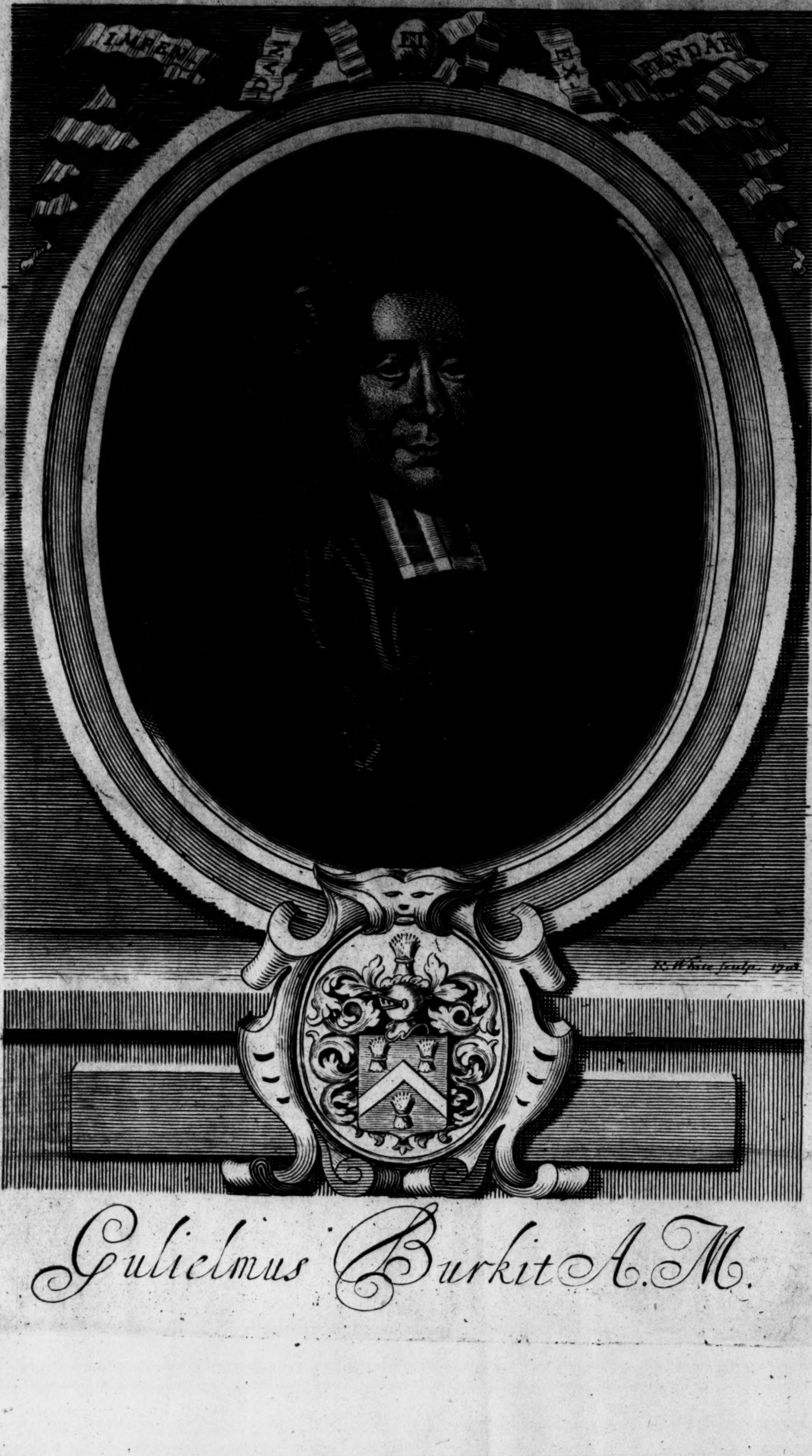
IMPENDAM ET EXPENDAR
R. White sculp. 1703

Gulielmus Burkit A.M.

EXPOSITORY NOTES,

E Libris WITH Jac: Foyle

Practical Obſervations,

E Coll. ON THE Reg.

NEW-TESTAMENT

OF OUR

Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

WHEREIN

The Sacred Text is at large Recited, the Senſe Explained, and the Inſtructive Example of the Bleſſed Jeſus and His Holy Apoſtles to our Imitation Recommended. The Whole deſigned to Encourage the Reading of the Scriptures in Private Families, and to render the Daily Peruſal of them Profitable and Delightful.

Endeavoured by *WILLIAM BURKITT*, Late Vicar and Lecturer of *Dedham* in *Eſſex*.

The FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurſt*, at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapſide*; *Jonathan Robinſon*, at the *Golden Lion*, and *John Wyat*, at the *Roſe*, in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1709.

30 JAN 61

TO THE
Right Honourable, and Right Reverend,

FATHER in GOD,
HENRY,

Lord Biſhop of LONDON,
One of HER
MAJESTY's
Moſt HONOURABLE
PRIVY COUNCIL.

My LORD,

IF *ever my Mean Labours were a* Bleſſing *to the People of* my Charge, *I with Them, and They with Me, have abundant Cauſe to* Bleſs Almighty God *for your Lordſhip, who was the* Immediate Inſtrument *of my Coming amongſt them.*

And we jointly lye under Superadded Obligations *to your Lordſhip, for* Repeated Inſtances *of Reſpect to this* Poor Town *in general, and to* my ſelf *in particular, in an* Allowance *for one to aſſiſt the Miniſter of this Place in that* Great Work *which is* here *daily incumbent upon* him.

I think my ſelf therefore oblig'd, *both in* Duty *and* Gratitude, *to give your* Lordſhip an Account *how I have ſpent my Time* here, *(eſpecially ſince I have had* Help *by your Lordſhip's* Particular Favour,*) which has been employed (as I could Redeem it) in an* Endeavour *to render the Reading of the* New Teſtament *profitable and delightful to my People, both in their* Families *and* Private Apartments.

In which Undertaking *my Care has been to be as clear and* particular *as I could, with an Eye to the* Benefit *of the* Plain *and* Unlearned *Reader; and have ſuited Things, as far as their Nature would bear, and my Skill would reach, to the moſt* Ordinary Capacities *and* Vulgar Apprehenſions.

And whatever the Succeſs *may be, I hope I ſhall receive the* Reward *of an* Honeſt Endeavour *from Him, who* eſtimates *our Pains not by their* Events *(which are not in our Power) but by their* Natural Tendencies, *and our* Sincere Intentions.

My LORD, *Controverſies are here induſtriouſly* declined, *(as inconſtent with my* Chief Deſign,*) yet not ſo as knowingly to betray any Text, or wilfully to deliver up any Truth, into the Hands of its* Avowed Enemies, *whether* Papiſts *or* Socinians.

Againſt the Contagious Corruptions *of the* former, *and the more Refined* Subtilties, *yet no leſs Perncious* Errors, *of the* latter, *the Clergy of this Dioceſs have been happily Antidoted by your Lordſhip, at your frequent* Conferences *with them. And the great* Freedom *and* Condeſcenſion, *with which your Lordſhip is pleaſed at ſuch Times to treat us, doth at once* invite *and* oblige *us alſo upon all* Occaſions *publickly and gratefully to acknowledge it.*

Yea, to your Lordſhip's Laſting Honour, *and Everlaſting* Comfort, *be it ſpoken, that not only your own* Clergy, *but theſe Three Nations, are inexpreſſibly indebted for your Lordſhip's* Pious Care *in* inſtructing *in the* Holy Principles *of our* Eſtabliſh'd Religion *the Glorious Queen* MARY, *of Immortal Memory, and Her* Illuſtrious Siſter, *our moſt Auguſt Queen* ANN, *(when your Lordſhip had the Honour to wait upon them in their Tender Years,) from whence Her Majeſty has been ſo Zealous to run all* Hazards *for its* Preſervation *ever ſince.*

May Heaven long, very long, continue your Lordſhip an Ornament *to the* Church, *an* Honour *to the* Engliſh Nobility, *a* Patron *of* Refugees *for the Sake of* Religion, *a Pattern of* Sincere Piety *towards* God, *and of the moſt* Extenſive Charity *to all Mankind: And after many Holy and Happy Days here on Earth, Crown your Lordſhip with the Rewards of a Glorious Immortality. So prayeth, in great Sincerity,*

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's much Oblig'd,

and moſt Obedient Servant,

BRITISH MUSEUM 30 JAN 61

W. Burkitt.

To the Right Honourable
CHARLES,
Lord Fitzwalter.

My Lord,

THE Sacred Pages inform us of a Son that was *Nouriſhed up in the Words of Faith*, by his Grandmother *Lois*, and his Mother *Eunice*.

The like Pious Care has been taken for your Lordſhip's Religious Education, by one of the Wiſeſt of Women, and the Beſt of Mothers, that the Age has afforded: And that Your Lordſhip's Improvement in Knowledge and Sincere Piety may Anſwer the Prayers, the Tears, the Endeavours, of ſuch an Endearing Parent, who prefers Your Lordſhip's Temporal Happineſs abundantly before her Own, I take Leave to put a Part of the *Inſpired Writings* into Your Lordſhip's Hand, with an *Endeavour of Mine* to render the Reading of them both Profitable and Delightful to Your Lordſhip.

Whilſt *Others* conſume their Precious Hours in Plays and Romances, and ſuch-like Corrupting and Effeminating Traſh, which the *Superfœtation* of the *Stage* furniſhes the Nation with, to the Scandal of Our Holy Religion, and the Grief of all Good Men, Debaſing the Minds, and Debauching the Manners, of ſo many amongſt us: That Your Lordſhip (and Others of your *Noble Order* with you) may Taſte ſuch Incomparable Delight and Sweetneſs in, and Experience ſuch Invaluable Benefit and Advantage by, Reading the Hiſtory of Your Bleſſed *Redeemer*'s Life and Actions, and may thereby be Transformed into His Holy Likeneſs here on Earth, and ſpend an Eternity in the Rapturous Contemplation and Raviſhing Fruition of him in Heaven, is the Fervent Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Honour's Faithfully Devoted
Servant and Chaplain,

W. Burkitt.

To Family Governours; particularly thoſe of my Charge.

AS *Religion did always conſiſt in an* Imitation of God, *and in a Reſemblance of thoſe* Excellencies *which ſhine forth in the* Beſt *and moſt* Perfect Being, *ſo we may* Imitate Him *now with much more* Eaſe, *and greater* Advantage, *ſince his* Son was manifeſt in our Fleſh, *and* dwelt among us : *For He was pleaſed to become* Man, *on purpoſe to ſhew us how we might become like to* God, *by a Daily Imitation of His Holineſs. And it is moſt certain that God Our* Father *will never own any of us for His* Children, *unleſs He ſees upon us the* Air *and* Features, *the* Impreſſes *and* Reſemblance, *of Chriſt Our* Elder Brother.

This Conſideration has induced me to ſet the Example of the Holy Jeſus before my ſelf and you in theſe Plain, Practical Notes *upon the* Holy Evangeliſts, *which contain Remarks upon the Hiſtory of our Saviour's* Life, Doctrine, *and* Miracles, *and of His* Death, Reſurrection, *and* Aſcenſion. *To the Intent that the* Temper *of our* Minds, *and the* Actions *of our* Lives, *may be a lively Tranſcript of the* Mind *and* Life *of our* Bleſſed Redeemer, *That we may* Admire *and* Imitate *His unſpotted* Purity, *His Condeſcending* Humility, *His Fervent* Charity, *His* Patience *under Sufferings and Reproaches, His Readineſs to* Forgive *Injuries, and His entire* Reſignation *to the* Divine Will *in all Conditions of Life whatſoever. That ſo following our* Lord *and* Maſter *in all the Steps of an* Imitable Virtue, *and ſetting His* Example *continually before us, we may be Daily Correcting and Reforming of our Lives by that* Glorious Pattern ; *for without preſent Likeneſs to Him, we have no Grounds to hope that we ſhall hereafter Live with Him.*

A true Compaſſion *to your* Souls, *and a fervent Deſire to farther their* Salvation *from the* Preſs, *as well as from the* Pulpit, *has put me upon Redeeming Time for this* Work.

I muſt acknowledge my conſtant Preaching Thrice a Week unto you (beſides Occaſionals) and Viſiting as often a populous and ſcattering Pariſh from Houſe to Houſe amongſt you, (which I have always accounted a moſt Important Part of my Duty,) would allow me but little, too little Time, *for ſuch a* Work *as* This, *which*

I heartily

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I heartily wiſh had fallen upon the Shoulder of ſome that had more Leiſure, *and* Greater Abilities, *for Writing on this Noble and Lofty Subject, which even to Eternity can never be exhauſted. But thus much I can truly ſay, that earneſtly Imploring Divine Aſſiſtance* I have done what I could; *my* Work *has been my* Recreation, *and the Lord accept it, and ſucceed it.*

And I have this Obſervation to Ground my Hope of Acceptance *and* Succeſs *upon, that Almighty God has in all Ages rendred thoſe Labours of his Servants (how mean ſoever in themſelves) moſt Acceptable and Uſeful, which have been employed in the Profitable Explication of any Part of the Holy Scriptures. As if* He *who Imprinted ſuch a Majeſty upon the Text, delighted alſo to Reflect an Honour upon the Interpreters thereof.*

My Deſign in preparing and giving theſe Notes into your Hands, is to Oblige *you to* Read *a part of the* Holy Scriptures *in your* Families *every Day; and to invite you thereunto, the Sacred Text is here at large Recited, and Controverſies Declined.*

And I do moſt Affectionately Requeſt you not to ſuffer the Holy Word of God, *which is in all your Hands, to lye by you as a* Neglected Book, *but daily to Read it, in and to your* Families, *with a Simplicity of Mind to be Directed and Inſtructed by it.*

All the Return I deſire from you for this my Labour of Love, *is your living in a daily Imitation of that Grand Pattern of Holineſs and Obedience which is here ſet before you, and in every Page recommended to you; and that we may continue to ſtrive together in our Prayers one with, and one for, another, for that Grace which may enable us to the Faithful Diſcharge of our Reſpective Duties towards God, towards each other, and all Mankind. And that the Happy Unity and Unanimity which has hitherto been amongſt us, may continue and encreaſe ſtill with us, to the Glory of God, the Honour of our Holy* Religion, *the preſent Benefit and Comfort, and the Eternal Joy and Rejoicing, both of Miniſter and People in the Day of the Lord Jeſus. Which, as it is the fervent Prayer, ſo it ſhall be the conſtant Endeavour of your Unworthy Miniſter, whoſe Higheſt Ambition it is to ſerve you in the Faith and Fellowſhip of the Goſpel, whilſt I am*

W. Burkitt.

A PRAYER

Before the Reading of the

Holy Scriptures.

ALmighty God and Merciful Father, who haſt appointed thy Word to be a Light to our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths, and cauſed all Holy Scriptures to be written for our Learning; Grant us the Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may in ſuch wiſe Read, Mark, Learn, and inwardly Digeſt them, that by Patience and Comfort of thy Holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold faſt, the Bleſſed Hope of Everlaſting Life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

And ſeeing of thy Tender Love to Mankind thou haſt given thy Dear and Only Son to be unto us both a Sacrifice for Sin, and alſo an Example of Godly Life, give us Grace, that we may always moſt Thankfully receive this His Ineſtimable Benefit, and alſo daily endeavour our ſelves to follow the Bleſſed Steps of His moſt Holy Life; who Liveth and Reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt, ever One God, World without End. *Amen.*

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EXPO-

EXPOSITORY NOTES
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
UPON THE
Holy GOSPEL
ACCCORDING TO
St. MATTHEW.

The HOLY BIBLE *contains the whole Revelation of the Will of* GOD *to the Children of Men: This Sacred Book is uſually divided into the Old and New Teſtament. The Old Teſtament contains the Law and the Prophets: The Writings of the New Teſtament are either Hiſtories or Epiſtles; the Hiſtories are the Four* Goſpels *and the* Acts *of the* Apoſtles. *The Four* Goſpels *were written by the Four* Evangeliſts *whoſe Names they bear; of whom* St. Matthew *and* St. John *were Eye-witneſſes of what they wrote, but* St. Mark *and* St. Luke *had what they wrote from the Relation of others.*

This Goſpel before us of St. Matthew *contains an Hiſtory of the Birth, Life, Miracles, Death, and Reſurrection, of the Holy* JESUS: *All which are the moſt Stupendious and Amazing Matters and Myſteries, as well as the moſt Neceſſary Truths to be Known and Believed by the World: And,*

This Chapter before us contains the Genealogy or Pedigree of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST *as he was Man, unto* Verſ. 17. *and then relates the Fact of his Wonderful Incarnation to the End of the Chapter.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE book of the generation of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

That is, the Deſcent of Jeſus Chriſt, who was according to the Fleſh the Son of *David*, and the Son of *Abraham*, is on this wiſe. And his Genealogy from *Abraham* down to his Reputed Father was thus. *Here Note*, That our Evangeliſt deſigning to write a Narrative of our Saviour's Life, begins with his Pedigree and Genealogy, and ſhews whom he deſcended from, namely, from *David* and *Abraham*. Where *Obſerve*, 1. That *David* is named before *Abraham*, becauſe he being a King, and an Illuſtrious Type of the *Meſſiah*, the *Jews* expected, and do to this Day expect, that the Son of *David* ſhould reign over them, and that they ſhould enjoy a Temporal Kingdom by him. *Obſerve* 2. The Names given to our Bleſſed Saviour, *Jeſus* and *Chriſt*; *Jeſus* is his *Hebrew* Name, and ſignifies a Saviour; *Chriſt* is his *Greek* Name, and ſignifies Anointed: From whence ſome do infer an Intimation and Encouragement, that both *Hebrews* and *Greeks*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may alike come unto Chriſt for Life and Salvation, he being the Common Saviour of both, according to that of St. *John*, Epiſt. 1. ch. 2. ver. 2. *He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.*

2 Abraham begat Iſaac, and Iſaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren. 3 And Judas begat Pharez, and Zara of Thamar, and Pharez begat Eſrom, and Eſrom begat Aram. 4 And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naaſſon, and Naaſſon begat Salmon.

Both the Evangeliſts, St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, make mention of our Saviour's Pedigree; the former by his Reputed Father's Side, the latter by his Mother's Side: The Deſign of both was to preſent us with a General Draught of our Lord's Pedigree and Deſcent, and not to be ſtrict and accurate in enumerating every Individual Perſon. This ſhould teach us not to be over-curious in ſcanning the Parts of this Genealogy, much leſs captiouſly to object againſt it: For if the Evangeliſts were not critical and exact in Compoſing this Genealogy, why ſhould we ſhew our ſelves in Examining of it? Rather let us attend to the Deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in Writing of it, which was Twofold: Firſt, For the Honour of our Saviour, as Man; ſhewing who were his Noble and Royal Progenitors according to the Fleſh. Secondly, For the Confirmation of our Faith, touching the Reality of our Redeemer's Incarnation. The Scripture making mention of all his Progenitors, from the Firſt Man *Adam*, to his Reputed Father *Joſeph*, will not ſuffer us to doubt either of the Truth of his Human Nature, or of the Certainty of his being the Promiſed *Meſſiah*. *Learn hence*, That the

Wiſdom of God hath taken all neceſſary Care, and uſed all needful Means, for the ſatisfying the Minds of all Unprejudic'd Perſons touching the Reality of Chriſt's Human Nature, and the Certainty of his being the Promiſed *Meſſiah*: For both theſe Ends is our Saviour's Genealogy and Deſcent recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jeſſe. 6 And Jeſſe begat David the King, and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been* the Wife of Urias. 7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Aſa. 8 And Aſa begat Joſaphat, and Joſaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias. 9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias. 10 And Ezekias begat Manaſſes, and Manaſſes begat Amon, and Amon begat Joſias. 11 And Joſias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time that they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel. 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor. 14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud. 15 And Eliud begat Eleazer, and Eleazer begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob. 16 And Jacob begat Joſeph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jeſus, who is called Chriſt. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations: and from David, until the carrying away into Babylon, are fourteen generations: and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Chriſt are fourteen generations.

Obſerve, Here are ſeveral Women mention'd in our Saviour's Genealogy, and all, or moſt of them, have a Brand of Infamy upon them. *Thamar* was one, with whom her Father-in-law *Judah* committed *Inceſt*; *Rachab* is called *an Harlot*; *Ruth* came of *Moab*, whom *Lot* begat of his own *Daughter*; and *Bathſheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*, was one with whom *David* had committed *Adultery*. Now the Wiſdom of God has thought fit to leave all this upon Record for ſeveral Ends and Purpoſes. 1. To denote the Freeneſs of God's Grace, which extends itſelf in the Saving Effects and Benefits of it to them that are moſt unworthy and ill-deſerving. 2. To encourage the greateſt Sinners to go unto Chriſt by Faith, and ſeek to be engrafted into him: For as Chriſt by the Power of his Godhead did purifie our Nature from all the Pollution of his Anceſtors, ſo he can by the Power of his Grace and Spirit ſanctifie our Perſons and Natures, how foul and impure ſoever they either are, or have been. 3. Hereby our Lord gives us to underſtand that he came to ſave the moſt Notorious Sinners, as well as thoſe whoſe Lives have been leſs Scandalous. 4. This is recorded for the Support of ſuch as are Illegitimate and Baſe Born; how vile ſoever their Parents Sin has rendred them in the Eyes of Men, 'tis their own Sin only which expoſes them to Contempt in the Sight of God. 'Tis not Illegitimacy, but Unregeneracy, that makes us Objects of God's Wrath.

18 Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe; When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, (befor they came together,) ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt.

That is, the Birth of Chriſt was not in the Ordinary and Natural Way, but his Mother *Mary* was found to be with Child by the Extraordinary and Miraculous Operation of the Holy Ghoſt. *Here Note*, That the Eſpouſal of *Mary* to *Joſeph* was for the Safety of *Chriſt*, and for the Credit and Reputation of the *Virgin*: It was for our Saviour's Safety, becauſe being to fly into *Egypt*, he has *Joſeph* his Reputed Father to take Care of him; and it was for the Virgin's Reputation, leſt ſhe ſhould have been accounted unclean. *Learn hence*, What a Special Regard Almighty God has to the Fame and Reputation of his Children; he would have them free from the leaſt Suſpicion of Evil and Diſhoneſty. *Mary* being eſpouſed to an Husband frees herſelf from the Suſpicion of Naughtineſs, and her Son from the Imputation of an Illegitimate Birth. *Obſerve farther*, The Miraculous Conception of the Holy *Jeſus*, the Holy Ghoſt overſhadowed the Virgin, and did miraculouſly cauſe her Conception without the Help of an Human Father. Thus Chriſt was the Son of God as well in his Human as in his Divine Nature: He muſt needs be a perfectly Holy Perſon who was conceived purely by the Holy Spirit's Operation.

19. Then Joſeph her husband being a juſt man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

That is, being an Holy Perſon, and a Strict Obſerver of the Rights of his Nation, he was unwilling to accompany with a Defiled Woman, and therefore minded *to put her away*, by giving a Bill of Divorce into her Hand before Two Witneſſes; but being Kind and Gentle, he intended *to put her away privily*, leſt ſhe ſhould have been expoſed and ſtoned to Death. *Obſerve here*, How early our Dear Lord's Sufferings began; he and his Mother are deſigned *to be put away*, even when he was but an *Embrio* in the Womb. *Obſerve farther*, From the great Clemency of *Joſeph* toward the Suſpected Virgin, that Kind and Merciful Men always preſume the Beſt, and proſecute with Gentleneſs, eſpecially where Life is concerned. Meek *Joſeph* doth reſolve upon the Milder Courſe, and chuſes rather *to put her away privily*, than publickly to expoſe her.

20 But while he thought on theſe things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, ſaying, Joſeph, thou ſon of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghoſt.

Two Things are here *obſervable*; namely, the Care that Almighty God takes, 1. For *Joſeph*'s Satisfaction. 2. For vindicating the *Virgin*'s Reputation. For *Joſeph*'s Satisfaction, an Angel is diſpatch'd to give him Aſſurance that the *Virgin* was not defiled by Man, but overſhadowed by the Holy Ghoſt. Whence *Note*, That Almighty God will certainly find out Ways and Means for his Peoples Satisfaction, when they are willing and deſirous above all Things to come to the Knowledge and Right Underſtanding of their Duty. *Obſerve* 2. How the Angel clears the Virgin's Innocency, as well as ſatisfies *Joſeph's* Doubtings, by aſſuring that what was Conceiv'd in her was by the Holy Ghoſt. *Learn hence*, That God will in his own Time clear the Innocency of ſuch as ſuffer in their Name and Reputation for the Sake of Chriſt, though for the preſent they may lye under the Burden of Diſgrace and Shame.

21 And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his Name Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his People from their ſins.

Obſerve here, 1. A Prediction of our Saviour's Birth; the Virgin *ſhall bring forth a Son*. 2. A Precept for the Impoſition of his Name; *Thou ſhalt call his Name Jeſus*, that is, a Saviour. 3. The Reaſon why that Name was given him, becauſe *he ſhould ſave a People*; not temporally, as *Joſhua* did the *Iſraelites* from their Enemies; but ſpiritually and eternally, *from their Sins*; not *in their Sins*, but *from them*; that is, from the Guilt and Puniſhment, from the Power and Dominion, of them. *Obſerve* 4. The Peculiar Subjects of this Priviledge, *his People: He ſhall ſave his People from their Sins*. *Learn* 1. That Sin is the Evil of Evils; or that Sin, conſidered in itſelf, is incomparably the greateſt and the worſt of Evils. 2. That the great End of Chriſt's coming into the World was to be a Saviour from this Evil. 3. That Chriſt's own People do want, and ſtand in need of, a Saviour as well as others; if he does not ſave them from their Sins, they muſt die in and for their Sins as well as others. And therefore he ſaves them from Sins Three Ways. (1.) By obtaining Pardon for Sin, and in Reconciling us to God. (2.) By weakening the Reigning Power of Sin, and implanting a New Principle of Holineſs in the Heart. (3.) By perfecting and accompliſhing all theſe Happy Beginnings at the End of this Life in Heaven. Dr. *Hammond*'s Pract. Catech.

22 (Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the Prophet, ſaying, 23 Behold a virgin ſhall be with

child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.)

Of all the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, the Prophet *Eſay* has the Honour to be firſt recited in the New. Here the Evangeliſt quotes his Prophecy of Chriſt's Incarnation. *Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child. Learn* thence, That the great Myſtery of our Saviour's wonderful Incarnation, was (tho' darkly) revealed to the Church of God under the Old Teſtament. *Obſerve* farther, The Name given to our Saviour under the Old Teſtament, *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*: God manifeſt in our Fleſh; God appearing in our Nature; God reconciling Man to himſelf. Oh Happy and bleſſed Union of two Natures in one Perſon; Chriſt is God and Man united, that God and Man may be reconciled.

24 Then Joſeph being raiſed from ſleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.

Joſeph is no ſooner aſſured that *Mary* is with Child by the Overſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt, but he inſtantly obeys the Lord's Command, and takes *Mary* to him, without farther diſputing or delaying. *Learn thence*, That a Gracious Perſon, when once ſatisfied in God's Word of Command, diſputes no farther, but inſtantly complies with the Will of God, even in the moſt hazardous and difficult Duties.

25 And knew her not, till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon; and he called his Name Jeſus.

It is piouſly Believed, tho' not poſitively in Scripture Aſſerted, that the Virgin had no other Child but our Saviour; it is a very probable Opinion, tho' not an infallible Article of Faith, as the Church of *Rome* would make it: For the Word *Until* ſignifies in Scripture, as much as Never. So *Gen.* 28. 15. *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have promiſed*; that is, *I will never leave thee.* So the Words following, *Her firſt-born Son*, do not imply that ſhe had any Child after; but that ſhe had none before. That Child which firſt openeth the Womb, is uſually in Scripture called the Firſt-born, tho' there was no other born after. Thus *Joſh.* 17. 1. *Machir* is called the Firſt-born of *Manaſſeh*, tho' he had no more Children. So that Chriſt, not only as God, but alſo as he was Man, was the Firſt-born, and Only Son. St. *Auſtin* expounds and applies *Ezek.* 44. *v.* 2. to the Virgin *Mary*; *This Gate ſhall be ſhut, it ſhall not be opened, and no Man ſhall enter in by it; becauſe the Lord God of* Iſrael *hath entred in by it, therefore it ſhall be ſhut.* And others of the Ancients ſay, That as Chriſt lay in a Tomb, in which none lay before himſelf, ſo he lodg'd in a Womb in which none ever lay, either before or after himſelf. But he ſaid, *Quid poſt partum ſecutum erat curioſe non eſt quærendum*, What the Virgin was afterwards is of ſmall concern to the Myſtery, therefore not to be enquired after. And yet it is now paſſed by ſome into a Matter of Faith, that the Virgin *Mary* was ever a Virgin, and it has been ſtiled an Hereſy to hold the contrary; but how it is conſiſtent with Good Divinity to make that an Article of Divine Faith which is founded on no Divine Revelation, or to make that neceſſary to be believed which confeſſedly is not contained in the Holy Scripture; let the Church of *Rome* anſwer.

CHAP. II.

Our Saviour's Miraculous Conception by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, being recorded in the Firſt Chapter; ſeveral remarkable Circumſtances relating to his Birth, are ſet down in this: As namely, The Place of his Birth, Bethlehem; *and the Time,* In the days of *Herod* the King.

1 NOW when Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king: behold there came wiſe men from the eaſt to Jeruſalem.

Obſerve here, 1. The Place of our Lord's Birth, *Bethlehem*; he was Born, not at *Athens*, not at *Rome*, not at *Jeruſalem*, not in any Opulent or Magnificent City, but in the meaneſt of the Cities of *Judah*: Thereby ſhewing us, that his Kingdom was not of this World, and that he little regarded Pomp and outward Greatneſs. Oh how can we be Abaſed enough for Chriſt, that thus Neglected himſelf for us? *Obſ.* 2. The Time of our Lord's Birth, *In the days of* Herod *the King.* This *Herod* being a Foreigner, and made King by the *Romans*, which now reigned over the *Jews*; in him was fulfilled *Jacob's* Prophecy, *Gen.* 49. 10. *That the Scepter ſhould not depart from Judah*; that is, the *Jews* ſhould have Governours of their own Nation *until Shiloh come*: That is, until Chriſt the promiſed *Meſſiah* come in the Fleſh. So that conſidering the Circumſtance of Time and Place, where and when Chriſt was Born, it was, and is wilful Obſtinacy in the *Jews*, to deny that the *Meſſiah* is come in the Fleſh. *Obſ.* 3. That Tribute of Honour which was paid unto our Saviour at his Birth; the Wiſe Men of the Eaſt came and Worſhipped him: That is, the *Chaldean*, *Arabian*, or *Perſian* Aſtronomers, who as the Firſt-Fruits of the Gentiles, ſeek after Chriſt; whilſt the *Jews* his own People rejected him. Oh how will their coming ſo far as the Eaſt to ſeek Chriſt, riſe up another Day in Judgment againſt us, if we refuſe to be found by Chriſt, who came from Heaven to ſeek us?

2 Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have ſeen his ſtar in the eaſt, and are come to worſhip him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Inquiry that they make after Chriſt, they do not aſk *whether* he was Born, but *where* he was Born; not doubting of the Fact, but ignorant of the Place. *Obſ.* 2. The Ground of their Inquiry: *For we have ſeen his Star*: They had ſeen a Star, but how did they know it was his Star? Probably, by Divine Revelation; They had a Light within, as well as a Star without, or they had never found Chriſt: It is likely, the Holy Spirit's Illumination accompanied the Star's Apparition. As God made known the Birth of Chriſt to the *Jews* by an Angel, to be manifeſted the ſame to the Gentiles by a new-created Star. *Obſ.* 3. The End of their Journey; *We are come to worſhip him*; that is, to Pay all that Honour and Homage which is due to a Great and Mighty Prince: All that Adoration and Worſhip, which belongs to the promiſed *Meſſiah*, the Redeemer of the World. All Honour and Homage, all Glory and Worſhip is due to Chriſt from the Sons of Men, and will be given him by thoſe that know him.

3 When Herod the king had heard *theſe things*, he was troubled, and all Jeruſalem with him.

Obſerve here, That when Chriſt came into the World to ſave Men, it caſt the World into a Conſternation, and cauſed wonderful Diſturbances. *Herod* is firſt concern'd, and next *all* Jeruſalem *with him*; *Herod* for fear of loſing his Kingdom, *Jeruſalem* for fear of New Commotions. Thus Chriſt, who was the Angel's Song, the Wiſe Men's Joy, *Iſrael's* Conſolation, becomes *Herod's* Fear, and *Jeruſalem's* Terror. But why was *Herod* thus diſturbed? 'Tis true, a King is Born, but one whoſe Kingdom is not of this World; 'twas *Herod's* falſe Apprehenſion, that was the Cauſe of this Perturbation. Hence we ſee, that the greateſt Enmities, and bittereſt Animoſities, have ariſen from cauſleſs Fears, and groundleſs Jealouſies.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief Prieſts and ſcribes of the People together, he demanded of them where Chriſt ſhould be born. 5 And they ſaid unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet; 6 And thou Bethlehem *in* the land of Juda, art not the leaſt among the princes of Juda: for out of thee ſhall come a Governour, that ſhall rule my People Iſrael.

Herod being in great Perplexity, conven'd a Council of the Chief Prieſts and Scribes, and demands of them the Place where Chriſt the promiſed *Meſſiah* was to be Born; they readily reply out of the Prophet *Micah*, ch. 5. 2. that *Bethlehem* is the Place; this was the City of *David's* Birth, and of Chriſt's the Son of *David*. *Bethlehem* ſignifies the Houſe of Bread, and was ſo called from its Fertility and Fruitfulneſs, and as ſome think, with Reference to Chriſt the True Bread of Life, Born there. *Bethlehem* was a mean and contemptible Place in it ſelf, but being Honoured with Chriſt's Preſence, how great is it? *Learn thence*, That the Preſence of Chriſt dignifies and exalts a Place, how mean ſoever in it ſelf. *Bethlehem*, tho' a little City in it ſelf, yet is not the leaſt among the Cities of *Judah*, becauſe Chriſt is Born there.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wiſe men, inquired of them diligently what time the ſtar appeared: 8 And he ſent them to Bethlehem, and ſaid, Go, and ſearch diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worſhip him alſo.

Obſerve here, 1, How *Herod* cloaks his intended Cruelty, with diſguiſed Hypocriſie; he had Murder in his Heart, when he pretended to Worſhip Chriſt with his Mouth. There is no Villany ſo great, but will maſk it ſelf under a Pretence and Shew of Piety. *Herod* veils his Intent to Kill Chriſt, with a Pretence to Worſhip him. *Obſ.* 2. *Herod* calls him *the young Child*, not *the young King*; that Word was too big to come out of *Herod*'s proud Mouth, he could neither bear the Thing, nor brook the Title. A King 'tis true he is, but one that will never be thy Rival, he has a Kingdom, but it is not of this World. *Obſ.* 3. How craftily *Herod* lays his Plot; he deſires the Wiſe Men to inquire throughly, and to inform him privately. To be Wiſe in doing Miſchief, is the worſt Wiſdom in the World: 'Tis not the Wiſdom from above, but from Hell Beneath.

9 When they had heard the King, they departed, and lo, the ſtar which they ſaw in the eaſt, went before them, till it came, and ſtood over where the young child was. 10 When they ſaw the ſtar, they rejoyced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the houſe, they ſaw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worſhipped him: and when they had opened their treaſures, they preſented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Star, which for ſome time diſappeared, now appears again, to their farther Direction in finding Chriſt: *Teaching us*, That God will not be wanting to ſuch as are on the Way to ſeek Chriſt, but will renew Directions and Encouragements to them, according as they ſtand in need; none ever ſincerely ſought Chriſt, but they certainly found him at the laſt. *Obſ.* 2. That the Joy which ariſes in ſuch a Soul, as has found Chriſt, is unutterable and unſpeakable; the Wiſe Men here *Rejoyced with Joy, with great Joy, with exceeding great Joy*. *Obſ.* 3. The Wiſe Men having found this young King, they bring Preſents to him, according to the manner of the Eaſtern Countries, namely, Gold, Frankincenſe, and Myrrh, which were the principal Commodities of the Eaſt: But the beſt Preſent we can make to Chriſt, is our Selves; he ſeeks not Ours, but Us; and rather deſires what we are, than what we have. Yet the Providence of God was wonderfully ſeen in theſe Preſents, for hereby Proviſion was made for the Suſtenance of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, and the Child *Jeſus*, in their Exile, or Flight into *Egypt*, which they were ſhortly to undergo.

12 And being warned of God in a dream, that they ſhould not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

God having warned the Wiſe Men in a Dream, not to go back to *Herod*, they return home another way. But did theſe Wiſe Men play the Parts of Honeſt Men, in that they returned not again to *Herod*? *Anſw.* It appears not that they promiſed *Herod* to return, tho' he expected it; or if they did, it was in conſideration that *Herod* ſhould Come and Worſhip Chriſt, not Murther and Deſtroy him: But if they promiſed him never ſo poſitively, God Almighty gave them a Diſpenſation from that Promiſe, by commanding them to return home another way. *Herod* kept his Deſign againſt Chriſt cloſe from the Wiſe Men, but he could not conceal his Intentions from the infinitely Wiſe God; he knew the Purpoſes of his Heart, and by his Providence, kept Chriſt out of his Hand: There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel againſt the Lord.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the Angel of the Lord appeareth to Joſeph in a dream, ſaying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him. 14 When he aroſe, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Lord's Humiliation by Perſecution, in the very Morning of his Life; he was Baniſhed almoſt as ſoon as Born. *Flee into Egypt, for Herod will ſeek the young Child to deſtroy him.* Ungrateful *Herod!* Was this Entertainment for a Saviour? What, raiſe the Country upon Chriſt, as if a Deſtroyer rather than a Saviour had Landed upon thy Coaſts? Oh! Barbarous Injuſtice! To deny a Subject the Protection of thoſe Laws under which he was Born: The Child of a Beggar might claim that as his Birthright, which is here denyed to the Son of God. Lord! How great an Humiliation was this, not only to become an Infant, but in thine Infancy to be hurried up and down, and driven out of thine own Land as a Vagabond. *Obſ.* 2. How our Lord himſelf in a time of Perſecution flies for Safety, who was able a thouſand ways to have preſerv'd himſelf from Danger: *Teaching us*, That in times of Difficulty and Danger, 'tis neither unwarrantable nor unbecoming, to preſerve our Lives by flight; ſurely 'tis no Shame for us to fly, when our Captain doth both practiſe it, and command it alſo. Chriſt by his own Example has ſanctified that State of Life unto us, and by his Command has made it lawful for us. *Obſ.* 3. The Place which Chriſt flies unto for Safety, and that is *Egypt*; an unlikely Place, conſidered in it ſelf: Who could expect Liberty in that Houſe of Bondage? But any Place is good, if God ſends us thither, and Chriſt be in our Company. His Preſence can make *Egypt* it ſelf not only ſafe, but delightful alſo. *Obſ.* 4. How readily *Joſeph* complies with the Divine Command; inſtantly, *He aroſe, and took the young Child, and fled.* Faith gave Wings to his Obedience, and inſtantly vanquiſh'd all his Fears, and afforded a fuller ſupply than all the Treaſures of the *Arabian* Princes. *Teaching us*, That when our Direction is clear, our Compliance ſhould be ſpeedy: We cannot be too forward and expeditious in the Execution of Divine Commands. *Obſ.* 5. Tho' *Joſeph* at the Command of God, flies preſently from *Herod*'s Rage, yet he flies privately, by Night, and prudently begins his Journey when leaſt Notice ſhould be taken of his Motion: *Teaching us*, That altho' we have never ſo many Promiſes of Safety and Deliverance, yet we muſt not put God upon working Miracles for our Preſervation, when it may be obtained in the Uſe of Means.

16 Then Herod, when he ſaw that he was mocked of the wiſe men, was exceeding wroth, and ſent forth, and ſlew all the Children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coaſts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wiſe men.

Obſerve, How *Herod* having play'd the Fox before, he acts the Lion now; his ſecret Policy not ſucceeding, he breaks out into open and inhumane Cruelty. *Learn*, That when Fraud and Subtilty fail the Enemies of the Church, they then fall to open Rage and barbarous Inhumanity: Thus here, theſe Holy Innocents fall as a Sacrifice to *Herod*'s Rage, and Die for Chriſt, who came to Die for them; and ſo were Martyrs in Deed, tho' not in Will. Some affirm, that *Herod* did not ſpare his own Child, then at Nurſe in the Coaſts of *Bethlehem*; which made *Auguſtus* ſay, He had rather be *Herod*'s Hog, than *Herod*'s Child; becauſe the *Jews* did kill and eat no Swine's Fleſh. And *Herod* in complyance with the *Jews*, Abſtained from it alſo.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the Prophet, ſaying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning: Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, becauſe they are not.

Obſerve here, The loud and bitter Cry which the Mothers of *Bethlehem* make for the Death of their innocent Children, which were barbarouſly Slain by the Sword of *Herod*; Here was Lamentation, Weeping and great Mourning made by *Rachel*, that is, by the Women Inhabiting in and about *Bethlehem*, where *Rachel*'s Sepulcher was; for the Land about *Bethlehem* was called *Rachel*, from her Sepulcher, ſo famous in thoſe Parts. *Rachel* here is not the Name of a Perſon, but of a Place. *Obſ.* 2. The Cauſe and Reaſon of this Cry, and bitter Lamentation; the Mothers Weep, not becauſe their Children are, but becauſe they are not; they did not with ſome wicked Parents, repine becauſe they had Children, but becauſe they had loſt them: Mothers have the ſharpeſt Throws both in their Childrens Births and Burials. As Children in their Births, are their Mothers *Benjamins*; ſo in their Burial, they are their Mothers *Bennoni*'s, Sons of Sorrow.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an Angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joſeph in Egypt, ſaying, 20 Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Iſrael: for they are dead which ſought the young child's life.

Obſerve, 1. *Herod*'s Death, like a Bloody Perſecutor, he is ſent unlamented to his Grave; Hiſtorians ſay, that out of his Body iſſued forth ſuch impure Streams of Blood, that the Loathſomneſs and Pain made him attempt the killing of himſelf. God ſeldom ſuffers Perſecutors to paſs in quiet to their Graves; they rarely die the common Death of all Men, having no other Balm at their Funeral, than their own Blood. *Obſerve*, 2. The Happy Conſequent of *Herod*'s Death, Chriſt is now called home without Danger; *Herod* being ſent to his Grave, the Coaſt is clear for the Return of the Holy Family: The Death of Perſecutors, is the Delivery of the Perſecuted. *Obſ.* 3. An Angel is diſpatch'd to acquaint *Joſeph* with *Herod*'s Death: Oh! How chearfully do thoſe Glorious Spirits execute the Commands of their Soveraign Maſter, with what Delight do they carry the Meſſages of God's Kindneſs to their Fellow Creatures? Lord! What an Argument is this of thy Love unto us, that in this our Pilgrimage State, thou alloweſt us thine own Royal Guard to attend and preſerve us?

21 And he aroſe, and took the young child and his Mother, and came into the land of Iſrael. 22 But when he heard that Archalaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his Father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithſtanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aſide into the Parts of Galilee.

Obſerve here, 1. The juſt Fear that *Joſeph* has upon his Mind, that *Herod*'s Son would be as Bloody a Tyrant as his Flagitious Father. No wonder, that the Children of Cruel Perſecutors are ſuſpected to tread in their Bloody Parents Steps. *Obſ.* 2. How God's Warrant and Direction doth quiet *Joſeph*'s Mind, reſolve his Doubts, and remove his Fears, and makes him readily comply with the Command of God; *Being warned of God he removes out of* Egypt *into* Galilee. Oh how ſafe and ſatisfactory is it, in all our Ways to follow the Call and Command of God! *Joſeph* and *Mary* durſt not move their Feet, no not out of *Egypt* it ſelf, till God gives them a Warrant for their Departure, and bids them go.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the Prophet, He ſhall be called a Nazarene.

A threefold Interpretation is given of theſe Words, *He ſhall be called a* Nazarene. Some read the Words, 1. *He ſhall be called a* Nazarite; the *Nazarites*, were a Religious and Separate Rank of Perſons among the *Jews*, who Abſtained from Wine, and came not near the Dead for fear of Pollution: Chriſt was a Holy Perſon, but no *Nazarite* in a ſtrict ſenſe; for he drank Wine, and touched the Dead. 2. Others read the Words, *He ſhall be called a* Netzer, a Branch, in Alluſion to *Iſa.* 11. 1. where he is called a *Branch of the Root of* Jeſſe. Chriſt was that True Branch, of which the Prophets had ſo often ſpoken. 3. Others will have the Word *Nazarene* refer to the City *Nazareth*, where Chriſt was Conceived, and lived moſt of his Time; *He ſhall be called a* Nazarene, becauſe he dwelt at *Nazareth*; hence his Diſciples were called the Sect of the *Nazarenes*, that is, the Followers of him that dwelt at *Nazareth*; and Chriſt himſelf is pleaſed to own the Title, *Act.* 22. 8. *I am* Jeſus *of* Nazareth, *whom thou perſecuteſt*. *Learn from hence*, The great Humility of Mind that was found in our Saviour: He was Born at *Bethlehem*, a little City; he Lives at *Nazareth*, a poor contemptible Place; He aſpires not after the Grandeur of the World, but is meek and lowly in Spirit; may the ſame humble Mind be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.

CHAP. III.

This Evangeliſt having declared our Saviour's Miraculous Conception, in the Firſt Chapter, and Recorded ſeveral remarkable Circumſtances relating to his Birth, in the Second Chapter; in this Chapter before us, he paſſes over in ſilence the whole Courſe of our Saviour's Life in private; taking no notice how he ſpent his Minority whilſt he dwelt at Nazareth, *which was till he was Thirty Years old; at which time he entred upon his Publick Miniſtry, having* John *the* Baptiſt *for his Harbinger and Forerunner; as this Chapter fully informs us.*

1 IN thoſe days came John the Baptiſt, preaching in the wilderneſs of Judea, 2 And ſaying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The Preacher ſent by God, *John* the Baptiſt: A Pattern of Mortification, and a Preacher of Repentance. *Obſ.* 2. The Place he is ſent to Preach in, *The Wilderneſs of* Judea; not in Populous *Jeruſalem*, but in a Barren Wilderneſs, where Inhabitants are few, and probably very ignorant and rude. *Learn hence*, That it is God's Prerogative to ſend forth the Preachers of the Goſpel, when and whither, and to what People he pleaſes; and none muſt aſſume the Office before they be ſent. *Obſ.* 3. The Doctrine that he Preaches, namely, the Doctrine of Repentance, *Repent ye*: This was to prepare the People for the *Meſſias*, and the Grace of the Goſpel. *Learn thence*, That the Preaching of the Doctrine of Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to the preparing of the Hearts of Sinners for the receiving of Chriſt Jeſus and his Holy Doctrine. *Obſ.* 4. The Motive which St. *John* uſes to inforce the Exhortation to Repentance, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; that is, now is the ſo much expected Time of the Appearing of the *Meſſiah* come; the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation is now to be Aboliſhed, and the Mercy and Grace of the Goſpel is now to be Revealed; therefore Repent, and Amend your Lives. *Note thence*, That the free and full Tenders of Grace and Mercy in the Goſpel, are the moſt alluring Arguments to move a Sinner to Repent, and to Convert to God.

3 For this is he that was ſpoken of by the Prophet Eſaias, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtraight.

The *Papiſts*, from *John* Baptiſt's living in the Wilderneſs would make him the firſt Founder of the Order of the *Hermits*, but very groundleſly. For, 1. What he did, was by God's Command; what they do, is by the Dictates of their own Fancy. 2. He buſied himſelf in Preaching in the Wilderneſs; they bury themſelves alive, and do nothing. 3. He lived in the Wilderneſs but for a time, afterwards we find him at Court, Preaching a Sermon to *Herod*; but they bind themſelves with a Vow, to live and die *Hermits*.

4 And the ſame John had his raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locuſts and wild hony.

The Plainneſs of *John*'s Habit and Diet, is here declared; he was habited in a plain Suit of Camels Hair, much as *Elijah* was before him; and as his Habit was plain, ſo his Diet was ordinary, feeding upon Herbs and ſuch Things as the Wilderneſs affords; hence it was that *Nazianzen* ſaid he was all Voice; a Voice in his Habit, a Voice in his Diet, and a Voice in his whole Converſation. His Example *Teaches us*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are not to affect Bravery in Apparel, or Delicacy in Diet; but having the neceſſary Comforts, and needful Conveniences of Life, to be therewith content.

5 Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

Obſerve here, The great Encouragement, which *John* had in his Miniſtry, from the People's Attendance upon it; he was now fiſhing for Souls, and God brought the People very thick about the Net of the Goſpel, and Multitudes were incloſed, no doubt to his Joy and great Satisfaction. For it is matter of great Rejoycing to the Miniſters of Chriſt, when they find their People forward to encourage their Miniſtry by a diligent Attendance.

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

This Place the *Papiſts* bring to ſupport their Doctrine of *Auricular Confeſſion*; but very groundleſly: For, 1. The Confeſſion of theſe Converts was voluntary, and not conſtrained 2. It was general, and not of every particular Sin. 3. It was publick and open, not in the Ear of a Prieſt. 4. It was a Confeſſion of Sin committed before Baptiſm, not after they were Baptized; in all which Circumſtances it differs from the Auricular Confeſſion of the Church of *Rome*, very greatly. *Note*, That Confeſſion of Sin paſt, together with a Profeſſion of Faith in, and Obedience to Chriſt for the time to come, are neceſſary Requiſites and Qualifications in all Perſons of riper Years that are admitted to Baptiſm; *John* admitted theſe Perſons to Baptiſm, upon their Confeſſion of Sin, and Promiſe of Amendment. From whence we may Learn, That ſuch Perſons as have been very bad, upon a Profeſſion of their Repentance and a promiſing to become better, may be admitted to the Holy Sacrament, provided, that we warn them, as the Baptiſt did theſe, not only to make Profeſſion of Repentance, but to bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance.

7 But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his Baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. 9 And think not to ſay within your ſelves, We have Abraham to our father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

Here we have the Entertainment which *John* gave to his unexpected Auditors, the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, which came to Hear him, and to be Baptized by him: He gives them firſt a quick and cutting Compellation, *O Generation of Vipers*; next, a ſharp and ſevere Reprehenſion, *Who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come*: It was Matter of Wonder and Admiration, to ſee ſuch Men turn Proſelytes. *Note thence*, That the Condition of proud *Phariſees*, pretending and falſe-hearted Hypocrites, tho' it be very dangerous, yet is not hopeleſs and deſperate; and their Salvation, tho' very improbable, yet muſt not be deſpaired of as impoſſible: And accordingly, the Baptiſt having given them a ſmart Reproof, ſubjoins a ſeaſonable Exhortation, *bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; as if he had ſaid, Do not ſatisfie your ſelves with a bare Profeſſion of Repentance, but let us ſee the Fruits of Repentance in your daily Converſation. *Learn thence*, That ſincere Repentance is not a barren thing, but conſtantly brings forth the Fruits of Holineſs anſwerable to its Nature: As the Body without the Spirit, and as Faith without Works is dead, ſo Repentance without Fruits is dead alſo. *Obſerve farther*, How he enforces his Exhortation, with a neceſſary Caution; *Think not to ſay within your ſelves, We have* Abraham *to our Father*, &c. As if he had ſaid, Truſt not to your outward Priviledges, and glory not in them; flatter not your ſelves, that becauſe you are *Abraham*'s Seed, and the only Viſible Church, that therefore the Judgments of God will not reach you; for God can out of the obdurate Gentile World, who now Worſhip Stones, raiſe up a People to himſelf, and take them into Covenant with himſelf, and caſt you all out, who have *Abraham*'s Blood running in your Veins, but nothing of *Abraham*'s Faith in your Hearts, nor of his Obedience in your Lives. Now from St. *John*'s Plain-dealing with theſe Hypocritical *Phariſees*, we *Learn*, That it is the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavour of the Miniſters of Chriſt, to drive Hypocrites from their vain Confidence, who do conſtantly bear up themſelves upon their External Priviledges, in the Enjoyment of which, they promiſe themſelves a freedom from the Judgments of God. *Think not to ſay within your ſelves, We have*, &c.

10 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: and therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down and caſt into the fire.

The Baptiſt had preacht the Doctrine of Repentance in the former Verſes, he backs it with a powerful Motive in this Verſe; drawn from the Certainty, the Severity and Suddenneſs of that Vengeance which would come upon them, if they continued impenitent: *Now is the Ax laid to the Root of the Tree. Learn*, 1. That thoſe whoſe Hearts are not pierced with the Sword of God's Word, ſhall certainly be cut down and deſtroyed by the Ax of his Judgments. *Learn*, 2. That it is not unſuitable for Goſpel-Preachers to preſs Repentance and Holineſs of Life upon their Hearers, from Arguments of Terror; *John* does it here, and Chriſt elſewhere. *Obſerve farther*, That foraſmuch as the Sin here ſpecified is a Sin of Omiſſion, which brings this ſore and ſevere Judgment; *Every Tree that bringeth not forth Good Fruit*, as well as that which bringeth forth Evil Fruit, *is hewen down and caſt into the Fire*; we may gather, That Sins of Omiſſion are certainly Damning, as well as Sins of Commiſſion; the Neglects of Duty are as dangerous and Damnable, as the Acts of Sin: Such Trees as ſtand in God's Orchard and bring forth no Good Fruit, are markt out as Fuel for the Devil's Fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear: he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire.

In theſe Words *John* declares the Excellency of Chriſt's Perſon and Miniſtry above his own: As to his Perſon, he owns that he was not worthy to carry his Shoes after him, or to perform the loweſt Offices of Service for him: And as to his Office, he declares that Chriſt ſhould not Baptize as he did, with Water, but with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire; that is, ſhould plentifully pour down of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit upon his Proſelytes, which like Fire in their Operation ſhould purifie their Hearts from Sin, conſuming their Luſts and Corruptions; but at the ſame time he has a Fiery Indignation and Flaming Judgments, to deſtroy and burn up Impenitent Sinners, like combuſtible Stubble. *Where obſerve*, How Chriſt is repreſented by one and the ſame Metaphor of Fire, in a way of Comfort to his Children, and in a way of Terror to his Enemies; he is a Fire unto both: He ſits in his Church as a Refiner's Fire, he is amongſt his Enemies as a conſuming Fire, a Fire for his Church to take Comfort in, a Fire for his Enemies to Periſh by.

12 Whoſe fan is in his hand, and he will throughly Purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

In theſe Words, the Baptiſt compares Chriſt the promiſed *Meſſiah* to an Huſband-man, the *Jewiſh* Church to a Barn-Floor; the Office of the Huſband-man is to Threſh, Fan, and Winnow his Corn, ſeparating it from the Chaff; preſerving the one, and conſuming the other. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Church is Chriſt's Floor. 2. That this Floor Chriſt will Purge, and that throughly. 3. That the Word of Chriſt is the Fan in his Hands, by and with which, he will throughly Purge his Floor: The Church is compared to a Floor, upon the Account of that Mixture which is in the Church; in a Floor there is Straw as well as Grain, Chaff as well as Corn; Tares as well as Wheat, Cockle and Darnel, as well as Good Seed: Thus in the Church, there is, and will be a Mixture of Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, Hypocrites and Sincere Chriſtians. But this Floor Chriſt will *Purge*; Purge it, but not break it up; Purge out its Corruptions, but not Deſtroy its Eſſence and Exiſtence; and the Fan with which he will Purge his Floor, is his Word, accompanied with the Wing of Diſcipline: The Fan detects and diſcovers the Chaff, and the Wing diſſipates and ſcatters it; and by the help of both, the Floor is Purged. *His Fan is in his Hand*, &c.

13 Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him;

Here we have our Saviour's Solemn Inauguration, and Publick Entrance upon his Prophetick Office by Baptiſm, or

Waſhing with Water, according to the Manner of the Prieſts under the Ceremonial Law, *Exod.* 29. 4. Where we have *Obſervable*, 1. The Circumſtance of time; *Then cometh Jeſus*; that is, after he had lain hid in *Nazareth* Thirty Years, he comes abroad, and enters upon his Publick Miniſtry, *Teaching us* by his Example, That when we are ripe and fit for Publick Service, we ſhould no leſs willingly leave our Obſcurity, than we took the Benefit of it, for our Preparation. *Obſ.* 2. The Action it ſelf, Chriſt is *Baptized* now, as he was *Circumciſed* before; not becauſe there was any Impurity in him, either Filth, or Fore-ſkin, which wanted either the Circumciſing Knife, or the Baptiſmal Water; yet Purity it ſelf condeſcends to be Waſhed, Chriſt to be Baptized; for theſe Reaſons: 1. That by this Symbol he might enter himſelf into the Society of Chriſtians, as by Circumciſion he had done into the Society of *Jews*; as a King condeſcends ſometimes to be made a Free-man of a City or Corporation. 2. That he might by his own Baptiſm ſanctifie the Ordinance of Baptiſm unto his Church. 3. That thereby he might fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Ceremonial Law, which required the Waſhing of the Prieſts in Water, when they entred upon their Office, as appears from *Exod.* 29. 4. *Obſerve* 3. The great Condeſcention of Chriſt, in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the Baptiſm of *John*, *Chriſt cometh to* John, not *John* to Chriſt. Behold! The Lord ſeeking to his Servant, Chriſt will be Baptized of his Meſſenger: Our Saviour's Deſign hereby no doubt was, to put Honour upon the Miniſtry of *John*. Oh how dare the Greateſt upon Earth deſpiſe the Miniſtry of Man, being appointed by God, which Chriſt Honoured in his own Perſon, and graced with his own Preſence!

14 But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me!

Note here, 1. The Modeſty of *John*'s Refuſal; *John forbad him*, and refuſed to admit him: But why? 1. In regard of Chriſt, becauſe he knew he needed it not; ſuch was his Majeſty and Greatneſs, that he was above it; and ſuch was his Purity and Holineſs that he could not want it. 2. In reſpect of himſelf, he knew his own Uncleanneſs; *I have need to be Baptized of thee*, &c. He thought it unſuitable that a Sinner ſhould Baptize and Waſh him that was no Sinner. 3. With reſpect to the People; leſt they ſeeing Chriſt Baptized, ſhould apprehend him to be a Sinner, and one that wanted the Baptiſm of Repentance, as well as themſelves. *Obſerve* 2. As the Modeſty of *John*'s Refuſal, ſo the Reaſon he aſſigns for it; *I have need to be Baptized of thee*: As if he had ſaid, Thou art Purity, I am Pollution; thou art Spirit, I am Fleſh: Thou art the Son of God, I am the Son of *Adam*: Such an humble Apprehenſion has this Holy Man of himſelf. *Learn*, That the more Holy a Perſon is the more ſenſible he is of his Unholineſs; where there is moſt Grace, there is the greateſt ſence of the want of Grace.

15 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Suffer it to be ſo now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs: Then he ſuffered him.

Theſe Words contain our Saviour's Reaſon, why he ſubmitted to *John*'s Baptiſm, becauſe it became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs; that is, to own every Divine Inſtitution, particularly the Righteouſneſs of the Ceremonial Law, which required the Waſhing of the Prieſts in Water, when they entred upon their Office, *Exod.* 29. 4. *Learn hence* 1. That whatever the Law required, in order to perfect Righteouſneſs, that Chriſt fulfilled in moſt abſolute Perfection. 2. That as it became Chriſt to fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Ceremonial Law for himſelf, ſo it is our Duty and Intereſt to fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Moral Law for our ſelves as an Evidence of our being Righteous in God's Sight, 1 *John* 3. 7. *He that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

16 And Jeſus when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the Water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him. 17 And lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

Here we have the ſolemn Inauguration of Chriſt into his Prophetick Office, accompanied with a threefold Miracle. 1: The opening of the Heavens. 2, The Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, like as a Dove deſcends. 3. God the Father's Voice concerning his Son. The Heavens were opened, to ſhew, that Heaven which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our Sins, is now opened to us, by Chriſt's Undertaking for us. As the Firſt *Adam* ſhuts us out of Heaven, the Second *Adam* lets us into it; he opened Heaven to us by his Meritorious Paſſion, and he keeps it open by his prevailing Interceſſion. Next, the Holy Ghoſt deſcends like a Dove upon our Saviour; here we have an Evidence of the Bleſſed Trinity; the Father ſpeaks from Heaven, the Son comes out of the Water, and the Holy Ghoſt appears upon him. *Hence we gather*, That the Holy Ghoſt is not a Quality, or an Operation, but a Perſon; and a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father and the Son. But why did the Holy Spirit now deſcend upon Chriſt, ſeeing he was now Truly and Really God? *Anſw.* The Divinity of Chriſt was Quieſcent in him, till he entred upon his Prophetick Office at Thirty Years old, and after. And the Holy Ghoſt now deſcends, *Firſt*, For the Deſignation of his Perſon, to ſhew that Chriſt was the Perſon ſet a part for the Work and Office of a Mediator. *Secondly*, For the Qualification of his Perſon, for the Performance of the Office. This was Chriſt's Unction, *Iſa.* 61. 1. when he was Anointed above his Fellows, to be the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church. *Laſt of all*, We have the audible Voice of God the Father, pronouncing, 1. The Nearneſs of Chriſt's Relation to himſelf, *This is my Son*, not by Adoption, but by Eternal Generation. 2. The Endearedneſs of his Perſon, *This is my Beloved Son*. 3. The Fruit and Benefit of this near and dear Relation unto us, *In him I am well pleaſed*. *Note* 1. That there is no poſſibility for any perſon to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; both our *Perſons* and our *Performances* find *Acceptance* only for his Sake. 2. That in and through *Chriſt*, God is well pleaſed with all *Believers*: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, &c. Lord! What reviving News is this to thy Church, to hear that her Head and Huſband, her Surety, Mediator, and Interceſſor, is that only Son of God in whom his Soul is delighted, and ever well pleaſed. That Son who always pleaſed thee, and by and thro' whom thou art well pleaſed with, and reconciled to thy offending Creatures.

CHAP. IV.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with our Bleſſed Saviour's Combat with, and Conqueſt over Satan; and the firſt Verſe informs us of the Time when, and Place where the Combat was fought.

1 THEN was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil.

Obſerve, 1. The great Humiliation of the Son of God, how exceedingly was he humbled by the horrid Temptations wherewith he was aſſaulted, than which, nothing could be more grievous to his Holy Heart. What could be more burthenſome to him that was brought up from Eternity with God the Father, than to be ſhut up in a Wilderneſs with the Devil; there to be baited by him ſo many Days, having his Ears filled, tho' not defiled, with horrid Blaſphemies; ſpit upon the Holy and Reverend Name of God: Oh deep Abaſement and wonderful Humiliation of the Son of God! *Obſ.* 2. The Time when Chriſt entred the Liſts with Satan, implied in the Word *Then*; that is, *Firſt*, Immediately after his Baptiſm; he is no ſooner out of the Water of Baptiſm, but he is in the Fire of Temptation. *Secondly*, Immediately after the Spirit deſcended upon him, and the Father had by a Voice from Heaven manifeſted his Complacency and Satisfaction in him, *This is my Beloved Son*, &c. *Note thence*, That great Manifeſtations of Love from God, are uſually followed with great Temptations from Satan. *Obſ.* 3. The Place where this Combat was fought, and that is, *in the Wilderneſs*. *Learn thence*, That no Place can Priviledge us from Temptation, or be a Sanctuary from Satan's Aſſaults; the ſolitary Wilderneſs has a Tempter in it, yea, Satan ſometimes makes uſe of Mens Solitarineſs, to farther his Temptations; a Cell, a Nunnery, or a Cloiſter, are as open to Satan, as the open Fields; and the Perſons that live in them, have a Tempter without, and an Enticer within as well as other Men. *Obſ.* 4. The Efficient Cauſe of Chriſt's going into the Wilderneſs to be Tempted by Satan; *He was led up of the Spirit*, ſays St. *Matthew*; *The Spirit drove him*, ſays

St. *Mark*: That is, the Holy Spirit of God, not Satan the Unclean Spirit; for the Devil is ſeldom if ever called *The Spirit*, but uſually ſome Brand of Reproach is annexed, as the *Evil Spirit*, or the *Unclean Spirit*. Chriſt was *Led by the Spirit*; that is, he was carried by a ſtrong Impulſe of the *Spirit* of God into the Wilderneſs, to be Tempted by *Satan*. *Learn hence*, 1. That none of the Children of God ought to expect a Freedom from Temptations; ſeeing Chriſt himſelf, in the Days of his Fleſh, was ſtrongly ſolicited by *Satan* unto Sin. 2. That all the Temptations wherewith the Children of God are aſſaulted, are ordered by Divine and Special Diſpenſation. Satan could not aſſault our Saviour, till he was *Led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs* for that End: and he ſhall not aſſault any of his Members, but by Divine Permiſſion.

2 And when he had faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

Obſerve here, How the Divine Power upheld the Humane Nature of Chriſt without Food. What *Moſes* did at the giving of the Law, Chriſt doth at the beginning of the Goſpel, namely, *Faſt Forty Days, and Forty Nights.* Chriſt hereby intended our Admiration, not our Imitation; or if our Imitation, of the Action only, not of the Time. Chriſt teaches us, by Faſting and Prayer to prepare our ſelves for a Conflict with our Spiritual Enemies; as he prepared himſelf by Faſting to grapple with the Tempter, ſo ſhould we.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread.

Obſerve here, 1. The Occaſion of the Temptation. 2. The Temptation it ſelf. The Occaſion was our Saviour's Hunger, and want of Bread. *Learn thence*, That when God ſuffers any of his Dear Children to fall into Want, and to be ſtreightned for outward Things, Satan takes a mighty Advantage thereupon, to Tempt and Aſſault them. But what doth he Tempt our Saviour to? To the Sin of Diſtruſt, to queſtion his Sonſhip; *If thou be the Son of God*. And next, to diſtruſt his Father's Providence and Care, *Command that theſe Stones be made Bread*: as if Satan had ſaid, how unlikely is it, that thou ſhouldſt be highly favoured, and yet deſerted? What! The Son of God, and yet ready to ſtarve; certainly if thou canſt not ſupply thy Neceſſities, Thou art nothing a kin to God. *Learn hence*, 1. That Satan's grand Deſign is, firſt, to tempt the Children of God to doubt of their Adoption; and next, to Diſtruſt God's Fatherly Care over them, and Proviſion for them; and laſt of all, to uſe Unwarrantable Means to help themſelves. Thus Satan dealt with Chriſt, and thus he deals with Chriſtians: For to work a Miracle at Satan's Direction, was not a Lawful Means of providing Food for himſelf.

4 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Obſerve here, The Weapon which our Saviour made uſe of to repel the Temptation, and to vanquiſh the Tempter; and that is the Word of God, *It is written*. *Learn*, That the Scriptures, or the Written Word of God, is the only ſure Weapon wherewith to vanquiſh Satan, and to beat back all his Fiery Temptations. Satan himſelf has not the impudence to oppoſe Scripture: What Monſters of Impiety then are they, who ridicule and deride them? They not only run counter to the Practice of Chriſt, but out do the Devil himſelf in Impudence.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and ſetteth him on a Pinacle of the Temple,

That is, Satan by God's Permiſſion took up his Body and carried it in the Air, and ſet it upon one of the Battlements of the Temple. *Learn hence*, 1. What a mighty Power Evil Spirits have over our Bodies, if God permits them to execute and exerciſe their Power upon them. 2. That it is owing to the gracious Care, and watchful Providence of God over us, that we are not hurried away bodily by Satan. Thanks be to God, tho' the Devils Malice be infinite, yet his Power is limited and bounded; as he cannot do all the Miſchief he would to the Bodies and Souls of Men, ſo he ſhall not do all he can. *Queſtion.* But why is the Holy City, and Holy Temple choſen by Satan to be the Scene of this Temptation? *Anſw.* I cannot tell, unleſs he apprehended, (as he might) that the Holineſs of the Place would aggravate the Sin. No Place ſo Sacred, no Duty ſo Holy as to protect us from Satan's Aſſaults. This Enemy purſues us even to the Horns of the Altar. Lord! How ought we at all times, and in all places to be uppon our Watch and Guard, eſpecially in thy preſence, becauſe then and there Satan is moſt active and buſie, and moſt deſirous to draw us into Sin.

6 And ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

Here we have *Obſervable*, Firſt the *Sin* which Satan tempts Chriſt unto: and next, the Argument, which he tempts him from: The Sin tempted to, is the Sin of Self-Murther, *Caſt thy ſelf down.* Whence we *Learn*, That Self-Murther is a Sin which Chriſt himſelf was, and the beſt of Saints may, by Satan be tempted to the Commiſſion of. But foraſmuch as Satan tempted Chriſt to murther himſelf, but had not Power to do it himſelf; do thou *caſt thy ſelf down*: We *Learn*, That tho' Satan may tempt, yet he cannot compel; he may entice, but cannot enforce any to Sin, without their own Conſent. *Obſ.* 2. The Argument which Satan uſes, it is a Scripture-Argument; he quotes the Promiſe of God, *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee:* What a Marvel is here, to find Satan with a Bible under his Arm, and a Text of Scripture in his Mouth? Chriſt had alledged Scripture before to Satan, here Satan retorts Scripture back again to Chriſt: *It is written*, ſays Chriſt; *It is written*, ſays Satan. *Learn thence*, That it is no wonder, to hear Hereticks and Hypocrites quote Scripture, when Satan himſelf durſt recite them: He that had prophanely touch'd the Sacred Body of Chriſt with his Hand, ſticks not preſumptuouſly to handle the Holy Scriptures of God with his Tongue. *Yet Obſerve*, How wretchedly the Devil wreſts, perverts, and miſapplies the Scriptures: When God promiſes his Angels ſhall keep us, it is *in Viis, non in Præcipitiis*; 'tis in all God's Ways, not in any of our own crooked Paths. *Note here*, That altho' the Children of God have the Promiſe of the Guardianſhip of Holy Angels, yet then only may they expect their Protection, when they are walking in the Way of their Duty, and uſing the Means for their own preſervation.

7 Jeſus ſaid unto him, It is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Obſerve here, Tho' the Devil had wreſted and abuſed Scripture, yet ſtill Chriſt alledges Scripture. The Abuſe of the Holy Scriptures by Hereticks and Seducers, is no Argument againſt the Uſe of them, we muſt not throw away our Bibles, becauſe the Devil quotes Scripture: But as Chriſt here compares *Scripture* with *Scripture*, ſo ſhould we, in order to the finding out the true *Senſe* and *Meaning* of it, for Scripture is the beſt Interpreter of it ſelf: Scripture is moſt clearly expounded by Scripture. This Satan knew full well, and therefore dares not make any further Reply.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: 9 And ſaith unto him, all theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.

The next *Sin* which Satan tempts our Saviour to, is the *Sin* of Idolatry, even to Worſhip the Devil himſelf. Oh thou impudent and Foul *Spirit*! To deſire thy Creator to Adore thee an Apoſtate Creature! Surely there can be no *Sin* ſo black and foul, ſo groſs and monſtrous, but that the Chriſtian may be tempted to it, when Chriſt himſelf was tempted to worſhip the Tempter. St. *Matthew* reads the Words, *If thou wilt fall down and worſhip me*; St. *Luke, If thou wilt worſhip before me.* Whence we may *gather*, (ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*,) That if to Worſhip before the Devil, be to Worſhip the Devil; then to Worſhip before an Image, is to Worſhip the Image. *Obſerve*, 2. The Bait which Satan makes uſe of to allure our Saviour to the Sin of Idolatry; and that was, in repreſenting to his Eye and View all the Glories of the World in the moſt inviting manner, and that in a Moment of Time; to the intent it might affect him the more and prevail the ſooner. *Learn thence*, That the Pomp and Greatneſs, the Glory and Grandeur of this World, is made uſe of by Satan, as a dangerous Snare to draw Men to a Compliance with him, in his Temptations unto Sin. When Satan ſets thee upon a Pinacle, look to thy ſelf.

10 Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

Obſerve here, 1. With what Zeal and Indignation of Spirit, our Bleſſed Saviour repels and beats back this Temptation of Satan, *Get thee hence. Note thence*, That the greater the Sins are which the Devil Tempts us to, the greater our Zeal and Indignation ought to be in oppoſing and reſiſting of the Temptation to them. A great Temptation muſt be withſtood with great Reſolution. *Obſerve*, 2. The Weapon with which he repels and beats back the Fiery Dart of Satan's Temptation, and that is, with the Shield of Scripture: *It is written, Thou ſhalt Worſhip the Lord thy God. Learn thence*, That GOD is the ſole Object of Religious Worſhip; it is ſo peculiarly the Creator's Due, that to give it to any Creature is groſs Idolatry, and repugnant to the Scriptures. No Creature is to pay Divine Adoration to any but his Creator; hence it appears that Chriſt is not a Creature, Divine Worſhip being given to him.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, Angels came and miniſtred unto him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Iſſue of this Combat; Satan is Conquered, and quits the Field; *Then the Devil leaveth him. Teaching us*, That nothing like a vigorous Reſiſtance of Temptation, cauſes the Tempter to flee from us; *Reſiſt the Devil and he will flee from you. Obſerve*, 2. Our Lord's Triumph over his Enemy; *Behold, Angels came and miniſtred unto him*; Food to his hungry Body, and Comfort to his Tempted Soul. They came no ſooner, leſt it ſhould be thought he needed their Aſſiſtance; they came now becauſe he was now pleaſed to make uſe of their Aſſiſtance. *Learn thence*, That thoſe who in the Hour of Temptation do hold out in reſiſting Satan, ſhall find the Power and Faithfulneſs of God will not be wanting to them, to ſend in Succour and Relief in the End.

12 Now when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came, and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the ſea-coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the Prophet, ſaying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The People which ſat in darkneſs, ſaw great light: and to them which ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour hearing of *John*'s Impriſonment, provides for his own Safety by departing into *Galilee*. As our Holy Lord avoided Perſecution, ſo may we. *Obſerve*, 2. The Place in *Galilee* he comes to, *Capernaum*. Chriſt had three Cities, which he called his own; *Nazareth*, where he was Bred; *Bethlehem*, where he was Born; and *Capernaum*, where he dwelt; this was a Sea-Coaſt Town in the Borders of *Zabulon* and *Nephthali. Obſerve*, 3. The Special Providence of God, in this Change of our Saviour's Habitation; for by that means the Prophecy, *Iſa.* 9. 1. was fulfilled; which declares, that in that dark part of the Country, the *Meſſiah* the true Light ſhould ſhine forth. *Learn hence*, 1. That a People deſtitute of the Saving Knowledge of the Goſpel, are in great Darkneſs, how great ſoever the Light of their Outward Comforts may be. This People had Natural Light enough, and Civil Light enough; they had an Abundance of Wealth and Riches, Peace and Plenty, but they wanted the Light of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, and therefore are ſaid to ſit in Darkneſs. 2. That where-ever the Goſpel is Preached amongſt a People, it is as a Light ſpringing up and ſhining forth amongſt them; quickning and enlivening, reviving and chearing the Souls of thoſe that entertain it, how great ſoever their outward Darkneſs and Diſtreſs may be. *The People that ſate in Darkneſs, ſaw great Light, and to them which ſate in the Region and Shadow of Death, Light is ſprung up*, &c.

17 From that time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Here our Saviour begins to enter upon his Prophetick Office, and by Preaching to make known the Will of God to Mankind; and *Obſerve*, The Doctrine which he Preached, is the ſame that *John* the Baptiſt did Preach, namely, the Doctrine of Repentance, *Repent ye*; and the Argument is the ſame alſo, *For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; that is, now is the ſo much expected time of the Appearing of the promiſed *Meſſiah. Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Ambaſſadors is alike, and the ſame in Subſtance: They both teach the Doctrine of Repentance to a loſt World, as moſt ſuitable to the Time and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel.

18 And Jeſus walking by the ſea of Galilee, ſaw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea, (for they were fiſhers) 19 And he ſaith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men. 20 And they ſtraightway left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he ſaw other two brethren, James the ſon of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ſhip with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ſhip, and their father, and followed him.

Our Bleſſed Saviour, as he was the Great Prophet of his Church, had Power and Authority to appoint Teachers under him; and accordingly here he begins to call his Apoſtles to that great Work; and in this Call, we have ſeveral Particulars very *obſervable*: As, 1. The Meanneſs of the Perſons whom he calls, Illiterate *Fiſher-men*; not a *Paul*, that had long Studied at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, is firſt called, but *Peter*, who was a Stranger to Eloquence and Humane Learning. Hereby our Saviour took effectual Care, that his Goſpel ſhould be known to be *the Power of God*, and not *the Wiſdom* and Device of Man; and that the Inſtrument ſhould not carry away the Glory of the Work. *Obſ.* 2. How our Saviour calls his Apoſtles by Couples, two and two, *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*; to let us underſtand, That the Work of the Miniſtry requires the Concurrence of all Hands that are called to it: All the Miniſters of God ſhould put their Hands, join their Hearts, and ſet their Shoulders as one Man, to this great Work; and all little enough, to carry it on with Advantage and Succeſs. *Obſ.* 3. The Work which they are called to, from being *Fiſher-men*, to be *Fiſhers of Men*: They catcht Fiſh before with the Labour of their Hands, they ſhall catch Men now, with the Labour of their Tongues. *Obſ.* 4. Our Saviour's Command; firſt, to follow him, before they are ſent out by him; *Follow me, and I will make you Fiſhers of Men*. We muſt be Chriſt's Diſciples, before we are his Miniſters; his Followers, before his Ambaſſadours. We muſt Learn Chriſt, before we Preach him; otherwiſe, we may Fiſh for a Livelihood, for Honour and Applauſe, but not for Souls: If we be not firſt incloſed our ſelves in the Net of the Goſpel, we can have but ſmall Hopes of bringing in of others. *Obſ.* 5. The Promiſe which Chriſt gives his Apoſtles for their Encouragement: 1. To Qualifie them, *I will make you Fiſhers*. 2. To ſucceed them, *I will make you Fiſhers of Men*. Faithfulneſs and Care, Diligence and Endeavour is our Part; but the Bleſſing and Succeſs is Chriſt's. Our Labour is only in the Caſt, Chriſt's Power is wholly in the Draught.

Some Fiſh cleave to the Rocks, others play upon Bp. *Hall*.
the Sands, and more wallow in the Mud; and we
ſhall labour all our Days, and catch nothing. If Chriſt doth not bring our Fiſh to Net, and incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the throwing of it. *Obſ.* 6. The Apoſtles ready Compliance with our Saviour's Call, *Straightway they followed him*. Whom Chriſt calls, he calls Perſwaſively and Effectually; whom he calls, he draws, and works them to a willing Compliance with their Duty. *Laſtly Obſerve*, Upon their Call to the Miniſtry, they leave off their Trade, they forſake *their Ship* and *their Nets*, and lie cloſe to the Miniſterial Employment. *Teaching us*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould wholly give themſelves to their Work, and not incumber themſelves with Secular Affairs; nothing but an indiſpenſible neceſſity in providing for a Family, can excuſe a Miniſter's entangling himſelf with Worldly Buſineſs.

23 And Jeſus went about all Galilee, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe among the people.

Our Saviour having called *Peter*, *James*, *Andrew* and *John*, to be Diſciples, in order to their being Apoſtles to Preach the Goſpel in the foregoing *Verſes*, this *Verſe* acquaints us how he went himſelf along with them in the Work; he did not ſend them forth as his Curates to Labour, and lye at Home himſelf upon his Couch at eaſe. What ſhall we ſay to thoſe lazy Fiſhermen, who can ſet others to the Drag, and care only to feed themſelves with the Fiſh, not willing to wet their Hands with the Net? Our Bleſſed Saviour, when he ſent forth his Apoſtles, went along with them, and laboured himſelf as much as any of them.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all ſick people that were taken with divers diſeaſes, and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with devils, and thoſe which were lunatick, and thoſe that had the palſie, and he healed them.

Obſerve here, 1. That altho' our Saviour's Doctrine needed no Confirmation beyond his own Authority, yet he was graciouſly pleaſed to exert the Power of his Godhead, in working Miracles for the Eſtabliſhment of our Faith. *Obſ.* 2. That the Miracles which Chriſt wrought were not Judicial, but Beneficial to Mankind: *Moſes* his Miracles were as great Judgments, as Wonders; but Chriſt's Miracles were Salubrious and Healing, full of Goodneſs and Compaſſion, and very Advantagious to the World: He diſpoſſeſt Devils, Healed the Sick, Cleanſed the Lepers, was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame. Oh Bleſſed Saviour! Thy Life in all Inſtances, was a Life of Univerſal Serviceableneſs, and Beneficialneſs to Mankind.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of the people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jeruſalem, aud from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

Obſerve here, How affecting our Saviour's Miniſtry was at firſt; Multitudes throng after him, they come from all Parts to attend upon his Miniſtry, when he firſt began to Preach amongſt them: His Miniſters find it thus alſo; at their firſt coming amongſt a People, their Labours are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt Good: Our Peoples Affections are then warmeſt, and our own Zeal perhaps is then greateſt. Happy is that Miniſter that improves all Opportunities and Advantages, for the Good of Souls: *For he that winneth Souls, is Wiſe.*

CHAP. V.

This Chapter *and the two next following, contain Chriſt's Famous Sermon upon the Mount, which comprehends the Sum and Subſtance both of the Old and New Teſtament. Our Saviour begins this his Sermon with a Declaration who are Bleſſed, including an Exhortation to Duty, and annexes a Reward to the Performance of that Duty. By this Sermon the Chriſtian World will be judged in the Laſt Day, and by the Particulars of it, we all muſt either ſtand or fall.*

1 AND ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſat, his diſciples came unto him. 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

Obſerve here, 1. The Preacher; *He*, that is, Chriſt, the Great Prophet and Teacher of his Church. 2. The Place where he Preached, *Upon a Mountain*; probably for Conveniency to Himſelf, and Advantage to his Auditors: Tho' ſome will have a Myſtery in it; that as the Law at firſt was given on a Mountain, ſo Chriſt would now explain it upon a Mountain, or to ſhew the Sublimity of his Doctrine and Precepts. 3. The Poſture in which he Preached, Sitting; *When he was ſet, he Taught*, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who ſat, to ſhew their Authority. *Obſerve*, 4. The Sermon it ſelf, which begins with Beatitudes and Bleſſings, and is accompanied with Promiſes of Reward: Not as the Law was delivered on Mount *Sinai* with Threatnings and Thunder, with Fire and Earthquake, but in a ſtill and ſoft Voice: Our Lord's Lips are full of Grace, they drop as the Honeycomb. Bleſſings and Promiſes are our Encouragements to Obedience.

3 Bleſſed *are* the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. It is not ſaid, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Eſtate*, but, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*; 'tis not a Poverty of Purſe and Poſſeſſion, but a Poverty of Spirit, that Entitles us to the Bleſſing. 2. 'Tis not ſaid, *Bleſſed are the Spiritually Poor*, but, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*: He that is deſtitute of the Grace and Spirit of Chriſt, that has no ſenſe of his Spiritual Wants, he is Spiritually Poor, but he is not *Poor in Spirit*. Farther, 3. 'Tis not ſaid, *Bleſſed are the Poor-Spirited*, but, *the Poor in Spirit*; ſuch as Act below and beneath themſelves as Men, and as Chriſtians, theſe are *Poor-Spirited* Men; but theſe are not *Poor in Spirit*. 4. 'Tis not ſaid, *Bleſſed are they that make themſelves Poor*, by leaving their Eſtates and Callings, and turning Beggars, as ſome do among the *Papiſts*: But Bleſſed are they whom the Goſpel makes Poor by giving them a ſight of their Spiritual Wants and Neceſſities, and directing them to Chriſt, that they may be made Rich. In Sum, not thoſe that are Poor in Eſtate, or thoſe whom the World has made Poor in Poſſeſſion, but thoſe whom the Goſpel has made Poor in Spirit, that is, the truly humble lowly Spirits, have a Right and Title to the Kingdom of Heaven. Now Humility is called Poverty of Spirit, becauſe it is the effect and fruit of God's Spirit.

4 Bleſſed *are* they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.

Obſerve here, 1. That Mourning for Sin is a Goſpel Duty; the Law allows no place for Repentance, tho' we ſeek it carefully with Tears. *Obſ.* 2. The Time and Seaſon for this Duty. Bleſſed are they that *Now* Mourn. Sorrow for Sin is Phyſick on Earth, but 'tis Food in Hell. Repentance is here a Grace, but there a Puniſhment. 3. As Mourning goes before Comfort, ſo Comfort ſhall follow after Mourning. Our Godly Sorrow for our own and others Sin, ſhall end in Everlaſting Joy and Comfort.

5 Bleſſed *are* the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth.

Obſerve here, 1. The Grace and Duty recommended, *Meekneſs*. 2. The Wages and Reward belonging to that Grace and Duty, *The Inheritance of the Earth*; *Meekneſs* either reſpects God, or our Neighbour. As it reſpects God, ſo it implies Flexibleneſs to his Commanding Will, and Submiſſiveneſs to his Providential Pleaſure. As it reſpects our Neighbour, it conſiſts in forgiving Injuries, bearing Reproaches, and recompencing Good for Evil. The Reward and Bleſſing inſured to this Grace and Duty is, the *Inheritance of the Earth*, where Heaven is not excluded, but included; yet the Earth is mentioned, to ſhew that Men ſhould be no Loſers by their Meekneſs, as to their Outward Eſtates; for Almighty God will make good to them, whatever they loſe for *Peace* ſake. Oh Happy Temper of Mind, that at once ſecure Heaven and Earth to boot! *Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth* in this Life, and Heaven in the next.

6 Bleſſed *are* they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

Obſ. 1. The Character of the Perſons whom Chriſt pronounces *Bleſſed*; ſuch as *Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs*. 2. Wherein their *Bleſſedneſs* doth conſiſt: *They ſhall be filled.* By *Righteouſneſs*, we are to underſtand, 1. A *Righteouſneſs* of *Juſtification*; the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator imputed to us, by which we ſtand *Righteous* in God's ſight, being freed from Condemnation. 2. A *Righteouſneſs* of *Sanctification*, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, enabling us to Act Righteouſly. By the former, there is a Relative Change in our Condition; by the latter, a Real Change in our Conſtitution. (1.) *Learn*, That all, and only ſuch as do Spiritually Hunger and Thirſt after Chriſt and his *Righteouſneſs*, are in an Happy and Bleſſed Condition. (2.) That to hunger after Holineſs, is to apprehend the worth of it; to be ſenſible of the want of it, to be deſirous of it, and reſtleſs in Endeavours after it, as Men uſually do that are pincht with Hunger.

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7 Bleſſed *are* the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy.

Here our Bleſſed *Redeemer* recommends to us a Compaſſionate Regard towards the Miſeries of Others, and that both in Soul and Body, Name and Eſtate; to be forward to *Pity* and *Pardon*, to *Relieve* and *Help*, to *Give* and *Forgive.* And as an Encouragement he adds, That as we deal with others, God will deal with us; our Charity towards Men, ſhall be Crowned with Mercy from G O D, and that in Abundance too; for our Rivulet of Charity, we ſhall partake of an Ocean of Mercy, *Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy. Learn*, That the Merciful Man is a Bleſſed Man, and therefore Bleſſed, becauſe he ſhall obtain Mercy, when he moſt wants it, and moſt deſires it. Mercy not Wages.

8 Bleſſed *are* the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God.

Note here, 1. The Duty required and called for, *Purity of Heart and Life*; the firſt expreſſed, the other included; for a clean Heart will be accompanied with a clean Life: Where there is a *Principle* of Grace within, there will be the *Actings* of Grace without. *Note*, 2. The Incentive to this Duty; the *Pure in Heart* and *Holy in Life*, ſhall *See* and *Enjoy* G O D; the infinitely *Pure*, and perfectly *Holy* G O D: They ſhall ſee him *Spiritually* and *Mediately* in this Life, *Gloriouſly* and *Immediately* in the Life to come.

9 Bleſſed *are* the Peace makers: for they ſhall be called the children of God.

Obſ. 1. The Connexion between *Peace* and *Purity*; *Purity of Heart* and *Peaceableneſs of Life* accompany one another; there is no *Inward Purity*, where there is not an Endeavour after *Outward Peace*. 2. The Duty exhorted to, namely, to Love *Peace*, and to Labour after *Peace*; to Love it our *ſelves*, and Promote it amongſt others; to be not only *Peaceable*, and *Peace-makers*. *Note*, 3. The Title of *Honour* that is here put upon ſuch as are of this *Peaceable* and *Peacemaking* Temper; they ſhall be called the *Children of God*; that is, they ſhall be reputed and eſteemed God's Children, for their likeneſs to him who is the *God of Peace*. And they ſhall be dignified and honoured with the *Priviledges* of *God's Children*; namely, *Grace* here, and *Glory* hereafter.

10 Bleſſed *are* they which are Perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Bleſſed *are* ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute *you*, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Note here, 1. That all the *Diſciples* and *Followers* of Chriſt, live they never ſo holily and Inoffenſively in the World, yet they expect *Suffering* and *Perſecution.* 2. That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt Edge of *Perſecution* is uſually turned againſt the Miniſters of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the Prophets of God. 3. That ſuch *Sufferings*, and ſuch *Perſecution* as will Afford a Man ſolid *Comfort*, and Entitle him to Real *Bleſſedneſs*, muſt be endured and undergone *for Righteouſneſs ſake.* 4. That it is the Will and Command of Chriſt, that thoſe which *Suffer* for Him and for Righteouſneſs ſake, ſhould not only be Meek and Patient, but Joyous and Chearful: *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad.* 5. That ſuch a Patient and chearful *Suffering* of *Perſecution* for Chriſt in this Life, ſhall certainly be Rewarded with the Glory and Bleſſedneſs of the Life that is to come. *Great is your Reward*, &c.

13 Ye are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be troden under foot of men.

Our Saviour compares Chriſtians in General, and his Miniſters in Particular, unto *Salt*, for a double Reaſon. Firſt, Becauſe it is the nature of *Salt*, to preſerve things from Corruption and Putrefaction, and to render them Savoury and Pleaſant. Thus are the Miniſters of the Goſpel to labour and endeavour by the Purity of their Doctrine, to ſweeten putrifying Sinners, that they may become ſavoury to God and Man; and may be kept from being Flyblown with Errors and Falſe Doctrine. Secondly, becauſe *Salt* has a piercing Power in it, which ſubdues the whole Lump, and turns into its own Nature: Such a piercing Power is there in the Miniſtry of the Word, that it ſubdues the whole Man to the Obedience of it ſelf, as if Chriſt had ſaid, Ye are to be Preachers and Patterns to the World. Ye are appointed by your pure Doctrine, and good Converſation, to purge the World from that Corruption in which it lies; but if you loſe either Soundneſs of Doctrine, or the Savour of a good Converſation you will be wholly Uſeleſs, as to theſe great Ends, and muſt expect to be caſt off by me as Unſavoury Salt is caſt to the Dunghil.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill, cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a Candle, and put it under a Buſhel: but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe. 16 Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.

Obſ. here, 1. Our Saviour's Doctrine. 2. The Inference which he draws from it, by way of *Application.* The Doctrine delivered is this, That *Chriſtians* in general, and the *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel* in particular, are the *Light of the World.* But how? Not Originally, but Derivatively: not Efficiently, but Inſtrumentally. Chriſt himſelf is the *Light of the World* by way of Original, his Miniſters are *Lights* by way of Derivation and Participation from him. Farther, Chriſt teaches them the End why he communicated *Light* unto them, namely to inlighten, direct, and quicken others: Even as the Sun in the Firmament, and a Candle in the Houſe, diffuſes and diſperſes its Light to all that are within the reach of it; ſo ſhould all Chriſtians, and particularly Chriſt's Miniſters, by the Light of Life and Doctrine, direct People in their Way towards Heaven. *Obſ.* 2. The Inference which our Saviour draws from the foregoing Doctrine; *Ye are the Light of the World*, therefore, *Let your Light ſhine before Men.* Where *Note*, 1. That our *Good Works* muſt ſhine, but not blaze; all Vain-glory and Oſtentation muſt be avoided in the *Good Works* we do. 2. Altho' we muſt abound in *Good Works*, that Men may ſee them, yet not to be ſeen of Men. 3. That the *Glorifying* of God, and doing *Good* to Mankind, muſt be the great End we propound in all the *Good Works* which we perform.

17 Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.

Our Saviour here informs his *Followers*, That he had no Deſign to Abrogate any part of the *Moral Law*, or to Looſe Mankind from the leaſt Meaſure of their *Duty*, either towards *God* or *Man*; but that he came *to Fulfil it.* 1. By yielding a *Perſonal Obedience to it.* 2. By giving a fuller and ſtricter *Interpretation* of it, than the *Phariſees* were wont to give; for they taught that the Law did only reach the outward Man, and reſtrain outward Actions. As if Chriſt had ſaid, tho, I preach a more Special Doctrine than is contained even in the letter of the Moral Law, yet think not that I came to deſtroy or diſſolve the Obligation of that Law, for I came to fulfil the Types and Predictions of the Prophets, and to give you the full Senſe, and Spiritual Import of the Moral Law.

18 For verily I ſay unto you, Till Heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Another *Reaſon* is here given by our Saviour, why he had no intention to Abrogate or Aboliſh the Law; and that is drawn from the *Duration* and *Perpetuity*, the *Unchangeableneſs* and *Immutability* of the *Law*: Sooner ſhall Heaven and Earth be aboliſhed, than the *Authority* and *Obligation* of the *Moral Law* be diſſolved. (1.) *Learn*, That the Law of God is an Eternal and Unchangeable Rule of Life and Manners, and is to ſtand in Force as long as the World ſtands, and the Frame of the Heaven and Earth endures. *Learn*, (2.) That Chriſtianity is not contrary to the Laws by which Mankind had formerly been obliged. Chriſt commands nothing that the Natural or Moral Law had forbidden, and forbids nothing which they had commanded, but has perfected the Law, and ſet it higher than any of the moſt ſtudied Doctors did think themſelves formerly obliged by it. To ſuppoſe that Chriſt has added to the Moral Precepts of the firſt Table, is to ſuppoſe that he has added to Perfection; for that required the *Jew* to love God with all his Heart, Soul, and Strength: Which is the ſame that

Chriſt Requireth of us Chriſtians here. Nor has Chriſt added to the Duties of the Second Table, ſince that requires us to love our Neighbour as our ſelves, which St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 13. 9. is the fulfilling of the Law.

19 Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach *them*, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

To evidence yet farther, that the Moral Law is a perfect Rule of Life, our Saviour tells his Diſciples, That if any of them did either by their Doctrine or Practice, make void any one of the leaſt of God's Commands, either by allowing themſelves in the Omiſſion of any known Duty, or in the Commiſſion of any known Sin, they ſhould never enter into the Kingdom of God. *Learn*, That ſuch a *Profeſſor of Chriſtianity* as allows himſelf in the leaſt *Voluntary Tranſgreſſion*, either of *Omiſſion* or *Commiſſion*, and encourages others by his Example to do the like, is certainly in a State of *Damnation*.

20 For I ſay unto you, That except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed *the righteouſneſs* of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. A Glorious Prize or Reward ſet before the Chriſtian, as attainable; namely, *The Kingdom of Heaven*. 2. The Means required, in order to our obtaining of this Prize, and laying hold of this Reward; we muſt be Holy and Righteous Perſons: Heaven is the Reward of Righteouſneſs, a Reward conferred only upon Righteous Perſons. 3. Here is the Special Qualification of that Righteouſneſs expreſſed, which will Intitle us to Heaven and Salvation: It muſt be a Righteouſneſs which *Exceeds the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*, and that theſe Three Ways. 1. In its Principle and Motive; Love to God, and Obedience to his Command; not the Applauſe and Commendation of Men. 2. In its Aim and End. The *Phariſees* made themſelves, their own Credit and Eſteem, their Worldly Gain and Intereſt, their Ultimate End, and not God's Glory, their ſupreme Aim. 3. In the manner of Performance; the *Phariſees* Duty wanted that Purity and Spirituality which the Law of God required; they had reſpect only to the Outward Action, without any regard to the inward Intention, and to that Purity of Heart which God required. *Queſtion*, In what Things are we to exceed the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. *Anſwer*, In *Sincerity*, or by being that within which we ſeem to be without. In *Simplicity*, or having Holy Ends in our Religious Actions. In *Humility*, or having low and humble Thoughts of our ſelves, and our beſt performances. In *Charity*, or having compaſſion on all diſtreſſed Perſons. In *Univerſality* of *Obedience* to all Commands. *Learn*, That Holineſs of Heart, and Righteouſneſs of Life, which God's Law requires of us, is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Salvation.

21 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. 22 But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Raca, ſhall be in danger of the counſel: but whoſoever ſhall ſay thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire.

Here our Bleſſed Saviour begins to expound the Spiritual Senſe and Meaning of the Law, and to Vindicate it from the corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*: Where *Obſerve*, Chriſt doth not deliver a New Law, but expounds then Old, doth not Injoin New Duties, but Inforces the Old Ones. The Law of God was always perfect, requiring the Sons of Men to Love God with all their Hearts, and their Neighbour as themſelves. In this Expoſition of the Law, Chriſt begins with the Sixth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not Kill*: Where he ſhews, That beſides the actual taking away of Life, a Perſon may violate that Command. 1. By Raſh Anger. 2. By Diſgraceful and Reviling Words. *Thence Learn*, That every Evil Motion of our Hearts againſt our Neighbour conſented to, all unjuſt Anger towards him, all Terms of Contempt put upon him, are forbidden by the Law of God, no leſs than the groſs Act of Murther it ſelf. *Learn*, (2.) That Wrath and Anger without juſt Cauſe, hath its Degrees; and according to the Degrees of the Sin, will the Degrees of Puniſhment be proportionable in the next World. *Learn*, (3.) That Self-Murther is here forbidden, and in no caſe lawful, Man having no more Power over his own Life, than over anothers; tho' Life be never ſo Miſerable and Painful, yet muſt we wait God's Time for our Diſmiſſion and Releaſe.

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him: leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon. 26 Verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.

For preventing the Sin of raſh Anger, which in our Saviour's Account is a Degree of Murder, he exhorts all his Diſciples and Followers to Brotherly Agreement, and to ſeek Mutual Reconciliation with each other. *Agree with thine Adverſary*: That is, thy offended, or offending Brother: *Agree with him*, as becomes a Man; *Quickly*, as becomes a Chriſtian: Implying, that it is a neceſſary Duty for every Chriſtian to ſeek Reconciliation ſincerely and ſpeedily, with ſuch as have offended him, or have been offended by him. *Obſ.* 2. The Argument or Motive with which Chriſt enforces his Exhortation to Brotherly Reconciliation; drawn from the Peril and Danger of the Neglect; and this is Twofold: The Firſt reſpects our preſent Duties and Services, when we wait upon God at his Altar, and attend upon him in Holy Offices. None of our Performances will find Acceptance with God, if there be found Malice and Hatred, Anger and Ill-will againſt our Brother. *Learn*, That no Sacrifice we can offer will be acceptable to God, ſo long as we our ſelves are Implacable to Men. A Second Danger reſpects us, when we appear before God in Judgment; then God will be our Adverſary, Chriſt our Judge, Satan our Accuſer, Hell our Tormentor; *If now from the Heart we do not every one of us forgive our Brother his Treſpaſſes*. Lord: How heinous then, is this Sin of inveterate Anger, Hatred, and Malice in our Hearts againſt any Perſon, no Gift tho' never ſo coſtly, no Devotions tho' never ſo ſpecious, will prevail with God to paſs it by, whilſt we live; and if we die with Hearts full of this Rancour and Bitterneſs, we can never expect to be incircled in the Arms of him who is all Love, all Mercy, all Goodneſs, and Compaſſion; no Reconciliation with God without an hearty good will to all Men. Nay farther, The Text here ſpeaks of a Priſon, which is the diſmal Dungeon of Hell, into which the implacable and unreconciled Perſon muſt be caſt, and lie for ever without Mixture of Pity; and it is not Men's Scoffing at it, that ſecure them againſt the Horror of it.

27 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. 28 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Our Saviour next proceeds to Explain the Seventh Commandment, which forbids Adultery; by which the *Phariſees* underſtood, only the groſs Act of Uncleanneſs, and carnal Lying with a Woman. But, ſays our Saviour, Whoever ſecretly in his Heart deſires ſuch a thing, and caſts his Eye upon a Woman in order to ſuch an Act, entertaining only a Thought of it with Pleaſure and Delight, he is an Adulterer in God's Account. *Learn*, That ſuch is the Purity and Spirituality of the Law of God, that it condemns ſpeculative Wantonneſs, no leſs than Practical Uncleanneſs; and forbids not only the outward Action, but the ſecret Purpoſe and Intention, and firſt Out-goings of the Soul after unlawful Objects.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for

thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.

Our Saviour had condemned Ocular Adultery in the foregoing *Verſe*, or the Adultery of the Eye; *He that looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her in his Heart.* Whence *Note*, That the Eye is an Inlet to Sin, eſpecially the Sin of Uncleanneſs: Luſt enters the Heart at the Window of the Eye. Now in theſe *Verſes* Chriſt preſcribes a Remedy for the Cure of this Eye-Malady; *If thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out:* Which is not to be underſtood Literally, as if Chriſt commanded any Man to maim his Bodily Members; but Spiritually, to Mortifie the Luſts of the Fleſh, and the Luſts of the Eye, which otherwiſe will prove a dangerous Snare to the Soul. *Learn*, 1. That Sin may be avoided; it is our Duty to avoid whatſoever leads to it, or may be an Occaſion of it; if we find the View of an Inſnaring Object will Inflame us, we muſt, tho' not put out our Eye, yet make a Covenant with our Eye, that we will not look upon it. *Note*, 2. That the beſt Courſe we can take to be kept from the Outward Acts of Sin, is to Mortifie our Inward Affection and Love to Sin. This is to Kill it in the Root; and if once our Inward Affections be mortified, our Bodily Members may be ſpared and preſerved; for they will no longer be Weapons of Sin but Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs.

31 It hath been ſaid, whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. 32 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery: and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

Our Bleſſed Saviour ſtill proceeds in vindicating and Clearing the Seventh Commandment from the corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*. Almighty God hath tolerated the *Jews* in Caſe of Uncleanneſs to put away their Wives, by a Bill of Divorce, *Deut.* 24. *v.* 1. Hereupon the *Phariſees* maintained it Lawful to put away the Wife upon every ſlight Occaſion. This Abuſe Chriſt corrects, and ſhews, That Divorce, except in Caſe of Adultery, is a certain Breach of the Seventh Commandment. *Learn*, 1. That ſo Indiſſoluble is the Marriage-Covenant betwixt Two Perſons, that nothing but Adultery, which Violates the Bands of Marriage, can diſſolve or diſannul it. 2. When Perſons are juſtly put away, it is unlawful for them to Marry to any other, or for others knowingly to Marry to them.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. 34 But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great king. 36 Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black.

The next Commandment which our Saviour Expounds and Vindicates, is the Third, which requires a Reverent Uſe of God's Name. Now the *Phariſees* taught that Perjury was the only Breach of this Commandment; and that Swearing was nothing, if they did not Forſwear themſelves: And that Perſons were only obliged to Swear by the Name of God in Publick Courts of Juſtice, bur in their ordinary and common Diſcourſe they might ſwear by any of the Creatures. Now in oppoſition to theſe Wicked Principles and Practices, Chriſt ſays, *Swear not at all*: That is 1. Swear not Prophanely in your ordinary Diſcourſe. 2. Swear not Unduly by any of the Creatures; for that is to aſcribe a Deity to them. 3. Swear not Lightly, upon any Trifling or Frivolous Occaſion; for Oaths upon ſmall Occaſions, are great Sins: So that an Oath is not here forbidden by our Saviour, but reſtrained. For tho' light and needleſs, common and ordinary Swearing be a very great Sin; yet to take an Oath upon a Solemn Occaſion, when Lawfully called thereunto, is a Chriſtian and Neceſſary Duty. Chriſt by this Prohibition doth not forbid all Swearing as a thing abſolutely evil; nor doth he forbid all Aſſertory or Promiſſory Oaths in matters Teſtimonial, when impoſed by the Magiſtrate, for Chriſt himſelf when adjured by the High-Prieſt, did Anſwer upon Oath. But he forbids all voluntary Oaths in common Converſation, and in our ordinary Diſcourſe, becauſe an Oath is an Act of Religious Worſhip: Therefore to Trifle with it, is an horrid Provocation.

37 But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil.

Here our Lord preſcribes a proper Means and Remedy for ſhunning the Occaſion and Danger of Raſh Swearing; and that is by uſing and accuſtoming our ſelves in Converſation, to a true Simplicity, and conſtant Plainneſs of Speech; either Affirming or Denying, according to the Nature of the thing; letting Oaths alone, till we are called to them upon great Occaſions, for ending Strife between Man and Man. *Learn*, That the great End of Speech being to Communicate the Senſe of our Minds each to other, we ought to uſe ſuch Plainneſs and Simplicity in Speaking, that we may believe one another without Oaths, or more Solemn and Religious Aſſeverations.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I ſay unto you, That ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other alſo. 40 And if any man will ſue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak alſo. 41 And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Our Saviour here Vindicates the Sixth Commandment, which obliges us to do no Wrong to the Body of our Neighbour. God had given a Law to the Publick Magiſtrate, to require an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, when a Perſon was wronged: Hereupon the *Phariſees* taught, That a private Perſon wronged by another, might exact Satiſfaction from him to the ſame degree, in which he had been Wronged by him; if he had loſt an Eye by another, he might revenge it, by taking away the Eye of another. But ſays Chriſt, *I ſay unto you, reſiſt not Evil*; that is, ſeek not private Revenge, but leave the Avenging of Injuries to God and the Magiſtrate; and in trivial Matters not to appeal at all, and when forced not for Revenge ſake. *Teaching us*, That Chriſtians ought rather to ſuffer a double Wrong, than to ſeek a private Revenge; Chriſtianity obliges us to bear many Injuries patiently, rather than to revenge one privately. Religion, indeed doth not bid us invite Injuries, but it Teaches us to bid them welcome: We are not to return Evil for Evil, but are rather to endure a greater Evil than Revenge a leſs.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away.

Our Saviour here preſſes the Law of Charity upon his Diſciples: This is Twofold; a Charity in Giving to them that Beg, and a Charity in Lending to them that deſire to Borrow: Chriſtianity obliges all thoſe which have Ability, to abound in Works of Charity of all ſorts and kinds whatſoever. He that is truly Charitable doth not only Give, but Lend; yea, ſometimes Lends, looking for nothing again; It is not enough to act Charity of one ſort, but we muſt be ready to act it in every kind, and to the higheſt Degree that our Circumſtances and Abilites will admit. Giving is a Godlike thing, he is the giver of every Good and Perfect Gift; he Gives before we Ask; and we muſt imitate God in giving; namely, by giving what we give Chearfully, Sincerely, Diſcreetly, Proportionably, Univerſally in obedience to God's Command, and with an Eye at his Glory. And there is ſometimes as great Charity in Lending as there is in Giving; many a Poor Family by our lending them a ſmall matter, may raiſe themſelves into a Condition to Live Comfortably and Honeſtly in the World.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou
ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:
44 But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them
that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and
pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſe-
cute you:

Another corrupt Gloſs which the *Phariſees* had put upon the Law of God, our Saviour here takes notice of: The Law ſaid, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour*, Levit. 19. 18. this they interpreted, to relate only to their own Country-men the *Jews*; concluding, that they might hate all the Uncircumciſed Nations, as Enemies: But, ſaith our Saviour, I require you to love all Men; for if Enemies muſt not be ſhut out of our Love, none muſt. *Love your Enemies*; here the inward Affection is required, *Bleſs them that Curſe you*; there outward Civility and Affability is required. *Do good to them that hate you*: here real Acts of Kindneſs and Charity are commanded to be done by us to our bittereſt and moſt malicious Enemies. *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*: Theſe are the higheſt Expreſſions of Enmity that can be, Calumny and Cruelty; yet are we commanded to Pray for thoſe that touch us in theſe two tendereſt Points, our Reputation, and our Life. *Learn*, That Chriſtianity obliges us to bear a ſincere Affection towards our moſt malicious Enemies; to be ready upon all Occaſions to do Good unto them, and to Pray for them.

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.

To encourage us to the foregoing Duty of Loving our Enemies, our Saviour propounds the Example of God himſelf to our Imitation, *That you may be the Children of your Father*; that is, that you may be known to be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, by your likeneſs to him, and imitation of him. *Note*, That the beſt Evidence we can have of our Divine Sonſhip, is our Conformity to the Divine Nature, eſpecially in thoſe Excellent Properties of Goodneſs and Forgiveneſs. *Note*, 2. That God doth Good to them that are continually doing evil unto him. Rain and Sun, Fat and Sweet, Gold and Silver, are ſuch good Things as their Hearts and Houſes are filled with, who are altogether empty of Grace and Goodneſs.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what re-
ward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame?
47 And if ye ſalute your brethren only, what do you
more *than others*? do not even the Publicans ſo?

Yet farther to encourage us to this Duty of Loving our Enemies, Chriſt aſſures his Diſciples, that he expects more from them, than from others; more than common Humanity and Civil Courteſie towards Friends; for even Heathens by the Light of Nature were taught to love thoſe that love them: But he expected that Chriſtianity ſhould teach them better, and lead them farther, even, *To love their Enemies, and to bleſs them that curſe them.* Note, Love for Love is Juſtice: Love for no Love is Favour and Kindneſs; but Love for Hatred and Enmity, is Divine Goodneſs; a Chriſt-like Temper, which will render us Illuſtrious on Earth, and Glorious in Heaven. But, Lord! How do Men continue their Love to little Sects and Parties? And from thence comes that Bitterneſs of Spirit of one Party towards another; and Oh! How hard is it to find a Chriſtian of a truly Catholick Love and Temper?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

That is, Aim at Perfection in all Chriſtian Virtues and Divine Graces, but particularly, in this of Love; in Imitation of your Heavenly Father, who is the perfect Pattern of all deſirable Goodneſs, and adorable Perfections. *To be perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect*, is indeed impoſſible, as to Equality, but not as to imitation. The Word rendred here *Perfect*, by St. *Matthew*, is elſewhere by St. *Luke*, rendred *Merciful*, Luke 6. 36. Implying, That Charity is the Perfection of a Chriſtian's Graces: He that is made perfect in Love, is perfect in all Divine Graces, in the Account of God. *Learn*, 1. That there is no ſtanding ſtill in Religion, but he that will be ſaved muſt preſs on towards Perfection. *Learn*, 2. That no leſs than perfect and compleat Perfection in Grace, and particularly in the Grace of Love and Charity, is, and ought to be the Aim of every Chriſtian in this Life, and ſhall be his Attainment in the next.

CHAP. VI.

This Chapter is a Continuation of our Saviour's Incomparable Sermon upon the Mount, in which he cautions his Diſciples againſt the Hypocriſie and Vain-Glory of the Phariſees, *both in their Almſgiving and Prayers: The former in the firſt Four Verſes of this Chapter, which ſpeak thus:*

1 TAKE heed that you do not your alms be-
fore men, to be ſeen of them: otherwiſe ye
have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.
2 Therefore, when thou doeſt thine alms, do not ſound
a trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the ſy-
nagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory
of men. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward.
3 But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand
know what thy right hand doth: 4 That thine alms
may be in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret,
himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

Obſerve here, 1. The Duty directed to, Almſgiving after a right manner; *Do not your Alms before Men*, ſome Copies read it, *Do not your Righteouſneſs before Men*: Becauſe Almſgiving is a conſiderable part of that Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, which we owe unto our Neighbour; he that is Uncharitable, is Unjuſt: Acts of Charity, are Acts of Juſtice and Equity. It alſo intimates to us, That the Matter of our Alms ſhould be Goods righteouſly gotten; to give Alms of what is gotten unjuſtly is Robery, and not Righteouſneſs. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Saviour's cautionary Direction in giving of Alms, *Take heed that you do them not to be ſeen of Men.* It is one thing to do our Alms that Men may ſee them, and another thing to do them that we may be ſeen of Men. We ought to do Alms before Men, that GOD may be glorified; but *Not to be ſeen of Men*, that our ſelves may be applauded. *Obſerve* 3. The particular Sin, which our Saviour warns his Diſciples againſt in giving their Alms, namely, Oſtentation and Vainglory, which the *Phariſees*, were notoriouſly guilty of; *Sounding a Trumpet*, to call people about them when they gave their Alms. *Thence Learn*, That the doing any Good Work, eſpecially any Work of Charity and Mercy vain gloriouſly, and not with an Eye at God's Glory, will certainly miſs of the Reward of Well-doing in another World. *Obſ.* 4. The Advice given by our Saviour for the Prevention of this Sin and Danger; and that is, to do our Alms as ſecretly as we can; *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth*: That is, conceal it from thy neareſt Relations, and if poſſible, from thy Self. *Note thence*, That the Secrecy of our Charity is one good Evidence of its Sincerity. Hence the *Egyptians* made the Emblem of Charity to be a Blind Boy, reaching out Honey to a Bee thad had loſt her Wings.

5 And when thou Prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as
the Hypocrites are: for they love to pray ſtanding
in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets
that they may be ſeen of men. Verily, I ſay unto
you, they have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou
Prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt
ſhut thy door, Pray to thy Father which is in ſecret,
and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee
openly.

Here our Saviour warns his Diſciples againſt the ſame Phariſaical Hypocriſy in Praying, which he had before reproved in Almſ-giving. It was Lawful to pray in the Synagogues, and to Pray ſtanding, and that before Men; but to do this upon deſign to be Applauded by Men, is condemned by Chriſt. Our Buſineſs in Prayer lies with God, we are not to concern our ſelves, how Men like our Performances; it is ſufficient, if God doth approve, and will accept them. To cure the foregoing Vanity, Chriſt directs to Secret Prayer, in our Cloſets, where God is the Witneſs, and will be the Rewarder of our Sincerity. *Note*, That Secret Prayer is a commanded and encouraged Duty, and when in Sincerity performed, ſhall be attended with a publick and glorious Reward: *Pray to thy Father which is in ſecret,* &c.

7 But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

A Vain-Glorious Oſtentation in Prayer was condemned by our Saviour in the former *Verſe*; here a Vain-Glorious Multiplication of Words, by idle Tautologies, and impertinent Repetitions, is condemned alſo: After the manner of the Heathen, who expect to have their Prayers granted by God for the multiplicity of Words uſed by themſelves. *Hence Note,* That a Chriſtian's Buſineſs in Prayer being not to inform God, (*For he knoweth what things we need, before we ask him*;) nor yet to move and perſwade God, (for he is *Our Father*;) it certainly argues an undue Apprehenſion of God, when we lengthen out our Prayers with vain Repetitions and a multitude of Words. Yet, *Note,* 1. That it is not all Repetition of the ſame Words in Prayer, which Chriſt here condemns, for he he himſelf Prayed thrice, uſing the ſame Words, that the Cup might might paſs from him. Nor, 2. Are we to apprehend that Prayers continued to a conſiderable length are forbidden by Chriſt; for *Solomon*'s Prayer was ſuch, 1 *King.* 8. *Nehemiah*'s ſuch, *Chap.* 9. 'Tis ſaid the People Confeſſed and Worſhipped for three Hours: Chriſt continued in Prayer all Night, and the Church, *Act.* 12. made Prayers without ceaſing, for St. *Peter*'s Enlargement. And we read of St. *Paul*'s Praying Night and Day, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. and of his commanding the Churches to be inſtant in Prayer, and to continue in Prayer. But Chriſt here condemns Prayers lengthned out upon an Apprehenſion that we ſhall be heard for our much Speaking, or can move God by Arguments whilſt we continue in our Sins. Dr. *Whitby.*

9 After this manner therefore pray ye:

As if Chriſt had ſaid, for preventing theſe and all other Faults in Prayer, I will my ſelf give you a Compleat Form of Prayer, and an exact Pattern and Platform for your Imitation when you Pray. *Note,* That the Lord's Prayer is both a perfect Form of Prayer which ought to be uſed by us, and alſo a Pattern and Platform, according to which all our Prayers ought to be framed. St. *Matthew* ſays, *After this manner Pray ye*, St. *Luke* ſays, *When ye Pray, ſay,*

9 Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Senſe and Signification of this beſt of Prayers, is this: *Oh thou our Father in* Jeſus Chriſt! *Who remaineſt in thy Throne in Heaven, and art there perpetually Praiſed, and perfectly obeyed by Glorious Angels and Glorified Saints; Grant that Thy Name may be Glorified, Thy Throne Acknowledged, and Thy Holy Will obeyed here on Earth below, by us thy Sons and Servants, moſt ſincerely and readily, and in ſome proportion to what is done in Heaven. And becauſe by reaſon of the Frailty of our Natures, we cannot ſubſiſt without the Comforts and Supports of Life, We crave, That ſuch a Proportion of the good Things of this Life may be given unto us, as may be ſufficient for us; and that we may be content with our Allowance. And knowing that thy Holineſs and Juſtice obliges thee to Puniſh Sin and Sinners, we plead with thee, for the Sake of thy Son's Satisfaction, to Pardon to us our daily Treſpaſſes which we are guilty of in this State of Imperfection; as we do freely and heartily Forgive others that have offended and wronged us. And ſeeing that by reaſon of the Frailty of our Natures, we are prone to ruſh upon, and run into Temptation; we crave, That by the Power of thy Omnipotent Grace, we may be kept from Satan's Temptation, from the World's Allurements, from our own Evil Inclinations, and be preſerved unblamable to thine Everlaſting Kingdom; which is exalted over all Perſons, over all Places, over all Things, in all Times, paſt, preſent, and to come: And accordingly, in Teſtimony of our Deſires, and in Aſſurance to be Heard and Anſwered, we ſay Amen. So be it, So let it be, Even ſo, O Lord, let it be for ever.* More particularly, In this Comprehenſive and Compendious Prayer, the following Severals are Remarkable. Namely, (1.) That the Learned obſerve, That this Prayer is taken out of the *Jewiſh* Liturgies, in which it is entirely found, excepting thoſe Words, *As we forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt us.* From whence *Grotius* Notes, How far Chriſt the Lord of his Church was from affecting Novelties, or deſpiſing any thing becauſe it was a Form; a piece of piteous Weakneſs amongſt ſome at this Day. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Perſon to whom Chriſt directs us to make our Prayers; namely, to God, under the Notion of a *Father,* Teaching us, That in all our Religious Addreſſes to God, we are to conceive of him and Pray unto him, under the Notion and Relation of a Father; *Our Father,* &c. So he is by Creation, by a Right of Providence and Preſervation, by Redemption, by outward and viſible Profeſſion, by Regeneration and Adoption; and this Relation which God ſtands in to us, may encourage us to Pray unto him; for being our Father, we are ſure that he is of eaſie Acceſs unto, and graciouſly ready to grant what we Pray for; and whereas it is added, *which art in Heaven,* This is not ſo to be underſtood as if his Eſſence were included, or his Preſence circumſcribed and confined there, for he fills Heaven and Earth with the Immenſity of it; but he is ſaid to be in Heaven, becauſe there is the ſpecial Manifeſtation of his Preſence, of his Purity, of his Power and Glory, and Teaches us with what Holy Fear, with what humble Reverence, and not without a Trembling Veneration, Polluted Duſt ought to make the ſolemn Approaches to the God of Heaven. *Obſerve,* (3.) That the Three firſt Petitions relate more immediately to God. (1.) That his *Name, may be Hallowed,* by the Name of God, underſtand God himſelf, as made known to us in his Attributes, Words, and Works. This Name is Hallowed or Sanctified by us Three Ways; by our Lips, when we acknowledge his Divine Perfections, and tell of all his wondrous Works; in our Hearts, by entertaining ſuitable Conceptions of God; and in our Lives, when the Conſideration of theſe Divine Perfections engage us to ſuitable Obedience. (2.) That his *Kingdom* may *come,* by which we are not to underſtand his General and Providential Kingdom, by which he Ruleth over all the World, that being always come, and capable of no farther Amplification; but principally the Kingdom of Grace promoted in the Hearts of his People by the Preaching of the Goſpel, we Pray that God would Dethrone Sin and Satan in our own and others Souls, and encreaſe Grace and Sanctification both in us and them, and that the Kingdom of Glory may be haſtned, and we may be preſerved Blameleſs to the Coming of Chriſt in his Kingdom. (3.) That his *Will* may be *done,* by which the Preceptive rather than the Providential Will of God, is to be underſtood, we are to Obey the Former univerſally, and to ſubmit to the Latter very chearfully; it intimates, that it ought to be the Prayer and Care, the Study and Endeavour of every Chriſtian, that the Commanding Will of God may be ſo done by Men upon Earth, as it is by the Glorified Saints, and Glorious Angels done in Heaven; namely, with that Alacrity and Chearfulneſs, with that Speed and Readineſs, with that Conſtancy and Diligence, that the Imperfection of Humane Nature will admit of; imitating the Bleſſed Angels, who execute the Divine Commands without Reluctancy or Regret. *Obſerve,* (4.) The Three laſt Petitions reſpect our Selves, as the Three former did Almighty God. The firſt of which is a Prayer for Temporal Bleſſings. *Give us this Day our Daily Bread,* where Note; the Mercy Pray'd for, *Bread,* which comprehends all the Comforts and Conveniences of Life, and whatever is neceſſary for the ſupporting Humane Nature. Alſo the Qualification, it muſt be our *own* Bread, not anothers, what we have a Civil Right to as Men, and a Covenant Right to as Chriſtians. *Note farther,* The kind of Bread we aſk and deſire, it is *daily* Bread, hereby we are put in Mind of our continual Dependance upon God for our Lives, and for all the Supports of Life which we enjoy, and alſo kept in Mind of our Mortality; and mark the Way and Manner of conveying all Good Things to us, it is in a way of Free Gift. *Give* us our daily Bread, we cannot give it our ſelves, and when we have it of God, we receive it not as a Debt, but as a free Gift. The next Petition is for Spiritual Bleſſings, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* Where, *Note,* (1.) Some things ſuppoſed; namely, That we are all Sinners, and as ſuch, ſtand in need of Pardon and Forgiveneſs. (2.) That our Sins are Debts, Wilful Debts, Repeated Debts, Innumerable Debts, Inexcuſable Debts, Debts difficultly diſcharged, and yet if undiſcharged, undoing Debts. (3.) That we are obliged to Pray every Day for daily Pardon, as we do for daily Bread, for our Sins are many and daily. (4.) It is here ſuppoſed, that ſince we are to Pray for Forgiveneſs of Sin, it is impoſſible ever to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God for Sin. *Laſtly Note*, The Condition or Qualification required, *forgive as we forgive*: This requires, (1.) That our Minds be full of Charity, free from Rancour and Ill Will, and all Deſires of Revenge, and a ſecret grudge againſt another. (2.) That we ſtand ready to help them, and do any Office of Love and Service for them that have offended us. (3.) That we admit our offending Brother into Friendſhip and Familiarity, which is called, a *forgiving him from the Heart*, our Heart muſt be towards him as formerly it was. The Sixth and laſt Petition follows, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. Here Note*, A double Mercy Prayed for; namely, preventing Mercy, and delivering Mercy. (1.) Preventing Mercy, *Lead us not into Temptation*, hereby it is ſuppoſed, (1.) That we are unable to keep our ſelves from Temptation, partly thro' our Natural Depravity, partly thro' Carnal Security. (2.) That it is God that muſt keep us from Satan's Aſſaults, his Traps and Snares, which every where he lays in Ambuſh for us. (3.) That it is our own daily Duty to be earneſt and inſtant with God in Prayer, not to ſuffer us by the Subſtraction of his Grace, or in a Way of Puniſhment for Sin, to run into the Circumſtances which may prove Snares to us, but daily to afford us ſuch a Meaſure of his Grace; as may keep us from falling by Temptation, and not to leave us fallen under the Temptation, but to recover us ſpeedily by his Power, and enable us to ſtand more firmly for the future. (2.) We here Pray for delivering Mercy, *Deliver us from Evil*, by which may be underſtood Satan the Evil one, but eſpecially the Evil of Sin, we Pray here that God would graciouſly preſerve us from thoſe vicious Inclinations of our Minds, and Evil Diſpoſitions of our Hearts, which render us ſo prone to yield to the Temptations of Satan; here we ſee the ugly and deformed Face of Sin, it is Evil; Evil in its Author and Original, it is of the Devil, the Evil one; Evil in its Effects and Fruits: It doth Debaſe and Degrade us, Pollute and Defile us, Befool and Deceive us, and without Repentance, Damns and Deſtroys us. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Concluſion of the Lord's Prayer, which contains a Complication of Arguments to urge Almighty God with, for obtaining the Mercy Pray'd for. (1.) *For thine is the Kingdom*; Thou art the only Abſolute and Rightful Sovereign, and all Men are concerned to Honour Thee, and Obey thy Laws; Thou art the Supreme Governor of the World, and King of thy Church, therefore let thy Kingdom come, and thy Will be done. (2.) *Thine is the Power*, therefore give us daily Bread, and forgive our daily Sins, for thou haſt Power to ſupply the One, and Authority to Pardon the Other: The Power of God is a mighty Encouragement to Prayer, and Faith in the Power of God has a mighty Prevalency in Prayer with God. (3.) *Thine is the Glory*, that is, thine Will be the Glory; as if we ſhould ſay, Lord! By enabling us to hallow thy Name, by owning thy Kingdom, by doing thy Will, and by thy providing for us, and pardoning of us, thou wilt have much Glory by us and from us; it teaches us, that as our Prayers in general ought to be Argumentative; ſo an Argument in Prayer drawn from the Glory of God, is a mighty Encouragement to hope for Audience and Acceptance. (4.) *For ever and ever*, that is, thy Kingdom is Eternal, thy Power Eternal, thy Glory Eternal; the God whom we Pray to is an Eternal God, and this Attribute of God is improveable in Prayer, as an Encouragement to expect the ſame Bleſſings from God which others have had before us, for he is yeſterday, to day, and the ſame for ever, *Amen*. A Word uſed in all Languages, denoting an hearty Aſſent to our own Prayers, an hearty Deſire to receive the Mercies Prayed for, and an humble Aſſurance that we ſhall be Heard and Anſwered.

14 For, if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. 15 But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

There being no Duty to which our corrupt Natures are more backward, than this of forgiving Injuries, our Saviour repeats that Duty over and over, and frequently inculcates it in the Holy Goſpels: Aſſuring us, That forgiving others, is the indiſpenſible Condition upon which we are to expect forgiveneſs from God. *Learn thence*, That every time we go to God in Prayer, and beg forgiveneſs of him, as we forgive others, if we do not forgive them heartily and ſincerely, fully and freely, readily and willingly, we flie in the Face of GOD, and our Prayers are a ſort of Imprecations againſt our ſelves. *Note farther*, That altho' God promiſes us forgiveneſs if we forgive others; yet it is with this Limitation, if no other condition of Salvation be wanting, for this Virtue alone cannot obtain Favour with God, unleſs other Duties are performed.

16 Moreover, when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they diſfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face: 18 That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

The next Duty which our *Saviour* inſtructs his Diſciples in, is that of *Religicus Faſting*, which is a *Devoting* of the whole Man, *Soul* and *Body*, to a Solemn and Extraordinary Attendance upon GOD, in a particular Time, ſet apart for that Purpoſe; in order to the Deprecating of his Diſpleaſure, and for the Supplicating of his Favour; accompanied with an Abſtinence from *Bodily Food* and *Senſual Delights*, and from all *Secular Affairs*, and *Worldly Buſineſs*. Now our *Saviour*'s Direction as to this Duty of *Faſting* is double: 1. He cautions us to beware of an abuſe in *Faſting*: *Be not as the Hypocrites are, of a ſad Countenance*; that is, Do not affect a ſullen Sadneſs, Ghaſtlineſs and Unpleaſantneſs of Countenance, like the Hypocritical *Phariſees*, who vitiate and diſcolour their Faces, do marr and aboliſh their Native Complexion. Hypocriſie can paint the Face Black and Sable, as well as Pride with Red and White. 2. He counſels us to take the right way in Faſting; *To Anoint the Head, and Waſh the Face*: That is, to look as at other Times, uſing our ordinary Garb and Attire, and not to affect any thing that may make us look like Mourners, when really we are not ſo. Where we may *Note*, That tho' Hypocrites by their dejected Countenances and mortified Habits, do ſeek to gain an extraordinary Reputation for *Piety* and *Devotion*, yet the ſincere Chriſtian is to be abundantly ſatisfied with *God's Approbation* of his Services, and with the ſilent *Applauſe* of his own *Conſcience*.

19 Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal. 20 But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal. 21 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

Obſerve here, 1. Something implied; namely, That every Man has his Treaſure; and whatſoever, or whereſoever that Treaſure is, it is attractive, and draws the Heart of Man unto it: For every Man's *Treaſure* is his *chief Good*. 2. Something permitted; namely, the getting, poſſeſſing, and enjoying of Earthly Treaſure, as an Inſtrument enabling us to do much *Good*. 3. Something prohibited; and that is, the Treaſuring up of Worldly Wealth, as our *Chief Treaſure*: *Lay not up Treaſures on Earth*; that is, Take heed of an Inordinate *Affection* to, of an exceſſive *Purſuit* after, of a vain *Confidence* and *Truſt* in any *Earthly Comfort*, as your *Chief Treaſures*. 4. Here is ſomething commanded; *But lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven*: Treaſure up thoſe Habits of Grace, which will bring you to an Inheritance in Glory: Be Fruitful in *Good Works*, *Laying up in ſtore for your ſelves a good Foundation, againſt the time to come, that ye may lay hold of Eternal Life*. *Obſ.* 5. The *Reaſons* aſſigned, 1. Why we ſhould not lay up our Treaſure on Earth; becauſe all Earthly Treaſures are of a periſhing and uncertain Nature, they are ſubject to Moth and Ruſt, to Robbery and Theft; the periſhing Nature of Earthly Things ought to be improved by us, as an Argument to ſit looſe in our Affections towards them. 2. The *Reaſon* aſſigned, why we ſhould lay up our Treaſure in Heaven, is this: Becauſe Heavenly Treaſures are ſubject to no ſuch Accidents and Caſualties, as Earthly Treaſures are, but are durable and laſting. *The Things that are not ſeen, are eternal:* The Treaſures of Heaven are inviolable, incorruptible, and everlaſting. Now we may know whether we have choſen theſe Things for our Treaſure, by our high *Eſtimation* of the *Worth* of them, by our ſenſible *Apprehenſion* of the *Want* of them, by the *Torrent* and *Tendency* of our *Affection* towards them, and by our laborious *Diligence* and *Endeavour* in the *Purſuit* after them. *Where the Treaſure is, there will the Heart be alſo.*

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, the whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?

In the foregoing *Verſes*, our Saviour acquainted us what in our *Affections* and *Judgments* we ſhould eſteem as our *Chief Treaſure:* Now this Judgment concerning our Chief Treaſure, is by our *Saviour* here compared to the Eye; as the Eye is the Candle of the Body, that enlightens and directs it, ſo our Underſtanding and Judgment of the Excellency of Heaven, and the Things above, will draw our Affections towards them, and quicken our Endeavour after them. *Note thence*, That ſuch as our *Judgment* is concerning *Happineſs*, ſuch will our *Deſires* and *Endeavours* be, for the Attainment of that *Happineſs*. Our *Affections* are guided by our *Apprehenſions*; where the *Eſteem* is high, *Endeavours* will be ſtrong.

24 No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.

Obſerve here, A two-fold Maſter ſpoken of, *God* and the *World*. *God* is our Maſter, by Creation, Preſervation, and Redemption; he has appointed us our *Work*, and ſecured us our *Wages*. The *World* is our Maſter, by Intruſion, Uſurpation, and a general Eſtimation; too many eſteeming it as their *Chief Good*, and delighting in it as their *Chief Joy*. *Obſ.* 2. That no Man can ſerve theſe two Maſters, who are of contrary *Intereſts*, and iſſue out contrary *Commands*: When two Maſters are ſubordinate, and their Commands ſubſervient each to other, the difficulty of Serving both is not great; but where Commands interfere, and Intereſts claſh, it is impoſſible. No Man can ſerve God and the World, but he may ſerve God with the World: No Man can ſeek God and Mammon both, as his *Chief Good*, and *Ultimate End*; becauſe no Man can divide his Heart betwixt GOD and the *World*. *Learn*, That to love the *World* as our *Chief Good*, and to ſerve the *World* as our *Chief* and *Sovereign Commander*, cannot ſtand with the Love and Service which we bear and owe to God. The *World's* Slaves, whilſt ſuch, can be none of *God's* Free-men.

25 Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

The next Sin which our Saviour cautions his Diſciples againſt, is immoderate Care for the things of this Life; ſuch a ſolicitous and vexatious Care for *Food* and *Raiment*, as is accompanied with Diffidence and Diſtruſt of GOD's Fatherly Providence over us, and Proviſion for us; and the Arguments which our Saviour uſes to diſſwade from this Sin, are many and cogent, laid down in the following *Verſes*. *Learn here*, (1.) That Almighty God will provide for every Servant of his Food and Raiment, and a Competency of the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life. *Learn*, (2.) The want of Faith in God's Promiſe, and a diſtruſt of his fatherly Care, it is a God-provoking and a Wrath-procuring Sin. *Learn*, (3.) That notwithſtanding God's Promiſe to ſupply our Wants, we not only may, but muſt uſe ſuch Prudential and Provident Means as are in our Power, in order to the ſupply of our own Wants. Dr. *Hammond's* Pract. Catech.

27 Which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit to his ſtature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin. 29 And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arayed like one of theſe. 30 Wherefore if God ſo cloath the graſs of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed? 32 (For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things.

Four Arguments are here uſed by our Saviour, to diſſwade us from the Sin of Anxious Care; 'tis needleſs, 'tis fruitleſs, 'tis Heatheniſh, 'tis Brutiſh. 1. 'Tis needleſs; *Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of theſe things*, and will certainly provide for you; and what need you take Care, and God too? 2. 'Tis fruitleſs; *Which of you by taking thought can add one Cubit to his Stature?* That is, by all our ſolicitous Care we can add nothing, either to the Length or Comfort of our Lives. 3. 'Tis Heatheniſh; *After all theſe Things do the Gentiles ſeek*. 4. 'Tis Brutiſh; nay, worſe than Brutiſh; *The Fowls of the Air*, and the Beaſts of the Field are fed by God, much more ſhall his Children: Has God a Breakfaſt for every little Bird that comes chirping out of its Neſt? And for every Beaſt in the Wilderneſs that comes leaping out of its Den? And will he not much more provide for you, *Oh ye of little Faith?* Surely he that feeds the Ravens when they Cry, will not ſtarve his Children when they Pray. Naturaliſts obſerve of the Raven, that ſhe expoſes her young ones as ſoon as they are hatcht, leaves them Meat-leſs, and Featherleſs, to ſhift, and ſtruggle with Hunger as ſoon as they come into the World; and whether by the Dew from Heaven, or Flies, or Worms, God feedeth them when they Gape and Cry, they are provided for: From whence our Saviour infers, that Man being much better, that is, a more conſiderable Creature than the Fowls, the Providence of God will provide for him, tho' no ſolicitude and anxious Thoughtfulneſs of his contributes thereunto.

33 But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

That is, Let your firſt and chief Care be to promote the Kingdom of Grace in this World, and to ſecure the Kingdom of Glory in the next; and in order unto both, ſeek after an Univerſal Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, both of Heart and Life; and then fear not the want of theſe Outward Comforts, they ſhall be added in Meaſure, tho' not in Exceſs; to Satisfie, tho' not to Satiate; for Health, tho' not for Surfeit. *Obſ.* 1. That Chriſtians muſt here on Earth ſet themſelves to ſeek Heaven, or the Kingdom of God. 2. That God's Kingdom cannot be ſought, without God's Righteouſneſs: *Holineſs* is the only way to *Happineſs*. 3. That Heaven, or the Kingdom of God, muſt be ſought in the firſt place, with our chief Care, and principal Endeavour. 4. That Heaven being once ſecure by us, all Earthly Things ſhall be ſuperadded by God, as he ſees needful and convenient for us.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf: ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Here our Saviour reinforces his Dehortation from ſolicitous Care for Worldly Things; aſſuring us, That every Day will bring with it a ſufficient Burden of Trouble, and therefore we ought not to torment our ſelves, by antedating our own Sorrows, and foretelling what may, or may not come to paſs. *Learn*, That it is a painful, ſinful, and Unprofitable Evil, to perplex our ſelves with diſtruſtful and diſtracting Fears of what may come upon us: Every Day has its own Duty and Difficulty; and tho' Sufferings muſt be expected, and prepared for, yet we muſt not torment our ſelves to Day, with the Fears of what may be to Morrow;

but every Day *caſt our Burden* of Care *upon that God, who daily careth for us.*

C H A P. VII.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having continued his Sermon on the Mount in the former Chapter, concludes it in this, with an Exhortation to ſeveral Duties; the Firſt of which is, To forbear raſh Judging of others.

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

Obſerve here, The Prohibition, and the Reaſon of that Prohibition. The Prohibition, *Judge not*: This is not meant of our Selves, but of our Neighbour. Self-judging is a great Duty; Judging others a grievous Sin: Yet is not all Judging of others condemned, but a Judging of our Neighbour's State or Perſon, raſhly and rigidly, cenſoriouſly or uncharitably; eſpecially unrighteouſly and unjuſtly. And the Reaſon of the Prohibition is added, *If we Judge others* Raſhly, *God will Judge us* Righteouſly. *Learn thence*, That a Raſh and Cenſorious Judging of Others, renders a Perſon liable and obnoxious to the Righteous Judgment of God. *Note farther*, That Chriſt doth not here forbid judicial Judging by the Civil Magiſtrate, nor Eccleſiaſtical Judging by the Church-Governours, whoſe Office gives them Authority ſo to do. Nor does he forbid one Chriſtian to paſs a Judgment on the notorious Actions of another, ſeeing the Duty of Reproof cannot be performed without it, but it is, ſuch a Raſh and Cenſorious Judging our Brother, as is void of Charity towards him, as is accompanied with contempt of him; eſpecially if we have been guilty of the ſame or greater Sins before him.

3 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

By *the Mote in our Brothers Eye*, is to be underſtood ſmall and little Sins, or ſome ſuppoſed Sins: By *the Beam in our own Eye*, is meant ſome *Notorious Sin* of our own. *Learn*, 1. That thoſe who are moſt *Cenſorious* of the leſſer Infirmities of Others, are uſually moſt *notoriouſly Guilty* of far greater failings themſelves. 2. That thoſe who deſire others ſhould look upon their Infirmities with a Compaſſionate Eye, muſt not look upon the failings of others with a Cenſorious Eye. 3. That there is no ſuch way to Teach us *Charity* in *Judging* others, as to exerciſe *Severity* in *Judging* of our ſelves.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

By *that which is Holy*, underſtand the *Word* and *Ordinances* in general; but *Admonition* and *Reproof* in particular: By *Dogs* and *Swine*, incorrigible and unreclaimable *Sinners*, hardned *Scorners* of *Holy Things*: 'Tis a *Proverbial Speech*, expreſſing, how ſure *Charitable Reprehenſions* are to be caſt away upon *Incorrigible Sinners*. *Learn*, 1. That 'tis poſſible for Sinners to arrive at ſuch a Height and Pitch in Wickedneſs and Sin, that it may be a Chriſtian's Duty, not to *Admoniſh* or *Reprove* them. *Obſ.* 2. How Chriſt provides, as for the Honour of his Word, ſo for the ſafety of thoſe that Publiſh it. As Chriſt will not have his *Word* offered to ſome Sinners, leſt they ſhould abuſe it; ſo leſt they ſhould abuſe thoſe that bring it. When Sinners turn Riniſh Swines, and we are in danger of being *rent by them*, Chriſt himſelf gives us a *Permiſſion* to ceaſe *Reproving* of them.

7 Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 8 For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his ſon ask bread, will he give him a ſtone? 10 Or if he ask a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? 11 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Obſerve here, A *Precept*, and a *Promiſe*; the *Precept*, or Duty commanded, is *Importunity* and *Conſtancy* in Prayer, we muſt *ask*, *ſeek*, and *knock*: The *Promiſe*, or Mercy inſured, is *Audience* and *Acceptance* with God. *Note*, 1. That Man is a poor, indigent, and neceſſitous Creature; full of Wants, but unable to ſupply them. 2. That God is an *All-ſufficient Good*, able to ſupply the *Wants*, and to relieve the *Neceſſities* of his *Creatures*, if they call upon him, and cry unto him. 3. Yet if we do not preſently *receive* what we *ask*, we muſt ſtill continue to *ſeek*, and *knock*; tho' *Prayer* be not always *anſwered* in our Time, yet ſhall it never fail of an *Anſwer* in God's Time. 4. That Natural Propenſity, which we find in our Breaſts, to hear the *Deſires*, and to ſupply the *Wants* of our own *Children*, ought to raiſe in us a confident *Expectation*, That Almighty God will *hear* our *Prayers*, and *ſupply* our *Wants*, when we call upon him: If a Father will give when a Child asks, much more will God. *If ye being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father*, &c. God loves to be giving, and to give good Gifts is his Delight. But Prayer is the Key that opens both his Heart and Hand: Yet not every Perſon, nor every Prayer ſhall find Acceptance with God, the Perſon praying muſt be a doer of God's Will, St. *John* 9. 31. and not regard Iniquity in his Heart, nor entertain any Grudge againſt his Neighbours; the Matter we pray for muſt be what is agreeable to God's Will, and the Manner of our Prayer muſt be in Faith and with Fervency, and unfainting Perſeverance.

12 Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Obſerve here, 1. An *Incomparable Rule of Life*. Always to do, as we would be done by. *Note*, That the great Rule of *Righteouſneſs* and *Equity* in all our *dealings* with Men, is this; *To do as we would be done unto*; it is a ſhort Rule, a full Rule, and a clear Rule; both the *Light of Nature* and the *Law of CHRIST* bind it upon us. *Obſ.* 2. The Commendation of this Rule, *It is the Law and the Prophets*; that is, the Sum of the Old Teſtament, ſo far as concerns our Duty to our *Neighbour*; and the Subſtance of the Second Table. *Learn*, That it is the Deſign of the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, firſt, to render Men *dutiful* and *obedient* to *God*, and then *righteous* and *charitable* one to another. *This is the Law and the Prophets*, yea, the whole of the Law and the Prophets, to *Love* GOD above our ſelves, and to *Love* our Neighbour as our ſelves.

13 Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Obſerve here, 1. That every Man is a Traveller in a certain Way. 2. That there are but Two Ways in which the Race of Mankind can Travel; the one *ſtrait* and *narrow*, that leads to *Life* and *Salvation*; the other *broad* and *wide*, which leads to *Hell* and *Deſtruction*. 3. That becauſe of the Difficulties in the Way of Salvation, and the Eaſineſs of the Way to Hell and Deſtruction; hence it is that ſo few Walk in the one, and ſo many in the other. 4. That Chriſtians having the *ſtrait Way* to Heaven revealed to them in and by the *Word of God*, ſhould chuſe rather to go in that Way alone to Life; than to run with the Multitude in that *broad* Way, which leads down to the Chambers of Death and Hell. 5. That the Metaphor of a *Gate* denotes our firſt Entrance into a Religious Courſe of Life, and its being *ſtrait*, denotes the Difficulty that attends Religion firſt: Evil Habits to be put off, Old Companions in Sin to be parted with, but when Faith and Patience have once ſmoothed our Way, Love will make our Work delightful to us.

15 Beware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in ſheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are

ravening wolves. 16 Ye ſhall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? 17 Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down and caſt into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.

Obſerve here, 1. A *Caution* given, *Beware of Falſe Prophets.* There were two ſorts of Deceivers, which our Saviour gave his Diſciples a ſpecial Warning of; namely, Falſe *Chriſts*, and Falſe *Prophets*: Falſe *Chriſts* were ſuch as pretended to be the True *Meſſiahs*; Falſe *Prophets* were ſuch who pretended to own *Chriſtianity*, but drew People away from the Simplicity of the *Goſpel*. *Obſ.* 2. The *Ground* of this *Caution*, *They come in Sheeps Cloathing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves*: That is, they make fair Pretences to Strictneſs in *Religion*, and to greater Meaſures and Degrees of *Mortification* and *Self-Denial* than others. Whence we *Learn*, That ſuch as go about to Seduce others, uſually pretend to extraordinary Meaſures of *Sanctity* themſelves, to raiſe an Admiration amongſt thoſe who judge of Saints more by their Looks, than by their Lives; more by their Expreſſions, than by their Actions. What Heavenly Looks and Devout Geſtures, what Long Prayers and Frequent Faſtings had the Hypocritical *Phariſees*, beyond what Chriſt or his Diſciples ever Practiſed? *Obſ.* 3. The Rule laid down by Chriſt, whereby we are to Judge of Falſe Teachers; *By their Fruits we ſhall know them. Learn*, That the beſt Courſe we can take to Judge of Teachers pretending to be ſent of God, is to Examine the Deſign and Tendency of their Doctrines, and the Courſe and Tenour of their *Converſations*. Good Teachers, like good Trees, will bring forth the good Fruits of *Truth* and *Holineſs*; but Evil Men and Seducers, like corrupt Trees, will bring forth *Error* and *Wickedneſs*, in their Life and Doctrine.

21 Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.

Not every one, that is, *Not any one that ſaith, Lord, Lord*, that is, that *owneth* me by way of *Profeſſion*, by way of *Prayer*, and by way of *Appeal*, ſhall be Saved; *But he that doth the Will of my Father*, ſincerely and Univerſally. *Learn hence*, 1. That Multitudes at the Great Day ſhall be really diſowned by Chriſt, as none of his Servants, that did Nominally *own* him for their Lord and Maſter: Many that have now Propheſied in his Name, ſhall then Periſh in his Wrath: Many that have caſt out Devils now, ſhall be caſt out to Devils then: Such as have now Done many Wonderful Works, ſhall then Periſh for Evil Workers. *Note*, 2. That a bare Name and Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, without the Practice of it, is a very Inſufficient Ground to Build our Hopes of Heaven and Salvation upon. A Profeſſion of Faith and Purpoſes of Obedience, without actual Obedience to the Commands of God, will avail no Perſon to Salvation. 3. That Gifts, Eminent Gifts, yea, Extraordinary and Miraculous Gifts, are not to be reſted in, or depended upon, as Sufficient Evidences for Heaven and Salvation. Gifts are as the Gold which Adorns the Temple, but Grace is like the Temple that Sanctifies the Gold.

24 Therefore, whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock: 25 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe: and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man, which built his houſe upon the ſand: 27 And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe: and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Chriſt here ſpeaks of Two Houſes, the one Built upon the Rock, the other on the Sand; theſe Two Houſes were alike Skilfully and Strongly Built, to outward Appearance; while the Sun ſhone, and the Weather was fair, none could diſcern but that the Houſe upon the Sand was Built as well, and might ſtand as long as that on the Rock; but when the Rain fell, the Foundation failed. Thus, where is the Hypocrite with all his Faith and Fear, with all his Shew and Appearance of Grace, in a wet and Windy Day; his Goodly outſide is like the Apples of *Sodom*, fair and Alluring to the Eye, but being toucht, inſtantly Evaporate into Duſt and Smoak. An Hypocrite ſtands in Grace no longer than till he falls into Trouble; and accordingly, *Our Saviour* here concludes his Excellent *Sermon*, with an Elegant *Similitude*: The *Wiſe Builder*, is not the frequent Hearer, but the faithful Doer of the Word, or the Obedient Chriſtian; the *Houſe* is Heaven, and the Hope of Eternal Life; the *Rock* is Chriſt; the *Building upon the Sand*, is reſting in the bare Performance of Outward Duties; the *Rains*, the *Winds*, and the *Floods*, are all kind of afflicting Evils, Sufferings, and Perſecutions that may befal us. *Note*, 1. That the Obedient Believer is the only Wiſe Man, that Builds his *Hopes of Heaven* upon a ſure and abiding Foundation. *Note*, 2. That ſuch Profeſſors as reſt in the outward Performance of Holy Duties, are *Fooliſh Builders*; their Foundation is weak and Sandy, and all their *Hopes* of *Salvation* vain and uncertain. An outward Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, tho' ſet off by Propheſying and Doing Miracles, will not avail any Man towards his Account at the Great Day, without that Real and Faithful, that Univerſal and Impartial Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt which the Goſpel requires.

28 And it came to paſs when Jeſus had ended theſe ſayings, the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the ſcribes.

Here we have Two Things *Obſervable*: 1. The Manner of our Lord's Teaching, it was *with Authority*; that is, it was Grave and Serious, Pious and Ardent, Plain and Profitable. With what Brevity, without Darkneſs! With what Gravity, without Affectation! With what Eloquence, without Meretricious Ornament, were our Lord's Diſcourſes! The Majeſty he ſhewed in his *Sermons*, made it evidently appear, that he was a Teacher ſent of GOD, and cloathed with his Authority. *Obſerve*, 2. The Succeſs of his Teaching; *The People were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine*: Affected with Admiration, believing him to be an Extraordinary *Prophet*. *Learn*, That ſuch is the Power of Chriſt's Doctrine, when accompanied with the Energy of his *Holy Spirit*, that it makes all his *Auditors* Admirers, yea, Believers; it cauſes Aſtoniſhment in their *Minds*, and Reformation in their *Manners*.

CHAP. VIII.

This Chapter is called by St. Ambroſe, Scriptura Miraculoſa, *the Miraculous Scripture; there being ſeveral great Miracles Recorded in this Chapter: As the Cleanſing of the Leper, the Curing of the Centurion's Servant, the Appeaſing of the Winds*, &c. *Our Saviour having delivered his Doctrine in the former Chapters: In this he backs his Doctrine with Miracles, for the Eſtabliſhment and Confirmation of it.*

1 WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And behold, there came a leper, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean. 3 And Jeſus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leproſie was cleanſed. 4 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, ſhew thy ſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift that Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

Note here, 1. In General that the *Jews* paid civil Adoration to their Kings, and to their Prophets: Thus *Saul* ſtooped with his Face to the Ground to *Samuel*; *Nebuchadnezzar* fell on his Face before *Daniel*, and *Obadiah* before *Elijah*; from whence may be gathered, that the Adorations given to Chriſt by them that knew nothing of his Divinity, were paid him as a Prophet ſent from God: Only next, Several *Particulars* are here *Obſervable*; as, 1. The *Petitioner*, and that is a *Leper*, he *came* and *Worſhipped* Chriſt, and Petitions him to Heal him, ſaying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* Where he diſcovers a firm Belief of Chriſt's *Power*, but a Diffidence and Diſtruſt of Chriſt's *Will*, to Heal him. *Learn*, Chriſt's *Divine Power* muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly Believed, by all thoſe that expect Benefit by him, and Healing from him. *Obſ.* 2. How readily our Saviour grants his *Petition*; Jeſus *touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean.* Our Saviour by *touching* the Leper, ſhew'd himſelf to be above the Law, as GOD; tho' ſubject to the Law, as Man; for by the *Ceremonial Law*, the Leper was forbidden to be Toucht. Yet was it a Received Rule among the *Jews*, that a Prophet might vary from the Punctillio's of the Ceremonial Law, or change a Ritual Law; ſo did *Elijah* ſtretch himſelf on the dead Child, and *Eliſha* on the *Shunamite*'s Son, notwithſtanding the Prohibition of coming near the Dead. But Chriſt's Curing the Leper by the Word of his Mouth, and the Touch of his Hand, ſhewed his *Divine Power*, and proved himſelf to be truly and really ſent of GOD. *Leproſie* being called by the *Jews* the *Finger* of God, a Diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing; our Saviour therefore as a Proof of his being the *Meſſias*, tells the Diſciples of *John*, *That the Lepers were cleanſed*, Matth. 11. 5. *and the Dead raiſed*: Which being put together, intimates, That the *Cleanſing* of the Leper is as peculiar an Act of *Divine Power*, as the *Raiſing* of the Dead; and accordingly, 2 *Kings*, 5. 7. ſaid the King, *Am I a God, that this Man ſends to me, to cure a Man of his Leproſie?* *Obſ.* 3. The *Certainty* and *Suddenneſs* of the *Cure*; *immediately his Leproſie was cleanſed*: Chriſt not only Cured him without *Means*, but without the ordinary *Time* required for ſuch a Cure. Thus Chriſt ſhewed both Power and Will to Cure him Miraculouſly, who believed his Power, but queſtioned his Willingneſs. *Obſerve*, 4. The Charge and Command given by Chriſt after the Cure: 1. *To tell it to no Man*; wherein the Modeſty, Humility, and Piety of Chriſt is diſcovered, together with the Care of his own Safety. His Modeſty, in not deſiring his Good Deeds ſhould be Proclaimed; his Humility, in ſhunning Vain-Glorious Applauſe and Commendation; his Piety in deſiring all the Praiſe, Honour and Glory, ſhould redound intirely to God; and his Care of his own Safety, leſt the Publiſhing of this Miracle ſhould create him untimely Danger from the *Phariſees.* Chriſtians, Behold your Pattern, to do much Good, and make but little Noiſe. Chriſt affected no Popular Air, he did not ſpoil a Good Work by Vain Oſtentation: When we Work hard for God, take we great Care that Pride doth not blow either it or us. Oh how difficult is it to do much Service, and not value our ſelves too much upon the Services which we do! The Second Part of the Charge which Chriſt gave the recovered Leper, was, *To ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt, and offer the Gift which* Moſes *commanded for a Teſtimony unto them*: That is, as a Teſtimony to the *Jews*, that he was the *Meſſias*, and that he did not oppoſe the Ceremonial Law given by *Moſes*. *Where Note*, That our Saviour would have the Ceremonial Law punctually Obſerved, ſo long as the Time for its Continuance did endure; tho' he came to deſtroy that Law, yet whilſt it ſtood, he would have it obſerved. Here Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, That tho' the Prieſthood was much degenerated from its Primitive Inſtitution, by Humane Inventions, yet Chriſt ſends the Leper to ſubmit to it; becauſe tho' they did corrupt, yet not extinguiſh the Divine Inſtitution.

5 And when Jeſus was entred into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beſeeching him, *6* And ſaying, Lord, my ſervant lieth at home ſick of the Palſie, grievouſly tormented. 7 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof: but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. *9* For I am a man under authority, having ſoldiers under me: and I ſay to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jeſus heard it, he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.

The Second Miracle our Saviour works in this *Chapter*, is the Healing the *Centurion*'s Servant: Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Perſon that applies to our Saviour for Help and Healing; he was a Gentile, an Heathen, a *Roman* Soldier, an Officer and Commander; yet he believes in, and relies upon the Power of Chriſt. *Note*, That ſuch is the Freeneſs of Divine Grace, that it extends it ſelf to all Sorts and Ranks, to all Orders and Degrees of Men, without Exception. Even the Bloody Trade of War yields worthy Clients to Chriſt. He doth not ſo much regard who we are, and whence we are; as what we are, and with what Diſpoſitions and Inclinations we come unto him. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſon whom the *Centurion* comes to Chriſt for; not for himſelf, nor for his Son, but for his Servant; his Servant is Sick, he doth not drive him out of Doors, nor ſtand gazing by his Bed-ſide, but looks out for Help and Relief for him; a Worthy Example. Some Maſters have not ſo much Regard to their Sick Servants, as they have to their Oxen or their Swine; but he is not worthy of a good Servant, that in a time of Sickneſs is not willing to ſerve his Servant. A conceit of Superiority, muſt beget in no Man a Neglect of Charitable Offices towards Inferiors. *Obſerve*, 3. Unto whom the *Centurion* ſeeks, and with what Zeal and Application; he ſeeks not to *Wizards* and *Conjurers*, but to the *Phyſician* for his poor Servant; yea, to Chriſt, the beſt *Phyſician*; and this not with a formal Relation in his Mouth, but with a vehement Aggravation of the Diſeaſe; *My Servant is grievouſly tormented*: Where the *Maſter's* Condolency and tender Sympathy with his afflicted Servant, is both matter of Commendation and Imitation alſo. *Obſerve*, 4. The Happy Mixture of Humility and Faith which was found in this *Centurion*; he owns his *Unworthineſs* of having Chriſt come under his Roof; yet acknowledges Chriſts Power, that by the ſpeaking of a Word his Servant might be Healed by him. Humility is both the Fruit of Faith, and the Companion of Faith; an humble Soul has an high Eſteem of Chriſt, and a low Eſteem of himſelf. *Obſ.* 5. How our Bleſſed Saviour exceeds both his *Deſires* and his *Expectations*; Chriſt ſays not only, I will Heal him, but, I will Come and Heal him: Wonderful Condeſcenſion! In St. *John*, ch. 4. v. 47. we read of a certain Noble-man and Ruler, that twice intreated our Saviour to come to his Houſe and Heal his Son; but our Lord refuſed, and did not ſtir a Foot: Here the *Centurion* doth but barely tell Chriſt of his poor Servant's *Sickneſs*, and Chriſt both unaſk'd and undeſired ſays, *I will come and Heal him.* Oh how far was Chriſt from ſeeming in the leaſt to honour Riches, and deſpiſe Poverty! He that came in the Form of a Servant, goes down and viſits a Sick Servant upon his poor Pallat-Bed, that would not viſit the rich Couch of the Ruler's Son. How ſhould we ſtoop to the loweſt Offices of Love and Kindneſs to one another, when Chriſt thus condeſcendingly Abaſed Himſelf before us? *Obſ.* 6. The Notice and Obſervation which our Saviour takes of the *Centurion*'s Faith; *He* wondred at it from him, who had wrought it in him: Chriſt wrought this Faith as God, and wondred at it as Man: What can be more Wonderful, than to ſee CHRIST Wonder! We do not find our Saviour wondring at Worldly Pomp and Greatneſs. When the *Diſciples* wondered at the Magnificence of the *Temple*, Chriſt rather rebuked them, than wondred with them. But when he ſees the gracious Acts of Faith, he is raviſhed with Wonder. Let it teach us to place our Admiration where Chriſt fixes his: Let us be more affected with the leaſt Meaſures of Grace in a Good Man, than with all the Gaieties and Glory of a Great Man: Let us not Envy the one, but Admire the other.

11 And I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: 12 But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into utter darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 13 And Jeſus ſaid

unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee. And his ſervant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour.

This was the firſt Occaſion that Chriſt took to ſpeak of the *Calling* of the *Gentiles*, and the *Rejection* of the *Jews*. *Obſerve here*, That the Unbelieving *Jews* are called *the Children of the Kingdom*, becauſe Born within the Pale of the *Viſible Church*; they preſumed that the *Kingdom of Heaven* was Entailed upon them, becauſe they were *Abraham*'s Seed; they boaſted of, and gloried in their External and Outward *Priviledges*. *Note Thence*, 1. That *Goſpel-Ordinances* and *Church-Priviledges* injoyed, are a ſpecial *Honour* to a People admitted to the Participation of them: Our Saviour here ſtiles the *Jews* upon that Account, *The Children of the Kingdom*. 2. That ſuch *Priviledges* injoyed, but not improved, do provoke Almighty God to inflict the heavieſt of *Judgments* upon a People. *The Children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt out into utter Darkneſs*: That is, into the *Darkneſs of Hell*, where ſhall be perpetual *Lamentations* for the Remembrance of the *Goſpel* kindly offered, but unthankfully rejected,

14 And when Jeſus was come into Peters houſe, he ſaw his wifes mother laid, and ſick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and ſhe aroſe and miniſtred unto them.

The next *Miracle* which our Saviour wrought, was in Curing *Peter*'s Wife's Mother of a Fever; the Miracle was not in Curing an Incurable Diſtemper, but in the Way and Manner of Curing: For, 1. It was by a *Touch* of our Saviour's *Hand*. 2. It was *Inſtantaneous* and *Sudden*; *Immediately the Fever left her*. 3. The *viſible Effects* of her *Recovery* preſently appeared, *She inſtantly aroſe, and miniſtred unto them*. That ſhe could Ariſe, argued her Cure *Miraculous*; that ſhe could and did Ariſe, and Adminiſter unto Chriſt, argued her *Thankfulneſs*, and a great *Senſe* of his *Goodneſs* upon her Mind. *Note here*, 1. That *Marriage* in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, yea, even in the Apoſtles themſelves, and in *Peter*, the chiefeſt of them, was neither cenſured nor condemned by our Saviour. St. *Peter* had a Wife and Family, which Chriſt condeſcends to Viſit. *Obſerve*, 2. That the firſt thing which Chriſt takes Notice of in the Houſe which he condeſcends to Viſit, is, what Aileth any in it; what Need they ſtand in of his Help and Healing; and accordingly, together with his *Preſence*, he affords them *Relief*. *Learn*, 3. That when Chriſt has graciouſly Viſited and Healed any of his Servants, it ought to be their firſt Work, and next Care, to Adminiſter unto Chriſt; that is, to employ their Recovered Health, and improve their Renewed Strength in his Service: *She aroſe and Miniſtred*.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with devils: and he caſt out the ſpirits with *his* word, and healed all that were ſick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, Himſelf took our infirmities, and bare *our* ſickneſſes.

It was very common about the Time of our SAVIOUR's Coming in the Fleſh, for the Devil Bodily to *Poſſeſs* Perſons, and very grievouſly to *Torment* them. This is one of the ſad and diſmal *Evils* which Sin has made us liable and obnoxious to, to be Bodily *Poſſeſt* by Satan; when we give Satan the Power of our *Hearts*, it is a juſt and righteous thing with God, to give him the *Poſſeſſion* of our *Bodies*. But who is the *Perſon* that *Diſpoſſeſſes* Satan? Chriſt Jeſus: 'Tis a ſtronger than the Strong Man, that muſt caſt out Satan: Our *Jeſus*, in whom we truſt, by his *Powerful Word* alone can deliver from Satan's Power, and all the ſad *Effects* and *Conſequence* thereof. *But Obſerve*, With what *Condolency* and *Sympathizing Pity*, he exerciſes theſe Acts of *Mercy* and *Compaſſion* towards poor Creatures, he is ſaid to take our *Infirmities* upon himſelf, and to bear our *Sickneſs*; he bare the Guilt, which was the Cauſe of theſe *Griefs* and *Sorrows*; and he bare the Sorrows themſelves, by a tender *Sympathy* with us under the Burden of them. Chriſt conſiders our *Sufferings* as his own: *He is afflicted in all our Afflictions*, and pained with all our Pains; in this Senſe, *He took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneſſes*.

18 Now when Jeſus ſaw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other ſide. 19 And a certain ſcribe came, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 20 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

Obſerve here, A Perſon reſolving to follow Chriſt; a Good Reſolution, if made deliberately, and not raſhly, nor for Siniſter Ends and Secular Advantages; which, it is to be feared, was the Caſe here, by the Anſwer which our Saviour gives; for, ſays he, *Foxes have Holes*, &c. that is, my Condition in this World is very poor, worſe than the Birds of the Air, for they have their fixed Neſts; or the Beaſts of the Earth, for they have their Dens and Holes; but I have no fixed Habitation. *Note*, 1. That many Perſons take up raſh and ſudden Reſolutions to follow Chriſt, before they have well conſidered what it will coſt them; what they are like to loſe, by being his Diſciples. 2. That ſuch Men may find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, who expect to gain any thing by following of Chriſt, but their Souls Salvation. *Note*, 3. The Title given to Chriſt, he is ſtiled here, and frequently elſewhere, The Son of Man. 1. To ſhew the Truth of his Humanity, the Son of Man muſt be Man. 2. To ſhew the Depth of his Abaſement, Chriſt Humbled, yea, Emptied himſelf, when being the Son of God, he ſubmitted to be made Man, *The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*.

21 And another of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 22 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.

We muſt not ſuppoſe by this Prohibition, that Chriſt diſallows or diſapproves of any Civil Office from one Perſon to another, much leſs of a Child to a Parent, either Living or Dying: But he let us know, 1. That no Office of Love and Service to Man, muſt be preferred before our Duty to God, unto whom we owe our firſt Obedience. 2. That Lawful and Decent Offices become Sinful, when they hinder greater Duties. 3. That ſuch as are called to the Work and Imployment of the Miniſtry, muſt mind that alone, and leave Inferiour Duties to Inferiour Perſons: As if our Saviour had ſaid, Others will ſerve well enough to Bury the Dead; but thou that art a Conſecrated Perſon, muſt do that unto which thou art Conſecrated and ſet apart. Under the Law, the Prieſts might not come near a Dead Corps, nor meddle with the Interrment of their own Parents; unto which our Saviour probably alludes.

23 And when he was entred into a ſhip, his diſciples followed him. 24 And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep. 25 And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us: we periſh. 26 And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. 27 But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him?

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt and his Diſciples no ſooner put forth to Sea, but Dangers attend, and Difficulties do accompany them; a Tempeſt aroſe, and the Ship was covered with Waves. *Learn thence*, That the Preſence of Chriſt it ſelf, doth not exempt his Diſciples and Followers from Trouble and Danger; here is a great Tempeſt about the *Diſciples* Ears, tho' *Chriſt* was in their Company. *Obſ*. 2. The Poſture our Saviour was in when this Tempeſt aroſe; he being weary on the Land, was fallen aſleep in the Ship: Our Bleſſed Redeemer hereby ſhewed himſelf to be truly and really Man; as he took upon him our Human Nature, ſo he ſubjected himſelf to our Human Infirmities. *Obſ*. 3. The *Diſciples* Application made to him; they awoke him with a ſad Out-Cry, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*: here was Faith mixed with Human Frailty: They had Faith in his Power, that he could ſave them;

but being aſleep, they concluded he muſt awake, before he could ſave them: Whereas, tho' his Human Nature was aſleep, yet his Divine Nature neither ſlumbred nor ſlept. *Learn hence*, That the Prevalency of Fear in a time of great and imminent Danger, tho' it may argue weakneſs of Faith, yet it is no Evidence of want of Faith: In the midſt of the *Diſciples* Fears, they Believed *Chriſt*'s Power. *Obſ.* 4. A double Rebuke given by our Saviour: 1. To the Winds and Seas; next, to the Fears of his *Diſciples*: *He rebukes the Winds and the Seas*, and inſtantly *they are calm*; when the Sea was as furious as a Mad-man, Chriſt by his Divine Power calms it. *Learn hence*, That the moſt raging Winds and outragious Seas, cannot ſtand before the Rebukes of Chriſt; if once he Rebukes them, their Rage is down: GOD lays a Law upon the moſt Lawleſs Creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt Lawleſly. 2. Chriſt Rebukes his *Diſciples* Fears, *Why are ye fearful?* No ſooner was the Storm up, but their Fears were up; and were as much over-ſet with their *Boiſterous Paſſions*, as the Veſſel was with the *Tempeſtuous Winds*; and accordingly Chriſt Rebukes the Tempeſt within, and then the Tempeſt without; firſt he calms their *Hearts*, and then the *Seas*: From this Inſtance we ſee, that great Faith in the Habit, may appear little in Act and Exerciſe: The *Diſciples* Faith in forſaking all and following Chriſt, was great Faith; but in this preſent Act, their Faith was weak, through the Prevalency of their Fear. *Note Laſtly*, That the Diſciples Faith was leſſened by their Fear; Fear is generated by Unbelief, and Unbelief ſtrengthned by Fear; as in things Natural, there is a Circular Generation, Vapours begat Showers, and Showers Vapours; ſo it is in things Moral, nothing can cure us of Fear, till God cures us of Unbelief: Chriſt therefore takes an effectual Method to rid the Diſciples of their Fears, by Rebuking their Unbelief.

28 And when he was come to the other ſide, into the countrey of the Gergeſenes, there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way.

We read of few, if any, in the Old Teſtament, that were poſſeſt with Evil Spirits, but of many in the New Teſtament. Our Saviour came into the World to deſtroy the Works of the Devil; therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome Human Bodies, to ſhew his Divine Power in caſting them out. *Note here*, 1. That the Evil Angels by their Fall loſt their Purity, but not their Power. 2. That they do no oftner exert their Power in doing Miſchief to the Bodies and Lives of Men, is from the Reſtraining Power of GOD. The Devils cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can.

29 And behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Obſerve, The Devils knew Chriſt to be the Son of GOD, and that he came into the World to be a Saviour, but not their Saviour; therefore they cry out, *What have we to do with thee?* Or Thou with us? Oh what an uncomfortable Faith is this, to believe that Chriſt is a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know that he is none of our Saviour! But what is their Out-cry againſt Chriſt? This, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* *Learn*, 1. That there are Tortures appointed to the Spiritual Natures of Evil Angels. The Fire of Hell is conceived to be, partly Material, and partly Spiritual; partly Material, to work upon the Bodies of Evil Men; and partly Spiritual, to work upon the Souls of Men, and the Spirits of Evil Angels. *Learn*, 2. That tho' the Devils be now as full of Diſcontent as they can be, yet they are not ſo full of Torment as they ſhall be; their Speech here intimates, that there will be a time when their Torments ſhall be increaſed, when they ſhall have their fill of Torment: Therefore they Pray, Increaſe not our *Torments*, before the appointed Time of their Encreaſe.

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many ſwine, feeding. 31 So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine.

Obſerve here, 1. A notable Evidence of Satan's *Limited Power*, that a whole Legion of Devils had not Power to deſtroy one Man, nor were able to hurt the meaneſt Creature without Permiſſion. *Obſ.* 2. The Devils Acknowledgment of their own Impotency, and Chriſt's Power; their Aſking Leave of Chriſt to go into the Swine, ſhews that they could not go of themſelves. *Learn hence*, 1. The *Reſtleſneſs* of Satan's Malice; he will hurt the Swine, rather than not hurt at all. 2. That tho' Satan's Malice be infinite, yet his Power is limited and bounded; as he cannot do all the Miſchief he would, ſo he ſhall not do all he can.

32 And he ſaid unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine: and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters.

Altho' Chriſt ſeldom wrought any Deſtructive Miracle, and altho' he certainly foreſaw, that the Swine would Periſh in the Waters; yet that the People might ſee, how great the Power and Malice of the Devil would be, if not reſtrained by Chriſt, he permitted him to enter into the Swine; Chriſt *ſaid unto them, Go*; and how glad was Satan of this Permiſſion to enter the Swine, in order to their Deſtruction. Let it teach us our Duty, by Prayer to commit our ſelves, and all that we have, Morning and Evening, into the Hands of GOD's Care: All that we have in the Houſe, and all that we have in the Field, that it may be preſerved from the Power and Malice of Evil Spirits.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing; and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus, and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.

Obſ. 1. What a contrary Effect this Miracle which Chriſt wrought, had upon theſe People: Inſtead of Believing on him for his Miraculous Cure of the Poſſeſſed, the Loſs of their Swine enrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt to depart from them. Temporal Loſſes are ſo great in Worldly Mens Eſtimation, that Spiritual Advantages are nothing eſteemed: Carnal Hearts prefer their *Swine* before their *Saviour*; and had rather loſe Chriſt's *Preſence*, than their *Worldly Profit*. *Obſ.* 2. How Unanimous and Importunate theſe *Gadarens* were, to get rid of Chriſt; the whole City came out, and are not only willing with his Departure, but they beſeech him to depart out of their Coaſts. *Learn hence*, That deplorably ſad is the Condition of ſuch from whom Chriſt departs; but moſt deplorably ſad their State, who *ſay* unto Chriſt, depart; but moſt deplorably ſad is the Caſe of them that *intreat* and *beſeech* Chriſt to depart from them: Thus did theſe *Gadarens*, and accordingly Chriſt took Ship and departed from them, and we never read of his return unto them.

CHAP. IX.

1 AND he entred into a ſhip, and paſſed over, and came into his own city.

In the laſt *Verſe* of the foregoing *Chapter*, the *Gadarens* with one Conſent deſire CHRIST to depart out of their Coaſts; here we find our Saviour, according to their deſire, departing from them into his own City, which was *Capernaum*; for *Bethlehem* brought him forth, *Nazareth* brought him up, and *Capernaum* was his Dwelling-Place. From their Deſire of Chriſt's Departure, and from Chriſt's departing according to their Deſire, we *Learn*, That the Bleſſed *Jeſus* will not long trouble that People with his *Preſence*, who are weary of his Company, and deſirous of his Departure.

2 And behold, they brought to him a man ſick of the palſie, lying on a bed: and Jeſus ſeeing their faith, ſaid unto the ſick of the palſie, Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgiven thee.

Obſerve, 1. The Patient, *One ſick of the Palſie*, which being a Reſolution of the Nerves, weakens the Joynts, and confines the Perſon to his Bed or Couch. As a Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Power, he was pleaſed to ſingle out ſome In-

Incurable Diſeaſes (as the World accounts them) to work a Cure upon as the *Leproſie* and *Palſie*. 2. The Phyſician, *Jeſus Chriſt*; he alone is that Wiſe, Faithful, and Compaſſionate Phyſician, that can and doth Cure both Soul and Body. *Obſerve*, 3. The Moving or Impulſive Cauſe of this Cure, *Jeſus ſeeing their Faith*; that is, their firm Perſwaſion that he was cloathed with a Divine Power, and able to help; together with their Confidence in his Goodneſs, that he was as willing as he was able; and no ſooner did they exerciſe their Faith in Believing, but Chriſt did exert his Divine Power in Healing. It was not the Sick Man's Faith, but the Faith of his Friends: The Faith of others may prevail for obtaining Corporeal Benefits, and Temporal Bleſſings for us; thus the Centurion's Faith healed his Servant, and *Jairus*'s Faith raiſed his Daughter. *Obſ.* 4. The marvellous Efficacy and Power of Faith; it obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected; they deſired only the Healing of the Body; but *Jeſus ſeeing their Faith*, Heals Body and Soul too, ſaying, *Be of Good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*; intimating, that Diſeaſes proceed from Sin, becauſe Chriſt firſt ſpeaks of forgiving them; yet it is conceived that Chriſt rather ſpeaketh here of the Temporal Remiſſion of the Puniſhment, than of the Eternal; becauſe *That* depends on our own Faith, and not anothers.

3 And behold, certain of the ſcribes ſaid within themſelves, This man blaſphemeth.

See here how the beſt of Men are ſometimes charged with ſaying and doing the worſt of things; to Do well, and Hear ill, was the Portion of Chriſt himſelf; and may be the Portion of the holieſt of thoſe that belong to Chriſt: The Innocent *Jeſus* was accuſed of Blaſphemy, of Sorcery, and of the blackeſt Crimes. Innocency it ſelf can protect no Man from Slander and Falſe Accuſations.

4 And Jeſus knowing their thoughts, ſaid, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee: or to ſay, Ariſe and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath Power on earth to forgive ſins, (then ſaith he to the ſick of the Palſie) Ariſe, take up thy bed, and go unto thine houſe.

Our Saviour here gives the *Phariſees* a Twofold Demonſtration of his Godhead: *Firſt*, By letting them underſtand that he knew their Thoughts; for to ſearch the Hearts, and to know the Thoughts of the Children of Men, is not in the Power either of Angels or Men, but the Prerogative of God only. *Secondly*, By aſſuming to himſelf a Power to forgive Sins; the Son of Man hath Power to forgive *Sins*. Our Saviour here, by forgiving Sins in his own Name, and by his own Authority, doth give the World an undeniable Proof and convincing Evidence of his Godhead; for, *Who can forgive Sins, but GOD only*?

7 And he aroſe, and departed to his houſe, 8 But when the multitude ſaw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given ſuch Power unto men.

Note here, The Multitude marvelled, but not believed; they admire our Saviour for an extraordinary Man, but did not believe in him, as the Son of God: They praiſe God, for giving ſuch Power to heal the Bodies of Men; but not for ſending his Son into the World, to ſave the Souls of Men. *Learn hence*, That the ſight of Chriſt's Miracles is not ſufficient to work Faith in the *Soul*, but requires the concurring Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, the one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

9 And as Jeſus paſſed forth from thence, he ſaw a man, named Matthew, ſitting at the receit of cuſtom: and he ſaith unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe, and followed him.

Obſ. here, The Number of our Lord's Apoſtles not being filled up, what a ſtrange Election and Choice he makes; *Matthew*, a grinding *Publican*, is the Man. *Learn*, Such is the Freeneſs of God's Grace, that it chuſes, and ſuch is the Efficacy of it, that it over-powers and brings in the worſt of *Sinners* unto God; *Matthew a Publican*, *Zacheus* an Extortioner, *Manaſſeth* a Murderer, *Paul* a Perſecutor; all theſe are brought home to God by the Power of Converting Grace. *Obſ.* 2. *Matthew*'s ready Compliance with God's Call, *He aroſe and followed* Chriſt. When the Inward Call of the *Spirit* accompanies the Outward Call of the Word, the *Soul* readily complies, and preſently yields Obedience to the Voice of God. Bp. *Hall*.

Chriſt oft-times ſpeaks by his *Word* to our Ear, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his *Spirit* to our Hearts, *Satan* ſhall not hold us down, the *World* ſhalt not keep us back, but we ſhall ariſe, and follow our Lord and Maſter.

10 And it came to paſs, as Jeſus ſat at meat in the houſe, behold, many publicans and ſinners came and ſat down with him and his Diſciples.

Obſerve here, Chriſt invited *Matthew* to a Diſcipleſhip, *Matthew* invites Chriſt to a Feaſt; the *Servant* invites his *Maſter*, a *Sinner* invites his *Saviour*. We do not find, where ever Chriſt was invited to any Table that he refuſed to go; if a *Phariſee*, if a *Publican* invited, he conſtantly went; not for the Pleaſure of Eating, but for the opportunity of Converſing, and doing Good: Chriſt feaſts us, when we feaſt him. From *Matthew*'s Example, *Learn*, That New Converts are full of Affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive of their Love unto him. Such as before Converſion diſeſteemed him, do afterwards kindly and reſpectfully entertain him. *Matthew* toucht with a ſenſe of Chriſt's *Rich Love*, makes him a *Royal Feaſt*. *Obſerve farther*, How at this Feaſt many *Publicans* and Sinners were preſent, of *Matthew*'s Acquaintance no doubt, and probably invited by him, that they might alſo ſee Chriſt, and be Partakers of the ſame Grace with him. Whence we *Learn*, That Grace teaches a Man to deſire, and ſeek the Converſion of others; and ſuch as are truly brought home to Chriſt themſelves, will ſtudy and endeavour to bring in all their Acquaintance to Chriſt alſo.

11 And when the Phariſees ſaw it, they ſaid unto his diſciples, Why eateth your Maſter with Publicans and Sinners?

See here, what a Grief it is to wicked Men, to find others brought in to Chriſt; the Wicked *Phariſees* murmur, repine, and envy, inſtead of admiring Chriſt's Condeſcenſion, and adoring his Divine Goodneſs: They cenſure him for converſing with *Sinners*; but Chriſt tells them in the following *Verſes*, that he converſt with them as their Phyſician, not as their Companion.

12 But when Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick. 13 But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

As if our Lord had ſaid, With whom ſhould the Phyſician converſe, but with his Sick Patients? Now I am come into the World to do the Office of a kind Phyſician unto Men; ſurely then I am to take all opportunities to Help and Heal them: They that are Sick need the Phyſician; but for you *Phariſees*, who are whole and well in your own Opinion, and ſwell'd with a Conceit of your own Righteouſneſs, I have no Hopes of doing any Good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole, deſire no Phyſician's Help. *Learn hence*, 1. That Sin is the *Soul's Malady*, its *Spiritual Diſeaſe* and *Sickneſs*. 2. That Chriſt is the Phyſician appointed by God, for the Cure and Healing of this *Diſeaſe and Malady*. 3. That there are Multitudes *Spiritually Sick*, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. 4. That only ſuch as are ſenſible of their *Spiritual Sickneſs*, are Subjects capable of Cure, and the Perſons whom Chriſt is an healing Phyſician to: *They that are whole need not the Phyſician, but they that are ſick.*

14 Then came to him the diſciples of John, ſaying, Why do we and the Phariſees faſt oft, but thy diſciples faſt not? 15 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt. 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloath unto an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worſe. 17 Neither do men put

new wine into old bottles: elſe the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles periſh: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preſerved.

The *Phariſees* themſelves had a Contention with our Saviour in the foregoing *Verſes*; here they ſet on the Diſciples of *John*, to contend with him about Faſting; alledging, that the Diſciples of *John* faſted often, Chriſt's Diſciples not at all: Our Saviour owns it, that his Diſciples did not faſt at preſent, for two *Reaſons*, 1. Becauſe it was *unſuitable* to them. 2. Becauſe it was *Intollerable* for them. It was *Unſuitable* to them, becauſe of Chriſt's Bodily Preſence with them; this made it a time of Joy and Feaſting, not of Mourning and Faſting: While Chriſt the Bridegroom is with them, they muſt feaſt and rejoice; when removed from them, there will be Cauſe enough to faſt and mourn. Chriſt is the *Bridegroom*, and his Church the *Bride*, which he has Eſpouſed and Married to himſelf; and whilſt his *Spouſe* did enjoy his Bodily Preſence with her; it was a Day of Joy and Rejoycing to her, and Mourning and Faſting was improper for her. Again, This Diſcipline of Faſting was at preſent *Intolerable* for the *Diſciples*, for they were raw, green, and tender, and could no more bear the *Severities* of *Religion* at preſent, than an old Garment could bear a piece of new ſtiff Cloth to be ſet into it, which will make the Rent worſe, if the Garment comes to a ſtretch; nor no more than old Bottles can keep new Wine. Thus ſays Chriſt, My *Diſciples* are young and green, tender and weak, newly converted; they cannot bear the *Severer Exerciſes* of *Religion* preſently; but when I am aſcended into Heaven, I will ſend down my Holy Spirit, which ſhall enable them to all the *Duties* which the *Goſpel* injoyns. Hence we may *Gather*, That *Young Converts*, till grown up to ſome Conſiſtency in *Grace*, muſt not be put upon the *Severer Exerciſes* of *Religion*; but handled with that *Tenderneſs* and *Gentleneſs*, which becomes the mild and merciful *Diſpenſation* of the *Goſpel*. Our Saviour here commends Prudence to his *Miniſters*; that they put not their People upon *Duties* beyond their *Strength*, but conſult their *Progreſs* in *Chriſtianity*, and the *Proficiency* they have made in *Religion*, and treat them accordingly.

18 While he ſpake theſe things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worſhipped him, ſaying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live. 19 And Jeſus aroſe, and followed him, and *ſo did* his diſciples.

Obſerve the humble Poſture in which this Man came unto Chriſt, namely, falling at his Foot and worſhipping him; which was not only a Sign of tender Affection towards his Daughter, but an Evidence of his Faith in our Bleſſed Saviour; yet his confining Chriſt's Power to his Bodily Preſence, and to the Touch of his Hand, was a Token of the *Weakneſs* of his *Faith*: *Come*, ſays he, *and lay thy Hand upon her and ſhe ſhall live*: As if Chriſt could not have cured her, without either coming to her, or laying his Hand upon her. *Note here*, That altho' all that come to Chriſt, are not alike ſtrong in Faith, yet our Bleſſed Redeemer refuſes none that come unto him with a ſincere Faith, tho' in much weakneſs of Faith. *Jeſus aroſe, and followed him.*

20 (And behold, a woman which was diſeaſed with an iſſue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment. 21 For ſhe ſaid within her ſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole. 32 But Jeſus turned him about, and when he ſaw her, he ſaid, Daughter, be of good comfort thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.)

Whilſt Chriſt is on his way to the *Ruler's* Houſe, a diſeaſed Woman comes behind him, touches his Garment, and is inſtantly Healed: The Virtue lay not in her Finger, but in her Faith; or rather in Chriſt, which her Faith Inſtrumentally drew forth. *Obſ. here*, How Faith oft times meets with a ſweeter Welcome, than it could expect. This poor Woman came to Chriſt, *trembling*, but went away *triumphing*; Chriſt bids her, *Be of good Comfort*, *her Faith had made her whole.*

23 And when Jeſus came into the rulers houſe, and ſaw the minſtrels and the People making a noiſe. 24 He ſaid unto them, Give Place, for the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to ſcorn. 25 But when the People were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid aroſe. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

Our Saviour being come to the *Ruler's* Houſe, finds the People very buſily preparing for the Interment of the dead Corps, with Muſick and other Solemnities. The Cuſtom of having Muſick at Funerals, came from the Heathens, no mention is made thereof in the Old Teſtament; we read of tearing the Fleſh, ſhaving the Head, eating the Bread of Mourners; alſo of Funeral-Songs, but theſe were only ſung with the Voice; but Inſtruments of Muſick at *Funerals*, came from the Pagans. Weeping and Lamentation are the moſt proper Funeral-Muſick; then, nothing ſounds ſo well as a Sigh, nor is any thing ſo much in ſeaſon, as a Tear: Yet are all Demonſtrations of immoderate and exceſſive Mourning, both hurtful to the Living, and diſhonourable to the Dead; nor is it an Argument of more Love, but an Evidence of leſs Grace. *Obſerve next*, In what ſenſe our Saviour affirms that *the Damſel was not Dead. Mortua eſt vobis, mihi Dormit*, ſays St. *Jerome*; *She is Dead to you, but Aſleep to me*: I can as eaſily raiſe her from Death, as you can awake her out of Sleep. Her Soul was ſeperated from her Body, but not yet fixt in its Eternal Manſion. Souls departed are under the Conduct of Angels, good or bad, to their ſeveral Places of Bliſs or Miſery. Probably, the Soul of this Damſel was under the Guard of Angels near her dead Body, waiting the Pleaſure of *Chriſt* in reference to it; either to reſtore it again to the Body, or to tranſlate it to its Eternal Manſion. *Note here*, That from theſe Words of our Saviour. *The Maid is not Dead but ſleepeth*, the Jeſuits plead for their Doctrine of Equivocations, and Mental-Reſervations, alledging, that when Chriſt ſaid, *ſhe is not dead*, he reſerved in his Mind, *in reſpect of my Power*. But the Words of Chriſt were plainly ſpoken to thoſe who were preparing for her Interment and Funeral Rites, and accordingly only intimate, that ſhe was not ſo dead, as that they needed to make theſe Preparations, he being come to awake her as out of Sleep.

27 And when Jeſus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and ſaying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the houſe, the blind men came to him: and Jeſus ſaith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? they ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, ſaying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened, and Jeſus ſtraitly charged them, ſaying, See, that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, ſpread abroad his fame in all that country.

The Ruler, and others who came to *Chriſt* for Cure, and Healing, believed him to be a Man, unto whom Almighty God had communicated Divine Power. But it is obſervable, that theſe poor Blind Men did believe him to be the *Meſſias*, by their calling him the Son of *David*; and according to their Faith, ſo was their Succeſs; their Faith capacitated them for a Cure. But why did our Lord enjoyn the Blind Men Silence, and ſtraitly charge them to tell no Man of the Cure? Herein the great Modeſty and Humility of *Chriſt* appeared, in avoiding all Oſtentation and Commendation; as alſo a due Care of his own Safety, leſt the publiſhing of his Miracles ſhould create him untimely Danger from the *Phariſees*.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man poſſeſſed with a devil. 33 And when the devil was caſt out, the dumb ſpake: and the multitudes marvelled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael.

Still our Lord goes about doing Good; before he Healed the Diſeaſed, here he Helps the poſſeſſed. *Learn*, 1. That amongſt the many Calamities which Sin has rendered humane Nature liable and obnoxious to, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſt by Satan. This Man's Dumbneſs was cauſed by the Devil's Poſſeſſion. *Learn*, 2. That one Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Power, and a convictive Evidence of his being truly and really God, was his caſting out Devils by the Word of his Power.

34 But the Phariſees ſaid, He caſteth out the devils through the Prince of the devils.

See here the dreadful and ſad Effects of Blindneſs, Obſtinacy, and Malice; the *Phariſees* charge Chriſt with making a contract with the Devil, affirming, that he derived his Power from him: But how unlikely was this, that Satan ſhould lend our Saviour a Power againſt himſelf, and for the Deſtruction of his own Kingdom? Oh how dangerous is a wilful and obſtinate Oppoſition of the Truth! It provokes God to deliver a Perſon up to final Obduracy.

35 And Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs, and every diſeaſe among the People. 36 But when he ſaw the multitudes, he was moved with compaſſion on them, becauſe they fainted, and were ſcattered abroad, as ſheep having no ſhepherd.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour's great Work and Buſineſs in this World; it was doing good both to the Bodies and Souls of Men; the moſt pleaſant and delightful, the moſt happy and glorious Work, that a Perſon can be imployed about. 2. His unwearied Diligence and Induſtry, in this great and good Work; *He went about all the Cities and Villages, Preaching the Goſpel, and Healing Diſeaſes*; he travelled from Place to Place, to ſeek Occaſions, and to lay hold upon all Opportunites of being Uſeful and Beneficial to Mankind. *Obſ.* 3. The particular Inſtance of our Lords *Goodneſs* and *Compaſſion towards the People* in thoſe Cities, and Villages where he Travelled; they wanted the Preaching of the Goſpel, that is, Faithful Diſpenſers of it. For tho' they had the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* to Teach them, they Inſtructing them rather in their own *Traditions*, than in the Simplicity of the *Goſpel*; Chriſt pities the People, as Sheep without a Shepherd. *Thence Learn*, That idle and lazy, unskilful and unfaithful Labourers in *Chriſt's* Harveſt, are no Labourers in his Account. *They were as Sheep having no Shepherd*. He who doth not inſtruct his Flock, and feed them with the ſincere Milk of the Word, from an Heart full of Love to God, and of Compaſſion to Souls, deſerves not the Name of a true Shepherd. Dr. *Whitby*.

37 Then ſaith he unto his diſciples, The harveſt truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt that he will ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, There is a great Number of People that are willing and prepared to receive Inſtructions, but there are but few who are able to inſtruct theſe poor Peeple in the Ways of Righteouſneſs and Truth; therefore Pray and Plead with God that he would provide Skilful and Faithful Miniſters to be ſent out to preach the Goſpel, throughout the World. *Note here*, 1. That God's *Church* is an Harveſt-Field. 2. That the *Miniſters* of God are Labourers in his Harveſt, under GOD, the Lord of the Harveſt. 3. That to God alone doth it belong to ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt; and none muſt thruſt themſelves in, till God ſends them forth. 4. That the Number of Faithful Labourers in God's Harveſt, is comparatively ſmall and few. 5. That it is the Church's Duty to pray, and that earneſtly and inceſſantly, to the Lord of the Harveſt, to increaſe the Number of Faithful Labourers, and alſo to encreaſe their Faithfulneſs.

CHAP. X.

This Chapter acquaints us with the Firſt Commiſſion which our Saviour gave his Diſcipels, to Preach the Goſpel: He directs them, Firſt, Whither to go, and to whom to Preach; namely, to the Jews, *whom he calls,* The loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael. He inſtructs them Secondly, As to the Doctrine he would have them Preach; namely, the Doctrine of Repentance. And Laſtly, He arms them againſt all the Difficulties they might meet with in their Miniſtry; and particularly, fortifies them againſt the Fears of Poverty and Perſecution.*

1 AND when he had called unto him his twelve diſciples, he gave them Power *againſt* unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe.

As the *Jewiſh* Church aroſe from Twelve *Patriarchs*, ſo did the *Chriſtian* Church become planted by Twelve *Apoſtles*; the Perſon commiſſionating them, was Chriſt. None are to undertake the Work and Calling of the Miniſtry, but thoſe whom Chriſt appoints; and the Perſons commiſſionated, were Diſciples, before they were Apoſtles: To Teach us, That Chriſt will have ſuch as Preach the *Goſpel*, to be Diſciples before they are Miniſters; trained up in the Doctrine of the *Goſpel*, before they undertake a Publick Charge. *Note farther*, The Power here Delegated by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, *over unclean Spirits, and for healing Diſeaſes*, in his Name, and after Chriſt's Reſurrection, They were enabled to confer this miraculous Power upon others, by laying their Hands upon them; an eminent Demonſtration of the Truth of the Chriſtian Faith. *Learn hence*, That to the Intent the Apoſtles might preach the Goſpel with more Authority, and greater Efficacy, Chriſt gave them a Power of working Miracles; namely, to caſt out Devils, and heal all manner of Diſeaſes in his Name. *When he called together his twelve Diſciples, he gave them power againſt unclean Spirits.*

2 Now the names of the twelve apoſtles are theſe; The firſt, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the ſon of Zebedee, and John his brother, 3 Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican, James the ſon of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whoſe ſirname was Thaddeus, 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iſcariot, who alſo betrayed him.

Obſerve here, Of the Twelve Apoſtles, *Peter* is named firſt, and *Judas* laſt. *Peter* is named fitſt, becauſe firſt called, *Matth.* 4. 18. or becauſe probably elder than the reſt: Or becauſe for Order-ſake, he might ſpeak before the reſt; From whence may be inferr'd a Primacy, but no Supremacy; a Priority of Order, but no Superiority of Degree. As the Fore-man of a *Grand-Inqueſt* has a Precedency, but no Preheminency. *Judas* is named laſt, with a Brand of Infamy ſat upon him, that he was the Traditor, the Perſon that betrayed his Lord and Maſter. *Learn thence*, That tho' the Truth of Grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a *Miniſter's* Salvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his Office, nor hinder the *Lawfulneſs* of his *Miniſtry*: *Judas*, though a *Traytor*, was yet a *Lawful Miniſter*. Inward Holineſs is not neceſſary to render the Offices belonging to the Miniſterial Function Valid and Effectual; *Judas* preaches Chriſt as well as the reſt, and was not excepted when Chriſt ſaid, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.*

5 Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth, and commanded them, ſaying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not. 6 But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

This was only a *Temporary Prohibition*, whilſt Chriſt was here upon Earth, the *Jews* being Chriſt's own *People*, of whom he came, and to whom he was Promiſed, the *Goſpel* is firſt Preached to them; but afterwards the *Apoſtles* had a Command to Teach all Nations, and after Chriſt's *Aſcenſion*, *Samaria* received the *Goſpel* by the Preaching of *Philip*, From the *Character* which Chriſt gives of the *Jews*, calling them *Loſt Sheep*; we *Learn*, 1. That the Condition of a People before brought home to Chriſt by the *Miniſtry* of the *Goſpel*, is a *Loſt Condition*: Sinners are as *Loſt Sheep*, wandring and going aſtray from God, till the *Miniſtry* of the *Word* finds them. 2. That the great Work and Office of the *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel* is to call home, and to bring in, loſt Sheep unto Jeſus Chriſt the great Shepherd. *Go*, ſays Chriſt, *to the loſt Sheep*, &c. *Mark*, Chriſt calls the *Iſraelites Sheep*, tho' they were not obedient to the Voice of their Shepherd, becauſe they were God's choſen People; and he calls them *loſt Sheep*, becauſe they were both loſt in themſelves, and alſo in great Danger of being eventually and finally loſt, by the Ignorance and Wickedneſs of their ſpiritual Guides.

7 And as ye go, Preach, ſaying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Duty* injoyned the *Apoſtles*, in order to the bringing home of *loſt Souls* to Chriſt, and that is, *Preaching*; *As ye go Preach. Note thence*, That the plain and perſwaſive *Preaching of the Goſpel*, is the ſpecial Means appointed by Chriſt for the Salvation of loſt Sinners. *Obſ.* 2. The Doctrine they are injoyned to Preach, namely, that *The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*; that is, that the promiſed *Meſſias* was come, and had ſet up his Kingdom in the World, and expected their *Obedience* to his *Laws. Where Note*, How that the *Preaching* of *John*, of *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, was one and the ſame; namely, the *Doctrine* of *Repentance*; *Repent*, ſay they all, *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*: That is, the Time of the *Meſſiah's* Appearing, which has been ſo long expected, is now come.

8 Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Here our *Saviour* impowers his *Apoſtles* to work *Miracles*, for the Confirmation of their Doctrine; but gives them a Charge to work them freely, without making any private Advantage to themſelves. Where *Obſerve* 1. How Beneficial the *Miracles* were, (which *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* wrought) to Mankind. *Moſes's Miracles* were as great *Judgments* as *Wonders*; but theſe were Beneficent; they delivered Men from Miſeries, from Bodily Diſeaſes, from the Power and Malice of Evil Spirits: *They healed the Sick, and caſt out Devils. Obſ.* 2. That *Jeſus Chriſt*, to ſhew himſelf a free Saviour, and that whatever came from him, was the Effect of Free-Grace, gave his *Apoſtles* a Charge to diſpenſe their Power in working Miracles freely, without Money, and without Price.

9 Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes: 10 Nor ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: (for the workman is worthy of his meat.)

This Command of Chriſt was Temporary, and extended only to the *Apoſtles* firſt Journey, which they were ſoon to diſpatch: Our Saviour encourages them to truſt God; firſt for *Protection*; take no Staves with you, that is, no ſtriking or ſmiting Staves for your own defence. Preachers muſt be no Strikers. Tho' a Walking Staff they might take with them: Itinerant-Preachers might be wearied with Travelling, as well as with Speaking. Next for *Proviſion*; he would not have them over-ſolicitous for that neither; ſaying, *The Workman is worthy of his Meat*. As it is a *Miniſter's* great Duty, to truſt GOD for his Maintenance; ſo it is the *People's* Duty to take care for their *Miniſter's* comfortable Subſiſtence. *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire, and the Work-man is worthy of his Meat.*

11 And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, inquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an houſe, ſalute it. 13 And if the houſe be worthy, let your Peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your Peace return to you. 14 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that houſe or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet. 15 Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Our Saviour proceeds to direct his Diſciples, how to manage this their firſt Journey in Preaching the Goſpel: he injoins them, 1. To obſerve the Rules of Decency, in their going from one Place to another; not like Beggars, wandring from Houſe to Houſe; but having entred a City or Village, to make enquiry, who ſtood beſt affected to the *Goſpel*, and there turn in. 2. Our Saviour injoyns them Civil and Religious Courteſie towards thoſe whom they applied themſelves unto. *When ye come into an Houſe ſalute it*; give it a Civil Salutation, but eſpecially a Chriſtian and Spiritual Salute, wiſhing them Mercy, Grace, and Peace. 3. He encourages his Apoſtles in the want of Succeſs; if they hear you not, *Shake off the Duſt of your Feet*. This Action was Emblematical, and ſignified, That Almighty God would in like manner ſhake off them, and eſteem them no better than the vileſt Duſt. *Note*, That thoſe who deſpiſe the Meſſage which the *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel* bring, ſhall hereafter find the Duſt of their Feet, and the Aſhes of their Grave, to give a Judicial Teſtimony againſt them in the Day of CHRIST. Where-ever the *Word* is preached, 'tis for a Teſtimony againſt them; for if the *Duſt* of a *Miniſter's* Feet bear Witneſs againſt the Deſpiſers of the *Goſpel*, their *Sermons* much more. Here *Grotius* well Notes, That the Sin of thoſe who reject the Goſpel, muſt be a wilful Sin, which it was in their Power to avoid: Becauſe it rendred them obnoxious to greater Puniſhment than *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* were to ſuffer at the day of Judgment: And becauſe committed againſt greater Light and, and greater Confirmation of the Truth; doubtleſs the higher a People Riſe under the means of Grace, the Lower they fall if they miſcarry.

16 Behold, I ſend you forth as the ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.

Our Saviour, in this and the following *Verſes*, arms his *Apoſtles* againſt all the *Difficulties*, *Dangers* and *Diſcouragements* which they might meet with in the Courſe of their *Miniſtry*: He tells them, he ſent them forth as Sheep amongſt Wolves; intimating thereby unto them, that the Enemies of the *Goſpel* have as great an Inclination from their Malicious Nature, to devour and deſtroy the *Miniſters* of Chriſt, as Wolves have from their natural temper to devour Sheep: He therefore recommends to them, *Prudence* and *Innocence*; *Be wiſe as Serpents*, to avoid the World's Injuries; and *Harmleſs as Doves*, in not revenging them. The *Miniſters* of Chriſt muſt not be altogether *Doves*, leſt they fall into Dangers; nor altogether as *Serpents*, leſt they endanger others. For as Piety without Policy is too ſimple to be ſafe, ſo Policy without Piety is too ſubtil to be good. Our Saviour in this *Text* teaches us, That Wiſdom and Innocency ſhould dwell together. Offend none by Word or Example.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their ſynagogues. 18 And ye ſhall be brought before governours and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak: for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak. 20 For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you.

Here our Saviour lets his Apoſtles know, that for their Owning *Him*, and Preaching his *Goſpel*, they ſhould be brought before all ſorts of *Magiſtrates*, and in all kinds of Courts: But he adviſes them, when they are brought before Kings and Princes, not to be anxiouſly thoughtful what they ſhould ſay; for it ſhould be given in that Hour, what they ſhould Anſwer. *Learn hence*, That tho' Truth may be oppoſed, yet Truth's Defenders ſhall never be aſhamed; and rather than they ſhall want a Tongue to plead for it, GOD himſelf will prompt them by his Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch Truths to their Minds, as all their Oppoſers ſhall not be able to gain-ſay. Yet, *Note*, That Chriſt doth not here forbid all fore-thoughts what to ſay, but only diſtruſtful Thoughts, that they ſhould not like Orators or Advocates ſtrive to make ſtudied Pleas, or Rhetorical Apologies for themſelves, ſince the Spirit would be in their Mouths, and give them immediate Supplies. *Note alſo*, That becauſe Chriſt here promiſed his Apoſtles an immediate Aſſiſtance from the Holy Spirit, how vain the Anabaptiſts and Quakers are, who by virtue of this Promiſe, do now expect the ſame Aſſiſtance in Prayer and Preaching, but they may as well pretend to caſt out Devils as the Apoſtles did, by virtue of the ſame Aſſiſtance which the Apoſtles had; whereas theſe extraordinary Gifts are long ſince ceaſed.

21 And the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up again their Parents, and cauſe them to be put to death. 22 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my Names ſake: but he that indureth to the end, ſhall be ſaved.

Our Saviour goes on in a farther Diſcovery of the World's Hatred, and Enmity againſt the *Goſpel*, and the *Preachers* of it, and gives all *Chriſtians* in general, and his *Miniſters* in particular, to underſtand, That ſuch is the Enmity of the *World* againſt *Holineſs*, and the *Profeſſors* of it, that it will overcome and extinguiſh, even the Natural Affection of the neareſt and deareſt Relations towards each other. *Grace* teaches us, *To lay down our Lives for the Brethren*; but *Corruption* teaches Brother to take away the Life of Brother; *The Brother ſhall deliver the Brother to Death.* Yet *Obſerve*, Our Saviour comforts his *Diſciples*, that there will be an end of theſe *Sufferings*; and aſſures them, That if their Faith and Patience did hold out unto the end, they ſhould be ſaved. This is our Comfort, that if our *Sufferings* for Chriſt end not in our Life-time, they will end with our Lives.

23 But when they perſecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not have gone over the cities of Iſrael, till the Son of man be come.

Our Saviour here directs his *Apoſtles* to a prudent Care of their own *Preſervation*, and allows them to flee in time of *Perſecution*; aſſuring them, That before they had gone through all the Cities of the *Jews*, Preaching the *Goſpel*, he would certainly come in Judgment againſt *Jeruſalem*, and with Severity deſtroy his own Murtherers, and their Perſecutors. *Learn*, That *Chriſt* allows his *Miniſters* the Liberty of Flight in time of *Perſecution*, that they may preſerve their Lives for future Service. Surely, 'tis no Shame to fly, when our Captain commands it, and alſo practiſes it, *Matth.* 2. Chriſt by his own Example has Sanctified that State of Life unto us, and by his Command made it Lawful for us.

24 The diſciple is not above his maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the diſciple, that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord: if they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more ſhall they call them of his houſhold?

Our Saviour here teaches all *Chriſtians*, but eſpecially *Miniſters*, how unreaſonable and abſurd it is for them, to expect kinder Uſage from an unkind *World*, than he himſelf met with: Are we greater, holier, or wiſer than He? Why then ſhould we expect better Uſage than He? Was he hated, perſecuted, reviled, murthered, for the *Holineſs* of his *Doctrine*, and the *Uſefulneſs* of his *Life*? Why then ſhould any of us, *Think ſtrange of the Fiery Trial, as if ſome ſtrange thing had befallen us?* 1 *Pet.* 4. 12. Is it not enough, *That the Diſciple be as his Maſter, and the Servant as his Lord*, but muſt he hope to be above him?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; and hid, that ſhall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkneſs, *that* ſpeak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the houſe tops.

Chriſt here exhorts his *Diſciples* to a free Profeſſion, and open Publication of the Doctrine of the *Goſpel*, from this Conſideration, that whatever they ſay or do ſhall be brought to Light, Proclaimed and Publiſhed to the World. I will make the Excellency of your Doctrine and the Innocency of your Lives, ſhine as the Light; your Integrity in deſpiſing of it, and Patience in Suffering for it, ſhall redound to God's Glory and your Commendation, at the Revelation of your Lord from Heaven. As Wicked Men have cauſe to fear, becauſe their Evil Deeds ſhall be made evident; ſo Good Men have cauſe to rejoice, becauſe their Goodneſs and Good Deeds ſhall be made manifeſt. Let it be our Care to do Good, and it ſhall be CHRIST's Care to diſcover the Goodneſs which we do, to vindicate it from Miſconſtruction, and ſet it in its cleareſt Light.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.

Obſerve here the following Particulars, 1. An unwarrantable Fear condemned; and that is, the ſinful, ſervile, ſlaviſh Fear of impotent Man. *Fear not him that can kill the Body.* 2. An holy, awful, and prudential Fear of the Omnipotent God commended. *Fear him that is able to kill both Body and Soul.* 3. The Perſons that this Duty of Fear is recommended to, and bound upon; Chriſt's own *Diſciples*, yea, his *Miniſters* and *Ambaſſadors*; they both may and ought to fear him; not only for his Greatneſs and Goodneſs, but upon the account of his Punitive Juſtice; as, *Being able to caſt both Soul and Body into Hell*: Such a Fear is not only Lawful but Laudable, not only commendable but commanded, and well becomes the Servants of God themſelves. This Text contains a certain Evidence that the Soul dies not with the Body, none are able to kill the Soul, but it continues after Death in a State of Senſibility; it is granted that Men can kill the Body, but it is denyed that they can kill the Soul, it is ſpoken of Temporal Death; conſequently then, the Soul doth not periſh with the Body, nor is the Soul reduced into an inſenſible State by the Death of the Body; nor can the Soul be ſuppoſed to Sleep as the Body doth to the Reſurrection; for an Intelligible, Thinking, and Perceiving Being as the Soul is, cannot be deprived of Senſation, Thought and Perception, no more than it can loſe its Being; the Soul after the Death of the Body, being capable of Bliſs or Miſery, muſt continue in a State of Senſation.

29 Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall to the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbred. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

Obſerve here, 1. The Doctrine which our Saviour Preaches to his *Diſciples*; and that is, the Doctrine of *Divine Providence*; which concerns it ſelf for the meaneſt Creatures; even the Birds of the Air, and the Hairs of our Head, do fall within the compaſs of God's Protecting Care. 2. Here is the Uſe which our Saviour makes of this Doctrine; namely, to fortifie the Spirits of his *Diſciples* againſt all diſtruſtful Fears, and diſtracting Cares. *Learn*, That the Conſideration of the *Divine Care*, and *Gracious Providence* of GOD over us and ours, ought to antidote our Spirits againſt all diſtruſtful Fears whatſoever. If an *Hair* from the *Head* falls not to the Ground without a *Providence*, much leſs ſhall the *Head* it ſelf; if the very *Excrements* of the Body, (ſuch are the *Hair*) be taken Care of by God, ſurely the more noble Parts of the Body, and eſpecially the nobleſt Part of our ſelves, our *Souls*, ſhall fall under his particular Regard.

32 Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. That not to confeſs Chriſt, in his Account is to deny him; and to deny him, is to be aſhamed of him. 2. That whoſoever ſhall deny, diſown, or be aſhamed of Chriſt, either in his *Perſon*, in his *Goſpel*, or in his *Members*, for any Fear or Favour of *Men*, ſhall with Shame be diſowned, and eternally rejected by Him at the Dreadful Judgment of the Great Day. CHRIST may be Denied Three Ways, *Doctrinally*, by an Erroneous and Heretical Judgment. *Verbally*, by Oral Expreſſions. *Vitally*, by a Wicked and Unholy Life. But Wo to that *Soul* that denies CHRIST any of theſe Ways.

34 Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth: I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. 35 For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter in law againſt her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes *ſhall be* they of his own houſhold.

We muſt diſtinguiſh here, betwixt the Intentional Aim of *Chriſt*'s Coming, and the Accidental Event of it. His Intentional Aim, was to propagate and promote *Peace* in the *World*; but thro' the *Corruption* of Man's Nature, the Accidental Event of his *Coming* is *War* and *Diviſion*: Not that theſe are the genuine and natural Fruits of the Goſpel, but Occaſional and Accidental only. *Note*, That the Preaching of the Goſpel, and ſetting up the Kingdom of Chriſt in the World tho' it be not the Natural Cauſe, yet it is the Accidental Occaſion of much of that War and Tumult, of much of that Diſtraction and Confuſion, which the World abounds with.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that loſeth his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.

Note here, That by *Worthineſs* we are not to Underſtand the Meritoriouſneſs of the Action, but the Qualification of the Perſon. He that cometh to Chriſt, (that is, will be his Diſciple) muſt by a deliberate Act of the Underſtanding, and well adviſed Choice of the Will, prefer him before all the World, and his deareſt Relations whatſoever; not that our Saviour, by theſe Expreſſions doth condemn Natural Love and Affection, either to our Relations, or our own Lives; but only regulates and directs it; and ſhews, that our firſt and chief Love muſt be beſtowed upon Himſelf. We may have tender and relenting Affections, towards our dear Relations; but then the Conſideration of CHRIST's Truth and Religion, muſt take Place of theſe; yea, of Life it ſelf; nay, when theſe come in Competition, we are to regard them no more, than if they were the Objects of our Hatred. *Luke* 14. 26. *If a man hate not his Father*, &c. *Learn hence*, That all the Diſciples of Chriſt ſhould be ready and willing whenever God calls them to it, to quit all their Temporal Intereſts and Enjoyments, even Life it ſelf; and to ſubmit to any Temporal Inconvenience, even Death it ſelf: And all this willingly, chearfully, and patiently; rather than diſown their Relation to Chriſt, and quit the Profeſſion of his Truth and Religion. 2. That ſuch as for Secular Intereſt, and the Preſervation of Temporal Life, do renounce their Profeſſion of Chriſt and his Religion; they do not only greatly hazard their Temporal Life, but expoſe their Eternal Life to the greateſt Danger. *He that findeth his Life, ſhall loſe it*, &c.

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, ſhall receive a prophets reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous mans reward. 42 And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.

Here in the cloſe of the *Chapter*, our Bleſſed Saviour encourages his *Apoſtles* to Faithfulneſs in their Office; by aſſuring them, that he ſhould reckon and eſteem all the Kindneſs ſhewn to them, as done unto himſelf: And to encourage the World to be kind to his *Diſciples* and *Miniſters*, he aſſures them, that even a Cup of cold Water ſhould meet with a liberal Reward: How cold is their Charity, who deny a Cup of cold Water to the *Miniſters* and *Diſciples* of Chriſt! *Learn*, 1. That there is ſome ſpecial and eminent Reward due to the Faithful *Prophets* of GOD, above other Men. 2. That he that ſhall entertain a *Prophet*, and do any good Office for him, under that Name; that is, for his Office-ſake, ſhall be Partaker of that Reward. 3. That the leaſt Office of Love and Reſpect, of Kindneſs and Charity, which we ſhew to any of the *Miniſters* or *Members* of Jeſus Chriſt, for his ſake, Chriſt accounts it as done unto himſelf, and it ſhall be rewarded by himſelf.

CHAP. XI.

1 AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had made an end of commanding his twelve diſciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having ſent forth his Twelve *Apoſtles* in the foregoing *Chapter*, to Plant and Propagate the *Goſpel*, we find him in this *Chapter* following them himſelf, in that great and neceſſary Work; *He departed to Teach and to Preach in their Cities.* CHRIST, the Great Biſhop and Shepherd of Souls, ſent not forth the *Apoſtles* as his Curates, to Labour and ſweat in the Vineyard, whilſt he took his Eaſe at Home; but he followed them himſelf: His Word of Command to them was, *Præite, Sequar*; *Go ye before, I will follow after*: *Note*, 1. That Preaching of the *Goſpel* is a great and neceſſary Work, incumbent upon all the *Miniſters* of Chriſt, let their Dignity and Preheminency in the Church be what it will: None of the Servants are above their Lord. 2. That if there be a Diſtinction betwixt *Teaching* and *Preaching*, (as ſome apprehend) they are both the Work of Chriſt's *Miniſters*, who are obliged from their *Maſter*'s Example to perform both: *Teaching* is in order to the Converſion of Sinners, and *Preaching* in order to the Edification of Saints.

2 Now when John had heard in the Priſon the works of Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples, 3 And ſaid unto him, Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?

It was not for *John*'s Information, that he ſent his *Diſciples* to *Jeſus*, but for their Satisfaction, that he was the true and promiſed *Meſſias*; *John* was aſſured of it himſelf by a Sign from Heaven at our Saviour's *Baptiſm*, Chap. 3. v. 17. But *John*'s Diſciples, out of great Zeal to him their Maſter, envied Chriſt himſelf, and were unwilling to believe any Perſon greater than their Maſter: Therefore *John* out of a pious Deſign, to confirm his *Diſciples* in the Belief of *Jeſus*'s being the true *Meſſias*, ſends them to our Saviour, to hear the *Doctrine* which he taught, and to ſee the *Miracles* which he wrought. *Learn hence*, What a Pious Deſire there is in ſuch as know Chriſt experimentally themſelves, to bring all that belong to them to a Saving Acquaintance with him.

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4 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go, and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee: 5 The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them.

Obſerve here, 1. The Way and Means which our Saviour takes for the Conviction and Satisfaction of *John*'s Diſciples, that he was the true *Meſſias*; he appeals to the Miracles wrought by himſelf, and ſubmits the *Miracles* wrought by him to the Judgment of their Senſes; *Go, and ſhew* John *the Miracles which you hear and ſee.* *Obſerve*, 2. The Miracles themſelves; *The Blind receive their ſight, the Lame walk, the Deaf hear*, &c. Chriſt was all this in a Literal Senſe, and in a Myſtical Senſe alſo, he was an Eye of Underſtanding to the Ignorant, a Foot of Power to the Weak: He opened an Ear in deaf Hearts, to receive the Word of Life: And the Poor are Evangelized; that is, turned into the *Spirit* and *Temper* of the *Goſpel*; the *Rich* hear the *Goſpel*, but the *Poor* receive it; that is, they feel the powerful Impreſſions of it: As we ſay, ſuch a one is *Italianized*, when his Carriage is ſuch, as if he were a Natural *Italian*. The Paſſive Verb Ευαγγελίζονται denotes, *Non Actum Prædicationis, ſed Effectum Evangelii Prædicati*; the *Good Effect* which the *Goſpel* had upon the Hearts and Lives of the Poor, transforming them into the likeneſs of it ſelf. *Learn*, It is a Bleſſed Thing, when the Preaching of the *Goſpel* has ſuch a powerful Influence upon the Minds of Men, that the Temper of their Minds, and the Actions of their Lives are a lively Tranſcript of the Spirit and Temper of the Holy JESUS. *Note*, That as it was Propheſied of the *Meſſias*, that he ſhould Preach the Goſpel to the Poor, *Iſa.* 61. 1. Accordingly they were the Poor whom Chriſt Preacht unto, for the *Phariſees* and *Rabbies* neglected them as the People of the Earth, *Joh.* 7. 49. and *Grotius* ſays, they had a Proverb, that the Spirit of God never reſts but upon a Rich Man. Beſides, The *Phariſees* and *Rabbies* Doctrines, which they Preacht, were vain Traditions, Allegorical Interpretations, and Cabaliſtical Deductions, which Tranſcended the Capacities of the Vulgar, ſo that they could profit very little by repairing to their Schools, and by hearing their Interpretations of the Law, and therefore our Saviour in the cloſe of this Chapter, calls the People off from them to learn of himſelf, *v.* 28. *Come unto me*, &c.

6 And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

Our Saviour here, by pronouncing them *Bleſſed that are not offended in him*, doth intimate the Miſery of thoſe who ſtumble at him, and to whom he is a Rock of Offence.

Some are offended at the *Poverty* of his *Perſon*, others are offended at the *Sublimity* and *Sanctity* of his *Doctrine*. Some are offended at his *Croſs*, others are offended at his *Free Grace*: But ſuch as inſtead of being Offended at CHRIST, Believe in him, and bottom their Expectations of *Heaven* and *Salvation* upon him, are in a Happy and Bleſſed Condition: *Bleſſed is he, that ſhall not be offended in me.*

7 And as they departed, Jeſus began to ſay unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man cloathed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they that wear ſoft cloathing, are in kings houſes. 9 But what went ye out for to ſee? A Prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more than a Prophet. 10 For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

Our Saviour having given Satisfaction to *John*'s Diſciples, next enters upon a large Commendation of *John* himſelf: Where *Obſerve*, 1. The *Perſons* whom he commended him before; not *John*'s own *Diſciples*, for they had too high an Opinion of their Maſter already, and were ſo much addicted to *John*, that they envied Chriſt for his Sake: See *Joh.* 3. 26. *Behold, Chriſt Baptizeth, and all Men come unto him.* It was a great Eye-ſore, that Chriſt had more *Hearers* and *Followers* than *John*; therefore not before *John's Diſciples*, but before the *Multitude*, Chriſt commends *John*: For as *John*'s *Diſciples* had too high, ſo the *Multitude* had too low an Opinion of him; poſſibly becauſe of his *Impriſonment* and *Suffering*. There was a time, when the People had high Thoughts of *John*, but now they undervalued him. *Learn thence*, The great uncertainty of *Popular Applauſe*; the People *contemn* to day, whom they *admired* yeſterday; he who to day is *cried up*, to morrow is *trodden down*. The *Word* and the *Miniſters* are the ſame, but this proceeds from the *Fickleneſs* and *Inconſtancy* of the People; nothing is ſo mutable as the Mind of Man, nothing ſo variable as the Opinion of the Multitude. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Time* when our Saviour thus commended *John*; not in the time of his *Proſperity* and *Greatneſs*, when the People flockt after him, and *Herod* got him to Court, and Reverenced him; but when the giddy Multitude had *forſaken* him, and he was faln into *Diſgrace* at Court, and had Preacht himſelf into a Priſon: Now Chriſt vindicates his *Innocency*, maintains his *Honour*, proclaims his *Worth*; and tells the People, that the World was not worthy of ſuch a Preacher as *John* was. *Learn thence*, That Chriſt will ſtand by, and ſtick faſt to his Faithful *Miniſters*, when all the *World* forſake them. Let the *World* ſlight and deſpiſe them at their pleaſure, yet *Chriſt* will maintain their *Honour*, and ſupport their *Cauſe*; as they bear a Faithful Witneſs to Chriſt, ſo Chriſt will bear Witneſs to their Faithfulneſs for him. *Obſerve*, 3. The Commendation it ſelf. Our Saviour commends *John*, 1. For his *Conſtancy*; he was not a *Reed ſhaken with the Wind*; that is, a Man of an unſtable and unſettled Judgment, but fixt and ſtedfaſt. 2. For his *Sobriety* and high Meaſures of *Mortification*; he was no delicate, voluptuous Perſon, but grave, ſober, and ſevere; he was mortified to the *Glory* and *Honour*, to the *Eaſe* and *Pleaſures* of the *World*. *John* wrought no Miracles, but his *Holy Converſation* was as effectual as *Miracles*, to prevail with the People. 3. For his *Humility*; he might have been what he would; the People were ready to cry him up for the *Meſſiah*, the *Chriſt* of *God*, but *John*'s lowly Spirit refuſes all; *He confeſſed, and denyed not*; *ſaying, I am not the Chriſt*, but a poor *Miniſter* of his, willing, but not worthy, to do him Service. This will commend our *Miniſtry* to the *Conſciences* of our People; when we ſeek not our own Glory, but the Glory of Chriſt. 4. Our Saviour commends *John* for his clear *Preaching* and *Revealing* of CHRIST to the People: *He was more than a Prophet*, ver. 9. becauſe he pointed out Chriſt more clearly and fully than any before him. The Ancient *Prophets* ſaw Chriſt afar off; *John* beheld him Face to Face; they Propheſied of him, he pointed at him, ſaying, This is He. Whence *Learn*, That the Clearer any *Miniſtry* is in diſcovering of CHRIST, the more Excellent it is.

11 Verily I ſay unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt; notwithſtanding, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.

Our Saviour having highly commended *John* in the foregoing *Verſes*, here he ſets Bounds to the *Honours* of his *Miniſtry*; adding, That tho' *John* was greater than all the *Prophets* that went before him, ſeeing more of Chriſt than all them, yet he ſaw leſs than them that came after him. The meaneſt Evangelical Miniſter that Preaches Chriſt come, is to be preferr'd before all the Old Prophets, who Propheſied of Chriſt to come, That Miniſter who ſets forth the Life, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, *Is greater in the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, has an higher Office in the Church, and a more excellent Miniſtry, than all the Prophets, yea, than *John* himſelf. The Excellency of a Miniſtry, conſiſts in the Light and Clearneſs of it. Now tho' *John*'s Light did exceed all that went before him, yet it fell ſhort of them that came after him: And thus he that was *Leaſt in the Kingdom of Grace* on Earth; much more, he that is leaſt in the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven, *Was greater than* John. Not that the meaneſt Chriſtian, but the meaneſt Evangelical Prophet, or Preacher of the Chriſtian Doctrine, is greater than *John*; partly in reſpect of his Doctrine, which is more Spiritual and Heavenly; partly in reſpect of his Office, which was to Preach Chriſt Crucified and Riſen again; and partly in reſpect of Divine Aſſiſtance, for *John* did no Miracle, but the Apoſtles that ſucceeded him, *went forth, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following*. Add to this, That the Holy Ghoſt fell not upon *John*, and he ſpake not by any extraordinary Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit ſent down from Heaven, as the Apoſtles did; and thus, he that was leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, was greater than *John*.

12 And from the days of John the Baptiſt, until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Our Saviour goes on in commending *John*'s Miniſtry, from the great Succeſs of it; It had that powerful Influence upon the Conſciences of Men, that no Soldiers were ever more violent and eager in the Storming and taking a ſtrong Hold, than *John*'s Hearers were in purſuing the Kingdom of Heaven. Never any Miniſter (before) diſcovered the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom ſo clearly as *John* did; and therefore never was there ſuch Zeal to preſs into the Kingdom of Heaven amongſt any, as the Hearers of *John* had. *Learn hence*, 1. That the clearer Knowledge any People have of the Worth and Excellency of Heaven, the more will their Zeal be inflamed in the Purſuit of Heaven. 2. That all that do intend and reſolve for Heaven, muſt offer Violence in the taking of it; none but the Violent are Victorious: *They take it by Force.* Which Words are both Reſtrictive, and Promiſſive. They are the Violent, and none other, that take it; and all the Violent ſhall take it. Tho' careleſs Endeavours may prove Abortive, vigorous Proſecution ſhall not miſcarry. There is alſo another Expoſition of theſe Words, *The Violent take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force*; that is, The *Publicans* and *Sinners*, and poorer ſort of People, who were lookt upon by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* as Perſons who had no Right to the Bleſſings of the *Meſſiah*; theſe as violent Invaders, and bold Intruders, embrace the Goſpel, and do as it were take it by Force from the Learned *Rabbies*, who challenge the chiefeſt Place in this Kingdom; and accordingly our Saviour tells them, St. *Matth.* 21. 31. The Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you; for ye Believed not *John* coming to you in the way of Righteouſneſs, but the Publicans and Harlots Believed him, when at the ſame time the Phariſees and Lawyers rejected, &c. being not Baptized of him.

13 For all the prophets, and the law propheſied until John. 14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Here is ſtill a further Commendation of *John*. The Law and the Prophets, till the coming of *John*, did foretell the *Meſſiah*, but not ſo determinately, not ſo nearly, not ſo clearly, as *John* did: And accordingly, he was that *Elias* which *Iſaiah* and *Malachi* foretold ſhould be the Harbinger and Fore-runner of Chriſt. But why has *John* the Baptiſt the Name of *Elias*? Poſſibly becauſe they were alike zealous in the Work of GOD; they were alike Succeſsful in that Work, and they were alike Perſecuted for their Work; the one by *Jezebel*, the other by *Herodias*.

16 But whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? It is like unto children ſitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows: 17 And ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners: but wiſdom is juſtified of her children.

Our Saviour in theſe *Words* deſcribes the perverſe Humour of the *Phariſees*, whom nothing could allure to the Embracing of the *Goſpel*, neither *John*'s Miniſtry, nor CHRIST's. This our Saviour ſets forth Two Ways. 1. *Allegorically*, verſe 16, 17. 2. *Properly*, verſe 18, 19. By way of *Allegory*, he compares them to ſullen Children, whom nothing would pleaſe, neither Mirth, nor Mourning: If their Fellows *Piped* before them, they would not *Dance*; if they Sang *Mournful* Songs to them, they would not *Lament*: That is, the *Phariſees* were of ſuch a *Cenſorious* and *Capricious* Humour, that GOD himſelf could not pleaſe them, tho' he uſed variety of *Means* and *Methods*, in order to that End. Neither the Delightful Airs of Mercy, nor the Doleful Ditties of Judgment, could affect or move their Hearts. Next, our Lord plainly Interprets this *Allegory*, by telling them, *That* John *came* to them *neither eating nor drinking*; that is, not ſo freely and plentifully, as other Men, being a very auſtere and mortified Man, both in his Diet and in his Habit: And all this was deſigned by God, that the Auſterity of his *Life*, and Severity of his *Doctrine*, might awaken the *Phariſees* to Repentance: But inſtead of this, they cenſure him for having a Devil; becauſe he delighted in Solitude, and avoided Converſe with Men. According to the Ancient Proverb, that every Solitary Perſon is either an Angel, or a Devil, either a wild Beaſt, or a God. *John* being thus rejected, Chriſt himſelf comes to them, who being of a free and familiar Converſe, not ſhunning the Society of the worſt of Men, even of the *Phariſees* themſelves, but complying with their *Cuſtoms*, and accompanying with them at their Feaſts; yet without the leaſt Compliance with them in their *Sins*; but the Freedom of our Saviour's *Converſation* diſpleaſed them, as much as *John*'s Reſervedneſs of Temper; for they cry, *Behold, a Man Gluttonous*. Chriſt's Affability towards *Sinners*, they call Approbation of their *Sins*; and his Sociable Diſpoſition, Looſeneſs and Luxury. *Learn hence*, 1. That the faithful and zealous *Miniſters* of GOD, let their Temper and Converſe be what it will, cannot pleaſe the Enemies of *Religion*, and the Haters of the Power of *Godlineſs*; neither *John*'s Auſterity, nor Chriſt's Familiarity, would gain upon the *Phariſees*. It is our Duty in the Courſe of our Miniſtry, to ſeek to pleaſe all Men for their Good: But after all our Endeavours to pleaſe all, we ſhall pleaſe but very few; but if *God* and *Conſcience* be of the Number of thoſe Few, we are Safe and Happy. *Obſerve*, 2. That it has been the old Policy of the Devil, that he might hinder the Succeſs of the *Goſpel*, to fill the Minds of Perſons with an Invincible Prejudice againſt the *Miniſters* and *Diſpenſers* of the *Goſpel*. *Obſerve*, 3. That after all the Scandalous Reproaches caſt upon *Religion*, and the *Miniſters* of it; ſuch as are Wiſdom's Children, Wiſe and Good Men, will juſtifie *Religion*; that is, approve it in their Judgments, Honour it in their Diſcourſes, and Adorn it in their Lives. *Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children.*

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not. 21 Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. 22 But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Our Saviour having gone thro' the Cities of *Galilee*, Preaching the Doctrine of Repentance, and Confirming his Doctrine with Miracles, and finding Multitudes after all his Endeavours remaining in their Impenitence, he proceeds to upbraid them ſeverely for that their Contempt of *Goſpel-Grace*: *Then began he to upbraid the Cities, &c.* Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Cities upbraided, *Chorazin*, *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*; in their Pulpits he daily Preacht, and thoſe Places were the Theatres upon which his *Miracles* were wrought; other Cities only heard, theſe ſaw; but where he Preached moſt, he prevailed leaſt. Like ſome Fiſher-men, he catcht leaſt in his own Pond. *Obſerve*, 2. What he upbraids them for; not for Diſreſpect to his Perſon, but for Diſobedience to his Doctrine; *Becauſe they repented not.* The great Deſign of Chriſt, both in the *Doctrine* which he Preached, and in the *Miracles* which he wrought, was to bring Men to Repentance; that is, to forſake their Sins, and Live well. *Obſerve*, 3. Whom he upbraids them with; *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Nations rude and barbarous, out of the Pale of the Church; ignorant of a *Saviour*, and of the Way of *Salvation* by him. *Learn*, That the higher a People riſe under the Means, the lower they fall, if they miſcarry. They that have been neareſt to Converſion, and yet not Converted, ſhall have the greateſt Condemnation when they are Judged. *Capernaum*'s Sentence ſhall exceed *Sodom*'s for Severity, becauſe ſhe exceeded *Sodom* in the Enjoyment of Means and Mercy. The Caſe of thoſe who are Impenitent under the Goſpel, is of all others the moſt Dangerous, and their Damnation ſhall be heavieſt and moſt ſevere. *Sodom*, the ſtain of Mankind, a City ſoakt in the Dregs of Villany, yet this Hell upon Earth ſhall have a milder Hell at the laſt Day of Judgment, than unbelieving *Capernaum*, as the next Verſe informs us, *Verſe* 23.

23 And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

This City lying under greater Guilt than the reſt, Chriſt names it by its ſelf, without the reſt; nay, he doth not only name it, but notifie it, as being lifted up to Heaven by Signal Favours and Priviledges; namely, Chriſt's *Preſence*, Chriſt's *Preaching*, and *Miracles*. *Obſ.* 1. *Capernaum*'s Priviledge injoyed, tho' a poor obſcure Place in it ſelf, yet ſhe was by the Perſon, Miniſtry, and Miracles of Chriſt, lifted up to Heaven. *Learn thence*, That Goſpel-Ordinances and Church-Priviledges enjoyed, are a mighty Honour and Advancement to the pooreſt Perſons and obſcureſt Places. *Obſ.* 2. An heavy Doom denounced, *Thou ſhalt be brought down to Hell*; that is, thy Condition ſhall be as ſad, as that of the worſt of Men, for thy Non-proficiency under the Means injoyed. *Learn thence*, That Goſpel-Ordinances and Church-Priviledges injoyed, but not improved, provoke Almighty God to inflict the foreſt of Judgments upon a People. *Thou* Capernaum, *exalted to Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell.*

24 But I ſay unto you, That it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Obſerve here, 1. That there ſhall be a Day of Judgment. 2. That in the Day of Judgment, ſome Sinners ſhall fare worſe than others. There are Degrees of Puniſhment among the Damned. 3. That the worſt of Heathens, who never heard of a Saviour, nor ever had an Offer of Salvation by him, ſhall fare better in the Day of Judgment, than thoſe that continue impenitent under the Goſpel. CHRIST here avouches, that *Capernaum*'s Sentence ſhall exceed *Sodom*'s for Severity.

25 At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. 26 Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.

In theſe *Verſes*, our Saviour glorifies his Father, for the wiſe and free Diſpenſation of his Goſpel-Grace, to the meaneſt and moſt ignorant; whilſt the Great and Learned Men of the World undervalued and deſpiſed it. By *Wiſe* and *Prudent* Chriſt means Worldly Wiſe Men, particularly

Scribes and *Phariſees*, from whom God in Judgment did hide the Myſteries of the Goſpel, and ſaid ye ſhall not ſee; becauſe they had cloſed their Eyes, and ſaid we will not ſee. By *Babes*, underſtand ſuch as are at the greateſt Diſtance in natural Conſiderations from a Capacity for ſuch Rich and Heavenly Manifeſtations. By *hiding theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent*, we are not to underſtand God's putting Darkneſs into them; but his leaving them to their own Darkneſs, or denying them that light which they had no deſire to ſee; plainly intimating that God judicially hides the Myſteries of Heavenly Wiſdom from Worldly Wiſe Men. *Learn*, 1. That 'till GOD reveals himſelf, his Nature and Will; no man can know either what he is, or what he requires. *Thou haſt revealed.* 2. That the Wiſe Men of the World have in all Ages deſpiſed the *Myſteries* of the *Goſpel*, and have therefore been Judicially given up by GOD to their own wilful Blindneſs. *Thou haſt hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent.* 3. That the moſt Ignorant and moſt Humble, not the moſt Learned if Proud, do ſtand ready to receive and embrace the *Goſpel-Revelation. Thou haſt revealed them unto Babes.* 4. That this is no leſs pleaſing to Chriſt, than it is the *Pleaſure* of the Father. *Even ſo Father, as it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Father, thy Election and Choice pleaſes me, as being the *Choice* and *Good Pleaſure* of thy *Wiſdom.*

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.

In this *Verſe*, Our Saviour opens his *Commiſſion*, and declares, 1. His *Authority*; that *all Power* is committed *to Him*, as Mediator, *from God the Father*. 2. His *Office*; *to reveal* his Father's Mind and Will to a Loſt World. *No Man knoweth the Father, but the Son*: That is, the Eſſence and Nature of the Father, the Will and Counſel of the Father; only as *the Son reveals them. Learn*, That all our *Saving Knowledge* of God is in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt; he as the Great *Prophet* of the Church, reveals the *Mind* and *Will* of GOD unto us for our Salvation, and no Saving knowledge without him.

28 Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

Here we have a ſweet *Invitation*, backt with a gracious *incouragement*; Chriſt invites ſuch as are weary of the Burden of Sin, of the Slavery of Satan, of the Yoak of the Ceremonial Law, to come unto him for Reſt and Eaſe; and as an Encouragement, aſſures them, that upon their *coming to Him*, they ſhall *find Reſt. Learn*, 1. That Sin is the Soul's *Laborious Burden. Come unto me ye that Labour.* Labouring ſuppoſes a Burden to be laboured under; this Burden is Sin's Guilt. 2. That ſuch as come to Chriſt for Reſt, muſt be Laden Sinners. 3. That Laden Sinners not only may, but ought to come to Chriſt for Reſt; they may come, becauſe invited; they ought to come, becauſe commanded. 4. That the Laden Sinner, upon his coming, ſhall find Reſt. *Come*, &c. *Note here*, That to come to Chriſt in the Phraſe of the New Teſtament, is to believe in him, and to become one of his Diſciples, *John* 7. 38. *He that cometh unto me ſhall not Hunger, he that believeth on me ſhall not Thirſt.*

29 Take my yoak upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.

Here Note, That the Phraſe of taking the Yoak is Judaical; the Jewiſh Doctors ſpeak frequently of the Yoak of the Law, the Yoak of the Commandments, and the Ceremonies impoſed on the Jews are called a Yoak, *Acts* 15. 10. Now as *Moſes* had a Yoak, ſo has Chriſt; and accordingly, *Obſ.* 1. Chriſt's *Diſciples*, muſt wear Chriſt's *Yoak*. This Yoak is twofold; a Yoak of *Inſtruction*, and a Yoak of *Affliction*. Chriſt's Law is a Yoak of *Inſtruction*; it reſtrains our Natural Inclinations, it curbs our Senſual Appetites; it is a Yoak to corrupt Nature; this Yoak Chriſt calls *his* Yoak, *Take my Yoak upon you*: 1. Becauſe he as a Lord, lays it upon our Necks. 2. Becauſe he as a Servant, bore it upon his own Neck firſt, before he laid it upon ours. *Obſerve* 2. That the Way and Manner how to bear Chriſt's Yoak muſt be learnt of Chriſt himſelf. *Take my Yoak upon you, and learn of me*; that is, Learn of me, both what to bear, and how to bear. *Obſerve*, 3. That Chriſt's Humility and Lowly-mindedneſs is a great Encouragement to *Chriſtians* to come unto him, and Learn of him, both how to obey his Commands, and how to ſuffer his Will and Pleaſure. *Learn of me, for I am meek.*

30 For my yoak is eaſie, and my burden is light.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's *Authority* and *Greatneſs*; he has *Power* to impoſe a Yoak, and inflict a Burden. *My Yoak: My Burden.* 2. His *Clemency* and *Goodneſs*, in impoſing an eaſie Yoak, and a light Burden. *My Yoak is eaſie, my Burden is light*; that is, my Service is good and gainful, profitable and uſeful; not only *tolerable*, but *delightful*; and as is my Yoak, ſuch is my Burden: The Burden of my *Precepts*, the Burden of my *Croſs*, both light, not abſolutely, but comparatively; the Weight of my *Croſs* is not comparable with the Glory of my *Crown. Learn*, That the Service of Chriſt, tho' hard and intolerable to Corrupt Nature, yet is a moſt deſirable and delightful Service to Grace, or Renewed Nature; Chriſt's Service is eaſie to a Spiritual Mind. 1. It is eaſie as it is a Rational Service; conſonant to Right Reaſon, tho' contradictory to depraved Nature. 2. Eaſie, as it is a Spiritual Service; delightful to a Spiritual Mind. 3. Eaſie, as it is an aſſiſted Service; conſidering that we work not in our own Strength, but in God's. 4. Eaſie, when once it is an accuſtomed Service; tho' hard to Beginners, it is eaſie to Progreſſors; the farther we walk, the ſweeter is our Way. 5. Eaſie, as it is the moſt gainful Service; having the Aſſurance of an Eternal Weight of *Glory*, as the Reward of our *Obedience*. Well therefore might our Holy LORD ſay to his Followers, *My Yoak is eaſie, and my Burden is light.*

CHAP. XII.

Our Bleſſed Saviour in this Chapter, takes occaſion to inſtruct his Diſciples in the Doctrine of the Sabbath; ſhewing, that Works of Neceſſity and Mercy may be performed upon that Day, without any Violation of the Divine Command.

1 AT that time Jeſus went on the ſabbath-day through the corn, and his diſciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Obſ. here, The poor Eſtate, and low Condition of Chriſt's own *Diſciples* in this World; they wanted Bread, and are forced to pluck the Ears of Corn, to ſatisfie their Hunger. God ſometimes ſuffers his deareſt Children in this World to fall into Straits, and to taſte of Want, for the Trial of their Faith, and Dependance upon his *Power* and *Providence*.

2 But when the Phariſees ſaw it, they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy diſciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the ſabbath-day.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Perſons* finding Fault with this Action of the *Diſciples*, the *Phariſees*; many of whom accompanied our Saviour, not out of any good Intention, but only with a Deſign to cavil at, and quarrel with every thing, that either Chriſt or his Diſciples ſaid or did. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Action* which they found fault with; *The Diſciples plucking off the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day.* Where *Note*, It is not Theft, which the *Diſciples* are accuſed for by the *Phariſees*: For to take in our Neceſſity ſo much of our Neighbour's Goods, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if he were preſent, and knew our Circumſtances, he would give us, is no Theft: but it is the *ſervile* Labour on the Sabbath, in gathering the Corn, that the *Phariſees* ſcruple; plucking the Ears, was lookt upon as a ſort of Reaping. *Learn thence*, How zealous *Hypocrites* are for the leſſer Things of the Law, whilſt they neglect the weightier; and how ſuperſtitiouſly addicted to the *Outward Ceremonies*, placing all *Holineſs* in the Obſervation of them.

3 But he ſaid unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him, 4 How he entred into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the Prieſts? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the ſabbath-days the Prieſts in the temple

profane the ſabbath, and are blameleſs? 6 But I ſay unto you, that in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

In theſe *Words*, our Saviour defends the *Action* of his *Diſciples* in plucking the Ears of *Corn* in their Neceſſity, by a double Argument: 1. From *David*'s Example; Neceſſity freed him from Fault in eating the Conſecrated Bread, which none but the *Prieſts* might lawfully eat; for in Caſes of Neceſſity, a *Ceremonial Precept* muſt give place to a *Moral Duty*; Works of Mercy and Neceſſity, for preſerving our Lives, and the better fitting us for Sabbath-Services, are certainly lawful on the Sabbath-Day. 2. From the Example of the *Prieſts* in the Temple, who upon the Sabbath do break the outward Reſt of the Day, by Killing their Sacrifices, and many other Acts of Bodily Labour; which would be accounted Sabbath-Prophanation, did not the Service of the Temple require and juſtifie it. Now ſaith our Saviour, if the Temple-Service can juſtifie Labour on the Sabbath, I am greater than the Temple, and my Authority and Service can juſtifie what my *Diſciples* have done. From the whole we *Learn*, That Acts of Mercy, which tend to fit us for Works of Piety, not only may, but ought to be done on the Sabbath-Day.

7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs.

Learn hence, That the Law of *Mercy* is much more excellent than the Law of *Ceremonies*; and where both cannot be obſerved, the leſs muſt give place to the greater. God never intended, that the *Ceremonies* of his Service in the Firſt Table, ſhould hinder *Works of Mercy* preſcribed in the Second Table. All GOD's *Commands* are for Man's *Good*: Where both cannot be obeyed, he will have the *Moral Duty* performed, and the *Ceremonial Service* omitted: *He will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*; that is, he will have Mercy rather than Sacrifice, where both cannot be had.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, I, who am Lord of the Sabbath, declare to you, that I have a Power to diſpence with the *Obſervation* of it: And it is my Will, that the *Sabbath*, which was appointed for Man, ſhould yield to Man's Safety and Welfare. Chriſt the Son of Man, was really the Son of GOD; and as ſuch, had Power over the Sabbath, to diſpence with it, yea, to abrogate and change it at his Pleaſure.

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their ſynagogue. 10 And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered: and they asked him, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath-days? that they might accuſe him. 11 And he ſaid unto them, What man ſhall there be among you, that ſhall have one ſheep, and if it fall into a pit on the ſabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12 How much then is a man better than a ſheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the ſabbath-days.

Here we have another Diſpute betwixt our Saviour and the *Phariſees*, concerning the Sabbath; Whether it be a Breach of that Day, mercifully to Heal a Perſon having a withered Hand? Chriſt confutes them from their own Practice, telling the *Phariſees*, that they themſelves judg'd it Lawful to help out a Sheep, or an Ox, if faln into a Pit on that Day: How much more ought the *Life* of a *Man* to be prefer'd? Here we may Remark, how Inveterate a Malice the *Phariſees* had againſt our Saviour, when they could find no Crime to charge him with, they blame him for working a merciful and miraculous Cure upon the Sabbath-Day. When Envy and Malice (which are evermore quick-ſighted) can find no occaſion of Quarrel, they will invent one, againſt the Innocent.

13 Then ſaith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand: and he ſtretched it forth; and it was reſtored whole, like as the other. 14 Then the Phariſees went out, and held a council againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 15 But when Jeſus knew it, he withdrew himſelf from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, 16 And charged them that they ſhould not make him known:

Obſ. 1. The merciful and miraculous Cure, wrought by our Saviour's Power, upon the Impotent Man; *He ſaid unto him, Stretch out thine Hand; and his Hand was reſtored*. *Obſ.* 2. What a contrary Effect this Cure had upon the *Phariſees*; inſtead of convincing them, they conſpire againſt him; Chriſt's Enemies, when *Arguments* fail, fall to *Violence*. *Obſ.* 3. The prudent *Means* which our Saviour uſes for his own Preſervation, *He withdrew himſelf*. Chriſt's Example Teaches his *Miniſters* their Duty; to avoid the Hands of *Perſecutors*, and prudently to preſerve their Lives, unleſs when their Sufferings are like to do more good than their Lives. *Obſ.* 4. The great *Humility* of Chriſt in concealing his own Praiſes; he had no Ambition that the Fame of his Miracles ſhould be ſpread abroad, for he ſought not his own Glory; neither would he by the Noiſe of his Miracles, enrage the *Phariſees* againſt him to take away his Life; knowing that his Time was not yet come, and he had much Work to do before his Death.

17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 18 Behold, my ſervant whom I have choſen, my beloved, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets. 20 A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

That is, our Bleſſed Saviour did thoſe *Good Acts* before ſpoken of, that it might appear, that he was the true *Meſſias* Propheſied of by *Iſaias* the Prophet, *Chap.* 42. 1, 2. Behold my Servant, whom I have ſet apart for Accompliſhing the Work of *Salvation* for a loſt World; he by the Fulneſs of my Spirit, ſhall Teach the Nations the Way of Truth and Righteouſneſs: He ſhall not ſubdue Men by Force and Violence, but as the Prince of *Peace*, ſhall deal gently with the Weak, and cheriſh the leaſt Meaſures of *Grace*, and Degrees of *Goodneſs*. *Obſerve here*, 1. A Deſcription of Chriſt as *Mediator*; he is God the Father's *Servant*, imployed in the moſt *Noble* Service; namely, that of the Inſtructing and Saving a loſt World. *Obſ.* 2. With what Meekneſs and Gentleneſs Chriſt ſets up his Spiritual Kingdom in the *World*, he doth not with Noiſe and Clamour, with Force and Violence, Subdue and Conquer; but with Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, gains Perſons Conſent to his Government and Authority. *Obſ.* 3. The Gentle Carriage of Chriſt, in treating thoſe of Infirmer Grace; he doth and will graciouſly preſerve, and tenderly cheriſh the ſmalleſt Beginnings, the Weakeſt Meaſures, and the Loweſt Degrees of Sincere Grace, which he obſerves in any of his Children and People. By the bruiſed Reed and ſmoaking Flax, underſtand ſuch as are broken with a Senſe of Sin, ſuch as are weak in Faith, ſuch as are ſo much over-power'd by Corruption, that they do rather Smoak than Burn or Shine; ſuch as are thus Low and Mean in Spirituals, Chriſt will not break with his Power, nor quench with his Rebukes, till he has perfected their Converſion, and their weak Grace is become Victorious.

22 Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this the ſon of David? 24 But when the Phariſees heard it, they ſaid, This *fellow* doth not caſt out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

As a farther Inſtance of Chriſt's Miraculous Power, he Healeth one whom the Devil had caſt into a Diſeaſe, which deprived him both of Speech and Sight: At this Miracle the Multitude wonder, ſaying, *Is not this the Son of David*? That is, the promiſed *Meſſias*: The *Phariſees* hearing this, with great Bitterneſs and Contempt ſaid, *This Fellow caſteth out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils*. *Obſerve from hence*, How *Obſtinacy* and *Malice* will make Men miſconſtrue the Actions of the moſt Holy and Innocent; CHRIST *caſteth out Devils*, ſay the *Phariſees*, *by the help* *of the Devil.* There never was any Perſon ſo *Good*, nor any Action ſo *Gracious*, but they have been ſubject both to Cenſure and Miſconſtruction. The beſt Way is, to ſquare our *Actions* by the Right Rule of *Juſtice* and *Charity*, and then let the *World* paſs their *Cenſures* at their Pleaſure. When the Holy and Innocent JESUS was thus aſſaulted, what Wonder is it, if we his ſinful *Servants* be Branded on all ſides by Reviling *Tongues*? Why ſhould we expect better Treatment than the Son of GOD?

25 And Jeſus knew their thoughts, and ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, is brought to deſolation: and every city or houſe divided againſt it ſelf, ſhall not ſtand: 26 And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf; how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt them out? therefore they ſhall be your judges. 28 But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or elſe, how can one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man, and then he will ſpoil his houſe? 30 He that is not with me is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.

Our Bleſſed Saviour to clear his *Innocency*, and to convince the *Phariſees* of the Unreaſonableneſs of this their *Calumny* and *Falſe Accuſations*, offers ſeveral Arguments to their Conſideration. 1. That it was very unlikely that Satan ſhould lend him this *Power*, to uſe it againſt himſelf. As Satan has a Kingdom, ſo he has Wit enough to preſerve his Kingdom, and will do nothing to weaken his own Intereſt. Now if I have received my Power from Satan, for deſtroying him and his Kingdom, then is Satan divided againſt himſelf. 2. Our Saviour tells them, they might with as much Reaſon attribute all Miracles to the Devil, as thoſe that were wrought by him. There were certain *Jews* amongſt themſelves, who caſt out Devils in the Name of the GOD of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; Chriſt asks the *Phariſees*, by what Power theſe their Children caſt them out? They acknowledged, that thoſe did it by the Power of GOD; and there was no Cauſe, but their Malice, why they ſhould not acknowledge that what he did was by the ſame Power. *If I caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you*; that is the *Meſſias* is come; becauſe he wrought theſe Miracles, to prove that he was the *Meſſias*. 3. Another Argument to prove, That the Miracles which Chriſt wrought were by the Power of God, and not by the help of Satan is this; The Devil is very ſtrong and powerful; and there is no Power but God's only, that is ſtronger than his. Now, ſays Chriſt, if I were not aſſiſted by a Divine Power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong Man, who reigns in the World as in his Houſe: It muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong Man, that ſhall bind Satan; and who is he, but the GOD of Strength?

31 Wherefore I ſay unto you, All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy againſt the *holy* Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Obſ. 1. How our Saviour makes a Difference betwixt ſpeaking againſt the Son of Man, and ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt. By *Speaking againſt the Son of Man*, is meant all thoſe Reproaches which were caſt upon our Saviour's Perſon as Man, without reflecting upon his Divine Power as GOD, which he teſtified by his Miracles. Such were their reproaching him with the Meanneſs of his Birth, their cenſuring him for a Wine-bibber, and a Glutton, and the like. But by *Speaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, is meant, their Blaſpheming and Reproaching that Divine Power whereby he wrought his Miracles; which was an immediate Reflection upon the Holy Spirit, and a Blaſpheming of him. *Obſ.* 2. The Nature of this Sin of ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt: it conſiſted in this, that the *Phariſees* ſeeing our Saviour work Miracles, and caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God; contrary to the Conviction of their own Minds, they maliciouſly aſcribe his Miracles to the Power of the Devil; charging him to be a Sorcerer and a Magician, and to have a familiar Spirit, by whoſe help he did thoſe mighty Works; when in Truth he did them by the Spirit of God. *Obſerve*, 3. That this Sin above all others, is called unpardonable, and upon what Account it is ſo: The Caſe of ſuch *Blaſphemers* of the Holy Spirit, is not only dangerous, but deſperate; becauſe they reſiſt their laſt Remedy, and oppoſe the beſt Means for their Conviction. What can God do more, to convince a Man that Jeſus Chriſt is the True *Meſſiah*, than to work Miracles to that purpoſe? Now if when Men ſee plain Miracles wrought, they will ſay it is not God that works them, but the Devil; as if Satan would conſpire againſt himſelf and ſeek the Ruine of his own Kingdom, There is no way left to convince ſuch Perſons, but they muſt and will continue in their Oppoſition to Truth to their inevitable Condemnation.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

Theſe Words may either refer to the *Phariſees*, or to Chriſt himſelf. If to the *Phariſees*, the Senſe is, You hypocritical *Phariſees* ſhew your ſelves what you are, by your *Words* and *Actions*, even as the *Fruit* ſheweth what the *Tree* is. If they refer to Chriſt, then they are an Appeal to the *Phariſees* themſelves, to judge of our Saviour and his Doctrine by the Miracles which he wrought: If he wrought by the Devil, his Works would be as bad as the Devils; but if his Works were good, they muſt own them to be wrought by the Power of God. The Expreſſion implies, That a Man may be known by his *Actions*, as a *Tree* may be judged by his *Fruit*; yet not by a ſingle *Action*, but by a *Series* of *Actions*; not by a particular *Act*, but by our general *Courſe*.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil, ſpeak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.

Note here, 1. The Fervency and Zeal of our Saviour's Spirit in the *Compellation* given to the *Phariſees*; he calls them a *Generation of Vipers*; intimating, that they were a venomous and dangerous ſort of Men. *Learn thence*, That it is not always railing and indiſcreet Zeal, to call Wicked Men by ſuch Names as their Sin deſerves. *Obſerve farther*, From our Saviour's ſaying, That *out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth ſpeaketh*; that the Heart is the Fountain both of *Words* and *Actions*; and according as the Heart is, ſo are the Current of Mens *Words* and Actions, either good or evil.

35 A good man out of the good treaſure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treaſure, bringeth forth evil things.

Obſerve here, A double Treaſure diſcovered in the Heart of Man. 1. An Evil Treaſure of Sin and Corruption, both Natural and Acquired, from whence proceed Evil Things. Now this is called a *Treaſure*, not for the Preciouſneſs of it, but for the Abundance of it; a little doth not make a Treaſure: And alſo for the Continuance of it; tho' it be perpetually overflowing in the Life, yet doth the Heart continue full; this Treaſure of *Original Corruption* in Man's Nature, it may be drawn low in this Life by ſanctifying Grace; but it can be never drawn dry. 2. Here is a *Good Treaſure of Grace* diſcovered, in a Sanctified and Renewed Man; which is the Source and Spring from whence all Gracious Actions do proceed and flow: For as the Heart of Man by Nature is the Fountain from whence all Sin ſprings, ſo the Heart renewed by Grace, is the Source and Spring from whence all Gracious Actions do proceed and flow.

36 But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

I ſay unto you: I, that have always been in my Father's Boſom, and fully known his Mind: I that am conſtituted Judge of Quick and Dead, and underſtand the Rule of Judgment: I, even I, do aſſure you that every Word that has no Tendency to promote the Glory of God, or ſome way the good of Others, will fall under Cenſure at the great Day, without an Intervening Repentance. *Note here,* That there are Two ſorts of Words, for which we muſt be Judged; ſinful Words, and idle Words. Sinful Words are blaſphemous Words, cenſorious Words, lying and ſlandering Words. Idle Words, are ſuch as ſavour nothing of Wiſdom or Piety; that have no tendency to make Men either Wiſer, or Better: How light ſoever Men make of their *Words* now, yet in GOD's Balance another Day they will be found to weigh very heavy. What a Bridle ſhould this Text be to extravagant Tongues, ſee *Col.* 4. 6. *Let your Speech be always ſeaſoned with Salt,* that is, with Wiſdom, *&c.* for our Words may miſchief others a long time after they are ſpoken; how many Years may a frothy or filthy Word, a prophane Scoff, an Atheiſtical jeſt ſtick in the Minds of them that hear it, after the Tongue that ſpake is dead; a Word ſpoken is Phyſically Tranſient, but morally Permanent.

37 For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

Obſerve here, The Argument which our Saviour uſes, to move us to watchfulneſs over our *Words*: *By our Words we ſhall be juſtified*; not Meritoriouſly, but Declaratively: *Good Words* declare *Goodneſs* in our ſelves, and we ſhall be declared *Good* to others by our *Words*; if our *Words* and *Actions* do correſpond and agree with one another. *Death and Life are in the Power of the Tongue*: That is, according to the right or wrong Uſing of the Tongue, we may judge and gather whether Men are Dead or Alive, as to God; and bound for Heaven, or Hell. Doubtleſs Juſtification or Condemnation, will paſs upon Men at the Day of Judgment, according to the State of the Perſon, and frame of the Heart, now our Words will juſtifie or condemn us in that Day, as Evidences of the State and Frame of the Soul, we uſe to ſay ſuch Witneſſes hang'd a Man; that is, the Evidence they gave, caſt and condemn'd him. O think of this, ſeriouſly; if Words evidence the State of thy Soul, What an Helliſh State muſt thy Soul be in, who haſt inured thy ſelf to the Language of Hell, to Oaths and Curſes. Sins whereby the Devil cheats Men more than by any Sins whatſoever; they are damned for them, yet get nothing by them, neither Profit nor Pleaſure.

38 Then certain of the Scribes and of the Phariſees anſwered, ſaying, Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee. 39 But he anſwered and ſaid to them, An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly: ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveth ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation; and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. 42 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for ſhe came from the uttermoſt Parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.

Obſerve here, 1. The Requeſt which the *Phariſees* make to Chriſt; *Maſter, we would ſee a Sign from thee.* But had not Chriſt ſhewed them ſigns enough already? What were all the Miracles wrought in their ſight, but convincing Signs that he was the true *Meſſias*? but Infidelity mixt with Obſtinacy, is never ſatisfied. *Obſerve,* 2. Our Saviour's Anſwer to the *Phariſees* Requeſt; he tells them that they ſhould have one Sign more, to wit, that of his *Reſurrection from the Dead: For as* Jonas *lay buried Three Days in the Whales Belly,* and was then wonderfully reſtored: So ſhould (and did) our Saviour continue in the grave part of Three Natural Days, and then riſe again. *Obſerve,* 3. How CHRIST declares the inexcuſableneſs of their State, who would not be convinced by the former Miracles he had wrought, that he was the true *Meſſiah*; nor yet be brought to believe in him by this laſt Sign or Miracle of his *Reſurrection.* The *Ninevites* ſhall condemn the *Phariſees, They repented at the Preaching of* Jonas; but theſe would not be convinced by the Preaching and Miracles of JESUS; *The Queen of* Sheba *alſo, who came from the South to hear and admire the Wiſdom of* Solomon, *ſhall riſe up in Judgment* againſt thoſe that reject CHRIST, who is the Wiſdom of the Father; and the Doctrine delivered by him, which was the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God. *Learn,* That the Sins of Infidelity and Impenitency are exceedingly heightned, and their Guilt aggravated, from the Means afforded by God to bring a People to Faith and Obedience. The Sin of the *Phariſees* in rejecting Chriſt's Miracles and Miniſtry, was by far greater than that of the *Ninevites*, had they rejected *Jonas* his Meſſage and Miniſtry, ſent by God amongſt them.

43 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none. 44 Then he ſaith, I will return into my houſe from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſhed. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation.

The Deſign and Scope of this *Parable,* is to ſhew that the *Phariſees* by rejecting the *Goſpel,* and refuſing to believe in *Chriſt*, were in a ſeven-fold worſe Condition, than if the *Goſpel* had never been Preacht to them, and a *Saviour* had never came among them; becauſe by our Saviour's Miniſtry Satan was in ſome ſort caſt out: But for rejecting Chriſt and his Grace, Satan had got a ſeven-fold ſtronger Poſſeſſion of them now, than before. From this Parable *Learn,* 1. That Satan is an Unclean Spirit; he has loſt his Original Purity, his Holy Nature, in which he was Created; and is become univerſally filthy in himſelf; no Means being allowed him by God, for the purging of his filthy and unclean Nature. Nay he is a perfect Enemy to Purity and Holineſs, maligning all that love it, and would promote it. 2. That Satan is a reſtleſs and unquiet Spirit; being caſt out of Heaven, he can reſt no where; when he is either gone out of a Man thro' Policy, or caſt out of a Man by Power, he has no Content or Satisfaction, till he returns into a filthy Heart, where he delights to be as the Swine in Miry Places. 3. That Wicked and Prophane Sinners have this unclean Spirit dwelling in them; their Hearts are Satan's Houſe and Habitation; and the Luſts of Pride and Unbelief, Malice and Revenge, Envy and Hypocriſie, theſe are the Garniſhings of Satan's Houſe. Man's Heart was God's Houſe by Creation, 'tis now Satan's by Uſurpation, and Judiciary Tradition. 4. That Satan by the Preaching of the Goſpel may ſeem to go out of Perſons, and they become ſober and civilized; yet may he return to his old Habitation, *And the laſt end of that man may be worſe than the beginning.*

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren ſtood without, deſiring to ſpeak with him. 47 Then one ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee. 48 But he anſwered and ſaid unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he ſtretched forth his hand towards his diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother, and my brethren. 50 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.

Obſerve here, 1. The Verity of Chriſt's Human Nature, he had Affinity and Conſanguinity with Men, Perſons near in Blood to him, called his Brethren, that is, his Couſin-Germans. 2. That the Holy Virgin her ſelf was not wholly free from Failings and Infirmities; for here ſhe does untimely and unſeaſonably interrupt our Saviour, when Preaching to the People, and imployed about his Father's Buſineſs. 3. That Chriſt did not neglect his Holy Mother, nor diſregard his near Relations; only ſhewed, that he preferr'd his Father's Service before them. 4. *Learn,* How dear Believers are to Jeſus Chriſt; he prefers his Spiritual Kindred, before his Natural. Alliance in Faith, and Spiritual Relation to Chriſt, is much nearer and dearer than Alliance by Blood: To bear

Chriſt in the Heart, is much better than to bear him in the Womb. Bleſſed be God, this greateſt Priviledge is not denied to us even now: Tho', ſee Chriſt we cannot, yet love him we may; his Bodily Preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his Spiritual Preſence is not denied us. Tho' Chriſt be not ours in Houſe, in Arms, in Affinity, in Conſanguinity, yet in Heart, in Faith, in Love, in Service, he is, or may be Ours. Verily, Spiritual Regeneration brings Men into a more Honourable Relation to Chriſt, than Natural Generation ever did, *Whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father, he is my Brother, Siſter, and Mother.*

CHAP. XIII.

1 THE ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſat by the ſea-ſide. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, ſo that he went into a ſhip, and ſat, and the whole multitude ſtood on the ſhoar. 3 And he ſpake many things unto them in parables, ſaying, ——

The foregoing *Chapter* gave us an Account of an Awakening Sermon Preached by our Saviour to the *Phariſees.* In this *Chapter* we are acquainted with the Continuance of his Preaching to the Multitude: Where Three things are *Obſervable,* 1. Our Lord's Aſſiduity and unwearied Diligence in Preaching of the *Goſpel*; for this *Sermon* was made the ſame Day with that in the former *Chapter, Verſe* 1. *The ſame Day went Jeſus out, and ſat by the Sea-ſide.* A good Pattern for the Preachers of the *Goſpel* to follow. How aſhamed may we be to Preach Once a Week, when our Lord Preacht Twice a Day. *Obſerve,* 2. The Place our Lord Preacht in, a *Ship,* not that he declined the Temple or the Synagogue, when he had the Opportunity: But in the want of them, Chriſt thought an *Houſe,* a *Mountain,* a *Ship,* no unmeet Place to Preach in. It is not the Place that Sanctifies the Ordinance, but the Ordinance that Sanctifies the Place. *Obſerve,* 3. The Manner of our Lord's Preaching; it was by *Parables* and *Similitudes*: Which was an Ancient Way of Inſtruction among the *Jews,* and a very Convincing Way; at once working upon Mens Minds, Memories, and Affections; making the Mind attentive, the Memory retentive; and the Auditors inquiſitive after the Interpretation of the *Parable.* Some are of Opinion, that our Saviour's *Parables* were ſuited to his Hearers Employments; ſome of whom being Huſbandmen, he reſembles his Doctrine to *Seed* ſown in the *Field*: For thus he ſpeaks;

—— 3 Behold, a ſower went forth to ſow. 4 And when he ſowed, ſome *ſeeds* fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls came and devoured them up. 5 Some fell upon ſtony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they ſprung up, becauſe they had no deepneſs of earth: 6 And when the ſun was up, they were ſcortched, and becauſe they had not root, they withered away. 7 And ſome fell among thorns: and the thorns ſprung up and choaked them. 8 But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty-fold, ſome thirty-fold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The *Scope* of this Parable is, to ſhew that there are Four ſeveral Sorts of Hearers of the Word, and but one Sort only that Hear to a *Saving Advantage*: Alſo to ſhew us the Cauſe of the different *Succeſs* of the Word Preacht. Here *Obſerve,* 1. The *Sower,* Chriſt and his Apoſtles; he, the prime and principal *Sower,* they, the ſecondary and ſubordinate *Seedsmen.* Chriſt ſows his own Field, his Miniſters ſow his Field; he ſows his own Seed, they ſow his Seed. Wo unto us, if we ſow our own Seed, and not Chriſt's. *Obſerve,* 2. The *Seed* ſown, the Word of God. Fabulous Legends, and Unwritten Traditions, which the *Seeds-men* of the Church of *Rome* ſow, theſe are not Seed, but Chaff; or their own Seed, not Chriſt's. Our Lord's Field muſt be ſown with his own Seed, not with mixt Grain. *Learn,* 1. That the Word of God Preacht, is like Seed ſown in the Furrows of the Field. As Seed has a Fructifying Virtue in it, by which it encreaſes, and brings forth more of its own kind; ſo has the Word of God a Quickning Power, to Regenerate and make alive dead Souls. *Learn,* 2. That the Seed of the Word, where it is moſt plentifully ſown, is not alike Fruitful. As Seed doth not thrive in all Ground alike, ſo neither doth the Word Fructifie alike in the Hearts of Men: There is a Difference both from the Nature of the *Soil,* and from the Influence of the *Spirit. Learn,* 3. That the Cauſe of the Word's Unfruitfulneſs, is very different, and not the ſame in all: In ſome, 'tis the Policy of Satan, that Bird of Prey, which follows God's Plough, ſteals away the Precious Seed; in others, 'tis a hard Heart of Unbelief; in others, the Cares of the World, like Thorns, choak the Word, overgrow the Good Seed, draw away the Moiſture of the Earth, and the Heart of the Soil, and hinders the Influences of the Sun. The far greater part of Hearers are fruitleſs and unprofitable Hearers. *Learn,* 4. That the beſt Ground doth not bring forth Fruit alike; ſome good Ground brings forth more, and ſome leſs; *Some thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred Fold.* In like manner, a Perſon may be a profitable Hearer of the Word, altho' he doth not bring forth ſo great a Proportion of Fruit as others, provided he bring forth as much as he can.

10 And the diſciples came, and ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in parables? 11 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Here we have the Diſciples *Queſtion,* and our Saviour's *Anſwer.* Their Queſtion is, *Why ſpeakeſt thou to the People in Parables,* which they do not underſtand? They cannot ſee the Soul of thy Meaning thro' the Body of thy Parables. Chriſt anſwers, *To you,* my Diſciples, and ſuch as you are, who love the Truth, and deſire to obey it, the Spirit *gives* you an Affective, Operative, and Experimental Knowledge, not barely to know theſe things, but to believe them, and feel the Power of them, in and upon your own Hearts: But the Generality of Hearers do ſatisfie and content themſelves with a bare Notional Knowledge of what they hear; a Parable therefore is well enough for them. *Learn,* 1. That the Doctrines of the Goſpel are Myſteries. 2. That it is a matchleſs and unvaluable Priviledge, practically and ſavingly to underſtand and know Goſpel-Myſteries. 3. That this Priviledge all are not Sharers in, nor Partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given: *Unto you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom, but to them it is not given.*

12 For whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance: but whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away, even that he hath.

That is, whoſoever improves the Meaſures of Grace received, ſhall obtain farther Meaſures and Degrees of it: *But from him* that doth not improve what he has already received, *ſhall be taken away, that which* to himſelf or others, *he ſeemed to have,* his Common Gifts, and Moral Endowments. *Learn,* That where there are Beginnings of True Grace, and a right and wiſe Improvement of it, God will make rich Additions of more Grace to the preſent Stock which we have received.

13 Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables: becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not: and hearing they hear not, neither do they underſtand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias, which ſaith, By hearing, ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand: and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive. 15 For this peoples heart is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and ſhould underſtand with their heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.

Theſe Words of our Bleſſed Saviour, as I conceive, have a peculiar Reference and Relation to the *Phariſees*; who attended upon Chriſt's Miniſtry, not with an honeſt ſimplicity of Mind, to be inſtructed by it, but to carp and cavil at it. Our Saviour tells them, he had formerly ſpoken things very plainly and clearly to them, and alſo wrought Miracles before them, to convince them of the Divinity of his Perſon, and of the Verity of his Doctrine: But they would not believe, either his Perſon or his Doctrine to be from God; and therefore he would now ſpeak to them in dark Parables, that they may be Judicially Blinded; they ſinfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the cleareſt Light, and ſaid they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their Eyes judicially, and ſays, they ſhall not ſee. *Learn hence*, To acknowledge the Divine Juſtice, which ſpeaks darkly to them that deſpiſe the Light: Such who ſee, and yet ſee not; they ſhall ſee the Shell, but not the Kernel; they ſhall hear the Parable, but not underſtand the Spiritual Senſe and Meaning of it. When wilful Blindneſs of Mind is added to Natural Blindneſs, it is a juſt and righteous thing with God, to ſuperadd Judicial Blindneſs, and to give them Obſtinacy of Heart, *His Curſe unto them.*

16 But bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee; and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I ſay unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them: and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Here our Saviour pronounces ſuch of his Diſciples and Followers Bleſſed, who received the Truths of the Goſpel ſo far, as they were already taught them; he aſſures them, that they ſhall receive farther Light, and fuller Meaſures of Spiritual Illumination: *Bleſſed are your Eyes, for they ſee. Learn*, That ſuch as have received the leaſt Meaſures of Spiritual Knowledge and Saving Illumination, and do improve it, they are in a happy and bleſſed Condition; for as they are capable of farther Meaſures of Divine Knowledge, ſo ſhall they be Partakers of them.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the ſower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and underſtandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart: this is he which received ſeed by the way-ſide. 20 But he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth it, and anon with joy receiveth it. 21 Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He alſo that received ſeed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word: and the care of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches choak the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received ſeed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and underſtandeth it, which alſo beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, ſome an hundred fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty.

As if our Lord had ſaid, You my *Diſciples*, who are not ſatisfied with a *Sound of Words*, I will Explain to you the Senſe and Signification of this Parable: The Scope of which is, to ſhew the different Effects which the Word of God has upon Mens Hearts, and the Reaſon of that Difference. The *Seed* is the *Word*, the *Sower* is the *Preacher*, the *Soil* is the *Heart* and *Soul* of Man. Now our Saviour aſſures us, that the Hearts of ſome *Hearers* are like *High-Way-Ground*, in which the Seed is not covered with the *Harrow* of Meditation; others are like *Stony-Ground*, in which the Word has *no Root*, no Root in their Underſtandings, Memories, Conſcience, Will, or Affections: But *They are offended*, either at the Depth and Profoundneſs of the Word, or at the Sanctity and Strictneſs of it, or at the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it. Again, ſome Hearers our Lord compares to *Thorny-Ground*. Thorns are covetous Deſires, which choak the good Seed, ſhadow the Blade when ſprung up, keep off the Influences of the Sun, and draw away the Fatneſs of the Soil from the *Seed*: All theſe Effects have Thorns in and among the *Seed*: And the like Effects have Worldly Affections and Covetous Deſires in the Heart of Man, rendring the *Word* unfruitful and unprofitable. But the good Chriſtian hears the *Word* attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, practiſes it univerſally, and *brings forth Fruit with Patience and Perſeverance*; Fruit that will redound to his Account, in the Great Day of Account. *Learn*, 1. That no *Hearers* are in Chriſt's Account *Good Hearers* of the *Word*, but ſuch as bring forth the *Fruits* of an holy, humble, and peaceable Converſation. 2. That a Perſon may be a good *Hearer* of the *Word*, if he brings forth the beſt *Fruit* he can, tho' it be not in ſo great a Proportion as others do: As ſome *Ground* brings forth Thirty, ſome Sixty, and ſome an Hundred fold: In like manner do all the ſincere *Hearers* of the *Word*; they all bring forth *Fruit*, tho' not all alike; all in *Sincerity* and *Reality*, tho' not all to the ſame Degree, and none to Perfection. *Obſerve* laſtly, Satan is here compared to the Fowls of the Air, which pick up the Seed before it take any Root in the Earth. The Devil is very jealous of the Succeſs of the Word, and therefore labours all he can to deſtroy the Word before it comes to operate upon the Heart; which he doth ſometimes by the Cares of the World, ſometimes by vain Companions, who prove more Quench-Coals unto early Convictions; if he can ſteal away the Word or choak it, he has his Deſire and Deſign.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which ſowed good ſeed in his field: 25 But while men ſlept, his enemy came and ſowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was ſprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares alſo. 27 So the ſervants of the houſhoulder came and ſaid unto him, Sir, didſt not thou ſow good ſeed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He ſaid unto them, An enemy hath done this. The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

The Deſign and Scope of this Parable is, to ſhew that there is no Expectation of Univerſal Purity in the Church of God in this Life; but as the Tares and the Wheat grow together in the ſame Field, ſo Hypocrites and Sincere Chriſtians are, and will be intermixt in the ſame Church, and can hardly be diſcerned one from the other. St. *Jerom* obſerves, That in the *Eaſtern Countries*, the Tares and the Wheat were ſo like one another whilſt they were in the Blade, that there was no knowing them aſunder. *Learn*, 1. That in the Outward and Viſible Church there ever has been, and will be a Mixture of Good and Bad, of *Saints* and *Sinners*, of *Hypocrites* and *Sincere Chriſtians until the Day of Judgment*. 2. That in that Day, Chriſt will make a thorough and a perfect *Separation*, and divide the *Tares* from the *Wheat*; that is, the *Righteous* from the *Wicked*. 3. That in the mean Time none ought to be ſo offended at this Mixture in the Church, as to ſeparate from Church-Communion on that Account: Until the Harveſt it is not to be expected, that the *Tares* and the *Wheat* ſhould be perfectly ſeparated. Yet *Obſerve*, 4. That tho' the *Tares* are forbidden to be pluckt up, when ſown, yet it is the Churches Duty, all ſhe can, to hinder their Sowing. Tho' we muſt not root the Wicked up, yet we muſt prevent the rooting of Wickedneſs all we can. Our Saviour that forbad to pluck up the *Tares*, did not forbid to hinder their Sowing. *Note here*, How vain is the Collection of the *Eraſtians* from hence, that the Wicked are not to be cut off by Excommunication from the Communion of the Church; nor doth this Text prove that the Magiſtrates may not cut off Evil Doers: Seeing this was not ſpoken to them, but to the Miniſters of the Church.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field. 32 Which indeed is the leaſt of all

ſeeds: but when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree: ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 Another parable ſpake he unto them, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All theſe things ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable ſpake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world.

Our Saviour's Deſign in this Parable is, to ſhew, how the *Goſpel* from ſmall and little, from unlikely and contemptible Beginnings, ſhould ſpread and encreaſe, fructify and grow up; Like as Muſtard-Seed, one of the ſmalleſt of Grains, grows up to a conſiderable Tallneſs; and as a little Leaven turns a great Heap of Meal into its own Nature; ſo the *Goſpel* ſhould ſpread and increaſe, Nations and Countries becoming Chriſtian. *Learn*, That how ſmall Beginnings ſoever the *Goſpel* had in its firſt Plantation, yet by the Fructifying Bleſſing of God, it has had, and ſhall have a wonderful Increaſe.

36 Then Jeſus ſent the multitude away, and went into the houſe: and his diſciples came unto him, ſaying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, He that ſoweth the good ſeed, is the Son of man: 38 The field is the world: the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: 39 The enemy that ſowed them, is the devil: the harveſt is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 43 Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The Parable of the *Tares* of the Field, Chriſt is pleaſed to explain to his Diſciples after this manner. The Perſon *Sowing* Good Seed, was himſelf, *the Son of Man*; who firſt Planted the *Goſpel*: The *Field* in which the Seed was ſown, was the *World*; that is, the Church in the World: The *Good Seed*, called *The Children of the Kingdom*, are ſincere Chriſtians: The *Tares*, called *The Children of the Wicked One*, are prophane Sinners, and unſound Hypocrites: The *Enemy* is the *Devil*; the *Harveſt* is the *End* of the *World*, and the *Angels are the Reapers*. *Learn*, 1. That the Mixture of the Tares and the Wheat, of the Righteous and the Wicked, muſt and ſhall remain in the Church unto the End of the World. 2. That in the End of the World, the Angels ſhall perform the Work of Separation, gathering the Righteous from among the Wicked; when every one's Harveſt ſhall be according to his Fruit; *The Righteous ſhining in the Kingdom of their Father, the Wicked caſt into a Furnace of Fire.*

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, ſeeking goodly Pearls: 46 Who when he had found one Pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it.

By the *Treaſure* hid in the Field, and the *Pearl* of great Price, are underſtood, Chriſt the Grace of the Goſpel, and the Way to Life and Salvation, therein diſcovered: He that is throughly convinced of the Worth and Excellency of Chriſt's Grace, will part with all that he has to purchaſe and obtain them. *Learn*, That the Sinner who will have Intereſt in Chriſt, and a Part in Goſpel-Grace, muſt part with all that he has to purchaſe and obtain them, even with his Goods and Lands, with his Wife and Children; for Chriſt and his Grace are a Real Good, a Subſtantial Good, a Durable Good; He out-bids all the Offers that the World can make, and therefore it is our Wiſdom to part with all for him, and eſpecially his Sins, dearer to him than all the reſt.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind. 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away. 49 So ſhall it be at the end of the world: the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt; 50 And ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire: there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

The Deſign and Scope of this Parable alſo, is to ſet forth the State of the Goſpel-Church, which is like a Floor, where Chaff is mixed with Wheat; a Field, where Tares are mixt with good Corn; a Net, where bad Fiſhes are involved with the good. As the Wheat muſt not be removed out of the Floor, before the time of Winnowing; nor the Tares gathered out of the Field, before the time of Reaping; nor the good Fiſhes break through the Net to get from the bad, before the time of Separation: So muſt not Chriſtians forſake a Church's Communion, becauſe of the preſent Mixture of Good and Bad in the Church. For a mixt Communion in the Church, and the good Chriſtians communicating with the bad, doth neither defile the Ordinances of Chriſt, nor pollute thoſe that ſincerely join in them.

51 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Have ye underſtood all theſe things? They ſay unto him, Yea, Lord. 52 Then ſaid he unto them, Therefore every ſcribe which is inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſure things new and old.

Obſerve here, 1. The Title, which our Saviour puts upon *Goſpel-Miniſters*, they are *Houſhold-Stewards*. 2. He points out the Office of thoſe Stewards; and that is, to provide for the Houſhold, both with Plenty and Variety. *He muſt bring forth out of his Treaſure*, in Plenty; and *Things new and old*, for their Variety. There are two Eſſential Qualifications in a Steward, *Faithfulneſs* and *Prudence*: He muſt be honeſt and faithful, in bringing out of his own Treaſure, not another's; and he muſt be prudent, in bringing things new, as well as old; not new Truths, but old Truths in a new Dreſs; leſt the Houſhold by always feeding upon the ſame Diſh, do nauſeate it, inſtead of being nouriſhed by it.

53 And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own countrey, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, Whence hath this man this wiſdom, and theſe mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's ſon? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his ſiſters, are they not all with us? whence then hath this man all theſe things? 57 And they were offended in him.———

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's tender and compaſſionate Regard to his own Country-men, the People of *Galilee* and *Nazareth*; he Preached to them, *in their Synagogues*. 2. The Effect which his Doctrine had upon them; *They were Aſtoniſhed at it*, but not Converted by it; they Admire, but did not Believe. 3. The Cauſe of their rejecting Chriſt's Miniſtry, was the Meanneſs of his Perſon, the Contemptibleneſs of his outward

Condition, the Poverty of his Relations. *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* Mar. 6. 3. He is called *The Carpenter?* Whence the Fathers concluded, that our Saviour during the time of his obſcure Privacy, wrought upon *Joſeph's* his reputed Father's Trade; and *Juſtin Martyr* ſays, he made Ploughs and Yoaks. Sure we are, our Lord ſpent no Time in Idleneſs, tho' we are not certain how he imployed his Time before he entred his Publick Miniſtry. *Note*, That the Poverty and Meanneſs of Chriſt's Condition, was that which Multitudes ſtumbled at; and which kept many, yea, moſt, from believing on him. None but a Spiritual Eye, can diſcern Beauty in an humbled Saviour. *Is not this the Son of the Carpenter?* 2. That it is no Impediment to, nor Hindrance of our Faith, that we never ſaw Chriſt's Perſon in the Fleſh, nor knew his Parentage and Education; for here are his own Country-men, who daily ſaw his Perſon, heard his Doctrine, and were Witneſſes of his Holy Converſation; yet inſtead of believing in him, were offended at him.

57——But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, ſave in his own countrey, and in his own houſe.

Our Saviour tells them, he doth not wonder that ſo few of his own Country-men, to whom he had been ſo familiarly known, did deſpiſe his Perſon, and reject his Doctrine; for a Prophet *generally* has leaſt Eſteem, where he has been brought up; becauſe perhaps the Follies of his Childhood, and Indecencies of his Youth, are remembred and reported to his Diſparagement. *Learn*, 1. That there is a real Tribute of Honour due, and payable to every Prophet, or Faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That the Miniſters of Chriſt for the moſt part, have leaſt Honour from their own Country-men, to whom they are beſt known. 3. That altho' it be ſo, yet this may not be thro' their own Fault, for Chriſt was ſo amongſt his.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.

This Sin not only locks up the Heart of a Sinner, but alſo binds up the Hand of a Saviour. Unbelief obſtructed Chriſt's Miraculous Works, when on Earth; and it obſtructs his Gracious Works now in Heaven. Ah! curſed Unbelief! which ſhuts up, O Sinner, thy Heart, and ſhuts out thy Saviour, and will effectually ſhut Thee out of Heaven, and not only procure Damnation, but no Damnation like it, *Mark* 16. 16. Chriſt was unable, becauſe they were unwilling; his Impotency was occaſioned by their Infidelity; he did not, becauſe he would not: And that he would not, proceeded from a Defect in their Faith, not from any Deficiency in Chriſt's Power: Their Unbelief bound his Hands, and hindred the Execution of his Power.

CHAP. XIV.

The former part of this Chapter gives us an Account of the Death of John *the Baptiſt, together with the Occaſion of it, which was his plain and faithful Reproving of* Herod *for the Uncleanneſs he lived in.*

1 AT that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus, 2 And ſaid unto his ſervants, This is John the Baptiſt, he is riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.

Obſerve here, 1. How ſtrange it was, that *Herod* ſhould not hear of the Fame of *Jeſus* till now; all the Country and adjoining Regions had rung of his Fame, only *Herod's* Court hears nothing. Miſerable is that Greatneſs, which keeps Princes from the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. How *Plain* is it from hence, that our Saviour came not at Court, he once ſent indeed a Meſſage to that Fox (*Herod*) whoſe Den he would not approach; Teaching us by his Example, not to affect, but to avoid outward Pomp and Glory. The Courts of Princes are too often a very bad Air for Piety and Religion to thrive in. *Obſerve*, 2. The Miſconſtruction of *Herod*, when he heard of our Saviour's Fame: This (ſays he) is *John* the Baptiſt, whom I Beheaded. His Conſcience told him, he had offered an unjuſt Violence to an Innocent Man; and now he is afraid that he is come again to be revenged on him for his Head. A Wicked Man needs no worſe Tormenter than his own Mind. Oh the Terrors and Tortures of a Guilty Conſcience! How great are the Anxieties of Guilt, and the Fears of Divine Diſpleaſure, than which nothing is more ſtinging, and perpetually tormenting!

3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in Priſon for Herodias ſake, his brother Philips wife. 4 For John ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, becauſe they counted him as a prophet.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon, that put the Holy Baptiſt to Death; 'twas *Herod*, 'twas *Herod* the King, 'twas *Herod* that invited *John* to Preach at Court, and heard him gladly. 1. It was *Herod Antiphas*, Son to that *Herod* who ſought Chriſt's Life, *Chap.* 2. Cruelty runs in a Blood. *Herod* the Murderer of *John*, who was the Fore-runner of Chriſt, deſcended from that *Herod* who would have murdered Chriſt himſelf. 2. 'Twas *Herod* the King. Sad! That Princes, who ſhould always be Nurſing Fathers to, ſhould at any time be the Bloody Butchers of the Prophets of God. 3. 'Twas *Herod* that heard *John* gladly; *John* took the Ear and the Heart of *Herod*, and *Herod* binds the Hands and Feet of *John*. Oh how inconſtant is a Carnal Heart to good Reſolutions! The Word has ofttimes an Awakening Influence, where it doth not leave an Abiding Impreſſion upon the Minds of Men. *Obſerve*, 2. The Cauſe of the Baptiſt's Death; it was for telling a King of his Crime. *Herod* cut off that Head, whoſe Tongue was ſo bold to tell him of his Faults. The Perſecution which the Prophets of God fall under, is uſually for telling Great Men of their Sins: Men in Power are impatient of Reproof, and imagine that their Authority gives them a Licence to Tranſgreſs. *Obſerve*, 3. The plain Dealing of the Baptiſt in reproving *Herod* for his Crime; which in one Act, was Adultery, Inceſt, and Violence. *Adultery*, that he took another's Wife; *Inceſt*, that he took his Brother's Wife; *Violence*, that he took her in ſpight of her Huſband. Therefore *John* doth not mince the Matter, and ſay, It is not Convenient; but, *It is not lawful for thee to have her*; it was not the Crown and Scepter of *Herod* that could daunt the Faithful Meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in God's Miniſters, both Courage and Impartiality. *Courage*, in fearing no Faces; *Impartiality*, in ſparing no Sins. For none are ſo great, but they are under the Authority and Command of the Law of God.

6 But when Herods birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleaſed Herod. 7 Whereupon he promiſed with an oath, to give her whatſoever ſhe would ask. 8 And ſhe being before inſtructed of her mother, ſaid, Give me here John Baptiſts head in a charger. 9 And the king was ſorry: nevertheleſs for the oaths ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. 10 And he ſent and beheaded John in the priſon. 11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damſel: and ſhe brought *it* to her mother.

Several *Obſervables* are here to be taken Notice of. 1. The Time of this Execrable Murther; it was upon *Herod's* Birth-Day. It was an Ancient Cuſtom among the Eaſtern Kings, to Celebrate their Birth-Days; *Pharaoh's* Birth-Day was kept, *Gen.* 40. *Herod's* here; both with Blood: Yet theſe Perſonal Stains do not make the Practice unlawful. When we ſolemnize our Birth-Day, with Thankfulneſs to our Creator and Preſerver, for Life and Being, for Protection and Preſervation to that Moment; and recommend our ſelves to the Care of his good Providence for the Remainder of our Days; this is an Act of Piety and Religion. But *Herod's Birth-Day* was kept with Revelling and Feaſting, with Muſick and Dancing: Not that Dancing, which in it ſelf is a ſet, regular, harmonious Motion of the Body, can be unlawful; any more than Walking or Running: Altho' Circumſtances may make it ſinful. But from this diſorderly Banquet on *Herod's* Birth-Day, we *Learn*, That Great Men's Feaſts and Frolicks are too often a Season of much Sin. *Obſ.* 2. The Inſtigator and Promoter of the Holy Baptiſt's Death, *Herodias and her Daughter*: That Good

Man falls a Sacriſice to the Fury and Malice, to the Pride and Scorn of a Luſtful Woman, for being a Rub in the Way of her Licentious Adultery. Reſolute Sinners, who are mad upon their Luſts, run furiouſly upon their Gainſayers, tho they be the Prophets of God themſelves; and reſolve to bear down all Oppoſition they meet with in the Gratification of their Unlawful Deſires. *Obſerve* 3. With what Reluctancy *Herod* conſented to this Villany; *The King was ſorry.* Wicked Men oft-times ſin with a troubled and diſturbed Conſcience; they have a mighty Struggle with themſelves, before they commit their Sins; But at laſt, their Luſts get Maſtery over their Conſciences. So did *Herod*'s here: For, 4. Notwithſtanding his Sorrow, he commands the Fact: *He ſent and Beheaded* John *in the Priſon*: And, a threefold Cord tied him to this Performance, 1. The Conſcience of his Oath. See his Hypocriſy, he made Conſcience of a raſh Oath, that made no Scruple of real Murder. 2. Reſpect to his Reputation: *Them that ſat with him*, heard him promiſe, and will be Witneſſes of his Levity, if he do not perform. Inſiſting upon *Punctilio's* of Honour has hazarded the Loſs of Millions of Souls. 3. A Loathneſs to diſcontent *Herodias* and *her Daughter*. Oh vain and fooliſh Hypocrite, who dreaded the diſpleaſing of a wanton Miſtreſs, before the offending of God and Conſcience. *Obſerve* 5. Theſe wicked Women not only require the Baptiſt to be Beheaded, but that his Head be brought in a Charger to them. What a Diſh was here, to be ſerved up at a Prince's Table on his Birth Day? A dead Man's Head ſwimming in Blood! How prodigiouſly inſatiable is Cruelty and Revenge? *Herodias* did not think her ſelf ſafe, 'till *John* was dead: She could not thing him dead, till his Head was off; ſhe could not think his Head off, till ſhe had it in her Hand. Revenge never thinks it has made ſure enough. Oh how cruel is a wicked Heart, that could take Pleaſure in a Spectacle of ſo much Horror! How was that Holy Head toſt by impure and filthy Hands: That true and faithful Tongue, thoſe ſacred Lips, thoſe pure Eyes, thoſe mortified Cheeks are now inſultingly handled by an Inceſtuous Harlot, and made a Scorn to the drunken Eyes of *Herod's* Gueſts. From the whole, *Learn*, 1. That neither the Holieſt of Prophets, nor the Beſt of Men, are more ſecure from Violence, than from Natural Death. He that was Sanctified in the Womb, Conceived and Born with ſo much Miracle, Lived with ſo much Reverence, and Obſervation; is now at Midnight obſcurely Murthered in a cloſe Priſon. *Learn*, 2. That it is as true a Martyrdom, to Suffer for Duty, as for Faith: he Dies as truly a Martyr, that Dies for doing his Duty, as he that Dies for profeſſing his *Faith*, and bearing Witneſs to the *Truth*.

12 And his diſciples came, and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jeſus. 13 When Jeſus heard of it, he departed thence by ſhip into a deſart place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

The Diſciples of *John* hearing that their Holy Maſter was thus baſely and barbarouſly murdered, took up his dead Body and buried it. Whence we *Learn*, That the Faithful Servants of God are not aſhamed of the Sufferings of the Saints, but will teſtifie their reſpect unto them both living and dead. *Obſerve farther*, How our Bleſſed Saviour upon the notice of *John*'s Death flies into the Deſart for the Preſervation of his own Life. Jeſus knew that his Hour was not yet come, and therefore he keeps out of *Herod*'s way. It is no Cowardice to fly from Perſecutors, when Chriſt our Captain both practiſes it himſelf, and directs us to it, ſaying. *When they perſecute you in one City, flee*, &c.

14 And Jeſus went forth, and ſaw a great multitude, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, and he healed their ſick.

Obſerve here, With what Condolency and tender Sympathy the compaſſionate Jeſus exerciſed Acts of Mercy and Compaſſion towards the Miſerable, and Diſtreſſed. *He was moved with compaſſion*; that is, toucht with an inward Senſe and Feeling of their Sorrow; *And healed their Sick*. Thoſe that came to Chriſt for Healing, found Three Advantages of Cure, above the Power and Performance of any Earthly Phyſician; to wit, Certainty, Bounty, and Eaſe. *Certainty*, in that all Comers were infallibly cured: *Bounty*, in that they were freely cured without Charge: And *Eaſe*, in that they were cured without Pain.

15 And when it was evening his diſciples came to him, ſaying, This is a deſart place, and the time is now paſt, ſend the multitude away that they may go into the villages, and buy themſelves victuals.

Note here, 1. The Diſciples Pity towards the Multitude, that had long attended upon Chriſt's Miniſtry in the Deſart; they preſuming the People hungry, having faſted all the Day, requeſt our Saviour to diſmiſs them, that they may procure ſome Bodily Refreſhment. *Learn thence*, That it well becomes the Miniſters of Chriſt to reſpect the Bodily Neceſſities, as well as to regard the Spiritual Wants of their People. As the Bodily Father muſt take Care of the Soul of his Child, ſo muſt the Spiritual Father have reſpect to the Bodily Neceſſities of his Children. *Obſ.* 2. The Motion which the Diſciples make on the behalf of the Multitude: *Send them away, that they may buy Victuals.* Here was a ſtrong Charity, but a weak Faith. *A ſtrong Charity*, in that they deſire the People's Relief: But a *weak Faith*, in that they ſuppoſe they could not otherwiſe be relieved, but by ſending them away to buy Victuals: Forgetting that Chriſt who had Healed the Multitude miraculouſly, could as eaſily Feed them miraculouſly, if he pleaſed: All things being equally eaſy to Omnipotency.

16 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, they need not depart, give ye them to eat.

Obſ. here, 1. Our Saviour's ſtrange Anſwer to the Diſciples Motion; *They need not depart*, ſays Chriſt. *Need not?* Why the People muſt either feed or famiſh? Victuals they muſt have, and this being a deſart Place, there was none to be had. Surely then there was need enough. But, 2. Chriſt's Command was more ſtrange than his Aſſertion? *Give ye them to eat.* Alas! Poor Diſciples! They had nothing for themſelves to eat, how then ſhould they give the Multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us, what of our ſelves we are unable to perform, it is to ſhew us our Impotency and Weakneſs, and to provoke us to look up to him. *That worketh all our Works, in us and for us.*

17 And they ſay unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fiſhes.

Note here, What a poor and ſlender Proviſion the Lord of the whole Earth has for his Houſhold and Family; *Five loaves*, and thoſe *Barley*; *two Fiſhes*, and *they ſmall*: Teaching us, That theſe Bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pampered. Our Belly muſt not be our Maſter, much leſs our God. We read but twice that Chriſt made any Entertainments, and both times his Gueſts were fed *with Loaves and Fiſhes*, plain Fare and homely Diet. The end of Food is to ſuſtain Nature, we ſtifle it with a Gluttonous Variety: Meat was ordained for the Belly, the Belly for the Body, the Body for the Soul, and the Soul for God. *Obſerve* farther. As the quality of the Victuals was plain and courſe, ſo the quantity of it was ſmall and little; *Five* Loaves and *two* Fiſhes. Well might the Diſciples ſay, *what are theſe among ſo many?* The Eye of Senſe and Reaſon ſees an impoſſibility of thoſe Effects which Faith can eaſily apprehend, and Divine Power more eaſily produce.

18 He ſaid, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs, and took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed and brake, and gave the loaves to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

Obſ. 1. How the Maſter of the Feaſt Marſhals his Gueſts, he commands them *all to ſit down*: None of them Reply, ſit down, but to what? Here are the Mouths, but where is the Meat? We can ſoon be ſet, but whence ſhall we be ſerved? Nothing of this; but they obey and expect. Oh how eaſy is it to truſt God, and rely upon Providence, when there is Corn in the Barn, and Bread in the Cupboard; but when our Stores are all empty, and nothing is before us, then to depend upon an inviſible Bounty, is a true and noble Act of Faith. *Obſ.* 2. The Actions performed by our Bleſſed Saviour. *He Bleſſed, and Brake, and gave the Loaves to his Diſciples, and they to the multitude*, 1. *He Bleſſed*, Teaching us, by his Example in all our Wants to look up to Heaven for a Supply; to wait upon God for his Bleſſing, and not to ſit down to our Food as a Beaſt to his Forage. 2. He *brake* the Loaves. He could have multiplied them whole, why would he rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us that we are to expect his Bleſſing in the Diſtribution, rather than in the Reſervation of what he gives us. Scattering is the way to encreaſing: Not Grain hoarded up in the Granary, but ſcattered in the Furrows of the Field, yields increaſe. Liberality is the way to Riches, and Penurioußneſs the Road to Poverty. 3. Chriſt gave the Bread thus broken to his Diſciples, that they might diſtribute it to the Multitude. But why did not our Lord diſtribute it with his own Hand, but by the Hands of his Diſciples? Doubtleſs to win reſpect to his Diſciples from the People. The ſame courſe doth our Lord take in Spiritual Diſtribution. He that could feed the World by his immediate Hand, chooſes rather by the Hands of his Miniſters to divide the Bread of Life to all Hearers.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thouſand men, beſides women and children.

They did all eat, not a Crumb and Bit, but to Satiety and Fulneſs; *They did Eat, and were filled*, yet Twelve Baskets remained: More is left than was at firſt ſet on. So many Bellies, and yet ſo many Baskets filled. The Miracle was doubled by an Act of boundleſs Omnipotency. It is hard to ſay which was the greater Miracle, the miraculous Eating, or the miraculous Leaving. If we conſider what they Eat, we may juſtly wonder that they left any thing; if what they Left, that they Eat any thing. *Obſerve farther*, Theſe Fragments, tho' of Barley-Bread and Fiſh-Bones, muſt not be loſt, but by our Saviour's Command, gathered up. The Liberal Houſe-keeper of the World will not allow the Loſs of his Orts. Oh how fearful then will the Account of thoſe be, who have large and plentiful Eſtates to anſwer for as loſt, being ſpent upon their Luſt in Riot and Exceſs!

22 And ſtraightway Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples to get into a ſhip, and to go before him unto the other ſide, while he ſent the multitudes away.

Jeſus conſtrained them, that is, he commanded them *to go away before him*: No doubt, they were very loth to leave him, and to go without him; both out of the Love which they bare to him, and themſelves. Such as have once taſted the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, are hardly drawn away from him; however, as deſirous as the Diſciples were to ſtay with Chriſt, yet at his word of command, they depart from him: Where Chriſt has a Will to command, his Diſciples and Followers muſt have a Will to obey.

23 And when he had ſent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt diſmiſſes the Multitude, and then retires to Pray; *Teaching us* by his Example, when we have to do with God, to diſmiſs the Multitude of our Affairs and Imployments, of our Cares and Thoughts. Oh how unſeemly is it to have our Tongues talking to God, and our Thoughts taken up with the World! *Obſerve*, 2. The Place Chriſt retires to for Prayer; a Solitary *Mountain*; not ſo much for his own need, for he could be alone when he was in Company; but to teach us, that when we Addreſs our ſelves to God in Duty, we are to take all the Helps, Furtherances and Advantages we can for the doing of it. When we converſe with God in Duty, Oh how good is it, *to get upon a Mountain*, to get our Hearts above the World, above Worldly Imployments, and Worldly Cogitations. *Obſerve*, 3. The Occaſion of Chriſt's Prayer: He had ſent the Diſciples to Sea, he foreſaw the Storm ariſing, and now he gets into a Mountain to Pray for them, that their Faith might not fail them when their Troubles were upon them. *Learn hence*, That it is the ſingular Comfort of the Church of God, that in all her Difficulties and Diſtreſſes, Chriſt is interceeding for her; when ſhe is on the Sea conflicting with the Waves, Chriſt is upon the Mountain Praying for her Preſervation.

24 But the ſhip was now in the midſt of the ſea, toſſed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

Note here, The great Danger the Diſciples were in, and the great Difficulties they had to encounter with; they were in *the midſt of the Sea*, they were *toſſed with the Waves*, *the Wind was contrary*, and Chriſt was abſent. The Wiſdom of God often ſuffers his Church to be toſſed upon the Waves of Affliction and Perſecution, but it ſhall not be ſwallowed up by them: Often is this Ark of the Church upon the Waters; ſeldom off them; but never drowned.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night, Jeſus went unto them walking on the ſea.

Chriſt having ſeen the Diſtreſs of his Diſciples on the Shore, he haſtens to them on the Sea. It was not a Stormy and Tempeſtuous Sea that could ſeparate betwixt him and them: He that waded through a Sea of Blood, and through a Sea of Wrath to ſave his People, will walk upon a Sea of Water to Succour and Relieve them. But, *Obſerve*, The Time when Chriſt came to help them, not till the fourth Watch, a little before the Morning. They had been many Hours upon the Waters, conflicting with the Waves, with their Fears and Dangers. God oft-times lengthens out the Troubles of his Children before he delivers them, but when they are come to an Extremity, that is the Seaſon of his Succours. As God ſuffers his Church to be brought into Extremities before he help her, So he will help her in Extremity. *In the fourth Watch Jeſus came*, &c.

26 And when the diſciples ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit: and they cried out for fear.

See how the Diſciples take their Deliverer to be a Deſtroyer: Their Fears were higheſt when their Deliverer and Deliverance were neareſt. God may be coming with Salvation and Deliverance for his Church, when ſhe for the preſent cannot diſcern him.

27 But ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them, ſaying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.

Obſerve, When the Diſciples were in the ſaddeſt Condition, how one Word from Chriſt revives them; it is a ſufficient Support in all our Afflictions to hear Chriſt's Voice ſpeaking to us, and to enjoy his favourable Preſence with us. Say but, Oh Saviour, *(It is I)* and then let Evils do their work, That one Word *(It is I)* is enough to lay all Storms, and to calm all Tempeſts.

28 And Peter anſwered him, and ſaid, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee, on the water. 29 And he ſaid, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ſhip, he walked on the water to go to Jeſus. 30 But when he ſaw the wind boiſterous, he was afraid: and beginning to ſink, he cried, ſaying, Lord, ſave me.

Obſerve here, 1. The mixture of *Peter's* Faith and Diſtruſt: It was Faith that ſaid, *Maſter*; it was Diſtruſt that ſaid, *If it be thou*: It was Faith that ſaid, *Bid me come to thee*: It was Faith that enabled him to ſtep down on the Watery Pavement: It was Faith that ſaid, *Lord, ſave me*: But it was Diſtruſt that upon the ſight of a mighty Wind, *Feared*: It was Diſtruſt that made him *Sink*. Oh the imperfect compoſition of Faith and Fear in the beſt of Saints here on Earth! Sincerity of Grace is found with the Saints on Earth; Perfection of Grace with the Saints in Heaven. Here the Saints look forth *Fair as the Moon*; which has ſome Spots in her greateſt Beauty: Hereafter they ſhall be *Clear as the Sun*, whoſe Face is all Bright and Glorious. *Obſ.* 2. That whilſt *Peter* Believes, the Sea is as firm as Braſs under him; when he begins to Fear, then he begins to Sink. Two Hands upheld *Peter*, the Hand of Chriſt's Power and the Hand of his own Faith. The Hand of Chriſt's Power laid hold on *Peter*, and the Hand of *Peter's* Faith laid hold on the Power of Chriſt. If we let go our hold on Chriſt, we Sink; if he lets go his hold on us, we drown. Now *Peter* Anſwered his Name *Cephas*, and Sunk like a Stone.

31 And immediately Jeſus ſtretched forth his hand, and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ſhip, the wind ceaſed. Then they that were in the ſhip, came and worſhipped him, ſaying, Of a truth, thou art the Son of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The Mercy of Chriſt is no ſooner ſought but found: *Immediately Jeſus put forth his Hand and caught him.* Oh with what ſpeed, and with what Aſſurance ſhould we flee to that Sovereign Bounty, from whence never any Suitor was ſent away empty. *Obſerve*, 2. Though Chriſt gave *Peter* his Hand, yet with his Hand he gave him a Check: *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Though Chriſt likes Believing, yet he diſlikes Doubting. A Perſon may be truly Believing, who nevertheleſs is ſometimes Doubting, but his Doubting eclipſes the Beauty of his Believing.

34 And when they were gone over, they came
into the Land of Genneſaret. 35 And when the
men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent
out into all that country round about, and brought
unto him all that were diſeaſed. 36 And beſought
him that they might only touch the hem of his garment:
and as many as touched, were made perfectly
whole.

Obſ. 1. Our Saviour's unwearied Diligence, in going about to do good: He no ſooner landeth, but goeth to *Genneſaret* and healeth their Sick. 2. The Peoples Charity to their Sick Neighbours in ſending abroad to let all the Country know that Chriſt the great Phyſician was come amongſt them. 3. *Obſerve*, Where lay the Healing Vertue: Not in their Finger, but in their Faith; or rather in Chriſt, whom their Faith apprehended.

CHAP. XV.

1 THen came to Jeſus Scribes and Phariſees, which
were of Jeruſalem, ſaying, 2 Why do thy
diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for
they waſh not their hands when they eat bread.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with a great Conteſt between our Saviour and the Phariſees about their Traditions and old Cuſtoms, which they valued more than the Commandments of God: They accuſed the Diſciples for Eating Bread with unwaſht Hands, which though it were in it ſelf but a Decent Cuſtom, the Phariſees made it a Religious Rite; for which Reaſon, our Saviour and his Diſciples would not obſerve it. *Whence we learn*, That what is in it ſelf, and may without offence be done as a Civil Cuſtom, ought to be diſcountenanced and oppoſed when Men require it of us as a Religious Act, or place Religion in it. The Phariſees placed ſo much Religion in waſhing their Hands before Meat, that they lookt upon it as highly criminal to neglect it, as to lie with a Whore: One of *Them*, being in Priſon and not having Water enough to Drink and to Waſh his Hands too; choſe rather to die with Thirſt, than to tranſgreſs the Tradition of the Elders.

3 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why do
you alſo tranſgreſs the Commandment of God by
your tradition? 4 For God commanded, ſaying,
Honour thy father and mother: and, he that curſeth
father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye
ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to his father or his mother,
It is a gift by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited
by me, 6 And honour not his father, or his mother,
he ſhall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment
of God of none effect by your tradition.

Obſerve here, 1. The heavy Charge which our Saviour brings in againſt the Phariſees; namely, For violating an Expreſs Command of God, and preferring their own Traditions before it: You make void *the Commandments of God by your Traditions*. *Obſerve*, 2. The Command which our Saviour inſtances in, as violated by them, it is the *Fifth* Commandment, which requires Children to Relieve their Parents in their Neceſſity. Now though the Phariſees did not deny this in plain Terms, yet they made an Exception from it, which if Children had a mind, rendered it void and uſeleſs. For the Phariſees taught, that in caſe any would give a Gift to the Temple, which Gift they called *Corban*, and of which they themſelves had a great ſhare; that then Children were diſcharged from making any farther Proviſion for their Poor, Aged, or Impotent Parents: And might ſay unto them after this manner, *That which thou askeſt for thy Supply, is given to God, and therefore I cannot Relieve thee.* So that Covetous and Graceleſs Children looks upon it as the moſt frugal way, once for all to Fine to the Temple, rather than pay the conſtant Rent, of daily Relief to their poor Parents. *Learn*, That no Duty, Gift or Offering to God is accepted, where the Duty of Charity is neglected. It is more acceptable to God to refreſh the Bowels of his Saints, who are the Living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, than to adorn material Temples with Gold and Silver.

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſie of you,
ſaying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with
their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but
their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do
worſhip me, teaching for doctrine the commandments
of men.

Our Saviour reproves the Hypocritical Phariſees for theſe things, 1. That they preferred Humane Traditions before the Divine Precepts. 2. That by their Humane Traditions they made void the worſhip of God. It is God's undoubted Prerogative to preſcribe all the Parts of his own Worſhip; and whoever preſumes to add thereunto, they worſhip him in vain. Our Saviour farther ſhews, that all this proceeded from the Inſincerity of their Hearts: *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* Whence *Learn*, 1. That the removing of the Heart far from God in *Worſhip*, is a great *Sin*, and an high Degree of *Hypocriſie*. 2. That whatever Outward *Shew* and *Profeſſion* of *Religion* Men make, if their *Hearts* be not right with God; and what they do proceeds not from an Inward Principle of *Love* and *Obedience* to God, they are under the Reign and Power of *Hypocriſy*, *Ye Hypocrites, in vain do ye worſhip me.* *Learn*, 3. That we muſt not be forward from Chriſt's Example to pronounce Men Hypocrites, becauſe we have neither that Authority nor Knowledge of the Heart which Chriſt had to authorize us ſo to do. Chriſt here called the Phariſees Hypocrites, 1. Becauſe they placed Holineſs and Religion in Ceremonies of Human Invention. 2. Becauſe being ſo ſuperſtitiouſly careful to avoid bodily Pollutions, they left their Hearts within full of Hypocriſy and Iniquity.

10 And he called the multitude, and ſaid unto
them, hear and underſtand. 11 Not that which goeth
into the mouth defileth a man: but that which
cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Our Bleſſed Saviour leaving the *Phariſees* with ſome diſlike, applies himſelf to the Multitude, and ſhews them the true *Spring* and *Original Fountain* of all *Spiritual Pollution* and *Uncleanneſs*: Namely, the *Filthineſs* and *Impurity* of Man's Heart and Nature; which boiling in the Heart, the Scum runs out at the Mouth: Thereby informing the Multitude, That not that which is eaten, but that which is ſpoken, defiles a Man: Not the Meat eaten with the Mouth, but the Wickedneſs of the Heart vented by the Mouth, *Pollutes* a Perſon in God's Account.

12 Then came his diſciples, and ſaid unto him,
Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended,
after they heard this ſaying? 13 But he anſwered
and ſaid, Every plant which my heavenly Father
hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up. 14 Let
them alone they be blind leaders of the blind. And if
the blind lead the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch.

Obſ. here, 1. How the *Diſciples* wonder, that our Saviour did ſo little regard the Diſpleaſure of the *Phariſees*; *Knoweſt thou not, that the Phariſees were offended?* Altho' nothing vext the *Phariſees* more, than the Diſcovery of their Falſe Doctrine before the Multitude, yet our Saviour did not ſtick to detect their Errours, and to declare the Truth; let the Effects, of their Diſpleaſure be what they would. Sinful Man-pleaſing is fruitleſs and endleſs. *Obſerve* 2. Our Lord's Anſwer; which ſhews a double Reaſon why he thus ſlighted the Offence taken by the *Phariſees*. 1. He compares the *Phariſees* Doctrine and Tradition to noiſom

Weeds in the Church; planted there not by God, but themſelves; and conſequently ſhall certainly be rooted up. In Matters of *Religion*, if Men will Act according to the Dictates of their own *Fancies*, and not walk by the Rule of *God's Word*, they may pleaſe themſelves perhaps, but they can never pleaſe their Maker. Divine Inſtitution is the only ſure Rule of Religious Worſhip. 2. Chriſt compares the *Phariſees* themſelves to blind Guides. *They are blind Leaders of the Blind*; Leaders and Followers both blind, who will certainly and ſuddenly *fall into the Ditch* of Temporal and Eternal Deſtruction. *Learn*, 1. That Ignorant, Erroneous and Unfaithful Miniſters, are the heavieſt Judgments that can befal a People. 2. That the following of ſuch Teachers and blind Guides, will be no Excuſe to a People another Day; much leſs free them from the Danger of Eternal Deſtruction.

15 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Declare
unto us this parable. 16 And Jeſus ſaid, Are
ye alſo yet without underſtanding? 17 Do not ye
yet underſtand, that whatſoever entreth in at the
mouth, goeth into the belly, and is caſt out into the
draught? 18 But thoſe things which proceed out of
the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they
defile the man. 19 For out of the heart, proceed
evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,
thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies. 20 Theſe are
the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwaſhen
hands, defileth not a man.

The Diſciples deſiring the Interpretation of the foregoing Parable, our Saviour gives it them; but withal expoſtulates with them, that they did not underſtand a thing ſo obvious and plain; *Are ye yet without Underſtanding?* As if he had ſaid, Have ye ſat thus long under my Miniſterial Teaching, and enjoyed the Benefit of my Company and Converſation, And yet are no farther *Proficients* in *Knowledge*? Whence *Learn*, That our Lord expects a *Proficiency* in *Knowledge* from us, anſwerable to the *Opportunities* and *Means* of *Knowledge* enjoyed by us. Next he gives them the Senſe and *Signification* of the Parable; telling them, that it is out of a Sinful Heart, that all Sin proceeds: The Heart is the Cage or Neſt which is full of theſe unclean Birds, and from whence they take their flight. Tho' the *Occaſions* of ſin are from without, yet the *Source* and *Original* of Sin is from within. *Learn*, That the Heart of Man is the Sink and Seed-Plot of all Sin, and the Fountain of all Pollution; the Life could not be ſo bad, if the Heart were not worſe: All the Irregularity of our *Lives*, flows from the Impurity of our *Hearts* and *Natures*.

21 Then Jeſus went thence, and departed into the
coaſts of Tyre and Sydon. 22 And behold a woman
of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried
unto him, ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou
Son of David, my daughter is grievouſly vexed with
a devil.

Obſerve here, The conſtant Employment of our Saviour, *He went about doing Good*, from Place to Place; in the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, he finds a Faithful Woman of the Race of the *Canaanites*, who becomes an humble Supplicant, to Chriſt, while the *Jews* neglected ſo great Salvation. Yea, ſhe not only ſpeaks, but cries unto him. Were we duly affected with our Spiritual Wants, we could ſpeak to God in no other Language, than that of Cries and Tears; nothing but Cries can pierce Heaven. *Obſerve*, 2. Tho' all *Iſrael* could not Example the Faith of this *Canaanite*, yet was her Daughter tormented with a Devil. *Learn*, That neither Truth, nor Strength of Faith, can ſecure us either againſt Satan's inward *Temptations*, or outward *Vexations*; and conſequently, the worſt of *Bodily Afflictions* are no ſufficient Proof of Divine Diſpleaſure. *Obſ.* 3. The Daughter did not come to Chriſt for her ſelf, but the Mother for her. Perhaps the Child was not ſo ſenſible of its own Miſery, but the good Mother feels both the Child's Sorrow, and her own. True Goodneſs teaches us to appropriate the Afflictions of others to our ſelves; it cauſes us to bear their *Griefs*, and to ſympathize with them in their *Sorrows*.

23 But he anſwered her not a word. And his
diſciples came and beſought him, ſaying, Send her
away, for ſhe crieth after us.

Strange! That a miſerable Supplicant ſhould cry and ſue, whilſt the God of Mercy is ſpeechleſs: What? Is the Fountain of Mercy dried up? Oh Saviour! We have oft found Cauſe to wonder at thy *Words*, but never till now at thy *Silence*. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt doth ſometimes delay to return an Anſwer to a well qualified Prayer. Sometimes his People do not Pray enough earneſtly; ſometimes they Pray too earneſtly, for ſome Outward and Temporal Mercy; ſometimes the Mercy they Pray for is not good for them; or it may be, it is not yet good for them. Let us not then judge of God's Hearing Prayer, by his preſent Anſwer.

24 But he anſwered and ſaid, I am not ſent, but
unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.

Obſerve, When our Saviour doth Anſwer, he gives not one Word of Comfort, but rather a Repulſe. Chriſt has ofttimes Love in his Heart to his People, when they can read none in his Countenance, nor gather it from his Diſcourſe. *Obſerve*, The Anſwer it ſelf. Chriſt ſays not, *I am ſent unto the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Adam; but *To the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*. The *Jews* are compared unto *Sheep*, the *Gentiles* unto *Dogs*. Chriſt inſinuates, that tho' ſhe were a loſt Sheep of *Adam*, yet not being one of the loſt Sheep of *Iſrael*, he could do nothing for her. It was a common Saying among the *Jews*, that the Nations of the World were likened to Dogs, whereas they were God's Sons and Daughters.

25 Then came ſhe and worſhipped him, ſaying,
Lord, help me.

Yet hath not this poor Woman done; Chriſt's former Silence, and his preſent Denial, cannot ſilence her. She *Comes*, ſhe *Worſhips*, ſhe *Cries*, *Lord help me*. Oh what an undaunted Grace is the Grace of Faith! It has a ſtrong Heart, and a bold Forehead, peremptory Denials cannot diſmay it. This *Woman*, will not deſpond, though her Prayer of Faith, from the Knees, of Humility, ſucceed not.

26 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to
take the childrens bread, and to caſt it to dogs.

Obſerve here, The ſeeming Severity of Chriſt to this poor Woman; he calls her not a *Woman*, but a *Dog*; and as it were ſpurns her from his Feet, with an harſh Repulſe. Did ever ſo ſevere a Word drop from thoſe mild Lips? What ſhall we ſay? Is the Lamb of God turned Lion? That a Woman in *Diſtreſs* imploring Pity, yea, *a good Woman*, and an humble Supplicant, ſhould be thus rated out of Chriſt's Preſence for a *Dog*. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt Faith of his own Children upon the ſevereſt Trials: The Trial had never been ſo ſharp, if her Faith had not been ſo ſtrong. Uſually, where God gives much Grace, he tries Grace much.

27 And ſhe ſaith, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs
eat of the crumbs which fall from their maſter's
table.

Obſerve, how her humility grants all, her Patience overcomes all, ſhe meekly deſires to poſſeſs the Dog's place; not to crowd *to* the Table, but to creep *under it*, and to partake of the Crumbs of Mercy that fall from thence. Indeed ſhe ſhewed one the beſt Qualities of a Dog, in keeping her hold where ſhe had once faſtened; not letting go, or giving over, until ſhe had gotten what ſhe deſired. *Learn hence*, That nothing is ſo pleaſing unto Chriſt, as to ſee his People following him with Faith and Importunity, when he ſeems to withdraw from them.

28 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman,
great is thy faith: be it unto thee, even as thou
wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that
very hour.

The *Diſciples* obſerving her Behaviour, might have been ready, to ſay; O Woman, great is thy Patience, great is thy Humility: But ſays Chriſt, *Great is thy* FAITH; he ſees the *Root*, we the *Branches*. Nothing but Faith could thus temper the Heart, thus ſtrengthen the Soul, thus charm the Tongue. Oh Powerful Grace of Faith, which Chriſt himſelf could no longer withſtand, but cries out as a Perſon overcome by the prevalency of it; *Oh woman, great is thy Faith*. *Note*, That no Grace ever goes away from Chriſt uncrowned: Tho' we may wait long for a Mercy, yet the Hand of Faith never knockt in vain at the Door of Heaven. Mercy is as ſurely ours, as if we had it, if we have but Faith and Patience to wait for it. This good Woman found it ſo, to her unſpeakable Comfort: And the ſame ſhall we find, in the Exerciſe of the ſame Grace. *Queſt.* But how does this poor Woman's Faith appear to be great Faith? *Anſw.* Becauſe having no Promiſe to rely upon, and ſuffering ſo many Repulſes with ſeeming Contempt, ſhe ſtill retained a good Hope of Chriſt's Kindneſs and Mercy. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Faith of thoſe who depending on God's Goodneſs do place an humble Confidence in God, and are not by great Temptations or Diſcouragements removed from that their Confidence; ſuch Faith is deſervedly ſtiled great Faith. 2. That the Faith of Believing *Gentiles* was not only Praiſe-worthy and well-pleaſing to God, but more excellent and better pleaſing than that of the *Jews*, to whom the Promiſes did belong.

29 And Jeſus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the ſea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and ſat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them thoſe that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and caſt them down at Jeſus feet, and he healed them: 31 Inſomuch that the multitude wondred, when they ſaw the dumb to ſpeak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to ſee: and they glorified the God of Iſrael.

Obſerve here, 1. The Charity; 2. The Faith of the Multitude; in bringing the Blind, the Deaf, and the Dumb to Chriſt: Their Charity, in lending Eyes to the Blind, and a Tongue to the Dumb; who could neither come to Chriſt themſelves, nor ſpeak for themſelves. Every Man has a Tongue to ſpeak for himſelf, happy is he that has a Tongue to Pray and intercede for others: This Charity did the People exerciſe here. *Obſerve alſo*, Their Faith; they laid the Lame and the Blind down at Jeſus Feet, relying upon his Power, and believing his Willingneſs to Help and Heal them. *Obſerve farther*, The Effect of this Miracle upon the Multitude; it was Twofold: 1. They were ſtruck with *Admiration* and *Wonder*, to ſee ſuch *Cures* wrought as Exceeded the Courſe of Nature, and the Power of Art. 2. *They glorified the God of Iſrael*; that is, they acknowledged it to be a wonderful Work of *Power* and *Mercy* wrought by that God whom *Iſrael* Worſhipt. Whence we *Learn*, That the *Miraculous Works* of Chriſt, which he wrought before the Multitude, were obvious to their Senſes; and did conſtrain the Beholders (if not blinded with *Phariſaical* Obſtinacy) to acknowledge the Power of God communicated to Chriſt, and to praiſe him for it: *The Multitude marvelled and glorified God.*

32 Then Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaid, I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they faint in the way. 33 And his diſciples ſay unto him, Whence ſhould we have ſo much bread in the wilderneſs, as to fill ſo great a multitude? 34 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? and they ſaid, Seven, and a few little fiſhes. 35 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the ground. 36 And he took the ſeven loaves, and the fiſhes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude.

Here we have the Second *Miracle* of Chriſt's compaſſionate Feeding the Hungry Multitude. *Chap.* XIV. we read of Five Thouſand fed *with five loaves and two fiſhes*; here Chriſt feeds Four Thouſand *with ſeven loaves, and a few ſmall fiſhes.* Where *Obſerve*, That Chriſt fed feweſt, when he had moſt Proviſion; when he had *ſeven loaves*, he fed but Four Thouſand; when he had but *five loaves*, he fed Five Thouſand. Thus the Wiſdom and Power of Chriſt is glorified by him, as he pleaſes. The feeding of *One Thouſand* with *One Loaf*, was as true a Miracle as the feeding *Seven Thouſand*. Our Saviour did put forth the Power of his Godhead in working *Miracles*, after what manner ſeemed beſt to his own Wiſdom. *Obſerve farther*, A double Action performed by our Saviour, 1. *He gave Thanks*; that is, he pray'd for a Bleſſing upon the *Food*: *Teaching* us our Duty, That if the Son of God did look up to Heaven, and *Bleſs* his *Food*, we ſhould not ſit down to our *Food* as a Beaſt to his *Fodder*, without craving a *Bleſſing* upon it. The next Action was, *He gave to his Diſciples.* But why did he diſtribute the *Loaves* by the Hands of his *Diſciples*? *Anſw.* Becauſe the *Diſciples* queſtioned through the weakneſs of their Faith, Whether ſuch a Multitude as Four Thouſand could be fed with ſo ſmall a Proviſion as *Seven Loaves*. Now our Saviour to convince them how eaſily he could do that thing which they adjudged impoſſible, he diſtributes the Bread *by them*; making uſe of their own *Eyes* and *Hands*, for their *Conviction* and *Satisfaction*. Thus Chriſt to ſhame the Unbelief of his *Diſciples*, makes them not only *Spectators*, but *Actors* in that *Work* which they judged impoſſible to be effected.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baskets full. 38 And they that did eat, were four thouſand men, beſide women and children. 39 And he ſent away the multitude, and took ſhip, and came into the coaſts of Magdala.

They did all eat, not a Crumb or a Bit, but to *Fulneſs* and *Satisfaction*; yet *Seven Baskets* remain; anſwering the Number of the *Loaves*, as the *Twelve Baskets* in the former Miracle anſwered the *Twelve Apoſtles*: In both, more is left than was at firſt ſet on: It is hard to ſay, which was the greater Miracle, the *Miraculous Eating*, or *Miraculous Leaving*.

If we conſider what they eat, we may juſtly wonder that they left any thing: If what they left, that they eat any thing. Dr. *Fuller*.

Obſerve Laſtly, Chriſt would not have theſe *Fragments* loſt, but gathered up; the Great Houſekeeper of the World will not allow the *Loſs* of his *Orts*. Oh how dreadful will the Account of thoſe be, who have large and plentiful Eſtates to Anſwer for, as Loſt, being ſpent upon their *Luſts*, in *Riot* and *Exceſs*!

CHAP. XVI.

1 THE Phariſees alſo with the Sadducees came, and tempting, deſired him that he would ſhew them a Sign from heaven. 2 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, When it is evening, ye ſay, *It will be* fair weather: for the skie is red. 3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the skie is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the skie, but can ye not diſcern the ſigns of the times? 4 A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given unto it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Perſons* demanding of our Saviour a Sign, the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, Perſons of contrary *Opinions* and *Intereſts*; yet both agree in Tempting and Oppoſing Chriſt. *Learn thence*, That Wicked Men, how oppoſite ſoever they are one to another, yet can agree together in Oppoſing Chriſt, and Undermining his Truth. *Obſerve*, 2. The Sign demanded, *Shew us a Sign from Heaven*: As if they had ſaid, Put us not off with ſuch *Earthly Signs* as we have Seen, multiplying *Loaves*? but let us ſee a Miracle from *Heaven*; ſuch as *Moſes* and *Elias* wrought. This they deſired, not ſo much for their *Satisfaction*, as out of *Curioſity*, nay, *Wicked Treachery*. *Learn thence*, That to demand a Sign, not to confirm our Faith, but to harden our ſelves in our Unbelief, is a dangerous Tempting of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. Our Saviour's Rejection of this Demand of the *Phariſees* to give them a Sign; *Oh ye Hypocrites*, ſays he, *ye can diſcern the Face of the Skie, but ye cannot diſcern the Signs of the Times.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Did not Malice and Obſtinacy blind your Eyes, ye might as eaſily ſee and diſcern that theſe are the Times of the *Meſſias*, and that I am he, by the *Miracles* wrought by me; as you can make a Judgment of the Weather, by looking upon the Sky. *Learn*, That to pretend more Ignorance and Uncertainty in diſcerning the Signs of *Goſpel-Times* than the Signs of the *Weather*, is great Hypocriſy: *Ye Hypocrites, ye can diſcern the Face of the Skie, but can ye not diſcern the Signs of the Times?* *Obſerve Laſtly*, That our Saviour doth not condemn the Study of Nature, or making Obſervation of the State of the Weather, from the Face of the Skie. All that our Saviour blames was, that they were better ſkill'd in the Signs of the *Weather*, than in the Signs of the *Times*. As God by Natural Signs gives us Warning of a Change in Natural Things; ſo by his Providential Diſpenſations he gives us Warning of a Change in Civil Things: *He that is wiſe, will obſerve theſe Things*; and by their Obſervation, *Will come to Underſtand the Pleaſure of the Lord.*

5 And when his diſciples were come to the other ſide, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have taken no bread. 8 Which when Jeſus perceived, he ſaid unto them, O ye of little faith, why reaſon ye among your ſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the ſeven loaves of the four thouſand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not underſtand, that I ſpake it not to you concerning bread, that ye ſhould beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees? 12 Then underſtood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees.

Obſerve here, 1. How dull the *Diſciples* of Chriſt were under Chriſt's own Teaching, and how apt to put a Carnal Senſe upon his *Words*; they apprehended he had ſpoken to them of the Leaven of Bread, what he intended of the Leaven of the *Phariſees* Doctrine. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſmart and ſharp *Reproof* which Chriſt gave his *Diſciples*, for not underſtanding the *Senſe* and *Signification* of what he ſpake. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is much diſpleaſed with his own People, when he diſcerns *Blindneſs* and *Ignorance* in them, after more than ordinary Means of Knowledge enjoyed by them. *How is it that ye do not yet underſtand?* *Obſerve*, 3. The *Metaphor* which Chriſt ſets forth the corrupt Doctrine of the *Phariſees* by; he compares it to *Leaven*, partly for its *Sowrneſs*, and partly for its *Diffuſiveneſs*. Leaven is a piece of ſowr Dough, that diffuſes it ſelf into the whole Maſs or Lump of Bread with which it is mixed. From whence our Saviour intimates, that the *Phariſees* were a ſowr and proud ſort of People; and their Doctrines, like themſelves, poiſonable and pernicious in their Conſequences; the *Contagion* of which our Lord warns his *Diſciples* to avoid and ſhun. Whence *Learn*, That Error is as damnable as Vice; Perſons Erroneous in their Judgments, are to be avoided, as well as thoſe that are Lewd and Wicked in their Converſations. He that has a due Care of his Soul's Salvation, muſt as well beware of Erroneous *Principles* as of Debauched *Practices*. *Obſerve*, 4. Our Saviour does not command his *Diſciples* to ſeparate from *Communion* with the *Phariſees*, and oblige them not to hear their *Doctrine*; but only to beware of the *Errors* that they mixt with their *Doctrine*. We may, and ought to hold *Communion* with a Church, tho' Erroneous in *Doctrine*, if not Fundamentally Erroneous. *Separation* from a Church, is not juſtifiable upon any other Ground, than that which makes a *Separation* betwixt God and that Church: Which is either the *Apoſtacy* of that Church into groſs *Idolatry*; or in Point of Doctrine, into damnable *Hereſy*, or impoſing ſinful Terms of *Communion*.

13 When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Ceſarea Philippi, he asked his diſciples, ſaying, Whom do men ſay that I the Son of man am? 14 And they ſaid, Some *ſay that thou art* John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God. 17 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, Our Saviour's Queſtion and the Diſciples Anſwer. Our Saviour's Queſtion is twofold: 1. *Whom do Men ſay that I am?* Not that the Son of God was ignorant what Men ſaid of him; but he had an Intention more firmly to ſettle and eſtabliſh his Diſciples in the Belief of his being the promiſed *Meſſias*. And therefore, 2. He puts the Queſtion to them, *Whom do you my Diſciples ſay that I am?* You, that have heard the Holineſs of my *Doctrine*, and ſeen the Divinity of my *Miracles*. What ſay you to me? And what *Confeſſion* do you make of me? Chriſt expects greater Meaſures of Grace and Knowledge, and higher Degrees of Affiance and Faith, from thoſe that have enjoyed the greateſt Means of *Grace* and *Knowledge*. The Diſciples were Eye and Ear-Witneſſes of his *Doctrine* and *Miracles*, and accordingly he expects from them a full *Confeſſion* of his *Divinity*. *Obſerve*, 2. The Anſwer return'd, 1. By the Apoſtles in general; *And they ſaid, Some ſay that thou art* John *the Baptiſt, ſome* Elias, *ſome* Jeremias. 'Tis no new thing (it ſeems) to find Diverſity of Judgments and Opinions, concerning Chriſt, and the Affairs of his Kingdom. We find, that when our Saviour was amongſt Men, who daily both ſaw and heard him, yet there was then a Diverſity of Opinions concerning him. 2. *Peter* in the Name of the reſt, and as the Mouth of all the Apoſtles, makes a full and open Confeſſion of his being the Son of God; *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God.* Whence *Note*, That the Vail of Chriſt's Humane Nature did not keep the Eye of his Diſciples Faith from ſeeing him to be the Son of God as well as the Son of Man: *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God.* *Obſerve*, 3. How highly pleaſed our Saviour was with this Confeſſion; he pronounces *Peter*, and the reſt in him, *Bleſſed*, who had by him made this Chriſtian Confeſſion; *Bleſſed art thou, Simon*; and tells him, 1. What did not enable him to make that Confeſſion, *Not Fleſh and Blood*; that is, not Man, nor the Wiſdom and Reaſon of Man. 2. But poſitively, *God the Father*, by the Operation of his Spirit, and the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, has wrought this Divine Faith in you, and drawn forth this Glorious Confeſſion from you, that I am indeed the Son of God. Thence *Learn*, That no Man can ſavingly believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the World; but he, in whom God himſelf by his Holy Spirit has wrought ſuch a Perſwaſion by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel.

18 And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

Obſerve here, 1. As *Peter* confeſs'd Chriſt, ſo Chriſt confeſſes him; *Peter* ſaid, *Thou art Chriſt*; Chriſt ſays, *Thou art Peter*; alluding to his Name, which ſignifies a *Rock*: He having made good that Title, by the Strength, Stability, and Firmneſs of his Faith. *Obſerve*, 2. A double Promiſe made by Chriſt to *Peter*: 1. For the Building: 2. For the Upholding of his Church. For the *Building* of his Church: 1. *Upon this Rock I will build my Church.* Upon what *Rock?* Upon *Peter*, *The Rock Confeſſing*, ſay the *Papiſts*: But if ſo, no more is ſaid of *Peter* here, than of all the *Apoſtles* elſewhere; *Galat.* 2. 9. *James* and *John* are called Pillars, as well as *Peter*. So that *Peter's* Superiority over the reſt of the *Apoſtles*, can with no ſhew of Reaſon be from hence inferr'd. Upon *Chriſt*, *the Rock Confeſſed*, ſay the *Proteſtants*; for Chriſt is the Foundation-Stone upon which his Church is Built: *Epheſ.* 2. 20. *Ye are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*, Jeſus Chriſt *himſelf being the chief Corner-Stone.* So then, not upon *Peter* the *Rock Confeſſing*, but upon *Chriſt the Rock Confeſſed*, and upon the Rock of *Peter's* Confeſſion; that Fundamental Truth, that Chriſt is the Son of the Living God, is the Church Built. *Upon this Rock will I build my* Church. *Super hanc Confeſſionis tuæ Petram ædificabo* Eccleſiam *meam*; yet Chriſt may here be ſaid to Build his Church upon *Peter*, becauſe he uſed St. *Peter's* Miniſtry in laying the Foundations of a Chriſtian Church among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; he being the firſt Preacher of that Faith which he here confeſt firſt to the *Jews*, *Act.* 2. and then to the *Gentiles*, *Act.* 10. And accordingly, St. *Peter's* Converſion of three thouſand Souls by his Miniſtry, *Act.* 2. 41. is lookt upon by ſome as a punctual fulfilling of this Promiſe here made unto Him. He was ſtiled the Rock becauſe he laid the Foundations of Faith among the Nations, that is, the firſt Foundations of a Chriſtian Church in the World. Whence it appears, that in this matter St. *Peter* neither had, nor can have a Succeſſor; but if the *Pope* will pretend to be his Succeſſor in this Affair, he muſt not ſit at *Rome*, Lording it there over God's Heritage, but muſt go in Perſon to the unbelieving *Jews*, and unconverted *Heathens* as *Peter* did; and labour by his Preaching to bring over the *Turk*, the *Jew*, and the *Infidel* to Chriſtianity. *Obſerve next*, Our Saviour's Promiſe for the *Upholding*, as well as the Building of his Church; *The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*: That is, All the Policy and Power of the Devil and his Inſtruments, ſhall neither deſtroy my Church, nor extinguiſh the Light of this Divine Truth, which thou haſt now made Confeſſion of; namely, *That I am the true Meſſias, the Son of the living God.* *Note*, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt is the Builder, and will be the Upholder of his Church. 2. That the Church upheld by Chriſt's Power and Promiſe, ſhall never be vanquiſht by the Devil's Policy or Strength. *Upon this Rock*, &c. *and the Gates*, &c. By the Gates of Hell underſtand, 1. The Wiſdom of Hell, Gates being the Seat of Counſel. 2. The Cenſures and Sentence of Hell, Gates being the Place of Judicature. 3. By the Gates of Hell, underſtand the Arms and Power of Hell, Gates being a Place of Strength and Guards. So that when Chriſt ſecures againſt Hell, he ſecures againſt all that receive their Commiſſion from Hell; neither Hell nor any invenom'd by Hell, ſhall prevail againſt my Church.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon to whom this Promiſe is made; namely, to *Peter* with the reſt of the Apoſtles; the Confeſſion being made by him, in the Name of the reſt. Elſewhere we find the ſame Authority and Power given to them all, which is here committed unto *Peter*, *Joh.* 20. 23. *Whoſe Sins ſoever ye remit, they are remitted.* Altho' there might be a Priority of Order amongſt the *Apoſtles*, yet no Superiority of Power was founded in any one of them, over and above the reſt. *Obſerve*, 2. The Power promiſed; *I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, the Key of Doctrine, and the Key of Diſcipline, or full Power and Authority to Preach the *Goſpel*, to Adminiſter *Sacraments*, and Execute *Church Cenſures*. The Speech is Metaphorical, and alludes to *Stewards* and *Officers* in great Houſes, to whoſe Truſt the Keys of the Houſhold are committed. Chriſt's *Miniſters* are the *Stewards* of his Houſe, into whoſe Hands the *Keys* of his Church are committed by Chriſt. The Pope would ſnatch them out of all Hands, and keep them in his own; he ſnatches at *Peter's* Keys, but makes ſhipwrack of *Peter's* Faith; arrogating *Peter's* Power, but abrogating his Holy Profeſſion. *Learn*, 1. That the Authority and Power which the Miniſters of the Goſpel do exerciſe and execute, is from Chriſt. *I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom.* 2. That this Power of the Keys, Chriſt diſpenced promiſcuouſly to all his Apoſtles, and never deſigned it as a Peculiar for St. *Peter*. As they all made the ſame Profeſſion of Faith by *Peter*, ſo they all received the ſame Authority and Power with *Peter*. And accordingly, the Apoſtles exerciſed their Office independently upon *Peter* in converting thoſe of the Circumciſion as well as He. And St. *Paul*, who was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, opened the Kingdom of Heaven to far more *Gentiles* than ever *Peter* did; And therefore had this Key of the Kingdom of Heaven given to Him as much as to St. *Peter*.

20 Then charged he his diſciples, that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.

That is, 'Till after his Reſurrection. It may ſeem ſtrange, that our Saviour ſhould charge his Diſciples, to tell no Man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt, ſeeing the Knowledge of it was ſo neceſſary. The Reaſon is conceived to be, 1. Becauſe the Glory of his Godhead was not to be fully manifeſted till after his Reſurrection, and then to be Publiſhed by himſelf, and confirmed by his own *Miracles*. 2. Leſt the Knowledge of it ſhould have hindred his Death: For, *Had the Rulers known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* *Learn*, That Chriſt has his own fit Times, and proper Seaſons, in which he reveals his own Myſteries to the World. 2. That Chriſt was ſo intent upon laying down his Life for Sinners, that he would not have his Death hindred by an untimely Declaration of his being truly and really God: After his Death it was, that *He declared himſelf to be the Son of God with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

21 From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day.

Obſerve, 1. The Wiſdom of our Saviour, in acquainting his Diſciples with the near Approach of his Death and Sufferings. This he did for ſeveral Reaſons: 1. To let them underſtand that he was really God, (as they had juſt before confeſs'd him to be) by his fore-knowing and fore-telling things to come. 2. To convince them of their Error, in apprehending that his Kingdom was of this World, and that he was to Reign here as a Temporal Prince. 3. To prevent their being offended at his Sufferings, and to prepare them for their own; that they might neither ſhrink at them, nor ſink under them. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſons foretold by Chriſt, that ſhould be the Bloody Actors in the Tragedy of his Death; namely, the *Rulers* and *Chief Prieſts*: It was the Poor that received Chriſt, and embraced the Goſpel; it was the Great Ones of the World that rejected him, and ſet him at nought; and the Rulers both in Church and State, Condemn'd and Crucify'd him.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee.

No doubt *Peter* ſpake all this out of a ſincere Intention, and with a ſingular Affection towards our Saviour; but Pious Intentions, and Good Affections, will not juſtifie unwarrantable Actions. From this Counſel of St. *Peter* to Chriſt, we *Learn*, 1. How ready Fleſh and Blood is to oppoſe all that tends to Suffering, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf.* 2. What need we have to be fortified againſt the Temptations of Friends as well as of Enemies; for Satan can make good Men his Inſtruments to do his Work, when they little think of it. *Peter* little ſuſpected that Satan ſet him on work to hinder the Redemption of Mankind, by diſſwading Chriſt from Dying. But obſerve in the next Verſe with what Indignation Chriſt rejects *Peter's* Advice.

23 But he turned, and ſaid unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that *be* of God, but thoſe that *be* of men.

Chriſt lookt upon *Peter* with Anger and Diſpleaſure; Chriſt heard Satan ſpeaking in *Peter*. 'Twas *Peter's* Tongue, but Satan tuned it; therefore Chriſt calls *Peter* by Satan's Name: They that will do the Devil's Work, ſhall have the Devil's Name too. He that would hinder the Redemption of Mankind, is Satan, an Adverſary to Mankind. From our Saviour's ſmart Reproof given to *Peter*, *Learn*, That no Love or Reſpect to Mens Perſons or Piety, muſt draw us to flatter them in their Sins, or cauſe us to ſpeak lightly of their Sins. From our Saviour's Reſolution not to favour himſelf, notwithſtanding *Peter's* Advice, *Learn*, That ſo intent was the Heart of Chriſt, upon the great Work of Man's Redemption, that he could not bear the leaſt Word that ſhould obſtruct him in it, or divert him from it.

24 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.

Obſerve here, 1: How our Saviour recommends his Religion to every Man's Choice; not attempting by Force and Violence to compel any to the Profeſſion of it. *If any Man will come after me*, that is, if any Man chooſe and reſolve to be a Chriſtian. 2. Our Saviour's Terms propounded, 1. Self-denial, *Let him deny himſelf.* By which we are not to underſtand the Denying and Renouncing of our Senſes in matters of Faith, nor yet the Renouncing of our Reaſon in matters of Religion; but by *Self-denial* is meant, that we ſhould be willing to part with all our Earthly Comforts, and quit all our Temporal Enjoyments, for the ſake of Chriſt and his Holy Religion. 2. Goſpel-Suffering, *He muſt take up his Croſs*: An Alluſion to a *Roman* Cuſtom, that the Malefactor who was to be Crucified, took his Croſs upon his Shoulder, and carried it to the place of Execution. *Where Note*, Not the making of the Croſs of our ſelves, but the patient bearing of it when God lays it upon our Shoulder, is the Duty injoyned: *Let him take up his Croſs*. 3. Goſpel-Service, *He muſt follow me*, that is, Obey my Commands, and follow my Example: He muſt ſet my Life and Doctrine continually before him, and muſt be daily Correcting and Reforming of his Life by that Rule and Pattern. See on *Luke* 9. 23.

25 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Love of this Temporal Life, is a great Temptation to Men to deny Chriſt, and to Renounce his Holy Religion. 2. That the ſureſt way to attain Eternal Life, is Chearfully to lay down a Mortal Life, when the Glory of Chriſt and his Service calleth us thereunto.

26 For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

Learn, 1. That God has intruſted every one of us with a Soul of ineſtimable worth and preciouſneſs, capable of being ſaved or loſt, and that to all Eternity. 2. That the Gain of the whole World is not comparable with the Loſs of one precious Soul. The Soul's Loſs is an incomprehenſible and irrecoverable Loſs.

27 For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.

There is a twofold Judgment ſpoken of by this Evangeliſt St. *Matthew*, namely, a particular coming of Chriſt to execute Vengeance on the *Jews* at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and a general coming at the Day of Judgment. If we underſtand this place of the latter, we have then, 1. The Judge Deſcribed, *The Son of Man*, he who was, and is, both God and Man, ſhall judge both Angels and Men. 2. The Splendour of that Day declared, *He ſhall come in Glory with his Holy Angels*. The Attendance of Angels ſhall be required by Chriſt, not for Neceſſity, but for Majeſty. 3. The Work and Buſineſs of that Day demonſtrated, and that is, *To render to every Man according to his Works*. *Learn*, That the Judgment of the Great Day will be both Glorious and Righteous: Chriſt will be Glorious in his Perſon, and Glorious in his Attendance; and the Judgment will be according to Righteouſneſs, *Without reſpect of Perſons according to what has been done in the Body*.

28 Verily I ſay unto you, There be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

A threefold Senſe and Interpretation is given of theſe words. 1. Some will have them refer to our Saviour's Transfiguration, mentioned in the next Chapter: As if he had ſaid, ſome of you, as *Peter*, *James* and *John*, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon Mount *Tabor* in ſuch Glory as I will come in to Judgment. 2. Others underſtand the Words of Chriſt's exerciſing his Kingly Power in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the *Jewiſh* Nation; which St. *John* did Live to ſee. 3. Others refer the Words to the Times of the Goſpel after Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, when the Goſpel was propagated and ſpread far and near, according to St. *Mark* 9. 1. *There are ſome ſtanding here that ſhall not taſte of Death, till they ſee the Kingdom of God come with Power*; that is, till they ſee the Encreaſe and Enlargement of the Church by the Goſpel. *Thence Note*, That where the Goſpel is powerfully Preached, and chearfully Obeyed, there Chriſt cometh moſt Gloriouſly in his Kingdom.

CHAP. XVII.

1 AND after ſix days, Jeſus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them, and his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light.

The former part of this Chapter gives us an Account of our Saviour's Glorious Transfiguration; He laid as it were the Garments of frail Humanity and Mortality aſide for a little time, and aſſuming to himſelf the Robes of Majeſty and Glory, the Rays of his Divinity darted forth, his Face ſhined with a pleaſing Brightneſs; and his Raiment with ſuch a Glorious Luſtre, as did at once both Dazle and Delight the Eyes of the Beholders. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The Reaſons of our Lord's Transfiguration. 1. To demonſtrate and Teſtifie the Truth of his Divinity, That *he was Chriſt the Son of the Living God*. According to St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion juſt before. This Divine Glory was an Evidence of his Divine Nature. 2. Chriſt was thus Transfigured to prefigure the Glory of his Second Coming to Judgment, *when he ſhall be admired of his Saints*, as here he was admired by his Diſciples. *Obſerve*, 2. The Choice which our Saviour makes of the Witneſſes of his Transfiguration, his Three Diſciples, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*. But why Diſciples? Why Three Diſciples? Why theſe Three? 1. This Transfiguration was a Type and Shadow of the Glory of Heaven: Chriſt therefore vouchſafes the Earneſt and Firſt Fruits of that Glory only to Saints; upon whom he intended to beſtow the full Harveſt. 2. Three Diſciples were Witneſſes ſufficient to Teſtifie this Miracle. *Judas* was unworthy of this Favour; yet leſt he ſhould murmur, or be diſcontented at his being left out, others are alſo left out beſides him. 3. Theſe Three, rather than others; becauſe, 1. Theſe Diſciples were more eminent for Grace, Zeal, and Love to Chriſt; and conſequently, are moſt highly dignified and honoured by him. The moſt eminent Manifeſtations of Glory are made by God to thoſe that are moſt eminent in Grace. 2. Theſe Three were Witneſſes of Chriſt's Agony and Paſſion; to prepare them for which, they are here made Witneſſes of his Transfiguration. This glorious Viſion upon Mount *Tabor*, fitted them to abide the Terrors of Mount *Calvary*. *Learn*, That thoſe whom God ſingles out for the greateſt Trials, he will fit beforehand with the beſt Enablements.

3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him.

Obſerve here, The Glorious Attendants upon our Saviour at his Glorious Transfiguration; they were Two, Two Men, and thoſe Two Men, *Moſes* and *Elias*. This being but a Glimpſe of Chriſt's Glory, not a full Manifeſtation of it, only Two of the Glorified Saints attend upon Chriſt at it: When he ſhall come in his full Glory, then Thouſands of Thouſands ſhall attend him. Theſe Two Attendants were Two Men, not Two Angels; becauſe Men were more nearly concerned in what was done; they were not only Spectators, but Partners. Man's Reſtauration was Chriſt's principal Aim, the Angels Confirmation his leſs principal Deſign. But why *Moſes* and *Elias*? 1. *Moſes* the Giver of the Law, and *Elias* the Chief of the Prophets, attending both upon Chriſt, did ſhew the Conſent of the Law and the Prophets with Chriſt, and their Fulfilling and Accompliſhment in him. 2. Becauſe theſe Two were the moſt laborious Servants of Chriſt. Both adventured their Lives in God's Cauſe, and therefore are highly honoured by Chriſt. *Such as honour him, he will honour*.

4 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon ſupplicating, *Peter*. No doubt the other Two, *James*, and *John*, were much affected, but *Peter* is moſt fervent and forward; yet there is no arguing with the Papiſts from his Fervency, to his Superiority; his Perſonal Prerogatives were not Hereditary. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſon ſupplicated, *Jeſus*, not *Moſes* or *Elias*; the Diſciples make no Prayer, no Suit to them, but to Chriſt only. Prayers to Saints departed, are both vain and unlawful. *Obſerve*, 3. The Supplication it ſelf, and that was for their Continuance where they were. *It is good for us to be here*. Oh what a raviſhing Comfort is the Fellowſhip of the Saints! But the Preſence of Chriſt among them, renders their Joys tranſporting. *Obſerve*, 4. Their Proffer of Service to farther this Continuance; *Let us make Three Tabernacles.* This Motion was well meant and devout. St. *Peter* will ſtick at no Coſt or Pains for the Enjoyment of Chriſt's Preſence and his Saints Company, yet was the Motion unadviſed and raſh. St. *Peter* errs in deſiring a Perpetuity of that Condition, which was but tranſient and momentary. This Viſion was only a Taſte of Glory, not a full Repaſt. He errs, in that he would bring down Heaven to Earth, and take up with *Tabor*, inſtead of *Heaven.* He errs, in that he would enter upon the Poſſeſſion of Heaven's Glory, without ſuffering and without dying. Peter *would be cloathed upon, but was not willing to be uncloathed. Learn*, 1. That a Glimpſe of Glory is enough to wrap a Soul into Extaſie, and to make it out of Love with worldly Company. 2. That we are apt to deſire more of Heaven upon Earth, than God will allow: We would fain have the Heavenly Glory come down to us, but we are unwilling to go by Death to that; we know not what we ſay when we talk of Felicity, in Tabernacles upon Earth.

5 While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.

Obſerve here, 1. A Cloud was put before the Diſciples Eyes, for two Reaſons. 1. To allay the Luſtre and Reſplendency of that Glory which they were ſwallowed up with. As we cannot look upon the Sun in its full Brightneſs, but under a Cloud by Reflection: So the Glory of Heaven is inſupportable, till God vails it, and ſhelters us from the Surcharge of it. 2. A Cloud overſhadows them, to hinder their farther praying and looking into the Glory. We muſt be content to behold God here through a Cloud *darkly, e're long we ſhall ſee him Face to Face. Obſ.* 2. The Teſtimony given by God the Father out of the Cloud concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son: *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Here *Note*, 1. The Dignity of his Perſon, he is a *Son*, therefore, for Nature coeſſential, for Dignity coequal, for Duration coeternal with the Father; and a *Beloved Son*, becauſe of his Likeneſs and Conformity to him. Father's Likeneſs is the cauſe of Love, a Union of Wills cauſes a mutual endearing of Affections. *Note*, 2. The Excellency of his Mediation, *In whom I am well pleaſed.* Chriſt in himſelf was moſt pleaſing to God the Father, and in and through him he is well pleaſed with all Believers. Chriſt's Mediation for us makes God appeaſable to us. *Note*, 3. The Authority of his Doctrine. *Hear him*: Not *Moſes* and *Elias*, who were Servants, but Chriſt my Son, whom I have commiſſioned to be the great Prophet and Teacher of my Church: Therefore adore him, as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Lawgiver. He honours Chriſt moſt that obeys him beſt. The obedient Ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing Eye, the adoring Knee, or the applauding Tongue. *This is my beloved Son, hear him.*

6 And when the diſciples heard it, they fell on
their face, and were ſore afraid. 7 And Jeſus came
and touched them, and ſaid, Ariſe, and be not afraid.
8 And when they had lift up their eyes, they ſaw
no man, ſave Jeſus only. 9 And as they came down
from the mountain, Jeſus charged them, ſaying,
Tell the viſion to no man, until the Son of man be
be riſen again from the dead.

Obſerve here, 1. The Effect which this Voice from Heaven had upon the Apoſtles, it caſt them into a Paſſion of Horror and Amazement. *They were ſore afraid, and fell on their Face. Learn thence*, That ſuch is the Majeſty and Glory of God, that Man in his ſinful State cannot bear ſo much as a Glimpſe of it, without great Conſternation and Fear. How unable is man to hear the Voice of God? And yet how ready to deſpiſe the Voice of Man? If God ſpeaks by himſelf his Voice is too terrible; if he ſpeaks by his Miniſters, it is too contemptible. *Obſ.* 2. The Perſon by whom the Diſciples were recovered out of theſe amazing Fears, into which they were caſt, namely, by Chriſt. *Jeſus came, and ſaid be not afraid.* It is Chriſt alone, who can riſe and comfort thoſe whom the Terrors of the Almighty have dejected and caſt down. *Obſerve*, 3. The manner how Chriſt recovered them out of this paſſionate Amazement, it was threefold; 1. By his gracious Approach, *he came unto them*, Chriſt will come with Comfort unto his Children, when they are diſabled from coming to him for Comfort. 2. By his comfortable Touch; *He came and touched them.* Chriſt comforts Believers by a real and cloſe Application of himſelf unto them. An unapplied Chriſt ſaves none, comforts none. 3. By his comforting Voice, *He ſaid, be not afraid.* 'Tis a Word of Aſſurance, that there is no Ground nor Cauſe of Fear, and 'tis a Word of Aſſiſtance. 'Tis *Verbum Operatorium*; he that ſaid unto them, *Ariſe, be not afraid*, did by his Spirit breathe Life, and conveigh Strength into their Souls to enable them to ariſe. *Obſerve*, 4. The ſtrict Injunction given by Chriſt to his Diſciples, not to publiſh or proclaim this Viſion till after his Reſurrection, for two Reaſons; 1. Leſt it ſhould hinder his Paſſion: For had the *Rulers of the World known him to be the Lord of Life and Glory, they would not have crucified him*: Therefore Chriſt purpoſely concealed his Deity, to give way to his Paſſion. 2. Chriſt being now in a State of Humiliation would have his Majeſty veiled, his Glory concealed, and conſequently forbids that Glorious Viſion of his Transfiguration ſhould be publiſhed, and accordingly charges his diſciples, *That they tell the Viſion to no man till he was riſen.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, tell no man the Things which you have ſeen, not the Reſidue of the Diſciples, that they be not troubled that they were not admitted to ſee with you: Nor thoſe Believers which now follow me, that they be not ſcandalized at my Sufferings after ſo glorious a Transfiguration.

10 And his diſciples asked him, ſaying, Why then
ſay the ſcribes, that Elias muſt firſt come? 11 And
Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Elias truly ſhall
firſt come, and reſtore all things: 12 But I ſay unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew
him not, but have done unto him whatſoever they
liſted: likewiſe ſhall alſo the Son of Man ſuffer of
them. 13 Then the diſciples underſtood that he
ſpake unto them of John the Baptiſt.

Here we have the Diſciples Queſtion, and our Saviour's Anſwer. They ask our Saviour how the Obſervation of the Jewiſh Doctors holds good, that *Elias* muſt come before the Meſſias come? We ſee the Meſſias, but we ſee no *Elias*; our Saviour anſwers, that *Elias* was come already. Not *Elijah* in Perſon, but one *in the Spirit and Power of* Elias. One of his Spirit and Temper, to wit, *John the Baptiſt*, who was propheſied of under the Name of *Elias.* And indeed great was the Reſemblance between the *Elias* of the Old Teſtament, and of the New; *viz. John the Baptiſt.* They were both born in bad Times, they were both Zealous for God and Religion; they were both undaunted Reprovers of the Faults of Princes, and they were both hated, and implacably perſecuted for the ſame. *Learn*, That Hatred and Perſecution, even unto Death, has often been the Lot and Portion of ſuch as have had the Courage and Zeal to reprove the Faults of Princes. Elias *is come, and they did unto him whatſoever they would.*

14 And when they were come to the multitude,
there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to
him, and ſaying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my ſon,
for he is lunatick, and ſore vexed: for oft times he
falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And
I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not
cure him.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſick patient brought to Chriſt the great Phyſician for Cure and Healing. A *Lunatick*, that is, a Perſon at certain times of the Moon, afflicted with the Falling Sickneſs. 2. This Sickneſs of his was aggravated by Satan, who bodily poſſeſs'd him, and cruelly caſt him into the Fire and into the Water, but rather for Torture than Diſpatch: Oh how does Satan that Malicious Tyrant rejoice in doing Hurt to Mankind! Lord abate his Power, ſince his Malice will not be abated. *Obſerve*, 3. The Perſon that brought him forth for Cure; his compaſſionate *Father*, who kneeled down, and cried out. Need will make a Perſon both humble and eloquent. Every one has a Tongue to ſpeak for himſelf; happy is he that keeps a Tongue for others. 4. The Phyſicians that he was brought unto. *Firſt, To the Diſciples*; and when they could not cure him, then to *Jeſus.* We never apply our ſelves importunately to the God of Power, till we begin to deſpair of the Creatures help.

17 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him hither to me.

Theſe Words are a ſevere Rebuke, given by Chriſt to his own Diſciples. Where, *Obſerve*, The Perſons upbraided, his Diſciples; and the Sin upbraided with, Unbelief. *Oh faithleſs Generation!* Yet was it not the total Want of Faith, but the Weakneſs and Imperfection of Faith, that they were upbraided with, and reproved for. *Hence learn*, 1. That ſecret Unbelief may lie hid and undiſcerned in a Perſon's Heart, which neither others nor himſelf may take any Notice of, until ſome Tryal doth diſcover it. The Diſciples were not ſenſible of that Unbelief, which lay hid in them, till this Occaſion did diſcover it. *Learn*, 2. That the great Obſtacle and Obſtruction of all Bleſſings, both Spiritual and Temporal coming to us, is our Unbelief. *Oh faithleſs Generation*; Others conceive that theſe Words were not ſpoken to the Diſciples but to the Scribes, which St. *Mark* chap. 9. ſays at this Time, were diſputing with Chriſt's Diſciples, and perhaps inſulting over them, as having found out a Diſtemper which could not be cured by Chriſt's Name and Power; and theſe he called now as he had done heretofore *a Generation of Vipers.*

18 And Jeſus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

Obſerve here, With what Facility and Eaſe our Saviour cured this poor Man, who was bodily poſſeſs'd by Satan: With one Word ſpeaking, he deliver'd the diſtreſſed Perſon from the Malice and Power of Satan. *Thence Learn*, That how long ſoever, and how ſtrong ſoever Satan's Poſſeſſion has been in a Perſon, Chriſt can eject and caſt him out both eaſily and ſpeedily.

19 Then came the diſciples to Jeſus apart, and ſaid, Why could not we caſt him out? 20 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe of your unbelief: for verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it ſhall remove; and nothing ſhall be unpoſſible unto you. 21 Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and faſting.

Obſerve here, How aſhamed the Diſciples were of this open Rebuke given them by their Maſter; they privately ask him the Cauſe of their ill Succeſs, *Why they could not caſt out Satan* according to the Power promiſed them to work Miracles. Our Saviour tells them that their Power to work this Miracle now failed them, for a double Reaſon: 1. For their *Unbelief*, by which we are to underſtand the Weakneſs of their Faith, not their total Want of Faith. 2. Becauſe they neglected the ſpecial Means appointed by God, in order to that end; to wit, *Faſting and Prayer*. That is, a Fervour of Devotion, joyned with Faith and Faſting. *Thence Learn*, That Faſting and Prayer are two ſpecial Means of Chriſt's Appointment, for the enabling of us victoriouſly to overcome Satan, and to caſt him out of our ſelves or others. We muſt ſet an edge upon our Faith by Prayer, and upon our Prayer by Faſting. *Queſtion*, But what are we to underſtand by Faith as a Grain of Muſtard-Seed? *Anſwer*, 1. Some do thereby underſtand a Faith that groweth and encreaſeth as a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed or a Faith as ſtrong and Active in Heart as Muſtard-ſeed is on the pallate; and by *Removing Mountains*, underſtand the performing things that are moſt difficult, as if Chriſt had ſaid, did your Faith encreaſe as a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed grows, it would enable you to ſurmount all Difficulties whatſoever. 2. Others by Faith as a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed underſtand the leaſt Degree of ſincere Faith on God, it being a proverbial Speech amongſt the *Jews*, uſed *pro Re minima*, for the leaſt thing, as if Chriſt had ſaid, had you the leaſt Meaſures of that Faith which caſts out Fear and Doubting of Succeſs in the Diſcharge of your Office, you might perform things moſt difficult, and even this Faith in its Effects would be moſt mighty. Dr. *Whitby*.

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid unto them, The ſon of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men? 23 And they ſhall kill him, and the third day he ſhall be raiſed again. And they were exceeding ſorry.

Obſervable it is, how frequently our Saviour forewarn'd his Diſciples of his Approaching Sufferings. All was little enough to arm them againſt the Scandal of the Croſs, and to reconcile them to the Thoughts of what he was to ſuffer for them, and they were to ſuffer with him. *Learn*, That we can never hear too much of the Doctrine of the Croſs. Nor can we be too often inſtructed in our Duty to prepare for a Suffering Condition. As Chriſt went by his Croſs to his Crown, from a State of Abaſement to a State of Exaltation, ſo muſt all his Diſciples and Followers likewiſe.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that reecived tribute-money, came to Peter, and ſaid, Doth not your maſter pay tribute? 25 He ſaith, Yes. And when he was come into the houſe, Jeſus prevented him, ſaying, What thinkeſt thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom or tribute? of their own children, or of ſtrangers? 26 Peter ſaith unto him, of ſtrangers. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithſtanding, leſt we ſhould offend them, go thou to the ſea, and caſt an hook, and take up the fiſh that firſt cometh up: and when thou haſt opened his mouth, thou ſhalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Obſerve here, 1. The queſtion put to St. *Peter*; *Doth your Maſter pay Tribute?* This Tribute-money originally was a Tax paid Yearly by every *Jew* to the Service of the Temple to the value of 15 pence a Head. But when the *Jews* were brought under the Power of the *Romans*, this Tribute-money was paid to the Emperor, and was changed from an Homage-penny to God, to a Tribute-penny to the Conqueror. The Collectors of this Tribute-money ask *Peter*, whether his Maſter would pay it or not. *Obſerve*, 2. The Anſwer returned, poſitively and ſuddenly, *He does pay*. *Peter* conſults not firſt with our Saviour, whether he would pay it; but knowing his Readineſs to render to all their Due, he ſays, *Yes*. There was no truer Paymaſter of the King's Dues, than that he was King of Kings. He preach'd it, and he practiſed it. *Give unto* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar's. Yet *Obſerve*, 3. Our Saviour inſinuates his own Exemption, Priviledge, and Freedom from paying this Tribute-money, as he was the Son of God, the Univerſal King: Subjects pay Tribute, but King's Children are free. Tho' Chriſt was free from paying Tribute by a natural Right, yet he would not be free by voluntary Diſpenſation. Therefore *Obſerve*, 4. to prevent all Scandal and Offence, he works a Miracle rather than the Tribute-money ſhould go unpaid. Whether Chriſt by his Almighty Word created this Piece of Money in the Mouth of the Fiſh (which was a Half Crown, for himſelf and St. *Peter*, who had an Houſe in *Capernaum*, and was there to pay his Poll) or whether Chriſt cauſed the Fiſh to take up this piece of Money at the bottom of the Sea, is not neceſſary to inquire, nor poſſible to determine. Our duty is, 1. Reverentially to adore that Omnipotent Power, which could command the Fiſh to be both his Treaſurer, to keep his Silver; and his Purveyor, to bring it to him. 2. Induſtriouſly to imitate his Example, in ſhunning all Occaſions of Offence, eſpecially towards thoſe whom God has placed in Sovereign Authority over us. *Obſ. Laſtly*, The Poverty of our Holy Lord, and his Contempt of Worldly Wealth and Riches. He had not ſo much as 15 Pence by him to pay his Poll. Chriſt would not honour the World ſo far as to have any part of it in his own Poſſeſſion. The beſt Man that ever lived in the World, had not a Penny in his Purſe nor an Houſe to hide his Head in, which he could call his own.

CHAP. XVIII.

1 AT the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?

Notwithſtanding our Bleſſed Saviour had ſo often told his Diſciples that his Kingdom was not of this World, yet they ſtill dreamt of a Temporal and Earthly Kingdom, which he, as the *Meſſias*, ſhould ſhew forth the Glory of, in which there ſhould be diſtinct Places of Honour, and Offices one above another; and accordingly at this time the Ambition of the Diſciples led them to inquire of our Saviour, who ſhould have the chief Place of Honour and Dignity under him in that his Kingdom, who ſhould be the Principal Officers of State, concluding it muſt be ſome of Them, tho' they could not agree who were fitteſt for thoſe high Poſts of Honour and Service. *Learn hence*, That the beſt and holieſt of Men are too ſubject to Pride and Ambition, to Court Worldly Dignity and Greatneſs, to affect a Precedency before, and a Superiority above others: The Diſciples themſelves were tainted with this Itch of Ambition, which prompted them to inquire of their Maſter, *Who ſhould be the greateſt in his Kingdom of the Church?*

2 And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet
him in the midſt of them. 3 And ſaid, Verily I ſay
unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as
little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom
of heaven.

Our Saviour intending to cure this Pride and Ambition in his Diſciples, firſt preaches to them the Doctrine of Humility, and to enforce his Doctrine, he ſets before them *a little Child*, the proper Emblem of Humility; aſſuring them, that unleſs they be converted, or turned from this Sin of Pride and Ambition, and become as a little Child in Lowlineſs of Mind and Contempt of Worldly Greatneſs, they cannot be ſaved. *Learn hence*, 1. That no ſins are more odious and abominable in the Sight of God, than Pride and Ambition, eſpecially amongſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel. *Learn*, 2. That Perſons already converted do ſtand in need of farther Converſion: They that are converted from a State of Sin, may want to be converted from a particular Act of Sin: This was the Diſciples Caſe here; they were turned from a Courſe of Sin, but they wanted a Converſion from a particular Act of Sin; to wit, from Ambition. *Learn*, 3. That Converſion, tho' ſincere, may be very imperfect. Converts ſtill have Remains of Corruption, ſome Luſts often breaking forth, which they muſt take ſpecial Care to reſiſt and ſubdue.

4 Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.

As if our Lord had ſaid, That Apoſtle, or that Miniſter, who thinks as meanly of himſelf as a little Child, and is humble and lowly in his own Eſteem, he deſerves the higheſt Place of Dignity and Honour in my Church. *Note*, That the truly humble Perſon, who is freeſt from affecting Preheminency, is moſt worthy of the higheſt Dignity and Eminency in the Church of God, and in the Account of Chriſt: The way to be Honourable is to be Humble. *Before Honour is Humility.*

5 And whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little child in
my Name, receiveth me. 6 But whoſo ſhall offend
of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better
for him that a milſtone were hanged about his
neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

Our Saviour having declared that the humbleſt Perſons ſhould be always higheſt in his Eſteem; he next declares, how exceeding dear and precious ſuch *Chriſtians* are to him, who reſemble little Children in Humility of Heart, and Innocency of Life: Aſſuring the World, that whatever Kindneſs and Reſpect is ſhewed to ſuch for his ſake, he reckons ſhewn to himſelf; and all that Diſreſpect and Unkindneſs which is offered to them, he accounts as done unto himſelf: So near is the Union, and ſo dear the Relation betwixt Chriſt and his Members, that whatever Good or Evil is done to them, he reckons as done unto himſelf.

7 Wo unto the world becauſe of offences: for it muſt needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.

Two things are here *Obſervable*: 1. The Neceſſity of Scandalous Offences: *It muſt needs be that Offences come.* 2. The Miſery and Miſchief that comes by them: *Wo unto the World becauſe of Offences.* Wo to ſuch as give Offence; this is *Væ Indignantis*, the Wo of one Denouncing; and, Wo to ſuch as Stumble at Offences given, this is *Væ Dolentis* the Wo of one Lamenting. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That Scandals or Offenſive Actions in the Church of Chriſt, will certainly fall out amongſt thoſe that profeſs Religion, and the Name of Chriſt; *Offences will come*: Their Neceſſity is, partly from the Malice of Satan, partly from the Wickedneſs and Deceitfulneſs of Mens own Hearts and Natures, God permitting thoſe to have their Natural Effects. 2. That Scandalous and Offenſive Actions from ſuch as profeſs Religion and the Name of Chriſt, are Baneful and Fatal Stumbling-Blocks to wicked and Worldly Men. 3. That the Offence which wicked Men take at the Falls of the Profeſſors of Religion, to the hardning of themſelves in their wicked Practices, is Matter of juſt and great Lamentation: *Wo unto the World, becauſe of Offences.*

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee,
cut them off, and caſt them from thee: it is better
for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than
having two hands, or two feet, to be caſt into everlaſting
fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it
out, and caſt it from thee, it is better for thee to enter
into life with one eye, rather than having two
eyes, to be caſt into hell fire.

This Command of Chriſt is not to be underſtood Literally, as if it were our Duty to Maim our Bodily Members; but the Exhortation is, to cut off all Occaſions that may betray us unto Sin; and to mortifie our darling and beloved Luſts, though as dear to us as our right Eye. *Learn*, 1. That Sin may be avoided; it is our Duty to avoid whatever leads unto it, or may be the Inſtrument or Occaſion of it. 2. That the beſt way to be kept from the Outward Acts of Sin, is to mortifie our Inward Affection and Love to Sin. If our Love and Affection to Sin be mortified, our Bodily Members may be preſerved, for they will no longer be Weapons of Sin, but Inſtruments of Holineſs.

10 Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones: for I ſay unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. A cautionary Direction given by Chriſt to the Men of the World, concerning his Members: *Take heed that ye offend not one of my little ones*; that is, that ye do not undervalue and neglect, much leſs injure and afflict them. 2. A Reaſon aſſigned, *Becauſe their Angels being conſtantly and immediately in the Preſence of God*, are perpetually ready to execute his Will, by revenging any Wrongs and Injuries done unto his Friends and Children. *Learn*, 1. What is the Office and Employment of the Glorious Angels: Namely, to be the immediate Attendants upon the Royal Perſon of the Supreme King and Sovereign of the World. *Learn hence*, 2. In what Eſteem good Men are with God, and what a mighty Regard he has for the meaneſt of his Children, in that he commits the Care and Preſervation of them to the Holy Angels who are neareſt to him, and in higheſt Favour and Honour with him. It is St. *Jerom's* Note upon this Place, That great is the Dignity of theſe little Ones, ſeeing every one of them from his Birth hath an Angel delegated to preſerve Him. But tho' others think that the Opinion of a Tutelary Angel, or of one particular Angel's having the Cuſtody of one particular Saint, as his continual Charge, has not a ſufficient Foundation in the Holy Scriptures; yet all the Angels in Heaven are miniſtring Spirits to them, and tho' they do not always attend upon their Perſons, (for they ſtand before the Face of God,) yet it is to receive his Commands either to help them in their Exigencies, or puniſh them that injure them.

11 For the Son of man is come to ſave that which
was loſt. 12 How think ye? If a man have an
hundred ſheep, and one of them be gone aſtray, doth
he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the
mountains, and ſeeketh that which is gone aſtray?
13 And if ſo be that he find it, verily I ſay unto
you, he rejoyceth more of that ſheep, then of the
ninety and nine which went not aſtray. 14 Even ſo
it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven,

ven, that one of thoſe little ones ſhould periſh.

Here our Saviour continues his Argument, againſt giving Offence to his Children and Members; he came into the World to redeem and ſave them; therefore none ought to ſcandalize and offend them. And to illuſtrate this, he compares himſelf to a good Shepherd, who regards every one of his Sheep; and if any wander or go aſtray, he ſeeks to recover it with Deſire and Joy. *Learn,* 1. That the natural Condition of Mankind is like that of wandring Sheep; they err and go aſtray from God, their chief Good, and the Object of their compleat Happineſs. 2. That it was the Work and Buſineſs, the Care and Concern of Jeſus Chriſt to ſeek and recover loſt Souls, as the Shepherd doth his loſt Sheep. 3. That the Love and Care of Chriſt towards his Sheep, in ſeeking to ſave, and to preſerve them, is a forcible Argument unto all not to ſcandalize and offend, much leſs to perſecute and deſtroy them.

15 Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. 17 And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.

In theſe Words our Saviour gives us an excellent Rule for the Duty of Fraternal Correction, or Brotherly Admonition. Where *Note,* 1. That Brotherly Reproof and admonition is a Duty incumbent upon Church Members. 2. That it may be adminiſtred ſucceſsfully, it muſt be adminiſtred privately and prudently. 3 When private Admonition prevails not, Chriſt has appointed Church-Governours, to execute Church Cenſures on the obſtinate and irreclaimable. 4. Perſons juſtly falling under the Cenſures of the Church, and rightly excommunicate, are to be look'd upon as Contumacious and Stubborn Offenders, and the Members of the Church to ſhun Society and Converſation with them: *If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican* was among the *Jews*; wholly neglected, and not thought fit to be converſed with.

18 Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven.

That is, whomſoever the Officers of my Church ſhall juſtly excommunicate upon Earth, ſhall without Repentance be ſhut out of Heaven; and whatſoever upon their true Repentance ſhall be abſolved on Earth, ſhall be abſolved in Heaven. *Learn.* That Chriſt will ratifie in Heaven whatſoever the Church aſſembled doth in his Name upon Earth; whether to the cenſuring of the Guilty, or abſolving of the Penitent. This Power of binding and looſing is by Chriſt committed to his Church.

19 Again, I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.

Here we have a Gracious Promiſe made by Chriſt, of his Preſence, with all his Members in general, and with his Miniſters in ſpecial: Whenever they meet *together in his Name*, that is, by his Authority, in Obedience to his Command, and with an Eye at his Glory. Whenever they celebrate any ſacred Inſtitution of his, or execute any Church-Cenſures, he will be in the midſt of them, to quicken their Prayers, to guide their Counſels to ratifie their Sentence, to accept their Endeavours. *Learn,* 1. That Chriſt will be graciouſly preſent with, and amongſt his People, whenever they aſſemble and meet together in his Name, be it never ſo ſmall a number. 2. That Chriſt will in a ſpecial manner be preſent with the Guides and Officers of his Church, to direct their Cenſures, and to confirm the Sentence paſſed in his Name, and pronounced by his Authority upon obſtinate Offenders.

21 Then came Peter to him, and ſaid, Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? till ſeven times? 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven.

Here St. *Peter* puts a Queſtion to our Saviour, how often Chriſtians ſhould forgive Offences to their Brethren, profeſſing Repentance. Chriſt anſwers, that there ſhould be no end of our mutual forgiving one another; but we are to multiply our Pardon as our Brother manifeſts his Repentance. Not that we are hereby obliged to take the frequent Offender into our Boſom, and to make him our Intimate, but to lay aſide all Malice, and all Thoughts and Deſires of Revenge, and to ſtand ready to do him any Office of Love and Friendſhip. *Learn,* 1. That to fall often into the ſame Offence againſt our Brother, is a great Aggravation of our Offence. 2. That as the Multiplication of Sin is a great Aggravation of Sin, ſo the Multiplication of Forgiveneſs is a great Demonſtration of a Godlike Temper in us. He that multiplies Sin, doth, like Satan, Sin abundantly; and he that multiplies Pardon, doth like God, pardon abundantly.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his ſervants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which ought him ten thouſand talents. 25 But foraſmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be ſold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The ſervant therefore fell down, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that ſervant was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the ſame ſervant went out, and found one of his fellow-ſervants, which ought him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, ſaying, pay me that thou oweſt. 29 And his fellow-ſervant fell down at his feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not; but went and caſt him into priſon, till he ſhould pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow-ſervants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, ſaid to him, O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſireſt me. 33 Shouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was worth, and delivered him unto the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.

Our Bleſſed Saviour to enforce the foregoing Doctrine of mutual Forgiveneſs, propounds a Parable; the main Scope of which is to ſhew, that unleſs we do actually forgive, and paſs by Injuries done to us, we cut our ſelves off from all Intereſt in God's pardoning Mercy, and muſt expect no Forgiveneſs at the Hands of God. From the whole, *Note* 1. That as we all ſtand in need of Forgiveneſs from God, ſo likewiſe of Forgiveneſs from one another. 2. That we all ſtand bound by the Laws of our Holy Religion to forbear and forgive one another. 3. That Almighty God has made the forgiving one another, the certain and neceſſary Condition of his forgiving us. 4. That ſuch as are inexorable towards their Brethren, ſhall find Almighty God hard to be entreated towards themſelves. We may expect the ſame Rigour and Severity from God, which we ſhew to Men. 5. That the Freeneſs of God's Love in forgiving us, ought to be both an Argument to excite us to forgive one another, and alſo a Rule to direct us in the manner of forgiving each other. Doth God forgive us when he has Power in his Hand to puniſh us? So muſt we, when we have Ability and Opportunity for Revenge. Doth God forgive univerſally all Perſons? So muſt we all Provocations: Doth he forgive freely and willingly, heartily and ſincerely? So muſt we; we muſt be as forward in forgiving, as they in provoking. *Learn* from the whole, The equity of unlimited forgiveneſs of our Brother, becauſe our God and Saviour forgives us more numerous and heinous Sins than our Brother is capable of committing againſt us. Let all unmerciful and unchriſtian Creditors remember this Text, who caſt poor Men into Priſon for Debt, who have nothing to pay: Surely, he who bids us lend, *looking for nothing again*, will not allow us to *impriſon* where nothing can be hoped for. It is to be feared, ſuch will find but little Mercy hereafter, who have ſhewed no Mercy here: For if at the Great Day ſuch ſhall be condemn'd as did not viſit Chriſtians in Priſon, what will their Condemnation be, who caſt them into Priſon?

CHAP. XIX.

AND it came to paſs that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe ſayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coaſts of Judea beyond Jordan: 2 And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there.

The Countrey of the *Jews* was divided into Three Provinces; namely, *Galilee*, *Samaria*, and *Judea*. In *Galilee* were the Cities of *Nazareth*, *Corazin*, *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*; here Chriſt dwelt and ſpent a conſiderable part of his time, Preaching to them, and working Miracles among them. But now comes the Time in which our Holy Lord takes his Leave of this Province of *Galilee*, and return'd no more to it: Woe to that People, whoſe Unthankfulneſs for Chriſt's Preſence and Miniſtry amongſt them, cauſes him finally to forſake them. Having left *Galilee*, our Holy Lord paſſes through *Samaria*, (the *Samaritans* being prejudiced againſt him, and refuſing to receive him) and comes into the Coaſts of *Judea*, where Multitudes of People flock'd after him. But *Obſerve* the Quality of his Followers, not the great Ones of the World, not many Mighty, not many Noble; but the Poor and Deſpiſed Multitude, the Sick and Weak, the Deaf and Blind, the Diſeaſed and Diſtreſſed. *Thence Obſerve*, That none but ſuch as find their Need of Chriſt, will ſeek after him, and come unto him. None will apply to him for Help till they feel themſelves helpleſs. *Great Multitudes* of the Sick and Diſeaſed came unto him, *and he healed them all.*

3 The Phariſees alſo came unto him, tempting him, and ſaying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe?

Obſerve here, 1. That whereſoever our Bleſſed Saviour went, the *Phariſees* followed him: Not out of a ſincere Intention, but with Deſign to enſnare him; and accordingly, they propound a Queſtion to him concerning Divorce, Whether a Man might put away his Wife upon any Occaſion, as the manner of the *Jews* was? Concluding, that they ſhould entrap him in his Anſwer, whatever it was. If he denied the Lawfulneſs of Divorce, then they would charge him with contradicting *Moſes*, who allowed it. If he affirmed it, then they would condemn him for contradicting his own Doctrine, *Chap.* 5. 32. for favouring Men's Luſts, and for complying with the wicked Cuſtom of the *Jews*, who upon every ſlight and frivolous Occaſion, put away their Wives from them. *Learn thence*, 1. That whereſoever our Lord went, as he had Diſciples and Sincere Followers, ſo the Devil ſtirr'd him up bitter and malicious Enemies, who ſought to render his Perſon unacceptable, and his Doctrine unſucceſsful. 2. That of all Chriſt's Enemies none had ſuch a bitter Hatred and Enmity againſt his Perſon, Miniſtry and Miracles, as the Phariſees. Men of great Knowledge, who rebelled againſt the Light of their own Conſciences, and the clear Convictions of their own Mind. 3. That ſuch was the Wiſdom of our Saviour in all his Anſwers to his Enemies, that neither their Wit nor Malice could lay hold upon any thing to enſnare him: For obſerve the Piety and Prudence of his Anſwer to the *Phariſees* in the next Words.

4 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female? 5 And ſaid, for this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife, and they twain ſhall be one fleſh. 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one fleſh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put aſunder.

Obſerve here, Chriſt gives no direct Anſwer to the *Phariſees* enſnaring Queſtion, but refers them to the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, when God made them one, to the Intent that Matrimonial Love might be both incommunicable and indiſſoluble. Whence *Learn*, 1. The Sacred Inſtitution of Marriage: It is an Ordinance of God's own Appointment, as the Ground and Foundation of all Sacred and Civil Society. *What God has joined together. Learn*, 2. The Antiquity of this Inſtitution, it was from the Beginning. *He which made them at the Beginning, made them Male and Female.* Marriage is almoſt as old as the World, as old as Nature; there was no ſooner One Perſon, but God divided him into Two; and no ſooner was there Two, but he united them into One. *Learn hence*, 3. The Intimacy and Nearneſs of this endeared and endearing Relation; the Conjugal Knot is tied ſo cloſe, that the Bonds of Matrimonial Love are ſtronger than thoſe of Nature. Stricter is the Tye betwixt Huſband and Wife, than that betwixt Parent and Child, according to God's own Inſtitution. *For this Cauſe ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife.*

7 They ſay unto him, Why did Moſes then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He ſaith unto them, Moſes, becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, ſuffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not ſo. 9 And I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

Obſerve here, The *Phariſees* Demand, and our Saviour's Reply. They demand, *Why* Moſes *commanded to put away the Wife by a Bill of Divorce*? Where *Note*, The wicked Abuſe which the *Phariſees* put upon *Moſes*, as if he had commanded them, whereas he only permitted *to put them away*. Moſes *ſuffered it for the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* That is, he did not puniſh it; not allowing it as good, but winking at it as a leſſer Evil, becauſe the *Jews* were ſo barbarouſly cruel to their Wives, as to turn them away upon every Diſguſt. Now our Saviour in his Reply refers them again to the Primitive Inſtitution of Marriage, bidding them compare the Precept and their Practice together; *for in the Beginning it was not ſo. Learn*, That according to the Word and Will of God, nothing can violate the Bonds of Marriage, and juſtify a Divorce between Man and Wife, but the defiling of the Marriage-Bed by Adultery and Uncleanneſs: This is the only Caſe in which Man and Wife may lawfully part. *Whoſoever ſhall put away his Wife, except for Fornication, committeth Adultery.*

10 His diſciples ſay unto him, If the caſe of the man be ſo with his wife, it is not good to marry.

That is, if a Man be ſo ſtrictly tied by Marriage, it is beſt for him not to marry. A very raſh Saying of the Diſciples, diſcovering both their great Carnality, and alſo the Tyranny of a ſinful Practice grown up into Cuſtom. *Learn*, 1. That the beſt of Men have their Weakneſſes and Infirmities; and the Fleſh takes its Turn to ſpeak as well as the Spirit in them. All that the Saints ſay is not Goſpel. *Learn*, 2. How impatient Nature is of Reſtraint, and how deſirous of ſinful Liberty, and to be freed from the Ties and Bonds which the Holy and Wiſe Laws of God put upon it.

11 But he ſaid unto them, All men cannot receive this ſaying, ſave they to whom it is given. 12 For there are ſome eunuchs, which were ſo born from their mother's womb: and there are ſome eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be

eunuchs, which have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heavens ſake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

As if our Lord had ſaid, You my Diſciples do not conſider what you ſay. All Men without ſinning againſt God cannot abſtain from Marriage, but thoſe only to whom God has given the Gift of Continency, and Grace of Chaſtity. Some indeed by Nature or natural Impotency are unfit for Marriage. Others wickedly are made unfit by Caſtration, others by Religious Mortification bring under their Bodies, That being freed from the Incumbrances that attend a Marriage State, they may give up themſelves the better to the Exerciſes of a Holy Life. *Learn*, 1. That Almighty God has given to divers Perſons different Tempers and Conſtitutions: Some can ſubdue their impure Deſires and Affections without the Remedy of Marriage, others cannot. 2. That Continency, or an Ability to live chaſtly, without the uſe of Marriage, is the ſpecial Gift of God, not common to all, but beſtowed only upon ſome. A Gift it is, worthy of our fervent Prayers, worthy of our beſt Endeavours. 3. That a Vow of Chaſtity is not in our Power; to quench a natural Affection requires a Supernatural Gift. *All have not received it.* That is, all Men cannot live ſingle, and abſtain from Matrimony. From whence it follows, that Men and Women are not by Monaſtical Vows to be obliged to live a ſingle Life, which ſome cannot perform without Sin. *Note farther*, When Chriſt ſays, that ſome *have made themſelves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's Sake*, The meaning is, That ſome have abſtained from Matrimony that they might be more expedite in Preaching the Goſpel, if Miniſters; or more promt, fit and ready to regard only the things of the Lord, if private Chriſtians.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put his hands on them, and pray: and the diſciples rebuked them. 14 But Jeſus ſaid, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

Obſerve here, A ſolemn Action performed. Children are brought to Chriſt to be bleſt by him. Where *Note*, 1. The Perſons brought, *Children*, young Children, ſucking Children as the Word imports: St. *Luke* 18. 15. *They brought them in their Arms*, not led them by the Hands. 2. The Perſon they are brought unto, *Jeſus Chriſt*; but for what End? Not to Baptize them, but *to Bleſs them*: The Parents looking upon Chriſt as a Prophet, a great Prophet, *the* great Prophet, do bring their Infants to him, that they may receive the Benefit of his Bleſſing and Prayers. Whence *Learn*, 1. That Infants are Subjects, capable of Benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt Office that Parents can perform unto their Children, to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made Partakers of that Benefit. 3. If Infants be capable of Benefit by Chriſt, if capable of his Bleſſing on Earth, and Preſence in Heaven; if they be Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and Heirs of his Kingdom of Glory, then they may be Baptized: For they that are in Covenant, have a Right to the Seal of the Covenant. If Chriſt denies not Infants the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the greater, what Reaſon have his Miniſters to deny them Baptiſm; which is the leſs? But ſay ſome, Chriſt did neither Baptize them, nor commanded his Diſciples ſo to do? *Anſw.* That is not to be wondred at, if we conſider that they had already entred into Covenant with God by Circumciſion, and Chriſtian Baptiſm was not yet inſtituted: *John's* Baptiſm was the Baptiſm of Repentance, of which Infants were incapable.

16 And behold, one came and ſaid unto him, Good maſter, what good thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal life.

Obſerve here, A Perſon addreſſing himſelf to Chriſt, and propounding an important Queſtion to him; *namely*, What he ſhould do to gain Eternal Life. Where *Note*, 1. He believes the Certainty of a future State. 2, He profeſſes his Deſire of an Eternal Happineſs in that State. And, 3. He declares his Readineſs to do ſome good thing, that he may obtain that Happineſs. *Learn*, That the Light of Nature, or natural Religion, directs and teaches Men, that good Works are neceſſary to Salvation, or that ſome good thing muſt be done by Men, that at Death expect Eternal Life. *What good thing ſhall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?* It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, and living well, that entitles us to Eternal Life.

17 And he ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? there is none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

The Perſon thus addreſſing himſelf unto Chriſt, was either a *Phariſee*, or a Diſciple of the *Phariſees*, who did not own Chriſt to be God, or to come from God, but taught that Eternal Life was attainable, by fulfilling of the Law in that imperfect Senſe, which the *Phariſees* gave of it. And accordingly, 1. Chriſt reproves him for calling him Good, *Why calleſt thou me good?* When thou wilt neither own me to be God, nor to come from God. *For there is none Good*; that is, Eſſentially and Originally Good, *but God only*: Nor any derivately Good, but he that receiveth his Goodneſs from God alſo. From this Place the *Socinians* argue againſt the Divinity of Chriſt; Thus, He to whom the Title of Good doth not belong, cannot be God moſt High. But by our Lord's Words this Title belongs not to Him, but only to God the Father, therefore God the Father muſt be God alone. *Anſw.* Chriſt may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to this young Man thus, thou giveſt me a Title which is never given to the moſt renowned Rabbins, and which agrees to God alone; now thou oughteſt to believe that there is ſomething in me more than Humane, if thou conceiveſt that this Title of Good doth belong to me. *Obſerve*, 2. That our Saviour might convince him of the Error of the Phariſees, who believed that they might without the Knowledge of him, the true Meſſias, enter into Life, by keeping the Law of God according to that lax and looſe Interpretation, which they, the Phariſees, had given of it; he bids him, *Keep the Commandments.* Where *Note*, Chriſt calls him off from outward Ceremonies, which the Phariſees abounded in, to the Practice of Moral Duties; yet withal lets him underſtand, that if he expected Salvation by the Moral Law, he muſt keep it perfectly and exactly without the leaſt Deficiency, which is an Impoſſibility to Man in his laps'd Eſtate. *Learn*, 1. That ſuch as ſeek Juſtification and Salvation by the Works of the Law only, muſt keep the whole Law, or Covenant of Works perfectly and exactly. *Learn*, 2. That the beſt way to prepare Men for Jeſus Chriſt, is to let them ſee their own Impotency, to keep and fulfil the Covenant of Works.

18 He ſaith unto him, Which? Jeſus ſaid, Thou ſhalt do no murder, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 20 The young man ſaith unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Obſerve here, That the Duties our Saviour inſtances in are the Duties of the Second Table, which Hypocrites are moſt failing in; but the ſincere Practice of our Duty to our Neighbour, is a ſingular Evidence of our Love to God. Theſe Duties of the ſecond Table the young Man ſays he had kept from his Youth, and perhaps might ſay it truly according to the Phariſees Interpretation, which condemned only the groſs outward Act, not the inward Luſt and Motion of the Heart. *Learn thence*, How apt Men are to think well of themſelves, and to have too high an Opinion of their own Goodneſs, and Righteouſneſs before God. *All theſe have I kept from my Youth.*

21 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come and follow me.

That is, Thou haſt been all thy Days a Phariſee, if now thou wilt be a Chriſtian, thou muſt maintain a Readineſs and Diſpoſition of Mind, to part with all that thou haſt in this World, at my Call, and at my Command, and follow after me. *Learn*, That ſuch as enter themſelves Diſciples of Chriſt, muſt be ready at Chriſt's Call to part with all for Chriſt's ſake that they have in this World. 2. All that profeſs themſelves to be Chriſt's Diſciples muſt be his

Followers; that is, they muſt obey his Doctrine, and imitate his Example, his Holineſs, his Humility, his Heavenly Mindedneſs, his Patience and Meekneſs, his Readineſs to forgive Injuries; *and the ſame Mind muſt be in us, which was in Chriſt Jeſus.*

22 But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions.

This parting with all for Chriſt, ſeemed ſo hard a Condition to the young Man, that he went away ſorrowful from Chriſt. Whence *Learn*, 1. That a Man wedded to the World, will renounce Chriſt, rather than the World, when both ſtand in Competition. 2. That Unregenerate and Carnal Men are exceeding ſorrowful, and ſadly concern'd, when they cannot have Heaven upon their own Terms, and win it in their own way. *The young Man went away ſorrowful.*

23 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Our Bleſſed Saviour takes Occaſion from what had paſt, to diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning the Danger of Riches, and the Difficulty that attends Rich Men in their way to Salvation. *A Rich Man ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God.* Whence *Note*, 1. That Rich Men do certainly meet with more Difficulties in their Way to Heaven, than other Men: 'Tis difficult to withdraw their Affections from Riches, to place their Supreme Love upon God, in the midſt of their Abundance. 'Tis difficult to depend upon God in a Rich Condition. *The Poor committeth himſelf to God, but the Rich Man's Wealth is his ſtrong Tower.* 2. That yet the Fault lyes not in Riches, but in Rich Men, who by placing their Truſt, and putting their Confidence in Riches, do render themſelves uncapable of the Kingdom of God.

24 And again I ſay unto you, It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Theſe Words were a Proverbial Speech among the *Jews*, to ſignifie a thing of great Difficulty, next to an Impoſſibility; And they import thus much, That it is not only a very great Difficulty, but an Impoſſibility for ſuch as abound in Worldly Wealth to be Saved, without an extraordinary Grace and Aſſiſtance from God. 'Tis hard for a Rich Man to become happy, even by God, becauſe he thinks himſelf happy without God.

25 When his diſciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved?

The Diſciples underſtanding how naturally and ſtrongly Men love the World, and how Idolatrouſly and Inordinately their Hearts run out upon it; they ſay unto Chriſt, *Lord, who can be ſaved?* *Learn*, 1. That when the general Difficulties which lye in the Way of Salvation, are laid forth, and ſufficiently underſtood, we may juſtly wonder that any are, or ſhall be Saved. 2. That ſuch are the ſpecial and peculiar Difficulties in the Rich Man's Way to Heaven, that his Salvation is Matter of Wonder and great Admiration to the Diſciples of Chriſt. *When the Diſciples heard this, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved?*

26 But Jeſus beheld them, and ſaid unto them, With men this is unpoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, Were all Men left to themſelves, no Man, either Poor or Rich, would be Saved; but God can bring Men to Heaven by the mighty Power of his Grace; He can make the Rich in Eſtate, Poor in Spirit; and them that are Poor in this World, Rich in Grace. *Learn*, 1. That it is impoſſible for any Man, Rich or Poor, by his own natural Strength, to get to Heaven. 2. That when we are diſcouraged with the Senſe of our own Impotency, we ſhould conſider the Power of God, and act our Faith upon it. *With God all things are poſſible.*

27 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Behold, we have forſaken all, and followed thee; what ſhall we have therefore? 28 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

The Apoſtles having heard our Saviour's Command to the young Man, to ſell all and give to the Poor, St. *Peter* in the Name of the reſt, tells Chriſt, that they had left all, and followed him; *Behold, we have left all.* Where *Note*, How *Peter* magnifies that little which he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it in with a Note of Obſervation and Admiration alſo, *Behold, we have left all, what ſhall we have then? Learn thence*, That altho' it be a very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and leſs that we have to forſake upon his Account, yet we are apt to magnifie and extol it, as if it were ſome great matter. *Lord, we have forſaken all.* What all? His tatter'd Fiſher-Boat, and his ragged Nets; ſcarce worthy to be mentioned: Yet how is it magnified! *Behold, Lord, we have left all.* But obſerve our Lord's kind and gracious Anſwer; You that have left all to follow me, ſhall be no Loſers by me. For in the *Regeneration*; that is, at the Reſurrection, when Believers ſhall be perfectly Renewed, both in Soul and Body, and ſhall enjoy my Kingdom, then, as I ſit upon the Throne of my Glory, ſo ſhall you ſit with me in an higher Degree of Dignity and Honour, *Judging the Twelve Tribes of* Iſrael; that is, the *Jews*, firſt for their Unbelief, and then all other Deſpiſers of Goſpel-Grace and Mercy. *Learn*, 1. That ſuch Miniſters as do moſt Service for Chriſt, and forſake moſt to follow him, ſhall in his Kingdom partake of moſt Honour and Dignity with him, and from him. 2. That as the Miniſters of Chriſt in general, ſo his Twelve Apoſtles in particular ſhall ſet nearer the Throne of Chriſt, and have an higher place in Glory at the Great Day, than ordinary Believers.

29 And every one that hath forſaken houſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my names ſake, ſhall receive an hundred fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.

The foregoing Promiſe, *v.* 28. reſpected the Apoſtles; this, all Chriſtians, who forſake their deareſt Enjoyments for Chriſt. He aſſures them, they ſhall be recompenced in this Life an Hundred fold: How? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter*: Not *in Specie*, but *in Valore*; not *in Kind*, but in *Equivalency*: Not an Hundred Brethren, or Siſters, or Lands; but *firſt*, He ſhall have that in God, which all Creatures would be to him, if they were multiplied an Hundred times; *Secondly*, The Gifts and Graces, the Comforts and Conſolations of the Holy Spirit, ſhall be an Hundred fold better Portion, than any thing we can part with for the Sake of Chriſt and his Goſpel here. Tho' we may be Loſers for Chriſt, yet ſhall we never be Loſers by him. Chriſt gives preſent Recompences as well as future Rewards; inſomuch that they which have ſuffered and loſt moſt for Chriſt, have never complained of their Sufferings or Loſſes. Therefore never be afraid to loſe any thing for Chriſt, he will not only ſee you indemnified, but plentifully Rewarded; in this World an Hundred Fold, in that to come, Eternal Life.

30 But many that are firſt, ſhall be laſt; and the laſt ſhall be firſt.

A twofold Senſe and Interpretation is given of theſe Words. The *Firſt*, reſpects the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general; the *Second*, all Profeſſors of Chriſtianity in particular. The *Jews*, as if Chriſt had ſaid, Look upon themſelves as firſt, and neareſt to the Kingdom of Heaven, but for their Infidelity they ſhall be laſt in it; that is, ſhall never come there. And the *Gentiles*, who are look'd upon as Dogs, and fartheſt from Heaven, ſhall be firſt there, upon their Converſion to me, and Faith in me. As the Words reſpect all Profeſſors, the Senſe is, Many that are firſt in their own Eſteem, and in the Opinion of others, and forward in a Profeſſion of Religion, yet at the Day of Judgment they will be laſt and leaſt in mine and my Father's Eſtimation and Account. And many that were little in their own, and leſs in the Eſteem of others, who had a leſs Name and Vogue in the World, ſhall yet be firſt and higheſt in my Favour. *Learn hence*, That the Day of Judgment will fruſtrate a great many Perſons Expectations, both as touching others, and concerning themſelves. Many will miſs of Heaven, and the laſt, which look'd upon themſelves to be firſt. And many will find others in Heaven, whom they leaſt expected there. *The Lord judgeth not as Man judgeth.* We judge of Men by outward Appearances, *but we are ſure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth.* He can neither be deceived nor yet deceive.

CHAP. XX.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market place, 4 And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. 5. Again he went out about the ſixth, and ninth hour, and did likewiſe: 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? 7 They ſay unto him, Becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, that ſhall ye receive.

A twofold Senſe and Interpretation is given of this Parable; but both Analogical. One of which relates to the calling of the Gentiles. The *Jews* were the firſt People that God had in the World; they were hired into the Vineyard betimes in the Morning, the Gentiles not till the Day was far ſpent; yet ſhall the Gentiles by the Favour, and Bounty of God, receive the ſame Reward of Eternal Life which was promiſed to the *Jews*, who bare the Heat of the Day, while the Gentiles ſtood idle. In the other Analogical Senſe we may underſtand all Perſons indefinitely, called by the Goſpel into the viſible Church, thoſe that are called laſt, ſhall be rewarded together with the firſt; and accordingly the Deſign and Scope of this Parable is to ſhew the Freeneſs of Divine Grace in the Diſtribution of thoſe Rewards which the Hand of Mercy confers upon God's faithful Servants. The *Vineyard* is the Church of God, the *Husbandman* is God himſelf, the *Labourers* are particular Perſons. God's going at divers times into his Vineyard imports the ſeveral Ages of Man's Life; ſome are called early in the Morning, ſome at Noon, others at Night. Now when God comes to diſpence his Rewards, thoſe that entred firſt into the Vineyard, and did moſt Service for God, ſhall be plentifully rewarded by him; and ſuch as come in later, but did faithful Service, ſhall not miſs of a Merciful Reward. *Learn*, 1. That ſo long as a Perſon keeps out of Chriſt's Vineyard and Service, he is *Idle*, Every unregenerate Man is an idle Man. 2. That Perſons are called by the preaching of the Goſpel at ſeveral Ages and Periods of Life into God's Vineyard; that is, into the Communion of the viſible Church. 3. That ſuch as do come in, tho' late, into God's Vineyard, and work diligently, and faithfully, ſhall not miſs of a Reward of Grace at the Hand of free Mercy.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his ſteward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt. 9. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more, and they likewiſe received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmered againſt the good man of the houſe, 12 Saying, Theſe laſt have wrought *but* one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he anſwered one of them, and ſaid, Friend, I do thee no wrong? didſt thou not agree with me for a penny. 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? is thine eye evil, becauſe I am good? 16 So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for many be called, but few choſen.

Here Obſerve, 1. That the time of God's full rewarding of his Labourers is the Evening of their Days; that is, when the Work is done. *When the Evening was come, the Lord of the Vineyard called his Labourers and gave them their Hire*; not but that they have part of their Reward in Hand, but it is chiefly laid up in Hope. *Obſ.* 2. That tho' God makes no difference in his Servants Wages for the time of their Work, yet he will make a difference for the degrees of their Service. Undoubtedly they that have done moſt Work, ſhall receive moſt Wages. *He that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully; God will reward every Man according to his Works*: that is, not only according to the Nature and Quality, but the Meaſure and Degree of his Works. All ſhall have Equity, but all ſhall not have equal Bounty. *Obſ.* 3. That all Inequality in the Diſtribution of Rewards doth not make God an unjuſt Accepter of Perſons; he may diſpence both Grace and Glory, in what Meaſure and Degree he pleaſes, without the leaſt Shadow of Unrighteouſneſs. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Obſ.* 4. That when we have done much Service for God, by labouring longer than others in his Vineyard, it is our Duty to have a low Eſteem both of our Services and our ſelves, *for the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*: That is, they that are firſt and higheſt in their own Eſteem, ſhall be laſt and leaſt in God's Account.

17 And Jeſus going up to Jeruſalem, took the twelve diſciples apart in the way, and ſaid unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes, and they ſhall condemn him to death, 19 And ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucifie him, and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

This is now the third time that Chriſt had acquainted his Diſciples very lately with his approaching Sufferings and bloody Paſſion. He did it twice before, *Chap.* 16 and *Chap.* 17. yet now he mentions it again, that they might not be diſmayed, and their Faith might not be ſhaken to ſee him die, who called himſelf the true Meſſias, and the Son of God. The firſt time he told his Diſciples of his Death in general; the ſecond time he declares the means, by Treaſon; now he tells them the manner, by crucifying, that he ſhould be *Scourged*, *Mocked, Spit upon*, and *Crucified*: All this he did to prevent his Diſciples Dejection at his Sufferings. *Learn thence*, That it is highly neceſſary that the Doctrine of the Croſs be often preach'd to us; that ſo being armed with Expectation of Sufferings before they come, we may be the leſs diſmayed and diſheartned when they come. Our Lord's frequent forewarning his Diſciples of his Death and Sufferings, was to fore-arm them with Expectation of *his* Sufferings, and with Preparation for their *own*.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her ſons, worſhipping him, and deſiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he ſaid unto her, What wilt thou? ſhe ſaith unto him, Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.

To ſit on the Right Hand and on the Left, is to have the moſt eminent Places of Dignity and Honour after Chriſt. This the Mother might be encouraged to aſk for *James* and *John*, becauſe of their Alliance to Chriſt, and becauſe Chriſt had admitted them with *Peter* to be with him at his Transfiguration. However the Reſt of the Diſciples hearing of this ambitious Requeſt of the Two Brethren; and being as deſirous, and in their own Opinion as deſerving of the ſame Honour, they had Indignation againſt them. *Where Note*, That none of the Diſciples did imagine that Chriſt had promiſed the Supremacy to *Peter*, by thoſe Words, *Tu es Petrus.* Thou art *Peter*; for then neither *James* nor *John* had deſired it, nor would the Reſt have contended for it.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſons making this Requeſt of Chriſt, *Zebedee's Children*; that is, *James* and *John*, by the Mouth of their *Mother*. They ſpake by her Lips, and made uſe of her Tongue, to uſher in a Requeſt which they were aſham'd to make themſelves. *Obſ.* 2. The Requeſt it ſelf, *Grant that theſe Two may ſit, the one on the Right, the other on thy Left Hand.* Where, *Note*, How theſe Diſciples did ſtill dream of Chriſt's Temporal Kingdom, (altho' he had ſo often told them, *that his Kingdom was not of this World*,) and ambitiouſly ſeek to have the Preference and Preheminence in that Kingdom. See here, how theſe poor Fiſhermen had already learnt craftily to fiſh for Preferment. Who can wonder to ſee ſome Sparks of Ambition and Worldly Deſires in the Holieſt Miniſters of Chriſt, when the Apoſtles themſelves were not free from aſpiring Thoughts, even when they lay in the Boſom of their Saviour? Ambition has along infected Churchmen, and troubled the Church even from the very firſt Original and Foundation of it. *Obſerve*, 3. Both the Unſeaſonableſs and Unreaſonableneſs of this Requeſt made by the Diſciples. Chriſt ſpeaks of his Sufferings to them, and they ſue for Dignity and great Places from him, *in optimis non nihil eſt peſſimi*, The holieſt, the wiſeſt, and beſt of Men in this their imperfect State are not wholly free from paſſionate Infirmities. Who would have expected that when our Saviour had been preaching the Doctrine of the Croſs to his Diſciples, telling them that he muſt be *Mocked*, *Scourged*, *Spit upon*, and *Crucified* for them; that they ſhould be ſeeking and ſuing to him for Secular Dignity and Honour, Preheminence and Power? But we plainly ſee the beſt of Men are but Men, and that none is in a State of Perfection on this ſide Heaven.

22 But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? they ſay unto him, We are able.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, you do but abuſe your ſelves with fond and idle Dreams; there is other Work cut out for you in the Purpoſe of God, then ſetting upon Thrones and Tribunals; to think of Suffering would do you more Service. And accordingly our Saviour in his Anſwer tells theſe Diſciples, 1. That they were greatly Ignorant of the Nature and Quality of his Kingdom, which was not ſecular, but Heavenly; but the Carnal Notion of a Glorious Earthly Kingdom upon Earth, in which they ſhould be delivered from the Roman Power, was ſo deeply imprinted in their Minds, that they frequently declared their Expectation of it, notwithſtanding all the Aſſurances which Chriſt had given them of the contrary. *Obſerve*, 2. The Courſe which our Saviour takes to cool the Ambition of his Diſciples; he tells them, they muſt expect here not Crowns on their Heads, but a Croſs on their Backs; they muſt firſt taſte of his Sufferings, before they talk of his Glory, and patiently ſuffer for him, before they expect to reign with him; plainly intimating, that the Croſs is the way to the Crown; Suffering the way to Reigning, and that thoſe that ſuffer moſt for Chriſt, ſhall partake of higheſt Dignity and Glory from him. *Obſ.* 3. The preſumptuous Confidence which the Diſciples had of their own Strength and Ability for Sufferings. *Are ye able*, ſays Chriſt, *to drink of my Cup?* They reply, *We are able.* Alas, poor Diſciples! when it came to the Tryal, they all cowardly forſook him and fled. A bold Preſumption makes us vaunt of our own Ability; holy Jealouſie makes us diſtruſtful of our own Strength. Thoſe that are leaſt acquainted with the Croſs, are uſually the moſt confident Undertakers.

23 And he ſaith unto them, Ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with: but to ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it ſhall be given* to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Obſerve here, Our Bleſſed Saviour's wonderful Mildneſs and Gentleneſs towards his Diſciples; he doth not with Paſſion, much leſs with indignation, reprehend them, either for their Ambition or Preſumption, but makes the beſt of their Anſwer, and encourages their good Intentions; he tells them, they ſhould have the Honour to ſhare with him in his Sufferings, to pledge him in his own Cup, and after a Conformity to him in his Sufferings, they might expect to be Sharers with him in his Glory. Yet *Obſerve*, that when Chriſt ſays, *That to ſit at his Right Hand was not his to give*, He means, as he was *Man*; or as he was *Mediator*, for elſewhere, as *God*, we find him aſſerting his Power to diſpoſe of the Kingdom of Heaven. *John* 10. 28. *I give unto them Eternal Life.* However the *Arrians* of old, and *Socinians* of late do from this Text infer, that God the Father has a Power reſerved to Himſelf, which he hath not comitted to Chriſt his Son. From whence they would conclude, that he is not the ſame God which the Father is, becauſe he hath not the ſame Power which the Father has. *Anſwer*, but if Chriſt be here ſuppoſed to deny this Power to himſelf, he muſt then manifeſtly contradict himſelf, when he ſays, *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, and all Power in Heaven and Earth is given to me.* When Chriſt therefore ſaith he could only give this to them for whom it was appointed of his Father. This doth not ſignifie any Defect in his Power, but a perfect Conformity to his Father's Will, and that he could not do This, unleſs the Divine Eſſence and Nature abided in Him. This the Words rather ſhew, than that there is any Want of Power in Chriſt.

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation againſt the two brethren. 25 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great, exerciſe authority upon them. 26 But it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your miniſter: 27 And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant.

Note here, 1. That Chriſt by theſe Words doth not forbid the exerciſe of Civil Dominion and Lawful Magiſtracy, for then all Order, all Defence of good Men, and Puniſhment of evil Doers would be taken away. Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, and the Magiſtrate is God's Miniſter for the Good of Human Society, and conſequently not here cenſured or condemn'd by Chriſt. True, when Chriſt was here on Earth, he refuſed to execute the Magiſtrates Office, becauſe his Kingdom was not of this World, and becauſe he would give no Umbrage to *Cæſar*, or the *Jews*; and becauſe he would leave us an Example of Humility and Contempt of Worldly Grandeur, and not becauſe the Office of Civil Magiſtracy was unlawful. *Note*, 2. That Chriſt by this Text doth not condemn the Exerciſe of Eccleſiaſtical Government, that being as neceſſary in the Church, as the former in the State. The Welfare of the Church neceſſarily depends on the Exerciſe of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline. *Note*, 3. Chriſt here forbids only the Exerciſe of that Dominion which is attended with Tyranny and Oppreſſion, and is managed according to Mens Will and Luſts; now ſays Chriſt, you ſhall have no ſuch Government, you ſhall command nothing for meer Will and Pleaſure, but your whole Office ſhall conſiſt in being Miniſters to the Good of others, and herein ye ſhall reſemble *me the Son of Man, who came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.* And accordingly, That Chriſt might effectually quench thoſe unhappy Sparks of Ambition which were kindled in his Apoſtles Minds, he tells them, that Supremacy and Dominion belong to Secular Princes not to Evangelical Paſtors, who ought to carry themſelves with Humility towards one another; not that Chriſt directs to a Parity and Equality amongſt all his Miniſters, and forbids the Preheminence of ſome over others, but the Affectation of Superiority, and the Love of Preheminency, is that which our Saviour diſallows. *Learn*, 1. That ſo far ought the Miniſters of Chriſt to be from affecting a Domination and Superiority of Power over their Fellow-Brethren, that in Imitation of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves Fellow-Servants. *I am amongſt you*, ſaith Chriſt, *as one that ſerveth.* 2. That ſuch Miniſters as do love and affect Preheminence and Superiority, are moſt unfit for it, and they deſerve it beſt, who ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the Dignity and Honour which the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly and only affect, is in another World; and the way to be greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble here, mean in our own Eyes, and little in our own Eſteem. *Whoſoever will be chief* (ſays Chriſt) *let him be your Servant.*

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be mi-

niſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

To encourage his Diſciples to the forementioned condeſcending Humility one towards another, our Saviour propounds to them his own inſtructive Example, *I came not to be miniſtred unto* (ſays Chriſt) *but to miniſter* to the Wants and Neceſſities of others, both for Soul and Body. O what a Sight will it be, as if our Lord had ſaid, to behold an humble God, and a proud Creature; an humble Saviour, and an haughty Sinner. Yea, our Lord urges his Example farther, that as he laid down his Life for us, ſo ſhould we be ready to lay down our Lives for one another. Did Chriſt lay down his Life for us, and ſhall not we lay down a Luſt for him? Our Pride, our Ambition, our Affectation of Dignity and Superiority over others. *Note here* two things, 1. Whereas it is ſaid, that Chriſt gave his Life a Ranſom for *many*; it is elſewhere affirmed that he taſted Death for every Man, even for them that *denied the Lord who bought them*. The Word *many* in other Places of Scripture is not excluſive of ſome, but induſive of all. Thus *Dan.* 12. 2. *Many that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall ariſe*, Anſwers St. *John* 5. 28, 29. *All that ſleep in the Grave ſhall hear his Voice.* Thus *Rom.* 5. 15. *Thro' the Offence of one, many died.* Anſwers 1 *Cor.* 15. 22. *In Adam all died.* There is a vertual Sufficiency in the Death of Chriſt for the Salvation of all Mankind, and an actual Efficacy for the Salvation of them that Repent, and Believe, and Obey the Goſpel. *Note* 2. From theſe Words, *He gave his Life a Ranſom*; that Chriſt ſuffer'd in our ſtead, and died in our Place, and gave his Life inſtead of Ours. It was the conſtant Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that their piacular Victims were Ranſoms for the Life of the Offender, and that he who gave his Life for another, ſuffered in his ſtead to preſerve him from Death. And who can reaſonably ſuppoſe, but that our Lord intended by ſaying, He gave himſelf a Ranſom, that he gave his Life inſtead of the Lives of thoſe for whom he ſuffer'd? Vain are the *Socinians* when they ſay this Price was to be paid to Satan, becauſe he detained us captive. True! The Price is to be paid to him that retains the captive, when he doth this for Gain to make Money of him as the *Turks* detain the *Chriſtians* captive at *Algiers*, But when a Man is detained in Cuſtody for Violation of a Law, then 'tis not the Jaylor but the Legiſlator to whom the Price of Redemption muſt be pay'd, or Satiſfaction be made. Accordingly this Price was pay'd to God, for Chriſt became our Ranſom, as he offer'd up his Life, and Blood for us, now he offer'd up himſelf without Spot to God, *Heb.* 9. 14. He therefore paid the Price of our Redemption to God.

29 And as they departed from Jerico, a great multitude followed him. 30 And behold, two blind men ſitting by the way ſide, when they heard that Jeſus paſſed by, cried out, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, becauſe they ſhould hold their peace: but they cried the more, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. 32 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, What will ye that I ſhall do unto you? 33 They ſay unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jeſus had compaſſion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received ſight, and they followed him.

This Chapter concludes with a famous Miracle, wrought by Chriſt upon two blind Men in the ſight of a great Multitude which followed him. Where *Obſ.* 1. The blind Men's Faith, in acknowledging Jeſus to be the true Meſſias, for ſo much the Title of *the Son of David* ſignifies. 2. Their Fervency, in crying ſo earneſtly to Chriſt for Mercy, and Healing, *Have Mercy upon us, thou Son of David.* A true Senſe of want will make us cry unto Chriſt for Help earneſtly, and with undeniable Importunity. *Obſerve* 3. The great Condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards theſe poor blind Men: *He ſtood ſtill, he called them, he had Compaſſion on them, he touched their Eyes, and healed them.* A mighty Inſtance of Chriſt's Divine Power. He that can open blind Eyes with a touch of his Finger, and that by his own Power, is really God. His Touch is an Omnipotent Touch. *Obſerve* 4. Altho' Chriſt well knew the Condition of theſe blind Men, yet before he will reſtore them to ſight, they muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of Sight, and cry unto him for Mercy and Healing. *Learn thence*, That altho' Chriſt perfectly knows all our Wants, yet he takes no notice of them, till we make them known to him by Prayer. *Obſerve*, 5. The beſt Way and Courſe which the blind Men took to expreſs their Thankfulneſs to Chriſt for recovered Sight, *they followed him.* *Learn thence*, That Mercy from Chriſt is then rightly improved, when it engages us to follow Chriſt. This ſhould be the effect of all Salvations wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt, that ſerveth and obeyeth him moſt; the Life of Thankfulneſs conſiſts in the Thankfulneſs of the Life.

CHAP. XXI.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jeruſalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then ſent Jeſus two diſciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over againſt you, and ſtraightway ye ſhall find an aſs tied, and a colt with her: looſe them, and bring them unto me. 3 And if any man ſay ought unto you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord hath need of them; and ſtraightway he will ſend them.

The former part of this Chapter gives us an Account of our Saviour's Solemn and Triumphant Riding into the City of *Jeruſalem*. Where *Obſerve*, That in all our Saviour's Journeys and Travails from Place to Place; he conſtantly went like a poor Man *on foot*, without Noiſe, and without Train; now he goes up to *Jeruſalem* to die for Sinners; he *rides*, to ſhew his great Chearfulneſs in that Service, and his Forwardneſs to lay down his Life for us. But what doth he ride upon? *An Aſs*, according to the manner of great Perſons amongſt the *Jews*; but eſpecially to fulfil the Prophecy, *Zach.* 9. 9. that the Meſſias, a King of the *Jews*, *ſhould come riding upon an Aſs.* But this *Aſs was a colt, the Foal of an Aſs, on which never Man had rode before*, ſays St. *Mark*, *Ch.* 11. 12. ſignifying thereby, that the moſt unruly and untamed Creatures become obedient and obſequious to him; and upon a *borrowed Aſs*, the uſe of which he demands, thereby manifeſting his Sovereign Right to all the Creatures; and accordingly he bids his Diſciples tell the Owner of the Aſs, *that the Lord hath need of him*; not *our Lord*, but *the Lord*, that is, he that is the Lord of all, *whoſe are the Cattel upon a thouſand Hills*; he that is Lord of all the Beaſts, and Owners too. *Obſerve farther*, That notwithſtanding Chriſt's ſupreme Right to the Aſs and the Colt, he will have neither of them taken without the Owner's Knowledge or againſt his Will; but the Diſciples muſt acquaint him with it, and by a double Argument move him to it. 1. Chriſt's Right of Dominion and Soverieignty over them; he is *the Lord* that ſends for them. 2. His Preſent Occaſion for them; the Lord has *need of them.* *Note* alſo here a wonderful inſtance of Chriſt's Preſcience or Foreknowledge even in the moſt minute and ſmalleſt Matters. 1. *You ſhall find a Colt.* 2. *On which no Man ever ſate.* 3. *A Colt tyed and Bound with its Dam.* 4. *In the Place where Two Ways met.* 5. *As they entred the Village.* 6. *That the Owner ſhould be willing to let him go.* Such an exact Knowledge had Chriſt of Perſons and Actions, even of the Circumſtances of Actions.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt, the foal of an aſs.

Here the Reaſon is aſſigned why Chriſt rode upon the Aſs into *Jeruſalem*; it was to fulfil an ancient Prophecy, that the Meſſias, or King of the *Jews*, ſhould come riding upon that Beaſt into *Jeruſalem*. There was not any Prophecy of Chriſt more plainly fulfilled than this. The Prophecy alluded to, is *Zach.* 9. 9. *Rejoyce greatly, Oh Daughter of*

Zion, *ſhout, Oh Daughter of* Jeruſalem, *behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is juſt, and having Salvation, lowly and riding upon an Aſs; and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs.* Where *Note*, The Character given of the Meſſias; he is the ſupreme King and Governour of his Church; *thy King cometh.* The Errand that he comes upon *Bringing Salvation*, and the Entertainment which his Church was to give him: *Namely*, To receive him with Triumphs of Joy, and Univerſal Acclamations. *Rejoyoce Oh Daughter of* Zion, *and ſhout, oh* Jeruſalem *for Joy.*

6 And the diſciples went, and did as Jeſus commanded them, 7 And brought the aſs, and the colt, and put on them their cloaths, and they ſet him thereon. 8 And a very great multitude ſpread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and ſtrawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David: Bleſſed is he that cometh in the the name of the Lord, Hoſanna in the higheſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The Obedience of the Diſciples, and the Motions of the Multitude; the Diſciples never diſpute their Lord's Commands, nor raiſe Objections, nor are afraid of Dangers, but ſpeedily execute their Lord's Pleaſure, and find every thing according to their Lord's Predictions. When our Call is clear, our Obedience muſt be ſpeedy. What God commands, we are not to diſpute, but to obey. *The Diſciples did as Jeſus commanded them. Obſ.* 2. The Actions of the Multitude in acknowledging Chriſt to be their King. *They caſt their Garments on the Ground* for him to ride upon, according to the Cuſtom of Princes when they ride in State; and they do not only diſrobe their Backs, but expend their Breath in joyful Acclamations, and loud Hoſanna's; wiſhing all manner of Proſperity to this meek, but mighty King. In this princely, yet poor and deſpicable Pomp, doth our Saviour enter into the famous City of *Jeruſalem.* Oh how far was our Holy Lord from affecting Worldly Greatneſs and Grandeur! He deſpiſed that Glory which worldly Hearts fondly admire; yet becauſe he was a King, he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his Kingdom confeſt, applauded, and bleſt; But that it might appear, *his Kingdom was not of this World*, he abandons all Worldly Magnificence. O glorious, yet homely Pomp! Oh meek, but mighty Prince!

10 And when he was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, ſaying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

This is not the firſt or only time that *Jeruſalem* was moved and troubled at the Appearance of Chriſt; at his Birth, *Matth.* 2. we read *all Jeruſalem was troubled*, together with *Herod*; and now he that rides into *Jeruſalem*, tho' in ſo mean a Port, yet there is a new Commotion. *Jeruſalem*, inſtead of being thankful for his Company, is troubled at his Preſence. *Thence learn*, That ſuch Perſons and Places as have the greateſt Helps and Priviledges afforded to them, are not always the moſt anſwerable in their Returns of Thankfulneſs. 'Tis not Chriſt's Preſence with us, but his Welcome to us, that makes us happy. *Chriſt is daily taught in our Synagogues, and preached in our Streets*, yet alas! Multitudes are ignorant of him, and ſay with the Men of *Jeruſalem*, when Chriſt was before their Eyes, *Who is this?*

12 And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt out all them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves, 13 And ſaid unto them, It is written, my houſe ſhall be called the houſe of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having entred *Jeruſalem*, *Obſerve* his firſt Walk was not to the Palace, but to the Temple, and his Work there was to purge and reform: All Reformation of Manners muſt begin firſt at the Houſe of God. Our Lord's Buſineſs was to reform the Temple, not to ruin it. Places dedicated to publick Worſhip, if prophaned and polluted, ought to be purged from their Abuſes, not pull'd down and deſtroy'd, becauſe they have been abuſed. But what was the Prophanation of the Temple which ſo offended our Saviour? *Anſwer*, Within the third or outward Court of the Tempel, there was a publick Mart, or Market held, where were ſold Oxen, Sheep, and Doves, and ſuch things as were needful for Sacrifice; many of the *Jews* coming an Hundred Miles to the Temple, it was burthenſome to bring their Sacrifices ſo far with them: Wherefore order was taken by the Prieſts, that Sheep and Oxen, Meal and Oil, and all other Requiſites for Sacrifice, ſhould be had for Money cloſe by the Altar, to the great eaſe of the Offerer. Nothing could be more plauſible than his Plea. But the faireſt Pretences cannot bear out a Sin with God; therefore our Bleſſed Saviour in Indignation at ſo foul an Abuſe, whips out theſe Chapmen, caſts down their Tables, and Vindicates the Honour and Reputation of his Father's Houſe. *Learn thence*, That there is a Reverence due to God's Houſe for the Owner's ſake, and for the Service ſake. Nothing but Holineſs can become that Place, where God is worſhipped in the Beauty of Holineſs. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for this Act of his; for (ſays he) *It is written, my Houſe ſhall be called an Houſe of Prayer:* Where by Prayer is to be underſtood the whole Worſhip and Service of Almighty God, of which Prayer is an eminent and principal Part. That which gives Denomination to an Houſe, is certainly the chief Work to be done in that Houſe. Now God's Houſe being called an Houſe of Prayer, certainly implies, that Prayer is the chief and principal Work to be performed in his Houſe; yet muſt we take heed that we ſet not the Ordinances of God at Variance one with another; we muſt not idolize one Ordinance, and vilifie another, but pay an awful Reſpect and Regard to all the Inſtitutions of our Maker.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 And when the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David; they were ſore diſpleaſed, 16 And ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe?

Obſerve here, 1. That our Bleſſed Saviour works his Miracles not ſecretly in a Corner, but openly in the Temple, and ſubmits them to the Examination of all Perſons Senſes. A Miracle is a ſupernatural Action, which is obvious to Senſe. Popiſh Miracles are talk'd of by many, but ſeen by none. *Obſ.* 2. That Chriſt's Enemies are never more incenſed, than when his Divine Power is moſt exerted, and his Divine Nature owned and acknowledged. When *the chief Prieſts ſaw the Miracles which Jeſus did, and heard the Children, crying Hoſanna to the Son of* David, *they were diſpleaſed. Obſ.* 3. That Chriſt can glorifie himſelf by *the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings*; he can form and fit up what Inſtruments he pleaſes, to ſhew forth his Excellencies, and celebrate his Praiſes. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe.*

17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there. 18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city he hungered. 19 And when he ſaw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having driven the Buyers and Sellers out of the temple, lodges not that Night in *Jeruſalem*, but withdraws to *Bethany*, a Place of Retirement from the Noiſe and Tumult of the City. Where *Note*, Our Lord's Love of Solitude and Retiredneſs. How delightful is it to a good Man, to dwell ſometimes within himſelf, *to take the Wings of a Dove, and fly away, and be at reſt:* Yet the next Morning our Lord returns to the City; he knew when to be ſolitary, and when to be ſociable; when to be alone, and when to converſe in Company. In his Paſſage to the City, he eſpies a *Fig-tree*; and *being an hungry*, (to ſhew the Truth of his Humanity,) *he goes to the Fig-tree and finds it full of Leaves*, but without any Fruit. Diſpleaſed with this Diſappointment, he curſes the Tree which had deceived his Expectation. This Action of our Saviour, in curſing the barren Fig-tree, was Typical; an Emblem of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* in general, and of every Perſon in particular, that ſatiſfies himſelf with a withered Profeſſion, bearing Leaves only, but no Fruit. As this *Fig-tree* was, ſo are they; *nigh unto curſing. Learn thence*, That ſuch as content themſelves with a Fruitleſs Profeſſion of Religion, are in great danger of having God's Blaſting added to their Barrenneſs.

20 And when the diſciples ſaw it, they marvelled, ſaying, how ſoon is the fig-tree withered away? 21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not, ye ſhall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but alſo if ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, it ſhall be done. 22 And all things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.

The Diſciples being filled with Admiration at the ſudden withering of the Fig-tree, thereupon our Saviour exhorts them to *have Faith in God*: That is firmly to rely upon the Power of God whereby he is able; upon the Goodneſs of God, whereby he is willing to fulfil his Promiſes to us. *Learn*, 1. That Faith is a neceſſary Ingredient in Prayer. Praying without Faith is like ſhooting without Bullet; it makes a noiſe, but doth no Execution. 2. That whatſoever good thing God has made the Matter of a Promiſe, ſhall be given to good Men, praying in Faith. *Whatſoever ye ask in Prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.* Yet *Note*, That the Faith here promiſed *to root up Mountains*, muſt be reſtrained to that Age of Miracles, and to the Perſons to whom this was ſpoken, namely the Apoſtles and firſt Propagators of the Goſpel; it being certain from Experience, that this is no ordinary and perpetual Gift of Chriſtians.

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief prieſts and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and ſaid, By what authority doſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I alſo will ask you one thing; which if ye tell me, I in like wiſe will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 25 The baptiſm of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? and they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid, we cannot tell. And he ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often queſtion'd our Saviour's Doctrine before, they call in queſtion his Miſſion and Authority now. Altho' they might eaſily have underſtood his Divine Miſſion by his Divine Miracles. Almighty God never impowered any to work Miracles that were not ſent by him; when the Adverſaries of Chriſt can object nothing againſt his Doctrine, they then quarrel with him about his Commiſſion and Calling, and demand by what Authority he doth teach and work Miracles. Our Bleſſed Saviour well underſtanding their Drift and Deſign, anſwers them one Queſtion, by asking them another. *The Baptiſm of* John, *was it from Heaven or of Men?* Was it of Divine Inſtitution, or of Human Invention? Implying, that the calling of ſuch as call themſelves to be the Miniſters of God, ought to be from God. *No Man ought to take this Honour upon himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was* Aaron, *Heb.* 5. 4. The Phariſees reply, they could not tell whence *John* had his Miſſion and Authority, this was a manifeſt Untruth; by refuſing to tell the Truth, they fall into a Lie. One Sin enſnares, and draws Men into the Commiſſion of more. Such as will not ſpeak exact Truth, according to their Knowledge, they fall into the Sin of Lying againſt their Conſciences. Our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what Authority I do theſe things.* He doth not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you, but I do not, I need not tell you, becauſe the Miracles which I work before you, are a ſufficient Demonſtration of my Divine Commiſſion, that I am ſent of God amongſt you; for God never ſet the Seal of his Omnipotence to a Lie, or impower'd an Impoſtor to work real Miracles.

28 But what think you? A certain man had two ſons, and he came to the firſt, and ſaid, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He anſwered and ſaid I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the ſecond, and ſaid likewiſe: And he anſwered and ſaid, I go, ſir; and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of his Father? They ſay unto him, The firſt. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him, And ye, when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

The Deſign and Scope of this parable is to ſhew, *That Publicans and Harlots*; that is, the vileſt, the prophaneſt and worſt of Sinners, who upon the hearing of Chriſt's Doctrine and Miracles, did repent and believe, were in a much better Condition than the proud Phariſees; who tho' they pretended to great Meaſures of Knowledge and high Degrees of Holineſs, yet did obſtinately oppoſe Chriſt, diſobey his Doctrine, deny his Miracles, and ſet at nought his Perſon. *Learn hence*, That the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt of Sinners, upon their Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, ſhall much ſooner find Acceptance with God, than proud Phariſaical Juſticiaries, who confidently rely upon their own Righteouſneſs. *Publicans and Harlots* (ſays Chriſt here to the Phariſees) *ſhall go into the Kingdom of God before you. Publicans* were the worſt ſort of Men, and *Harlots* the worſt kind of Women; yet did theſe repent ſooner, and believed in Chriſt before the proud Phariſees. The Reaſon was, becauſe their Hearts lay more open to the Stroaks of Conviction, than thoſe that were blinded by vain Hopes and preſumptuous Confidence, Security fruſtrates all means of Recovery.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain houſholder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-preſs in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his ſervants and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another. 36 Again he ſent other ſervants, more than the firſt: and they did unto them likewiſe. 37 But laſt of all he ſent unto them his Son, ſaying, They will reverence my Son. 38 But when the husbandmen ſaw the Son, they ſaid among themſelves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and caſt him out of the vineyard, and ſlew him.

In this Parable God compares the Jewiſh Church to a *Vineyard*, himſelf to an *Houſholder*, his Planting, Pruning, and Fencing his Vineyard denotes his Care to furniſh his Church with all needful Helps and Means to make it ſpiritually fruitful; his *letting it out to Husbandmen*, ſignifies his committing the Care of his Church to the Prieſts and Levites, the publick Paſtors and Governours of the Church; his Servants are the Prophets and Apoſtles, whom he ſent from time to time, to admoniſh them to bring forth Fruit anſwerable to the Coſt which God had expended on them. His *Son* is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the Rulers of the Jewiſh Church ſlew and murdered. The Scope of this Parable is to diſcover to the *Jews*, particularly, to the Phariſees, their obſtinate Impenitency under all Means, their bloody Cruelty to the Prophets of God; their Tremendous Guilt, in crucifying the Son of God. For all which, God would unchurch them finally, and ruin their Nation, and ſet up a

Church among the Gentiles, that ſhould bring forth better Fruit than the Jewiſh Church ever did. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That the Church is God's Vineyard, exceeding dear and precious to the Planter and the Owner of it. 2. As dear as God's Vineyard is unto him, in Caſe of Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, it is in great Danger of being deſtroyed, and laid waſte by him. 3. That the only Way and Courſe to engage God's Care over his Vineyard, and to prevent his giving it to other Husbandmen, is to give him the Fruits of it. It is but a Vineyard that God lets out, it is no Inheritance; no People ever had ſo many Promiſes of God's Favour, as the *Jews* had, nor ever enjoyed ſo many Priviledges, whilſt they ſtood in his Favour, as the *Jews* did; Yet tho' they were the firſt, and *the natural Branches, they are broken off, and we Gentiles ſtand by Faith, let us not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. *v.* 20.

40 When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe husbandmen? 41 They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in their ſeaſons.

Obſerve here, At the firſt mentioning of the Parable, the Phariſees expreſs a bitter Indignation againſt ſuch wicked Servants, not conſidering what a dreadful Sentence they paſſed upon themſelves, and their own Nation. Little did they think that hereby they condemned their Temple to be burnt, their City to be deſtroyed, their Country to be ruined; but in theſe Words they vindicate God, they condemn themſelves, and own the Juſtice of God, in inflicting the ſevereſt Puniſhments on them.

42 Therefore ſay I unto you, The kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Which Words are the Application that our Saviour makes of the foregoing Parable concerning the *Vineyard*; which the chief Prieſts and Phariſees did not apprehend themſelves to be concerned in, till he brought the Application of it home unto them. *Therefore ſay I unto you, the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you*, &c. *Note*, 1. The greateſt Mercy that God can beſtow upon any People, is, his giving his Kingdom to them; that is all Goſpel-Ordinances, and Church-Priviledges leading to the Kingdom of Heaven. 2. Obſerve the Terms, upon which God either gives or continues his Kingdom to a Church and Nation. And that is, *upon bringing forth the Fruits thereof. Learn*, 3. That the greateſt Judgment which can befal a People, is the taking away the Kingdom of God from them. *The Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given*, &c.

43 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Did ye never read in the ſcriptures, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 44 And whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Theſe Words are taken out of the 118th *Pſalm*, which the *Jews* underſtood to be a Prophecy of the Meſſiah, and accordingly Chriſt applies them to himſelf. The Church is the *Building* intended, Chriſt himſelf the *Stone* rejected; The *Rejecters*, or the *Builders Rejecting*, were the Heads of the Jewiſh Church; that is the chief Prieſts and Phariſees. *God*, the great Maſter-Builder of his Church, takes this precious Foundation-*Stone* out of the Rubbiſh, and ſets it in the *Head of the Corner*. Nevertheleſs there are ſome who ſtumble at this Stone. Some thro' Ignorance, others thro' Malice ſtumble at his Perſon, at his Doctrine, at his Inſtitutions. Theſe ſhall *be broken in pieces. But on whomſoever this Stone ſhall fall, it will grind them to Powder*. That is, Chriſt himſelf will fall as a burthenſome Stone upon all thoſe that knowingly and maliciouſly oppoſe him; and particularly upon the *Jews*, who not only rejected him, but perſecuted and deſtroyed him. Thus Chriſt tells the chief Prieſts and Phariſees their own particular Doom, and alſo declares what will be the fatal Iſſue of all that Oppoſition which is made againſt himſelf and his Church. It will terminate in their inevitable and irreparable Deſtruction.

Whoſoever ſhall fall on this Stone, ſhall be broken; and on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind them to Powder. That is, He that ſtumbles on this Stone whilſt Chriſt is here on Earth, being offended at his Doctrine, Life, and Miracles, ſhall be broken by his Fall upon it; as the Perſon ſtoned is, by the ſharp ſtone which he falls upon. But he on whom this Stone ſhall fall, when Chriſt is elevated to his Throne of Glory, ſhall be more violently ſhattered by it, as is the Perſon ſtoned, by the great Stone as big as two Men can lift, thrown down violently upon his Breaſt.

45 And when the chief Prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpake of them. 46 But when they ſought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, becauſe they took him for a prophet.

When the chief Prieſts came to underſtand that theſe Parables were all applied to them, that they were the *Murtherers of the King's Son*; That they were the *Builders that rejected the chief Corner-Stone*, they are enraged at the cloſe Application made to themſelves; and had not Fear reſtrain'd them, would have laid violent Hands upon him. *Learn thence*, That nothing doth more provoke and exaſperate unſound Hypocrites, than the particular Application, and cloſe coming home of the Word of God unto their Hearts and Conſciences. So long as the Truths of God are generally delivered, Sinners are eaſie, looking upon themſelves as unconcern'd; but when the Word of God comes cloſe to them, and ſays, *Thou art the Man*; This is thy Wickedneſs, They are angry at the Meſſage, and rage at the Meſſenger.

CHAP. XXII.

AND Jeſus anſwered, and ſpake unto them again by parables, and ſaid, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his Son. 3 And ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage: 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his marchandiſe. 6 And the remnant took his ſervants and entreated them ſpitefully, and ſlew them. 7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city. 8 Then ſaith he to his ſervants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So thoſe ſervants went out into the high-ways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts. 11 And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and he was ſpeechleſs. 13 Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

The Deſign and Scope of this Parable of the *Marriage-Supper*, is to ſet forth that Gracious Offer of Mercy and Salvation, which was made by God in and thro' the preaching of the Goſpel to the Church of the *Jews*. The Goſpel is here compared to a *Feaſt*, becauſe in a Feaſt there is Plenty, Variety, and Dainties. Alſo to a *Marriage-Feaſt*, being full of Joy, Delight and Pleaſure. And to a *Marriage-Feaſt made by a King*, as being full of State, Magnificence and Grandeur. To this Marriage-Feaſt or Goſpel-Supper, Almighty God invited the Church of the *Jews*, and the *Servants ſent forth* to invite them, were the Prophets and Apoſtles in General; and *John* the Baptiſt in particular, whom they entreated ſpitefully and ſlew. *The making light of the Invitation* ſignifies the generality of the *Jews* Refuſal and careleſs Contempt of the Offers of Grace in the Goſpel. By the *Armies which God ſent forth to deſtroy thoſe Murderers*, are meant the Roman Soldiers, who ſpoiled and laid waſte the City of *Jeruſalem*, and were the ſevere Executioners of God's Wrath and Judgment upon the wicked *Jews*. *The High Ways* ſignifie the deſpiſed Gentiles, who upon the *Jews* Refuſal, were invited to this Supper, and prevailed with to come in. *The King's coming in to ſee his Gueſts*, denotes, that Inſpection which Chriſt makes into his Church in the times of the Goſpel. *By that Man without the Wedding Garment*, underſtand ſuch as are deſtitute of true Grace, and real Holineſs, both in Heart and Life. In the Examination of him, Chriſt ſays, *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither*; Not Friends, why came you along with him. Teaching us, That if unholy Perſons will preſs in to the Lord's Supper, the Sin is theirs; but if we come not, becauſe they will come, the Sin is ours. The Preſence of an unholy Perſon at the Lord's Table, ought not to diſcourage us from our Duty, or cauſe us to turn our Back upon that Ordinance. The Command to *bind* the unqualified Perſon *Hand and Foot, and to caſt him into utter Darkneſs*, plainly intimates, that the Condition of ſuch Perſons as live under the Light, and enjoy the Liberty of the Goſpel, but walk not anſwerably, to their Profeſſion, is deplorably ſad and doleful. They do not only incur Damnation, but no Damnation like it. *Bind him Hand and Foot, and caſt him into utter Darkneſs.* From the whole, *Note*, 1. That the Goſpel for its Freeneſs and Fulneſs, for its Varieties and Delicacies, is like a Marriage-Supper. 2. That Goſpel Invitations are mightily diſeſteemed. 3. That the Preference which the World has in Men's Eſteem is the great cauſe of the Goſpel's Contempt. *They went, one to his Farm, and the other to his Marchandiſe.* 4. That ſuch as are Careleſs in the Day of Grace, ſhall undoubtedly be Speechleſs in the Day of Judgment. 5. That Chriſt takes a more particular Notice of every Gueſt that cometh to his Royal Supper than any of his Miniſters do take, or can take. There was but one Perſon without the Wedding Garment, and he falls under the Eye and View of Chriſt. 6. That 'tis not ſufficient that we come, but cloathed we muſt be, before we come, if ever we expect a Gracious Welcome to Chriſt's Supper; cloathed with Sincerity, cloathed with Humility, cloathed with Love and Charity; if we be not thus cloathed, we ſhall appear naked to our Shame, and hear that dreadful Charge, *Bind him Hand and Foot; and caſt him into utter Darkneſs; where is weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*, ſee on *Luke* 14. 17.

14 For many are called, but few are choſen.

This is our Bleſſed Saviour's Application of the foregoing Parable to the *Jews*; he tells them that many of them, indeed all of them were called; that is, invited to the Goſpel-Supper, but with few, very few of them was found that ſincere Faith, and that ſound Repentance, which doth accompany Salvation. *Learn thence*, That amongſt the Multitude of thoſe that are called by the Goſpel unto Holineſs and Obedience, few, very few comparatively, do obey that Call, and ſhall be Eternally ſaved.

15 Then went the Phariſees, and took counſel how they might entangle him in his talk. 16 And they ſent out unto him their diſciples with the Herodians, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for any man; for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men. 17 Tell us therefore, what thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar, or not? 18 But Jeſus perceived their wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? 21 They ſay unto him, Cæſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's: and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard *theſe words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

Here we have another new Deſign, to entangle our Bleſſed Saviour in his Diſcourſe. Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Perſons imployed to put the enſnaring Queſtion to our Saviour; namely, *the Phariſees and the Herodians.* The Phariſees were againſt paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, looking upon themſelves as a free People, and the Emperor as an Uſurper. But the *Herodians* were for it, *Herod* being made by the Roman Emperor, King of the *Jews*, was zealous for having the *Jews* pay Tribute to *Cæſar*, and ſuch of the *Jews* as ſided with him, and particularly his Courtiers and Favourites were called *Herodians*. *Obſerve*, 2. The Policy and wicked Craft here uſed, in imploying theſe two contrary Sects to put the Queſtion to our Saviour concerning *Tribute*. Thereby laying him under a Neceſſity (as they hoped) to offend one ſide, let him anſwer how he would. If to pleaſe the Phariſees he denied paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, then he is accuſed of Sedition; if to gratifie the *Herodians* he voted for paying Tribute, then he is look'd upon as an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and expoſed to a popular Odium: It has been the old Policy of Satan and his Inſtruments, to draw the Miniſters of God into Diſlike, either with the Magiſtrates, or with the People; that they may either fall under the Cenſure of the one, or the Diſpleaſure of the other. *Obſerve*, 3. With what Wiſdom and Caution our Lord anſwers them, he firſt calls for the *Tribute-Money*, which was the Roman Penny, anſwering to Seven Pence Half-penny of our Money, Two of which they paid by way of Tribute or Poll-Money, for every Head to the Emperor. Chriſt asks them *whoſe Image or Superſcription* their Coin bore? They anſwer, *Cæſar's*: *Render then*, ſays Chriſt, *to* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar's. As if he had ſaid, The admitting of the Roman Coin amongſt you, is a Teſtimony that you are under Subjection to the Roman Emperor, becauſe the coining and impoſing of Money is an Act of Sovereign Authority. Now you having owned *Cæſar*'s Authority over you, by accepting of his Coin as current amongſt you, give unto him his juſt Dues, *and render unto* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar*'s*. *Learn thence*, That there was no truer Paymaſter of the King's Dues, than he that was King of Kings; he preach'd it and he practiſed it, *Matth.* 17. 27. And as Chriſt is no Enemy to the Civil Rights of Princes, and his Religion exempts none from paying their Civil Duties: So Princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his Divine Honour, as he is not to wrong them of their Civil Rights. As Chriſt requires all his Followers to render unto *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s, ſo ſhould Princes oblige all their Subjects to *Render unto God the things that are God's.*

23 The ſame day came to him the Sadducees, which ſay that there is no reſurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Maſter, Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having no Children, his brother ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us ſeven brethren, and the firſt, when he had married a wife, deceaſed, and having no iſſue, left his wife unto his brother. 26 Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third, unto the ſeventh 27 And laſt of all the woman died alſo. 28 Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her. 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the reſurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the multitude heard this, they were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having put the *Phariſees* and *Herodians* to ſilence, next the *Sadducees* encounter him. This Sect denied the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body, and as an Objection againſt both, they propound a Caſe to our Saviour, of a Woman that had had Seven Brethren ſucceſſively to her Husbands: They demand, *Whoſe Wife of the Seven this Woman ſhall be at the Reſurrection?* As if they had ſaid, if there be a Reſurrection of Bodies, ſurely there will be a Reſurrection of Relations too, and the other World will be like this, in which Men will marry as they do here. And if ſo, whoſe Wife of the Seven ſhall this Woman be, they all having an equal Claim to her? Now our Saviour for reſolving of this Queſtion, 1. Shews the different State of Men in this World, and in the other World. *The Children of this World,* ſays Chriſt, *Marry, and are given in Marriage, but in the Reſurrection they do neither.* As if our Lord had ſaid, After Men have lived a while in this World, they Die, and therefore Marriage is neceſſary to maintain a Succeſſion of Mankind; but in the other World Men ſhall become Immortal, and live for ever; and then the Reaſon of Marriage will wholly ceaſe. For when Men can die no more, there will be no need of any new Supplies of Mankind. 2. Our Saviour having got clear of the *Sadduces* Objection, by taking away the Ground and Foundation of it, he produceth an Argument for the Proof of the Soul's Immortality, and the Body's Reſurrection. *Thus,* Thoſe to whom Almighty God pronounces himſelf a God, are alive; but God pronounced himſelf a God to *Abraham, Iſaac,* and *Jacob,* many Hundred Years after their Bodies were Dead; therefore their Souls are yet alive, fœderally alive unto God: Their Covenant Relation lives ſtill, otherwiſe God could not be their God; *for he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.* If one Relation fails, the other neceſſarily fails with it; if God be their God, then certainly they are in Being, *for God is not the God of the Dead;* that is, of thoſe that are utterly periſh'd. Therefore it muſt needs be, that altho' their Bodies be naturally dead, yet do their Souls ſtill live, and their Bodies ſhall alſo live again at the Reſurrection of the Juſt. From the whole, *Note,* 1. That there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no Error ſo monſtrous, that having had a Mother, will die for the lack of a Nurſe. The beaſtly Opinion of the Mortality of the Soul, and the Annihilation of the Body, finds *Sadduces* to profeſs and propogate it. *Note,* 2. The Certainty of another Life after this, in which Men ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as they behave themſelves here; tho' ſome Men live like Beaſts, they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their laſt end be like theirs. *Note,* 3. That glorified Saints in the Morning of the Reſurrection ſhall be like unto the Glorious Angels; not like them in Eſſence and Nature, but like them in their Properties and Qualities, in Holineſs and Purity, in Immortality and Incorruptibility, and in their manner of Living; they ſhall no more ſtand in need of Meat or Drink, than the Angels do, but ſhall live the ſame Heavenly, Immortal and Incorruptible Life, that the Angels live. *Note,* 4. That all thoſe that are in Covenant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their Souls do immediately paſs into Glory, and their Bodies at the Reſurrection ſhall be Sharers in the ſame Happineſs with their Souls. If God be juſt, the Soul muſt live, and the Body muſt riſe: For good Men muſt be rewarded, and wicked Men puniſhed; God will moſt certainly ſome time or other plentifully reward the Righteous, and puniſh the Evil Doers; but this being not always done in this Life, the Juſtice of God requires it to be done in the next.

34 But when the Phariſees had heard that he had put the Sadduces to ſilence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked *him* a queſtion, tempting him, and ſaying, 36 Maſter, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the firſt and great commandment. 39 And the ſecond is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 40 On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The *Sadduces* being put by Chriſt to ſilence, the *Phariſees* again encounter him; they ſend to him a Lawyer, that is, one of their Interpreters and Expounders of the Law of *Moſes,* who propounds this Queſtion to him, *Which is the great Commandment in the Law?* Our Saviour tells them, *It is to love the Lord with all the Heart, with all the Soul, and with all the Mind.* That is, with all the Powers, Faculties, and Abilities of the Soul, with the greateſt Meaſure, and higheſt Degrees of Love. *This is the Sum* and Subſtance of the Duties of the firſt Table. *And the ſecond is like unto it,* not equal with it, but *like unto it.* The Duties of the ſecond Table are of the ſame Authority, and of the ſame Neceſſity with the firſt. As a Man cannot be ſaved without the Love of God, ſo neither without the Love of his Neighbour. *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* That is, the whole Duty of Man, required by *Moſes* and the Prophets, is comprehended in, and may be reduced to theſe Two Heads; *namely,* The Love of God, and our Neighbour. From the whole, *Note,* 1. That the Fervency of all our Affections, and particularly the Supremacy of our Love, is required by God as his Right and Due. Love muſt paſs thro', and poſſeſs all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul; the Mind muſt meditate upon God, the Will muſt chuſe and embrace him, and the Affections muſt take Complacency and Delight in him; the meaſure of loving God, is to love him without meaſure. God reckons that we love him not at all, if we love him not above all. 1. We muſt love him above all *Appretiative,* ſo as to prize him in our Judgment and Eſteem above all, and before all Things. 2. We are to love God above all Things *Comparative,* preferring his Favours above all Things, comparatively hating whatever ſtands in Competition with Him. 3 We are to love God above all things *Intenſive,* That is, Our longing Deſires muſt run out after Him, we muſt pant and thirſt for the Enjoyment of Him. 4. We muſt love every thing in Subordination to God, and nothing coordinately or equally with God. *Note,* 2. That thus to love God is the firſt and great Commandment. *Great,* in regard to the Object, which is God, the firſt Cauſe, and the chief Good. *Great,* in regard of the Obligation of it. To love God is ſo indiſpenſable a Command, that God himſelf cannot free us from the Obligation of it; for ſo long as he is God, and we his Creatures, we ſhall lye under a natural and neceſſary Obligation to Love and ſerve him. *Great,* in regard of the Duration of it, when Faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in Viſion, and Hope in Fruition; Love will then be perfected in a full Enjoyment. *Note,* 3. That every Man may, yea, ought to love himſelf, not his ſinful ſelf, but his natural ſelf, and eſpecially his Spiritual ſelf, the new Nature in him. This, it ought to be his particular Care to encreaſe and ſtrengthen. Indeed there is no expreſs Command in Scripture for a Man to love himſelf, becauſe the Light of Nature directs, and the Law of Nature binds and moves every Man ſo to do. God has put a Principle of Self-love and of Self-preſervation, into all his Creatures, but eſpecially into Man. *Note,* 4. As every Man ought to love himſelf, ſo 'tis every Man's Duty *to love his Neighbour as himſelf.* 1. Not as he *does love* himſelf, but as he *ought* to love himſelf. 2. Not in the ſame Degree and Meaſure that he loves himſelf, but after the ſame manner, and with the ſame kind of Love, that he loves himſelf. As we love our ſelves freely and readily, ſincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and preſervingly; ſo ſhould we love our Neighbour. Tho' we are not commanded to love our Neighbour as much as we love our ſelves, yet we are to love him like as we love our ſelves. *Note, Laſtly,* That the Duties of the firſt and ſecond Table are inſeparable. The Love of God and our Neighbour muſt not be parted. *He that loveth not his Neighbour, whom he hath ſeen, never loved God, whom he hath not ſeen.* A conſcientious Regard to the Duties of both Tables will be an Argument of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion. Let it then be our Prayer and daily endeavour, that *we may love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and our Neighbour as our ſelves. For this is the Sum of the Law, and the Subſtance of the Goſpel.*

41 While the Phariſees were gathered together, Jeſus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, The Son of David. 43 He ſaith unto them, How then doth David in ſpirit call him Lord, ſaying, 44 The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? 46 And no man was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any man (from that day forth) ask him any more queſtions.

The *Phariſees* had often put forth ſeveral Queſtions maliciouſly unto Chriſt, and now Chriſt puts forth one Queſtion innocently unto them. *Namely*, What they thought of the Meſſiah whom they expected. They reply, that he was to be *the Son of David*, a Secular Prince deſcending from *David*, that ſhould deliver them from the Power of the *Romans*, and reſtore them to their Civil Rights. This was the Notion they had of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould be a Man, *the Son of David*, and nothing more. Our Saviour replies, Whence is it then that *David* calls the Meſſiah *Lord? Pſal.* 110. *v.* 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lo d*: How could he be both *David*'s Lord, and *David*'s Son, No Son is Lord to his Father; therefore if Chriſt were *David*'s Sovereign, he muſt be more than Man, more than *David*'s Son. As Man, ſo he was *David*'s Son; as God-man, ſo he was *David*'s Lord. *Note hence*, That altho' Chriſt was truly and really Man, yet he was more than a bare Man. He was Lord unto, and was the Salvation of his own Forefathers. *Note*, 2. That the only way to reconconcile the Scriptures which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be God and Man in one Perſon. The Meſſiah as a Man was to come forth out of *David*'s Loins, but as God-man he was *David*'s Sovereign and Saviour. As Man, he was his Father's Son; as God, he was Lord to his own Father.

CHAP. XXIII.

THen ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his
diſciples, 2 Saying, The ſcribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat. 3 All therefore whatſoever
they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do; but do
not ye after their works: for they ſay and do not.

The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſo often mentioned in the Goſpels were the great Doctors and Spiritual Guides amongſt the *Jews*. *Scribe* is the Name of an *Office*, *Phariſee* the Name of a *Sect*. They were both Learned in the Law, and Teachers of the Law of *Moſes*. Our Bleſſed Saviour in the former part of this Goſpel held many Conferences with theſe Men, and uſed the moſt perſwaſive Arguments to convince them, both of their Errors and Wickedneſs. But their Obſtinacy, and Malice being ſuch, that neither our Saviour's Miniſtry nor Miracles would convince them, hereupon our Lord denounces in this Chapter Eight ſeveral Woes againſt them. But firſt he charitably warns his Diſciples and the Multitude againſt the Perinicious Practices of this ſort of Men, ſaying, *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in* Moſes *Seat*; that is, they teach and expound the Law of *Moſes*, which they were wont to do ſitting. *Whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do.* That is, what they teach you conſonant to the Word of God, and agreeable to the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets: If they go not out of *Moſes* Chair into their own unwritten Traditions, follow their Doctrine, and obey their Precepts. *But do not after their Works*, follow not their Example, take heed of their Pride and Hypocriſie, of their Ambition and Vain-Glory. Obey their Doctrine, wherein it is ſound; but follow not their Example, wherein it is corrupt. *Learn*, 1. That the Perſonal Miſcarriages of Miniſters muſt by no Means beget a Diſeſteem of their Office and Miniſtry. Charity muſt teach us to diſtinguiſh betwixt the Calling and the Crime. 2. That the infallible Truths of God recommended to us by a vicious Teacher, ought to be entertained and obeyed by us without either Scruple or Prejudice. What the *Phariſees* themſelves (ſays Chriſt) bid you obſerve, *that obſerve and do*. 3. That no People are obliged to follow their Teacher's Pattern and Example any farther than it is agreeable to Scripture Rule, and conformable to Chriſt's Example, *Do not after their Works, who ſay and do not.*

4 For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous
to be born, and lay them on men's ſhoulders, but
they themſelves will not move them with *one* of their
fingers.

Theſe *heavy Burthens* which the *Phariſees laid upon the Peoples Shoulders*, were Councels and Directions, Rules and Canons, Auſterities and Severities, which the *Phariſees* introduced and impoſed upon their Hearers, but would not undergo the leaſt part of thoſe Severities themſelves. If we do not follow our own Counſels, we muſt not think to oblige our People to follow them. No Man ought to preſs upon others what he is unwilling to perform himſelf. It is very ſinful to give that Counſel to others which we refuſe to take our ſelves.

5 But all their works they do, for to be ſeen of
men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge
the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

In theſe Words our Bleſſed Saviour admoniſhes his Diſciples and the Multitude to take heed of imitating the *Phariſees* in their Oſtentation and Hypocriſie, in their Ambition and Vain-Glory, and he inſtances in Three Particulars, wherein they expreſs'd it. 1. *All their Works*, ſays Chriſt, *they do to be ſeen of Men*, To do good Works, that Men may ſee them, is a Duty; but to do all or any of our Works to be ſeen of Men, is Hypocriſie. 2. *They make broad their Phylacteries, and enlarge the Borders of their Garments.* Theſe *Phylacteries* were certain Scrowls and Labels of Parchment, in which were written the Ten Commandments, and ſome Sections of the Law; theſe they tied to their Foreheads, and pinn'd upon their Left Sleve, that the Law of God might be continually before their Eyes, and perpetually in their Remembrance. This Ceremony they judged God preſcribed them. *Deut* 6. 8. *Thou ſhalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hand, and they ſhall be as frontlets between thine Eyes. By enlarging the Borders of their Garments*, our Saviour points at the Fingers and Blue Ribbonds which the *Jews* did wear upon their Garments, in Obedience to the Command, *Numb.* 15. 37, 38. As the Threads in thoſe Fingers and Ribbonds cloſe woven together, did repreſent the Connexion, Complication, and inſeparable Conjunction of God's Commandments among themſelves; ſo the wearing of theſe Fingers was to put them in Mind of the Laws of God, that which way ſoever they turn'd their Eyes, they might meet with ſome pious Admonition to keep the Law of God. Now the vain glorious *Phariſees*, that they might be thought more mindful of the Law of God than other Men, did make their Phylacteries broader, and their Fingers thicker and longer than other Men. 3. They fondly affected, and ambitiouſly contended for the firſt and uppermoſt Seats in all Conventions, as at Feaſts, and in the Synagogues, and loved to be reſpectfully ſaluted in open and publick Places, and to have Titles of Honour, ſuch as *Rabbi*, *Maſter*, *Father*, and *Doctor*, put upon them. Now that which our Saviour condemns is the *Phariſees* fond Affectation of theſe little things, and unduly ſeeking their own Honour and Glory. It was not their taking, but *their loving the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts*, that Chriſt condemns. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That Hypocrites are moſt in affecting Ceremonial Obſervations, and outward Parts of commanded Duties, neglecting the Subſtance of Religion it ſelf. Theſe *Phariſees* were for carrying a Library of God's Law on their Cloaths, ſcarce a Letter of it in their Hearts. They wore the Law of God, *as frontlets* before their Eyes, but not engraven on the Tables of their Hearts. *Obſerve*, 2. That the Nature of Hypocriſie is to ſtudy more to ſeem Religious in the ſight of Men, than to be Religious indeed before God. The Hypocrite is the World's Saint, and not God's. He courts the World's Acceptation more than the Divine Favour and Approbation.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your
maſter, *even* Chriſt, and all ye are brethren. 9 And
call no man your father upon the earth: for one is
your father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye
called maſters: for one is your maſter, *even* Chriſt.
11 But he that is greateſt among you, ſhall be your
ſervant. 12 And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf,
ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf,
ſhall be exalted.

The Word *Rabbi* ſignifies a *Doctor* or *Teacher*, eminently endowed with Variety of Knowledge, whoſe Place it was to ſit in an exalted Chair, or chief Seat in the Synagogue; their Diſciples and Scholars ſat upon lower Forms at the Feet of their Teachers. Our Saviour doth not ſimply condemn the giving or receiving of theſe Titles of *Rabbi*, *Maſter*, and *Father*; But the things forbidden, are,

1. A vain-glorious Affectation of ſuch Titles as theſe, the ambitious ſeeking of them, and glorying in them. 2. He condemns that Authority and Dominion over the Conſciences of Men, which the Phariſaical Doctors had uſurped, telling the People that they ought to believe all their Doctrines, and practiſe all their Injunctions as the Commands of the Living God. They did in effect aſſume Infallibility to themſelves. *Learn hence*, 1. That there have been in all Ages of the Church a ſort of Teachers, who have uſurped Authority and Dominion over the Faith and Conſciences of Men. 2. That Chriſtians ought not to ſubmit their Faith and Conſcience in Matters of Religion to any Human Authority whatſoever, nor to give up themſelves abſolutely to the Conduct of any Man's Judgment or Opinion in Matters of Faith. 3. That Chriſt alone, the great Prophet and infallible Teacher of his Church, is the only Perſon to whoſe Doctrine and Precepts, we owe abſolute Faith and Obedience. *One is your Maſter even Chriſt*. 4. As God will abaſe, and Men will deſpiſe the Proud, eſpecially Miniſters, who are ſuch; ſo ſhall God exalt, and Men will honour them that ſtoop to the meaneſt Services for the Good of Souls. *Whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed.* This was a Sentence often uſed by our Saviour, and was a frequent Saying among the *Jews*.

13 But wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: for ye neither go in your ſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entring, to go in.

From this Thirteenth Verſe to the Thirtieth, the *Phariſees* have Eight ſeveral Woes denounced againſt them by our Saviour: The firſt is for perverting the Scriptures, and keeping the true Senſe and Knowledge of them from the People. This St. *Matthew* calls *the ſhutting up of the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*. St. *Luke* calls it, *A taking away the Key of Knowledge from Men*, which is an Alluſion to a known Cuſtom among the *Jews* in Admiſſion of their Doctors; for thoſe that had Authority given them to interpret the Law and the Prophets, were ſolemnly admitted into that Office, by delivering to them a Key and a Table-Book. So that *by the Key of Knowledge* is meant the Interpretation, and Underſtanding of the Scriptures; and *by taking away the Key of Knowledge*, is ſignified firſt, that they arrogated to themſelves alone the Underſtanding of the Scriptures; *Secondly*, That they kept the true Knowledge of the Scriptures from the People, eſpecially the Prophecies which concerned the Meſſias, and ſo they hindered Men from embracing our Saviour's Doctrine, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures is abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to Salvation. This our Saviour calls *the Key*, which lets Men into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Learn*, 2. That great is the Guilt, and inexcuſable the Fault of thoſe who deprive the People of the Knowledge of the Scriptures. *They ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men*, and do what in them lyes to hinder their Eternal Salvation. Men may miſcarry with their Knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh for want of Knowledge.

14 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation.

The ſecond Wo denounced againſt the *Phariſees*, is for their groſs Hypocriſie, in colouring over their Covetouſneſs, with a Pretence of Religion; making long Prayers in the Temple and Synagogues for Widows, and thereupon perſwading them to give bountifully to the *Corban*, or the common Treaſure of the Temple. Some part of which was imployed for their Maintenance. *Learn*, 1. It is no new thing for deſigning Hypocrites to cover the fouleſt Tranſgreſſion with the Cloak of Religion. The *Phariſees* make long Prayers a Cover for their Covetouſneſs. 2. That to make uſe of Religion in Policy for Worldly Advantage ſake, is the way to be damn'd with a Vengeance for Religion-ſake. *Wo unto you Scribes*, &c.

15 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one Proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than your ſelves.

The next Wo denounced is for their falſe-ended Zeal and Earneſtneſs, in proſelyting Heathens to the Jewiſh Religion; not with a pious Intention to ſave them, but to ſerve themſelves upon them, to have their Conſciences and Purſes under their Power; and when you have poyſon'd them, ſays our Saviour, by your corrupt Doctrine, and hardned them in a courſe of Sin by your wicked Example, *they are more the Children of Hell than before* you practiſed upon them. *Learn*, 1. Great is the Diligence, and indefatigable the Induſtry which falſe Teachers uſe, in gaining Proſelytes to their Opinion and Party. *They compaſs Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte*. 2. That ſuch as are proſelyted to Error, are oft-times faſter rivetted in their falſe Opinions, than their Teachers themſelves. *They are made twofold more the Children of Hell than your ſelves.*

16 Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. 17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold? 18 And whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon.

The fourth Wo, which our Saviour denounces againſt the *Phariſees* is for their falſe and erroneous Doctrine concerning Oaths. 1. They taught Men to ſwear by the Creatures. 2. They taught that ſome Oaths made by the Creatures were obligatory and binding, others not. Particularly they affirmed, that *if a man ſwear by the Temple, or the Altar, it was nothing*; that is, he was not bound by ſuch an Oath. But *if a Man ſwear by the Gold of the Temple, and the Altar*; that is, by the Gifts offered to the *Corban*, or Treaſury of the Temple, and by the Sacrifices and Oblations on the Altar: Such an Oath they affirm'd was binding, becauſe it was for their Profit, that the Gifts on the Altar, and the Gold brought into the Treaſury, ſhould be accounted moſt holy, ſeeing that would encourage the People to be the more ready to contribute and offer. This horrid Hypocriſie and Covetouſneſs our Bleſſed Saviour here ſharply reproves, and ſhews, that Oaths made by the Creatures, tho' unlawful, yet being once made, did oblige, as if the Parties had ſworn by God himſelf; for he that ſwears by the Temple, ſwears by it, and him that dwelleth therein. *Learn*, 1. That ſwearing by the Creatures is no new Sin, but as old as the *Phariſees*. 2. That ſwearing by the Creatures is a great Prophanation of the Name of God, and a mighty Provocation to him. 3. That this notwithſtanding, if the Matter of ſuch Oaths be not ſinful, they are obligatory and binding. He that ſweareth by the Creatures, ſweareth indeed by the God of the Creatures: *For*, ſays our Saviour, *he that ſweareth by the Heavens, ſweareth by the Throne of God, and him that ſitteth thereon.*

23 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye pay tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel.

The next Wo denounced is for the *Phariſees* Oſtentation of a preciſe keeping of the Law in ſmaller Matters, and neglecting weightier Duties. They *paid Tythe of Mint, Aniſe and Cummin*, but at the ſame time *omitted Judgment, Mercy and Faith*; that is, juſt dealing with Men, Charity towards the Poor, and Faithfulneſs in their Promiſes and Covenants one with another. This, ſays our Saviour, *is to ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a Camel.* A Proverbial Expreſſion, intimating, that ſome Perſons pretend great Niceneſs and Scrupuloſity about ſmall Matters, and none, or but little about Duties of the greateſt moment. Hence *Note,* 1. That Hypocrites lay the greateſt Streſs upon the leaſt Matters in Religion, and place Holineſs moſt in thoſe things where God places it leaſt. *Ye tythe Mint, &c. but neglect the weightier Matters of the Law.* This is indeed the Bane of all Religion and true Piety, to prefer Rituals and Human Inſtitutions before Divine Commands, and the Practice of Natural Religion. Thus to do is a certain Sign of groſs Hypocriſy. *Obſerve,* 2. That altho' ſome Duties are of greater moment than others, yet a good man will omit none, but perform every Duty, the leaſt as well as the greateſt, in Obedience to the Command of God. *Theſe things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

25 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye make clean the outſide of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs. 26 Thou Blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt that which is within the cup and platter, that the outſide of them may be clean alſo.

Our Saviour doth not here condemn their Legal, or Traditional waſhing of Pots and Cups, or any External Decency and Cleanlineſs in Converſation: But his Deſign is to ſhew them the Vanity of outward Purity, without inward Sanctity, and to convince them of the Neceſſity of cleanſing the heart, in order to the purifying and reforming the Life. Plainly intimating, 1. That Men's Lives could not be ſo bad, if their Hearts were not worſe, all the Obliquity of their Lives proceeding from the Impurity of their Hearts and Natures. 2. That an holy Heart will be accompanied with an Holy Life. A man may be outwardly pure, and yet inwardly filthy; but he that has a pure Heart, will live a Pure and a Holy Life. Cleanſe *that which is within the Cup that the outſide may be clean alſo.*

27 Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanneſs. 28 Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of Hypocriſie and iniquity.

Here we have a Wo denounced against the *Phariſees* for cheating and deceiving the People with an outward Shew, an external Appearance of Piety and Religion: Their Lives were ſeemingly very Religious, but their Hearts were full of Hypocriſy, and all Impurity, like Sepulchres painted without, and full of Rottenneſs within. *Whence Learn,* That the great Deſign of Hypocriſie is to cheat the World with a vain and empty Shew of Piety. The Ambition of the Hypocrite is to be thought good, not to be ſo; he is the World's Saint, not, God's.

29 Wo unto your Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites: becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous, 30 And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto your ſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers. 33 Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damation of hell.

This is the eighth Wo denounced by our Bleſſed Saviour againſt the *Phariſees* for their grand Hypocriſie, in pretending great Honour to the Saints departed, *building their Tombs, and garniſhing their Sepulchres,* and declaring againſt their Father's Impiety, That *had they lived in their Days, they would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets.* Now their Hypocriſie appeared in three Particulars: 1. In that they continued in their own Wickedneſs, and yet recommended the Saints departed; they magnifie the Saints, but multiply their Sins, and inſtead of imitating their Virtues, they content themſelves with garniſhing their Sepulchres. 2. In profeſſing great Reſpect to the dead Saints, and at the ſame time perſecuting the living Palpable Hypocriſie! And yet as groſs as it is, it prevails to this Day. The Church of *Rome,* who magnifie Martyrs, and canonize Saints departed, have yet added to their numbers, by ſhedding of their Blood. 3. In taking falſe meaſures of their Love to the Saints departed, from their building their Tombs, and garniſhing their Sepulchres; whereas the beſt Evidence of our Love unto them is the imitating their Vertues, and cheriſhing their Followers. 'Tis groſs Hypocriſie to pay Reſpect to the Relicks of Saints, and Veneration to their Images, and at the ſame time, to perſecute and afflict their Followers. *Learn hence,* 1. That the World has all along loved dead Saints better than the living. *Mourtui non mordent,* the dead Saints Example how bright ſoever, is not ſo ſcorching and troubleſome at a diſtance; and he himſelf no longer ſtands in other Men's Light; whereas the living Saints Example is a cutting Reproof to Sin and Vice. *Obſerve,* 2. That there is a certain Civility in Human Nature, which leads Men to a juſt Commendation of the Dead, and to a due Eſtimation of their Worth. The *Phariſees* here, tho' they perſecuted the Prophets, whilſt alive, yet had they a mighty Veneration for their Piety and Vertue after they were dead, and thought no Honour too great to be done unto them. *Note,* 3. That it is the groſſeſt Hypocriſie to pretend to love Goodneſs, and yet hate and perſecute good Men. Theſe Hypocritical *Phariſees* pretend high to Piety and Religion, and at the ſame time killed the Prophets, and ſtoned them that were ſent unto them. 4. That the higheſt Honour we can pay to the Saints departed, is not by raiſing Monuments, and building Tombs to their Memory; but by a careful Imitation of their Piety and Virtue, following the Holineſs of their Lives, and their Patience and Conſtancy at their Deaths.

34 Wherefore behold, I ſend unto you prophets and wiſe men, and ſcribes, and ſome of them ye ſhall kill and crucifie, and ſome of them ye ſhall ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and perſecute them from city to city. 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, ſon of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I ſay unto you, All theſe things ſhall come upon this generation.

Obſerve here, A Prophetical Prediction, and a ſevere Denunciation. 1. A Prediction foretelling what a cruel Uſage the Apoſtles ſhould meet with from the *Jews,* Killing and Crucifying ſome, Scourging and Stoning others; which accordingly was fulfilled in the Crucifying of St. *Peter,* the Scourging of St. *Paul,* in the Stoning of St. *Stephen,* and Killing of St. *James.* The firſt Planters and Propagators of the Goſpel ſealed their Doctrine with their Blood, and the Blood of the Martyrs has all along been the Seed of the Church. *Obſ.* 2. A ſevere Denunciation, *That upon you may come all the Righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, from* Abel *to* Zacharias *the Son* of Jehoida, (2 *Chron.* 24. 20.) who was the laſt Prophet, whoſe Murder is related by Name in the Old Teſtament. Theſe Words are not to be underſtood as if the End and Intent of Chriſt's ſending the Prophets were, that the *Jews* might put them to Death, and bring their righteous Blood upon themſelves. This was the Conſequent and Event indeed of their ſending, but by no means the Deſign and Intent of it. *Learn,* 1. That raging Perſecutors have no Regard, either to the extraordinary Miſſion, or eminent Sanctity of Perſons, who reprove them for their Sins, *I ſend unto you Prophets* (ſays our Saviour) *wiſe Men, and Scribes, and ſome of them ye ſhall Kill and Crucifie.* 2. That as the Piety of the Perſons, ſo neither can the Sanctity of the Place diſcourage and deter bloody Perſecutors from the Rage and Fury againſt the Prophets of God. In the Temple it ſelf, in the Court of the Houſe of the Lord, *even betwixt the Porch and the Altar was* Zacharias *ſlain.* That it is a righteous Thing with God to puniſh the Good Men for the Impieties of their Parents. This is to be underſtood, 1. Where the Children tread in their Fathers Steps, and continue in their Parents Sins; which they do, if they do not confeſs them, abhor them, and be humbled for them. 2. This is to be underſtood of Temporal Evils, not of Eternal Puniſhment. No Man ſhall for his Father's Sins lye down in Everlaſting Burnings. As our Father's Faith will not let us into Heaven, ſo neither will their Impiety ſhut us into Hell. At the Day of Judgment every Man ſhall be ſeparately conſidered according to his Deeds.

37 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate. 39 For I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Our Lord concludes this Chapter with a Pathetical Lamentation over *Jeruſalem*. His Ingemination, or doubling of the Word, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*, ſhews the Vehemency of Chriſt's Affection towards them, and the Sincerity of his Deſires for their Salvation. *Obſerve*, 1. The great Kindneſs and Compaſſion of Chriſt to the *Jews* in general, and *Jeruſalem* in particular, ſet forth by a lively Metaphor and Similitude; that of *an Hen gathering her Chickens under her Wings*. As the Hen doth tenderly cheriſh, and carefully hide, and cover her Young from the Eye of the Deſtroyer; ſo would Chriſt have ſhrouded and ſheltered this People from all thoſe Birds of Prey, and particularly from the Roman Eagle, by which they were at laſt devoured. *Again*, As the Hen continueth her Call to her young ones from Morning to Night, and holds out her Wings for ſhelter to them all the Day long; ſo did Chriſt wait for this Peoples Repentance and Converſion for more than Forty Years after they had killed his Prophets, and murthered himſelf, before they meet with a final Overthrow. *Obſerve*, 2. The amazing Obſtinacy and Wilfulneſs of this People, in rejecting this Grace and Favour, this Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *I would have gathered you, but you would not.* *Obſerve*, 3. The fatal Iſſue of this Obſtinacy, *Behold your Houſe is left unto you deſolate. Is left*; that is, certainly and ſuddenly will be ſo. The Preſent Tenſe put for the *Paulo poſt Futurum*, it denotes both the Certainty and Nearneſs of this People's Ruin. *Learn*, 1. That the Ruin and Deſtruction of Sinners is wholly chargeable upon themſelves; that is, on their own Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy, *I would have gathered you*, ſays Chriſt, *but ye would not. Learn*, 2. How deplorably and inexcuſably they will periſh, who periſh by their own Wilfulneſs under the Goſpel. 3. That there is no Deſire like unto God's Deſire of a People's Repentance; no Longing like unto God's Longing for a People's Salvation. O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem! *how often would I have gathered thee? When ſhall it once be?* Chriſt did very ſeriouſly deſire the Converſion of the *Jews*, who continued ſtill in their Impenitency and Unbelief. And conſequently they whom he ſo ſeriouſly deſired to convert, might have been converted, but they would not be ſo. *I would have gathered, but ye would not.*

C H A P. XXIV.

AND Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple; and his diſciples came to him for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, See ye not all theſe things? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

Our Bleſſed Saviour had often acquainted his Diſciples with his approaching Death at *Jeruſalem*: *The Son of Man muſt go up to* Jeruſalem *to be Crucified.* Now in this Chapter he acquaints them with the Deſtruction that ſhould come upon *Jeruſalem* in general, and upon the Temple in particular, for their putting him the Son of God to Death. The Diſciples looking upon the Temple with Wonder and Admiration, were apt to think that the Temple, in regard of its invincible Strength, could not be deſtroyed; or that at leaſt, in regard of its incredible Magnificence, 'twas great Pity it ſhould be deſtroyed; and accordingly they ſay to Chriſt, *See what goodly Buildings are here*: as if they had ſaid, Maſter what great Pity is it, that ſuch a magnificent Structure ſhould become a ruinous Heap? But hence we *Learn*, 1. That Sin brings Cities and Kingdoms, as well as particular and private Perſons, to their End. There are no Places ſo ſtrong, but an Almighty God is able to deſtroy them; and Sin is ſufficient to lay them waſte. *Obſerve*, 2. That the Threatnings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing Improbabilities there may be to the contrary. God had threatned *Jeruſalem* with Deſtruction for her Sin, and now it is not all her Strength that can oppoſe his Power. *Learn*, 3. That notwithſtanding Magnificence and Worldly Glory doth mightily dazle our Eye, yet how little doth it affect Chriſt's Heart. Even the Temple it ſelf, that moſt magnificent Structure, Chriſt values no more than an Heap of Rubbiſh, when the Impiety of the Worſhippers had devoted it to deſtruction. *Not one ſtone*, ſays Chriſt, *ſhall be left upon another unthrown down.* This Threatning was fulfilled Forty Years after Chriſt's Death, when *Titus* the Roman Emperor deſtroyed the City, and burnt the Temple, and *Turnus Rufus*, the General of his Army, Ploughed up the very Foundation upon which the Temple ſtood. Thus was the Threatning of God fulfilled, *Jer.* 26. 18. *Zion ſhall be ploughed as a Field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become Heaps.* The Truth and Veracity, the Faithfulneſs and Fidelity of God is as much concerned in the Execution of his Threatnings as in the Performance of his Promiſes.

3 And as he ſat upon the mount of olives, the diſciples came unto him privately, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you, 5 For many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and ſhall deceive many.

A double Queſtion is here propounded by the Diſciples to our Saviour. *Firſt*, As to the time of the Temple's Deſtruction. *Secondly*, As to the Signs of that Deſtruction. As to the former, the time when the Temple ſhould be deſtroyed. See the Curioſity of Humane Nature, both in deſiring to know what ſhould be hereafter, and alſo when that hereafter ſhould be. Thence *Learn*, That there is found with all of us an itching Curioſity and Deſire, rather to inquire and pry into the hidden Counſels of God's ſecret Will, than to obey the manifeſt Declarations of God's revealed Will. *Tell us when theſe things ſhall be?* As to their ſecond Queſtion, *What ſhould be the Sign of his Coming?* Our Saviour acquaints them with this amongſt many others, *That there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts, falſe Prophets*, and Seducers, a multitude of Impoſtors, that ſhould draw many after them; therefore he bids them, *Take heed and beware.* Where *Obſerve*, That Chriſt doth not gratifie his Diſciples Curioſity, but acquaints them with their preſent Duty, to watch againſt Deceivers and Seducers, who ſhould have the Impudence to affirm themſelves to be Chriſt. Some, Chriſt perſonal, or the Meſſiah; others, Chriſt Doctrinal, affirming their Erroneous Opinions to be Chriſt's Mind and Doctrine. From the whole *Note*, 1. That there will be many Seducers, many Erroneous Perſons, and falſe Opinions before the End of the World: For *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction was a Type and Emblem of the World's Deſtruction. 2. That ſuch Seducers will come in Chriſt's Name, and their Errors and falſe Opinions ſhall be given out to be the Mind of Chriſt. 3. That many will be ſeduced and carried away with their fair Pretences, and plauſible Deceits. 4. That Chriſt's own Diſciples had need to take heed, leſt they themſelves *being led away by the Error of the Wicked, do fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs. Take heed that no Man deceive you, for many will come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and ſhall deceive many.*

6 And ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: ſee that ye be not troubled: for all *theſe things* muſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom, and there ſhall be famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8 All theſe are the beginning of ſorrows.

The next Sign which our Saviour gives his Diſciples of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, is the many Broils and Commotions, civil Diſcords and Diſſentions, that ſhould be found amongſt the *Jews*, *Famines*, *Peſtilence*, and *Earthquakes*, *fearful Sights*, and *Signs in the Air*. And *Joſephus* declares, That there appeared in the Air, Chariots and Horſes, Men ſkirmiſhing in the Clouds, and encompaſſing the City; and that a Blazing Star, in faſhion of a Sword, hung over the City for a Year together. *Learn*, 1. That War, Peſtilence and Famine, are Judgments and Calamities, inflicted by God upon a ſinful People for their Contempt of Chriſt and Goſpel Grace. *Ye ſhall hear of Wars, Famine and Peſtilence.* 2. That altho' theſe be mighty and terrible Judgments, yet are they the Fore-runners of worſer Judgments. *All theſe are the Beginning of Sorrows.*

9 Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you: and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my Names ſake. 10 And then ſhall many be offended, and ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another. 11 And many falſe prophets ſhall ariſe, and ſhall deceive many. 12 And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold. 13 But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

Our Saviour here goes on, in giving farther Signs of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. 1. He declares the ſharp Perſecutions which ſhould fall upon the Apoſtles themſelves; *they ſhall kill you*. Thence *Learn*, That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt edge of Perſecution is uſually turn'd againſt the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the Miniſters of God. *You ſhall be hated and killed.* The next Sign is the Apoſtacy of Profeſſors upon the Account of thoſe Perſecutions. *Then ſhall many be offended. Shall betray one another, and hate one another. Learn hence*, That Times of Perſecution for Chriſtianity are conſtantly Times of Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Profeſſion. 2. That Apoſtates are uſually the bittereſt Perſecutors. *Omnis Apoſtata eſt oſor ſui ordinis. They ſhall betray one another, and hate one another.* A Third Sign is the abounding of falſe Teachers. *Many falſe Prophets ſhall ariſe, and ſhall deceive many.* Where *Note*, That the fair Pretences, and ſubtil Practices of Heretical Teachers, have drawn off many from the Truth, whom open Perſecution could not drive from it. A Fourth Sign is the Decay and Abatement of Zeal for God, and Love one to another. *The Love of many ſhall wax cold.* That is, both towards God, and towards Man. When Iniquity abounds, Trouble waxes hot; and when Trouble waxes hot, falſe Love waxes cold, and true Love waxes colder than it was before: The cold Blaſts of Perſecution blow upon the Love of a few, but blow out the Love of many more. Theſe are the Signs laid down by our Saviour, foretelling the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and foraſmuch as *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction was not only a Fore-runner, but a Figure of Chriſt's coming to Judgment, theſe are alſo the Signs, foretelling the Approach of that dreadful Day. *Verſe* 13. *He that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.* Our Saviour cloſes his Diſcourſe with an Exhortation to Conſtancy and Perſeverance. *Teaching us*, That there is no ſuch way to overcome Temptation and Perſecution, as by keeping our Integrity, and perſevering in our Fidelity to Chriſt. 2. That Conſtancy and Perſeverance in our Integrity and Fidelity towards Chriſt, is ſometimes attended with Temporal Salvation and Deliverance in this Life, but ſhall certainly be rewarded with Eternal Salvation in the next: *He that endureth unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.*

14 And this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world for a witneſs unto all nations, and then ſhall the end come.

Here our Bleſſed Saviour comforts his Diſciples with a threefold Conſideration. 1. That his Goſpel, how hated and perſecuted ſoever, ſhould be plainly and perſuaſively preached. *This Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preached.*—Therefore called the Goſpel of the Kingdom, becauſe it diſcovers the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven. *Obſerve*, 2. The Extent of the Goſpel's Publication, *it ſhall be preached unto all Nations*; that is, to the Gentile World, not only amongſt the *Jews*, but amongſt the chief and principal Nations of the Gentiles alſo. *Obſerve*, 3. The Deſign and End of the Goſpel's Publication, and that is for a Witneſs or Teſtimony; namely, for a Witneſs of God's Mercy and Grace offered to Sinners, and of their Obſtinacy who reject it. *Learn thence*, That the Preaching of the Goſpel wherever it comes proves a Teſtimony to them to whom it comes. To the Humble and Teachable it is a Teſtimony for, to the Scorners and Deſpiſers it is a Teſtimony againſt; or in the Words of the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. *To ſome it is the Savour of Death unto Death, to others the Savour of Life unto Life.*

15 When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, (whoſo readeth, let him underſtand.)

The Senſe is, when ye ſhall ſee the Armies of the *Romans* who are an Abomination to you, and an Occaſion of great Deſolation where they go; when you ſhall ſee that abominable deſolating Army begirting the Holy City of *Jeruſalem*, then call to mind the Prophecy of *Daniel*, which primarily belonged to *Antiochus*, but ſecondarily to *Titus*, and ſhall now be fully compleated. For the Siege ſhall not be raiſed, till both City and Temple be razed to the Ground. *Learn thence*, That God has Inſtruments ready at his Call to lay waſte the ſtrongeſt Cities, and to ruin the moſt flouriſhing Kingdoms which do oppoſe the Tenders of his Grace, and can make thoſe whom Men moſt abhor, to be the Occaſions of their Deſtruction.

16 Then let them which be in Judea, flee into the mountains. 17 Let him which is on the houſe top, not come down to take any thing out of his houſe: 18 Neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his cloaths.

The meaning is, As ſoon as you ſhall ſee the *Roman* Army appear before the City of *Jeruſalem*, let every one that values his own Safety fly as far, and as faſt as he can, even as *Lot* fled out of *Sodom*; and let ſuch as fly be glad if by flight they can ſave their Lives, tho' they loſe their Goods, their Cloaths and all things beſide. From hence, *Learn*, 1. That when Almighty God is pouring forth his Fury upon a ſinful People, it is lawful, yea, a neceſſary Duty, by flight to endeavour the hiding and ſheltring of themſelves from the approaching Calamity and Deſolation. *When ye ſhall ſee* Jeruſalem *encompaſſed with Armies, then flee to the Mountains.* 2. That in the Caſe of flight before a bloody Enemy and Army, if we loſe all that we have, and our Lives be given us we fare well, and the Lord deals very mercifully with us.

19 And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day.

Here our Saviour declares the doleful Diſtreſs of thoſe that could not flee from the Siege of *Jeruſalem*; as Women big *with Child*, and ſuch as *give Suck*, who by that Means are like to loſe their Lives. And he farther adds, that it ſhould encreaſe the Calamity, if their *Flight* ſhould happen to be *in the Winter*, when none can fly either faſt, or far; or if they ſhould be forced to flee on the *Sabbath-Day*, when the *Jews* ſcrupled Travelling, farther than a Sabbath-Day's Journey, which was about Two Miles. From hence *Learn*, That it is a great Addition to the Trouble and Diſquiet of a good Man's Spirit, when the Day of his Spiritual Reſt is interrupted; and inſtead of enjoying Communion with God in his Houſe, he is driven from Houſe and Home, and flies before the Face of an enraged Enemy. *Pray ye*, ſays our Saviour, *that your Flight be not on the Sabbath-Day.* That being a Day of Holy Reſt.

21 For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever ſhall be. 22 And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortned, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved: but for the elects ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortned.

The doleful Miſeries and dreadful Calamities which were coming upon the *Jews* in general, and upon *Jeruſalem* in particular, are here foretold by our Saviour, partly from the *Roman* Army without, and partly from the Seditions and Factions of the Zealots within, who committed ſuch Outrages and Slaughters, that there were no leſs than an Hundred Thouſand ſlain, and Ninety ſeven Thouſand carried away Captive, and made Priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for Thirty Pence, were now themſelves ſold Thirty for a Penny. Now did the Temple it ſelf become a Sacrifice, a whole Burnt-Offering, and was conſum'd to Aſhes. Yet *Obſerve*, Chriſt promiſes that theſe Calamitous Days ſhould be ſhortned, for the Elect's ſake. God had a Remnant which he determined ſhould ſurvive this Deſtruction, to be an holy Seed; and accordingly the Providence of God ſo order'd, that the City was taken in Six Months, and the whole Country depopulated in Eighteen. Whence *Obſerve*, How the Lord intermixes ſome Mercy with the extremeſt Miſery that doth befal a People for their Sin. On this ſide Hell no Sinners can ſay that they feel the Strokes of Juſtice to the utmoſt, or that they have Judgment without Mercy.

23 Then if any man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here is Chriſt, or there: believe it not. 24 For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that (if it were poſſible) they ſhall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore, if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold, he is in the deſart, go not forth: behold, he is in the ſecret chambers, believe it not.

The *Jews* had all along cheriſhed in themſelves a vain Expectation, that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a Temporal Deliverer, that ſhould ſet them at Liberty from the Power and Slavery of the *Romans*; and accordingly Chriſt declares to his Diſciples here, that immediately before *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, ſeveral Perſons taking the Advantage of this Expectation, would make themſelves Heads of Parties, and pretend that they were the true Meſſiah, who would ſave and deliver them from their Enemies, if they would repair to them, and follow after them. Hereupon our Lord cautions his Diſciples againſt ſuch falſe Chriſt's, and falſe Prophets, and bids them *believe them not*, tho' they did never ſo many great Signs and Wonders, and promiſed them never ſuch Glorious Deliverances. *Learn hence*, That the Church's great Danger is from Seducers that came in Chriſt's Name, and pretending to work Signs and Wonders by his Authority. 2. That ſuch is the Power of Seduction and Deluſion, that many are carried away with Seducers and falſe Teachers. 3. That the Elect themſelves, if left unto themſelves, might be ſeduced; but Divine Power guards them againſt Seduction and Deluſion. *They ſhall deceive, if it were poſſible, the very Elect.* Which Phraſe imports not what the Event would be upon the Elect, but the Vehemency of the Endeavours of Seducers; namely, that they would do the utmoſt that they could to ſhock the Chriſtian, and cauſe him to fall from his Sedfaſtneſs.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt: ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.

There is a threefold coming of Chriſt ſpoken of in the New Teſtament. 1. His coming in his Spiritual Kingdom by the preaching of the Goſpel among the Gentiles. 2. His coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem* Forty Years after his Aſcenſion. 3. His final Coming to Judgment at the great Day. All theſe Comings of the Son of Man for their Suddenneſs and Unexpectedneſs are compared unto Lightning, which in a moment, breaketh out of the Eaſt, and ſhineth unto the Weſt. *Learn hence*, That the Coming and Appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the judging of the wicked and impenitent Sinners, will be a very certain, ſudden, and unexpected Appearance.

28 For whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

If the coming of Chriſt be underſtood in the former Verſe of his coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, then by the Carcaſs in this Verſe are to be underſtood the People of *Jeruſalem*, and the Body of the Jewiſh Nation: And by *the Eagles* are to be underſtood the Roman Armies, who carried an Eagle in their Standard. Theſe were the Inſtruments which Almighty God made uſe of, as his Rod and Scourge to chaſtiſe and puniſh the People of *Jeruſalem*. *Learn thence*, That the appointed Meſſengers of God's Wrath, and the Inſtruments of his Vengeance will ſuddenly gather together, certainly find out, and ſeverely puniſh and plague an impenitent People devoted to Deſtruction. *Where the Carcaſs is*, (the Body of the Jewiſh Nation) *there will the Eagles* (the Roman Soldiers) *be gathered together.*

29 Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days, ſhall the ſon be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light, and the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens ſhall be ſhaken. 30 And then ſhall appear the ſign of the ſon of man in heaven.

Our Saviour goes on in figurative Expreſſions, to ſet forth the Calamities that ſhould befal the Jewiſh Nation, immediately after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. *The Sun ſhall be darkned*; that is, all their Glory and Excellency ſhall be eclipſed, all their Wealth and Proſperity ſhall be laid waſte, the whole Government Civil and Eccleſiaſtical deſtroy'd; and ſuch Marks of Miſery found upon them, as never were ſeen upon a People. *By the Sign of the Son of Man*, the Papiſts, will have underſtood, *the Sign of the Croſs*. Others underſtand it of thoſe Prodigies, which were ſeen a little before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which *Joſephus* mentions, as namely, A Comet in the Form of a Sword hanging over the City for a Year together: A Light in the Temple, and about the Altar ſeen at Midnight for half an Hour. A Cow led by the Prieſt to be ſacrificed, calved a Lamb. A Voice heard in the Temple, ſaying, *Abeamus hinc, Let us go hence. Learn hence*, God doth premoniſh before he puniſh; he warns a People of Deſtruction often, before he deſtroys them once.

30 And then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. 31 And he ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Then *ſhall the Tribes mourn*; that is, then ſhall the *Jews* be convinced that their Deſtruction was the Puniſhment of their Sin, in rejecting and crucifying Chriſt; and accordingly they that pierced him, ſhall behold him, and mourn over him. Thus it was before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and thus will it be before the final Judgment. They that pierced him ſhall be brought before him. Lord, how will the Sght of a pierced Chriſt pierce their Souls with Horror; they who have not ſeen a pierced Chriſt in the Sorrows of Repentance, ſhall hereafter ſee him in the Sorrows of Deſpair. To behold Chriſt with the Eye of Senſe hereafter, will be very dreadful and terrible to all thoſe that have not beheld him with the Eye of Faith here. *And he ſhall ſend Angels with the Sound of a Trumpet.* Thoſe that apply this to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, by the Angels underſtand the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who by the Trumpet of the Word did bring in Believers throughout all *Judea*, who were ſaved from that Deſtruction. Thoſe that underſtand it of the general Judgment, take it literally, that Chriſt at the great Day will ſend forth his Holy Angels, and gather all his Elect to himſelf with the ſound of a Trumpet. Probably, as there was an audible Sound of a Trumpet at the giving of the Law, ſo there ſhall be the like Sound of a Trumpet, when Chriſt ſhall ſummon the World to Judgment, for tranſgreſſing of that Law. A joyful Sound will this be to the Friends of Chriſt, a doleful dreadful Sound in the Ears of his Enemies.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is nigh: 33 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. 34 Verily I ſay unto you, this generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Here our Bleſſed Saviour declares Two Things with reference to his coming. 1. The Certainty of the Thing it ſelf. 2. The Uncertainty of the Time. The Certainty of his coming he ſets forth by the Similitude of the *Fig-tree*, whoſe beginning to bud declares *the Summer at Hand*. Thus when they ſhould ſee the forementionꝰd Signs, they might conclude the Deſtruction of their City and Temple *to be nigh at Hand*, and that ſome then living ſhould ſee all theſe Predictions certainly fulfilled. Whatever Chriſt foretells ſhall certainly be fulfilled, his Word being more firm than the Fabrick of Heaven and Earth. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Uncertainty*, as to the preciſe Time, when this Judgment ſhould come. No Angel in Heaven, nor Creature on Earth could determine the Time, only the glorious Perſons in the Godhead; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. *Learn*, 1. That all things are not revealed to the Angels themſelves, but ſuch things only as it concerns them to know, and the Wiſdom of God thinks fit to reveal. 2. That the preciſe Time of the Day of Judgment is kept by God as a Secret to himſelf. He will not have us know that Hour, to the Intent that we may be upon our watch every Hour.

37 But as the days of Noah were, ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entred into the ark. 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then ſhall two be in the field, the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women ſhall be grinding at the mill, the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

In theſe Verſes our Saviour declares that *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, and the World's final Deſolation at the great Day, would be much like the Deſtruction of the old World, and that in two Reſpects; 1. In regard of Unexpectedneſs. 2. In regard of Security, and Senſuality. How ſenſual and ſecure was the old World before the Flood? *They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage.* That is, wholly given up to Senſuality and Debauchery, and did not know of the Flood's coming; that is, did not conſider it, *till it ſwept them away.* Thus was it in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and ſo will it be in the end of the World. *Learn hence*, 1. That as the old World periſhed by Infidelity, Security and Senſuality, ſo will the ſame Sins be prevailing before the Deſtruction of this preſent World. *As it was in the Days of* Noah, *ſo ſhall it be when the Son of Man cometh.* 2. That the true Reaſon why Sinners are drowned in Senſuality, and given over to ſecurity, is this, becauſe they do not believe the Certainty, or conſider the Proximity and Nearneſs of an approaching Judgment. The old World *knew not of the Floods coming*, Strange! when *Noah* had told them of it an Hundred and Twenty Years together. The meaning is, They did not conſider it, and prepare for it. To ſuch as are unprepared for, and unapprehenſive of Death and Judgment, thoſe Evils are always ſudden, altho' Men be never ſo often warn'd of them. But to ſuch as are prepared, Death is never ſudden, let them die never ſo ſuddenly.

42 Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the good man of the houſe had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye alſo ready for in ſuch an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

Here we have the Application made by our Saviour of the foregoing Doctrine concerning the Certainty and Suddeneſs of a future Judgment. *Watch therefore always*; not without Intermiſſion, but without giving over, that ye may be not only in an habitual, but actual Readineſs for my Appearance. *Learn thence*, That it is the indiſpenſable Duty; and ought to be the indefatigable Endeavour of every Chriſtian, to ſtand upon his Watch in a prepared Readineſs, for Chriſt's Appearance, both for his coming to us, and for our going to him. *Watch always, for ye know not the Hour when your Lord cometh.*

45 Who then is a faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his houſhhold, to give them meat in due ſeaſon? 46 Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. 47 Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods.

Theſe Words may be applied two ways. 1. To all the faithful Servants of Chriſt in general, Thence *Learn*, That for a Perſon to ſpend and end his Days in the Service of Chriſt, and doing his Will, gives good Aſſurance of a Bleſſed Condition. *Bleſſed is that Servant.* 2. To the Miniſters of the Goſpel in ſpecial, may theſe Words be applied. And here *Obſerve*, 1. The Character and Duty of a Goſpel Miniſter. He is the *Steward of Chriſt's Houſhold, to give them their Meat in due Seaſon.* *Obſerve*, 2. The Qualifications requiſite in ſuch Stewards, Faithfulneſs and Prudence. *Who then is that faithful and wiſe Steward?* *Obſerve*, 3. The Reward inſured to ſuch Stewards as anſwer theſe Qualifications. *Bleſſed is that Servant.* *Learn hence*, 1. That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are in a ſpecial Senſe the Stewards of Chriſt's Houſhold. 2. That Faithfulneſs and Prudence are the neceſſary and indiſpenſable Qualifications of Chriſt's Stewards. 3. That wherever theſe Qualifications are found, Chriſt will graciouſly and abundantly rewatd them. Our Faithfulneſs muſt reſpect God, our Selves, and our Flock, and includes Integrity of Heart, Purity of Intention, Induſtry of Endeavour, Impartiality in our Adminiſtrations. Prudence appears in the choice of ſuitable Subjects, in the choice of fit Language, in exciting our own Affections, in order to the moving of our People. Miniſterial Prudence will teach us by the Strictneſs and Gravity of our Deportment, to maintain our Eſteem in the Conſciences of our People. It will aſſiſt us to bear Reproach, and direct us to give Reproof; he that is ſilent, cannot be innocent: Reprove we muſt, or we cannot be faithful; but prudently, or we cannot be ſucceſsful.

48 But and if that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming. 49 And ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: 50 The lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day, when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of: 51 And ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth:

Our Lord in theſe Verſes deſcribes an unfaithful and negligent Steward, and denounces the dreadful Sentence of Wrath hanging over him; he is deſcribed, 1. By the Character of Infidelity; he believeth not Chriſt's coming to Judgment, tho' he preaches it to others; he ſaith in his Heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming.* 2. He is deſcribed by his Hatred, Envy and Malignity againſt his Fellow-ſervants, that were more painful and faithful than himſelf. He begins to ſmite, at leaſt with the Virulence of his Tongue, if not with the Violence of his Hand. 3. By his aſſociating with the wicked, and ſtrengthning their Hands by his ill Example, *He eateth and drinketh with the Drunken.* That is, as their Aſſociate and Fellow Companion. Thus the unfaithful Servant is deſcribed; next his Judgment and Sentence is declared. *Obſerve*, 2. The tremendous Judgment that ſhall come upon unfaithful Stewards. 1. Chriſt will ſurprize them in their Sin and Security, by *coming in an Hour when they look'd not for him.* 2. He will execute Temporal Vengeance upon them. *He will cut them aſunder*, or hew them in pieces, as the *Jews* did their Sacrifices. That is, ſeperate his Soul from his Body by untimely Death. Hence ſome *Obſerve*, That God ſeldom ſuffers ſlothful, ſenſual, wicked and debauch'd Miniſters *to live out half their Days.* 3. Chriſt will puniſh them with Eternal Deſtruction alſo. *Appointing them their Portion with Hypocrites.* That is with the worſt of Sinners, they ſhall have a double Damnation. As the Hypocrite has a double Tongue, a double Heart, and is a double Sinner, ſo ſhall he undergo a double Damnation. *Learn hence*, That ſuch Miniſters as neglect the Service of God, and the Souls of their People; as they are ranked amongſt the worſt of Sinners in this Life, ſo ſhall they be puniſhed with them in the ſevereſt manner in the next. When Satan deſtroys the Souls of Men, he ſhall anſwer for it as a Murtherer only, not as an Officer that was intruſted with the Care of the

Soul. But if the Steward doth not provide, if the Shepherd doth not feed, if the Watchman doth not warn, they ſhall anſwer not only for the Souls that have miſcarried, but for an *Office neglected*, for a Talent hidden, and for a Stewardſhip unfaithfully adminiſtred. Wo unto us, if at the great Day we hear diſtreſſed Souls roaring out their Complaints, and howling forth that doleful Accuſation againſt us: Lord! Our Stewards have defrauded us, our Watchmen have betrayed us, our Guides have miſled us.

CHAP. XXV.

Our bleſſed Saviour in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter had exhorted all Chriſtians to the great Duty of Watchfulneſs, and to be in a Poſture of Readineſs againſt his coming. Which Duty he is pleaſed to inculcate again in this Chapter, and accordingly he urges the Neceſſity of it from two eminent Parables; the former, Of the Ten Virgins, v. 1. *and the latter*, Of a Man travelling into a far Country, v. 14.

THen ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wiſe, and five were fooliſh.

By the Kingdom of Heaven here, is meant the State of the viſible Church on Earth; it cannot be underſtood of the Kingdom of Glory, for there are no fooliſh Virgins in that Kingdom, nor yet of the inviſible Kingdom of Grace; for therein are no fooliſh Virgins neither. But in the viſible Church here on Earth, there ever has been a Mixture of wiſe and unwiſe, of Saints and Hypocrites. *Five of theſe Virgins were wiſe, and Five were Fooliſh.* Where *Obſerve*, our Lord's great Charity, in ſuppoſing and hoping that amongſt the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, the number of ſincere Chriſtians is equal with Hypocritical Profeſſors. *Five were wiſe, and Five Fooliſh.* Teaching us, that we ſhould not confine the Church of Chriſt within a narrow Compaſs, nor confine our Charity to a few, and think none ſhall go to Heaven but thoſe of our own Party and Perſwaſion, but to extend our Charity to all Chriſtians that hold the Foundation with us, and to hope well of them. Lord! let me rather err on the charitable Hand, than be found on the cenſorious and damning ſide; this is to imitate my Saviour, whoſe Charity ſuppoſed as many wiſe as fooliſh Virgins, as many Saints as Hypocrites in the Church. All theſe Virgins are ſaid to *take their Lamps*, and *go forth to meet the Bridegroom.* For underſtanding which, we muſt know that our Saviour alludes to the ancient Cuſtom of Marriages, which were celebrated in the Night; when uſually Ten young Men attended the Bridegroom, and as many Virgins attended the Bride, with Lamps in their Hands, the Bridegroom leading home his Bride by the Light of thoſe Lamps. By theſe *Virgins* are ſhadowed forth the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity. The *fooliſh Virgins* are ſuch as ſatisfie themſelves with a bare Profeſſion, without bringing forth Fruits anſwerable thereunto. Theſe *wiſe Virgins* are ſuch as walk'd anſwerably to their Profeſſion, perſevered and continued ſtedfaſt therein, and abounded in the Graces and Virtues of a good Life. They are called *wiſe Virgins* for the Purity of their Faith, for the Purity of their Worſhip, and for the Purity of their Converſations.

3 They that were fooliſh took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps.

By the *Lamps* are meant an outward Profeſſion of Faith and Holineſs. By *Oil in their Lamps* is to be underſtood that ſolemn Profeſſion of Repentance, and Faith, which all Chriſtians make in Baptiſm. By *Oils in their Veſſels* is meant the Sanctifying and Saving Grace of the Holy Spirit; the Growth and Improvement of them, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance in them. *Obſerve here*, wherein the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins agreed, and wherein they differed. They agreed thus far, that both took their *Lamps*, both *lighted* them, they both had *Oil in their Lamps*, the difference was not that the wiſe had Oil, and the fooliſh had none, but in this, that the wiſe took Care for a future Supply of Oil to feed their Lamps, when the firſt Oil was ſpent. Some Profeſſors, like *fooliſh Virgins*, content themſelves with a blazing Lamp of an outward Profeſſion, without concerning themſelves to ſecure an inward Principle of Grace and Love, which ſhould maintain that Profeſſion, as the Oil maintains the Lamp. As the Lamp will not long hold burning without a Stock of Oil to feed it; ſo a Profeſſion of Religion, tho' never ſo glorious, will not be laſting nor perſevering without a Principle of Faith and Love in the Heart to ſupport and maintain it. *Learn hence*, That the true Wiſdom of a Chriſtian conſiſts in this, to take care, that not only the *Lamp* of his Life may ſhine by outward Profeſſion, but that the Veſſel of his Heart may be furniſhed with the Graces of the Holy Spirit as a prevailing and abiding Principle.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumbred and ſlept.

That is, while Chriſt delays his coming to Perſons by Death and Judgment, they are not ſo diligent as they ought, to prepare themſelves for Death and Judgment. Inſtead of being upon their Watch and Guard, *they ſlumbered and ſlept. Note*, That not only viſible Profeſſors, but the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians are very prone to Spiritual Slumber. *While the Bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumbered and ſlept.* Spiritual Slumber conſiſts in this When Graces are not lively, and kept in exerciſe, particularly Faith, Hope, and Love; when there is an Abatement of our Love and Zeal, and Intermiſſion of our Care and Watchfulneſs; this is a Degree of Spiritual Slumber; yet the Saints Slumber is not a prevailing Slumber, 'tis not an Univerſal Slumber, 'tis not in all the Faculties of the Soul; if there be Deadneſs in the Affections, yet is there not Searedneſs in the Conſcience. *I ſleep*, ſays the Church, *but my Heart awaketh, Cant.* 5. 2. Still there is a Principle in the Soul which takes God's part, and the Chriſtian groans under the Burthen of his dull and drouſie State. But the greateſt Wiſdom is, to maintain a conſtant Watch; that we may at no time be ſurprized by the Bridegroom's coming, or be in a Confuſion when Death and Judgment ſhall overtake us. Bleſſed are thoſe Virgins, whoſe Lamps always burn bright.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

At Midnight, that is, at the moſt diſmal and unſeaſonable time, when all the Virgins were faſt aſleep; and when awaken in great Affrightment, could not on a ſudden conſider what to do. Such is the Caſe of thoſe who put off their Repentance, and Preparation for another World, till they are ſurprized by Death and Judgment. Lord, how will the Midnight Cry of the Bridegroom's coming terrifie and amaze the unprepared Soul! What a ſurprizing Word will this be, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh? Learn hence*, That the Bridegroom will certainly come, tho' at his own time; and then all ſhall be called upon, both prepared and unprepared, to go forth to meet him. Reaſon ſays he may come, becauſe there is a juſt God that will render to every one according to his Deeds, and reward both Body and Soul for all the Services they have done for God. The Body ſhall not always remain like a ſolitary Widow in the Duſt, but ſhall meet its old Companion the Soul again. And as Reaſon ſays he may come, Faith ſays he will come, and argues from the Promiſe of Chriſt, *John* 14. 3. and from the Purchaſe of Chriſt; from Chriſt's Affection to us, and from our Affection to him: Faith has ſeen him upon the Croſs, and determines ſhe ſhall ſee him in the Clouds. The Bridegroom will certainly come at his own time, happy they that are ready to *go forth to meet him.*

7 Then all thoſe virgins aroſe, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the fooliſh ſaid unto the wiſe, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

The Virgins ariſing and trimming their Lamps, doth denote their actual Preparation for Chriſt's Coming and Appearance, and their putting themſelves into a Poſture of Readineſs to receive him. *Thence Learn*, That a believing Apprehenſion of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of our Lord's Coming and Approach will rouze us out of our Spiritual Slumber, and prepare us to meet him with Joy and Aſſurance. *Then they aroſe and trimmed their Lamps. And the fooliſh ſaid to the wiſe, give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out. Obſerve here*, 1. A Requeſt made, *Give us of your Oil.* There is a time when the Neglecters of Grace will be made ſenſible of the Worth of Grace by the want of it. Such as now undervalue, yea, vilifie by the Grace of God, will be heard to ſay, *Oh give us of your Oil.* *Obſerve*, 2. The Reaſon of the Requeſt, *For our Lamps are gone out.* *Thence Learn*, That the Lamp of Profeſſion will certainly go out, which has not a Stock of Grace to feed and maintain it.

9 But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, not ſo; leſt there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for your ſelves.

Obſerve here, 1. The wiſe Virgins Denial, *Not ſo*, They will part with no Oil. *Learn thence*, That it muſt be the Care of every one to get Grace of his own, otherwiſe the Grace of others will do him no good. 'Tis not what others have done, nay, not what Chriſt himſelf has done, that will ſave us, without our own Endeavours. *Obſerve*, 2. The Reaſon of their Denial, *Leſt there be not enough for us and you.* *Thence Note*, That ſuch Chriſtians as have moſt Grace, or the largeſt Stock of Grace, have none to ſpare; none to ſpare, in regard of their Occaſions for Grace on Earth, and in regard of their Expectations of Glory in Heaven. *Obſerve*, 3. The Advice and Counſel given; *Go to them that ſell, and buy for your ſelves.* Some take this for an Exhortation, others for a mocking Deriſion. *Go to them that ſell.* That is, ſay ſome, to the Shops of the Ordinances, where it may be had. *Thence Note*, That ſuch as would have Grace, muſt have timely Recourſe to the Ordinances and Means of Grace. *Go to them that ſell.* Others underſtand the Words Ironically, and as ſpoken by the way of Deriſion. *Go to them that ſell.* If you know where to find them, and either buy or borow for your ſelves. *Learn thence*, That it is the greateſt Folly in the World to have Oil to buy, when we ſhould have Oil to burn: To have our Grace to ſeek, when we ſhould have it to exert and exerciſe. It is no time to get Grace when the Bridegroom is come, and the Day of Grace is paſt and over.

10 And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was ſhut,

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt will come at the great Day to his People as a Bridegroom, and to the Wicked as a Judge. The Relation now begun betwixt Chriſt and his Church ſhall then be publickly ſolemniz'd. *Obſerve*, 2. The Qualification of the Perſons, who ſhall enter with the Bridegroom into Heaven. *Such as are ready, went in with him.* This Readineſs is twofold, Habitual and Actual; Habitual Readineſs conſiſts in the State of the Perſons (juſtified and pardoned) in the Frame of the Heart (ſanctified and renewed:) And in the Courſe of the Life, univerſally and perſeveringly Holy and Righteous, conſiſts our Actual Preparation. *Obſerve*, 3. The doleful condition of ſuch as were unready. The Door is ſhut againſt them; the Door of Repentance, the Door of Hope, the Door of Salvation, all ſhut, eternally ſhut, *and by him that ſhutteth, and none can open.* *Learn hence*, The utter Impoſſibility of ever getting our Condition altered by us, when the Day of Grace and Salvation is once over with us. Wo to ſuch Souls, who by the Folly of their own Delays have cauſed the Door of Converſion and Remiſſion to be everlaſtingly ſhut againſt their own Souls.

11 Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not.

Obſerve here, The Virgin's Petition, and the Bridegroom's Reply. The Petition, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* *Learn thence*, That how negligent ſoever Men are of Heaven and Salvation here, there are none but will deſire it earneſtly, and importunately hereafter. *Afterwards*; that is, when too late. *Obſ.* farther the Bridegroom's Reply. *I know you not*; that is, I own and approve you not. There is a twofold Knowledge that Chriſt has a Knowledge of, ſimple Intuition, and a Knowledge of ſpecial Approbation; the former Knowledge Chriſt has of all Men, the latter only of good Men. *Learn hence*, That it will be a dreadful Miſery for any Perſons, but eſpecially for ſuch as have been eminent Profeſſors, to be diſowned by Chriſt at his coming to hear that dreadful Word from the Mouth of Chriſt, *Verily, I know you not.*

13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Here we have our Lord's Application of the foregoing Parable, to be always upon our Watch, continually upon our Guard to meet the Bridegroom in Death and Judgment, becauſe we know not the time of his Coming and Approach. *Lean thence*, That Watchfulneſs and a prepared Readineſs is a great Duty that lies upon all thoſe who believe and look for Chriſt's Coming and Appearance. Happy Souls, who are found in a Poſture of Readineſs at the Bridegroom's Approach, ſtanding with *Lamps trimmed, Loyns girded, Lights burning*; that is, improving and exerciſing their Graces, abounding in all the Fruits of the Spirit, and in all ſubſtantial Virtues of a good Life. Such and only ſuch ſhall have an Entrance abundantly adminiſtred unto them into the everlaſting Kingdom.

14 For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own ſervants, and delivered unto them his goods: 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ſeveral ability, and ſtraightway took his journey.

Obſerve here, The Perſon inſtructing, Chriſt; the Perſons inſtructed, all Chriſtians: The Talents they are intructed with, Goods; that is, Goods of Providence, Riches and Honours; Gifts of Mind, Wiſdom, Parts and Learning; Gifts of Grace, all theſe Goods, Chriſt diſpences variouſly; more to ſome, fewer to others, but with Expectation of Improvement from all. *Learn*, 1. That Chriſt is the great Lord of the Univerſe, and Owner of all his Servant's Goods and Talents. 2. That every Talent is given us by our Lord to improve and imploy for our Maſter's Uſe and Service. 3. That it pleaſes the Lord to diſpence his Gifts variouſly amongſt his Servants, to ſome he commits more, to others fewer Talents. 4 That to this Lord of ours every one of us muſt be accountable and reſponſible for every Talent committed to us, and intruſted with us.

16 Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the ſame, and made *them* other five talents. 17 And likewiſe he that had received two, he alſo gained other two. 18 But he that received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's mony.

The former Verſes gave an Account of the Lord's Diſtribution; theſe acquaint us with the Servants Negotiation. Some traded with, and made Improvement of their Talents, others traded not at all; yet it is not ſaid, they did imbezzle the Talent, but not improve it. *Learn*, It is not ſufficient to juſtifie us, that we do not abuſe our Talents; 'tis Fault enough to hide them, and not improve them; the ſlothful Servant ſhall no more eſcape Puniſhment than the waſteful Servant.

19 After a long time, the lord of thoſe ſervants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And ſo he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, ſaying, Lord, thou deliver'ſt unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beſides them five talents more. 21 His Lord ſaid unto him well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. 22 He alſo that had received two talents, came and ſaid, Lord, thou delivered'ſt unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beſides them. 23 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Note here, 1. That the Wiſdom of God diſpences his Gifts and Graces variouſly, as ſo many Talents to his Servants to be imployed and improved for his own Glory, and his Churches Good. 2. That all ſuch Servants as have received any Talents, muſt look to reckon and account for them; and this Account muſt be particular, perſonal, exact, and impartial. 3. That all ſuch Servants as have been faithful in improving their Talents, at Chriſt's coming ſhall be both commended and rewarded alſo. *Well done, good and faithful Servant: enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* Where *Obſerve*, 1. That the State of the Bleſſed is a State of *Joy.* 2. That the Joy which the Bleſſed partake of, is *the Joy of their Lord*; that is, the Joy which he provides, and which he poſſeſſes. 3. That the way after which the Saints partake of this Joy, is *by entring into it*, which denotes the higheſt, and the fulleſt Participation of it. The Joy is too great to enter into them, they muſt enter into that; *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

24 Then he which had received the one talent, came and ſaid, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou haſt that is thine. 26 His lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant, thou knoweſt that I reap where I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed: 27 Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury.

Obſerve here, 1. That he that received but One Talent, is called to an Account as well as he that received Five. Heathens that have but one Talent, namely, the Light of Nature, muſt give an Account for that One Talent, as well as Chriſtians that have Five, muſt account for Five. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſlothful Servant's Allegation; *I knew thee to be an hard man, and I was afraid.* Where *Note*, His Prejudice againſt his Maſter, and the Effect of that Prejudice, *he was afraid*; and the Fruit of his Fear, *he hid his Talent in the Earth. Learn hence*, That Sinners entertain in their Minds very hard and unkind Thoughts of God; they look upon him as an hard Maſter, rigorous in his Commands, and difficult to be pleaſed. *Learn*, 2. That ſuch hard Thoughts of God do naturally occaſion ſlaviſh Fear, which is a great Hindrance to the faithful Diſcharge of our Duty to God. *Obſerve*, 3. The Maſter's Reply to the ſlothful Servant's Allegation, which contains an Exprobation, or Upbraiding of him for his Sloth and Negligence; *Thou wicked and ſlothful Servant.* Where *Note*, 1. That the ſlothful Servant is a wicked Servant, as well as the unfaithful Servant. 2. That wicked and ſlothful Servants, to excuſe themſelves, will not ſtick to charge their Miſcarriages upon God himſelf. *Thou wert an hard Man.* 3. That no Excuſes whatſoever ſhall ſerve either the ſlothful or unfaithful Servant at the Bar of Chriſt.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which has ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath. 30 And caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

Theſe Words contain the Sentence denounced by Chriſt upon the ſlothful Servant; his Puniſhment is firſt a Puniſhment of Loſs. *Take the Talent from him. Learn thence*, That not improving the Gifts of God given as Talents to us, provokes God to take them from us, as well as miſimproving. *From him that hath not*; that is, from him that improveth not, *ſhall be taken that which he hath.* 2. Follows the Puniſhment of Senſe, *Caſt him into utter Darkneſs, where is weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth. Learn thence*, That Hell is a Place and State of inexpreſſible Miſery and Torment. A diſmal Place, as being deprived of the Sight and Enjoyment of God, of Chriſt, of Saints and Angels. A doleful Place, full of overwhelming Sorrow and deſpairing Grief. *The gnaſhing of their Teeth*, ſignifies their being full of Rage and Indignation againſt God, againſt the Saints, and againſt themſelves.

31 When the Son of man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. 32 And before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats: 33 And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

From hence, to the End of the Chapter, we have a Draught and Scheme of the general Judgment. Where *Obſerve*, The Perſon Judging, *the Son of Man*; the Perſons judged, *Good and Bad*; the one called *Sheep*, for their Innocency and Meekneſs; the other *Goats*, for their Unrulineſs and Uncleanneſs. *Obſerve* alſo, The manner of his coming to Judgment, moſt Auguſt and Glorious. Glorious in his Perſon, glorious in his Attendants. *Learn*, That Chriſt's Appearance at the Great Day to the judging of the World, it will be a ſplendid and a glorious Appearance. He *will come with Power, and in great Glory*, in regard of the Dignity of his Perſon, and the Quality of his Office, and the Greatneſs of his Work. He will appear as a King in the midſt of his Nobles, to take off the Scandal and Ignominy of the Croſs, and as a Recompence for his Abaſement and Humiliation, to ſtrike the Hearts of his Enemies with Dread and Fear, and to fill the Souls of his People with Joy and Confidence. Let us therefore propound it to our Faith, to believe it; to our Fear, to tremble at the Thoughts of it; to our Hope and Love, that we may expect and wait, look and long for it. *Obſerve* farther, The Work of this Judge. He ſhall firſt *gather all Nations. Learn*, That at the general Judgment all that have lived ſhall be ſummoned to the Bar of Chriſt; Perſons of all Sexes, of all Ages, of all Nations, of all Conditions; having gathered them together, he ſhall next *ſeparate them, as a Shepherd his Sheep.* Thence *Learn*, That tho' there be a Mixture and Confuſion of the Godly, and the Wicked here, yet at the Day of Judgment there will be a Separation made betwixt them, and they ſhall never come together more.

34 Then ſhall the king ſay unto them on his right hand, come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Here follows the Sentence which Chriſt will pronounce upon the Righteous and the Wicked at the Great Day; firſt the Sentence of Abſolution upon the Righteous, then the Sentence of Condemnation upon the Wicked. *Learn thence*, That at the Day of Judgment, the Godly ſhall be abſolved before the Wicked are condemned. The Reaſons are, becauſe 'tis more delightful to God to reward, than to puniſh; to ſave, than to deſtroy; becauſe 'tis ſuitable to Chriſt's Love to begin with his Saints, and to be admired by them. Alſo to put his Saints out of Fear, as to their Eternal Condition, and to bring them near to himſelf, and to ſet them upon the Throne with himſelf, as Aſſeſſors and Judges of the wicked World. 1 *Cor.* 6. 3. *Know ye not that the Saints ſhall judge the World?* *Laſtly*, With reſpect to the Wicked, that they may be the more affected with their Loſs, and have a vexatious and tormenting Senſe of that Happineſs which they have refuſed. *Obſerve* next, The joyful Sentence pronounced, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father.* Where *Note*, 1. The joyful Compellation, *Ye Bleſſed.* Which Term is oppoſed to theſe Two Things. 1. To the World's Judgment of them, which accounts them vile and accurſed. Here is an Abſolution from their unjuſt Cenſures. 2. To the Sentence of the Law, which pronounces all its Tranſgreſſors accurſed, *Gal.* 3. 10. but ſays Chriſt, I that have redeemed you from the Curſe of the Law, pronounce you *Bleſſed.* But why, *Bleſſed of my Father!* 1. To point out the Fontal Cauſe of all our Happineſs, the Love of the Father. *This prepared the Kingdom.* 2. This Expreſſion ſhews how the Divine Perſons glorifie one another. As the Spirit glorifies the Son, ſo the Son glorifies the Father, refers all to him. Therefore Chriſt ſays not, *Come my redeemed ones*, but, *Come ye Bleſſed ones*; not, *Come you that were redeemed by me*, but, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father*; 'tis *his good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom. Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his ſecond Coming will adjudge all his People unto a State of glorious and everlaſting Happineſs, which his Father has prepared, and himſelf has purchaſed for them. *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.*

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.

Here our Saviour ſets forth not the meritorious Cauſe of his Saints Happineſs, but the infallible Signs of ſuch as ſhould inherit that Happineſs, the Character of the Perſons that might expect it. Such as fed him, clothed and viſited him in his Members. Where *Note*, 1. That the Godly having their Sins forgiven in this World, ſome would gather that there ſhall be no mention made of them in the Day of Judgment. For they obſerve that Chriſt here only mentions the Good Works of his Saints; *ye fed me, ye clothed*, not a Word of their Failings. *Obſerve*, 2. That they are not the Duties of the firſt, but of the ſecond Table, which here Chriſt mentions, becauſe Works of Charity are more viſible to the World than Works of Piety. *Learn hence*, 1. That at the great Day every Man's Sentence ſhall be pronounced according to his Works. 2. That Works of Charity done out of Love to Chriſt, ſhall be particularly obſerved, and bountifully rewarded by Chriſt at the great Day. The Queſtion then will be not only how have you Heard, Pray'd, or Preached, but whom have you Fed, Clothed, and Viſited. 3. That whatever Good or Evil, is done to the poor Members of Chriſt, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf. *I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat.* Chriſt perſonal is not the Object of our Pity and Charity, but Chriſt myſtical is expoſed to Want and Neceſſity; he feels Hunger and Thirſt, Cold and Nakedneſs in his Members, and is refreſhed and comforted in their Refreſhments and Comforts. He takes it as a Courteſy, who might demand it by Authority. How can we be cloſe-handed or hard-hearted to the neceſſitous Chriſtians, did we ſteadily deſire that in adminiſtring to them, we miniſter Refreſhment to Chriſt himſelf, who parted with the Glory of Heaven, yea, with his Heart Blood for us.

37 Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, When ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty, and give thee drink? 38 When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee? 40 And the King ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me:

Here we have a Dialogue or interchangeable Diſcourſe betwixt Chriſt and his faithful Servants at the great Day; Where *Obſerve*, Their Queſtion, and his Reply. Their Queſtion, *Lord, when did we feed thee, cloath, or viſit thee?* We have forgot the Time, tho' ſuch is thy Goodneſs to remember it. *Learn thence*, That Chriſt keeps a faithful Record of all our Acts of pious Charity, when we have forgotten them. If we remember to do Good, Chriſt will be ſure to remember the Good we have done: Ay, and reward it as well as remember it. Again, this Queſtion of theirs may proceed from Admiration and Wonder, and from an humble Senſe of their own Nothingneſs, and from the Greatneſs of Chriſt's Condeſcenſion, in taking notice of ſuch mean Services, and requiting them with ſuch a Tranſcendant Reward. *Learn hence*, That when Chriſt comes to reward his Children and People, they will wonder and be aſtoniſhed at the Poverty and Meanneſs of their own Services, and at the Tranſcendency and Greatneſs of his Rewards. *Obſerve* next, Our Lord's Reply, *Inaſmuch as ye did it to the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye did it unto me.* Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Title put by Jeſus Chriſt upon his pooreſt and meaneſt Members, *My Brethren.* 2. The Reſentment of the Kindneſs ſhewed to his Brethren, *as ſhewn unto himſelf; Inaſmuch as ye did it to them, ye have done it to me.* *Learn thence*, That ſuch is the endearing Intimacy betwixt Chriſt and his Members, that whatever is done to any of them, is eſteem'd by him as done unto himſelf.

41 Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Here we have the Sentence of Condemnation denounced againſt the Wicked. Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Poſture in which they are found; *at Chriſt's Left Hand.* This doth not ſo much denote the Ignominy of the Place, (tho' placing at the Left Hand is leſs honourable) as the Impiety of their Choice, they took up with left-hand Mercies, the Mercies of the Footſtool, Wealth and Riches, Dignity and Honour. As for the good Things, *which are at God's Right Hand for evermore*, they never ſought after theſe. Verily a Man may know his future State by his preſent Choice. *Obſerve*, 2. The Title given to wicked Men, *Ye curſed.* Not curſed of my Father; becauſe curſing is God's ſtrange Work. We force him to it, he delights not in it. *Obſerve*, 3. The Sentence it ſelf. Where *Note*, 1. The Puniſhment of Loſs, *Depart from me.* *Learn thence*, That it is the Hell of Hell to the damned, that they muſt everlaſtingly depart from, and loſe the comfortable Fruition and Enjoyment of God in Chriſt. 'Tis to be deprived of an infinite Good. Hell is a deep Dungeon, where the Sunſhine of God's Preſence never cometh. 2. The Puniſhment of Senſe, *Depart into everlaſting Fire.* Where *Note*, Its Severity, 'tis *Fire*; its Eternity, it is *everlaſting Fire.* *Learn thence*, That there are everlaſting Torments in Hell prepared for the Wicked; there is a State of Torment, and a Place of Torment, provided by God. All Princes have not only their Palace, but their Priſon. God has the Palace of Heaven, for the Enjoyment of himſelf and his Friends; and the Priſon of Hell for the puniſhing his Enemies. The Nature of the Damned's Miſery is ſet out by *Fire*; and the whole Man, Body and Soul, ſhall be tormented in it. 1. The Body in all its Members; their Eyes with affrighting Spectacles, *the Devil and his Angels*, and their old Companions in Sin: every time they behold theſe, it revives their Guilt, and enrages their Deſpair. Their Ears are filled with Yellings and Howlings, and hideous Outcries. 2. The Soul ſhall ſuffer in Hell, by reflecting upon its own Choice, by remembring time ſinfully waſted, Seaſons of Grace ſadly ſlighted, the Mercies of God unworthily abuſed! Lord, how will the Remembrance of paſt Mercies aggravate preſent Miſeries! *Note farther*, 1. That Chriſt ſaith not of the Puniſhment as he doth of the Bleſſing, that it was *prepared from the Beginning of the World*, leſt it ſhould be thought that God deſigned Mens Puniſhment before they ſinned. *Note*, 2. That altho' Chriſt ſaith, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father*, he ſaith not, Go ye curſed of my Father, becauſe God is the Author and Procurer of Mens Happineſs, but Man only is the Author of his own Miſery. *Note*, 3. That Chriſt ſpeaks of this eternal Miſery by Fire, as deſigned originally not for Man, but for the Devil and his Angels; but Man by giving up himſelf to the Power and Thraldrom of Sin and Satan, and working himſelf down to the infernal Regions, and becomes like unto him in Torments, whom he ſo much reſembled in Manners and Qualities.

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. 44 Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or a thirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? 45 Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.

Obſerve here, 1. How Chriſt lays the Charge of the Wicked's Damnation upon themſelves alone, *You gave me no Meat, ye took me not in.* Man, and Man alone is the Cauſe of his own Deſtruction and Damnation. *Obſerve*, 2. The Kind of Sin charged on the Wicked at the great Day. Conſider it, 1. In general; 'tis a Sin of Omiſſion. Whence *Learn*, That Sins of Omiſſion are certainly damning, as well as Sins of Commiſſion. Conſider it, 2. In particular; 'tis a Sin of Unmercifulneſs, or want of Love to Chriſt and his Members. *Learn thence*, That one reigning Sin, one prevailing Corruption, is enough to damn a Perſon, becauſe it deprives a Man of the Grace of the Goſpel, and excludes him from all the Benefit of the Promiſes. *Note*, *Laſtly*, If ſuch as do not give to Chriſt in his Members, ſhall be miſerable at the great

Day, what will the Condition of them be that take from them, who ſtrip and ſtarve them, who perſecute and hate them? Who impriſon or baniſh them? If the Uncharitable ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved, yea, ſhall certainly be damned, where ſhall the Unmerciful and Cruel appear?

46 And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Obſerve here, 1. That tho' the Righteous are firſt judged, yet the Sentence is firſt executed on the Wicked. *Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment*. *Obſerve*, 2. That Men's States and Conditions in another World will be different, as their Ways and Doings have been in this World. 3. That everlaſting Life ſhall be the Portion of the Godly, and everlaſting Puniſhment the Portion of the Wicked. God grant that the Horrors of eternal Darkneſs, and the diſmal Thoughts of a miſerable Eternity, may effectually diſcourage every one of us from a wicked and impenitent Courſe of Life; *for who can dwell with the devouring Fire? Who can dwell with everlaſting Burnings?*

CHAP. XXVI.

AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſhed
all theſe ſayings, he ſaid unto his diſciples,
2 Ye know that after two days is the feaſt of the
paſſover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be cruci-
fied. 3 Then aſſembled together the chief prieſts,
and the ſcribes, and the elders of the people, unto
the palace of the high prieſt, who was called Caia-
phas, 4 And conſulted that they might take Jeſus
by ſubtilty, and kill him. 5 But they ſaid, Not on
the feaſt *day* leſt there be an uproar among the
people.

Several things are here *Obſervable*; as, 1. The Perſons conſpiring againſt our Bleſſed Redeemer's Life, namely, the *chief Prieſts*, *Scribes*, and *Elders*, that is, the whole *Sanhedrim*, or general Council of the Jewiſh Church: Theſe lay their malicious Heads together, to contrive the Deſtruction of the innocent Jeſus. Here was a general Council of them, conſiſting of *Prieſts*, *Doctors*, and *Elders*, with the *High Prieſt* their Preſident, yet erring in a Point of Doctrine concerning the Meſſiah, not believing Jeſus to be the Son of God, notwithſtanding all the convincing Miracles which he had wrought before them. *Obſerve*, 2. The manner of this Conſpiracy againſt our Saviour's Life; it was clandeſtine, ſecret, and ſubtil, *They conſulted how they might take him by Subtilty and kill him*. *Learn thence*, That Satan makes uſe of the Subtilty of crafty Men, and abuſeth their Parts as well as their Power, for his own Purpoſes. Satan never ſends a Fool of his Errand. *Obſerve*, 3. The Time when this Conſpiracy was managed, *at the Time of the Paſſover*. Indeed at firſt the chief Prieſts did not incline to that time, *fearing a Tumult and Uproar among the People*; but *Judas* preſenting them with a fair Opportunity to apprehend him, they changed their Purpoſe, and accordingly at the Feaſt of the Paſſover our Saviour ſuffered. This was not without a Myſtery, that Chriſt the true Lamb of God, whom the Paſchal Lamb typified and repreſented, ſhould be offered up at *the Feaſt of the Paſſover*. Signifying thereby, that he was the true Paſchal Lamb, and that the Legal Shadow ought to ceaſe in the Exhibition of him. *Learn hence*, That not only the Death of Chriſt in general, but all the Circumſtances relating to it, were foreordained by God himſelf, as the Place where, *at Jeruſalem*; the Time when, *at the Feaſt of the Paſſover*; that Time did God deviſe beſt for this Lamb to be a Sacrifice.

6 Now when Jeſus was in Bethany, in the houſe
of Simon the leper, 7 There came unto him a wo-
man having an alabaſter box of very precious oint-
ment, and poured it on his head, as he ſat at *meat*.

This Woman St. *John* ſays was *Mary*, the Siſter of *Lazarus*, who, to ſhew her Love to Chriſt, and put Honour upon him, took a precious Box of Ointment, and poured it upon our Saviour's Head, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern Countries*, who uſed ſo to do at their Feaſts and Banquets, to which *David* alludes, *Pſal*. 23. 5. *Learn hence*, 1. That where true Love to Chriſt prevails in the Heart, nothing is adjudged too dear for Chriſt. This Box of Ointment murmuring *Judas* valued at Three Hundred Pence; which reckoning the Roman Penny at Seven Pence Half-penny, makes of our Money Nine Pounds Seven Shillings and Six Pence. Love (we ſee) ſpares for no Coſt, but where the Eſteem of Chriſt is high, the Affection will be ſtrong. *Note*, 2. That where ſtrong Love prevails towards Jeſus Chriſt, it ſuffers not it ſelf to be outſhined by any Examples. The weakeſt Woman that ſtrongly loves Jeſus Chriſt, will piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt Apoſtle to expreſs the Fervour of her Love unto him. I do not find any of the Apoſtles at thus much Coſt to put Honour upon Chriſt, that this poor Woman was at. Love knows no Bounds, no Meaſures.

8 But when his diſciples ſaw it, they had indig-
nation, ſaying, To what purpoſe *is* this waſte?
9 For this ointment might have been ſold for much,
and given to the poor.

That is, when *Judas*, and ſome other Diſciples, whom he had influenced, ſaw this Action, they murmured; particularly *Judas*, blamed this holy Woman for needleſs Prodigality, and did tacitly reflect upon Chriſt himſelf, for ſuffering that waſteful Expence. Oh how doth a covetous Heart think every thing too good for Chriſt! He that ſees a pious Action well done, and ſeeks to undervalue it, ſhews himſelf poſſeſs'd with a Spirit of Envy. *Judas* his invidious Spirit makes him cenſure an Action which Chriſt highly approved. *Learn thence*, That Men who know not our Hearts, may, thro' Ignorance or Prejudice, cenſure and condemn thoſe Actions, which God doth commend, and will graciouſly reward. Happy for this poor Woman, that ſhe had a more righteous Judge to paſs Sentence upon her Action than Wicked *Judas*.

10 When Jeſus underſtood it, he ſaid unto them,
Why trouble ye the woman? for ſhe hath wrought
a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor al-
ways with you, but me ye have not always. 12 For
in that ſhe hath poured this ointment on my body,
ſhe did it for my burial.

Obſerve here, How readily our Lord vindicates this good Woman: She ſays nothing for her ſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſuch an Advocate. 1. Chriſt rebukes *Judas*; *why trouble ye the Woman?* Plainly intimating, that it is no ſmall Trouble to a Gracious Spirit to find their good Works miſinterpreted and miſrepreſented: Next, he defends the Action, calling it a good Work; becauſe done out of a Principle of Love to Chriſt, *ſhe hath wrought a good Work upon me*. And *Laſtly*, He gives the Reaſon of her Action, *ſhe did it for my Burial*. As Kings and great Perſons were wont in thoſe *Eaſtern Countries* at their Funerals to be embalm'd with Odours and ſweet Perfumes: So, ſays our Saviour, this Woman, to declare her Faith in me, as her King and Lord, doth with this Box of Ointment, as it were before-hand, embalm my Body for its Burial. True Faith puts Honour upon a crucified, as well as a glorified Saviour. This holy Woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all Honour in his Death, believing it would be a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice unto God, and the Saviour of Life unto his People. *Obſerve farther*, From theſe Words, *But me ye have not always*, the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is overthrown: For if Chriſt be, as to Soul, Body, and Divinity, perpetually preſent in the Hoſt amongſt thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, then have they Chriſt always with them, contrary to what our Saviour here declares, tho' his poor Members would be always preſent with them, yet he himſelf ſhould not be ſo. *The Poor ye have always, but me ye have not always.*

13 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel
ſhall be preached in the whole world, there ſhall
alſo this, that this woman hath done, be told for a
memorial of her.

Our Saviour having defended this holy Woman from the Calumny of *Judas*, in the foregoing Verſes, in this he declares, that ſhe ſhould be rewarded with an honourable Memorial in all Ages of the Church; *Wherever the Goſpel is preached, this ſhall be ſpoken of her*. Oh what Care doth Chriſt take to have the good Deeds of his Children not buried in the Duſt with them, but be had in *everlaſting Remembrance*.

Tho' Sin cauſes Men to rot above Ground, to ſtink alive; and when they are dead, leaves an in-glorious Memory upon their Graves, yet will the Actions of the Juſt ſmell ſweet, and bloſſom in the Duſt. *Learn hence*, That we may laudably proſecute that which will procure us a good Name, and ſpread our Reputation to future Ages.

14 Then one of the twelve called Judas Iſcariot, went unto the chief prieſts, 15 And ſaid unto them; What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of Silver. 16 And from that time he ſought opportunity to betray him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon betraying our Bleſſed Redeemer, *Judas*: *Judas*, a Profeſſor; *Judas*, a Preacher; *Judas*, an Apoſtle, and *one of the Twelve*, whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the World, to be his deareſt Friends, and his own Family and Houſhold. Shall *we wonder* to find Friends unfriendly and unfaithful towards us, when our Saviour had a Traitor in his own Houſe? *Obſerve*, 2. The Heinouſneſs of his Sin, in betraying Chriſt; He betrayed Chriſt Jeſus, a Man; Chriſt Jeſus, his Maſter; Chriſt Jeſus, his Maker; the firſt was Murther, the ſecond Treaſon. *Learn thence*, That it is no ſtrange or uncommon thing, for the vileſt of Sins, and moſt horrid Impieties, to be acted by ſuch Perſons, as make the moſt eminent Profeſſion of Holineſs and Religion. *Obſerve*, 3. What was the Sin occaſioning and leading *Judas* to the committing of this horrid Sin: It was Covetouſneſs. I do not find that *Judas* had any particular Malice againſt Chriſt's Perſon, but a baſe and unworthy Spirit of Covetouſneſs poſſeſs'd him; this made him ſell his Maſter. Covetouſneſs is the Root-Sin, an inordinate Deſire and Love of Riches, an eager and unſatiable Thirſt after the World, is the Parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural Sins: Therefore remember we our Saviour's Caution, *Luke* 12. 15. *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs*; he doubles the Caution, to ſhew us both the great Danger of the Sin, and the great Care we ought to take to preſerve our ſelves from it. *Obſerve*, 4. How ſmall a Sum tempted the covetous Mind of *Judas* to betray his Maſter, *Thirty Pieces of Silver*; which amounted but to Three Pounds Fifteen Shillings of our Money. This was the Price of a Slave or common Servant; *Exod.* 21. As Chriſt took upon him the Form of a Servant, ſo his Life was valued at the rate of an ordinary Servant's Life. It may ſeem a Wonder, that the High Prieſts ſhould offer no more for the Life of our Saviour, and that *Judas* ſhould accept ſo little. Seeing that his Covetouſneſs was ſo great, and their Rage ſo grievous, how comes it to paſs that he demands ſo little, and that they offer no more? Had the Reward been proportioned to the Greatneſs of their Malice, it had been Thirty Thouſand, rather than Thirty Pieces of Silver. But the Scripture muſt be fulfilled accordingly; the Wiſdom of God over-ruled this Matter, for fulfilling that Prophecy, *Zach.* 11. 12. *They weighed for my Price thirty Pieces of Silver.* Let not any Chriſtian be concerned that he is deſpiſed and undervalued; he can never meet with ſo great a Reproach, ſo low an Abaſement for Chriſt, as Chriſt underwent for him. *Obſerve Laſtly*, *Judas* his Folly, as well as his Treachery; he that might have demanded what he pleaſed for this Purchaſe, *he ſays unto the chief Prieſts, What will ye give me?* As if he had ſaid, I am reſolved to ſell him at any rate, give me what you will for him. Nay, farther, *Judas* covenanted, and they promiſed, but whether it was now paid, appeareth not. *Learn*, That ſuch a Perſon as has a vile and baſe Eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt, will part with him upon any Terms. The bare Expectation of a few Sheckles of Silver, will make ſuch a one willing to part with the Pearl of great Price. Wonder not then to ſee ſome Perſons ſelling their Country, their Friends, their God and their Religion for Money, *Judas* did ſo before them.

17 Now the firſt day of the feaſt of unleavened bread, the diſciples came to Jeſus, ſaying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Paſſover? 18 And he ſaid, Go into the city to ſuch a man, and ſay unto him, The maſter ſaith, My time is at hand, I will keep the Paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples. 19 And the diſciples did as Jeſus had appointed them, and they made ready the Paſſover.

The time for the Celebration of the Paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends two of his Diſciples to *Jeruſalem*, to prepare things neceſſary, in order thereunto: Accordingly, they enter the City, and find the Maſter of an Houſe, whoſe Heart Chriſt, by his Divine Power, had ſo inclined, that he willingly accommodated them upon this Occaſion. Our Bleſſed Saviour had not a Lamb of his own, and poſſibly no Money in his Purſe to buy one, but he finds as excellent Accommodations in this poor Man's Houſe, as if he had dwelt in *Ahab's* Ivory Palace, and had had the Proviſions of *Solomon's* Table. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt has ſuch an Influence upon, and Command over the Spirits of Men, that he can incline them to do what Service ſoever he pleaſeth for him. When Chriſt has a Paſſover to celebrate, he will prepare an Houſe, and diſpoſe the Heart to a free Reception of himſelf. *Learn*, 2. That Chriſt being under the Law, obſerves and keeps the Law of the Paſſover. Thus he fulfilled all Righteouſneſs; and altho' the Ceremonial Law was to receive its Aboliſhment in the Death of Chriſt, yet all the time of his Life he punctually obſerved it.

20 Now when the even was come, he ſat down with the twelve.

Obſerve here, The Impudent Forehead of this bold Traytor *Judas*, who preſumed as ſoon as he had ſold his Maſter, to ſit down at the Table with him, and partake with the other Diſciples of the ſolemn Ordinance of the Paſſover; had the Preſence of *Judas* polluted the Ordinance to any beſides himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would never have permitted his bold Intruſion. *Learn hence*, 1. That nothing is more ordinary than for unholy Perſons preſumptuouſly to ruſh in upon the ſolemn Ordinances of God, which they have no Right, whilſt ſuch, to partake of. 2. That the Preſence of ſuch Perſons pollutes the Ordinances only to themſelves; holy Perſons are not polluted by the Sins of ſuch. *For to the Pure all things are Pure.*

21 And as they did eat, he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me.

What an aſtoniſhing Word was this? One of you my Diſciples ſhall betray me. Can any Church on Earth expect Purity in all its Members, when Chriſt's own Family of Twelve had a Traitor and a Devil in it? Yet tho' it was very ſad to hear that one ſhould betray him, it was Matter of Joy that it was but One; One Hypocrite in a Congregation is too much, but there is cauſe of Rejoycing if there be no more. But why did not Chriſt name *Judas*, and ſay, Thou art he that ſhalt betray me? Doubtleſs to draw him to Repentance, and to prevent giving *Judas* any Provocation. Lord, how ſad is it for ſuch as pretend Friendſhip to Chriſt, and call themſelves of his Family and Acquaintance, *who eat of his Bread, and yet lift up the Heel againſt him.*

22 And they were exceeding ſorrowful, and began every one of them to ſay unto him, Lord, is it I?

Obſerve here, 1. The Diſciples Sorrow, and next the Effect of that Sorrow. Their Sorrow was (as well it might) exceeding great. Well might innocent Diſciples be overwhelm'd with Sorrow, to hear that their Maſter ſhould die; that he ſhould die by Treaſon, that the Traitor ſhould be one of themſelves. But tho' their Sorrow was great, yet was the Effect of their Sorrow very good; it wrought in them a holy Suſpicion of themſelves, and cauſed every one to ſearch himſelf, and ſay, *Maſter, is it I?* Thence *Learn*, That it is poſſible for ſuch ſecret Wickedneſs to lurk in our Hearts as we never ſuſpected, which Time and Temptation may draw forth in ſuch a manner, as we could not believe; and therefore it is both wiſe and holy to ſuſpect our ſelves, and be often ſaying, *Lord, is it I?* There is no better Preſervative from Sin, than to be jealous over our ſelves with a Godly Jealouſie. *Obſerve* farther, That tho' the Diſciples Fear and Sorrow made them jealous and ſuſpicious, yet was it of themſelves, not of one another; nay, not of *Judas* himſelf. Every one ſaid, *Maſter, is it I?* Not, *Maſter, is it Judas?* *Learn hence*, That true Sincerity, and Chriſtian Charity will make us more ſuſpicious of our ſelves than of any other Perſon whatſoever: It always hopes the beſt of others, and fears the worſt concerning our ſelves.

23 And he anſwered and ſaid, He that dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25 Then Judas which betrayed him, anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, is it I? He ſaid unto him, Thou haſt ſaid.

Here our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples who it was that had deſigned his Death, even he that dipped with him in the Diſh, or he to whom he gave the Sop. *Obſerve*, The Traitor whom Chriſt leſs loved, he has the Sop given to him; the other Diſciples, whom Chriſt loved better, had no ſuch particular Boon. Outward good things are not always given to the Children of Men in Love, but are ſometimes beſtowed in Diſpleaſure; there is no meaſuring Chriſt's Affection by Temporal Bleſſings, no concluding either Love or Hatred by theſe things. *Obſerve* farther, How *Judas* could ſit ſtill, and hear the Threats of Judgment Denounced againſt himſelf without Concern; he hears Chriſt ſay, *Wo to the Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed*, and is no more blank'd than Innocence it ſelf: Reſolved Sinners run on deſperately in their wicked Courſes, and with open Eyes, ſee and meet their own Deſtruction, and are neither diſmayed at it, nor concerned about it. *Obſerve* farther, That this ſhameleſs Man had the Impudence to ſay to Chriſt, *Maſter, is it I?* Our Saviour gives him a direct Affirmation, *Thou haſt ſaid.* Did not *Judas* (think we) bluſh, and caſt down his guilty Eyes, and let fall his drooping Head at ſo gauling an Intimation? Nothing leſs, Lord, how does Obduracy in Sin ſteal the Brow, and make it uncapable of all relenting Impreſſions? *Obſerve Laſtly*, How Chriſt prefers Non-entity before Damnation. *It had been better for that Man if he had never been born.* A Temporal miſerable Being is not worſe than no Being, but an Eternal miſerable Being is worſe than no Being at all. Eternal Miſery is much worſe than Non-entity. *It had been better for* Judas *he had not been born*, than to commit ſuch a Sin, and lye under ſuch Wrath, and that everlaſting. Oh better to have no Being, than not to have a Being in Chriſt!

26 And as they were eating, Jeſus took bread and bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to the diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it: 28 For this is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins. 29 But I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Immediately after the Celebration of the Paſſover follows the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper. In which *Obſerve* 1. The Author of this new Sacrament, *Jeſus took Bread. Note thence*, That to inſtitute a Sacrament is Chriſt's ſole Prerogative; it is the Churches Duty to celebrate the Sacraments, but ſhe has Power to make none. This belongs only to Chriſt. *Obſ.* 2. The time of the Inſtitution, the Night before his Paſſion. *The Night before he was betrayed, Jeſus took Bread. Learn thence*, That it is very neceſſary when Sufferings are approaching, to have Recourſe to the Table of the Lord, which affords both an Antidote againſt Fear, and is reſtorative to Faith. *Obſerve here*, 3. The Sacramental Elements, *Bread and Wine. Bread*, repreſenting his Body; and *Wine*, his Blood. *Obſerve* 4. The Miniſterial Actions, *the breaking of the Bread*, and *the Bleſſing of the Cup*. As to the Bread, *Jeſus took it*; that is, ſet it apart from common Uſe, and ſeparated it for Holy Ends and Purpoſes. *He bleſſed it*; that is, prayed for a Bleſſing upon it; *and brake it*, thereby ſhadowing forth his Body broken upon the Croſs. And *he gave it to his Diſciples*, ſaying, This broken Bread ſignifies my Body ſuddenly to be broken upon the Croſs for your Redemption and Salvation. *Do this in Remembrance of me*, and of my Death. Thus the Scriptures conſtantly ſpeak in Sacramental Matters. So Circumciſion is called the Covenant, and the Lamb the Paſſover: In like manner here, the Bread is called Chriſt's Body, becauſe inſtituted to repreſent to all future Ages his Body broken. Moreover, how could the Diſciples think they had eaten Chriſt's Body, when they ſaw his Body whole before them? And beſides, to eat human Fleſh, and drink Blood, was not only againſt the expreſs Letter of the Law, but abhorred by all Mankind. True it is, that the Heathens laid it to the Chriſtians Charge, that they eat human Fleſh; but falſly, as it appears by the Apology made for the Primitive Chriſtians; which Apology had been falſe, had they daily eaten the Fleſh of Chriſt in the Sacrament. The very Heathens own'd it a thing more deteſtable than Death to eat humane Fleſh, and more to eat the God they worſhip, and to devour him whom they pretended to adore. Again, as to the Cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by Prayer and Thankſgiving, he commands his Diſciples *to drink all of it*, and ſubjoins a Reaſon for it; For *this is my Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for Remiſſion of Sins.* That is, the Wine in this Cup repreſents the ſhedding of my Blood, by which the new Covenant betwixt God and Man was ratified and confirmed. Whence we *Learn*, That every Communicant has an undoubted Right to the Cup, as to the Bread in the Lord's Supper. *Drink ye all of it*, ſays Chriſt; therefore to deny the Cup to the Laity is contrary to the Inſtitution of Chriſt. After the Celebration was over, our Saviour and his Diſciples ſang an Hymn, as the *Jews* were wont to do at the Paſſover, the ſix Euchariſtical Pſalms, from 113th to the 119th Pſalm. *Learn hence*, How fit it is that God be glorified in his Church, by ſinging of Pſalms, and in particular, when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated. *When they had ſung an Hymn, they went unto the Mount of* Olives.

31 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad.

Here our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples, that by reaſon of his approaching Sufferings, they ſhould all of them be ſo exceedingly offended, that they would certainly forſake and leave him; which accordingly came to paſs. *Learn thence*, That Chriſt's deareſt Friends forſook him, and left him alone in the midſt of his greateſt Diſtreſs and Danger. *Obſ.* 2. What was the Canſe of this their Flight, it was the Prevalency of their Fear. *Thence Note*, How ſad it is for the holieſt and beſt of Men to be left under the Power of their own Fears in a Day of Temptation.

32 But after I am riſen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Obſerve here, The wonderful Lenity of Chriſt towards his timerous and fearful Diſciples; notwithſtanding their cowardly Flight from him, he tells them he would not forſake them, but love them ſtill; and as an Evidence of it, would meet them in *Galilee: I will go before you into* Galilee, *there ſhall you ſee me.* And when they did ſee him, he never upbraided them with their Timerouſneſs, but was Friends with them, notwithſtanding their late Cowardice. Chriſt's Love to his Diſciples is like himſelf, unchangeable and everlaſting. *Haveing loved his own, he loved them unto the end.*

33 Peter anſwered and ſaid unto him, Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, That this night before the cock crow thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples.

See here what ſtrong Purpoſes and ſettled Reſolutions, both *Peter* and all the Apoſtles had to keep cloſe to Chriſt; but how did their Self-confidence fail them? *Learn thence*, That Self-confidence is a Sin, too, too incident to the holieſt and beſt of Men. *Tho' all Men forſake thee, yet will not I.* Good Man, he reſolved honeſtly too, too much in his own Strength. Little, little did he think what a Feather he ſhould be in the Wind of Temptation, if once God left him to the Power and Prevalency of his own Fears. *Obſerve farther*, That the reſt of the Apoſtles had the like confident Opinion of their own Strength with St. *Peter. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all. Note thence*, That the holieſt of Men know not their own Strength till it comes to the Trial. Little did theſe good Men imagine what a cowardly Spirit they had in them, till Temptation put it to the Proof.

36 Then cometh Jeſus with them unto a place called Gethſemane, and ſaith unto the diſciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him, Peter, and the two ſons of Zebedee, and began to be ſorrowful, and very heavy. 38 Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the diſciples, and findeth them aſleep, and ſaith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak. 42 He went away again the ſecond time, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, If this cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came, and found them aſleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame words.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being now come with his Diſciples into the Garden, he falls there into a bitter and bloody Agony, in which he prayed with wonderful Fervency and Importunity to his Heavenly Father. His Sufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his Knees, and would be found in a praying Poſture. *Learn thence*, That Prayer is the beſt Preparative for, as well as the moſt powerful Support under the heavieſt Sufferings that can befal us. As to this Prayer of our Saviour's in the Garden, many things are very *Obſervable*. As 1. The Place where he Prayed, *In the Garden*; but why went Chriſt thither? Was it to hide or ſhelter himſelf from his Enemies? Nothing leſs; for if ſo, it had been the moſt improper Place, becauſe he was wont to retire rather to pray. *John* 18. 2. Judas *knew the Place, for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither*; ſo that Chriſt went thither not to ſhun, but to prepare himſelf by Prayer to meet his Enemies. *Obſerve* 2. The time when he enter'd the Garden for Prayer, it was in the Evening; here he ſpent ſome Hours in pouring out his Soul to God; for about Midnight *Judas* and the Soldiers came, and apprehended him in a praying Poſture. *Teaching* us by his Example, that when eminent Dangers are before us, eſpecially, when Death is apprehended by us, to be very much in Prayer to God, and very fervent in our Wreſtlings with him. *Obſ.* 3. The Matter of our Lord's Prayer, *that if poſſible the Cup might paſs from him.* That is, thoſe bitter Sufferings which were then before him; particularly the inſupportable Burthen of his Father's Wrath. *He prays if poſſible that his Father would* excuſe him from this dreadful Wrath, his Soul being amazed at it. But what! Did Chriſt then begin to repent of his Undertaking for Sinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when it came to the Pinch; No, no; as Chriſt had two Natures, being God and Man, ſo he had two diſtinct Wills; as Man he feared and ſhunned Death, as God-man he willingly ſubmitted to it; the Divine Spirit, and the Humane Nature of Chriſt did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing Intereſts, till at laſt Victory was got on the Spirit's ſide. Again, this Prayer was not abſolute, but conditional, *If it be poſſible. Father*, if it may be, if thou art willing, if it pleaſe thee, *let it paſs*; if not, I will drink it. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Cup of Sufferings is in it ſelf conſidered a very bitter and diſtaſteful Cup, which Humane Nature abhors, and cannot but deſire and pray may paſs from it. 2. That yet oft-times the Wiſdom of God is pleaſed to put this bitter Cup of Affliction into the Hands of thoſe whom he doth moſt ſincerely love. 3. That when God doth ſo, it is their Duty to drink it with humble Submiſſion, and chearful Reſignation. *Not my Will, but thine be done. Obſ.* 4. The manner how our Lord prayed; and here we ſhall find it, 1. A ſolitary Prayer, he went by himſelf alone, out of the hearing of his Diſciples; he ſaid to them, *Tarry ye here, while I go and pray yonder.* Mark, Chriſt did neither deſire his Diſciples to pray with him, or to pray for him. No, he muſt tread the Wine-preſs alone; not but that Chriſt loved and delighted in his Diſciples Company, but there were Occaſions when he thought fit to leave them, and to go alone to God in Prayer. *Thence Learn*, That the Company of our beſt Friends is not aways ſeaſonable. *Peter, James* and *John*, were three good Men, but Chriſt bids them tarry, while he went aſide for private Prayer. There are Times and Caſes when a Chriſtian would not be willing that the deareſt Friend he has in the World ſhould be with him, or underſtand and hear what paſſes betwixt him and his God. 2. This Prayer of Chriſt was an humble Prayer; that's evident by the Poſtures into which he caſt himſelf; ſometimes *Kneeling*, ſometimes *Lying proſtrate upon his Face*. He lyes in the very Duſt; lower he cannot fall; and his Heart was as low as his Body: And ſuch was the Fervour of his Spirit, that he prayed himſelf into an Agony. Oh let us bluſh to think how unlike we are to Chriſt in Prayer, as to our praying Frame of Spirit! Lord, What Drowſineſs and Deadneſs? What Lazineſs and Dulneſs? What Stupidity and Formality is found in our Prayers? How often do our Lips move, and our Hearts ſtand ſtill? 3. It was a repeated and reiterated Prayer, *He prayed the firſt, ſecond and third time.* He returns upon God over and over, plies him again and again, reſolving to take no Denial. *Learn thence*, That Chriſtians ought not to be diſcouraged, tho' they have ſought God again and again for a particular Mercy, and no Anſwer of Prayer has come unto them. *Obſerve* alſo, How our Lord uſed the ſame Prayer three times over, *ſaying the ſame Words.* A Perſon then may pray with, and by a Form of Prayer, and yet not pray formally, but in a very acceptable manner unto God. Chriſt both gave a Form of Prayer to his Diſciples, and alſo uſed one himſelf. *Obſerve* next, The Poſture in which our holy Lord found his own Diſciples, when he was in his Agony; *they were ſleeping*, when he was praying. O wonderful! That they could ſleep at ſuch a time. *Hence we gather*, That the beſt of Chriſt's Diſciples may be ſometimes overtaken with Infirmities, with great Infirmities, when the moſt important Duties are performing. *He cometh to his Diſciples, and finds them ſleeping. Obſerve* next, The gentle Reproof he gave the Diſciples for ſleeping; *What, could you not watch with me one Hour?* Could you not watch, when your Maſter is in ſuch Danger? Could you not watch with me, when I am going to deliver up my Life for you? What, not one Hour, and that the parting Hour too! After his Reprehenſion he ſubjoins an Exhortation; *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*; and ſuper adds a forcible Reaſon, *For tho' the Spirit be willing, yet the Fleſh is weak. Thence Learn*, That the holieſt and beſt reſolved Chriſtians, who have willing Spirits for Chriſt and his Service, yet in regard of the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, or the Frailty of Humane Nature, it is their Duty to watch and pray, and thereby guard themſelves againſt Temptations. *Watch and pray, —— for tho' the Spirit is willing, yet the Fleſh is weak*; tho' you have ſincerely reſolved rather to die with me than deny me, yet be aſſured, that when Temptation actually aſſaults you, when Fear and Shame, Pain and Suffering, Death and Danger, are before you, and preſent to your Senſe, the Weakneſs of your Fleſh will prevail over theſe Reſolutions, if you do not watch diligently, and pray fervently for Divine Aſſiſtance.

45 Then cometh he to his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 46 Riſe, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. 47 And while he yet ſpake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves from the chief prieſts, and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him, gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he, hold him faſt. 49 And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid Hail Maſter; and kiſſed him. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and took him.

Our Saviour having pour'd out his Soul in prayer to God in the Garden, he is now ready, and waits for the coming of his Enemies; being firſt in the field; Accordingly, *While he yet ſpake, came* Judas, *one of the Twelve*, and under his Conduct a Band of Soldiers to apprehend him. It was the Lot and Portion of our Bleſſed Redeemer to be betrayed into the Hands of his mortal Enemies, by the Treachery of a falſe and diſſembling Friend. *Obſerve here*, The Traitor, the Treaſon, the Manner how, and the Time when this Treaſonable Deſign was executed. *Obſ.* 1. The Betrayer, *Judas*, all the Evangeliſts carefully deſcribe him by his Name, *Judas*, by his Sirname *Iſcariot*; leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for *Jude* the Brother of *James*. God is tender and careful of the Names and Reputations of his upright-hearted Servants. He is alſo deſcribed by his Office, *One of the Twelve*. The Eminence of his Place and Station was an high Aggravation of his Tranſgreſſion. Nay, in ſome reſpect he was preferred above the reſt, having a peculiar Truſt repoſed in him, he bare the Bag: That is, he was Almoner and Steward of Chriſt's Family, to take care for the neceſſary Accommodarions of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; and yet this Man, thus called, thus honoured, thus reſpectfully treated by Chriſt, for the Lucre of a little Money, perfidiouſly betrays him. Oh, whither will not a bad Heart, and a buſie Devil carry a Man? *Learn hence*, 1. That the greateſt Profeſſors had need be jealous of their own Hearts, and look well to the Grounds and Principles of their Profeſſion. A Profeſſion begun in Hypocriſie will certainly end in Apoſtacy. *Learn* 2. That Perſons are never in ſuch eminent Danger, as when they meet with Temptations exactly ſuited to their Maſter-Luſts. Covetouſneſs was *Judas*'s Maſter-Sin; the Love of the World made him a Slave to Satan, and the Devil lays a Temptation before him, which ſuits his Temper, hits his Humour, and it prevails immediately. Oh pray, pray that ye may be kept from a ſtrong and ſuitable Temptation, a Temptation ſuited to your predominant Luſt and Inclination. *Obſ.* 2. As the Betrayer *Judas*, ſo the Treaſon it ſelf with its aggravating Circumſtances; he led an armed Multitude to the Place where Chriſt was, gave them a Signal to diſcover him, and encouraged them to lay Hands upon him, and *hold him faſt*. This was the helliſh Deſign Satan put into his Heart, and it has theſe aggravating Circumſtances attending it. He had ſeen the Miracles which Chriſt wrought by the Power of God, and could not but know him to be a Divine Perſon. He could not ſin out of Ignorance or blind Zeal, but the Love of Money made him do what he did. Farther, what he did was not done by the Perſwaſions of any, but he was a Volunteer in this Service. The High-Prieſts neither ſent to him, nor ſent for him, but he offers his Service, and no doubt they were very much ſurprized to find one of Chriſt's own Diſciples at the Head of a Conſpiracy againſt him. *Learn hence*, That no Man knows where he ſhall ſtop or ſtand when he firſt enters the Ways of Sin; ſhould any one have told *Judas*, that his Love of Money would at laſt ſo far prevail upon him, as to make him ſell the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, he would have anſwered as *Hazael* did *Eliſha*, *Is thy Servant a Dog, that I ſhould do this thing*? Wickedneſs like Holineſs doth not preſently come to its full Strength in the Soul, but grows up by inſenſible Degrees. Men do not commence Maſters in the Art of Villany in an Inſtant, they begin firſt with leſſer, then with greater Sins; firſt with ſecret, then with open Sins. Doubtleſs *Judas* was an old tho' ſecret Sinner; ſurely he could not immediately attain to ſuch an heighth of Impudence, and ſo great a Degree of Stupidity. Hear ye Profeſſors of Religion, you that partake of Ordinances, frequent Sacraments, take heed of Living as *Judas* did in the allowed Commiſſion of any ſecret Sin, to the waſting of your Conſciences and deſtroying of your Souls. *Obſerve* 3. The Manner how this helliſh Plot was executed; partly by Force, and partly by Fraud; by Force in that he came *with a Multitude, armed with Swords and Staves*; and by Fraud *he gives him a Kiſs, and ſays, Hail, Maſter*. Here was Honey in the Tongue, and Poiſon in the Heart. This Treacherous Kiſs enhaunced his Crime beyond Expreſſion. O vileſt of Hypocrites, how durſt thou approach ſo near thy Lord in the Exerciſe of ſo much Baſeneſs and Ingratitude. But none ſin with ſo much Impudence and Obſtinacy as Apoſtates. *Learn* we hence, To beware of Men; when we ſee too, too glittering Appearances, we may ſuſpect the Inſide. Charity for others is our Duty, but too great Confidence may be our Snare. There is ſo much Hypocriſie in many, and ſo much Corruption in all, that we muſt not be too confident. *Obſerve* 4. The time when this treaſonable Deſign was executed upon Chriſt; when he was in the Garden with his Diſciples, exhorting them to Prayer and Watchfulneſs, dropping heavenly and moſt ſeaſonable Counſels upon them. *While he yet ſpake, lo,* Judas *came, and the Multitude with him. Judas* found Chriſt in the moſt heavenly and excellent Emloyment, when he came to apprehend him. Oh how happy is it, when our Sufferings find us in God's Way, engaged in his Service, and engaging his Aſſiſtance by fervent Supplication. Thus did our Lord's Sufferings meet him, may they ſo meet us.

51 And behold, one of them which were with Jeſus, ſtretched out his hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtruke a ſervant of the high prieſts, and ſmote off his ear. 52 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Put up again thy ſword into his place: for all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword, 53 Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then ſhall the ſcriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?

The rude Multitude laying Hands upon Chriſt, the Diſciples who had remitted their Watch, do reſume their Courage, and are willing to reſcue their Maſter if they can; particularly, *Peter* draws his Sword, and cuts off the Ear of *Malchus*, one of the forwardeſt to lay hold on Jeſus. *Obſerve here*, St. *Peter*'s Zeal and ſincere Love for his Lord and Maſter; it was in great Sincerity ſpoken, *Though I die with thee, I will not deny thee*. But why did not St. *Peter* draw his Sword upon *Judas*, rather than *Malchus*? Perhaps becauſe tho' *Judas* was more faulty, yet *Malchus* was more forward to arreſt and carry off our Saviour. How doth a pious Breaſt ſwell with Iudignation at the Sight of any open Affront offered unto Chriſt. *Obſerve here*, That tho' St. *Peter*'s Heart was ſincere, yet his Hand was raſh: Good Intentions are no Warrant for irregular Actions, and accordingly Chriſt, who accepted his Affection, reproves him for the Action: *Put up thy Sword, for they that take the Sword ſhall periſh by the Sword*. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt will thank no Man to fight for him without a Warrant and Commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a Lawful Magiſtrate, even in Chriſt's own Defence, is raſh Zeal, and diſcountenanced by the Goſpel. To a lawful Power lawfully executed, there muſt be yielded due Obedience. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Our Lord's abſolute Refuſal to be reſcued out of his Enemies Hands, with the Reaſon of it; Did I encline to be reſcued by Force? As if our Lord had ſaid, I could command all the Troops of Angels in Heaven, to ſhew themſelves upon that Occaſion; but how can this ſtand with the Decree of my Father, with the Declarations of the Scripture, with the Demonſtration of my Mercy, and with the Salvation of miſerable Mankind? *Learn hence*, That Chriſt was infinitely more concern'd for the Salvation of loſt Sinners, than for his own Death and Sufferings; more concerned for our Eternal Salvation, than for his own Temporal Preſervation. Had he been reſcued by the Power of Angels, we had faln a Prey into the Paw of Devils.

55 In that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the mnltitude, Are ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves for to take me? I ſat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56 But all this was done, that the ſcriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the diſciples forſook him, and fled.

We had an Account of our Lord's Apprehenſion in the former Verſes, here the ſad Effect of it upon his Diſciples; *They all forſake him, and fled*. Had this been done by the giddy Multitude who followed him for the Loaves, it had been no Cauſe of Wonder; but for thoſe who had already forſaken all to follow him; who were his faithful, though fearful Friends; what an Addition to his Sufferings muſt this be! No doubt but the Ingratitude of his Friends, made deeper Wounds in his Soul, than the Malice of his Enemies could make in his Body. They that ſaid all to Chriſt, *v.* 25. *Tho' we ſhould die with thee, yet will we not deny thee*, do here all of them deſert and forſake him; when it came to the puſh, not a Man of them ſtands by him. *Learn hence*, That the holieſt of Men know not their own Hearts, when great Temptations and Trials are before them, till they come to grapple with them, and to be engaged in them. We know not our own Strength till Temptation puts us to the Proof.

57 And they that had laid hold on Jeſus, led him
away to Caiaphas the high prieſt, where the ſcribes
and the elders were aſſembled. 58 But Peter followed
him afar off unto the high prieſts palace,
and went in, and ſat with the ſervants to ſee the
end. 59 Now the chief prieſts and elders, and all
the counſel ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus to put
him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though
many falſe witneſſes came, yet found they none.
At the laſt came two falſe witneſſes, 61 And ſaid,
This fellow ſaid, I am able to deſtroy the temple of
God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the
high prieſt aroſe, and ſaid unto him, Anſwereſt thou
nothing? what is it which theſe witneſs againſt
thee? 63 But Jeſus held his peace.

Judas having made good his Promiſe to the High Prieſt, and delivered Jeſus a Priſoner into their Hand, theſe Wolves of the Evening no ſooner ſeize the Lamb of God, but they thirſt, and long to ſuck his innocent Blood. Yet leſt it ſhould look like a downright Murther, they will allow him a Mock-Trial, and abuſe the Law, by perverting it to Injuſtice and Bloodſhed: Accordingly, they induſtriouſly ſuborn falſe Witneſſes to take away his Life, not ſticking at the groſſeſt Perjury, ſo they might deſtroy him. *The Chief Prieſts and Elders, and all the Council, ſought falſe Witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to Death.* Abominable Wickedneſs! Innocency it ſelf cannot protect from Slander and falſe Accuſation. No Man is ſo innocent or good, whom falſe Witneſs may not condemn. Yet *Obſerve* farther, Our Lord's Meekneſs and Patience, his ſubmiſſive Silence under all theſe wicked Suggeſtions and falſe Accuſations. *Jeſus held his Peace*, v. 63. Guilt is clamourous and impatient, Innocency is ſilent, and careleſs of miſ-reports. *Learn hence*, That to bear the Revilings, Contradictings, and falſe Accuſations of Men, with a ſilent and ſubmiſſive Spirit, is an excellent and Chriſt-like Temper. Our Lord ſtood before his unjuſt Judges and falſe Accuſers, as *a Sheep before the Shearer, dumb, and not opening his Mouth.* Altho' a Trial for his Life was managed moſt maliciouſly and illegally againſt him; *when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not, but committeth himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* Oh let the ſame humble Mind be in us which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus!

63 And the high prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto
him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell
us, whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God.
64 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid: nevertheleſs,
I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son
of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming
in the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high
prieſt rent his cloaths, ſaying, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy:
what further need have we of witneſſes?
behold, now ye have heard his baſphemy. 66 What
think ye? They anſwered and ſaid, He is guilty of
death. 67 Then did they ſpit in his face, and buffeted
him, and others ſmote him with the palms of
their hands, 68 Saying, Propheſie unto us, thou
Chriſt, who is he that ſmote thee?

We obſerved even now that our Saviour was ſilent, and did make no Reply to the falſe Witneſſes that evidenced againſt him at his Trial, becauſe being ſo manifeſtly contradicting, they did fall to the Ground of themſelves. But now when the Queſtion was ſolemnly put by the High Prieſt, *Art thou the Chriſt?* He ſaid, *I am. Thence Learn*, That altho' we are not obliged to anſwer every cavilling or enſnaring Queſtion, yet we are bound faithfully to own, and freely to confeſs the Truth, when we are ſolemnly called thereunto. Chriſt, who in the former Verſes was ſilent, *and as a deaf Man that heard not*, now *witneſſes a good Confeſſion:* Teaching us, both by his Example and Command, to confeſs and own both him and his Truth, when lawfully required; when our Silence will be a denying of the Truth, a Diſhonour to God, and a Scandal to our Brethren: Chriſt knew that his Anſwer would coſt him his Life, and yet he durſt not but give it. *Art thou the Son of the Bleſſed, Jeſus ſaid, I am.* Yea, farther *Obſerve*, That as Chriſt anſwer'd directly and plainly at his Trial, ſo he did not refuſe to anſwer upon Oath. *I adjure thee by the living God, ſays the Judge of the Court, that thou tell us whether thou art the Chriſt.* That is, I require thee to anſwer this Queſtion upon Oath; for adjuring a Perſon, or requiring them to anſwer upon Oath, was the manner of ſwearing among the *Jews.* Now to this Adjuration our Saviour anſwer'd plainly and directly, *I am. Mark* 14. 61. *Hence Learn*, That ſwearing before a Magiſtrate upon a juſt and great Occaſion is lawful: If Chriſt in the Fifth of St. *Matthew* forbids all Oaths, then here his Practice was contrary to his own Doctrine; but it is evident that Chriſt anſwered the Magiſtrate upon Oath, and ſo may we. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Sentence of Condemnation, which the Council paſſed upon him for owning himſelf to be the Son of God. *He hath ſpoken Blaſphemy, and is worthy to die.* Hereupon the unruly Rabble affront him with the vileſt Abuſes, and moſt horrid Indignities: *They ſpit in his Face, they Blindfold him, they ſmote him with their Fiſts and Palms of their hands*, and in a way of Contempt and Mockery they bid him Divine or Propheſie, *who it was that ſmote him. Learn hence*, That there is no Degree of Contempt, no Mark of Shame, no Kind of Suffering, which we ought to decline or ſtick at, for Chriſt's ſake, who hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting upon our Account. O monſtrous Impiety! how do they ſpit on that awful, lovely Face? How do they Revile and Blaſpheme his noble Office of a Prophet of the moſt high God; propheſie, ſay they, in a mocking Deriſion, *who it was that ſmote thee?* To ſuch Act of Inhumanity did the Barbarous Rage of the bloody *Jews* carry them.

69 Now Peter ſat without in the palace: and a
damſel came unto him, ſaying, Thou alſo waſt with
Jeſus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all,
ſaying, I know not what thou ſayeſt. 71 And when
he was gone out into the porch, another maid ſaw
him, and ſaid unto them that were there, This fellow
was alſo with Jeſus of Nazareth. 72 And again
he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.
73 And after a while came unto him they that ſtood
by, and ſaid to Peter, ſurely thou alſo art one of them,
for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then begun he
to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not the man.
And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembred
the words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him,
Before the cock crow thou ſhalt deny me thrice.
And he went out, and wept bitterly.

This laſt Paragraph of the Chapter gives us an Account of the Fall and Riſing of *Peter*; of his Sin, in denying Chriſt, and of his Recovery by a ſpeedy and ſevere Repentance. Both muſt be conſider'd diſtinctly. *Firſt*, As touching his Sin and Fall, there are Four Particulars *Obſervable*; namely, the Sin it ſelf, the Occaſion of that Sin; the Reiteration and Repetition of it, and the aggravating Circumſtances attending it. *Obſerve*, 1. The Sin it ſelf, the Denial of Chriſt, *I know not the Man*, a manifeſt Untruth. Next he adds an Oath to confirm that Untruth; *he ſwore that he knew not the Man.* And laſt of all, he wiſh'd an *horrid Curſe and Imprecation upon himſelf.* That is, he wiſh'd himſelf excommunicated and caſt out of the Church. Say ſome, he wiſh'd himſelf eternally ſeparated from the Preſence of God: Say others, he wiſh'd in effect that the Devil might take him if he were acquainted with Jeſus. The inordinate Love of Life, and ſlaviſh Fear of Sufferings and Death, may draw the beſt of Men to commit the worſt of Sins. *Obſerve*, 2. The Occaſions of this Sin, and they were Three; his following Chriſt afar off; his being in bad Company amongſt Chriſt's Enemies; and his preſumptuous Confidence of his own Strength and Standing. 1. *His following of Chriſt afar off.* To follow Chriſt is the Work of Faith, and Fruit of Love; but to follow him afar off, was the Effect of Fear and Frailty. Wo unto us when a Temptation comes, if we be far off from Chriſt's Preſence and Aſſiſtance. 2. His being in wicked Company amongſt Chriſt's Enemies. Oh *Peter*, thou hadſt better have been a-cold by thy ſelf alone, than ſitting by a Fire encompaſſed with the Blaſphemies of the wicked; where thy Conſcience, tho' not ſeared, was yet made hard. The way to eſcape prevailing Temptations to

Sin, is to ſhun ſuch Places, and avoid ſuch Companions, as in all Probability will invite and draw us into Sin. 3. Confidence of his own Strength and Standing was another Occaſion of *Peter*'s Falling. Pride and preſumptuous Confidence have been ever the Fore-runners and Occaſions of a Fall. Oh Lord! to preſume upon our ſelves is the ready way to provoke thee to leave us to our ſelves: If ever we ſtand in the Day of Trial, 'tis the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. Not only they who go out in the Strength of Nature, but alſo they who go forth in the Strength of inherent Grace, may quickly fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs. *Obſerve*, 3. The Reiteration and Repetition of this Sin. He denies him a *Firſt*, *Second*, and *Third* Time. He denies him firſt *with a Lie*, then *with an Oath*, and after all, *with an Anathema* and a *Curſe*. Oh how dangerous is it, not to reſiſt the firſt Beginnings of Sin! If we yield to one Temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more, and ſtronger. *Peter* proceeded from a bare Denial, firſt to Perjury, then to Curſing and Imprecation. *Obſerve*, 4. The aggravating Circumſtances attending this Sin of *Peter*'s, and they are theſe: 1. The Character of the Perſon thus falling; a Diſciple, an Apoſtle, a chief Apoſtle, a ſpecial Favourite; who with *James* and *John* had the ſpecial Honour to be with Chriſt upon *Mount Tabor*: *Peter*, who had preached and propheſied in Chriſt's Name, caſt out Devils, and wrought Miracles by Chriſt's Power, yet he denies him. 2. Conſider the Perſon whom he denies; his *Maſter*, his Saviour and Redeemer; he that had waſhed *Peter*'s Feet but a little before; that eat the Paſſover with *Peter* and gave the Sacrament to *Peter*, yet this kind and condeſcending Saviour was denied by *Peter*. 3. Conſider before whom he denies him, in the Company and Preſence of the chief Prieſts, Scribes and Elders, and their Servants, who rejoiced at it, and were hardned by it; That one Diſciple ſhould ſell him for Money, and another Diſciple deny him thro' Fear: 4. Conſider the Time when he denied him; verily it was but a few Hours after he had received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from Chriſt's own Hand. How unreaſonable then is their Objection againſt coming to the Lord's Table, becauſe ſome that go to it diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it? Such Examples muſt not diſcourage us from coming to the Ordinance, but excite and encreaſe our Watchfulneſs after we have been there, to take heed that the future Conduct of our Lives be ſuitable to the Solemnity of a Sacramental Table. 5. Conſider the ſmallneſs of his Temptation to deny Chriſt; a Damſel only put the Queſtion to him, *Art thou not one of his Diſciples?* If a Band of Armed Soldiers had appeared to him, and affrighted him; had he been terrified by the High Prieſt's Threatnings, bound and led away to Judgment, ſentenced to an ignominious painful Death, ſome Excuſe might have been made for him: But to diſown his Relation to Chriſt at the Queſtion of a Maid-Servant that kept the Door only; the ſmallneſs of the Temptation was an Aggravation of the Crime. Ah, *Peter*, how unlike thy ſelf art thou at this time? Not a Rock, but a Reed, a Pillar blown down by a Woman's Breath. Oh frail Humanity, whoſe Strength is weakneſs and Infirmity! *Obſerve here*, That in moſt of the Saint's Falls, recorded in Scripture, either the firſt Inticers, or the accidental Occaſion, were Women. Thus in *Adam*'s, *Lot*'s, *Sampſon*'s, *David*'s, *Solomon*'s, and *Peter*'s. A weak Creature may be a ſtrong Tempter; nothing is too impotent or uſeleſs for the Devil's Service. It was a great Aggravation of *Peter*'s Sin, that the Voice of a Maid, a Door-keeper only, ſhould be ſtronger to overcome him, than his Faith in Jeſus to ſuſtain him. But what ſhall we ſay? Small things are ſufficient to caſt us down, if God doth not hold us up: We ſink under any Burden, if he ſuſtains us not, and yield to every Temptation, if he leaves us to our ſelves: A Damſel ſhall then make a Diſciple ſhrink, and a Door-keeper is enough to drive an Apoſtle before her. *And immediately the Cock crew. And* Peter *remembred the Words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the Cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.* Here we have an Account of St. *Peter*'s Riſing and Recovery after his ſhameful Fall, by a renewed Act and Exerciſe of Repentance. Where *Obſerve*, The Suddenneſs of his Repentance, the Means of his Repentance, and the Manner of it. *Obſerve*, 1. The Suddenneſs of his Repentance; Altho' his Sin was great, yet was his Repentance ſpeedy, and without Delay. From whence *Note*, That Sins committed by the ſurprizal of a ſudden Temptation, are much ſooner repented of, than where the Sin is preſumptuous and deliberate. *David*'s Sins of Murther and Adultery were preſumptuous and deliberate Sins; he continued a long time in them, and lived almoſt a Twelve-month without any ſolemn Repentance of them. St. *Peter*'s Sin was haſty and ſudden under a violent Paſſion of Fear, contrary to his ſettled Purpoſe and Reſolution of Conſtancy, and he takes the warning of the ſecond crowing of the Cock, and goes forth to expreſs his Repentance. *Obſerve*, 2. The Means of his Repentance, which was twofold. Leſs Principal, *the Crowing of the Cock*; more principal, *Chriſt's looking upon* Peter, *and* Peter*'s remembring the Words of Chriſt*. 1. The leſs principal Means of St. *Peter*'s Repentance *was the crowing of the Cock*. As the Voice of the Maid occaſion'd him to ſin, ſo the Voice of the Cock occaſioned him to repent.

Bp. *Reynolds*, on St. *Peter*'s Fall.

That God who can work without Means, does ſometimes work by weak and contemptible Means, and when he pleaſes can open the Mouth of a Bird or a Beaſt, for the Converſion of a Man. But why ſhould our Saviour chuſe the crowing of the Cock as a Means to bring St. *Peter* to Repentance? There is ever ſome Myſtery in Chriſt's Inſtrument; the Cock was a Preacher to call *Peter* to Repentance, there being ſomething of Emblem between the Cock and a Preacher. A true Miniſter muſt have the Wings of a Cock to rouze up himſelf from Security, and to awaken others to a Senſe of their Duty. He muſt have the Watchfulneſs of a Cock to be ever ready to diſcover and fore-warn Danger; he muſt have the Voice of a Cock, *to cry aloud, and tell* Iſrael *of their Sins*, and terrifie the roaring Lion, and make him tremble. In a Word, he muſt obſerve the Hours of the Cock to crow at all Seaſons of the Night, *to preach in Seaſon and out of Seaſon*, the glad Tidings of Salvation. But, 2. The more principal Means of St. *Peter*'s Recovery was, 1. *Chriſt's looking upon* Peter. Chriſt firſt looks upon *Peter* with an Eye of Mercy, Grace and Pity, before *Peter* looks upon his Sin in order to Repentance. Here take notice of the Greatneſs of Chriſt's Grace, of his wonderful Love and Mercy to this poor Diſciple. When our Saviour was upon his Trial for his Life, a time when our Thoughts are wholly taken up about our ſelves, even then did Chriſt find Leiſure to think upon *Peter*, remember to turn about, and give him a pitiful, but piercing Look; a Look, that melted his Heart, and diſſolved it into Tears. We never begin to lament for Sin, till we are firſt lamented by our Saviour. *Jeſus looked upon* Peter. That is, the firſt more principal Means of *Peter*'s Repentance; the ſecond is, Peter*'s remembring the Words of Chriſt, Before the Cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.* This Remembrance of Chriſt's Words was an applicative and feeling Remembrance of them. He remembred the Prediction of Chriſt, and applies it ſenſibly to himſelf. *Teaching us*, That the Efficacy of Chriſt's Word in order to the bringing of a Soul unto Repentance, depends not upon the Hiſtorical Remembrance of it, but upon the cloſe Application of it to every Man's Conſcience. A ſanctified Remembrance of Chriſt's Words, and our own Sins, is an excellent Preparative to Repentance. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Manner of St. *Peter*'s Repentance; It was ſecret, *he went out*; it was ſincere, *he wept bitterly*; it was laſting and abiding, all the Days of his Life, and attended with an extraordinary Zeal and Forwardneſs for the Service of Chriſt to the end of his Life. 1. It was ſecret, *he went out*, *Vere dolet, qui ſine, Teſte dolet.* He ſought a Place of Retirement where he might mourn in ſecret; he cannot well be thought to diſſemble his Grief, who chuſes no other Witneſs but the Omnipreſent God. Solitarineſs is moſt agreeable to an afflicted Spirit; and as St. *Peter*'s Sorrow cauſed him to go forth, ſo might alſo Shame: Chriſt looked upon *Peter*, but how aſhamed muſt *Peter* be to look upon Chriſt, conſidering that he ſo lately denied to have ever ſeen him? 2. His Repentance was ſincere, *he wept bitterly*; his Grief was extraordinary, and his Tears abundant. There is ever a weeping that follows Sin; Sin muſt coſt the Soul Sorrow, either here or in Hell; we muſt mourn a while, or lament for ever. Doubtleſs with *Peter*'s Tears there was join'd hearty Confeſſion of Sin to God, and ſmart Reflections upon himſelf after this manner: Lord, what have I done? I, that did once acknowledge my Maſter *to be Chriſt*, *the Son of the living God*, have ſince denied him with Oaths, Curſes and Imprecations: I, that promiſed to lay down my Life for his ſake, have yet diſown'd and denied him at the Voice of a Damſel.

Oh what Unfaithfulneſs, what Weakneſs, what Wickedneſs! *Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep all my Days for the Fault of this one Night!* Bleſſed indeed are the Tears of a converted Revolter, and happy is the very Miſery of a mournful Offender. 3. This holy Man's Repentance was laſting and abiding, he had a lively Senſe and Remembrance of this Sin upon his Soul all his Life. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory reports, that ever after, when St. *Peter* heard the crowing of a Cock, he fell upon his Knees, and mourn'd; others ſay, that he was wont to riſe at Midnight, and ſpend the time in penitent Devotion between Cock-crowing and Day-light; and the Papiſts, who love to turn every thing into Superſtition, began that Practice of ſetting a Cock upon the top of Towers, and Steeples, and Chimneys, to put the People in mind of this Sin of *Peter*, and his Repentance by that Signal. *Laſtly*, St. *Peter*'s Repentance was attended with an extraordinary Zeal and Forwardneſs for the Service of Chriſt to the end of his Life. He had an earneſt Love towards Chriſt, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee*: And as an Evidence of it, he fed Chriſt's Sheep; for in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles we read of his extraordinary Diligence to ſpread the Goſpel, and his Travels in order thereunto, are computed to be Nine Hundred and Fifty Miles: And the Wiſdom of God thought fit that this Apoſtle ſhould preach the Goſpel to the *Jews*, as St. *Paul* did to the Gentiles; that as he had joined with the *Jews* in denying and diſowning Chriſt, ſo he ſhould endeavour to perſwade them to join with him in Repentance, as he had joined with them in their Sin. His Sin was in ſome Reſpect like theirs, therefore is he ſent to preach the Goſpel to them, and his Diligence therein is an undoubted Proof and Evidence of his Repentance. Have any of us fallen with *Peter*, tho' not with a formal abjuring, yet by a practical denying of him, let us go forth and weep with him, let us be more vigilant and watchful over our ſelves for time to come, let us expreſs more extraordinarily Love unto, and Zeal for Chriſt, more Diligence in his Service, and more Concernedneſs for his Honour and Glory. This would be an happy Improvement of this Example. The Lord grant it may have that bleſſed Effect. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXVII.

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief prieſts and elders of the people took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death. 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governour.

The foregoing Chapter gave us an Account of *Judas* his Treaſon, in delivering our Saviour into the Hands of the chief Prieſts. In this Chapter we find our holy Lord brought by the chief Prieſts unto *Pontius Pilate* the Roman Governor, in order to his Arraignment and Condemnation. Whence *Obſerve*, That it has been the old Policy of corrupt Church-Governours, to abuſe the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate, in executing their cruel and unjuſt Cenſures upon holy and innocent Perſons. The chief Prieſts and Elders do not kill our Saviour themſelves, but they deliver him over to the ſecular Power, and deſire *Pilate* the civil Magiſtrate to ſentence and condemn him, which ſoon after we ſhall find he did. *They bound him, and led him away*: But what need was there of binding him, that never made any Reſiſtance: And oh, what Ingratitude was it to bind him with Cords, who came to unlooſe thoſe Bonds of Sin wherewith we were bound!

3 Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief prieſts and elders, 4 Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What is that to us? ſee thou to that. 5 And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himſelf.

Here we have a ſad Relation of *Judas* his deſperate Death, after an Hypocritical Life, as alſo of the Horror of his Mind and Conſcience before his Death. *Obſerve here*, 1. The time when *Judas* repented, after it was too late. *When he ſaw that he was condemned, he repented.* *Learn thence*, That they that will not ſee their Sins timely to their Converſion, ſhall ſee them ſooner or later to their Confuſion. *Obſerve*, 2. The Repentance it ſelf, in the ſeveral Parts and Branches of it: He was ſorrowful for the Fact, he made Confeſſion of his Sin, and made Reſtitution for the Wrong done. *He repented, ſaying, I have ſinned, and caſt down the Thirty Pieces of Silver.* *Learn thence*, That a wicked Man, when Conſcience is thoroughly awaked, may make Confeſſion of his Sin, expreſs ſome Sorrow for it, and endeavour alſo the making of ſome Satisfaction and Reſtitution for the Wrong and Injury done by it. They that mourn for Sin, as Sin: They that mourn more for the intrinſical Evil that is in Sin, than for the Penal and Conſequential Evils that follow Sin: They that confeſs Sin voluntarily and freely, particularly, penitently, believingly, with an Eye of Sorrow upon their Sin, and an Eye of Faith fixt upon their Saviour: They that make Reſtitution as an Act of Obedience to the Command of God, and as an Act of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs to their Neighbour; ſuch Perſons Repentance ſhall find Acceptance with God. *Obſerve*, 3. The Anſwer and Reply which the wicked High Prieſts and Elders make to deſpairing *Judas*. 1. They excuſe themſelves, *What is that to us?* 'Tis natural to all Sinners to ſhift Sin from themſelves, and to lay it at any Door, rather than their own. Thoſe that have had a Share in the Pleaſure and Profit of Sin, are yet very deſirous to throw the Odium and Guilt of it upon others. *What is that to us?* ſay theſe Monſters in Sin. O wonderful Stupidity! could they think it nothing to them to hire a Man to betray innocent Blood? Was not the Money given the Price of Blood, and the Field they bought called the Field of Blood? yet do they Impudently ſay, *What is that to us?* 2. As they excuſe and acquit themſelves, ſo they load and burthen him; *Look thou to that.* Lord! what miſerable Comforters are Companions in Sin to one another, when Diſtreſs and Sorrow comes upon them? When Sin comes to be queſtion'd, in order to its being puniſh'd; every Sinner is for ſhifting for himſelf, and leaves his Fellow in the Suds. Let us then remember the Words of the Holy Ghoſt, *He that walketh with wiſe Men ſhall be wiſe, but a Companion of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* How jolly ſoever Sinners are together when in the height of their Luſts; they are but miſerable Comforters to one another upon a Sick Bed, or under the Laſhes of an awakened Conſcience. But tho' they may avoid each other now, there is a time a coming, when it will be impoſſible at the great Day; the Sinner ſhall ſee both his Companions in Sin, and his Sins themſelves to be what he would never believe them here, the vileſt of Monſters. *Obſerve*, 4. The ſad and fatal End of *Judas*; *he went forth and hanged himſelf.* Horror and Deſpair took hold upon him, and ſeized his Conſcience, which was ſo intolerable, that he ran to the Halter for a Remedy. *Learn hence*, 1. That Conſcience is a powerful, tho' inviſible Executioner; the Wrath of Man may be endured, but the Wrath of God is inſupportable, and the Eruptions of Conſcience are irreſiſtible. Oh how intolerable are thoſe Scourges that laſh us in this tender and vital Part! *Judas* awakened with the Horror of his Fact, Conſcience begins to rouze, and the Man is unable to bear up under the furious Revenges of his own Mind. There is an active Principle in Mens Breaſts and Boſoms, which ſeldom ſuffers daring Sinners to paſs in quiet to their Graves. Guilt is naturally troubleſome and uneaſie, it diſturbs the Peace and Serenity of the Mind, and fills the Soul with Storms and Thunder, both in Life and Death! How vainly did *Judas* hope to take Sanctuary in a Grave, and to meet with that Eaſe in another World, which he could not find in this? Thus ended this miſerable Man, *Judas.* Behold! ye Profeſſors of Religion, the terrible Example of God's Juſtice on a deceitful Hypocrite. Behold! a Diſciple, an Apoſtle, firſt a Traitor and then a Self-Murtherer. Behold! all ye covetous Worldlings, to what the Love of that accurſed Idol has brought this wretched Apoſtle. Behold! *Judas* one ſhining in the Robes of a glorious Profeſſion, now ſhining in the Flames of God's eternal Wrath and Vengeance. Lord! how earneſt ought we to be for thy perſevering Grace, when neither the Preſence, the Miracles, the Sermons, the Sacraments of Chriſt could preſerve and ſecure a Profeſſor, a Diſciple, an Apoſtle, from the fatal Miſchief of a ruinous Apoſtacy? Let him that ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

6 And the chief prieſts took the ſilver pieces, and ſaid, It is not lawful for to put them into the treaſury, becauſe it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counſel, and bought with them the potters field, to bury ſtrangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 (Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Iſrael did value: 10 And gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)

Obſerve here, 1. The Niceneſs and Scrupuloſity of theſe Hypocrites; they made no Scruple to give Money to ſhed Blood, but they ſcruple the putting that Money into the Treaſury, which was the Price of Blood. They are afraid to defile their Treaſury, but are not afraid to pollute their Souls. Thus Hypocrites *ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a Camel*; ſcruple a Ceremony, but make no Conſcience of Murther and Perjury. *Obſerve*, 2. The Uſe which they put this Money to, which *Judas* brought them; they bought with it a Field to bury Strangers in. Thus Chriſt, who was himſelf a Stranger in a borrow'd Grave, by the Price of his Blood (being Thirty Pieces of Silver) conferred Graves on many Strangers. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the Wiſdom of God order'd it, that hereby a Scripture-Prophecy was fulfilled, *Zach.* 11. 13. They weighed for my Price Thirty Pieces of Silver, and I took and caſt them unto the Potter. Whence *Learn*, That all the Indignities and abaſing Sufferings, which the Lord Jeſus underwent, were not only fore-ordain'd by God, but alſo fore-told by the holy Prophets: His being ſcourged, buffetted, ſpit upon, and here his being ſold for Thirty pieces of Silver.

11 And Jeſus ſtood before the governour, and the governour asked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt. 12 And when he was accuſed of the chief prieſts and elders, he anſwered nothing. 13 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Heareſt thou not how many things they witneſs againſt thee? 14 And he anſwered him to never a word, inſomuch that the governour marvelled greatly.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Saviour readily anſwers *Pilate*, but refuſes to anſwer the chief Prieſts before *Pilate*. *Pilate* aſks him, Art thou the King of the *Jews?* Jeſus readily anſwers, *Thou ſayeſt*; or it is as thou ſayeſt. But to all the Accuſations of the chief Prieſts, and to all that they laid to his Charge before *Pilate*, our Saviour anſwers never a Word, probably for theſe Reaſons: Becauſe his Innocency was ſuch as needed no Apology; Becauſe their Calumnies and Accuſations were ſo notoriouſly falſe, that they needed no Confutation: To ſhew his Contempt of Death, and to teach us by his own Example Patience and Silence, when for his ſake we are ſlandered and traduced. *Learn thence*, That altho' we are not obliged to anſwer every captious and enſnaring Queſtion, nor to refute every Slander and falſe Accuſation, yet are we bound faithfully to own and confeſs the Truth, when we are ſolemnly called thereunto. Our Saviour as *a deaf Man hears not*, anſwers not the Calumnies of the chief Prieſts; but when *Pilate* aſks him, *Art thou the King of the* Jews? Or as St. *Mark* has it, *Art thou the Son of the Bleſſed*? Jeſus ſaid, *I am*, tho' he knew that Anſwer would coſt him his Life. Hence the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. ſays, *That Chriſt before* Pontius Pilate *witneſſed a good Confeſſion. Teaching us*, Sometimes to hold our Peace, when our own Reputation is concerned; but never to be ſilent, when the Honour of God, the Glory of his Truth, the Edification and Confirmation of others, may effectually be promoted by our open Confeſſion. Then muſt we with Chriſt give a direct, plain and ſincere Anſwer. For *whoever denies him, or any Truth of his, knowingly and wilfully, him will Chriſt deny in the Preſence of his Father, and before all his holy Angels.*

15 Now at that feaſt the governour was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable priſoner, called Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate ſaid unto them, Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you? Barabbas, or Jeſus which is called Chriſt? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Now *at the Feaſt*; that is, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, which by way of Eminency is called *the Feaſt*, the Governour uſed to releaſe a priſoner (poſſibly by way of Memorial of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*) accordingly *Pilate* makes a Motion of them, that Chriſt may be the Priſoner ſet at Liberty in Honour of their Feaſt; for he was ſenſible what they did was out of Envy and Malice. As Covetouſneſs ſold Chriſt, ſo Envy delivered him. Envy is a killing and murthering Paſſion; *Envy ſlayeth the ſilly one*, Job 5. 2. That is, it ſlays the ſilly Perſon, who harbours this peſtilent Luſt in his Boſom, and is like a Fire in his Bones continually preying upon him, cauſing him to pine away, and die miſerably, becauſe another lives happily. To envy another Man's Proſperity, is an Argument of the worſt Simplicity: Yea, farther, as Envy ſlayeth the ſilly one, ſo it prompts and provokes the Sinner to ſeek the ſlaying of ſimple and innocent ones. Envy wiſhes the envied Perſon out of the way, yea, out of the World; and if need be, will not only wiſh it, but lend a Lift towards it too: Witneſs the chief Prieſt's here, whoſe Envy was ſo conſpicuous, that *Pilate* himſelf takes notice of it, and ſays, *He knew that for Envy they had delivered him.*

19 When he was ſet down on the Judgment-ſeat, his wife ſent unto him, ſaying, Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man; for I have ſuffered many things this day in a dream, becauſe of him.

There are ſeveral ſorts or kinds of Dreams, Natural, Moral, Diabolical and Divine. The Queſtion is, what kind of Dream this was? Not *Natural*, all agree; ſome think it was *Diabolical*, and that Satan hoped thereby to prevent the Work of Man's Redemption by the Death of Chriſt. But if ſo, why had not *Pilate* the Dream rather than his Wife? Probably this Dream was from God; for even our very Dreams are ordered by God, our ſleeping as well as our waking times are in God's Hand. *Learn hence*, How wonderfully the Wiſdom and Power of God is ſeen in this Woman's Teſtimony, which ſhe gave to the Innocency of our Saviour. When all his Diſciples were fled from him, when none of his Friends durſt ſpeak a Word for him, God raiſes up a Woman, a Stranger, a Pagan, to give Evidence of his Innocency. And it is obſervable, that at our Saviour's Trial not one Mouth was opened to plead or ſpeak a Word for him, in Defence of Innocency it ſelf, but only *Pilate*'s and his Wive's; they both pronounce him Righteous, tho' they were Gentiles and Pagans, whilſt his own Kindred and Countrymen the *Jews*, thirſt after his Righteous and Innocent Blood.

20 But the chief prieſts and elders perſwaded the multitude that they ſhould ask Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus. 21 The governour anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I releaſe unto you? They ſaid Barabbas. 22 Pilate ſaid unto them, What ſhall I do then with Jeſus which is called Chriſt: They all ſay unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governour ſaid, Why, what evil hath he done? but they cried out the more, ſaying, Let him be crucified.

Obſerve here, 1. How exceedingly unwilling and averſe *Pilate* was to be the Inſtrument of our Saviour's Death; one while he bids the *Jews* take him themſelves, and judge him according to their Law. Another while he offers to ſave Chriſt in Honour of their Feaſt, when by Cuſtom he was to releaſe a Priſoner, and this Priſoner he deſired might be Jeſus. When this would not ſatisfie, he expoſtulates with them about our Saviour's Innocency, what Evil has he done? Nay, St. *Luke* ſays, *chap.* 23. *That* Pilate *came forth three times, and profeſſed that he found no Fault in him.* Yet tho' *Pilate* was ſatisfied, the *Jews* would not be deny'd. *Thence Learn*, That wicked Men and Hypocrites within the viſible Church may be guilty of ſuch Tremendous Acts of Wickedneſs as the Conſcience of Infidels and Pagans without the Church may boggle at, and proteſt againſt. *Pilate* a Pagan abſolves Chriſt, whilſt hypocritical *Jews*, which had heard his Doctrine,

ctrine, and ſeen his Miracles, do condemn him. But *Obſerve,* 2. Who influenced the main Body of the *Jews* to deſire *Barabbas,* and to deſtroy Jeſus. It was the *chief Prieſts and Elders,* they *perſwaded the Multitude.* Wo to the People when their Guides and Leaders are corrupt; for then they ſhall be tempted by wicked Counſel: And wo unto them, much more, if they follow their wicked and pernicious Counſels. Thus did the *Jews* follow their Guides the chief Prieſts, till they had preſerv'd *Barabbas,* and deſtroyed Jeſus.

24 When Pilate ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and waſhed his hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon: ſee ye to it.

Two Things are here *Obſervable* in *Pilate's waſhing of his Hands.* 1. By this Action he pronounces our Saviour's Innocency, and was willing thereby to teſtifie his own, that he did not conſent to our Saviour's Death, waſhing the Hands being an uſual Ceremony in Proteſtation of a Perſon's Innocency. But, 2. It was great Folly and Fondneſs in *Pilate,* to think that waſhing of his Hands did or could free him from the Guilt of innocent Blood. Oh *Pilate!* thou haſt need rub hard if thou meaneſt to ſcoure from thy Soul the Guilt of that Crimſon Sin which thou haſt committed; thy Guilt cleaves ſo cloſe unto thee, that nothing can expiate it but the Blood which thou haſt ſpilt; neither was it any Excuſe of *Pilate's* Sin, that what he did was to pleaſe the People, and to gratifie their Importunity. It is a fond Apology for Sins, when Perſons pretend that they were not committed with their own Conſent, but at others Inſtigation and Importunity.

25 Then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, His blood be on us and on our children.

That is, Let the Guilt and Puniſhment of this Blood reſt upon us and our Poſterity. A moſt horrid and impious Imprecation; the dreadful Effects of it began to come upon them Forty Years after in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem,* and has reſted and remained upon their Poſterity to this Day, near Seventeen Hundred Tears, the *Jews* being Vagabonds over the Earth, abhorred by all Nations whereſoever they come. The juſt God has heard their wicked Wiſh, and caus'd that Blood to fall upon them in ſo ſevere, tho' righteous a manner, as muſt pierce the Heart of thoſe that read and obſerve it. God has given them Blood to drink, as indeed they were worthy. This ought to be a Terror and a Warning to all Perſons, that they avoid all curſed Imprecations, and wicked Wiſhes upon themſelves or others. Wo to ſuch as wiſh *Damnation* to themſelves, *Pox* and *Plague* upon others; how if God ſays *Amen,* and ratifie in Heaven thy curſed Imprecations made on Earth; as he did this of the wicked *Jews, His Blood be on us, and our Children.* Yet what they with a wicked Mind put up as a direful Imprecation, we may with a pious Mind offer up to God as an humble Petition; Lord, let thy Son's Blood, not in the Guilt and Puniſhment, but in the Efficacy and Merit of it, be upon us, and upon our Poſterity after us, for evermore.

26 Then releaſed he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ſcourged Jeſus, he delivered him to be crucified.

As the Death of the Croſs was a Roman Puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans firſt to ſcourge and whip their Malefactors, and then deliver them to be crucified. Now the manner of the Roman ſcourging is ſaid to be thus; They ſtript the condemned Perſon, and bound him to a Poſt; Two ſtrong Men firſt ſcourged him with Rods of Thorns: Then Two others ſcourged him with Whips of Cords full of Knots: And laſtly, Two more with Whips of Wyre; and therewith tore off the very Fleſh and Skin from the Perſon's Back and Sides. That our Saviour was thus cruelly ſcourged ſeems to ſome not improbable from that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 129. 3. *The Ploughers ploughed upon my Back, and made long Furrows.* Which, if ſpoken Prophetically of Chriſt, was Literally fulfilled in the Day of his Scourging. But why was the precious Body of our Bleſſed Lord thus galled and torn with Scourgings? Doubtleſs to fulfil that Prophecy, *I gave my Back to the Smiters, and my Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair; That by his Stripes we might be healed.* And to *Learn* us Patience from his Example? Why ſhould we think it ſtrange to be ſcourged, either with the Tongue, or the Hand, or with both, when we ſee our dear Redeemer bleeding by Stripes and Scourges before our Eyes?

27 Then the ſoldiers of the governour took Jeſus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of ſoldiers. 28 And they ſtripped him, and put on him a ſcarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail king of the Jews. 30 And they ſpit upon him, and took the reed, and ſmote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucifie him.

The next part of our Lord's Sufferings conſiſted of cruel Mockings; our Bleſſed Saviour had ſaid that he was the King of the *Jews,* not a Temporal King to rule over them with Pomp and Power, but a Spiritual King to rule in the Hearts of his People; but the *Jews* miſſing of their Expectation of a Temporal King in Chriſt, look upon him as an Impoſtor, and accordingly they treat him as a mock King, putting a *Crown upon his Head,* but a very ignominious and painful one, *a Crown of Thorns; a Scepter in his Hand,* but it was of a *Reed;* and a *Robe of Purple* or *Scarlet,* both which were uſed by Princes; and *bowed the Knee before him,* as they were wont to do to Princes. Thus all the Marks of Scorn imaginable are put upon our Bleſſed Redeemer, yet that which they did in jeſt, God did in earneſt; for all theſe things were Enſigns and Marks of Sovereignty; and Almighty God cauſed the Regal Dignity of his Son to appear and ſhine forth even in the midſt of his greateſt Abaſement. Whence was all this Jeering and Sport, but to flout Majeſty? And why did Chriſt undergo all this Ignominy, Diſgrace and Shame, but to ſhew us what was due unto us for our Sins, and to give us an Example to bear all the Scorn, Reproach and Shame imaginable for his ſake, *Who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame.*

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his croſs. 33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to ſay, a place of a ſcull, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had taſted thereof, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, caſting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots. 36 And ſitting down they watched him there:

The Sentence of Death being paſt by *Pilate,* who can with dry Eyes behold the ſad Pomp of our Saviour's Bloody Execution? Forth comes the Bleſſed Jeſus out of *Pilate's* Gates, bearing that Croſs, which ſoon after was to bear him. With his Croſs on his Shoulder, he marches towards *Golgotha;* and when they ſee he can go no faſter, they force *Simon* the *Cyrenian,* not out of Compaſſion, but from Indignation, to be the Porter of his Croſs. This *Cyrenian* being a Gentile, not a *Jew,* who bare our Saviour's Croſs, might ſignifie and ſhew that the Gentiles ſhould have a part in Chriſt, and be Sharers with the *Jews* in the Benefits of his *Croſs.* At length Chriſt comes to the Place of Execution, *Golgotha,* or *Mount Calvary.* Here in a publick Place, with infamous Company, betwixt Two Thieves, he is Crucified; that is, faſtned to a great Croſs of Wood, his Hands ſtretched forth abroad, and his Feet cloſed together, and both Hands and Feet faſtned with Nails; his naked Body was lifted up in the open Air, hanging betwixt Heaven and Earth; thereby intimating, that the crucified Perſon was fit to live in neither. This ſhameful, painful and accurſed Death, did the holy and innocent Jeſus undergo for Sinners. Some obſerve all the Dimenſions of Length, Breadth, Depth and Height in our

Saviour's Sufferings; for Length, his Paſſion was ſeveral Hours long, from Twelve to Three, expoſed all that time both to Hunger and Cold; the Thieves crucified with him were not dead ſo ſoon; they enduring but perſonal Pain, he undergoing the Miſeries of all Mankind. But what his Paſſion wanted in Length, it had in Breadth, extending over all the Parts and Powers of his Soul and Body, no part free but his Tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his Enemies. His Sight was tormented with the ſcornful Geſtures of ſuch as *paſſed by, wagging their Heads*: his Hearing grieved with the Taunts and Jeers of Prieſts and People; his Smelling offended with noiſome Savours in the Place of Skulls; his Taſte with the Gall and Vinegar given him to drink. His Feeling was wonderfully affected by the Nails, which pierced his Hands and Feet, and the Crown of Thorns which pierced his tender Temples with a Multiplicity of Wounds. And for the Depth of his Paſſion it was as deep as Hell it ſelf; enduring Tortures in his Soul, as well as Torments in his Body; groaning under the Burthen of Deſertion, and crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Laſtly, For the Height of his Sufferings, they were as high as Heaven, his Perſon being innocent and infinite, no leſs than the Son of God, which adds an infinite Worth and Value to his Sufferings. *Lord, let us be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the Breadth and Length, Depth and Heighth, and let us know the Love of Chriſt, which in ſuffering for us, paſſeth Knowledge.* So infinite every way were the Dimenſions of it.

37 And ſet up over his head, his accuſation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

It was the manner of the *Romans* when they crucified any Man, to publiſh the Cauſe of his Death in Capital Letters, placed over the Head of the Perſon. Now ſee how the Wiſdom and Providence of God powerfully over-ruled the Heart and Pen of *Pilate* to draw this Title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his Croſs: *Pilate* is Chriſt's Herald, and proclaims him, *King of the Jews*. *Learn hence*, That the Regal Dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an Enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt Sufferings and Reproaches. *Pilate* did Chriſt a ſpecial Honour, and an Eminent piece of Service; he did that for Chriſt which none of his own Diſciples durſt do; but he did it not deſignedly for his Glory, but from the ſpecial over-ruling Power of Divine Providence: But the higheſt Services performed to Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall never be accepted nor rewarded by God.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him: one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 And they that paſſed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And ſaying, Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt it in three days, ſave thy ſelf: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs. 41 Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking him, with the ſcribes, and elders, ſaid, 42 He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave: if he be the king of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him. 43 He truſted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he ſaid, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves alſo which were crucified with him, caſt the ſame in his teeth.

Here we have ſeveral Aggravations of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs. 1. From the Company he ſuffer'd with, *Two Thieves*. It had been Diſparagement enough to our Bleſſed Saviour to have been ſorted with the Beſt of Men; but to be numbered with the Scum of Mankind, is ſuch an Indignity as confounds our Thoughts. This was intended by the *Jews* to diſhonour him the more, and to perſwade the World that he was the greateſt of Offenders; but God over-ruled this, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *He was numbered with the Tranſgreſſors*. 2. Another Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings on the Croſs, was the Scorn and mocking Deriſion, which he met with in his dying Moments, from the common People, from the chief Prieſts, and from the Thieves that ſuffer'd with him. The common People, both in Words and Actions expreſſed Scorn and Deteſtation againſt him. *They reviled him, wagging their Heads.* The chief Prieſts, tho' Men of Age and Gravity, not only barbarouſly *mock him* in his extreameſt Miſery, whom Humanity obliged them to Pity; but they ſcoff Atheiſtically and prophanely, jeering at his Faith and Affiance in God, tauntingly ſaying, *He truſted in God, that he would deliver him; now let him deliver him, if he will have him.* Where *Obſerve*, That Perſecutors are generally Atheiſts, though they make a Profeſſion of Religion. *The chief Prieſts and Elders* here, though learned and knowing Men, yet they blaſpheme God, and mock at his Power, deride his Providence, which was as bad as to deny his Being. Hence we may gather, That thoſe who adminiſter to God in Holy Things by way of Office, if they be not the beſt, they are the worſt of Men. No ſuch bitter Enemies to the Power of Godlineſs, as the Miniſters of Religion, who were never acquainted with the Efficacy and Power of it in their own Hearts and Lives. Nothing on this ſide Hell is worſe than a wicked Prieſt, a Miniſter of God devoted to the Service of the Devil. A Third Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings on the Croſs was, That the Thieves that ſuffered with him, reviled him with the reſt. That is, one of them, as St. *Luke* has it, or perhaps both of them might do it at firſt. Which if ſo, encreaſes the Wonder of the penitent Thieves Converſion. From the Thieves Impenitency we *Learn*, That neither Shame nor Pain will change the Mind of a reſolute Sinner, but even then when he is in the very Suburbs of Hell, will he blaſpheme.

45 Now from the ſixth hour there was darkneſs over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, *Eli, Eli, Lamaſabachthani?* that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 47 Some of them that ſtood there, when they heard that, ſaid, This man calleth for Elias. 48 And ſtraightway one of them run and took a ſpunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The reſt ſaid, Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him. 50 Jeſus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghoſt.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Rays of Chriſt's Divinity, and the Glory of his Godhead, breaks out and ſhines forth in the midſt of that Infirmity, which his Humane Nature laboured under. He ſhews himſelf to be the God of Nature, by altering the Courſe of Nature. The Sun is eclipſed, and Darkneſs overſpreads the Earth for *Three Hours*; namely, from Twelve a Clock to Three. Thus the Sun in the Firmament becomes cloſe Mourner at our Lord's Death, and the whole Frame of Nature puts its ſelf into a Funeral Habit. *Obſerve*, 2. That the Chief of Chriſt's Sufferings conſiſted in the Sufferings of his Soul; the Diſtreſs of his Spirit was more intolerable than the Torments of his Body, as appears by his mournful Complaint, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Being the firſt Words of the 22d. *Pſalm*; and ſome conceive, that he repeated that whole Pſalm, it being an admirable Narrative of the Dolours of his Paſſion. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ſuffering for our Sins, was really deſerted for a Time, and left deſtitute of all ſenſible Conſolation. *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* *Learn* farther, That under this Deſertion Chriſt deſpaired not, but ſtill retained a firm Perſwaſion of God's Love unto him, and experienced neceſſary Supports from him. *My God, my God*, Theſe are Words of Faith and Affiance, ſtriving under Temptation. Chriſt was thus forſaken for us, that we might never be forſaken by God: yet by God's forſaking of Chriſt, is not to be underſtood any Abatement of Divine Love, but only a withdrawing from the Humane Nature, the Senſe of his Love, and a letting out upon his Soul a deep afflicting Senſe of his Diſpleaſure againſt Sin. There is a total and eternal Deſertion, by which God utterly forſakes a Man, both as to Grace and Glory, being wholly caſt out of God's Preſence, and adjudged to Eternal Torments; This was not comparable to Chriſt, nor agreeable to the Dignity of his Perſon. But there is a Partial and Temporary Deſertion, when God *for a little Moment hides his Face* from his Children; now this was both agreeable to the Dignity of Chriſt's Nature, and alſo ſuitable to his Office, who was to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God for our forſaking of him, and to bring us near to him, that we might be received for ever. *Obſerve Laſtly*, What a miraculous Evidence Chriſt gave of his Divinity inſtantly before he gave up the Ghoſt. *He cried with a loud Voice.* This ſhew'd that he did not Die according to the ordinary Courſe of Nature, gradually departing and drawing on, as we expreſs it. No, his Life was whole in him, and Nature as ſtrong at laſt as at firſt. Other Men die gradually, and towards their End, their Senſe of Pain is much blunted; they faulter, fumble, and die by Degrees; but Chriſt ſtood under the Pains of Death in his full Strength; his Life was whole in him. This was evident by the mighty Outcry he made when he gave up the Ghoſt, contrary to the Senſe and Experience of all other Perſons; this argued him to be full of Strength. And he that could cry with ſuch a loud Voice (*in articulo mortis*) as he did, could have kept himſelf from Dying if he would. Hence we *Learn*, That when Chriſt died, he rather conquered Death, than was conquer'd by Death. He muſt voluntarily and freely lay down Life, before Death could come at him. *He yielded up the Ghoſt.* O! Wonderful Sight, the Lord of Life, hangs dead, dead on the accurſed Tree. O! ſevere and inexorable Juſtice in God. O! Amazing and aſtoniſhing Love in Chriſt: Love beyond Expreſſion, beyond Conception, beyond all Comprehenſion; with what Compariſon ſhall we compare it! Verily with nothing but it ſelf; never was Love like thine.

51 And behold the vail of the temple was rent
in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the
earth did quake, and the rocks rent, 52 And the
graves were opened, and many bodies of ſaints
which ſlept, aroſe, 53 And came out of the graves
after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city,
and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centu-
rion, and they that were with him, watching Jeſus,
ſaw the earthquake, and thoſe things that were
done, they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was
the Son of God. 55 And many women were there
(beholding afar off) which followed Jeſus from
Galilee, miniſtring unto him. 56 Among which
was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of
James, and Joſes, and the mother of Zebedee's
Children.

Here we have an Account of ſeveral extraordinary and wonderful Things, which occur'd and fell out about the time that our Saviour died. 1. *The Vail of the Temple rent aſunder.* That is, the Hanging which parted the Holy from the moſt Holy Place to hide the Myſteries therein; namely, the Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat from the view of the ordinary Prieſts. This Vail was now rent from the Top to the Bottom, and the rending of it did impart theſe great Myſteries. 1. That now our great High Prieſt was entring into the moſt Holy Place with his own Blood, having made the Atonement for us. *Heb.* 9. 12. *By his own Blood he once entred into the moſt Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* 2. That the Means whereby he entred into the moſt Holy Place, was by the rending of his Humanity, his Soul from his Body, typified by rending of this Vail; accordingly his Body is called a Vail, *Heb.* 10. 20. *Conſecrated through the Vail of his Fleſh.* 3. That now by the Death of Chriſt all thoſe dark Myſteries vailed up formerly in the moſt Holy Place, as the Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat are now unfolded and laid open, and the Uſe of the whole Ceremonial Law at an End, and the Jewiſh Temple-Service ceaſed. 4. That now the Kingdom of Heaven the moſt Holy Place is open to all Believers. Chriſt our great High Prieſt is entred in with his own Blood, and hath not cloſed the Vail after him, but rent it in ſunder, and made and left a paſſage for all Believers to follow him, firſt in their Prayers, and next in their Perſons. See *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. *Having therefore Boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt by the Blood of Jeſus, by a new and living Way which he hath conſecrated for us through the Vail, that is to ſay his Fleſh; let us draw near with a true Heart*, &c. *Obſerve* 2. The Earth quaked. As there was an Univerſal Eclipſe, ſo likewiſe an Univerſal Earthquake at our Lord's Crucifixion, which did awaken many of the Saints (that died before our Saviour's Incarnation) out of their dead Sleep. Theſe aroſe both as Witneſſes of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and alſo as Sharers in it. But none of them aroſe till Chriſt was riſen, *he being the firſt Fruits of them that Slept.* And theſe holy Perſons that aroſe with him, poſſibly attended him to Heaven at his Aſcenſion. From hence we *Learn*, That Chriſt was the Saviour of thoſe that believed in him before his Incarnation, as well as of thoſe that believed in him ſince his Incarnation; and that the former are Partakers of the Fruit and Benefit of his Death and Reſurrection, no leſs than the latter. Others conjecture, that theſe who roſe out of their Graves were ſuch as believed in Chriſt and died before him, as old *Simeon*, &c. Accordingly they underſtand, St. *John* 5. 25. *The Hour is coming and now is, that the Dead ſhall here the Voice of the* Son *of Man*, of this Reſurrection here mentioned. And whereas it is ſaid they *went into the Holy City and appeared to many*; it is probable they were known to them unto whom they did appear; and if ſo, they muſt have lived in the Time of their Knowledge. *Obſerve* next, What Influence and Effect the ſight of theſe prodigious Things had upon the *Centurion* and the *Soldiers*: It convinced them, that *verily this was the Son of God.* Here we ſee the Heathen Soldiers are ſooner convinced of the Divinity of Chriſt, than the unbelieving Jewiſh Doctors. Obſtinacy and Unbelief filled their Minds with an invincible Prejudice againſt Chriſt, ſo that neither the Miracles done by him in his Life, nor wrought at his Death, could convince the high Prieſts, that Chriſt was any other than an Impoſtor and Deceiver. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Who of Chriſt's Friends were Witneſſes of his Death; *They are Women who followed him from* Galilee, *and miniſtred unto him*: not one of his dear Diſciples, except St. *John*, who ſtood by the Croſs with the *Virgin Mary.* What a Shame was this for the Apoſtles to be abſent from a Spectacle upon which the Salvation of the whole World did depend; and what an Honour was this to the Female Sex in general, and to theſe Women in particular, that they had the Courage to follow Chriſt to his Croſs, *when all the Diſciples forſook him and fled*? God can make Women Glorious Confeſſors of his Truth, and arm them againſt the Fears of Sufferings, contrary to the natural Timorouſneſs of their Tempers. Theſe Women wait upon Chriſt's Croſs, when Apoſtles fly, and durſt not come near it.

57 When the even was come, there came a
rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, who alſo
himſelf was Jeſus diſciple: 58 He went to Pilate,
and begged the body of Jeſus: then Pilate command-
ed the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joſeph
had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean lin-
nen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb,
which he had hewn out in the rock, and he rolled
a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre, and
departed. 61 And there was Mary Magdalene,
and the other Mary ſitting over againſt the ſepul-
chre.

Here we have an Account given of our Lord's Funeral and Interment in the Grave: ſuch a Funeral as never was ſince Graves were firſt digged. Concerning which we have theſe Particulars *Obſervable*: 1. The Preparatives that were made for our Lord's Funeral; namely, the Begging and Perfuming of his dead Body; his Body could not be buried, till by begging it was obtain'd of *Pilate*, the dead Bodies of Malefactors being in the Power and Diſpoſal of the Judge. *Pilate* grants it; and to manifeſt their dear Affection to their dead Lord, they wrapt the Body in fine Linnen, with Spices to perfume it. But what need of Odours for that Body which could not ſee Corruption; Tho' his holy Body did not want them, yet the Affections of his Friends could not withhold them. *Obſ.* 2. The Bearers that carryed his Body to the Grave, or the Perſons concerned in Solemnizing his Funeral. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, and *Nicodemus*, Two rich Men, and two ſecret Diſciples. 1. They were rich Men, Senators, honourable Counſellors: and ſo that Prophecy was fulfilled, *Iſa.* 53. laſt. *He made his Grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his Death.* 2. They were good Men as well as rich Men; Diſciples, tho' ſecretly, for fear of the *Jews.* Grace doth not always make a publick and open Show where it is. As there is much ſecret Riches in the Bowels of the Earth, which no Eye ever ſaw, ſo there may be Grace in the Heart of a Chriſtian, which the World takes no Notice of. We never heard any News of *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* till now, yet was he eminently rich, wiſe and good; a Worthy tho' a cloſe Diſciple. Much Grace may be where little is ſeen. Some Gracious Perſons cannot put forward, and diſcover themſelves like others; and yet ſuch weak Chriſtians perhaps, when a Trial comes, ſhall ſtand their Ground, when ſtronger run away. We read of none of the Apoſtles at Chriſt's Funeral; Fear had chaſed them away, tho' they profeſs'd a Readineſs to die with Chriſt: But *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus* appear boldly for him. Let it be a Caution to ſtrong Chriſtians neither to glory in themſelves, nor to glory over the Weak. If God deſert the ſtrong, and aſſiſt the weak, *the feeble ſhall be as* David *and the ſtrong as Tow.* *Obſ.* 3. The Mourners that followed the Hearſe; namely, the Women that followed him out of *Galilee*, and particularly the two *Maries*; a very poor Train of Mourners, a few ſorrowful Women. Others are attended to their Graves by their Relations and Friends, but Chriſt's Diſciples were all ſcatter'd, and afraid to own him either dying or dead. Our Bleſſed Lord affected no Pomp or Gallantry in his Life, and it was no ways ſuitable either to the End or Manner of his Death. Humiliation was deſigned in his Death, and his Burial was the loweſt Degree of his Humiliation. *Obſ.* 4. The Grave or Sepulchre in which they buried him; *it was in a Garden.* As by the Sin of the firſt *Adam* we were driven out of the Garden of Pleaſure, the Earthly Paradice; ſo by the Sufferings of the ſecond *Adam*, who lay buried in a Garden, we may hope for an Entrance into the Heavenly Paradice. It was in a *Sepulchre hew'd out of a Rock*; that ſo his Enemies might have no Occaſion to cavil, and ſay that his Diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret Holes, or unſeen Paſſages under Ground. And it was in a new Sepulchre, in which never any Man was laid, leſt his Adverſaries ſhould ſay, it was ſome other that was riſen, or that he roſe from the Dead by touching ſome other Corps. *Obſ.* 5. The manner of our Lord's Funeral, haſtily, openly, decently Celebrated. It was done in haſte, by Reaſon of the Streights of Time, the Preparation for the Paſſover cauſed them to be very expeditious; the Sabbath was approaching, and they lay all Buſineſs aſide to prepare for that. *Learn thence*, How much it is our Duty to diſpatch our worldly Buſineſs as early as we can towards the end of the Week, that we may be the better prepared to ſanctifie the Lord's Day, if we live to enjoy it. We ought to remember that Day before it come, and to Sanctifie it when it is come. Again, our Lord was Buried openly, as well as haſtily; all Perſons had Liberty to be Spectators, that none might object there was any Fraud or Deceit uſed in or about his Burial. He was alſo Interred decently, his Body wrapt in fine Linnen and perfum'd with Odours, according to the *Jewiſh* Cuſtom, which uſed not to Unbowel, but Embalm their Dead. *Obſerve* 6. The Reaſon why our Lord was Buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other Men lye by the Walls; and had his Dead Body remained a Thouſand Years unburied, it could have ſeen no Corruption, having never been tainted with Sin. Sin is the cauſe of the Body's Corruption; 'tis Sin that makes our Bodies ſtink worſe than Carrion when they are Dead. A Funeral then was not neceſſary for Chriſt's Body upon the ſame Accounts that it is neceſſary for ours. But, 1. He was Buried to declare the certainty of his Death, and the reality of his Reſurrection, and for this Reaſon did God's Providence order it, that he ſhould be Embalm'd, to cut off all Pretenſions. For in this kind of Embalming, his Mouth, his Ears, and his Noſtrils, were all fill'd with Spices and Odours, ſo that there could be no Latent Principle of Life in him; being thus Buried then, declares him to be certainly Dead. 2. He was Buried to fulfill the Types and Prophecies that went before concerning him. *Jonas* being Three Days and Three Nights in the Belly of the Whale, was a Type of Chriſt's being Three Days and Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth; and the Prophet, *Eſa.* 53. 9. had declar'd the manner of his Funeral long before he was born. *He made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death.* Pointing by that Expreſſion at this Tomb of *Joſeph's*, who was a rich Man; *and the Scriptures cannot be broken.* 3. He was Buried to compleat his Humiliation; *They have brought me to the Duſt of Death*, ſays *David*, a Type of Chriſt. This was the loweſt Step he could poſſibly deſcend in his abaſed State; lower he could not be laid, and ſo low his bleſſed Head muſt be laid, elſe he had not been humbled to the loweſt. 4. He went into the Grave, that he might conquer Death in its own Territories and Dominions. Chriſt's Victory over the Grave cauſes his Saints to triumph and ſing, *Oh Grave? where is thy Deſtruction?* Our bleſſed Lord has perfumed the Bed of the Grave by his own lying in it: So that a Pillow of Down is not ſo ſoft to a Believer's Head as a Pillow of Duſt. *Obſerve laſtly*, Of what Uſe the Doctrine of our Lord's Burial may be unto us. 1. For Inſtruction, here we ſee the amazing Depths of our Lord's Humiliation. From what, to what his Love brought him; even from the Boſom of his Father to the Boſom of the Grave. Now the Depth of his Humiliation ſhews us the Fulneſs and Sufficiency of his Satisfaction, as well as the Heinouſneſs of our Tranſgreſſion. 2. For Conſolation againſt the Fears of Death and the Grave. The Grave receives Chriſt, but could not retain him. Death ſwallowed him up as the Fiſh did *Jonas*, but quickly vomited him up again; ſo ſhall it fare with Chriſt myſtical, as it did with Chriſt perſonal; the Grave could not long keep him, it ſhall not for ever keep us; as his Body reſted in Hope, ſo ſhall ours alſo; and though they ſee Corruption, which he did not, yet ſhall they not always lye under the Power of Corruption. *In a Word*, Chriſt's lying in the Grave has chang'd and alter'd the Nature of the Grave; it was a Priſon before, a Bed of Reſt now; a loathſome Grave before, a perfumed Bed now. He whoſe Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his Foot into the Grave, *Awake and ſing thou that dwelleſt in the Duſt*, for the Enmity of the Grave is ſlain by Chriſt. 3. For Imitation, let us ſtudy and endeavour to be buried with Chriſt, in reſpect of our Sins. I mean, *Rom.* 6. 4. *Buried with him into Death.* Our Sins ſhould be as a dead Body, in ſeveral Reſpects. Are dead Bodies removed far from Society of Men? So ſhould our Sins be removed far from us? Do dead Bodies in the Grave ſpend and conſume away by little and little? So ſhould our Sins daily. Will dead Bodies grow every Day more and more loathſome to others? So ſhould our Sins be to our ſelves. Do dead Bodies wax out of Memory, and are quite forgotten? So ſhould our Sins, in reſpect of any Delight that we take in remembring of them. We ſhould always remember our Sins to our Humiliation; but never think or ſpeak of them with the leaſt Delight or Satisfaction; for this in God's Account is a new Commiſſion of them, and lays us under an Additional Guilt.

62 Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again. 64 Command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure, until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, he is riſen from the dead: ſo the laſt errour ſhall be worſe than the firſt. 65 Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as ſure as you can. 66 So they went, and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.

This laſt Paragraph of the Chapter acquaints us with the Endeavours that the Murtherers of Chriſt uſed to prevent his foretold Reſurrection: They ask and obtain of *Pilate*, that his Sepulchre may be ſtrongly guarded till the Third Day was paſt and over, when probably they intended to have expoſed his dead Body to the View of the People; and accordingly a threefold Guard is ſet about the Grave, the Stone, the Seal and the Watch, concluding that Chriſt was ſafe enough, either for riſing or ſtealing: The Stone making the Grave ſure, the Seal making the Stone ſure, and the Watch or Band of Soldiers making all ſure. The Stone being ſealed with the publick Seal, no Perſon might meddle with it upon pain of Death. Where *Note*, 1. The wonderful Wiſdom, the over-ruling Power and Providence of God; by this exceſſive Care and extraordinary Diligence the High Prieſts hoped to prevent our Saviour's Reſurrection, but the Truth and Belief of it was hereby confirmed to all the World. How much Evidence had Chriſt's Reſurrection wanted, if the High Prieſts and Elders had not been thus maliciouſly induſtrious to prevent his riſing? *Learn* 2. That the Endeavours uſed to obſtruct our Lord's Reſurrection, have render'd it more certain and undoubted; had not all this Care and Caution been uſed by his Enemies, the Grounds of our Faith had not been ſo ſtrong, ſo evident, and ſo clear. It was very happy, that the *Jews* were thus jealous and ſuſpicious, thus careful and diſtruſtful; for otherwiſe the World had never received ſo full and perfect an Evidence of Chriſt's Reſurrection as now, whereon all our Comfort and Salvation doth depend. Verily their ſollicitous Care to ſuppreſs our Redeemer's Reſurrection has render'd it more conſpicuous, and freed it from all Suſpicion of Forgery.

CHAP. XXVIII.

This laſt Chapter of St. Matthew *contains the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and gives us an Account of what he did on Earth between the time of his Triumphant Reſurrection, and his Glorious Aſcenſion.*

IN the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the firſt day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to ſee the ſepulchre.

The Lord of Life was buried upon the *Friday* in the Evening of that Day on which he was Crucified; and his holy Body reſted in the ſilent Grave, the next Day, and a part of the Morning the Day following. Thus he aroſe again the Third Day, neither ſooner nor later; not ſooner, leſt the Truth of his Death ſhould have been queſtion'd that he did not Die at all; and not later, leſt the Faith of his Diſciples ſhould have fail'd. And accordingly, when the Sabbath was paſt, and *it dawned towards the Firſt Day of the Week, in the Morning very early*, before Day, *Mary Magdalen*, and other devout Women, go to viſit the Sepulchre, intending, with their Spices and Odours, farther to Embalm our Lord's Body. But *Obſerve*, Although the Hearts of theſe good Women did burn with an Ardent Love and Zeal to their Crucified Lord, yet the commanded Duties of the Sabbath are not omitted by them; they ſtay till the Sabbath is ended, and then early in the Morning they go with Odours in their Hands to perfume his Sacred Corps; fearing neither the Darkneſs of the Night, nor the Preſence of the Watchmen: How great a Tribute of Reſpect and Honour is due and payable to theſe Women for their Magnanimity and Courage. They followed Chriſt when his Diſciples left him; they accompanied him to his Croſs, and followed his Hearſe to the Grave, when none of his Diſciples durſt appear. *Learn hence*, That Courage is the ſpecial and peculiar Gift of God; and where God gives Courage, it is not in Man to make afraid.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the Angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and came and rolled back the ſtone from the door, and ſat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow. 4 And for fear of him the keepers did ſhake, and became as dead men.

Obſerve here, 1. With what Pomp and Triumph doth our Lord ariſe. The Earth that *quaked* before at his Crucifixion, *quakes now again* at his Reſurrection, it quak'd then at the Diſſolution, now at the Reunion of his Humane Nature, to tell the World that the God of Nature then Suffered, and now Conquered. *Obſerve* 2. How an Angel is imployed in Chriſt's Reſurrection; *He rolls away the Stone.* But could not Chriſt have riſen then without the Angel's Help? Yes ſure, he that raiſed himſelf, ſurely could have removed the Stone: But God thinks fit to ſend an Officer from Heaven to open the Priſon Door of the Grave, and by ſetting our Surety at Liberty, proclaims our Debt to the Divine Juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit that the Angels who had been Witneſſes of our Saviour's Paſſion, ſhould alſo be Witneſſes of his Reſurrection. *Obſ.* 3. How unable the Keepers of the Grave were to bear the Sight and Preſence of the Angel; *they ſhake for Fear, and became as dead Men.* Angels being pure and perfect Spirits, Man is not able to bear the Sight of an Angel, no, not in Humane Shape, without Terror and Affrightment; and if the Sight of an Angel be ſo dreadful, what is the Sight of God himſelf!

5 And the Angel anſwered and ſaid unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that you ſeek Jeſus which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is riſen, as he ſaid; come, ſee the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his diſciples that he is riſen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there ſhall ye ſee him, lo, I have told you.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Lord's Reſurrection aſſerted and declar'd, *He is riſen.* God never intended that the Darling of his Soul ſhould be loſt in an obſcure Sepulchre; *he is not here*, ſays the Angel; that is, in the Grave, *where you laid him*, where you left him. Death has loſt its Prey, and the Grave has loſt her Gueſt. *Obſerve* 2. It is not ſaid, He is not here, for he is raiſed, but, *He is riſen.* The Word imports the active Power of Chriſt, or the ſelf-quickning Principle by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the Dead. *Acts* 1. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf active after his Paſſion. Learn*, That it was the Divine Nature or Godhead of Chriſt, which raiſed his Humane Nature from Death to Life. Others were raiſed from the Grave by Chriſt's Power, he raiſed himſelf by his own Power. *Obſerve* 3. The Teſtimony or Witneſs given to our Lord's Reſurrection; that of an Angel, *The Angel ſaid he is not here, but riſen.* But why is an Angel the firſt Publiſher of our Lord's Reſurrection? Surely the Dignity of our Lord's Perſon, and the Excellency of his Reſurrection required that it ſhould be firſt publiſhed by an Angel; and accordingly it is worthy our Obſervation, how very ſerviceable and officious the holy Angels were in attending upon our Saviour in the Days of his Fleſh; an Angel foretells *his Conception to the Bleſſed Virgin*; an Angel proclaims his *Birth to the Shepherds*; an Angel ſuccours him *in his Temptations in the Wilderneſs*; an Angel comforts him *in his Agony in the Garden*; and at his Reſurrection *the Angel rolls away the Stone from the Sepulchre*, and *brings the firſt Tydings of it to the Women.* In his Aſcenſion the Angels *bore him Company to Heaven*; and when he comes again to Judgment, *he ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. Obſ.* 4. The Perſons to whom our Lord's Reſurrection was firſt made known, *to Women*, to the *Two Maries.* But why to the Women? God will make choice of weak Means for producing great Effects, knowing that the Weakneſs of the Inſtrument redounds to the greater Honour of the Agent. In the whole Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, Almighty God intermixes Divine Power with Humane Weakneſs. Thus the Conception of Chriſt was by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt; but his Mother, a poor Woman, a Carpenter's Spouſe: So the Crucifixion of Chriſt was in much Meanneſs and outward Baſeneſs, being Crucified between two Thieves: But the Powers of Heaven and Earth trembling, the Rocks rending, and the Graves opening, ſhewed a Mixture of Divine Power. God will honour what Inſtruments he pleaſes, for the Accompliſhment of his own Purpoſes. But why to theſe Women, the two *Maries*, is this Diſcovery of Chriſt's Reſurrection firſt made? Poſſibly it was a Reward for their Magnanimity and Maſculine Courage. Theſe Women clave to Chriſt when the Apoſtles fled from him, and forſook him; they aſſiſted at his Croſs, they attended at his Funeral, they watched his Sepulchre. Theſe Women had more Courage than the Apoſtles, therefore God makes the Women Apoſtles to the Apoſtles; he ſends them to tell the Apoſtles of the Reſurrection, and they muſt have the News at the ſecond Hand. Oh what a tacit Rebuke was hereby given to the Apoſtles! A ſecret Check, that they ſhould be thus out-done by poor Women. Theſe holy Women went before the Apoſtles in the laſt Services that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the Apoſtles here come after them in their Rewards and Comforts. *Obſ.* 5. The Evidence which the Angel offers to the Women, to evince and prove the Verity and Certainty of our Saviour's Reſurrection; namely, by an Appeal to their Senſes. *Come ſee the Place where the Lord lay.* The Senſes, when rightly diſpoſed, are the proper Judges of all ſenſible Objects; Chriſt himſelf did appeal to his Diſciples Senſes concerning the Truth of his own Reſurrection. *Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my ſelf*; and indeed, if we muſt not believe our Senſes, we ſhall want the beſt external Evidence for the Proof of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; namely, the Miracles wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles: For what Aſſurance can we have of the Reality of thoſe Miracles, but from our Senſes; Therefore ſays our Saviour, *if ye believe not me, yet believe the Works that I do.* That is, the Miracles which I have wrought before your Eyes. Now as my Senſes tell me that Chriſt's Miracles were true, ſo they aſſure me that the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is falſe. From the whole *Note*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the Omnipotent Power of his God-head, revived and roſe again from the Dead, to the Terrour and Conſternation of his Enemies, and the unſpeakable Joy and Conſolation of Believers.

8 And they departed quickly from the ſepulchre with fear, and great joy, and did run to bring his diſciples word. 9 And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold, Jeſus met them, ſaying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worſhipped him. 10 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there ſhall they ſee me.

Obſerve here, 1. What Haſte and Speed theſe holy Women make to carry the News of Chriſt's Reſurrection to the Apoſtles; ſuch as find and feel their Hearts grieved for the Abſence and Want of Chriſt, will be very ready to comfort ſuch as are in the ſame Condition: Oh how glad are theſe holy Women to carry the good News of their Lord's Reſurrection to the Heart-broken Diſciples. *Obſ.* 2. How theſe holy Women haſting in Obedience to the Angel's Command to tell the Diſciples, do meet with Chriſt in the Way. Such as obey the Directions of God's Miniſters, ſeeking Chriſt in his own Way and Means, ſhall find him to their Comfort ſooner than they expected. Theſe holy Women find Chriſt before they look'd for him; *as they went to tell his Diſciples, Jeſus met them.* O! happy Women, whilſt they were weeping for a dead Chriſt, they find a living Jeſus. *Obſ.* 3. The affectionate and loving Title which Chriſt puts upon his Diſciples. *Tell my Brethren.* He might have ſaid, Go tell thoſe Apoſtate Apoſtles, that cowardly left me in my Danger, that durſt not own me in the High Prieſt's Hall, that durſt not come within the Shadow of my Croſs, nor within the Sight of my Sepulchre. Not a word of this by way of upbraiding them for their late ſhameful Cowardice, but all Words of Kindneſs. *Go tell my Brethren.* Where *Note*, That Chriſt calls his Diſciples *Brethren* after his Reſurrection and Exaltation, as he had done before in his State of Humiliation, to ſhew the Continuance of his former Affection to them, and that the Change of his Condition had wrought no Change in his Affection towards his deſpiſed Members: But thoſe that were his Brethren before in the time of his Abaſement, are ſo ſtill after his Exaltation and Advancement. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Place where Chriſt chuſes to meet with and ſpeak to his Diſciples, not in *Jeruſamen*, but in *Galilee*. *I go before them into* Galilee, *there ſhall they ſee me. Jeruſalem* was now a forſaken Place, a People abandoned to Deſtruction; Chriſt would not ſhew himſelf openly to them, but *Galilee* was a Place where Chriſt's Miniſtry was more acceptable. Such Places wherein Chriſt is moſt welcome to Preach, ſhall be moſt honoured with his Preſence. *In* Galilee *ſhall they ſee me.*

11 Now when they were going, behold, ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done. 12 And when they were aſſembled with the elders, and had taken counſel, they gave large money unto the ſoldiers, 13 Saying, ſay ye, His diſciples came by night, and ſtole him away while we ſlept. 14 And if this come to the governours ears, we will perſwade him, and ſecure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this ſaying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Prieſts and Elders endeavour by a notorious Lie to hinder the Belief of our Lord's Reſurrection; they ſuborn and bribe the Soldiers to ſay that his Corps was ſtoln out of the Grave. Lies have been an old Refuge, which the Enemies of Chriſt have all along had Recourſe unto; lying is an ancient Device of Satan. But, *Obſerve* 2. What an improbable and unlikely Lie this was, which they put into the Soldiers Mouths to vouch; *Say his Diſciples came and ſtole him away while we ſlept.* Frivolous excuſe! carrying with it a moſt ſelf-evident Contradiction. If the Soldiers were aſleep, how could they diſcover the Diſciples ſtealing away the Body? If awake, why did they not prevent their ſtealing it? Beſides, how improbable was it that Chriſt's few and fearful Diſciples ſhould attempt to open the Sepulchre guarded by Soldiers? And as unlikely was it that the Soldiers ſhould be all aſleep together, and ſo faſt aſleep too, that the great Stone at the Mouth of the Sepulchre ſhould be rolled away, and not one of the Soldiers awaked with the Noiſe. Infatuation is the certain Conſequence of Deſertion of God. Yet *Obſerve* farther, That this incredible Falſhood finds a faſt and firm rooting in the Belief of the *Jews* to this Day. *Note thence*, That it is a Righteous Thing with God to deliver up thoſe to ſtrong Deluſions, even to the believing of notorious Lies, who will not yield their Aſſent to Divine Truths upon the cleareſt Evidence, and moſt convincing Demonſtration. How ſtrange is it, that ſuch a Falſhood as this ſhould find Belief amongſt the *Jews* to this Day? But where Truth is obſtinately rejected, a Lie, tho' never ſo improbable, is received.

16 Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jeſus had appointed them. 17 And when they ſaw him, they worſhipped him: but ſome doubted.

The Meeting of our Saviour and his Apoſtles upon a Mountain in *Galilee*, was an appointed and general Meeting. The Mountain is ſuppoſed to be that near *Capernaum*, where he made that famous Sermon, called *the Sermon on the Mount*: and the Meeting is ſuppoſed to be appointed as a general Rendezvous for confirming the Faith of all his Diſciples in the Certainty of his Reſurrection. Poſſibly our Lord appointed this Place in *Galilee* ſo far from *Jeruſalem*, that his Diſciples might without Danger come thither to ſee their Saviour alive again after his Crucifixion. This is judged to be that famous Appearance, of which St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 1 Cor. 15. 6. *When he was ſeen of above Five Hundred Brethren at once.* And thoſe that ſaw him worſhipped him, who before had doubted. *Learn hence*, That when Faith is once ſatisfied, and ſees Chriſt to be God, it engages the Soul to worſhip him. Divine Worſhip is due to Chriſt upon the Account of his Divine Nature. No Creature can be the Object of Divine Worſhip, therefore they that worſhip Chriſt by praying to him, and yet deny him to be God, are certainly Idolaters. If Chriſt had had an Angelick Nature, that had not made him capable of Divine Worſhip: for Adoration is founded only in Divinity, and what is but Humane or Angelical, is not Adorable.

18 And Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt: 20 Teaching them to obſerve all things, whatſoever *I* have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: Amen.

Obſerve here, 1. A Power aſſerted. 2. An Authority delegated. 3. A Command injoined. 4. A Promiſe ſubjoined. *Obſerve* 1. A Power and Authority aſſerted by our Saviour as belonging to himſelf; *All Power is given to me both in Heaven, and in Earth.* 1. *In Heaven*; which comprehends a Power of ſending the Holy Ghoſt; a Power over the Angels, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, and a Power to diſpoſe of Heaven to all that ſhall believe in him. 2. *In Earth*; which comprehends a Power to gather a Church out of all Nations and Authority to rule, govern and defend the ſame againſt all its Enemies. *Learn hence*, That all Power and Authority concerning the Church of God, was given unto Chriſt, conferr'd upon him, upon the Account of his Meritorious Death and Triumphant Reſurrection. *All Power is given to me.* That is, as Mediator; but this Power was inherent in him as God from all Eternity. *Obſ.* 2. This Power delegated by Chriſt to his Apoſtles; *Go ye therefore, and teach, and baptize all Nations, Inſtructing them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Here is a threefold Power delegated by Chriſt to his Apoſtles. 1. To congregate and gather a Church, a Chriſtian Church, out of all the Heathen Nations throughout the World. Before he had confined them only to *Iſrael*, now they muſt travel from Country to Country, and Proſelyte the Heathen Nations, which before had been taught of the Devil, and were led away by his Oracles and Deluſions. *Go and diſciple all Nations*, without any Diſtinction of Country, Sex or Age whatſoever, and make the Goſpel Church as large as you can. *Thence Note*, That the Apoſtles and firſt Planters of the Goſpel had a Commiſſion from Chriſt to go amongſt the Pagan Gentiles, without Limitation; and were not to take up their ſettled Reſidence in any one Nation, but to Travel from Country to Country, inſtructing them in the ſaving Myſteries of the Goſpel. The ſecond Branch of their Power was to Baptize in the Name of the whole Trinity, *Baptizing in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt.* Where *Obſerve*, That all adult and grown Perſons are to be firſt taught and inſtructed before they be Baptized. But it follows not from hence, that the Children of ſuch Parents may not be Baptized before they are taught; for the Apoſtles were to Baptize all Nations, of which Children are a chief, if not the chiefeſt part. Beſides, thoſe that were proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion, tho' before they were circumciſed themſelves, they were inſtructed in the Law of God; yet when they were Circumciſed themſelves, their Children were not denyed Circumciſion at Eight Days old. In like manner have we no Reaſon to deny the Children of baptized Parents, who are in Covenant themſelves, the Sign and Seal of the Covenant, which is Baptiſm, God having aſſured his People that *he will be the God of them, and of their Seed.* If this Priviledge be denied, the Children of Chriſtian Parents are in a worſe Condition than the Children of the *Jews*, and conſequently Infants are in a worſe Condition ſince Chriſt's coming, than they were before, and the Priviledges of thoſe that live under the Goſpel are ſtreighter and narrower than thoſe that lived under the Law. *Obſerve* farther, In whoſe Name Perſons are to be Baptized; *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* Where we have a Profeſſion of our Belief in the Holy Trinity, a Dedication of the Perſon to the Worſhip and Service of the Holy Trinity, and a Stipulation or Covenant Promiſe that we will continue faithful in the Service of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to our Lives End. The third Branch of the Power which Chriſt delegated to his Apoſtles, was by their Miniſtry to preſs upon all their Converts an Univerſal Obſervance of, and Obedience to all his Commands. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Where *Note*, 1. That Preaching is the ordinary and inſtituted Means to convert Nations unto God. 2. That Preaching muſt not only go before Baptiſm, but follow after it. Obedience muſt be preſt upon, and practiſed by all thoſe that enter into Covenant with God; otherwiſe they lie under a greater Condemnation. 3. That Preaching the Goſpel is a chief part of the Miniſters Work, and no Apoſtle thought himſelf above that Duty. 4. As the Apoſtles did not, ſo the Miniſters of Chriſt ought not to teach any thing but what Chriſt commands them. 5. As they are to teach what Chriſt commands them, ſo they are to teach all things whatſoever Chriſt commands them; *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.* Laſtly, *Obſerve*, The Promiſe ſubjoined; *Lo I am with you always to the end of the World.* That is, I am and will be with you and your Succeſſors lawfully called by my Power and Authority, by the Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance of my Holy Spirit: I will be with you, to uphold my Ordinance, to protect, encourage, and reward you and all your Succeſſors in the faithful Diſcharge of your Truſt; and this not for a Day, a Year, or an Age, but to the End and Conſummation of all Ages. *Learn hence*, That the Miniſtry of the Word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments are a ſtanding and perpetual Ordinance, to continue in the Chriſtian Church throughout all Ages. *Learn* 2. That all the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, in what part of the World ſoever God ſhall caſt their Lot, and in what time ſoever they ſhall happen to live, may comfortably expect Chriſt's Gracious Preſence with their Perſons, and his Bleſſing upon their Endeavours. *Lo I am with you*, I am *always* with you, *and to the end of the World I will be with you.* Thanks be to Chriſt for the Gracious Promiſe of his Spiritual and Perpetual Preſence with his Miniſters to the end of the World. May this Promiſe cauſe us to gird up the Loins of our Minds, encreaſe our Diligence, Zeal and Fervour, accounting no Labour too great, no Service too much, no Sufferings too ſevere, ſo that *we may but finiſh our Courſe with Joy, and fulfil the Miniſtry we are engaged in.* Amen, Amen.

The END *of* St. MATTHEW.

The HOLY GOSPEL According to Saint MARK.

Saint Mark, *the Writer of this Compendious Hiſtory of our Bleſſed Saviour's Life and Death, was the Diſciple and Companion of Saint* Peter; *and ſome affirm, that he wrote his Goſpel from Saint* Peter's *Mouth, it being Dictated by Saint* Peter, *and Indited by the Holy Ghoſt: But ſince we are aſſured that the Spirit of God Indited the Book, we need not trouble our ſelves to find out whoſe Hand it was that held the Pen.*

CHAP. I.

THE beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God.

The Word *Goſpel* ſignifies a Meſſage of Glad Tydings, and intimates to us, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel contains the moſt Gladſome Tydings, the moſt Joyful Meſſage, that ever was ſent from God to Mankind: Happy Tydings, concerning our Reconciliation with God, and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt. Oh how highly ſhould we Prize, how ſtedfaſtly Believe, how cordially Embrace, theſe Good Tydings of Great Joy! *Obſerve*, 2. This Goſpel is called the *Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe Chriſt, as God, is the Author of this Goſpel, and alſo the principal Subject and Matter of it: Indeed St. *John the Baptiſt* was the firſt Publiſher and Preacher of the Goſpel Doctrine, but Chriſt himſelf was the Firſt and principal Author, and likewiſe the chief Subject Matter of it; for whatever is taught in the Goſpel, relates either to the Perſon and Offices of Chriſt, or to the Benefits received by him, or the Means of enjoying thoſe Benefits from him. *Obſerve*, 3. How St. *Mark* ſtiles Chriſt *the Son of God*, as St. *Matthew* had ſtiled him before the Son of *David*; the one ſets forth the Verity of his Humane Nature, the other the Reality of his Divine Nature; ſignifying to us, that the True and Promiſed Meſſias was both God and Man in Two diſtinct Natures, and One Perſon for ever. He is True and Real God, as well as the Father and the Holy Ghoſt; not a meer Man, but God as well as Man.

2 As it is written in the Prophets, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

St. *Mark* begins his Goſpel with an Account of St. *John the Baptiſt*'s Preaching and Miniſtry; and declares, 1. That the Prophets of Old, particularly *Iſaiah* and *Malachi*, did long before foretel the Baptiſt's Meſſage and Miniſtry; that he ſhould go before Chriſt as his Harbinger, to prepare the Way for him: *Behold, I ſend my meſſenger to prepare thy Way.* Where *Note*, 1. The Dignity and Authority of the Miniſters of Chriſt; they are his *Meſſengers*, ſent by him to deliver his Mind and Will unto his People. This Miniſterial Miſſion is Twofold, Extraordinary and Ordinary; the former, when God immediately by himſelf calls Men to the Holy Function; the latter, when he uſes the Miniſtry of Man in order thereunto. *Obſerve*, 2. The Work and Office of the Miniſters of Chriſt declared, and that is, to prepare People to receive Jeſus Chriſt offered and tendered to them in the Goſpel. *Behold, I ſend my meſſenger to prepare thy way before thee.* *Learn* thence, That the great Deſign and End of the Miniſtry of the Word, is to prepare and fit Men for entertaining the Holy Religion of Chriſt in their Hearts, and to oblige them to Walk according to the Rules and Directions of it in their Lives.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight.

Here *Note*, 1. The Title given to *John the Baptiſt*: He is called a *Voice*, in Reſpect of his Miniſterial Office, which was to Speak forth, to Promulge and Publiſh, the Doctrine of Salvation. 2. The Quality or Kind of this Voice, a *crying* Voice, *the Voice of one crying*. This implies, 1. His Earneſtneſs and Vehemency, his Zeal and Fervency, in Preaching. When we lift up our Voice, and cry aloud, we ſpeak with Earneſtneſs and Fervour. When our own Hearts are warmly affected with what we Preach, we may hope to affect the Hearts of our Hearers. Why has God commiſſioned Men, rather than Angels, to be the Preachers and Diſpenſers of his Word, but becauſe we can ſpeak to, and treat with Sinners more feelingly and more affectionately than the Angels can? 2. This crying of the Holy Baptiſt in his Preaching implies his Liberty and Boldneſs, as well as his Vehemency and Earneſtneſs, in delivering of his Meſſage. The Lifting up of the Voice in ſpeaking, argues Boldneſs and Courage in the Speaker; as on the contrary, the depreſſing of the Voice ſheweth Timerouſneſs. *Learn* hence, That the Miniſters of the Word are to uſe both Zeal and Earneſtneſs, and alſo Courage and Boldneſs of Spirit, in delivering the Word and Meſſage of God. Not forbearing to reprove Sin, nor concealing any Part of God's Truth, for fear of Mens Diſpleaſure. *Obſerve*, 3. The Sum and Subſtance of what he cried, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his Paths ſtraight.* That is, Make ready your ſelves, prepare your own Hearts to entertain the Doctrine and Glad Tydings of the Goſpel. It is a Metaphorical Speech, taken from the Cuſtom of Loyal and Dutiful Subjects; who, when their Prince is coming to Lodge in their City, they prepare and make ready the Way for his coming, by removing every thing that may obſtruct or hinder his Progreſs. *Learn* hence, That Man's Heart by Nature is very unfit to embrace and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We have Naturally no Fitneſs, no Diſpoſition, no Inclination to believe in him, or to ſubmit unto him. 2. If ever we deſire to entertain Chriſt in our Hearts, we muſt firſt prepare and make fit our Hearts for the receiving and embracing of him. For tho' *the Preparation of the Heart be from the Lord*, yet he requires the Exerciſe of our Faculties, and the Uſe of our Endeavours. He prepares our Hearts, by enabling us to the Preparation of our own Hearts. This is done by getting a Sight of the Evil of Sin, a Senſe of our Miſery without Chriſt, and hungring and thirſting Deſire after him, a true Faith in him. Chriſt will lodge in no Heart that is not thus made ready to receive him.

4 John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of Sins.

A Twofold Account is here given of St. *John*'s Execution of his Miniſtry and Office; *Firſt*, his Baptizing; *Secondly*, his Preaching. *John did Baptize*: That is, admit Perſons into the Church, by waſhing them with Water. *John* baptized into the Name of Chriſt, who was to come; the Apoſtles baptized into the Name of Chriſt, already come. The ſecond Part of his Office was Preaching; where *Note*, That Preaching of the Word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, are to go together, and belong only to the Miniſters of the Word lawfully called. *John did Baptize and Preach*; but where and what did he preach? The Place where was the Wilderneſs; a Place not much frequented, tho' not altogether uninhabited; a ſolitary, mean, and obſcure Place. Thither God had called him, and there he contents himſelf. *Learn* hence, That the Miniſters of God muſt be content to execute their Miniſtry where God calls them, be the Place never ſo mean and obſcure, and the People never ſo rude and barbarous:

John was a Preacher of great Note and Fame; *Jeruſalem* the chief City might ſeem more fit for him; but God had called him to Preach in the Wilderneſs, and he would not leave it. We muſt not leave our Place becauſe it is mean and obſcure, nor deſert our People thinking them too baſe to inſtruct; but where God has called us we muſt there abide, till he that call'd us thither remove us thence. *Obſerve* farther, As the place where the Baptiſt preach'd, *in the Wilderneſs*, ſo the Doctrine which he preach'd, namely, *the Baptiſm of Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sin:* That is, the Doctrine of Baptiſm, which ſealeth Remiſſion of Sins to the Party baptized. *Learn* hence, That the Preaching of the Doctrine of Repentance is abſolutely Neceſſary, and the Indiſpenſible Duty of every Goſpel-Miniſter. *John Baptiſt* preach'd it, our Saviour preach'd it, his Apoſtles preach'd it. *They went out Preaching every where that Men ſhould repent.* The Baptiſm of Repentance (ſays the Learned *Lightfoot*) belongs to Children, tho' they know not what Repentance means, becauſe it engages them to Repentance when they come to Years to underſtand that Engagement. For thus was it with Children circumciſed, they became Debtors to obſerve the whole Law. Tho' they knew not what the Law meant, yet Circumciſion bound them to it when they came to Years of Diſcretion.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

Here we have an Account of the Succeſs of *John*'s Miniſtry; 1. In the general Concourſe and Reſort of the People to it. *All Judea and Jeruſalem*; that is, a great many of all Degrees and Ranks, of all Ages and Sexes. *John* was famed for a Prophet, and a Prophet was now a great Rarity. *Malachi* was the laſt Prophet before *John*, and he lived about Five Hundred Years before *John*. Now the Excellency of his Perſon, the Earneſtneſs of his Preaching, the Acceptableneſs of his Doctrine, that the Meſſias was come, and the Auſterity of his Life and Converſation, all theſe cauſed the People to flock unto him. *Learn* hence, That it is a great Encouragement to the Miniſters of Chriſt when People ſhew themſelves ready and forward to repair unto the Places where the Word and Sacraments are diſpenced to them: *All Judea and Jeruſalem* attended upon *John*'s Miniſtry. The ſecond Fruit of *John*'s Miniſtry was, that the People were ready to receive at his Hand the Sacrament of Baptiſm; *They were all baptized of him in Jordan.* *Learn* hence, That the Miniſters of Chriſt ought not only to preach the Word, but alſo to diſpence the Sacraments, to their People, even to all that do deſire them, and are fit to be partakers of them. A third Fruit of *John*'s Miniſtry was his Hearers Profeſſion of their true Repentance by the *Confeſſion of their Sins:* As the Profeſſion of Repentance is requiſite in all that are Baptized, ſo a free and voluntary, ingenious and impartial Confeſſion of Sin, is a good Evidence and Teſtimony of the Truth and Sincerity of our Repentance.

6 And John was cloathed with camels hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins: and he did eat locuſts and wild honey.

This Verſe acquaints us with the Strictneſs and Auſterity of St. *John*'s Life in the Wilderneſs, which is laid down in Two Things, in his mean and frugal Apparel, and in his ſober and temperate Diet. His Apparel was rough and *hairy*, and his *Girdle of Leather*; as *Elijah* his Forerunner was clad before him, 2 *King.* 1. 8. His Diet was coarſe and ordinary, *Locuſts and wild Honey*; that is, ſuch plain and ordinary Food as the Wilderneſs afforded. His Examples teaches us, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are not to affect either Bravery in Apparel, or Delicacy in Diet, but both by their Habit and Diet ſet an Example of Gravity and Sobriety before their People; being in theſe, as well as in other Things, an Example unto their Flocks.

7 And preached, ſaying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe.

Obſerve here, 1. The high Opinion that the Baptiſt had of Chriſt; *he is mightier than I:* That is, a Perſon of greater Dignity and Excellency by far than my ſelf; whence may be gathered, that tho' Chriſt was Man, he was not meer Man, but more than Man; even very God, equal with the Father; for *John Baptiſt* was *the greateſt of them that were Born of Women*, Matth. 11. 11. yet ſays he, *Chriſt is mightier or greater than I.* How ſo? But in regard of the Dignity of his Perſon, being both God and Man in Two diſtinct Natures, and One Perſon. *Obſerve*, 2. The humble and low Eſtimation that the Baptiſt had of himſelf; *His Shoe Latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe:* A proverbial Speech, implying, that he was unworthy to do the baſeſt and meaneſt Service for Chriſt. Oh how well doth Humility of Mind, an humble Apprehenſion, a low Eſteem and Opinion of themſelves, and their own Gifts and Abilities, become the Meſſengers and Miniſters of Chriſt! *John* was a Man of Eminent Abilities, yet of Exemplary Humility; he thought himſelf unworthy to unlooſe Chriſt's Shoe, or do the meaneſt Office for him.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he ſhall baptize you with the holy ghoſt.

John ſhewed the Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon above his own in the former Verſe; in this he declares the Excellency of Chriſt's Office, and the Meanneſs of his own; I waſh the Body with Water, but Chriſt cleanſes the Soul by the Operation of his Holy Spirit. Thence *Learn*, That tho' the Miniſters of Chriſt do by Chriſt's Command diſpence the Outward Ordinance of Baptiſm, yet it is Chriſt himſelf, that by the Inward Work of his Spirit doth make it effectual to ſuch as receive it. *I baptize with Water, but he with the Holy Ghoſt.*

9 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and the ſpirit like a dove deſcending upon him. 11 And there came a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

See the Note on Matth. 3. 13. *Obſerve* here, 1. The great Condeſcenſion of Chriſt, in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the Baptiſm of *John:* Chriſt, tho' he was *John*'s Lord and Maſter, yea, Lord of Heaven and Earth, yet cometh to hear *John* Preach, and will be Baptized of his Meſſenger. Thence *Learn*, That the greateſt Perſons ſhould neither think themſelves too great, nor too good, to come unto the Miniſters of God, to hear the Word from his Mouth, or to receive the Sacrament at his Hand. Chriſt, the Son of God, was content to be Baptized of *John*, a mean Perſon in Compariſon of himſelf. How dare then the greateſt upon Earth deſpiſe the Miniſtry of Man, being appointed by God? *Obſerve*, 2. The ſolemn inveſting of Chriſt into the Office of a Mediator by a threefold Miracle; namely, the opening of the Heavens, the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and God the Father's Voice or Teſtimony concerning his Son: *The Heavens were opened*, to ſhew that Heaven which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our Sins, is now opened to us by Chriſt's undertaking for us. As Chriſt opened Heaven by his meritorious Paſſion, ſo he keeps it open by his prevailing Interceſſion. Next, *The Holy Ghoſt deſcends like a Dove upon our Saviour.* Here we have a Proof and Evidence of the Bleſſed Trinity. The Father ſpeaks from Heaven, the Son comes out of the Water, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcends in the Likeneſs of a Dove. But why did the Holy Ghoſt now deſcend upon Chriſt? *Firſt*, For the Deſignation of his Perſon, to ſhew that he was the Perſon ſet apart for the Work and Office of a Mediator. *Secondly*, For the Sanctification of his Perſon for the Performance of that Office. This was Chriſt's Unction, the Day in which he was Anointed above his Fellows to be the King, Prieſt and Prophet, of his Church, *Iſa.* 61. v. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath anointed me*, &c. *Obſerve*, 3. The Voice of God the Father pronouncing, 1. The Nearneſs of Chriſt's Relation to himſelf; *This is my Son.* 2. The Endearedneſs of his Perſon; *This is my Beloved Son.* 3. The Fruit and Benefit of this near and dear Relation unto us; *In him I am well pleaſed.* Hence *Learn*, 1. That there is no Poſſibility for any Perſon to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; neither our Perſons nor our Performances can find Acceptance but thro' him, and for his ſake. 2. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Ground and Cauſe of all that Love which God the Father ſheweth to the Sons of Men: In Chriſt God is well pleaſed with us as a reconciled Father; out of him a conſuming Fire.

12 And immediately the ſpirit driveth him into the wilderneſs. 13 And he was there in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beaſts, and the angels miniſtred unto him.

Immediately; That is, 1. After his Baptiſm. Chriſt is no ſooner out of the Water of Baptiſm, but he is in the Fire of Temptation: Such as are Baptized with Chriſt, and entered into the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they muſt look to be aſſaulted with Satan's Temptations. Again, *Immediately*, that is, 2. After the Father had declared his Complacency in him, and being Well-pleaſed with him. *Learn* thence, That great Manifeſtations of Love from God are uſually followed with great Temptations from Satan. *The Spirit driveth him*; that is, the Holy Spirit of God. For the Devil is ſeldom, if ever, called the Spirit, but uſually ſome Brand of Reproach is annexed, as the evil Spirit, or the unclean Spirit, and the like. *Chriſt was led by the Spirit*, ſays St. *Matthew*, 4. 1. *He was driven by the Spirit*, ſays St. *Mark*; that is, He was carried by a ſtrong Impulſe of the Spirit of God to be tempted by Satan, and did not go of his own private Motion to enter the Liſts with Satan. *Teaching* us our Duty, not to run into, or ruſh upon, Temptations without a Warrant and call from God. *Obſerve* next, The Place where Satan aſſaulted Chriſt with his Temptations; it was a ſolitary Wilderneſs. No Place can priviledge us from Temptations, or be a Sanctuary from Satans Aſſaults. The ſolitary Wilderneſs has a Tempter in it; yea, Satan oft-times makes uſe of Mens Solitarineſs to farther his Temptations; and ſuch as ſeperate themſelves from Human Society, and give themſelves up to Solitude and Retirement, they give great Advantage to the Temper to tempt them. *Obſerve* next, the Time and Continuance of our Holy Lord's Temptations; not for an Hour, a Day, a Week, or a Month, but for *Forty Days, and Forty Nights*; not all the Time, but very often in that Time. *Teaching* us what we are to expect from Satan; Temptations, not a few; he will not ſolicite us once, but often, and follow us with freſh Aſſaults; but the only Way to overcome him, is as often to reſiſt him. *Obſerve* farther, a ſpecial Aggravation of our Lord's Temptations in the Wilderneſs, *He was with the wild Beaſts*, having no Comfort from Man, but only wild Beaſts for his Companions, which were more likely to annoy and hurt him, than any way to help and comfort him. Here we have an Evidence of the Divine Power of Chriſt; who, as Lord of the Creatures, can alter and change the Nature of the Creatures at his Pleaſure, reſtraining the moſt Savage and Hurtful Beaſts from hurting either himſelf, or any of his People. *Obſerve*, laſtly, The Supply ſent in to Chriſt in the Hour of Temptation. *The Angels came and miniſtred unto him*; Food to his hungry Body, and Comfort to his tempted Soul. *Learn* thence, That thoſe who in the Hour of Temptation do hold out in reſiſting Satan, ſhall find that the Power and Faithfulneſs of God will not be wanting to them to ſend in Succor and Relief at laſt. *Then the Devil leaveth him, and behold Angels came and miniſtred unto him.*

14 Now after that John was put in Priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God. 15 And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the goſpel.

In this our Saviour's firſt beginning to preach the Goſpel, we have an Account of the Time when, the Place where, and the Sum of what he preached. *Obſerve*, 1. The Time when our Lord began to preach, and that was *after John the Baptiſt was caſt into Priſon*: where *Note*, 1. The undue Reward which the Miniſters of God do ſometimes meet with from a wicked World: They are hated, perſecuted, and impriſon'd, for their Courage in reproving Sin: *John*, for reproving *Herod*'s Inceſt, was put in Priſon. *Note*, 2. *John* was no ſooner in Priſon, and ſtopt, and hindered from preaching, but Chriſt began to preach. See the Care and Kindneſs of God towards his Church, in that he never leaves it wholly deſtitute of the Means of Inſtruction: When ſome of his faithful Miniſters are reſtrained from Preaching, he ſtirreth up others in their Rooms, not ſuffering all their Mouths to be ſtopt at once. *Obſerve*, 2. The Place where our Lord firſt preached, in *Galilee*. The Land of *Canaan* in our Saviour's time was divided into Three principal Provinces. On the South, *Judaa*; on the North, *Galilee*, in the midſt, *Samaria*. *Galilee* was divided into the upper and lower *Galilee*; the higher was called *Galilee* of the *Gentiles*, becauſe it was the outmoſt part of the Land, and ſo next unto the *Gentiles*. In this upper *Galilee Capernaum* was the Metropolis, or Chief, and *Corazin* a Leſſer City. Now much of our Saviour's time was ſpent in *Galilee*; he was conceived and brought up at *Nazareth*, a City in *Galilee*; he firſt preached at *Capernaum* in *Galilee*; he wrought the firſt Miracle at *Cana* in *Galilee*. His Transfiguration was upon Mount *Tabor* in *Galilee*; and our Saviour's ordinary Reſidence was in *Galilee*; he came into *Judea*, and up to *Jeruſalem*, only at the Feaſts, and after his Reſurrection he appoints his Diſciples to meet him in *Galilee*. Only his Nativity, his Paſſion, and Aſcenſion, were proper to *Judea*: His Nativity at *Bethlehem*, his Paſſion at *Jeruſalem*, and his Aſcenſion upon Mount *Olivet*, hard by *Jeruſalem*. Now all this demonſtrates Chriſt to be the true and promiſed Meſſias; for according to Prophecy, the *Meſſiah* was to have his Preſence and Principal Abode in the Province of *Galilee*. *Iſa*. 9. *v*. 1, 2, 3, *&c*. Yet becauſe he was of *Galilee*, the *Jews* would not believe him to be the *Meſſiah*, ſaying in Scorn, *Can any good thing come out of* Galilee? Whereas our Saviour's Habitation and free Converſation there was a Proof unto them, and ought to have perſwaded them, that according to Prophecy he was the very Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. The Sum of what our Lord preached, namely, a Doctrine, and an Exortation. His Doctrine is, *That the Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand.* That is, that the Time foretold by the Prophets when the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* ſhould begin was now come. The Exortation is, *Therefore Repent, and Believe the Goſpel.* From the former, *Note*, That the *Meſſiah*'s coming, or our Saviour's appearing in the Fleſh, was exactly at the Time foretold by the Holy Prophets. *The Time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of the Meſſiah is at Hand.* *Note*, 2. That the great Doctrines of Repentance and Faith are taught only in and by the Goſpel, and accordingly ought in a ſpecial Manner to be preach'd, and inſiſted upon by the Miniſters of the Goſpel. The Doctrine of Chriſt and his Ambaſſadors is and ought to be the ſame; they both teach the great Doctrines of Faith and Repentance to a loſt World. *Repent, and Believe the Goſpel.*

16 Now as he walked by the ſea of Galilee, he ſaw Simon and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: (for they were fiſhers.) 17 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come after me, and I will make you to become fiſhers of men. 18 And ſtraightway they forſook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he ſaw James the ſon of Zebedee, and John his brother, who alſo were in the ſhip mending their nets. 20 And ſtraightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ſhip with the hired ſervants, and went after him.

In this Hiſtory of our Saviour's calling the Four Diſciples, *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, *Obſerve* theſe Particulars. *Obſ*. 1. The Meanneſs of the Perſons whom he calls, illiterate *Fiſhermen*: Chriſt took hereby effectual Care that his Goſpel ſhould be known to be the Power of God, and not the Wiſdom and Device of Man; and that the Inſtruments ſhould not carry away the Glory of the Work. *Obſerve*, 2. Chriſt called his Apoſtles by Couples, *Two and Two*; firſt *Peter* and *Andrew*, then *James and John*; thereby ſignifying to us, that the Work of the Miniſtry requires the Concurrence of all Hands that are called to it. All the Miniſters of God ſhould join their Hearts and Hands, and ſet their Shoulders as one Man to this Great Work, and all little enough (God knows) to carry it on with Advantage and Succeſs. *Obſerve*, 3. The Work which they are called from, and called to, from being *Fiſhermen*, to be *Fiſhers of Men*; from catching Fiſh with the Labour of their Hands, to catch Men with the Labour of their Tongues. *Obſ*. 4. Our Saviour's Command, firſt to follow him before they be ſent out by him: *Follow me, and I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* We muſt be Chriſt's Diſciples before we are his Miniſters; his Followers before we are his Ambaſſadors: We muſt learn Chriſt before we preach him; otherwiſe we may Fiſh for a Livelihood, but not for Souls. *Obſ*. 5. The Gracious Promiſe which Chriſt gives his Apoſtles for their Encouragement; namely, to qualifie them for, and to ſucceed them in, their Office. *I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* Faithfulneſs and Care, Diligence and Endeavour, is our part, but the Bleſſing and Succeſs is Chriſt's; our Labour is only in the Caſt, Chriſt's Power is wholly in the Draught. Some Fiſh cleave to the Rocks, others play upon the Sands, more wallow in the Mud; and verily we ſhall labour all our Days, and catch nothing, if Chriſt doth not bring our Fiſh to Net, and incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the throwing and caſting of it. *Obſ*. 6. The Apoſtles ready Compliance with our Saviour's Call, *Straightway they forſook Father and Friends, Ship and Nets,* and *followed him.* Whom Chriſt calls, he calls effectually; he draws whom he calls, and works their Hearts to a ready Compliance with their Duty. *Obſ.* 7. That upon their Call to the Miniſtry they leave off their Trade, they forſake their Ship and their Nets, and lye cloſe to their Miniſterial Imployment. *Teaching us*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould wholly give themſelves up to their great Work, and not incumber themſelves with Secular Affairs, and worldly Buſineſs. Nothing but an indiſpenſible Neceſſity, in providing for a Family, can excuſe a Miniſter's encumbring himſelf with worldly Concerns and Buſineſs.

21 And they went into Capernaum, and ſtraightway on the ſabbath-day he entred into the ſynagogue, and taught. 22 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the ſcribes.

Our Saviour having called his Diſciples, *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, to follow him in order to their preaching of the Goſpel; here we may obſerve how he went himſelf along with them, teaching perſonally in the Synagogues where-ever he came: He did not ſend his Apoſtles forth as his Curates, and lye at home himſelf upon his Couch of Eaſe. What ſhall we ſay to thoſe lazy Fiſhermen that ſet others to the Drag, but care only to feed themſelves with the Fiſh? Not willing to wet their Hand with the Net, or take any Pains themſelves? Our Saviour did not thus, but when he ſent forth his Apoſtles, he ſtill preached himſelf, he went into their Synagogues, and taught. *Obſerve* farther, The Succeſs of his preaching; the People were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine, ſtruck with Admiration, apprehending and believing him to be an extraordinary Prophet, ſent from God. *Learn* thence, That ſuch is the Efficacy of Chriſt's Doctrine, eſpecially when accompanied with the Energy and Operation of his Holy Spirit, that it makes all his Auditors Admirers; cauſing Aſtoniſhment in their Minds, and Reformation in their Manners. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Reaſon of our Lord's Succeſs in preaching; *He taught as one having Authority.* He taught in his own Name, as being Lord of his Doctrine; not ſaying with the Prophets, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, but, *I ſay unto you.* And he wrought powerful Miracles, which accompanied his Doctrine. As Chriſt was careful to preſerve the Authority of his Perſon and Doctrine with the People, ſo is it the Duty of his Miniſters to demean themſelves amongſt their People, that neither their Authority may be contemned, nor their Perſons deſpiſed, but their Doctrine and themſelves reverenced and obeyed.

23 And there was in their ſynagogue a man with an unclean ſpirit, and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? Art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee, who thou art, the holy One of God. 25 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy Peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, inſomuch, that they queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him.

St. *Mark* having given an Account of our Saviour's Doctrine which he preach'd, *v.* 15. namely, the Doctrine of Faith and Repentance, he now acquaints us in the remaining part of this Chapter with the Miracles which he wrought for the confirming of his Doctrine, and they are Three: *Firſt*, The *caſting of a Devil out of one poſſeſſed*, v. 23. *Secondly*, The *curing of* Peter'*s Wife's Mother of a Fever*, v. 29. *Thirdly*, The *cleanſing of a Leper*, from *v.* 40. to the end of the Chapter. His firſt Miracle was the *caſting out of a Devil out of one poſſeſſed. There was a Man with an unclean Spirit*: That is, an unclean Spirit did enter into him, and bodily poſſeſs him. Amongſt the many Calamities which Sin has brought upon our Bodies, this is one, that we are liable to be bodily poſſeſs'd by Satan. The Devil has an inveterate Malice againſt Mankind, ſeeking to ruin our Souls by his Suggeſtions and Temptations, and to deſtroy our Bodies by ſome Means or other: But bleſſed be God, tho' his Malice be infinite, yet his Power is limited and bounded; as he cannot do all the Miſchief he would, ſo he ſhall not do all he can. Oh how much is it our Intereſt, as well as our Duty, by Prayer, to put our ſelves Morning and Evening under the Divine Protection, that we may be preſerved from the Power and Malice of Evil Spirits! *Obſ.* 2. The Attribute or Title given to the Devil, he is called an *unclean Spirit*. The Devils, thoſe wicked Spirits of Hell, are moſt impure and filthy Creatures; impure by Means of their Original Apoſtacy, impure by Means of their Actual and Daily Sins, ſuch are Murder, Malice, Lying, and the like, by which they continually pollute themſelves; impure by Means of their continual Deſire and Endeavour to pollute Mankind with the Contagion of their own Sin. Lord, how foul is the Nature of Sin, which makes the Devil ſuch a foul and unclean Creature! *Obſ.* 3. This unclean Spirit no ſooner ſaw Chriſt but *he cried out*. Whence *Note*, That the Greatneſs of Chriſt's Power (being the Son of God) over Devils and wicked Spirits is ſuch, that it is very terrible and tormenting to them; it was terrible to them in his State of Humiliation on Earth, and made them cry out: But Oh, how terrible will his Power be to them at the Great Day, when *Chriſt ſhall come in flaming Fire, to render Vengeance both to Men and Devils!* *Obſ.* 4. The Subſtance of the Devil's Outcry; *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to deſtroy us?* Where *Note*, 1. That tho' the Devils are now as full of Sin and Diſcontent as they can be, yet are they not ſo full of Miſery and Torment, as they ſhall be. *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* ſays St. *Matthew*, 8. 29. *Art thou come to deſtroy us?* ſays St. *Mark*: That is, to bring upon us our full and final Deſtruction. Implying, that the Devil has not yet his full Judgment and compleat Damnation. Therefore there is certainly a Day of Judgment to come, and the Devils are in Chains of Darkneſs, reſerved to the Judgment of that Great Day. But ſome by theſe Words, *Art thou come to deſtroy us?* Underſtand as much as, Art thou come to reſtrain us from the Exerciſe of our Power? *Learn* we thence, That the Devil thinks himſelf deſtroyed when he is reſtrained from doing Miſchief. *Obſ.* 5. The Title which the Devil puts upon our Saviour; *Jeſus of Nazareth, the Holy One of God.* Altho' there was Ground for the common Peoples calling Chriſt *Jeſus of Nazareth*, becauſe he was bred and brought up there, and lived there during his private Life, till about Thirty Years of Age; tho' he was not Born there, but at *Bethlehem*; yet it is conceived, that the Devil gave this Title to our Saviour in Policy, to diſguiſe the Place of Chriſt's Nativity, that ſo the *Jews* might not believe him to be the true *Meſſiah*, becauſe he was of *Nazareth*, whereas the *Meſſiah* was to come out of *Bethlehem*. Therefore to the Intent that the *Jews* might be at the greater Loſs concerning Chriſt, and in Doubt of his being the true *Meſſiah*, the Devil here calls him not Jeſus of *Bethlehem*, but *Jeſus of Nazareth*. But how comes the next Title out of the Devil's Mouth, *The Holy One of God*? Could an Apoſtle, could *Peter* himſelf, make a Profeſſion beyond this? But how comes the Devil to make it? For no good End or Purpoſe we may be ſure; for he never ſpeaks Truth for Truth's ſake, but for Advantage. Probably, 1. He made this Profeſſion, that ſo he might bring the Truth profeſs'd into Suſpicion, hoping that a Truth which received Teſtimony from the Father of Lies would be ſuſpected. 2. It might perhaps be done that the People might believe that our Saviour had ſome Familiarity with Satan, and did work Miracles by his Help, becauſe he did confeſs him, and ſeem ſo much to honour him. From this Inſtance and Example *Learn*, That it is poſſible for a Perſon to own and acknowledge Chriſt to be the true and only Saviour, and yet to miſs of Salvation by him. If a ſpeculative Knowledge and a verbal Profeſſion of Chriſt were ſufficient to Salvation, the Devil himſelf would not miſs of Happineſs. *Obſ.* 6. How our Saviour rebukes the Devil for this Confeſſion, and commands him Silence; *And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy Peace.* But why was this Rebuke given the Devil when he ſpake the Truth? *Anſw.* 1. Becauſe Chriſt knew that the Devil confeſs'd this Truth on purpoſe to diſgrace the Truth. 2. Becauſe the Devil was no fit Perſon to make this Profeſſion. A Teſtimony of Truth from the Father of Lies is enough to render Truth it ſelf ſuſpected: Yet the Devil's Evidence, that Chriſt was the Holy One of God, will riſe up in Judgment againſt the wicked Phariſees, who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Miracles, and ſtopt their Ears againſt the Doctrine *of the Holy One of God.* *Obſerve* laſtly, How the unclean Spirit obeys the Voice of Chriſt, tho' with great Reluctancy and Regret; *When the unclean Spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud Voice, he came out.* Chriſt is Lord over the wicked Angels, and has an abſolute Power and Authority to over-rule them, and command them at his Pleaſure; if Chriſt ſays to the Evil Spirit, *Come out*, out he muſt come. Yet obſerve the Devil's Spight at parting, *he tears the Man*, tortures his Body, throws him violently from Place to Place, ſhewing how loth he was to be diſpoſſeſſed. Where Satan has once gotten an Hold, and ſettled himſelf for a time, how unwilling is he to be caſt out of Poſſeſſion; yea, it is a Torture and Vexation to him to be caſt out; it is much eaſier to keep him out than to caſt him out. Satan may poſſeſs the Body by God's Permiſſion, but he cannot poſſeſs our Hearts without our own Conſent and Approbation; it will be our Wiſdom to deny him Entrance into our Souls at firſt, by rejecting his wicked Motions and Suggeſtions; for when once entred, he will, *like the ſtrong Man armed, keep the Houſe, till a ſtronger than he caſts him out.*

28 And immediately his fame ſpread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee. 29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the ſynagogue, they entred into the houſe of Simon, and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wive's mother lay ſick of a fever: and anon they tell him of her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lift her up, and immediately the fever left her, and ſhe miniſtred unto them.

The ſecond Miracle which our Saviour wrought in this Chapter to confirm the Truth and Authority of his Doctrine, was his raiſing up of *Peter's Wive's Mother* from her Bed of Sickneſs. Where *Note*, 1. That St. *Peter*, now a Diſciple, and afterwards an Apoſtle was a married Perſon. Neither the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the Miniſters of the New, did abhor the Marriage-Bed, nor think themſelves too Pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker. The Church of *Rome*, by denying the Lawfulneſs of Prieſts Marriage, makes her ſelf wiſer than God, who ſays, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is honourable amongſt all Men. Obſ.* 2. *Peter*, tho' a good Man, and his Wive's Mother probably a gracious Woman, yet is his Family viſited with Sickneſs. Strength of Grace, and Dearneſs of Reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail againſt Diſeaſes. God's own Children are viſited with bodily Sickneſſes as well as others. *Obſ.* 3. The Charitable Care of St. *Peter*, and the other Diſciples, forthwith to acquaint Chriſt with the Condition of this Sick Perſon. *Anon they tell him of her.* The Care of our Fellow-Chriſtians, eſpecially when of the number of our near and dear Relations in a Time of Sickneſs, is not to be deferred or delayed. Outward Help for their Bodies, and the Spiritual Help of our Prayers for their Souls, are both ſtraightway to be afforded them. *Obſ.* 4. Chriſt's Divine Power manifeſted in this Miraculous Cure: *He no ſooner took her by the Hand but the Fever left her.* The Miracle was not in curing an Incurable Diſtemper, but in curing an ordinary Diſtemper after a Miraculous manner; namely, 1. By a Touch of the Hand. 2. The Recovery was inſtantaneous and ſudden: *Immediately the Fever left her.* 3. The viſible Effects of her Recovery inſtantly appeared: *She aroſe and miniſtred unto* Chriſt and his Diſciples. That ſhe could ariſe, argued her Cure Miraculous; that ſhe did ariſe, and did adminiſter to Chriſt, argued her Thankfulneſs. *Learn* thence, That after Chriſt has graciouſly healed any of us, it ought to be our firſt Work and Care to adminiſter unto Chriſt. That is, to employ our recovered Health in the Service of Chriſt, and to improve our renewed Strength to the Honour and Glory of Chriſt.

32 And at even, when the ſun did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with devils: 33 And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many that were ſick of divers diſeaſes, and caſt out many devils, and ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him.

The Evangeliſt here declares ſundry other Miracles wrought by our Saviour before the Door of St. *Peter*'s Houſe, where he now was: He healed all the Diſeaſed that were brought unto him, and caſt out Devils out of them that were poſſeſſed with them. But how comes it to paſs that we read of ſo many poſſeſſed with Devils in our Saviour's Time, and ſo few either before or ſince? *Anſw.* 1. Probably Satan perceiving that the *Meſſiah* was come in the Fleſh to deſtroy his Kingdom, did rage the more, and diſcover greater Malice and Enmity againſt Mankind. 2. Perhaps Almighty God permitted Satan at that time, to poſſeſs ſo many, that Chriſt might have Occaſion to manifeſt his Divine Power by caſting Satan out: And accordingly we find our Saviour diſpoſſeſſing all that were poſſeſs'd by Satan. It is added, *That he ſuffered not the Devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him.* That is, Chriſt would not be made known to be the Son of God by the preaching of the Devil, to whom it belonged not to publiſh the Goſpel, leſt the World ſhould take from thence an Occaſion to think that our Saviour held a Correſpondency with thoſe wicked Spirits, and that the Miracles he wrought were performed by the Devil's Aſſiſtance, as being one in Combination with him; poſſibly from the Devil's owning Chriſt to be the Holy One of God, the *Phariſees* concluded that there was a Compact and Agreement betwixt them, and thereupon their Affirmation was grounded, *he caſteth out Devils by* Beelzebub, &c.

35 And in the morning, riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed.

Obſerve here, 1. The Duty performed by our Saviour; namely, Prayer, ſolitary and private Prayer. He went by himſelf alone out of the hearing of his Diſciples. The Company of our beſt Friends is not always ſeaſonable, nor acceptable; there are Times and Caſes when a Chriſtian would not be willing that his deareſt Relations upon Earth, ſhould hear that Intercourſe which paſſes betwixt him and his God. *Obſ.* 2. Chriſt chuſes the Opportunity of the Morning for Prayer, *He riſes a great while before Day* to ſet about this Work. *Teaching* us, that the Morning is a fit Seaſon, yea, the beſt Seaſon, for private Duties. Now our Spirits are freſheſt, and our Minds freeſt, before the Diſtractions of the Day break in upon us; it is better to go from Prayer to Buſineſs, than from Buſineſs to Prayer.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. 37 And when they had found him, they ſaid unto him, All men ſeek for thee. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there alſo: for therefore came I forth. 39 And he preached in their ſynagogues throughout all Galilee, and caſt out devils.

Obſerve here, Two Things, *Firſt*, The great End of Chriſt in his Incarnation and coming into the World, *namely*, as a Prophet ſent from God to reveal his Will, and to publiſh the Doctrine of the Goſpel. *Therefore came I forth*; that is, to preach and plant the Goſpel. *Secondly*, It being Chriſt's Deſign not only to plant, but propagate, the Goſpel, he would not confine his Miniſtry to any particular Place, no, not to the great City of *Capernaum*, but reſolves to preach the Word in the ſmalleſt Towns and Villages. Leaving his Miniſters herein an Inſtructive Example, to be as willing to preach the Goſpel in the ſmalleſt Villages, as in the largeſt Cities, if God calls them thereunto. Let the Place be never ſo obſcure and mean, and the Congregation never ſo ſmall and little, if God ſends us thither, the greateſt of us muſt not think it beneath us to go and inſtruct an handful of People.

40 And there came a leper to him, beſeeching him, and kneeling down to him, and ſaying unto him, If thou wilt thou canſt make me clean. 41 And Jeſus moved with compaſſion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and ſaith unto him, I will, be thou clean. 42 And as ſoon as he had ſpoken, immediately the leproſie departed from him, and he was cleanſed. 43 And he ſtraightly charged him, and forthwith ſent him away. 44 And ſaith unto him, See thou ſay nothing to any man: but go thy way, ſhew thy ſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing thoſe things which Moſes commanded for a teſtimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publiſh it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, inſomuch, that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in deſart places: and they came to him from every quarter.

The laſt Miracle of our Saviour's, recorded in this Chapter, in his healing of a Leper; he came, beſeeching Chriſt to heal him: *Saying, If thou wilt thou canſt make me clean.* Where *Obſ.* 1. He doth not queſtion Chriſt's Power, but diſtruſts Chriſt's Willingneſs to heal him: *Lord, If thou wilt thou canſt.* Chriſt's Divine Power muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly believed by all thoſe that expect Benefit by him, and Healing from him. *Obſ.* 2. The great Readineſs of Chriſt to help and heal this diſtreſſed Perſon. *Jeſus touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean.* By the Ceremonial Law the Leper was forbidden to be touch'd, therefore Chriſt's touching this Leper ſhewed him to be above the Law, and that he was the Lord of it, and might diſpence with it; and his healing the Leper by the Word of his Mouth, and Touch of his Hand, ſhew'd him to be truly and really God. Leproſie amongſt the *Jews* was an incurable Diſtemper, called *the Finger of God*, a Diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing. Our Saviour therefore, as a Proof of his being the true *Meſſiah*, tells *John's* Diſciples, *Matth.* 11. 5. *That the Lepers were cleanſed, and the Dead Raiſed by him*; which Two being joyned together, do imply that the Cleanſing of Lepers is as much an Act of Divine Power, as the Raiſing of the Dead. And accordingly, 2 *Kin.* 5. 8. 'tis ſaid, *Am I a God, that this Man ſends to me to Cure a Man of his Leproſie.* *Obſ.* 3. The Certainty and Suddeneſs of the Cure, was a Proof of Chriſt's Divine Power: *Immediately* his Leproſie was cleanſed. Chriſt not only cured him without Means, but without the ordinary Time required for ſuch a Cure. Thus Chriſt ſhew'd both Power and Will to cure him miraculouſly, who believed his Power, but queſtioned his Willingneſs. *Obſ.* 4. The Cauſe moving our Saviour to Cure this Leper, *his Bowels were moved with tender Pity and Compaſſion towards him.* Chriſt's exerciſing Acts of Mercy and Compaſſion, with ſuch Condolency and Sympathizing Pity, ſhould by way of Example teach us to be inwardly moved with tender Compaſſion and Mercy towards ſuch as are in Miſery. We are not only to draw out our Bread, but to *draw out our Soul* to the Hungry. *Obſ.* 5. A Twofold Charge and Command given by Chriſt to the Leper after his Cure, 1. To conceal, and *tell it to no Man.* Where the great Modeſty, Humility and Piety of Chriſt is diſcovered, together with the Care of his own Safety. His Modeſty, in not deſiring his good Deeds ſhould be Publiſhed and Proclaimed. His Humility, in ſhunning Vain-glorious Applauſe and Commendation. His Piety, in deſiring all Honour and Glory ſhould redound entirely to God. And the Care of his own Safety appeared, leſt the Publiſhing of his Miracles ſhould create him untimely Danger from the *Phariſees.* The Second Part of the Charge given to the recovered Leper, was, *To ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt, and Offer the Gift which* Moſes *commanded: For a Teſtimony unto him*: That is to teſtifie to the *Jews*, that he did not oppoſe the Ceremonial Law, which required a Thank-Offering at his Hand, and that he was the true and promiſed *Meſſiah.* *Learn* thence, That our Saviour would have the Ceremonial Law punctually obſerv'd, ſo long as the time for its continuance did endure; tho' he came to deſtroy that Law, yet whilſt it ſtood he would have it punctually obſerv'd. *Obſerve* 6. Notwithſtanding our Saviour's ſtrict Prohibition, the Leper publiſhes the Fame of this Miracle. 'Tis like his Intention might be good, in extolling his great Benefactor, but his acting contrary to Chriſt's Command was a Fault, and ſhews the Corruption of Human Nature, in being moſt forward to that which is moſt forbidden. 'Tis a Sin to do any thing againſt the Command of Chriſt, tho' with never ſo good a Meaning, Purpoſe and Intention, to Exalt and Honour Chriſt. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Inconveniences which attended our Saviour upon this indiſcreet Publication of the Miracle; and they were Two. 1. Our Saviour *could no more enter into Capernaum*, and other Cities, to preach in an open Manner as he had done, by reaſon of the great Concourſe of People after him. 2. The Fame of this Miracle brought the People about him *from all Quarters*; not ſo much to hear as to ſee; not ſo much to hear his Holy and Heavenly Doctrine which he taught, as to gratifie their Curioſity with the Sight of the Miracles which he wrought. Oh how many throng'd after Chriſt, more to have their Bodily Diſeaſes cured, than their Souls healed. Chriſt deſired not their flocking after him upon this Account; therefore he retires from the Breath of popular Applauſe; he would not openly enter into the City, *but was without in Deſart Places.* Oh great Humility! How little did our Bleſſed Redeemer regard the Applauſe and Commendation of Men? Conſtantly we find him as ſoon as his publick Preaching and working Miracles was over, he withdraws himſelf from the Multitude into ſome private Place apart; he doth not ſtay in the Crowd with his Ear open to liſten how Men admire the Preacher, and applaud the Sermon; plainly ſhewing that he ſought his Father's Glory, not his own Praiſe, or the Peoples Commendation; leaving his Example as an inſtructive Pattern to all his Miniſters and Ambaſſadors to take heed of Vain-glory. Not to affect Popularity, or ſeek the Applauſe and Commendation of Men in what they do, reſolving that Man's Opinion ſhall be nothing with them, but that the pleaſing of God, and doing their Duty to the Souls of their People, ſhall always be their whole Scope.

CHAP. II.

AND again he entred into Capernaum after ſome days, and it was noiſed that he was in the houſe: 2 And ſtraightway many were gathered together, inſomuch that there was no room to receive them, no not ſo much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

In the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, we find how induſtriouſly our Bleſſed Saviour withdrew himſelf from the Concourſe and Throng of People which flock'd after him from every Quarter; and to ſhew how little he affected the Applauſe and Commendation of the Multitude, he left the Cities, and *was without in Deſart Places.* Hereby giving his Miniſters an Inſtructive Example to decline Vain-glory, and to ſhun popular Applauſe. But now the Words before us ſhew, that our Saviour having *entered* (privately it is probable) *into the City* of Capernaum, it is preſently noiſed and reported *that he was in the Houſe*, and a mighty Concourſe and Throng of People are after him, inſomuch that neither the Houſe, nor hardly the Streets, could contain them. Thence *Learn*, That ſuch as leaſt ſeek after Honour and Applauſe from Men, are oft-times moſt Famous and Renowned. Our Saviour was ſo far from ſeeking the Peoples Praiſe and Commendation, that he came into *Capernaum* without Obſervation, and betook himſelf to his Dwelling-houſe there; but the more he ſought to lye hid, the more he was taken notice of. Honour flies from them that purſue it, and purſues thoſe that fly from it. The Way to be Honourable is to be Humble. God ſeldom honours a proud Man, by making him either eminently ſerviceable, or ſucceſsful. *Obſerve* farther, the People being come together, our Saviour takes the Opportunity to preach; *And he preached the Word unto them.* Teaching his Miniſters, by his Example, to embrace all Opportunities, in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, on the Lord's Day, and on the Week Day, to edifie our People by our Miniſtry, by our publick Exhortations, by our private Inſtructions, and prudent Admonitions, and holy Example.

3 And they came unto him, bringing one ſick of the palſie, which was borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the preſs, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the ſick of the palſie lay. 5 When Jeſus ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſie, Son, thy ſins be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the ſcribes ſitting there, and reaſoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus ſpeak blaſphemies? who can forgive ſins but God only? 8 And immediately, when Jeſus perceived in his ſpirit that they ſo reaſoned within themſelves, he ſaid unto them, Why reaſon ye theſe things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it eaſier to ſay to the ſick of the palſie, Thy ſins be forgiven thee; or to ſay, Ariſe and take up thy bed and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of the palſie) 11 I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine houſe. 12 And immediately he aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, inſomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, ſaying, We never ſaw it on this faſhion.

Here we have the Relation of our Saviour's miraculous healing of one ſick of the Palſie at *Capernaum.* Where *Obſ.* 1. The diſeaſed and diſtreſſed Perſon, *one ſick of the Palſie.* Which Diſeaſe being a Revolution and Weakneſs of the Nerves, enfeebles the Joints, and confines the Perſon to his Bed or Couch. As a Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Power he was pleaſed to ſingle out the Palſie and Leproſie, incurable Diſeaſes, to work a Cure upon ſuch as were afflicted with them. Now this Perſon was ſo great a Cripple, by reaſon of the Palſie, that he was borne of Four. He could not go, nor was capable of being led, but was carried by Four in his Bed or Couch. *Obſ.* 2. As the Grievouſneſs of the Diſeaſe, ſo the Greatneſs of their Faith. The Man and his Friends had a firm Perſwaſion that Chriſt was cloath'd with a Divine Power, and able to help him, and they hoped in his Goodneſs that he was alſo willing to help him. Accordingly, the Roof of the Jewiſh Houſes being flat, they uncover ſome part of it, and let the Bed down with the ſick Man in it into the Room where Chriſt was. *Obſ.* 3. No ſooner did they exerciſe their Faith in believing, but Chriſt exerts his Divine Power in healing. And ſee the marvellous Efficacy of Faith, it obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected. They deſired only the healing of the Body, but Chriſt heals Body and Soul too. *Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven.* Thereby our Saviour ſhews them, that Sin is the Original Cauſe of all Bodily Diſeaſes, and conſequently that in Sickneſs the beſt Way to find Eaſe and Deliverance from Pain, is firſt to ſeek for Pardon. The Senſe of Pardon in ſome degree will take away the Senſe of Pain. *Obſ.* 4. The Exception which the Scribes took againſt our Saviour for pronouncing that this Man's Sins were forgiven him. They accuſe him of the Sin of Blaſphemy; urging, that it is God's peculiar Prerogative to pardon Sin. Their Doctrine was true, but their Application falſe. Nothing more true than that it is the higheſt degree of Blaſphemy for any meer Man to arrogate to himſelf the incommunicable Prerogative of God, which conſiſts in an Abſolute and Authoritative Power to forgive Sin. But then their denying this Power to Chriſt of forgiving Sin, which he had as God from all Eternity, and as Mediator, God and Man, in one Perſon, when here upon Earth; this was Blaſphemy in them; the challenging of it none in him. *Obſ.* 5. Our Saviour gives theſe Scribes a Twofold Demonſtration of his Godhead, 1. By letting them underſtand that he knew their Thoughts; *Jeſus perceived in his Spirit that they reaſoned within themſelves.* To ſearch the Hearts, and to know the Thoughts and Reaſonings of Men, is not in the Power of Angels or Men, but the Prerogative of God only. 2. By aſſuming to himſelf a Power to forgive Sin: For our Saviour here, by aſſuming to himſelf a Power of forgiving Sins in his own Name, and by his own Authority, doth give the World an undeniable Proof and convincing Evidence of his Godhead; *for who can forgive Sins but God only?* *Obſ.* 6. The Effect of this Miracle upon the Minds of the People; They marvelled, and were amazed, but not believed. They admire our Saviour for an extraordinary Man, but did not believe him to be God. *Learn* hence, That the Sight of Chriſt's Miracles is not ſufficient to work Faith in the Soul, without the concurring Operation of the Holy Spirit. The one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

13 And he went forth again by the ſea-ſide; and all the multitude reſorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 And as he paſſed by, he ſaw Levi the ſon of Alpheus ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and ſaid unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe, and followed him. 15 And it came to paſs, that as Jeſus ſat at meat in his houſe, many publicans and ſinners ſat alſo together with Jeſus and his diſciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the ſcribes and phariſees ſaw him eat with publicans and ſinners, they ſaid unto his diſciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and ſinners? 17 When Jeſus heard it, he ſaith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the phyſician, but they that are ſick: I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

Obſerve here, 1. The unwearied Pains and Diligence which our Saviour uſed in the Execution of his Miniſterial Office and Calling; no ſooner had he done preaching in *Capernaum,* and healing the Sick of the Palſie, but he goeth out thence *to the Sea-ſide,* to preach there. Oh Bleſſed Saviour! How perpetually wert thou employed in the Labours of thy Calling, in the Service of thy Father, and for the Good of Mankind! Thou went'ſt about doing Good, ſetting a Pattern for all thy Miniſters to follow. How doth the Example of thy laborious Diligence at once inſtruct and ſhame us! *Obſ.* 2. The number of our Lord's Diſciples not being fill'd up, obſerve what a free and gracious, unexpected and undeſerved Choice he makes. *Levi,* that is, *Matthew,* (for he had both Names) a grinding Publican, who gathered the Taxes for the *Romans,* and was probably guilty (as others were) of the Sins of Covetouſneſs, Extortion and Oppreſſion, yet is he called to follow Chriſt as a ſpecial Diſciple. *Learn* thence, That ſuch is the Freeneſs of God's Grace, that it calls and converts Sinners unto Chriſt when they think not of him, nor ſeek unto him. Little did *Levi* now think of a Saviour, much leſs ſeek after him, yet is he at this time called by him. *Matthew* a Publican, *Zaccheus* an Extortioner, *Saul* a Perſecutor, all theſe are brought home to God, as Inſtances and Evidences of the mighty Power of converting Grace. *Obſ.* 3. *Matthew*'s ready Compliance with Chriſt's Call; *He aroſe, and followed him.* When the inward Call of the Holy Spirit accompanieth the outward Call of the Word, the Soul readily complies, and preſently yields Obedience to the Voice of Chriſt. Chriſt oft-times ſpeaks by his Word to our Ears, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his Spirit efficaciouſly to our Hearts, Satan ſhall not hold us down, the World ſhall not keep us back, but we ſhall, with *Levi,* inſtantly ariſe, and follow our Saviour. *Obſ.* 4. *Levi* or *Matthew,* to ſhew his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt, makes him a great Feaſt. Chriſt invited *Matthew* to a Diſcipleſhip, *Matthew* invites Chriſt to a Dinner. The Servant invites his Maſter, a Sinner invites his Saviour. We do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any Table that he ever refus'd to go; if a *Publican,* if a *Phariſee,* invited him, he conſtantly went; not ſo much for the Pleaſure of eating, as for the Opportunity of converſing and doing Good. Chriſt feaſts us when we feaſt him. *Learn* hence, That new Converts are full of Affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive of their Love unto him. *Matthew,* touch'd with a Senſe of Chriſt's rich Love, makes him a Royal Feaſt. *Obſ.* 5. The Cavil and Exception which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* made at our Lord's free Converſation. They cenſure him for converſing with Sinners; he juſtifies himſelf, telling them that he convers'd with them as their Phyſician, not as their Companion. *They that are whole need no Phyſician,* ſays Chriſt, *but they that are ſick.* As if our Lord had ſaid, With whom ſhould a Phyſician converſe but with his ſick Patients? Now I am come into the World to do the Office of a kind Phyſician unto Men, ſurely then I am to take all Opportunities of converſing with them, that I may help and heal them, *for they that are ſick need the Phyſician:* But as for you *Scribes* and *Phariſees,* who are well and whole in your own Opinion and Conceit, I have no Hopes of doing Good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole deſire no Phyſician's Help. From this Aſſertion of our Saviour, theſe Truths are ſuggeſted to us; 1. That Sin is the Soul's Malady, its Spiritual Diſeaſe and Sickneſs. 2. That Chriſt is the Phyſician appointed by God for the cure and healing of this Diſeaſe. 3. That there are Multitudes of Sinners Spiritually ſick, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. 4. That ſuch, and only ſuch, as find and feel themſelves Spiritually ſick, are Subjects capable of Chriſt's healing. *They that are whole need not the Phyſician, but they that are ſick. I came not to call the* (Opinionatively) *Righteous, but the* (Senſible) *Sinner to Repentance.*

18 And the diſciples of John, and of the Phariſees uſed to faſt: and they come and ſay unto him, Why do the diſciples of John, and of the Phariſees faſt, but thy diſciples faſt not? 19 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber faſt, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot faſt. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 21 No man alſo ſeweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: elſe the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the

rent is made worſe. 22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: elſe the new wine doth burſt the bottles, and the wine is ſpilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine muſt be put into new bottles.

Obſerve here, 1. A great Difference betwixt *John*'s Diſciples and Chriſt's in the Matter of Faſting. *John*'s Diſciples imitated him, who was a Man of an Auſtere Life, and much given to faſting. Therefore is ſaid *To come neither eating nor drinking*, Matth. 11. 18. On the other ſide, Chriſt's Diſciples followed him, *who came eating and drinking*, as other Men did; and yet tho' there was a great Difference betwixt *John*'s Diſciples and Chriſt's in Matters of Practice, yet were they all of one Faith and Religion. Thence *learn*, That there may be Unity of Faith and Religion among thoſe who do not maintain an Uniformity in Practice. Men may differ in ſome outward Religious Obſervations and Cuſtoms, and yet agree in the Fundamentals of Faith and Religion. Thus did *John*'s Diſciples and Chriſt's; the one *faſted often*, the other *faſted not*. *Obſ.* 2. In that the Diſciples of the *Phariſees* uſed to faſt as well as *John*'s Diſciples. We may *learn*, That Hypocrites and wicked Men may be, and ſometimes are, as ſtrict and forward in the Outward Duties of Religion as the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians: They pray, they faſt, they hear the Word, they receive the Sacraments: They do, yea, it may be, they outdo, and go beyond the Sincere Chriſtian in external Duties, and Outward Performances. *Obſ.* 3. The Defenſative Plea, which our Bleſſed Saviour makes for the not faſting of his Diſciples; he declares that it was neither ſuitable to them, nor tolerable for them, thus to faſt at preſent, *Not ſuitable*, in regard of Chriſt's Bodily Preſence with them. This made it a time of Joy and Rejoicing, not of Mourning and Faſting. Chriſt is the Bridegroom, and his Church the Bride; whilſt therefore his Spouſe did enjoy his Bodily Preſence with her, it was a Day of Joy and Rejoicing to her, and Mourning and Faſting were improper for her. But when Chriſt's Bodily Preſence ſhall be removed, there will be Cauſe enough to Faſt and Mourn. Again, This Diſcipline of Faſting was not at preſent *tolerable* for the Diſciples; for they were raw, green, and tender, not fit for Auſterites, nor could bear as yet the Severities of Religion, no more than an *old Garment* could bear a piece of *new* ſtiff *Cloth* to be ſet into it, which will *make the Rent worſe*, if the Garment comes to a Stretch: Or no more than *old Bottles* can keep *new Wine*. As if our Saviour had ſaid, My Diſciples at preſent are tender and weak, newly called and converted; they cannot therefore bear the Severities of Religion preſently; but e'er long I ſhall leave them, and go to Heaven, from whence I will ſend down my Holy Spirit upon them, which ſhall enable them to all the Duties which the Goſpel enjoyns. Now the intended Leſſon of Inſtruction from hence is this, That it is hurtful and dangerous for young Converts, for weak Chriſtians, to be put upon the ſeverer Exerciſes of Religion, or to be urged to the Performance of ſuch Duties as are above their Strength. But they ought to be handled with that Tenderneſs which becomes the mild and gentle Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. Our Saviour here commends Prudence to his Miniſters, in treating their People according to their Strength, and putting them upon the Duties according to their Time and Standing.

23 And it came to paſs, that he went through the corn fields on the ſabbath day, and his diſciples began as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Phariſees ſaid unto him, Behold, why do they on the ſabbath-day that which is not lawful? 25 And he ſaid unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26 How he went into the houſe of God in the days of Abiathar the high Prieſt, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſt, and gave alſo to them which were with him? 27 And he ſaid unto them, The ſabbath was made for man, and not man for the ſabbath: 28 Therefore the ſon of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

Obſ. here, 1. The Poverty, the low Eſtate and Condition, of Chriſt's own Diſciples in this World; they wanted Bread, and are forced to *pluck the Ears of Corn*, to ſatisfie their Hunger. God may, and ſometimes doth, ſuffer his deareſt Children to fall into Streights, to taſte of Want, for the Trial of their Faith, and Dependance upon his Power and Providence. *Obſ.* 2. How the Phariſees (who accompanied our Saviour only with a Deſign to cavil at, and quarrel with every thing that either he or his Diſciples did) blame this Action of the Diſciples, namely, their plucking of the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day. Yet *Note*, Firſt, It was not any Theft which the Diſciples were charged with; for to take in our Neceſſity ſo much of our Neighbour's Goods as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that if he were preſent, and knew our Circumſtances, he would give us is no Theft. But it is the ſervile Labour on the Sabbath, in gathering the Ears of Corn, which the Phariſees ſcruple. Whence *Obſerve*, how zealous Hypocrites are for the leſſer Things of the Law, whilſt they neglect the greater, and ſuperſtitiouſly addicted to outward Ceremonies; placing all Holineſs in the Obſervation of them, neglecting Moral Duties. *Obſerve* farther, 3. How our Saviour defends the Actions of his Diſciples, in gathering the Ears of Corn in their Neceſſity, by the Practice and Example of *David*. Neceſſity freed him from Fault and Blame, in eating the Conſecrated Bread, which none but the Prieſts might lawfully eat. For in Caſes of Neceſſity a Ceremonial Precept muſt give Place to a Moral Duty. Works of Mercy and Neceſſity for preſerving our Lives, and the better fitting us for Sabbath Services, are certainly lawful on the Sabbath-day. *Obſ.* 4. A double Argument which our Saviour uſes to prove that the Sabbath's Obſervation may be diſpenced with in a Caſe of abſolute Neceſſity. 1. Drawn from the end of the Sabbath's Inſtitution; *The Sabbath was made for Man.* That is, Inſtituted of God for the Good and Benefit of Mankind, both with Reſpect to their Souls, and to their Bodies. The outward obſerving and keeping of the Sabbath is ſubordinate to the Good of Man, and therefore the Good of Man is to be preferr'd before the outward keeping of the Sabbath. 2. Argument is drawn from the Authority which Chriſt the Inſtitutor of the Sabbath has over it. *The Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*: That is, he has Authority and Power both as God, and as Mediator, to inſtitute and appoint a Sabbath, to alter and change the Sabbath, to diſpence with the Breach of it upon a juſt and great Occaſion. And conſequently Acts of Mercy, which tend to fit us for Works of Piety, not only may, but ought to be done upon the Sabbath-day, which was the Propoſition which our Saviour undertook to prove.

CHAP. III.

AND he entred again into the ſynagogue, and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the ſabbath-day, that they might accuſe him. 3 And he ſaith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he ſaith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the ſabbath-day, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill? but they held their peace.

The former part of this Chapter reports to us a Miraculous Cure wrought by Chriſt upon a Man who had a withered Hand. The Place where he wrought it, was the *Synagogue*; the Time when, was the *Sabbath-day*; the Manner how, was by *ſpeaking of a Word*; the Perſons before whom, were the envious and malicious *Phariſees*. Theſe Men were always cavilling at our Saviour's Doctrine, and ſlandering his Miracles; yet our Saviour goes on with his Work before their Faces, without either Interruption or Diſcouragement. *Learn* thence, That the unjuſt Cenſures and malicious Cavils of wicked Men againſt us for well-doing, muſt not diſcourage us from doing our Duty either towards God, or towards our Neighbeour. Tho' the *Phariſees* watched our Saviour; and when their Envy and Malice could find no Occaſion of Quarrel, would invent and make one; yet ſuch was our Lord's Courage and Reſolution, that he bids *the Man which had the withered Hand ſtand forth*: To ſhew that he was reſolved to heal him, notwithſtanding their malicious Purpoſe to accuſe him for it, as a Breaker of the Sabbath. Oppoſition met with in doing our Duty, muſt not diſcourage us from doing Good, if we will follow the Example of our Bleſſed Redeemer.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs

of their hearts, he ſaith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched it out: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other.

Obſ. here, 1. The *Phariſees* ſinful and graceleſs Diſpoſition, and that was Hardneſs of Heart. The Heart of Man is naturally hard, and full of Obſtinacy and Enmity againſt Chriſt; but there is an acquired Hardneſs, which Continuance in Sin occaſions; the *Phariſees* laboured under both. *Obſ.* 2. A double Affection which this Hardneſs of Heart found in the *Phariſees* did ſtir up in Chriſt, namely, Anger and Indignation, Grief and Commiſeration: *He was grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts. Learn* hence, 1. That Humane Paſſions are not ſinful, and that Chriſtian Religion doth not deſtroy natural Affections. 2. That anger at Sin, either in our ſelves or others, if kept within its due Bounds, is not only lawful but commendable. This Paſſion of Anger was found in him, in whom was no Sin. 3. That our Anger againſt Sin ought to be accompanied with Grief and Compaſſion towards Sinners. We ſhould pour out our Tears of Compaſſion, when Men pour forth their Abominations. 4. That of all Sins Hardneſs of Heart and Unbelief are moſt grievous and offenſive, moſt diſpleaſing and provoking, to Jeſus Chriſt: He *looked about with Anger, being grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts. Obſ.* 3. The ſudden and inſtantaneous Cure which our Saviour wrought upon the Man that had the withered Hand: Our Saviour did not touch him, but only ſaid to him, *Stretch forth thy Hand, and it was preſently cured. Learn* hence, That Chriſt's having abſolute Power over all bodily Diſeaſes and Infirmites, to cure them miraculouſly without Means, only by a Word ſpeaking, is one Argument that proves him to be truly and really God.

6 And the Phariſees went forth, and ſtraightway took counſel with the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 7 But Jeſus withdrew himſelf with his diſciples to the Sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea. 8 And from Jeruſalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he ſpake to his diſciples, that a ſmall ſhip ſhould wait on him, becauſe of the multitude, leſt they ſhould throng him. 10 For he had healed many, inſomuch, that they preſſed upou him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean ſpirits when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, ſaying, Thou art the Son of God. And he ſtraitly charged them, that they ſhould not make him known.

Obſ. here, 1. What diſmal Effect this Famous Miracle of Chriſt's had upon the *Phariſees* and *Herodians.* Inſtead of being convinced by it, they conſpire againſt him for it. Theſe *Herodians* and *Phariſees* were of different Opinions, Enemies to one another, yet they join together in ſeeking the Death of Chriſt. The *Phariſees* were againſt paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, looking upon themſelves as a Free People, and accounting the *Roman* Emperor an Uſurper. The *Herodians* were for it. *Herod* being made by the *Roman* Emperor King of the *Jews*, was zealous for having the *Jews* pay Tribute to *Cæſar*; and ſuch of the *Jews* as ſided with him, particularly his Courtiers and Favourites, were ſtiled *Herodians*; but both *Phariſees* and *Herodians* take Councel againſt Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That Unity and Conſent is of it ſelf alone far from being a Mark and Note of the True Church. Unity in the Faith and Doctrine of Chriſt, and in the Profeſſion and Practice of the true Religion, is a Note indeed of the True Church: But Unity in oppoſing Chriſt, his Perſon, his Doctrine, his People, is ſo far from being a Mark of the True Church, that it is the Badge of the Antichriſtian Synagogue. *Obſ.* 2. The prudent Means which our Saviour uſes to preſerve himſelf from the Rage of the *Phariſees, he withdrew himſelf from them.* Chriſt's Example teaches his Miniſters their Duty in a time of Danger to fly from Perſecution, and to endeavour to preſerve their Lives, unleſs when their Sufferings are like to do more Good than their Lives. *Obſerve*, 3. The great Zeal and Forwardneſs of the People in flocking after our Saviour's Miniſtry; People come now at firſt from all Places and Countries, from *Judea*, from *Idumea*, from beyond *Jordan* from *Tyre* and *Sydon*, to hear his Doctrine, and ſee his Miracles. The People came from all Parts when our Saviour firſt began to preach. His Miniſters find it thus: At their firſt coming amongſt a People their Labourers are moſt Acceptable, and they do moſt Good; our Peoples Affections are then warmeſt, and perhaps our own too. *Obſerve*, 4. What Sort of People they were which attended thus zealouſly upon our Saviour's Miniſtry, they were the common and ordinary People; *the Poor received the Goſpel*, whilſt the *Phariſees*, and other Men of moſt Account, the *mighty*, the *noble*, and the *wiſe Men after the Fleſh*, deſpiſed our Saviour's Perſon, ſlighted his Miniſtry, and ſought his Life. The ordinary and meaneſt Sort of People ever have been more zealous and forward in embracing the Goſpel, than ever the great, the rich, and the honourable Part of the World have been. It is a ſad, but a certain Truth, Heaven is a Place where few (comparatively) of the great Men of the World are like to come; their Temptations are many, their Luſts are ſtrong, and their great Eſtates, through their own Abuſe, become Fewel to their Luſts. *Obſerve*, 5. The Behaviour of the unclean Spirits, (the Devils) towards our Saviour, and our Saviour's Carriage towards them: *They fall down at the very Sight of him, they cry out, and confeſs him to be the Son of God*; but he ſharply *rebukes* them, and *charges them that they ſhould not make him known.* Not that our Saviour would have the Knowledge of his Perſon ſuppreſt, but becauſe the Devils were no fit Perſons to preach Jeſus Chriſt. A Truth out of the Mouth of the Father of Lies is enough to render Truth it ſelf ſuſpected. Beſides, the Time appointed for the full and clear Manifeſtation of the Godhead of Chriſt was not yet come. This was not to be done till after his Reſurrection; the Divine Nature was to lye hid under the Veil of Chriſt's Fleſh during his State of Humiliation and Abaſement.

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach: 15 And to have power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils. 16 And Simon he ſirnamed Peter. 17 And James *the ſon of* Zebedee, and John the brother of James, (and he ſirnamed them Boanerges, which is, The ſons of thunder) 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the ſon of* Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iſcariot, which alſo betrayed him: and they went into an houſe.

As the Jewiſh Church aroſe from *Twelve Patriarchs*, ſo the Chriſtian Church became planted by *Twelve Apoſtles.* The Perſon commiſſioning them was Chriſt: None may undertake the Work and Calling of the Miniſtry, but thoſe whom Chriſt appoints and calls. The Perſons commiſſioned were Diſciples before they were Apoſtles; to teach us, That Chriſt will have ſuch as preach the Goſpel to be Diſciples before they are Miniſters, trained up in the Faith and Doctrine of the Goſpel, before they undertake a publick Charge. *Obſerve* farther, The Holy Preparative which our Saviour uſes in order to this Election of his Apoſtles, he goeth up into a Mountain to pray upon that great Occaſion. So ſays St. *Luke*, 6. 12. *He went up into a Mountain, to pray*, and *ſpent the Night in prayer to God.* And *when it was Day he called his Diſciples, and of them he choſe Twelve.* In this Prayer no doubt he pleaded with his Father to furniſh thoſe that were to be ſent forth by him with all Miniſterial Gifts and Graces. *Learn* thence, That as Prayer is a neceſſary Preparative to all Duties, ſo more eſpecially before the publick Election and Ordination of the Miniſters of the Church, ſolemn Prayer is to be uſed by ſuch as are to ordain and chuſe them; our Lord's Practice is to be a ſtanding Rule herein to all Church Officers. *Obſerve* again, Tho' Chriſt called his Apoſtles now, yet he did not ſend them forth now: *He ordained Twelve, that they ſhould be with him.* That is, that they might converſe with him, and be Eye-witneſſes and Ear-witneſſes of his Life, Doctrine and Miracles. And having been thus with Chriſt, and fitted and prepared by him for their Work afterwards, they went forth. Thence *Learn*, That ſuch as are to take upon them the Office of the Miniſtry, ought firſt to be fitted and prepared for it, then ſolemnly called to it, before they enterprize and undertake the Execution of it; if the Apoſtles here who were called and qualified extraordinarily, were to ſpend ſome Time with Chriſt to receive Direction and Inſtruction from him before they went forth to preach; how much more needful is it for ſuch as are ordinarily called to be well fitted and furniſhed for the Miniſterial Service before they undertake it? *Obſerve* next, How the ſeveral Names of the Apoſtles are here Regiſtred and Recorded: God will honour thoſe that honour him, and are the ſpecial Inſtruments of his Glory. Of theſe Apoſtles *Peter* is named firſt, and *Judas* laſt. *Peter* is named firſt, becauſe probably elder than the reſt, or becauſe for Order ſake he might ſpeak before the reſt. From whence may be inferr'd a Primacy, but no Supremacy; a Priority of Order, not a Superiority of Degree. As the Foreman of a Grand Jury has a Precedency, but no Preheminency; he is firſt in Order before the reſt, but has no Authority or Power over the reſt. *Judas* is named laſt, with a Brand of Infamy upon him; that he was the Traditor, the Perſon that betrayed his Lord and Maſter. Whence *Learn*, That tho' the Truth of Grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a Miniſter's Salvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his Office, nor hinder the Lawfulneſs of his Miniſtry. *Judas*, tho' a Traytor, was yet a Lawful Miniſter. The Miſſion of a Perſon may be valid, tho' he be not ſanctified. *Obſerve* laſtly, that our Saviour ſirnamed *James* and *John Boanerges*, Sons of Thunder. St. *Jerome* thinks this Name was given them, becauſe being with Chriſt in the Mount, at his Transfiguration, they heard the Father's Voice out of the Cloud like Thunder: Others think them ſo called, becauſe they were more vehement and earneſt than the reſt in preaching, and did with greater Zeal and Power ſound forth the Doctrine of the Goſpel like Thunder. It is very probable that Chriſt gave them this Name from a Foreſight of the Heat and Zeal of their Temper, of which they ſoon gave an Inſtance, in deſiring Fire to come down from Heaven to conſume the *Samaritans*.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, ſo
that they could not ſo much as eat bread. 21 And
when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold
on him: for they ſaid he is beſide himſelf. 22 And
the ſcribes which came down from Jeruſalem, ſaid, He
hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils caſteth
he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and
ſaid unto them in parables, How can Satan caſt out
Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided againſt
it ſelf, that kingdom cannot ſtand. 25 And if a
houſe be divided againſt it ſelf, that houſe cannot
ſtand. 26 And if Satan riſe up againſt himſelf, and
be divided, he cannot ſtand but hath an end. 27 No
man can enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil
his goods, except he will firſt bind the ſtrong man,
and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 28 Verily I ſay unto
you, All ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men,
and blaſphemies, wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme:
29 But he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the
holy Ghoſt, hath never foregiveneſs, but is in danger
of eternal damnation: 30 Becauſe they ſaid, He hath
an unclean ſpirit.

Obſerve here, 1. How truly our Lord's Word was verified. John 4. 34. *My Meat is to do the will of him that ſent me*; for he and his Apoſtles going into an Houſe to refreſh themſelves in their Hunger, the People preſs'd upon him ſo faſt to hear the Word, that he regards not the ſatisfying of his Hunger, but applies himſelf to inſtruct the People. Lord! how exemplary was thy Zeal and Diligence in preaching the Everlaſting Goſpel to a loſt World? As it is inſtructive to, may it be imitated and followed by, all thy Ambaſſadors. *Obſ.* 2. The raſh Cenſure of our Saviour's Friends; that is his Kinſmen, concerning this Action, in neglecting to eat Bread, and ſuffering the Multitude thus unſeaſonably to preſs upon him. They conclude he is beſides himſelf, out of his right Mind; and accordingly went out to lay hold upon him. *Learn* hence, 1. That the forward Zeal and Diligence of Chriſt and his Miniſters, in preaching the Goſpel, is accounted Madneſs and Frenzy by a blind World. But they may ſay with the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13. *If we be beſides our ſelves, it is unto God.* But who were the Perſons that thus look'd upon our Saviour as beſides himſelf? Verily his own Kindred and Relations according to the Fleſh. *Learn* thence, That oft-times the Servants of God meet with the ſtrongeſt Temptations from, and are moſt diſcouraged and moleſted by, ſuch as are their neareſt Relations by Blood or Alliance. This is a great Trial to find our Relations ſetting us back, inſtead of helping us forward, in the Ways of Religion; but we muſt bear it patiently, knowing, that not only others of God's Children, but Jeſus Chriſt, his own and only Son, did experience this Trial. *Obſerve*, 3. The malicious and wicked Slander which the *Scribes* endeavoured to fix upon our Bleſſed Saviour; namely, That he was poſſeſs'd of the Devil, and by Familiarity with him, and Help from him, caſt forth Devils out of others. Good God! How was thine one and only Son, the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, cenſured, ſlandered, and falſly accuſed of the worſt of Crimes; of Gluttony, of Blaſphemy, of Sorcery! Can any of thy Children expect Freedom from the Perſecution of the Tongue, when Innocency it ſelf could not protect thy Holy Son from Slander and falſe Accuſation? *Obſ.* 4. Our Saviour's Anſwer and juſt Apology for himſelf, in which are contained, 1. A confutation of their Calumny and Slander. 2. A Reprehenſion of the *Scribes* for the ſame. 1. To confute this Slander, our Saviour, by ſeveral Arguments, ſhews how abſurd and unlikely it is that the Devil ſhould caſt out himſelf, and any Ways oppoſe or ſeek to deſtroy his own Kingdom. As if our Saviour had ſaid, Is it likely that Satan would lend me his Power to uſe it againſt himſelf? Surely Satan will do nothing to weaken his own Intereſt, or ſhake the Pillars of his own Kingdom. Now if I have received my Power from Satan for deſtroying him and his Kingdom, then is Satan like a Family divided within it ſelf, and like a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, which can never ſtand, but be brought to Deſolation. Our Saviour having ſufficiently ſhewn that he did not work his Miracles by the Power of the Devil, he next informs them from whence he had that Power, even from God himſelf; and accordingly he compares Satan to a ſtrong Man well-armed, with Weapons to defend his Houſe; and he compares himſelf (cloathed with Divine Power) to one that is ſtronger than the ſtrong Man. So that the Argument runs thus: The Devil is very ſtrong and Powerful, and there is no Power but God's only that is ſtronger than his. If then (ſays Chriſt) I were not aſſiſted with a Divine Power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong Man, who reigns in the Bodies and Souls of Men, as in his Houſe; for it muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong Man that ſhall bind Satan; and who is he but the God of Strength? *Learn* hence, That Chriſt's Divine Power is only Superior to Satan's Strength. He only can vanquiſh and over-rule him at his Pleaſure, and drive him out of that Poſſeſſion which he holds either in the Bodies, or in the Souls of Men. *Obſ.* 5. The Charge which our Saviour brings againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* for Blaſpheming his Divine Power in working Miracles. He charges them with ſinning the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. *All Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven, but he that ſhall Blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never Forgiveneſs.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, All the Reproaches which you caſt upon me as Man are pardonable, as when you check me with the *Poverty and Meanneſs of my Birth*, when you cenſure me for a *Wine-bibber*, a *Glutton*, a *Friend* and *Companion* of *Sinners*, and the like unjuſt Crimes. But when you Blaſpheme that Divine Power, by which all my Miracles are wrought, and contrary to the Convictions of your own enlightned Minds, maliciouſly aſcribe all my Miracles to the Power of the Devil, which were wrought indeed by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, this makes your Condition not only dangerous, but deſperate, becauſe you reſiſt the laſt Remedy and oppoſe the beſt Means, for your Conviction. For what can be done more to convince you that I am the true and promiſed Meſſiah, than to work ſo many Miracles before your Eyes to that Purpoſe? Now if when you ſee theſe, you will ſay it is not the Spirit of God that works theſe, but the Power of the Devil; as if Satan would conſpire againſt himſelf, and ſeek the Ruin of his own Kingdom; there is no Way or Means left to convince you, but you will continue in your Obſtinacy, and malicious Oppoſition to Truth, to your unutterable and inevitable Condemnation.

31 There came then his brethren, and his mother,
and ſtanding without, ſent unto him, calling him.
32 And the multitude ſat about him, and they ſaid

unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without ſeek for thee. 33 And he anſwered them, ſaying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he looked round about on them which ſat about him, and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren. 35 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my brother, and my ſiſter, and mother.

Obſ. here, 1. The Truth and Verity of Chriſt's Humane Nature; he had Affinity and Conſanguinity with Men, Perſons near the Blood to him by the Mother's ſide, called here his *Brethren*; that is, his Kinſmen. *Obſ.* 2. That the Mother of Chriſt, tho' ſhe was a Bleſſed and Holy Woman, yet was ſhe not free from Sin, but Failings and Infirmities are found with her. It was a Fault to interrupt our Saviour unſeaſonably at this time, when he was preaching to the People. The like we ſee in her at other times. *Luke* 2. 48. and *John* 2. 3. No Saint here on Earth ever was in a State of Sinleſs Perfection. Bleſſed be God we are haſtning to ſuch a State. *Obſ.* 3. That Chriſt did not neglect his Holy Mother, or diſregard his poor Kindred and Relations, but only ſhewed that he preferred his Father's Work and Buſineſs before their Company and Acquaintance at this time. *Obſ.* 4. How exceeding Dear obedient Chriſtians are to Jeſus Chriſt; he prefers his Spiritual Kindred before his Natural; Alliance by Faith is more valued by our Saviour than Alliance by Blood. To bear Chriſt in the Heart, is a greater Honour than to bear him in the Womb. Bleſſed be God this great and gracious Priviledge is not denied us, even now. Altho' we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may. His Bodily Preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his Spiritual Preſence is not denied us. Tho' Chriſt be not ours in Houſe, in Arms, in Affinity, in Conſanguinity, yet in Heart, in Faith, in Love, in Service, he is, or may be ours. Verily, Spiritual Regeneration bringeth Men into a more honourable Relation to Chriſt than Natural Generation ever did.

CHAP. IV.

AND he began again to teach by the ſeaſide: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, ſo that he entred into a ſhip, and ſat in the ſea, and the whole multitude was by the ſea, on the land. 2 And he taught them many things by parables, and ſaid unto them in his doctrine.

The foregoing Chapter acquainted us with the Blaſphemous Slander which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* caſt upon our Bleſſed Saviour, accuſing him for caſting out Devils by the Help of the Devil. This they did, no doubt, to diſcredit his Perſon, and hinder his Miniſtry; yet for all this the People follow him in great Multitudes, more than ever, to hear him, and be inſtructed by him. Thence *learn*, that all the Power and Malice of Satan and wicked Men ſhall not be able to ſuppreſs the Goſpel, or hinder the free Courſe of it; yea, the more it is oppoſed, the more it ſhall prevail; the more the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* diſgraced our Saviour, and vilified his Doctrine, the more the People followed him in Troops, to be Partakers of his Miniſtry. *Obſ.* 2. The Place where our Lord now preached, *in a Ship*. Not that he declined the Temple, or the Synagogue, when he had Opportunity, but in the want of them Chriſt thought an Houſe, a Mountain, a Ship, no unmeet Place to preach in. It is not the Place that ſanctifies the Ordinance, but the Ordinance that ſanctifies the Place. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's Geſture in preaching, *he ſat*, it being the Cuſtom of the Jewiſh Church ſo to do. *Mat.* 23. 2. *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in* Moſes *Chair*. *Learn* thence, That in indifferent Rites and Orders, touching the outward Worſhip of God, we are to conform our ſelves to the laudable Cuſtom and Practice of the Church in which we live, and whereof we are Members. Thus did our Saviour, and ſo ought we. *Obſ.* 4. The manner of our Lord's Preaching, it was by *Parables* and *Similitudes*, which was an Ancient Way of Inſtruction among the *Jews*, and a very convincing Way, working upon Mens Minds, Memories and Affections, all at once, making the Mind attentive, the Memory retentive, and the Auditors inquiſitive, after the Interpretation of the Parable. Some are of Opinion that our Saviour's Parables were ſuited to his Hearers Imployments; and accordingly many of his Hearers being Husbandmen, he reſembles his Doctrine to Seed ſown in the Field. For thus he ſpeaks:

3 Hearken, Behold, there went out a ſower to ſow: 4 And it came to paſs as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way ſide, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5 And ſome fell on ſtony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it ſprang up, becauſe it had no depth of earth. 6 But when the ſun was up, it was ſcorched, and becauſe it had no root, it withered away. 7 And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choaked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that ſprang up, and increaſed, and brought forth ſome thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred. 9 And he ſaid unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Several Things are here *Obſervable*. As, 1. How Chriſt begins and ends the Parable with an Admonition to diligent and ſerious Attention. *Hearken*, ſays Chriſt, *ver.* 3. and *he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, v. 9. This ſhews us at once the Peoples Backwardneſs and Negligence in applying their Minds to hear and receive the Word of God, and alſo ſhews the Miniſter's Duty to excite and ſtir up their Peoples Diligence and Attention in hearing God's Word. *Obſerve* 2. What is the general Scope and Deſign of this Parable: *Namely*, To ſhew that there are Four ſeveral Sorts of Hearers of God's Word, and but One good one, but One Sort only hear to a ſaving Advantage. Now as to the Matter of the Parable, *Note*, 1. *The Sower* is Chriſt and his Apoſtles; he the principal Sower, they the ſubordinate Seedſmen. Chriſt ſows his own Field, his Miniſters ſow his Field. He ſows his own Seed, they his Seed. Wo unto us if we ſow our own Seed, not Chriſt's. *Note* 2. *The Seed* ſown, the Word of God; fabulous Legends, and unwritten Traditions, which the Seedſmen of the Church of *Rome* ſow, theſe are not Seed, but Chaff, or their own Seed, and not Chriſt's. Our Lord's Field muſt be all ſown with his own Seed, with no mixt Grain. *Learn* 1. That the Word preach'd is like Seed ſown in the Furrows of the Field. As Seed has a fructifying Virtue in it, by which it encreaſes and brings forth more of its own kind, ſo has the Word of God a quickning Power to regenerate and make alive dead Souls. 2. *Learn* from this Parable, That the Seed of the Word, where it is moſt plentifully ſown, is not alike fruitful. Seed doth not thrive in all Ground alike, neither doth the Word fructifie alike in the Souls of Men. There is a Difference both from the Nature of the Soil, and from the Influence of the Spirit. For tho' no Ground be naturally good, yet ſome is worſe than other. *Learn* 3. That the Cauſe of the Word's Unfruitfulneſs is very different, not the ſame in all. In ſome 'tis an hard Heart of Unbelief, in others the diſtracting Cares of the World choak the Word. Like Thorns, which hinder the Corn's Growth, by overſhadowing it, by drawing away the Moiſture and Heart of the Earth from it, and by hindring the Influences of the Sun from cheriſhing it. Unto which may be added the Policy of Satan, that Bird of Prey, which follows God's Plough, and ſteals away the precious Seed of the Word out of the Furrows of their Souls. *Learn* 4. That the beſt Ground doth not bring forth Encreaſe alike. Some good Ground brings forth more, others leſs; ſome Thirty, ſome Sixty, ſome an Hundred-fold. In like manner a Perſon may be a profitable Hearer of the Word, altho' he doth not bring forth ſo great a Proportion of Fruit as others, provided he brings forth as much as he can.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve, asked of him the parable. 11 And he ſaid unto him, Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all theſe things are done in parables: 12 That ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand; leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and their ſins ſhould be forgiven them. 13 And he ſaid unto them, Know ye not this parable? And how then will you know all parables?

Obſerve here, The Diſciples Queſtion, and our Saviour's Reply. Their Queſtion is about the Senſe and Meaning of the

Parable. They own their Ignorance, and deſire better Information. It is no Shame for the beſt of Miniſters, yea, the beſt of Men, to acknowledge their own Ignorance in the Myſteries of Religion, and to attend upon the Means of Inſtruction, in order to their further Information. In our Saviour's Anſwer, *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God*, &c. *Obſ.* 1. That the Doctrines of the Goſpel are great Myſteries. 2. That it is a matchleſs and invaluable Priviledge practically to underſtand Goſpel Myſteries. 3. That this Priviledge all are not Sharers in, and Partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given. 4. That it is a Righteous Thing with God to give ſuch Perſons over to further Blindneſs and Ignorance in Spiritual Things, who wilfully reject the Truth, and ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light and Evidence of it. The *Phariſees* had all along ſhut their Eyes, and ſaid, they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their Eyes judicially, and ſays, they ſhall not ſee. *Seeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive; and hearing ye ſhall hear, and not underſtand.*

14 The ſower ſoweth the word. 15 And theſe
are they by the way ſide, where the word is ſown,
but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately,
and taketh away the word that was ſown in their
hearts. 16 And theſe are they likewiſe which are
ſown on ſtony ground, who when they have heard
the word, immediately receive it with gladneſs:
17 And have no root in themſelves, and ſo endure
but for a time: afterward when affliction or perſecution
ariſeth for the word's ſake, immediately they
are offended. 18 And theſe are they which are ſown
among thorns: ſuch as hear the word, 19 And the
cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches,
and the luſts of other things entring in, choak the
word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And theſe are
they which are ſown on good ground, ſuch as hear the
word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, ſome
thirty fold, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

Here our Saviour applies himſelf to interpret and explain the foregoing Parable. *The Seed* is the Word, *the Sower* is the Preacher, the Soil is the Heart and Soul of Man. Some Hearers Chriſt compares to the *Highway* Ground, in which the Seed lyes uncovered for want of the Harrow of Meditation. Others to *Stony Ground*, in which the Word has *no Root*. No Root in their Underſtandings, in their Memories, Wills and Affections, but they are inſtantly offended, either at the Depth and Profoundneſs of the Word, or at the Sanctity and Strictneſs of the Word, or elſe at the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it. Again, Some Hearers our Lord compares to *Thorny Ground*; Worldly and Covetous Deſires are as Thorns, choaking the good Seed; they ſhadow the Blade when ſprung up, keep off the Influences of the Sun, and draw away the Fatneſs of the Soil from the Seed. All theſe miſchievous Effects have Thorns among the Seed. And the like ill Effects have worldly Affections, and covetous Deſires, in the Soul of Man, rendring the Seed of the Word unfruitful and unprofitable. But the good Chriſtian hears the Word attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, practices it univerſally, and brings forth Fruit perſeveringly. *Learn*, 1. That no Hearers are in Chriſt's Account good Hearers of the Word, but ſuch as bring forth Fruit anſwerable to their hearing. 2. That a Perſon may be a good Hearer of the Word in Chriſt's Account, if he bring forth the beſt Fruit he can, tho' it be not in ſo great a Proportion as others do. As ſome Ground brings forth *Thirty*, ſome *Sixty*, and ſome *an Hundred-fold*, in like manner do all ſincere Hearers of the Word; they all bring forth Fruit, tho' not all alike; all in Sincerity, tho' not all Equally, and none to Perfection. It is *Theophylact*'s Note on the Place, how ſmall is the number of good Men, and how few are ſaved! For only the fourth part of the Seed fell upon good Ground, and was preſerved. Others obſerve a Gradation here; the Seed ſown in the Highway comes not up at all, that on ſtony Ground comes up, but encreaſeth not. That among Thorns encreaſeth, but bears no Fruit; only that Seed which fell on good Ground brings forth Fruit unto Perfection.

21 And he ſaid unto them, Is a candle brought to
be put under a buſhel, or under a bed? and not to be
ſet on a candleſtick? 22 For there is nothing hid,
which ſhall not be manifeſted: neither was any thing
kept ſecret, but that it ſhould come abroad. 23 If
any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And
he ſaid unto them, Take heed what you hear:
with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to
you: and unto you that hear, ſhall more be given.
25 For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he
that hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which
he hath.

Obſerve here, 1. The End and Deſign of Chriſt in revealing his Word and Will to his Diſciples, and in communicating to them the Light of Spiritual Knowledge; *namely*, That they may communicate it to others, and not keep it cloſe unto themſelves. Even as the *Candle* in an Houſe diffuſes and diſperſes its Light to all that come within the Reach of it, in like manner ought all Chriſtians, and particularly Chriſt's Miniſters, by the Light of Life and Doctrine, to direct Perſons in their Way towards Heaven. Such as are enlightned by God in any Meaſure with the Knowledge and Underſtanding of his Word, ought not to conceal and hide this Knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and imploy it for the Good and Benefit of others. *Obſerve* 2. The Cautionary Direction given by Chriſt to his Diſciples, *To take heed how they hear the Word*. Such as would profit by hearing of the Word, muſt diligently attend to the Matter of the Doctrine which they hear, and alſo to the manner how they hear. Such is the Majeſty and Authority of the Perſon that ſpeaks to us in the Word, ſuch is the Sublimity and Spirituality of the Matter, and ſo great is our Danger, if we miſcarry under the Word, that it nearly concerns us *to take heed*, both *what we hear*, and *how we hear*. *Obſerve* 3. The Argument which our Saviour makes uſe of to quicken his Diſciples to communicate the Knowledge, and improve the Grace, they had received, for the Good and Benefit of others, *To him that hath ſhall be given:* That is, ſuch as improve their Spiritual Gifts ſhall have them encreaſed; ſuch as improve them not ſhall have them blaſted. *Learn* hence, That the beſt Courſe we can take to encreaſe and thrive in Grace, is to exerciſe and improve it. He that hides his Talent, doth not only forfeit it, but is in Danger of being puniſhed ſeverely for the Non-improvement of it.

26 And he ſaid, So is the kingdom of God, as if a
man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground, 27 And ſhould
ſleep, and riſe night and day, and the ſeed ſhould
ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28 For
the earth bringeth forth fruit of her ſelf, firſt the blade,
then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.
29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately
he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come.

This Parable of our Saviour's is an inſtructive Leſſon to the Miniſters of the Goſpel faithfully to do their Parts, in ſowing the Seed of the Word amongſt their People, and then not to be over-ſolicitous about the Event, but to leave the Iſſue to God; nor to be diſcouraged, tho' the Fruit of their Labour doth not preſently appear. Accordingly Chriſt propounds the laborious Husbandman to his Miniſter's Imitation. As the Husbandman, when he has prudently and painfully caſt his Seed into the Ground, is not anxiouſly diſquieted, but goes to Bed, and reſts in Hope, and at length the Corn ſprings up; firſt the *Blade*, next the *Ear*, then the *Grain*. In like manner let the Miniſters of God do their Duty without Diſcouragement, *In the Morning ſow their Seed, and in the Evening not withold their Hand.* And altho' the Seed ſown doth not appear preſently, it may be not in our Days, but ſeems rotten among the Clods, yet may it appear afterwards with a plentiful Encreaſe, when our own Heads are laid among the Clods; verifying that Saying of our Saviour, *One ſoweth, and another reapeth.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the Miniſtry of the Word is the ordinary, the neceſſary, and the principal Means, which God has appointed for ſowing the Seeds of Grace in the Hearts of his People. *So is the Kingdom of God, as if a Man ſhould caſt Seed into the Ground.* 2. That the Virtue and Efficacy of the Word preached doth not depend upon the Parts of a Man, but upon the Power of God. *The Seed ſpringeth up he knoweth not how.* *Learn* 3. That the Word of God ſincerely preached may be ſucceſsful, tho' it be not preſently ſucceſsful; the Seed ſown in one Miniſter's Days may ſpring up in another's. Happy we, if as God's Husbandmen we be imployed in Plowing, Sowing, or Reaping; our Lord will reward us, *ſecundum laborem, non fructum*; not according to our Succeſs, but according to our Endeavours. The Care and Endeavour is ours, but the Bleſſing and Succeſs is God's.

30 And he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? 31 It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which when it is ſown in the earth, is leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth. 32 But when it is ſown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ſhooteth out great branches, ſo that the fowls of the air may lodge under the ſhadow of it. 33 And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. 34 But without a parable ſpake he not unto them: and when they were alone he expounded all things to his diſciples.

The Deſign of our Saviour in this Parable is to ſhew how the Goſpel Church, from ſmall and little, from unlikely and contemptible Beginnings, ſhould ſpread and encreaſe, fructifie and grow up: Like as Muſtard-Seed, one of the ſmalleſt of Grains, grows up to a conſiderable Talneſs, even ſo Chriſt foretells that the Goſpel ſhould ſpread and encreaſe, Nations and Countries becoming Chriſtian. Hence *Learn*, That how ſmall Beginnings ſoever the Goſpel had in its firſt Plantation, yet by the fructifying Bleſſing of God it has had, and ſhall have, a wonderful Encreaſe.

35 And the ſame day when the even was come, he ſaith unto them, Let us paſs over unto the other ſide. 36 And when they had ſent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ſhip, and there were alſo with him other little ſhips. 37 And there aroſe a great ſtorm of wind, and the waves beat into the ſhip, ſo that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ſhip, aſleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and ſay unto him, Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh? 39 And he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and ſaid unto the ſea, Peace, be ſtill: and the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm. 40 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful? how is it that you have no faith! 41 And they feared exceedingly, and ſaid one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the ſea obey him?

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour and his Diſciples no ſooner put forth to Sea, but Dangers attend, and Difficulties do accompany them; a Tempeſt aroſe, and that Ship was covered with Waves which Chriſt himſelf was in, with his Diſciples. *Learn* thence, That the Preſence of Chriſt it ſelf doth not exempt his Diſciples and Followers from Trouble and Danger. Here is a great Tempeſt about the Diſciples Ears, tho' Chriſt himſelf was in their Company. *Obſ.* 2. The Poſture our Saviour was in when this Tempeſt aroſe; he being wearied with the Labours of the Day, was laid down upon a Pillow to ſleep at Night, thereby ſhewing himſelf to be truly and really Man; and that as he took upon him our Humane Nature, ſo he aſſumed the Infirmities of our Nature alſo, as Wearineſs and Pain, Hunger and Thirſt. *Obſerve* 3. The Diſciples Application made to Chriſt; they awake him with a ſad Outcry, *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* Here was Faith mixt with Humane Frailty. They believed that he could ſave them; but being aſleep, they conclude he muſt be awaked before they can be ſaved by him; whereas, tho' his Humane Nature was aſleep, yet his Divine Nature neither ſlumbered nor ſlept. *Learn* hence, That the Prevalency of Fear in a time of great and imminent Danger, tho' it may argue Weakneſs of Faith, yet is no Evidence of a total Want of Faith; in the midſt of the Diſciples Fears they believed Chriſt's Power. *Obſ.* 4. A double Rebuke given by our Saviour, firſt to the Winds, next to the Fears of his Diſciples. *He rebukes the Winds*, and inſtantly *they are calm.* When the Sea was as furious as a Mad-man, Chriſt with a ſingle Word calms it. *Learn* hence, That the moſt raging Winds, and outrageous Seas, cannot ſtand before the Rebukes of Chriſt. Chriſt, as God, lays a Law upon the moſt lawleſs Creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt lawleſly. *Obſerve* farther, Chriſt rebukes his Diſciples Fears, *Why are ye fearful?* No ſooner was the Storm up, but their Fears were up; they forgot that the Lord High Admiral of the Ocean was on board the Ship; and were as much overſet with their boiſterous Paſſions, as the Veſſel was with tempeſtuous Winds; and accordingly Chriſt rebukes the Tempeſt within, before the Storm without. Firſt he calms their Hearts, then he quiets the Seas. From this Inſtance of the Diſciples we may gather, that great Faith in the Habit may appear little in Act and Exerciſe; the Diſciples Faith, in forſaking all, and following Chriſt, was great Faith; but in this preſent Act their Faith was weak, through the Prevalency of their Fears. Oh the imperfect Compoſition of the beſt of Saints! Faith and Fear will take their Turns, and act their Part, whilſt we are upon the Stage of this World; e'er long our Fears will be vanquiſhed, and our Faith ſwallowed up in Viſion. Lord! ſet our Souls a longing for that joyful Hour.

CHAP. V.

AND they came over unto the other ſide of the ſea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ſhip, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean ſpirit, 3 Who had his dwelling among the Tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with chains: 4 Becauſe that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked aſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5 And always night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himſelf with ſtones. 6 But when he ſaw Jeſus afar off, he ran and worſhipped him, 7 And cried with a loud Voice, and ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 (For he ſaid unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean ſpirit.) 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? and he anſwered, ſaying, My name is Legion: for we are many. 10 And he beſought him much, that he would not ſend them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of ſwine feeding. 12 And all the Devils beſought him, ſaying, Send us into the ſwine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jeſus gave them leave. And the unclean ſpirits went out, and entred into the ſwine, and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, (they were about two thouſand) and were choked in the ſea. 14 And they that fed the ſwine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to ſee what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jeſus, and ſee him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and had the legion, ſitting, and cloathed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16 And they that ſaw it told them how it befel to him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and alſo concerning the ſwine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coaſts. 18 And when he was

come into the ſhip, he that had been poſſeſſed with
the devil, prayed him that he might be with him.
19 Howbeit, Jeſus ſuffered him not, but he ſaith unto
him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how
great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath
had compaſſion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began
to publiſh in Decapolis, how great things Jeſus
had done for him: and all men did marvel.

This piece of Hiſtory gives us a very ſad Relation of a Perſon that was poſſeſſed with a Legion of Devils; we read of few if any, in the Old Teſtament, that were thus poſſeſs'd, but of many in the New Teſtament. Our Saviour came into the World to deſtroy the Works of the Devil: therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome Humane Bodies, to ſhew his Divine Power in caſting him out. *Note* here, 1. That the evil Angels by their Fall loſt their Purity, but not their Power; for with God's Permiſſion they have Power, not only to enter into Mens Bodies, and to poſſeſs them, but alſo to diſtemper their Minds, and drive them to Frenzy and Madneſs; cauſing them to offer Violence to their own Lives, and to do Hurt and Miſchief to their own Bodies. Thus did this poſſeſſed Perſon here, wounding and cutting himſelf with Stones. *Note* 2. That the Reaſon why the evil Angels do no oftner exert their Power in doing Miſchief to the Bodies and Lives of Men, is from the reſtraining Power of God. The Devils cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. *Note*, 3. The Place where theſe evil Spirits delighted to make their Abode, *amongſt the Tombs*, or Graves, Places deſolate, forlorn and ſolitary, which are apt to breed Horror of Mind, and give Advantage to Temptations. *Learn* thence, That it is dangerous, and very unſafe, for Perſons, eſpecially in whom Melancholy prevails, to give themſelves to Solitarineſs, to frequent deſolate and forlorn Places, and to affect the being much alone, it giving Advantage to Satan to ſet upon them with powerful Temptations. It is better to frequent Humane Society, and eſpecially to delight in the Society and Communion of the Saints, by Means whereof we may be more and more ſtrengthned and fortified againſt Satan's Temptations. *Note* 4. That the Devils own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and that he came into the World to be a Saviour, but not a Saviour to them; therefore they cry out, *What have we to do with thee?* Or thou with us? Oh! what an uncomfortable Confeſſion and Acknowledgment is this, to own Chriſt to be a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know that he is none of our Saviour! *Note* 5. That tho' the Devils do own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and do pay Homage and Worſhip, and yield Service and Subjection to him, as his Slaves and Vaſſals, yet it is not a free and Voluntary Service, but extorted rather, and forced from them by the Power of Chriſt. *He worſhipped, and cried out, ſaying, What have I to do with thee?* *Note* 6. What a multitude of evil Spirits did enter into one Man. Oh the extream Malice and Cruelty of the Devil againſt Mankind, in that ſo many evil Spirits did at once afflict and torment a ſingle Perſon, even a *Legion* many Thouſands of them, *Obſerve* alſo, The Unity and Agreement which is amongſt theſe evil Spirits in doing Miſchief; tho' there was a *Legion* of them in this one Perſon, yet they have all but one Name. *Learn*, That the very Devils have a Sort of Unity amongſt themſelves, and in their Malice and miſchievous Deſigns againſt Mankind they are as one. How happy were it if good Men were as much united in Deſigns and Endeavours for the Glory of God, as Devils conſpire and combine againſt it? *Note* 7. The Outcry which the Devil makes at the Appearance and Approach of Chriſt, *Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* From thence *Learn*, 1. That there are Tortures appointed to the Spiritual Natures of evil Angels. 2. That the Devils are not ſo full of Torment as they ſhall be. Altho' they are as full of Diſcontent as they can be, there will be a Time when their Tormentors ſhall be encreaſed, when they ſhall have their Fill of Torment. This they know, and accordingly thus they pray, *Torment us not before our Time*; that is, encreaſe not our Torments before the appointed Time of their Encreaſe. *Note* 8. The Devil's Requeſt, 1. Not *to ſend them out of the Country*, *v.* 10. for being now among Heathens, they thought they were among their own, and not in Chriſt's Juriſdiction, as being not amongſt his People. 2. For Permiſſion and Leave to go into the Herd of Swine. Where *Obſerve Firſt*, The Devil's Malice; he will hurt the poor Beaſts, rather than not hurt at all. *Secondly*, His powerful Reſtraint; he cannot hurt a Pig without a Permiſſion. *Suffer us to enter.* Satan's Malice indeed is infinite, but his Power is bounded; it is *Poteſtas ſub poteſtate, A Power under a Power.* If he could not hurt the Swine, much leſs can he afflict the Body or Soul of Man without Leave and Licenſe. *Note* 9. How Satan's Requeſt is yielded to by our Saviour, he permits the Devils to enter into the Swine; not to ſatisfie their Deſire in doing Miſchief: But, *Firſt*, to ſhew his Power over the Devils, that they could do nothing without his Permiſſion: *Next*, To ſhew how great the Power and Malice of the Devil would be, if not reſtrained: And, *Laſtly*, That the Miracle of caſting out ſuch a Multitude of Devils might appear to be the greater. *Learn* hence, That ſometimes Almighty God, for wiſe Ends, and juſt Cauſes, doth ſuffer the Devil to enjoy his Deſire, in doing Hurt and Miſchief unto the Creatures. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Go.* *Note* 10. What a contrary Effect this Miracle which Chriſt wrought had upon theſe People, inſtead of believing his Divine Power, upon the Sight of his miraculous healing the Poſſeſſed, the Loſs of their Swine enrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt to depart from them: Carnal Hearts prefer their Swine before their Saviour, and had rather loſe Chriſt's Preſence than their Worldly Profit. So deſirous were theſe *Gadarenes* to get rid of our Saviour's Company, *that they pray and beſeech him to depart out of their Coaſts.* *Learn* hence, ſad is the Condition of ſuch from whom Chriſt departs, more ſad the Condition of ſuch who ſay unto Chriſt, Depart; but moſt ſad the Caſe of them who pray and beſeech Chriſt to depart from them. Thus did theſe *Gadarenes* deſire and beſeech Chriſt to depart from them, which accordingly he did, and we read no more of his return to them. *Note Laſtly*, How deſirous the Poſſeſſed Man was to continue with Chriſt, after he was come to himſelf. *He prayed that he might be with him.* This he might deſire, partly to Teſtifie his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt, partly out of Fear of being repoſſeſs'd again by Satan, or perhaps to have the Opportunity of hearing Chriſt's Doctrine, and ſeeing his Miracles: For ſuch as have once *taſted that the Lord is gracious*, and experienced the Pleaſure and Profit of Chriſt's Company, are very deſirous of the Continuance of it, and exceeding loth to part with it. However our Saviour at this time did not think to ſuffer him, knowing that more Glory would redound to God by publiſhing this Miracle to his Friends: Chriſt expects, after eminent Deliverances wrought for us, that we ſhould be the Publiſhers of his Praiſes, and declare to all, far and near, the great Things which God hath done for us. Add to this, that our Saviour might not permit this Man to be with him to avoid the Suſpicion of Vain-glory, of which he might have given ſome Umbrage, had he carried about with him thoſe whom his greateſt Miracles were wrought. And laſtly, To ſhew that Chriſt in his abſence, as well as when preſent, is able to protect thoſe that believe and truſt in him from the Malice of evil Spirits.

21 And when Jeſus was paſſed over again by ſhip
unto the other ſide, much people gathered unto him,
and he was nigh unto the ſea. 22 And behold, there cometh
one of the rulers of the ſynagogue, Jairus by name,
and when he ſaw him, he fell at his feet. 23 And
beſought him greatly, ſaying, My little daughter lyeth
at the point of death, *I pray thee* come and lay
thy hands on her that ſhe may be healed, and ſhe ſhall
live. 24 And Jeſus went with him, and much people
followed him, and thronged him.

Obſ. here, 1. The Perſon who came to Chriſt on Behalf of his Sick Daughter deſcribed, by his Name, *Jairus*, by his Office, a *Ruler of the Synagogue*, by his Geſture, *he fell down at Jeſus Feet, and woſhipped him.* This Geſture of his was not only a Sign of tender Affection in him towards his Daughter, but alſo an Evidence of his Faith in Our Bleſſed Saviour; yet his confining Chriſt's Power to his bodily Preſence, and to the Touch of his Hand, was a Token of the Weakneſs of his Faith. *Come, ſays he, and lay thine Hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live.* As if Chriſt could not have cured her without either coming to her, or laying his Hand upon her. *Note*, All that come to Chriſt are not alike ſtrong in Faith; yet our Bleſſed Redeemer refuſes none who come to him with a ſincere Faith, tho' in much Weakneſs of Faith. *Obſ.* 2. How readily our Saviour complies with *Jairus* Requeſt.

Jeſus went with him. Altho' his Faith was but weak, yet our Saviour doth not reject him, or deny his Suit, but readily goes with him. *Learn* hence, How ready we ſhould be to go to Chriſt in all our Diſtreſſes, Afflictions, and Neceſſities, who is ſo ready to hear, and ſo forward to help us, if we ſeek him in Sincerity, tho' our Faith be feeble. *Obſ.* 3. The great Humility of our Bleſſed Saviour, in ſuffering himſelf to be thronged by poor People. *Much People followed him, and thronged him.* Oh humble and lowly Saviour! How free was thy Converſation from Pride and Haughtineſs? How willing to converſe with the meaneſt of the People for their Advantage? Our Lord did not only ſuffer them to come near him, but even to throng him: What an Example is here for the greateſt Perſons upon Earth to imitate and follow, not to deſpiſe the Perſons, nor diſdain the Preſence, of the meaneſt and pooreſt of the People; but to look upon ſome with an Eye of Favour, upon others with an Eye of Pity, upon none with an Eye of Contempt.

25 And a certain woman which had an iſſue of
blood twelve years. 26 And had ſuffered many
things of many phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe
had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe,
27 When ſhe had heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind
and touched his garment. 28 For ſhe ſaid, if I
may touch but his cloaths, I ſhall be whole. 29 And
ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up:
and ſhe felt in her body that ſhe was healed of that
plague. 30 And Jeſus immediately knowing in himſelf,
that vertue had gone out of him, turned him about
in the preſs, and ſaid, Who touched my cloaths?
31 And his diſciples ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the
multitude thronging thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched
me? 32 And he looked round about to ſee her
that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing
and trembling, knowing what was done in her,
came and fell down before him, and told him
all the truth. 34 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter,
thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be
whole of thy plague.

As our Saviour was on his Way to *Jairus* his Houſe, a diſeaſed Woman comes behind him, touches his Cloaths, and is preſently healed; the Virtue lay not in her Finger, but in her Faith; or rather in Chriſt, which her Faith inſtrumentally drew forth. *Obſ.* here, 1. The diſeaſed Perſon, a Woman with a Bloody-Flux. Let Women here take Notice of the Miſeries which the Sin of the firſt Woman has brought upon all Women, amongſt which this is one, that it has made their Bodies ſubject to unnatural Iſſues and Fluxes of Blood. *Obſ.* 2. The long Continuance of this Diſeaſe, *Twelve Years.* It pleaſes God to lay long and tedious Afflictions upon ſome of his Children in this Life, and particularly to keep ſome of them a very long time under bodily Weakneſs, to manifeſt his Power in ſupporting them, and to magnifie his Mercy in delivering them. *Obſ.* 3. This poor Woman was found in the uſe of Means; ſhe ſought to Phyſicians for Help, and is not blamed for it, tho' *ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon them.* The Uſe of Phyſick is not to be neglected by us in Times of Sickneſs, eſpecially in dangerous Diſeaſes of the Body. To truſt to Means is to neglect God, and to neglect the Means is to tempt God. The Health of our Bodies ought to be Dear and Precious to us, and all lawful Means ought to be uſed, both to preſerve it, to recover it, and confirm it. *Obſ.* 4. The workings and acting of this poor Woman's Faith, her Diſeaſe was unclean by the Ceremonial Law, and therefore to be ſeperate from Society; accordingly ſhe is aſhamed to appear before Chriſt, but comes behind him to touch his Cloaths, being firmly perſwaded that Chriſt had a Power communicated by God unto him, miraculouſly to cure incurable Diſeaſes. And ſee how our Saviour encouraged her Faith, tho' ſhe did not believe him to be the Eternal Son of God, but one to whom God had communicated a Power of healing Bodily Diſeaſes; yet, ſays Chriſt, *This thy Faith hath made thee whole.* *Learn* hence, That Faith ofttimes meets with a better Welcome from Chriſt than it did or could expect. This poor Woman came to Chriſt trembling, but went away triumphing. *Obſ.* 5. Chriſt would have this Miracle diſcovered, he therefore ſays, *Who toucheth me,* and *I perceive that Virtue is gone out of me.* *Firſt,* In Reference to himſelf, to manifeſt his Divine Power, that by the Touch of his Cloaths he could cure ſuch an incurable Diſeaſe. *Secondly,* In Relation to the Woman, that ſhe might have Opportunity to Give God the Praiſe and Glory for the Cure. And, *Thirdly,* With Reſpect to *Jairus,* that his Faith might be ſtrengthned in the Belief of Chriſt's Power to raiſe his Daughter. Now from thoſe Words, *Vertue went out of Chriſt,* and he healed them, it is evident that the Vertue which did theſe miraculous Cures reſided in Chriſt, and was not communicated to him, and conſequently proves him to be God, for the Divine Vertue, by which the Prophets and Apoſtles did their Cures, is aſcribed to God; as *Act.* 19. 11. *God wrought ſpecial Miracles by the Hand of* Paul. But the Miracles done by Chriſt are aſcribed to the Divine Vertue dwelling in him. Accordingly here he ſays, *I perceive Vertue is gone out of me.*

35 While he yet ſpake, there came from the ruler
of the ſynagogue's houſe, certain which ſaid, Thy
daughter is dead, why troubleſt thou the Maſter any
further? 36 Aſſoon as Jeſus heard the word that was
ſpoken, he ſaith unto the ruler of the ſynagogue, Be
not afraid, only believe. 37 And he ſuffered no man to
follow him, ſave Peter, and James, and John the brother
of James. 38 And he cometh to the houſe of the
ruler of the ſynagogue, and ſeeth the tumult, and them
that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was
come in, he ſaith unto them, Why make ye this ado,
and weep? the damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth.
40 And they laughed him to ſcorn: but when he had
put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother
of the damſel, and them that were with him, and entereth
in where the damſel was lying, 41 And he took
the damſel by the hand, and ſaid unto her, *Talithi
cumi*, which is being interpreted, Damſel, (I ſay unto
thee) ariſe. 42 And ſtraightway the damſel aroſe,
and walked; for ſhe was of the age of twelve years:
and they were aſtoniſhed with a great aſtoniſhment.
43 And he charged them ſtraitly, that no man ſhould
know it: and commanded that ſomething ſhould be
given her to eat.

Obſ. here, 1. The doleful News brought to *Jairus* his Ears, *Thy Daughter is dead.* The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer the Faith of his Saints to be hard put to it, greatly aſſaulted with Difficulties and Trials. *Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour's ſeaſonable Word of Comfort, *Be not afraid only believe.* Chriſt is ready to comfort Believers in the Hour of their ſtrongeſt Temptations and greateſt Trials. *Obſ.* 3. Chriſt's Application of himſelf to the raiſing unto Life *Jairus* his dead Daughter. In order to which, 1. He goes into the Houſe only with Three of his Diſciples, which were ſufficient to witneſs the Truth of the Miracle. Our Saviour, to avoid all Shew of Vain-glory, and to evidence that he ſought not ambitiouſly his own Honour and Praiſe, would not work this great Miracle publickly before all the People. 2. He rebukes them for the ſhew they make of immoderate Grief and Sorrow for the dead Damſel, they wept and wailed greatly with Minſtrels and muſical Inſtruments, according to the Cuſtom of the Heathens, who by a mournful Sort of Muſick did ſtir up the Paſſion of Grief at their Funerals. To mourn immoderately for the Dead is an Heatheniſh Practice and Cuſtom. 'Tis hurtful to the Living, and diſhonourable to the Dead; nor is it an Argument of more Love, but an Evidence of leſs Grace. 3. He adds a Reaſon for this Rebuke and Reproof given them. *The Damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth. Vobis Mortua, mibi Dormit: She is dead to you, but aſleep to me.* Not ſo dead as to be beyond my Power to raiſe her to Life. Souls departed are under the Conduct of Angels to their ſeveral Regions of Bliſs or Miſery. It is very probable that the Soul of this Damſel was under the Guard of Angels near her dead Body, waiting the Pleaſure of God in order to its Diſpoſal, either to reſtore it again to the Body, or to tranſlate it to its Eternal Manſion. *Obſerve* father, The Nature of Death in general, and of the Saints in particular, deſcribed. *'Tis a*

Sleep. Sleep is a State of Reſt; Sleep is a ſudden Surprizal; in Sleep there is an inſenſible Paſſage of our Time; the Perſon ſleeping ſhall certainly awake, either in this World, or in the next. It will be our Wiſdom to prepare for the Bed of the Grave, and ſo to live, that when we lay down in it there may be nothing to diſturb our Reſt. *Obſerve* next, The Words which our Saviour uſed at the raiſing of the Damſel, *Tabitha Cumi.* *Syriack* Words, to ſhew the Truth of the Miracle; not like a Conjurer, muttering a Charm in unknown Words to himſelf; and alſo to ſhew the Greatneſs of the Miracle, that he was able to raiſe her by a Word ſpeaking. *Obſerve laſtly,* The Charge given by our Saviour not to divulge this Miracle. *He charged them ſtraitly that none ſhould know it.* That is, not to divulge it imprudently to ſuch of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* as would not be convinced by it, but only cavil at it, and be the more enraged againſt him, and ſeek his Death before his time was come. Alſo not to divulge it unſeaſonably, and all at once, but gradually, and by degrees; for it was the Will of God that the Divine Glory of Chriſt ſhould not be manifeſted to the World all at once, and on the ſudden, but by little and little, during his State of Humiliation; for his Reſurrection was the Time appointed for the full Manifeſtation of his Godhead. *Rom.* 1. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with Power by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

CHAP. VI.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his diſciples follow him. 2 And when the ſabbath day was come, he began to teach in the ſynagogue: and many hearing him were aſtoniſhed, ſaying, From whence hath this man theſe things? and what wiſdom is this which is given unto him, that even ſuch mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James, and Joſes, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his ſiſters here with us? and they were offended at him. 4 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe. 5 And he could there do no mighty work: ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled, becauſe of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having in the former Chapter wrought Two Famous Miracles, in curing a Woman of her Bloody Iſſue, and raiſing *Jairus* his Daughter from Death, we find him here in the beginning of this Chapter paſſing *into his own Country*; that is, to the City of *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, called his own City and Country, becauſe he was there conceived, there brought up; there *Joſeph* and *Mary*, and his Kindred dwelt, and Chriſt with them, during his private Life, which was till he was Thirty Years of Age. Now our Saviour being come into his own Country. *Obſ.* 1. What his Imployment was; he preach'd in their Synagogues, and held Communion with the Jewiſh Church, altho' ſhe had many Corruptions in her. *Teaching* us, by his Example, not to deſert and forſake the Communion of ſuch a Church, in which there is found neither Heretical Doctrine, nor Idolatrous Worſhip, altho' many Things be found in her culpable and blame-worthy. The Jewiſh Church was certainly ſuch, and yet our Saviour maintained not occaſional only, but conſtant Communion with her. *Obſ.* 2. The Influence and Effect which our Saviour's preaching had upon his own Countrymen, the People of *Nazareth*; it did work Admiration in them, but not Faith; *they were aſtoniſhed,* but did not believe. Men may be mightily moved and affected by the Word, and yet may never be converted by it; the Men of *Nazareth* wondered, and yet were offended; they did not believe in him, but were offended at him. *Obſ.* 3. The Ground and Cauſe of this their Offence, and that was the Meanneſs of his Extraction, and the Poverty of his Condition; *Is not this the Carpenter?* From whence the Ancient Fathers, particularly *Juſtin Martyr*, concluded, that our Saviour did work upon his Father *Joſeph's* Trade during his Father's Life, and thence was called *the Carpenter's Son*; and when *Joſeph* was dead, (which was before Chriſt was Thirty Years old, when he entered upon his Publick Office) he was then called *the Carpenter.* The Antients ſay, he ſpent his time in making Ploughs and Yoaks, and that thence it was that he drew ſo many Similitudes in his preaching from the Yoak and the Plough. This we are ſure of, that our Lord Lived not Thirty Years before his Manifeſtation idely and unprofitably. It is moſt probable that he followed his Father's Calling, and wrought under him, it being ſaid, that *he was ſubject to him, Luke* 2. 15. as a Child to a Parent, and as a Servant to his Maſter. As to this, that it ſeems not only true, but requiſite, that Chriſt ſhould be of ſome Trade, becauſe by the Jewiſh Canons all Fathers were bound to teach their Children ſome Trade; yea, ſays the Learned Dr. *Whitby*, their moſt Celebrated Rabbins thought it a great Reproach not to be of ſome Trade; doubtleſs our Lord, during his private Life; did give no Example of Idleneſs. Indeed, after he entred upon his Prophetick Office he no longer followed *Joſeph's* Calling, but apply'd himſelf wholly to the Work of the Miniſtry. He made no more Ploughs, but one to break up hard Hearts; no more Yoaks, but one for the Devil's Neck. However, in regard of our Saviour's low Extraction, and mean Education, *His Countrey men were offended at him. Learn* hence, That the Poverty and Meanneſs of Chriſt's Condition, was that which Multitudes ſtumbled at, and which kept many, yea, moſt from believing on him. None but a Spiritual Eye can diſcern Beauty in an humbled and abaſed Saviour. *Learn 2ly,* That it is the Property and Practice of prophane Men to take Occaſion from the outward Quality and Condition of God's Miniſter's, both to deſpiſe their Perſons, and to reject their Doctrine. *Obſ.* 4. The Reaſon aſſigned by our Saviour why the Men of *Nazareth* deſpiſed him, and ſet him at nought, becauſe he was their Countryman and Acquaintance, their Familiarity bred Contempt. *Teaching* us, That very often the faithful Miniſters of God are moſt contemned and diſhonoured where they are moſt familiar known. Sometimes their Remembrance of their mean Original and Extraction, ſometimes the Poverty of their Parent's Condition, ſometimes the Indecencies of their Childhood, ſometimes the Follies of their Youth are ript up; all which are Occaſions of Contempt, and gave Ground for this proverbial Saying, *That a Prophet is not without Honour, ſave in his own Country.* Which, like other proverbial Speeches, holds true in the general, that for the moſt part it is ſo, but it is not univerſally true in all Perſons and Caſes. However, this good uſe may be made of our Saviour's Obſervation, to teach his Miniſter's to be wiſe, in converſing with their People; not to make themſelves cheap and common in every Company, nor too familiar with all ſorts of Perſons, nor to be light and vain in any Company; for this will certainly breed Contempt both of their Perſons and Miniſtry. Our Duty is, by Strictneſs and Gravity of Deportment to maintain our Eſteem in the Conſciences of our People, and to temper Gravity with a condeſcending Affability. That Miniſter, which proſtitutes his Authority, fruſtrates the Ends of his Miniſtry, and is the Occaſion of his own Contempt. *Obſ.* 5. How this Peoples Contempt of Chriſt's Perſon, and Unbelief of this Doctrine, did hinder Chriſt from working Miracles amongſt them. *He could do no mighty Works there.* Not becauſe he was unable, but they were unwilling. Not as if their Infidelity abated his Divine Power, but they were unprepared to receive any Benefit by him; his Miracles would have been caſt away upon ſuch inconvincible Perſons, who will ſow upon barren Sands, or water dead Plants. It was an Act of Juſtice in Chriſt to deprive the *Phariſees* of thoſe Advantages which they had ſo long reſiſted. Chriſt had a natural Ability to do mighty Works there, but no moral Ability. He could not do it honourably, their Unbelief was a moral Hinderance; ſo then this Inability proceeded from no Deficiency in Chriſt's Power, but from a Defect in their Faith. He could not, becauſe he would not; and he would not, becauſe it was not fit for him ſo to do. Altho' Chriſt be Omnipotent, and has all Power in his Hand, yet Unbelief binds his Hands, and hinders him in the Execution of that Power. Unbelief is ſuch a Sin, as keeps Men from being Partakers of the Benefits of Chriſt. *Obſ.* 6. How the Incredulity and Unbelief of this People was ſo great, that Chriſt wondered at it. *He marvelled, becauſe of their Unbelief.* Not becauſe he was ignorant of the Cauſe of it, but becauſe he had uſed ſuch marvellous Means for the curing them of their Unbelief. *Learn* hence, That Unbelief is a great Sin at all times; but when Marvels are wrought for the cure and healing of it, and it remains uncured, it is a marvellous Sin, and juſtly cauſes Admiration and Wonder in Chriſt himſelf. *He marvelled, becauſe of their Unbelief.*

7 And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to
ſend them forth by two and two, and gave them power
over unclean ſpirits, 8 And commanded them that
they ſhould take nothing for their journey, ſave a ſtaff
only : no ſcrip, no bread, no money in their purſe : 9 But
be ſhod with ſandals : and not put on two coats.
10 And he ſaid unto them, In what place ſoever ye
enter into an houſe, there abide till ye depart from that
place. 11 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor
hear you, when ye depart thence, ſhake off the duſt
under your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. Verily
I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom
and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, then for that
city. 12 And they went out, and preached that men
ſhould repent. 13 And they caſt out many devils, and a
nointed with oil many that were ſick, and healed them

We heard before, *Chap.* 3. of our Saviour's ſolemn calling his Apoſtles to their Work and Office, now he ſends them forth to execute their Office. Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Perſon that ſends them forth, Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That none ought to take upon them the Office of Preaching, or any other Miniſterial Function in the Church, till thereunto lawfully called by Chriſt himſelf. The Apoſtles were immediately called and ſent forth by Chriſt himſelf, and received the Doctrine which they taught mediately from Chriſt's own Mouth. His Miniſters now are called immediately, they receive their Authority from Chriſt by the Hands of the Governors of his Church. *Obſ.* 2. The manner of their ſending, by Two and Two in a Company, partly to make their Meſſage of more Authority ; partly to teſtifie their mutual Conſent in the Doctrine which they taught ; and partly to comfort and encourage, to help and ſtrengthen, to aſſiſt and ſupport each other ; in Imitation of this Example the Jeſuits ſend forth their Emiſſaries by Pairs. *Learn* hence, That the Miniſters of the Word do ſtand in great need of the mutual Help and Comfort of the united Aſſiſtance and Encouragement of each other in the weighty Duties of their Calling and Function; like Labourers in the Harveſt-field they ſhould help one another, the Strong endeavouring to ſtrengthen the Hands of the Weak. But, Lord, what Tears are ſufficient to bewail the Want of Love and Unity, yea, the Prevalency of that Envy and Malignity which is found too often amongſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel ? So that inſtead of going forth Two by Two, happy is he that is alone in a Place. Well might *Melancthon* bleſs God when he lay a dying, that he was going to a Place where he ſhould be free from the implacable Hatred of Divines. This is and ought to be for a Lamentation. *Obſ.* 3. The Power given by Chriſt to work Miracles for confirming the Doctrine of the Goſpel which his Apoſtles preached ; he gave them Power over unclean Spirits, and they caſt out Devils, and anointed with Oil them that were ſick, and healed them. This Power to work Miracles was neceſſary for the Apoſtles; partly to procure Reverence to their Perſons, being poor and unlearned Men, but principally to gain Credit and Authority to their Doctrine ; for the Doctrine of Faith in the Meſſiah, as now come and exhibited in the Fleſh, being a ſtrange and new Doctrine to the *Jews*, the Truth and Certainty of it was to be extraordinarily ratified by Chriſt and his Apoſtles Miracles. Some of which were caſting out of Devils ; and by anointing with Oil, to heal and recover ſick Perſons. This Gift of Healing remained ſome time in the Church, as appears from St. *James* 5. 14. *Is any ſick ? Anoint him with Oil in the Name of the Lord ?* Where *Obſerve*, That the Apoſtles did not uſe Oil as the Inſtrument and Means of healing (for then the Cure had not been miraculous) but only as a Symbol of the Cure, or as an outward Sign and Teſtimony of miraculous Healing ; which outward Sign was for the ſtrengthning of the Faith of ſuch as were healed ; aſſuring them, that as certainly as their Bodies were anointed, ſo certainly ſhould their Health and Strength be reſtored. The Papiſts upon this ground their Sacrament of *Extream Unction*, but very vainly ; for the Apoſtles anointed thoſe that were ſick as a Sign of their Recovery ; but the Papiſts anoint thoſe that have the Pangs of Death upon them, that their Sins may be blotted out, and the Snares of the Devil avoided. *Obſ.* 4. The Charge given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles at the time of their ſending out. This is threefold : *Firſt*, Touching their Preparation for their Journey, he bids them not take much Care, to ſpend much Time in furniſhing themſelves with Victuals, Money, Apparel, Weapons of Defence, and the like, only taking a Walking-Staff in their Hands, becauſe they were to finiſh their Journey, ſpeedily, and to return again to Chriſt. This Command of our Saviour to his Apoſtles, not to incumber themſelves when going forth to preach the Goſpel, *Teaches* his Miniſters their Duty, to free themſelves as much as poſſibly they can from Worldly Incumbrances, which may hinder them in the Performance of their Office and Function. 2 Tim. 2. 4. *No Man that warreth intangleth himſelf with the Affairs of this Life. Secondly*, Touching their Lodging in their Journey. Our Saviour adviſes them not to change it during their Stay in one Place ; but *into whatſoever Houſe the firſt entred, they ſhould there continue till they departed out of that Place*, that ſo they might avoid all ſhew of Lightneſs and Inconſtancy, and teſtifie all Gravity and Stayedneſs in their Behaviour, this being a ſpecial Means to win Authority to their Perſons and Miniſtry. *Thirdly*, Chriſt gives a Charge to his Apoſtles touching their Carriage towards ſuch as ſhall refuſe to give Entertainment to them and their Doctrine. They were to denounce the Judgments of God againſt ſuch Contemners, *by ſhaking off the Duſt of their Feet for a Teſtimony againſt them.* Thence *Learn*, That the Contempt of God's Miniſters, and eſpecially of their Miniſtry and Doctrine, is an odious and execrable Sin, deteſted by God, and which ought to be abhorred by Man. *Shake off the Duſt of your Feet.* This Action was Emblematical, ſignifying that Almighty God would in like manner ſhake them off as the vileſt Duſt. *Learn 2dly*, That where-ever the Word is preached, it is for a Teſtimony ; either a Teſtimony for or againſt a People. For if the Duſt of a Miniſters Feet bear Witneſs againſt the Deſpiſers of the Goſpel, their Sermons much more. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The dreadful Judgment denounced by our Saviour againſt the Contemners of the Apoſtle's Doctrine ; *Verily it ſhall be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *in the Day of Judgment than for that City.* Where *Note*, 1. That there ſhall be a Day of Judgment. 2. That in the Day of Judgment ſome Sinners ſhall fare worſe than others. 3. That of all Sinners the Condition of ſuch will be ſaddeſt at the Day of Judgment, who having lived under the Goſpel, have died, after all, in Impenitency and Infidelity ; *Verily I ſay unto you, it will be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *than*, &c.

14 And king Herod heard *of him*, (for his name
was ſpread abroad) and he ſaid, That John the
Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty
works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 15 Others
ſaid, that it is Elias. And others ſaid, That it is
a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16 But
when Herod heard *thereof*, he ſaid, It is John whom
I beheaded, he is riſen from the dead. 17 For Herod
himſelf had ſent forth, and laid hold upon John,
and bound him in priſon for Herodias ſake, his brother
Philip's wife ; for he had married her. 18 For
John had ſaid unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee
to have thy brother's wife. 19 Therefore Herodias
had a quarrel againſt him, and would have killed
him, but ſhe could not. 20 For Herod feared
John, knowing that he was a juſt man and an holy,
and obſerved him, and when he heard him, he did
many things, and heard him gladly. 21 And when
a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday
made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and
chief eſtates of Galilee : 22 And when the daughter
of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced, and
pleaſed Herod, and them that ſat with him, the
King ſaid unto the damſel, Ask of me whatſoever
thou wilt, and I will give it thee. 23 And he ſware unto
her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt ask of me, I will give
it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24 And ſhe
went forth, and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall
I ask ? And ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt.

25 And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the
king, and asked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by
and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptiſt.
26 And the king was exceeding ſorry, *yet* for his
oath's ſake, and for their ſakes which ſat with him, he
would not reject her. 27 And immediately the king
ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be
brought: and he went, and beheaded him in the priſon.
28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to
the damſel: and the damſel gave it to her mother.
29 And when his diſciples heard *of it*, they came
and took up his corps, and laid it in a tomb.

The Hiſtory of *John* the Baptiſt's Death is here recorded by this Evangeliſt, as St. *Matthew* had done before, *Ch.* 14. 1, 2. Here we have theſe Particulars farther *Obſervable*: 1. The Character and Deſcription of a zealous and faithful Miniſter. He is one that deals plainly, and durſt tell the greateſt Perſons of their Faults. *Herod*, tho' a King, is reproved by the Baptiſt for his Inceſt, in taking his Brother's Wife. The Crown and Scepter of *Herod* could not daunt the faithful Meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in the Miniſters of God both Courage and Impartiality. Courage, in fearing no Faces; Impartiality, in ſparing no Sins. *Obſ.* 2. Who it was that commanded the Baptiſt to be beheaded. It was *Herod the King whom he had reproved.* How ſad is it when Kings, who ſhould be Nurſing-fathers to the Church, do prove the bloody Butchers of the Prophets of God. The ſevereſt Perſecutions, which the Prophets of God have fallen under, are uſually occaſioned by their telling Great Men of their Crimes. Men in Power are impatient of Reproof, and imagine that their Authority gives them a Licenſe to tranſgreſs. *Obſ.* 3. The Time of the Baptiſt's Death; *It was upon* Herod's *Birth-Day.* It was an Ancient Cuſtom among the Eaſtern Kings to celebrate their Birth-Days; *Pharoh* did ſo, *Gen.* 40. and *Herod* here, but both with Blood; yet theſe perſonal Stains do not make the Practice unlawful when we ſolemnize our Birth-Days with Thankfulneſs to our Creator and Preſerver, and recommend our ſelves by Prayer to his Gracious Providence and Protection for the Remainder of our Days. This is an Act of Piety and Religion; but *Herod*'s Birth-Day was kept with Revelling, with Feaſting, with Muſick and Dancing. All which were made ſinful to him by the Circumſtances which did attend it. Great Mens Feaſts and Frolicks are too often the Seaſon and Occaſion of much Sin. *Obſ.* 4. The Inſtigators and Promoters of the Holy Baptiſt's Death; *Herodias and her Daughter.* Lord! How deadly is the Malice of Souls debauched with Luſt. Impriſonment would not ſatisfie them, they muſt have his Blood. Reſolute Sinners, who are mad upon their Luſts, run furiouſly upon their Oppoſers, and reſolve to bear down all Oppoſition they meet with in the Gratification of their unlawful Deſires. *Obſ.* 5. With what great Reluctancy *Herod* conſented to this Villany; *The King was exceeding ſorry.* Wicked Men oft-times ſin with a troubled and diſturbed Conſcience; there is a mighty Struggle betwixt their Reaſon and their Luſts, but at laſt they maſter their Conſciences, and chuſe rather to gratifie their Luſts, than to obey their Reaſon. So did *Herod* here; for notwithſtanding his Sorrow, he commands the Fact, he ſent and beheaded *John* in the Priſon. *Obſ.* 6. The Motives and Inducements which prevail'd with *Herod* to behead this Holy Man. 1. The Conſcience of his Oath; *Nevertheleſs for his Oath ſake.* See his Hypocriſie; he made Scruple of a raſh Oath, who made no Scruple of real Murther. See here not only the Folly, but great Impiety, of raſh Vows; eſpecially in Ignorant Perſons, who think themſelves obliged by them: Whereas it is their Duty, firſt to repent of them, and then to break them as faſt as they can. St. *Chryſoſtom* ſays *Herod* might have ſpared the Baptiſt's Head, and yet have kept his Oath to *Herodias*; for he ſware to give her only half of his Kingdom, and his Head was worth more than his whole Kingdom. 2. Reſpect to his Reputation, not only for his Oath's ſake, but *for them that ſat with him.* They heard him promiſe, and will be Witneſſes of his Inconſtancy if he do not perform. Inſiſting upon Punctilio's of Honour has hazarded the Loſs of Millions of Souls. 3. His great Unwillingneſs to diſcontent *Herodias* and her Daughter. Oh vain and fooliſh Hypocrite, who dreaded the diſpleaſing of a wanton Miſtreſs, more than the offending of God and Conſcience! *Obſ.* 7. Theſe bloody Women do not only require the Baptiſt to be beheaded, but *that his Head be brought in a Charger* to them. What a Diſh was here to be ſerved up at a Prince's Table on his Birth-Day! A dead Man's Head ſwimming in Blood. How prodigiouſly inſatiable is Cruelty and Revenge? *Herodias* did not think her ſelf ſafe till *John* was dead; ſhe would not think him dead till his Head was off, and would not believe his Head off till ſhe had it in her Hand. Revenge never thinks it has made ſure enough. Oh how cruel is a wicked Heart, that could take Pleaſure in a Spectacle of ſo much Horror! Methinks I ſee how that Holy Head was toſs'd upon *Herod*'s Table by impure and filthy Hands. That true and faithful Tongue, thoſe ſacred Lips, thoſe chaſte Eyes, thoſe mortified Cheeks, are now inſultingly handled by a lewd and inceſtuous Harlot, and made a Scorn to *Herod*'s drunken Gueſts. *Obſ.* 8. That neither the holieſt of the Prophets, nor the beſt of Men, are more ſecure from Violence than from natural Death. The Holy Baptiſt was Sanctified in the Womb, Conceived and Born with ſo much Miracle, lived with ſo much Reverence and Obſervation, is now at Midnight obſcurely murthered in a cloſe Priſon. *Obſ.* 9. That it is as true a Martyrdom to ſuffer for Duty, as for Faith. He dies as truly a Martyr that dies for doing his Duty, as he that dies for profeſſing his Faith, and bearing Witneſs to the Truth. *Obſ.* 10. How far Men may go in Religion, and yet be far enough from ſaving Grace; they may reverence God's Miniſters, believe them to be holy and juſt Men, hear them with Delight and Pleaſure, protect and defend them from their Oppoſers; they may *reform and do many Things*, and *yet be far from the Kingdom of God.* *Herod* did all this; he knew *John* to be an holy and juſt Man, reverenced and reſpected him, guarded and kept him ſafe from *Herodias*'s Malice. For tho' he was impriſon'd before, yet *Herod* ſuffered none to hurt him, but heard him often with Pleaſure and Delight. Wicked and unregenerate Men may be ſo affected with the Word of God, as to become Protectors and Defenders of thoſe that diſpence it, and yet receive no ſaving Advantage by it. The plain and powerful preaching of the Word may win upon, and prevail with, an unregenerate Man to perform many good Duties, and to forſake many known Sins, and yet may he, after all, remain under the Power of Hypocriſie. Nay, from *Herod*'s Example we may *Learn*, That a wicked Man may take ſome Pleaſure and Delight in hearing the Word preached; either the Generality of the Truths aſſerted, or the Novelty of the Notions delivered, or the Wit and Fancy, the graceful Elocution and Delivery, of the Preacher, may create a preſent Delight; but it is neither a Spiritual Delight, nor an Abiding Delight. *And when his Diſciples heard of it, they came and took up his Corps, and laid it in a Tomb. When his Diſciples heard it:* That is, the Diſciples of *John* hearing that their Holy Maſter was thus barbarouſly murthered, they took up his dead Body, and decently interr'd it. *Learn* thence, That the faithful Servants of God are not aſhamed of the Sufferings of the Saints, but will teſtifie their Reſpects unto them, both living, dying, and dead. The Diſciples of *John* give their Maſter an honourable and reſpectful Burial, fearing neither *Herod*'s Power, nor *Herodias*'s Malice.

30 And the Apoſtles gathered themſelves together
unto Jeſus, and told him all things, both what they
had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he ſaid
unto them, Come ye your ſelves apart into a deſart
place, and reſt awhile. For there were many coming
and going; and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat.
32 And they departed into a deſart place by ſhip
privately. 33 And the people ſaw them departing,
and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all
cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.
34 And Jeſus, when he came out, ſaw much people,
and was moved with compaſſion towards them, becauſe they were as ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and
he began to teach them many things.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Report of *John*'s Death being brought to Chriſt, he preſently withdraws and his Diſciples with him, from that Place into the Deſart. Chriſt will not long continue his Preſence in thoſe Places where any of his Servants are Slain, and others of them are in Danger. *Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour, upon the Notice of *John*'s Death, flies into the Deſart for his own Preſervation: *His Hour was not yet come*, and therefore he keeps out of *Herod*'s Way. It is no

Cowardice to fly from the Rage of Perſecutors. Chriſt himſelf both practiced it, and directed his Diſciples to it, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one City, fly to another.* We muſt not expoſe our Lives to Hazard, but when the laying down our Lives will do God and Religion more Service than we can do by living. *Obſ.* 3. With what Condolency and Sympathizing Pity our Bleſſed Saviour exerciſed Acts of Mercy and Compaſſion, when the Objects of Compaſſion were before him. *Jeſus ſeeing the Multitude, was moved with Compaſſion towards them.* Chriſt, when here on Earth, did bear a tender and compaſſionate Heart towards poor Creatures in Diſtreſs and Miſery; and to our Comfort he retains the ſame compaſſionate Nature and Diſpoſition now in Heaven which he had here on Earth. *Obſ.* 4. The Ground or Cauſe of this Compaſſion in our Saviour, becauſe *they were as Sheep, having no Shepherd. Learn* thence, That the Caſe of ſuch a People is very ſad, and their Condition to be much lamented and pitied, who are deſtitute of Able, Faithful and Conſcientious, Paſtors and Teachers to feed them with the Spiritual Food of the Word and Sacraments. Where Viſions fail, the People periſh. But was the Jewiſh Church now with Paſtors as Sheep without a Shepherd? Had they not the *Phariſees*, the *Scribes* and Doctors, to teach and inſtruct them? Yes, no doubt, but they were no Paſtors in Chriſt's Account, becauſe unfaithful Paſtors. Thence *Learn*, That idle, negligent, and unfaithful Paſtors, are no Paſtors in the Sight of God, and in the Account of Chriſt. *Jeſus had Compaſſion on the Multitude, becauſe they were as Sheep, having no Shepherd.*

35 And when the day was now far ſpent, his diſciples came unto him, and ſaid, This is a deſart place, and now the time is far paſſed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themſelves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſay unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred penniworth of bread, and give them to eat? 28 He ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and ſee. And when they knew, they ſay, Five and two fiſhes. 39 And he commanded them to make all ſit down by companies upon the green graſs. 40 And they ſat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fiſhes, he looked up to heaven, and bleſſed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his diſciples to ſet them before them; and the two fiſhes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fiſhes. 44 And they that did eat of the loaves, were about five thouſand men.

This Miracle of our Saviour's feeding Five Thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children, with Five Loaves and Two Fiſhes, is recorded by all Four Evangeliſts, and in the Hiſtory of it theſe following Particulars are *obſervable. Note*, 1. The Diſciples Pity towards the Multitude, who had long faſted, and wanted now the ordinary Comforts and Supports of Life. It well becomes the Miniſters of Chriſt to reſpect the Bodily neceſſities, as well as regard the Spiritual Wants, of Perſons. *Obſ.* 2. The Motion which the Diſciples make to Chriſt on Behalf of the Multitude. *Send them away, that they may buy Victuals.* Here was a ſtrong Charity, but a weak Faith. A ſtrong Charity, in deſiring the Peoples Relief; but a weak Faith, in ſuppoſing that they could not otherwiſe be relieved, but by ſending them away; forgetting that Chriſt, who had healed the Multitude miraculouſly, could alſo feed them miraculouſly, if he pleaſed. All Things being equally eaſie to an Almighty Power. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's ſtrange Reply to the Diſciples Requeſt; *They need not depart, give ye them to eat.* Need not depart? Why, the People muſt either feed or famiſh. Victuals they muſt have, and a dry Deſart will afford none; yet ſays Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Give ye them to eat.* Alas, poor Diſciples, they had nothing for themſelves to eat, how then ſhould they give the Multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us what we are unable to perform, it is to ſhew us our Impotency and Weakneſs, and to provoke us to look up to him, and depend, by Faith, on his Almighty Power. *Obſ.* 4. What a poor and ſlender Proviſion the Lord of the whole Earth has for his Houſhold and Family; *Five Barley Loaves and Two ſmall Fiſhes. Teaching* us, That theſe Bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pamper'd; our Belly muſt not be our Maſter, much leſs our God. The End of Food is to ſuſtain Nature, we muſt not ſtifle it with a Gluttonous Variety. And as the Quality of the Victuals was plain, ſo the Quantity of it was ſmall; *Five Loaves and Two Fiſhes.* Well might the Diſciples ſay, *What are theſe among ſo many?* The Eye of Senſe and Reaſon ſees an utter Impoſſibility of thoſe Effects which Faith can eaſily apprehend, and Divine Power more eaſily produce. *Obſ.* 5. How Chriſt, the great Maſter of the Feaſt, doth marſhal his Gueſts: *He commands them all to ſit down in Ranks by Hundreds, and by Fifties.* None of them reply, Sit down, but to what? Here are the Mouths, but where's the Meat? We may ſoon be ſet, but when, or whence, ſhall we be ſerv'd? Not a Word like this, but they obey and expect. Lord, how eaſie is it to truſt thy Providence, and rely upon thy Power, when there is Corn in the Barn, Bread in the Cupboard, or Money in the Purſe; but when our Stores are all empty, and we have nothing in Hand, then to depend upon an inviſible Bounty, is a true and noble Act of Faith. *Obſ.* 6. The Actions performed by our Bleſſed Saviour; *He bleſſed, and brake, and gave the Loaves to his Diſciples, and they to the Multitude.* 1. *He bleſſed* them. *Teaching* us by his Example never to uſe or receive the good Creatures of God for our Nouriſhment without Prayers and Praiſe; never to ſit down to our Food as a Beaſt to his Forage. 2. *He brake* the Loaves. He could have multiplied them whole, why then would he rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us, that we may rather expect his Bleſſing in the Diſtribution of his Bounty, than in the Reſervation of it. Scattering is the way to Encreaſing; Liberality is the way to Riches. 3. Chriſt *gave* the Bread thus broken *to his Diſciples* that they might diſtribute it *to the Multitude.* But why did our Lord diſtribute the Loaves by his Diſciples Hands? Doubtleſs to gain Reſpect to his Diſciples from the People. And the ſame Courſe doth our Lord take in Spiritual Diſtributions. He that could feed the World by his own immediate Hand, chuſes rather, by the Hand of his Miniſters, to divide the Bread of Life amongſt his People. *Obſ.* 7. The Certainty and the Greatneſs of the Miracle; *They did all eat, and were filled.* They did all eat, not a Crumb, or a Bit, but to Satiety and Fulneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied, and yet *Twelve Baskets of Fragments remain.* More is left than was at firſt ſet on. 'Tis hard to ſay which was the greateſt Miracle, the miraculous Eating, or the miraculous Leaving. If we conſider what they eat, we may wonder that they left any thing: if what they left, that they eat any thing. *Obſ.* 8. Theſe Fragments, tho' of Barley Loaves and Fiſh Bones, muſt not be loſt, but, at our Saviour's Command, gathered up. The Liberal Houſe-keeper of the World will not allow the Loſs of his Orts. Oh how tremendous will their Account be, who having large and plentiful Eſtates, ſpend them upon their Luſts, being worſe than loſt in God's Account!

45 And ſtraightway he conſtrained his diſciples to get into the ſhip, and to go to the other ſide before unto Bethſaida, while he ſent away the people. 46 And when he had ſent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when even was come, the ſhip was in the midſt of the ſea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he ſaw them toiling in rowing: (for the wind was contrary unto them) and about the fourth watch of the night, he cometh unto them walking upon the ſea, and would have paſſed by them. 49 But when they ſaw him walking upon the ſea, they ſuppoſed it had been a ſpirit, and cried out. 50 (For they all ſaw him, and were troubled) and immediately he talked with them, and ſaith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ſhip, and the wind ceaſed: and they were ſore amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and wondered. 52 For they conſidered not *the miracle* of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

This Paragraph acquaints us with another Miracle which our Saviour wrought, *in walking upon the Sea to his Diſciples;*

and herein we have *Obſervable*, 1. His ſending his Diſciples to Sea, *he conſtrained them to go into a Ship*; not compelling them againſt their Wills, but commanding them to take Ship, and *go before him*. No doubt the Diſciples were loth to this, unwilling to leave him, and to go without him; for they that have once taſted the ſweetneſs of Chriſt's Company and Acquaintance, are hardly and difficultly drawn away from him. *Obſ.* 2. Chriſt having diſmiſs'd his Diſciples and the Company, retires *into a Mountain to pray*; to teach us, that when we addreſs our ſelves to God in Duty, to take all Helps, Furtherances, and Advantages, for the doing of our Duty. We muſt diſmiſs the Multitude before we addreſs to God in Prayer; we muſt ſend away the Multitude of worldly Cares, worldly Thoughts, worldly Concerns and Buſineſs, when we would wait upon God in Duty. *Obſ.* 3. The great Danger the Diſciples were in, and the Difficulties they were to encounter with. *They were in the midſt of the Sea toſſed with the Waves, and the Winds were contrary*; and which was ſaddeſt of all, Chriſt was abſent. The Wiſdom of God ſometimes ſuffers his Children and People not only to be diſtreſſed, but greatly diſtreſſed, with a variety of Diſtreſſes. *Obſ.* 4. The ſeaſonable Succour and Relief which Chriſt afforded his Diſciples; *In the fourth Watch he came unto them, walking upon the Waters*. It was not a ſtormy and tempeſtuous Sea that could ſeparate betwixt him and them; he that waded through a Sea of Blood, and a Sea of Wrath, to ſave his People, will walk upon a Sea of Waters to ſuccour and relieve them. And the Time was the *Fourth Watch*, about Four in the Morning, when they had been many Hours conflicting with the Waves, and in great Danger of their Lives. To *Teach* us, That Chriſt ſometimes lengthens out the Trials of his Children before he delivers them; but when they come to an Extremity, that is the Seaſon of his Succour. *Obſ.* 5. How the Diſciples took their Deliverer for their Deſtroyer; *When they ſaw Chriſt, they cried out*. Their Fears were higheſt when their Deliverer aud Deliverance was neareſt; God may be coming with Salvation and Deliverance to his People, when they for the preſent cannot diſcern it. *Obſ.* 6. When the Diſciples were in the ſaddeſt Condition, one Word from Chriſt revives them; it is a ſufficient Support in all our Afflictions, to hear Chriſt's Voice ſpeaking to us, and to enjoy his favourable Preſence with us. Say but, Oh Saviour (*it is I*) and then let Evils do their worſt: That One Word (*it is I*) is ſufficient to allay all Storms, and to calm a Thouſand Tempeſts. *Cbſ. Laſtly*, What Influence and Effect this Miracle had upon the Diſciples, *They were ſore amazed, and beyond Meaſure aſtoniſhed*; they wonder at the ceaſing of the Winds, and calming of the Seas; but *they had forgotten the Miracles of the Loaves*, which was a great Stupidity and Dulneſs in them, and argued Hardneſs of Heart, and want of Conſideration in them. *Learn* thence, That there is much Stupidity of Mind, and Hardneſs of Heart, remaining unmortified in the beſt of Saints, whilſt here in an imperfect State; the Work of Grace and Sanctification is but imperfect in the beſt.

53 And when they had paſſed over, they came into the land of Geneſareth, and drew to the ſhore. 54 And when they were come out of the ſhip, ſtraightway they knew him, 55 And ran thorough that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was. 56 And whitherſoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Here *Obſerve* 1. The unwearied Diligence and Induſtry of our Saviour in going about to do Good: He no ſooner landeth, but goeth to *Geneſareth*, and healeth their Sick. It was the great Buſineſs and conſtant Employment of our Saviour's Life to Travel from Place to Place, that he might be uſeful and beneficial to Mankind: He went to thoſe that could not, and to thoſe that would not, come to him. *Obſ.* 2. The People of *Geneſareth's* Charity to their ſick Neighbours; they ſent abroad, to let all the Country know, that Chriſt, the great Phyſician, was come amongſt them. There is a Duty of Love and Mercy which we owe unto thoſe that are in Affliction and Miſery; *namely*, To afford them the beſt Help, Relief and Succour we are able, both in their inward and outward Afflictions. *Obſ.* 3. The Suddenneſs and Certainty of the Cure; they touched him, and were made whole. The Healing Virtue lay not in their Fingers, but in their Faith; or rather in Chriſt, whom their Faith apprehended.

CHAP. VII.

THen came together unto him the Phariſees, and certain of the Scribes which came from Jeruſalem. 2 And when they ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen) hands, they found fault. 3 For the Phariſees, and all the Jews, except they waſh their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the Elders. 4 And when they come from the market, except they waſh, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the waſhing of cups, and pots, brazen veſſels, and of tables. Then the Phariſees and Scribes aſked him, Why walk not thy diſciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwaſhen hands? 6 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Well hath Eſaias propheſied of you, hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit, in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aſide the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men; as the waſhing of pots and cups: and many other ſuch like things ye do. 9 And he ſaid unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moſes ſaid, Honour thy father and thy mother: and whoſo curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 11 But ye ſay, If a man ſhall ſay to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to ſay, a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me, *he ſhall be free*. 12 And ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father, or his mother: 13 Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many ſuch like things ye do.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with a Conference or Diſputation which our Saviour had with the Phariſees about their Superſtitious Obſervation, of the Jewiſh Traditions. Theſe Traditions were ſuch Rites and Cuſtoms as were delivered to them by the Elders and Rulers of the Jewiſh Church in former Times, which Traditions they valued and regarded more than the expreſs Commandments of God. *Learn* thence, That ſuperſtitious Men are always more fond of, and zealous for, the Traditions of Men in Divine Worſhip, than of the expreſs and poſitive Commands of God. *Secondly*, That it is the manner of ſuch Perſons to tie others to their own Practice and Example, in Matters of Religious Worſhip, and to condemn all thoſe who do not conform to them in the ſmalleſt Matters. The Phariſees here cenſure the Diſciples for eating with unwaſhed Hands, becauſe it was their Cuſtom to waſh when they did eat; yet did not Chriſt or his Diſciples refuſe to waſh before Meat, as it was a civil and decent Cuſtom, but becauſe the Phariſees made it a religious Rite: *Teaching* us, That what is in it ſelf indifferent, and may without Offence be done as a civil Cuſtom, ought to be diſcountenanced and oppoſed when required of us as an Act of Religion. The Jews fearing leſt they ſhould touch any Perſon or Thing that was unclean, and ſo be defiled unawares, did uſe frequent Waſhings, as of *Cups*, *Pots*, *Veſſels*, *Tables*, *Beds*, or *Couches*, which they lay upon when they eat. Thus Phariſaical Hypocriſie puts God off with outward Cleanſing, inſtead of inward Purity; regarding more the outward Cleanneſs of the Hand, than the inward Purity of the Heart. This was the Accuſation of the Phariſees, to which our Saviour replies by way of Recrimination, that if his Diſciples did not obſerve the Tradition of the Elders, they (the Phariſees) *did* *reject and make void the Commandment of God, and did worſhip him in vain, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* *Learn* hence, That all Service and Worſhip which is offered to God, according to Man's Will and Ordinances, and not according to the Rule of God's own Word, is Vain and Unprofitable: Divine Inſtitution is the only pure Rule of Religious Worſhip, as to the Subſtance of it; here what God doth not command, he forbids. *Obſerve* next, the Inſtance which our Saviour produces of the Phariſees violating an expreſs Command of God, and preferring their own Traditions before it: He inſtances in the *Fifth Commandment*, which requires Children to relieve their Parents in their Neceſſities. Now tho' the Phariſees did not deny this in plain Terms, yet they made an Exception from it; which, if Children pleaſed, might render it vain, void, and uſeleſs. For the Phariſees taught, that in caſe the Child of a poor Parent, that wanted Relief, would give a Gift to the Temple, which Gift they called *Corban*, that is, a Gift Conſecrated to God and Religious Uſes, that then the Children of ſuch poor Parents were diſcharged from making any farther Proviſion for their aged or impotent Parents; but might reply after this manner, That which thou askeſt for thy Supply is given to God, and therefore I cannot relieve thee. So that covetous and graceleſs Children look'd upon it as the moſt frugal Way, once for all, to Fine to the Temple, rather than Pay the conſtant Rent of daily Relief to their poor Parents. *Learn* hence, That the Practice of Moral Duties is required before, and is more acceptable to Almighty God, than the moſt ſolemn Acts and Exerciſes of Inſtituted Worſhip whatſoever. *I will have Mercy*, ſays God, *rather than Sacrifice*; and *to do Juſtice and Judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice.* *Secondly*, That no Duty, Gift or Offering, to God is accepted, where the Duty of Charity is neglected; it is much more acceptable to God to refreſh the Bowels of his Saints, who are the living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, than to adorn material Temples with Gold and Silver. *Corban* is a *Syriack* Word, ſignifying a Gift given to God. The Phariſees applied theſe Gifts to the Uſe and Service of the Temple; poſſibly to repair, beautifie and adorn it; which had not been amiſs if they had not taught that ſuch Gifts to the Temple did diſcharge Children from the Duty of Charity to their Natural Parents. *Theſe Things they ought to have done*, in the firſt place, *and not to leave the other undone.*

14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and underſtand. 15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man. 16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17 And when he was entered into the houſe from the people, his diſciples asked him concerning the parable. 18 And he ſaith unto them, Are ye ſo without underſtanding alſo? do ye not perceive, that whatſoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him, 19 Becauſe it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20 And he ſaid, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For, from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs: 23 All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Our Bleſſed Saviour leaving the Phariſees with ſome Diſlike, applies himſelf to the Multitude, and inſtructs them in a very neceſſary and uſeful Doctrine, touching the true Original Cauſe of all Spiritual Pollution and Uncleanneſs: *Namely*, The Filthineſs and Impurity of Man's Heart and Nature. And that it is not the Meat eaten with the Mouth, but the Wickedneſs of the Heart vented by the Mouth, which pollutes a Perſon in God's Account. The Heart and Soul of Man alone is capable of ſinful Defilement. Nothing can defile a Perſon in God's Account, but that which defileth the inward Man. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Heart of Man is the Sink and Seed-plot of all Sin, the Source and Fountain of all Pollution. 2. That all the Impiety of the Life proceeds from the Impurity and Filthineſs of the Heart. Mens Lives would not be ſo bad if their Hearts were not worſe. Theſe Diſciples deſiring the Interpretation of the foregoing Parable, our Saviour gives it them; but withal expoſtulates with them for not underſtanding a Matter ſo obvious and plain, *Are ye yet without Underſtanding?* As if he had ſaid, Have you ſat thus long under my Miniſterial Teaching, and enjoyed the Benefit of my Converſation, and yet are no further Proficients in Knowledge? Plainly intimating, that Chriſt expects a Proficiency in Knowledge from us proportionable to the Opportunities and Means of Knowledge enjoyed by us. Having given them this Rebuke, he next acquaints them with the Senſe and Meaning of the Parable; namely, That it is out of a wicked and ſinful Heart that all Sin and Wickedneſs doth proceed. Though the Occaſions of Sin are from without, yet the Source and Original of it is from within. The Heart of Man is as a Cage full of unclean Birds; *Hence proceed evil Thoughts*, either againſt God or our Neighbours. *Adulteries*, or all the Sins of the Fleſh. *Murthers*; that is, all Cruelty and hard Dealing towards others. *An Evil Eye*; that is, an envious Spirit, which frets and grieves at the Happineſs of others; called an evil Eye, becauſe Envy doth much ſhew and manifeſt it ſelf in the outward Countenance, and eſpecially by the Eyes. From the whole, *Note*, That the beſt Way to hinder the Progreſs of Sin in the Life, is to mortifie it in the Heart, to crucifie all inordinate Motions, Luſts and Corruptions, in their Root; for the Heart is the firſt Seat and Subject of Sin, from whence it flows forth into the Life and Converſation.

24 And from thence he aroſe and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an houſe, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid. 25 For a certain woman whoſe young daughter had an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician, by nation) and ſhe beſought him that he would caſt forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jeſus ſaid unto her, Let the children firſt be filled: for it is not meet to take the childrens bread, and to caſt it unto the dogs. 28 And ſhe anſwered and ſaid unto him, Yes, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the childrens crumbs. 29 And he ſaid unto her, for this ſaying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when ſhe was come to her houſe, ſhe found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

All along, in the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Life, we are to take notice how he went about from place to place doing Good; being now come into the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, he finds a poor Woman of the Race of the *Canaanites*, who becomes firſt an humble Supplicant, and then a bold Beggar, on the behalf of her poſſeſſed Daughter. Where *Obſ.* 1. That though all *Iſrael* could not example the Faith of this *Canaanite*, yet was her Daughter tormented with the Devil. *Learn* thence, That neither Truth of Faith, nor Strength of Faith, can ſecure againſt Satan's inward Temptations, or outward Vexations; and conſequently the worſt of Bodily Afflictions are no ſufficient Proof of Divine Diſpleaſure. *Obſ.* 2. The Daughter did not come to Chriſt for her ſelf, but the Mother for her. Perhaps the Child was not ſo ſenſible of its own Miſery, but the Mother feels both the Child's Sorrow and her own. True Goodneſs teaches us to appropriate the Afflictions of others to our ſelves, cauſing us to bear their Griefs, and to ſympathize with them in their Sorrows. *Obſ.* 3. The ſeeming Severity of Chriſt to this poor Woman; he calls her not a Woman, but a *Dog*, and, as it were, ſpurns her from the Table. Did ever ſo ſevere a Word drop from thoſe mild Lips? What ſhall we ſay? Is the Lamb of God turned a Lion, that a Woman in Diſtreſs, imploring Pity, ſhould be thus rated out of Chriſt's Preſence? But hence we *Learn*, How Chriſt puts the ſtrongeſt Faith of his own Children upon the ſevereſt Trial. This Trial had never been ſo ſharp if her Faith had not been ſo ſtrong: Uſually where God gives much Grace, he tries Grace much. *Obſ.* 4. The Humble Carriage of this Holy Woman; her Humility grants all, her Patience overcomes all, ſhe meekly deſires to poſſeſs the Dog's place; not to croud to the Table, but to creep under it, and to partake of the Crumbs of Mercy that fall from thence. Nothing is ſo pleaſing to Chriſt as to ſee his People follow him with Faith and Importunity when he ſeems to withdraw himſelf from them.

31 And again departing from the coaſts of Tyre and Sydon, he came unto the ſea of Galilee, thorow the midſt of the coaſts of Decapolis. 32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech: and they beſeech him to put his hands upon him. 33 And he took him aſide from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he ſpit, and touched his tongue, 34 And looking up to heaven, he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, be opened. 35 And ſtraightway his ears were opened, and the ſtring of his tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain. 36 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed it, 37 And were beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

See here, 1. The bitter Fruits and ſad Effects of Sin, which has brought Deafneſs, Dumbneſs, and Blindneſs, upon the Humane Nature. As Death, ſo all Diſeaſes, entred into the World by Sin. Sin firſt brought Infirmities and Mortality into our Natures, and the Wages of Sin are Diſeaſes and Death. *Obſ.* 2. That the Bleſſing of Bodily Health and Healing is from Chriſt; who by his Divine Power, as he was God, miraculouſly and immediately healed them that were brought unto him. *Obſ.* 3. The Actions and Geſtures which our Saviour uſed in healing this deaf Perſon. He put his Fingers into his Ears, he ſpit, and touched his Tongue. Not that theſe were Means or Natural Cauſes effecting the Cure, for there was no healing Virtue in the Spittle; but only outward Signs, Teſtimonies and Pledges, of Chriſt's Divine Power and Gracious Readineſs, to cure the Perſon in Diſtreſs. *Obſ.* 4. How Chriſt withdrew the Perſon from the Multitude, whom he was about to help and heal. *Teaching* us in all our good Works to avoid all Shew and Appearance of Oſtentation and Vain-glory: To ſet God's Glory before our Eyes, and not ſeek our own Praiſe. *Obſ.* 5. The Effect which this Miracle had upon the Multitude; it occaſion'd their Aſtoniſhment and Applauſe, *They were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, He hath done all Things well.* It becomes us both to take Notice of the wonderful Works of God, and alſo to magnifie and extol the Author of them. This is one way of glorifying our Creator.

CHAP. VIII.

IN thoſe days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaid unto them, 2 I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I ſend them away faſting to their own houſes, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his diſciples anſwered him, From whence can a man ſatisfie theſe men with bread in the wilderneſs? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? and they ſaid, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to ſit down on the ground: and he took the ſeven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his diſciples to ſet before them: and they did ſet them before the people. 7 And they had a few ſmall fiſhes, and he bleſſed, and commanded to ſet them alſo before them. 8 So they did eat and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left ſeven baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thouſand, and he ſent them away.

This Chapter begins with the Relation of a Famous Miracle wrought by our Saviour; *namely,* his feeding of Four Thouſand Perſons with Seven Loaves and a few Fiſhes. And here we have *obſervable, Firſt,* The tender Care which Chriſt took of the Bodies of Men, to provide all Neceſſaries for their Support and Comfort; *He giveth us richly all Things to enjoy.* The great Houſe-keeper of the World *openeth his Hand, and filleth all Things living with Plenteouſneſs.* How careful was our Saviour here that the Bodies of poor Creatures might not faint, nor be over-weak and weary by the Way? Therefore he would not diſmiſs them without Refreſhment. *Obſ.* 2. The Original Source and Spring from whence this Care that Chriſt had of the Multitude did proceed and flow; *Namely,* From that ſympathizing Pity and tender Compaſſion which the merciful Heart of Chriſt did bear towards Perſons in Diſtreſs and Miſery. *Learn* thence, That the tender Pity and Compaſſion of Chriſt is not the Spring and Fountain of Spiritual Mercies only, but of Temporal Bleſſings alſo; *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude, who have nothing to eat.* *Obſ.* 3. How the Diſciples, not ſeeing any outward, viſible Means for the Peoples Support, conclude it impoſſible for ſo many to be ſatisfied with the little Supply they had; *namely,* Seven Loaves and a few ſmall Fiſhes. *Learn* thence, That a weak Faith ſoon grows thoughtful, and ſometimes diſtruſtful, at the Sight of Difficulties. *Whence* (ſay the Diſciples) *can theſe Men be ſatisfied with Bread?* Not conſidering that the Power of God in bleſſing our Food is far above the Means of Food. It is as eaſie for him to ſuſtain and nouriſh us with a little as with much. *Man liveth not by Bread,* but by the Bleſſing of God upon the Bread he eats. *Obſ.* 4. That altho' Chriſt could have fed theſe Four Thouſand without the Loaves, yet he takes and makes uſe of them, ſeeing they might be had. *Learn* thence, That Chriſt did not neglect his own appointed, ordinary Means, nor do any thing in an extraordinary Way, farther than was abſolutely neceſſary. Chriſt was above Means, and could work without them, and when they failed, did ſo: But when the Means were at hand, he made uſe of them himſelf, to teach us never to expect that in a Way of Miracle, which may be come at in a Way of Means. *Obſ.* 5. From our Lord's Example, That Religious Cuſtom of begging a Bleſſing upon our Food before we ſit down to it, and of *Receiving the good Creatures of God with Thanksgiving.* How unworthy is he of the Crumbs that fall from his own Table, who with the Swine looks not up unto, and takes no thankful notice of the Hand that feeds him. *Obſ.* 6. The Certainty and Greatneſs of the Miracle; *They did all eat, and were filled.* They did all eat, not a Cruſt of Bread, or a Bit of Fiſh, but to Satiety and Fulneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied, and yet *Seven Baskets remain*; more is left than was at firſt ſet on. 'Tis hard to ſay which was the greateſt Miracle, the miraculous Eating, or miraculous Leaving. If we conſider what they eat, we may wonder that they left any thing; if what they left, that they eat any thing. *Obſ. Laſtly,* Our Lord's Command to gather up the Fragments, *Teaches* us, That we make no waſte of the good Creatures of God. The Fragments of Fiſh-bones and broken Bread muſt be gathered up: The Liberal Houſe-keeper of the World will not allow the Loſs of his Orts. Frugality is a commendable Duty. God hath made us Stewards, but not abſolute Lords, of his Bleſſing. We muſt be accountable to him for all the Inſtances of his Bounty received from him.

10 And ſtraightway he entred into a ſhip with his diſciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Phariſees came forth, and began to queſtion with him, ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempting him, 12 And he ſighed deeply in his ſpirit, and ſaid, Why doth this generation ſeek after a ſign? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall be no ſign given unto this generation. 13 And he left them, and departed to the other ſide.

Obſ. here, 1. The unreaſonable Practice of the wicked Phariſees in asking a Sign of Chriſt; that is, ſome new and extraordinary Miracle to be wrought by him, to demonſtrate him to be the true and promiſed Meſſias: But had not our Saviour ſhewed them Signs enough already? What were all the Miracles daily wrought before their Eyes but convincing Signs of his Divine Power? But Infidelity, mixt with Obſtinacy, is never ſatisfied. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour's Carriage towards theſe obſtinate Phariſees, who perſiſted in their Unbelief;

belief; *He ſighed deeply in his Spirit*, and mourn'd for the Hardneſs of their Heart. *Learn* thence, That to grieve and mourn for the Sins of others, to be affected with them, and deeply afflicted for them, is a Gracious and Chriſt-like Temper. It is not ſufficient to make an outward Shew of grieving for others Sins, but we ought to lay them to Heart, and to be inwardly afflicted for them. *Jeſus ſighed deeply in his Spirit.* *Obſ.* 3. A ſharp Reproof given by our Saviour to them. At the ſame time that our Saviour did inwardly grieve for the Phariſees Wickedneſs, he did openly reprove them for it. It is not ſufficient that we mourn for the Sins of others, but we muſt prudently reprove them as Occaſion is offered, and our Duty requireth. *Obſ.* 4. The Sin which the Phariſees are reproved for; *namely*, for *ſeeking after a Sign.* That is, for demanding new Miracles, after he had wrought ſo many before their Eyes, to prove the Divinity of his Perſon. *Learn* thence, That it is a Sin for any to require new Signs and Miracles for the Confirmation of that Doctrine which has been already ſufficiently confirm'd by Miracles. Yea, an heinous Sin, which deſerveth a ſharp Reproof and Cenſure. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Our Saviour's peremptory Denial of the Phariſees preſumptuous Requeſt; *There ſhall be no Sign given to this Generation.* That is, no ſuch Sign or Miracles as they deſire, and would have. No Sign or Miracle ſhall be wrought at their Motion and Sute: Altho' after this, Chriſt of his own Accord, and at his own Pleaſure, wrought many Miracles before their Eyes. Such as wilfully harden themſelves againſt the Light of their own Conſciences, are righteouſly delivered up to Hardneſs of Heart, and final Impenitency. Theſe Hypocritical Phariſees ſhut their Eyes againſt the moſt convictive Evidence; and they are given up to their own Obſtinacy: *Our Saviour left them, and departed.*

14 Now the diſciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ſhip with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, ſaying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the leaven of Herod. 16 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, It is becauſe we have no bread. 17 And when Jeſus knew it, he ſaith unto them, Why reaſon ye, becauſe ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither underſtand? have ye your hearts yet hardened? 18 Having eyes, ſee ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not yet remember? 19 When I brake the five loaves among five thouſand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They ſay unto him, Twelve. 20 And when the ſeven amongſt four thouſand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? and they ſaid, Seven. 21 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that you do not underſtand?

Obſerve here, 1. How dull the Diſciples of Chriſt were under Chriſt's own Teaching, and how apt to put a carnal Senſe upon his Words. They apprehended he had ſpoke unto them of the Leaven of Bread, what he intended of the Leaven of the Phariſees Doctrine. *Obſ.* 2. The Rebuke our Saviour gives his Diſciples for not underſtanding the Senſe and Signification of what he ſpake. Chriſt is much offended with his own People, when he diſcerns Blindneſs and Ignorance in them after more than ordinary Means of Knowledge enjoyed by them: *How is it that ye do not yet underſtand?* *Obſ.* 3. The Metaphor by which Chriſt ſets forth the corrupt Doctrines of the Phariſees and Herodians. He compares it to *Leaven.* Partly for its Soureneſs, and partly for its Diffuſiveneſs. Now *the Leaven of Herod*, or *the Herodians*, is ſuppoſed to be this: That becauſe *Herod* was made King of the *Jews*, and lived at the time when the Meſſiah was expected, there were thoſe that maintained the Opinion that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; which Opinion Chriſt compares to Leaven, becauſe as that diffuſeth it ſelf into the whole Maſs or Lump of Bread, with which it is mixed: So falſe Doctrine was not only evil and corrupt in it ſelf, but apt to ſpread its Contagion farther and farther, to the infecting of others with it. *Learn* thence, That Error is as damnable as Vice; and Perſons erroneous in Judgment to be avoided, as well as thoſe that are wicked in Converſation; and he that has a due Care of his Soul's Salvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous Principles, as he is of debauched Practices. *Obſ.* 4. Our Saviour does not command his Diſciples to ſeparate from Communion with the Phariſees, and oblige them not to hear their Doctrine; but only to beware of their Errors, which they mix with their Doctrine. We may and ought to hold Communion with a Church, though erroneous in Judgment, if not fundamentaliy erroneous. For Separation from a Church is not juſtifiable upon any other Grounds than that which makes a Separation betwixt God and that Church, which is either Apoſtacy into groſs Idolatry, or in Point of Doctrine into damnable Hereſie. *Obſ.* 5. The Fault obſerved by our Saviour in his Diſciples, Hardneſs of Heart; *Have ye your Hearts yet hardned?* There may be, and oft-times is, ſome Degree of Hardneſs of Heart in ſincere Chriſtians; but this is not a total Hardneſs; it is lamented and humbled for, not indulged and delighted in. As Chriſt is grieved for the Hardneſs of his Peoples Hearts, ſo are they grieved alſo; it is both bitter and burthenſome to them.

22 And he cometh to Bethſaida, and they bring a blind man to him, and beſought him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had ſpit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he ſaw ought? 24 And he looked up and ſaid, I ſee men as trees, walking. 25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was reſtored, and ſaw every man clearly. 26 And he ſent him away to his houſe, ſaying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any man in the town.

Here we have recorded a ſpecial Miracle wrought by our Saviour at *Bethſaida*, in curing a blind Man brought unto him. Where *Obſerve* 1. What evident Proof the Phariſees had of Chriſt's Divine Power and Godhead: He had before cauſed *the Deaf to hear, the Dumb to ſpeak, the Lame to walk*; now *he makes the Blind to ſee*; yet did the Phariſees obſtinately reſiſt all Means of their Conviction, and continued in their Oppoſition to Truth, to their inevitable and unutterable Condemnation. *Obſ.* 2. The wonderful Humility, the great Condeſcention, of Jeſus Chriſt towards this Blind Man: *He took him by the Hand, and led him*, himſelf. A great Evidence of his Condeſcending Humility, and of his Goodneſs and Mercy; ſhewing how ready and willing he was to help and heal him: See here a ſingular Pattern of Humility and Condeſcending Grace and Mercy in our Dear Redeemer, in that he vouchaſed with his own Hands to take and lead a poor Blind Man through the Streets of *Bethſaida*, in the Sight of all the People. *Let us learn of him who was thus meek and lowly in Heart.* *Obſ.* 3. Our Lord leads the Blind Man out of the Town before he heals him; not in the Town where all the People might take Notice of it. Thereby teaching us to avoid all Shew of Ambition, all Appearance of Vain-glory, in what we do. Even *as Chriſt ſought not his own Glory, but the Glory of him that ſent him.* *Obſ.* 4. The manner of the Cure wrought upon this Blind Man; it was gradual, and by degrees; not inſtantaneous, and at once; he had firſt a dark, dim, and obſcure Sight, afterwards a clear, and a perfect Sight. Chriſt thereby gave Evidence of his Abſolute and Omnipotent Power, that he was not tied to any particular Means, or Manner, or Order of Working; but wrought his Miracles variouſly, as he ſaw to be moſt fit for the Glory of God, and the Benefit of his People. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Charge given by our Saviour not to publiſh this Miracle in the Town of *Bethſaida*; a Place where Chriſt had ſo often Preach'd, and wrought ſo many Miracles. But the Inhabitants had obſtinately and contemptuouſly undervalued and deſpiſed both his Doctrine and Miracles; therefore we read, *Mat.* 11. 21. that our Saviour denounced a *Woe againſt Bethſaida*, aſſuring her, *that it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for her.* The higher a People riſe under the Means, the lower they fall if they miſcarry. Such a People as have been neareſt to Converſion, being not converted, ſhall have the greateſt Condemnation when they are judged.

27 And Jeſus went out, and his diſciples into the towns of Ceſarea Philippi, and by the way he asked his diſciples, ſaying unto them, Whom do men ſay that I am? 28 And they anſwered, John the Baptiſt: but ſome ſay, Elias: and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Peter anſwereth and ſaith unto him, Thou art the Chriſt.

30 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the ſon of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and after three days riſe again. 32 And he ſpake that ſaying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Theſe Verſes relate to us a Conference which our Saviour had with his Diſciples, touching their own and others Opinion of his Perſon. Where *Obſerve* 1. The Place where Chriſt and his Diſciples did confer; it was *in the Way as they walked together*. Teaching us our Duty to take all Occaſions and Opportunities for Holy Conference, for good Diſcourſe touching Spiritual Things, when in the Houſe, when in the Field, when travelling in the Way, *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord ſpake often to one another.* *Obſ.* 2. The Conference it ſelf; *Whom do Men ſay that I am*; That is, What do the common People think and ſpeak of me? Not as if Chriſt were ignorant what Men ſaid of him, or did vain-gloriouſly enquire after the Opinion of the Multitude concerning him; but with an Intention more firmly to ſettle and eſtabliſh his Diſciples in the Belief of his being the true and promiſed Meſſias. The Diſciples tell him, That *ſome ſaid, He was John the Baptiſt, others Elias, others one of the Prophets.* It is no new thing, it ſeems, to find diverſity of Judgments and Opinions concerning Chriſt and the Affairs of his Kingdom. When our Saviour was amongſt Men, who daily converſed with him, yet was there then a great Diverſity of Opinions concerning him. *Obſ.* 3. How St. *Peter*, as the Mouth of all the Apoſtles, and in their Names, makes a full and open Confeſſion of Chriſt, acknowledging him to be the true and promiſed Meſſiah, *Peter ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt.* Whence *Note*, That the Vail of Chriſt's Humane Nature did not keep the Eye of his Diſciples Faith from ſeeing him to be truly and really God. (2.) That Jeſus, the Son of the Virgin *Mary*, was the Chriſt, the true Meſſiah, or the Perſon ordained by God to be the Mediator betwixt God and Man; the Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind: *Thou art the Chriſt.* *Obſ.* 4. The Charge and ſpecial Injunction given by our Saviour *to tell no Man of him*: That is, not commonly and openly to declare that he was the Son of God, and the true Meſſiah: Becauſe he was now in his State of Humiliation, and the Glory of his Divinity was to be concealed till his Reſurrection. Chriſt had his own fit Times and proper Seaſons, in which he reveal'd the great Myſteries of his Kingdom to the World. *Obſ.* 5. The great Wiſdom of our Saviour in acquainting his Diſciples with the near Approach of his Death and Paſſion; thereby to prevent that Scandal and Offence which otherwiſe they might have taken at his Sufferings: The better to fit and prepare them to bear that great Trial, and to correct the Error which they had entertained touching an earthly Kingdom of Chriſt: That the Meſſiah was to be a Temporal Prince. *Obſ.* 6. St. *Peter*'s Carriage towards Chriſt upon this Occaſion; *He took him aſide*, and began to blame him for affirming that he muſt Die. Oh how ready is Fleſh and Blood to oppoſe all that tends to Suffering! What need have we to be fortified againſt the Temptations of our Friends, as well as of Enemies. Satan ſometimes makes uſe of good Men as his Inſtruments to do his Work by, when they little ſuſpect it. Little did *Peter* think that Satan now ſet him on Work to hinder the Redemption of Mankind, by diſſwading Chriſt from Dying. *Obſ.* 7. With what Indignation Chriſt rejects *Peter*'s Admonition; *Get thee behind me Satan.* Chriſt heard Satan ſpeaking in *Peter*: 'Twas *Peter*'s Tongue, but Satan tuned it, therefore Chriſt calls *Peter* by Satan's Name. They that will do the Devil's Work, ſhall have the Devil's Name too. He that would hinder the Redemption of Mankind is Satan, an Adverſary to Mankind. From our Saviour's ſmart Reproof given to *Peter*, we *Learn*, That no Reſpect to Mens Perſons, or Regard to their Piety, muſt cauſe us to flatter them in their Sins, or move us to ſpeak favourably of their Sins. As well as our Saviour loved *Peter*, he rebukes him ſeverely. Oh Lord! ſo intent was thy Heart upon the great Work of our Redemption, that thou could'ſt not bear the leaſt Word that ſhould obſtruct thee in it, or divert thee from it.

34 And when he had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me. 35 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpels, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Bleſſed Saviour recommends his Religion to every one's Election and Choice, not attempting by Force and Violence to compel any Perſon to the embracing of it. *If any Man will come after me*; that is, if any Man chuſes and reſolves to be a Chriſtian. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour's Terms propounded; namely, Self-denial, Goſpel-ſuffering, and Goſpel-ſervice. 1. Self-denial; *Let him deny himſelf.* By which we are not to underſtand, either the denying of our Senſes in Matters of Faith, or the renouncing our Reaſon in the Matters of Religion; but a Willingneſs to part with all our Earthly Comforts, and Temporal Enjoyments, for the Sake of Chriſt, when called thereunto. 2. Goſpel-ſuffering; *He muſt take up his Croſs.* An Alluſion to a Roman Cuſtom, that the Malefactor who was to be Crucified took his Croſs upon his Shoulder, and carried it to the Place of Execution. Where *Note*, That not the making of the Croſs, but the patient bearing of it, when God has made it, and laid it upon our Shoulders, is the Duty enjoin'd: *Let him take up his Croſs.* 3. Goſpel-ſervice; *Let him follow me*, ſays Chriſt: That is, obey my Commands, and imitate my Example. He muſt ſet my Life and Doctrine continually before him, and be daily correcting and reforming of his Life, by that Rule and Pattern. *Obſ.* 3. The Reaſons urged by our Saviour to induce Men to a Willingneſs to lay down their Lives for the Sake of Chriſt and his Holy Religion. *He that will ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it; and he that is willing to loſe his Life for the Goſpel's ſake, the ſame ſhall find it.* Intimating to us, 1. That the Love of this Temporal Life is a great Temptation to Men to deny Chriſt, and to renounce his Holy Religion. And, 2. That the ſureſt Way to attain Eternal Life is chearfully to lay down our Temporal Life, when the Glory of Chriſt, and the Honour of Religion, requires it at our Hand.

36 For what ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? 37 Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

Our Saviour had ſhewn in the former Verſes the great Danger of ſeeking to ſave our Temporal Life, by expoſing to hazard our Eternal Life. This he confirms in the Words before us by a double Argument: The firſt drawn from the Excellency of Eternal Life, or the Life of the Soul: The ſecond drawn from the Irrecoverableneſs of this Loſs, or the Impoſſibility of Redeeming the Loſs of the Soul by any Way or Means whatſoever. *What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? Learn* 1. That Almighty God has intruſted every one of us with a Soul of ineſtimable Worth and Preciouſneſs, capable of being ſaved or loſt, and that to all Eternity. 2. That the Gain of the whole World is not comparable with the Loſs of one precious Soul. The Soul's Loſs is an inconceivable, incompenſable, and irrecoverable Loſs.

38 Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father, with the holy angels.

That is, whoſoever ſhall deny or diſown me, either in my Perſon, my Goſpel, or my Members, for any Fear or Favour of Man, he ſhall with Shame be diſowned, and eternally rejected, by me at the great Day. There are two Paſſions that make Perſons diſown Chriſt and Religion in the Day of Temptation; *Namely*, Fear and Shame. Many good Men have been overcome by the former, as St. *Peter* and others; but we find not any good Men in Scripture guilty of the latter; *Namely*, that denied Chriſt out of Shame. This argues a rotten, unſound, and corrupt Heart. If any Man thinks it beneath his Honour and Quality to own the oppoſed Truths and deſpiſed Members of Jeſus Chriſt, he will think it much more beneath him, his Honour and Dignity, to own them at the great Day. *Learn* hence, That it is not ſufficient that we own Chriſt by believing in him, but we muſt honour him by an outward profeſſing of him alſo. *Secondly*, That ſuch as are aſhamed of Chriſt's Doctrine or Members, are aſhamed of Chriſt himſelf. *Thirdly*, That ſuch as either for Fear dare not, or for Shame will not, own the Doctrine of Chriſt, or the Members of Chriſt now, ſhall find Chriſt aſhamed to own and confeſs them at the Great Day. *Whoſoever is aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and wicked Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with his Holy Angels.*

CHAP. IX.

AND he ſaid unto them, verily I ſay unto you, That there be ſome of them that ſtand here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power.

There is a threefold Senſe and Interpretation given of theſe Words by Expoſitors: 1. Some refer the Words to the Times of the Goſpel after Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion; when the Goſpel was ſpread and propagated far and near, and *the Kingdom of God came with Power*. *Learn* thence, That where the Goſpel is powerfully preached, and chearfully obeyed, there Chriſt cometh moſt glorioſly in his Kingdom. 2. Others underſtand theſe Words of Chriſt's coming, and exerciſing his Kingly Power in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; which ſome of the Apoſtles, then ſtanding by, lived to ſee. 3. Others (as moſt agreeable to the Context) underſtand the Words as relating to our Saviour's Transfiguration. As if he had ſaid, *Some of you*, meaning *Peter, James* and *John*, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon Mount *Tabor*, in ſuch Splendor and Glory, as ſhall be a *Prælудium*, a Shadow and Repreſentation, of that Glory which I ſhall appear in when I come to judge the World at the Great Day. And whereas our Saviour ſays not, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not die, but *which ſhall not taſte of Death*, this implies Two Things: 1. That after they had ſeen this Transfiguration they muſt taſte of Death as well as others. 2. That they ſhould but taſte of it, and no more. From whence *Learn*, 1. That the faithful Servants and Diſciples of Chriſt muſt at length, in God's appointed Time, taſte and have experience of Death as well as others. 2. That altho' they muſt taſte, yet they ſhall but taſte of Death; they ſhall not drink off the Dregs of that bitter Cup; tho' they fall by the Hand of Death, yet ſhall they not be overcome by it, but in the very fall get Victory over it.

2 And after ſix days, Jeſus taketh with him, Peter, James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themſelves: and he was transfigured before them.

Here we have the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Transfiguration, when he laid, as it were, the Garments of our frail Humanity aſide for a little time, aſſuming to himſelf the Robes of Majeſty and Glory, to demonſtrate and teſtifie the Truth of his Divinity; for this Divine Glory was an Evidence of his Divine Nature; and alſo an Emblem of that Glory which he and his Diſciples, all his faithful Servants and Followers, ſhall enjoy together in Heaven.

3 And his raiment became ſhining, exceeding white as ſnow; ſo as no fuller on earth can white them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moſes: and they were talking with Jeſus. 5 And Peter anſwered and ſaid to Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 6 For he wiſt not what to ſay, for they were ſore afraid. 7 And there was a cloud that overſhadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon: hear ye him. 8 And ſuddenly when they had looked round about, they ſaw no man any more, ſave Jeſus only with themſelves.

Obſerve here, 1. That to confirm the Diſciples Faith in the Truth of Chriſt's Divine Nature, he was pleaſed to ſuffer the Rays of his Divinity to dart forth before their Eyes, ſo far as they were able to bear it. His Face ſhined with a pleaſing Brightneſs, and his Raiment with ſuch a glorious Luſtre, as did at once both delight and dazle the Eyes of the Diſciples. *Obſ.* 2. The Choice which our Saviour makes of the Witneſſes of this his glorious Transfiguration; his Three Diſciples, *Peter, James* and *John*: But why Diſciples? Why Three Diſciples? Why theſe Three? 1. Why Diſciples? Becauſe this Transfiguration was a Type and Shadow of the Glory of Heaven: Chriſt vouchſafes therefore the Earneſt and Firſt Fruits of that Glory only to Saints, upon whom he intended to beſtow the full Harveſt in due time. 2. Why Three Diſciples? Becauſe Three were ſufficient to witneſs the Truth and Reality of this Miracle. *Judas* was unworthy of this Favour; yet leſt he ſhould murmur, or be diſcontented, others are left out as well as he. But, 3. Why theſe Three, rather than others? Probably, 1. Becauſe theſe Three were more eminent for Grace, Zeal and Love towards Chriſt. Now the moſt eminent Manifeſtations of Glory are made to thoſe that are moſt excelling in Grace. 2. Theſe Three Diſciples were Witneſſes of Chriſt's Agony and Paſſion; to prepare them for which, they are here made Witneſſes of his Transfiguration. This glorious Viſion upon Mount *Tabor* fitted them to abide the Terror of Mount *Calvary*. *Obſ.* 3. The glorious Attendants upon our Saviour at his Transfiguration. They were *Two*, *Two Men*, and thoſe Two Men *Moſes* and *Elias*. This being but a Glimpſe of Chriſt's Glory, not a full Manifeſtation of it, only Two of the glorified Saints attend at it. Theſe Two Attendants are not Two Angels, but Two Men; becauſe Men were more nearly concerned than Angels in what was done. But why *Moſes* and *Elias* rather than other Men? (1.) Becauſe *Moſes* was the Giver of the Law, and *Elias* was the Chief of the Prophets. Now both theſe attending upon Chriſt, did ſhew the Conſent of the Law and the Prophets with Chriſt, and their Accompliſhment and Fulfilling in him. (2.) Becauſe theſe Two were the moſt laborious Servants of Chriſt; both adventured their Lives in God's Cauſe, and therefore are highly honoured by him. For, *Thoſe that honour him, he will honour*. *Obſ.* 4. The Carriage and Demeanour of the Diſciples upon this great Occaſion, (1.) They ſupplicate Jeſus, not *Moſes* and *Elias*; they make no Suit to them, but to Chriſt only, *Maſter, it is good being here*. Oh! what a raviſhing Comfort and Satisfaction is the Communion and Fellowſhip of the Saints! But the Preſence of Chriſt amongſt them renders their Joys tranſporting. (2.) They proffer their Service to farther the Continuance of what they did enjoy; *Let us make Three Tabernacles*. Saints will ſtick at no Pains or Coſt for the Enjoyment of Chriſt's Preſence, and his Peoples Company. *Learn* hence, That a Glimpſe of Heaven's Glory is ſufficient to wrap a Soul into Extaſie, and to make it out of Love with Worldly Company. 2. That we are apt to deſire more of Heaven upon Earth than God will allow. We would have the Heavenly Glory come down to us, but are unwilling, by Death, to go up to that. *Obſ.* 5. How a Cloud was put before the Diſciples Eyes when the Divine Glory was manifeſted to them; partly to allay the Luſtre and Reſplendency of that Glory which they were ſwallowed up with. The Glory of Heaven is inſupportable in this ſinful State; we cannot bear it unvail'd; and partly to hinder their farther prying and looking into that Glory. We muſt be content to behold God through a Cloud *darkly here*, e'er long *we ſee him Face to Face*. *Obſ.* 6. The Teſtimony given out of the Cloud by God the Father concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son: *This is my Beloved Son, hear him*. Where *Note*, 1. The Dignity of his Perſon; he is *my Son*. For Nature co-eſſential, and for Duration co-eternal, with his Father. 2. The Endearedneſs of his Relation, he is *my Beloved Son*; becauſe of his Conformity unto me, and Compliance with me; Likeneſs is the Cauſe of Love; and an Union and Harmony of Wills cauſes a mutual endearing of Affections. 3. The Authority of his Doctrine, *hear ye him*: Not *Moſes* and *Elias*, who were Servants; but Chriſt, my Son, whom I have commiſſioned to be the great Prophet and Teacher of my Church: Therefore adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Law-giver. The obedient Ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing Eye, the adoring Knee, or the applauding Tongue.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead. 10 And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what

the riſing from the dead ſhould mean? 11 And they aſked him, ſaying, Why ſay the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come? 12 And he anſwered and told them, Elias verily cometh firſt, and reſtoreth all things, and how it is written of the ſon of man, that he muſt ſuffer many things, and be ſet at nought. 13 But I ſay unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted, as it is written of him.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſtrict Injunction given by Chriſt to his Diſciples, not to publiſh or proclaim this Glorious Viſion at his Transfiguration till after his Reſurrection; becauſe being now in a State of Humiliation, he would have his Divine Majeſty and Glory vailed and concealed. *Learn* hence, That the Divine Glory of Chriſt's Perſon, as God, was not to be manifeſted ſuddenly, and all at once, but gradually, and by ſteps. Firſt more obſcurely by his Miracles, by the forced Acknowledgments of Devils, by the free Confeſſion of his Diſciples, and by the glorious Viſion of his Transfiguration; but the more clear and full, the more publick and open Manifeſtation of his Divine Glory was at the time of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. *Obſ.* 2. The Diſciples Obedience to Chriſt's Injunction, touching the concealing of his Transfiguration till after his Reſurrection, *they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the Dead ſhould mean.* Not that they queſtioned the Reſurrection in general, but Chriſt's Reſurrection only in particular, becauſe his Reſurrection did ſuppoſe his Death; and they could not conceive how the Meſſiah, whom they erroneouſly ſuppoſed muſt be a Temporal Prince, ſhould ſuffer Death at the Hands of Men. *Obſ.* 3. The Queſtion which the Diſciples put to Chriſt, how the Obſervation of the Jewiſh Doctors holds good; *namely,* That *Elias* muſt come before the *Meſſias* come: We ſee the *Meſſias,* but no *Elias.* Our Saviour anſwers, *That Elias was come already;* not *Elias* in Perſon, but *one in the Spirit and Power of Elias;* to wit, *John the Baptiſt,* who was propheſied of under the Name of *Elias,* there being a great Reſemblance between the *Elias* of the *Old Teſtament,* and of the *New,* viz. *John the Baptiſt;* they were both Men of a mighty Zeal for God and Religion, they were both undaunted Reprovers of the Faults of Princes, and they were both implacably hated and perſecuted for the ſame. Thence *Learn,* That Hatred and Perſecution, even unto Death, has often been the Lot and Portion of ſuch Perſons who have had the Courage and Zeal to reprove the Faults of Princes. *Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted.*

14 And when he came to his diſciples, he ſaw a great multitude about them, and the ſcribes queſtioning with them. 15 And ſtraightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, ſaluted him. 16 And he aſked the ſcribes, What queſtion ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my ſon, which hath a dumb ſpirit: 18 And whereſoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I ſpake to thy diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, and they could not. 19 He anſwereth him and ſaith, O faithleſs generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him: and when he ſaw him, ſtraightway the ſpirit tear him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. 21 And he aſked his father, how long is it ago ſince this came unto him? And he ſaid, Of a child. 22 And oft-times it hath caſt him into the fire, and into the waters to deſtroy him; but if thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us. 23 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth. 24 And ſtraightway the father of the child cried out, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25 When Jeſus ſaw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And the ſpirit cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, inſomuch that many ſaid, He is dead. 27 But Jeſus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he aroſe. 28 And when he was come into the houſe, his diſciples aſked him privately, Why could not we caſt him out? 29 And he ſaid unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and faſting.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon brought to Chriſt for Help and Healing, one Bodily poſſeſs'd by Satan, who had made him Deaf and Dumb from his Childhood; and oft-times caſt him into the Fire and Water, but rather to torment than to diſpatch him. Oh how does Satan, that malicious Tyrant, rejoice in doing Hurt to the Bodies, as well as the Souls, of Mankind! Lord, abate his Power, ſince his Malice will not be abated. How great is thy Goodneſs, in preſerving us from the Power and Malice of Evil Spirits, and how watchful is thy Providence over us, to preſerve us, when Satan is ſeeking, by all imaginable Means and Methods, to deſtroy us. *Obſerve,* 2. The Perſon that repreſents his ſad Condition to our Saviour, his compaſſionate Father, *who kneeled down, and cried out:* Need will make a Perſon both humble and eloquent. Every one has a Tongue to ſpeak for himſelf, happy is he that keeps a Tongue for others. *Obſerve,* 3. The Circumſtance of Time, Satan had got Poſſeſſion of his Perſon very young, in his Youth, nay, in his Childhood: And Oh how hard was it to caſt him out after ſo long Poſſeſſion! The Diſciples could not do it with all their Power and Prayers: And when our Saviour himſelf, by the Power of his Godhead, did diſpoſſeſs him, it was with foaming and renting that he left him. Thus when Satan gets Poſſeſſion of Perſons Hearts in their Youth, Oh how hard will it be to caſt him out! It will put the Soul to great Grief, great Pain, great Sorrow of Heart. Satan will endeavour to hold his own, and keep the Sinner his Slave and Vaſſal, if all the Power of Hell can keep him. Lord! convince young Perſons, that it is eaſier to keep Satan out, than it is to caſt him out, of the Poſſeſſion of their Hearts. *Obſerve,* 4. The Phyſicians which this diſtreſſed Perſon is brought unto. Firſt, to the Diſciples, and then to Jeſus. We never apply our ſelves importunately to the God of Power till we deſpair of the Creatures Help. But why could not the Diſciples caſt him out? Chriſt tells them, becauſe of their Unbelief; that is, becauſe of the Weakneſs of their Faith, not the total Want of Faith. Whence *Learn,* That ſecret Unbelief may lye hid and undiſcerned in the Heart, which neither others nor our ſelves may take Notice of, until ſome Trial doth diſcover it. *Obſerve,* 5. The poor Man's humble Requeſt, and Chriſt's gracious Reply. *If thou canſt do any thing, help me,* ſays the Father; *If thou canſt believe, all Things are poſſible,* ſays our Saviour. *Note* thence, That the Fault is not in Chriſt, but in our ſelves, if we receive not that Mercy from him which we deſire and need. There is no Deficiency in Chriſt's Power, the Defect lyes in our Faith. Hereupon the Man *cries out with Tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief.* If theſe were Tears of Joy for the Truth of his Faith, then we gather, that the loweſt Degree and leaſt Meaſure of Faith is Matter of Joy unſpeakable to the Owner and Profeſſor of it. If theſe were Tears of Sorrow for the Weakneſs of his Faith, then we may collect, that the Remains of Unbelief in the Children of God do coſt them many Tears: They are the Burthen and Sorrow of Gracious Souls. *The Father of the Child cried out with Tears, Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief.* *Obſerve,* 6. With what Facility and Eaſe our Saviour caſt out this ſtubborn Devil, that had ſo long poſſeſs'd this poor Child, even with a Word ſpeaking. How long ſoever Satan has kept Poſſeſſion of a Soul, Chriſt can eject and caſt him out both eaſily and ſpeedily; one Word of Chriſt's Mouth is ſufficient to help us out of all Diſtreſs, both Bodily and Spiritual. Yet did our Lord ſuffer the Evil Spirit to rage and rend the Child before he went out of him: Not from any Delight in the poor Child's Miſery, but that the Multitude, ſeeing the Deſperateneſs of the Caſe, might the more admire the Power of Chriſt in his Deliverance. *Obſerve* 7. The Soveraign Power and Abſolute Authority, which Chriſt had even here on Earth, when in his State of Humiliation, over the Devil and his Angels: He commands him to go out, and enter no more into the Child, and is obeyed. This was a Proof and Demonſtration of the Godhead of our Saviour, that he had Power and Authority over Devils, to command and over-rule them, to curb and reſtrain them, at his Pleaſure. And whereas Chriſt commands the Devil not only to come out, but to enter no more into the Perſon, it implies, that Satan being caſt out of his Hold, earneſtly deſires to enter in again, to recover his Hold, and to regain his Poſſeſſion; but if Chriſt ſays, Enter no more, Satan ſhall obey his Voice. *Obſerve* 8. The Diſciples Enquiry into the Reaſons why they could not caſt this ſtubborn Devil out, according to the Power which he had given them to work Miracles. Chriſt tells them it was, (1.) Becauſe *of their Unbelief*; by which underſtand the Weakneſs of their Faith, not their total Want of Faith. (2.) Becauſe they did not in this extraordinary Caſe apply themſelves to the Uſe of extraordinary Means; *Namely, Prayer and Faſting. Learn* hence, (1.) That in extraordinary Caſes, where the Neceſſities either of Soul or Body do require it, Recourſe muſt be had to the Uſe of extraordinary Means; one of which is an importunate Application unto God, by ſolemn Prayer. *Secondly*, That Faſting and Prayer are Two ſpecial Means of Chriſt's own Appointment, for the enabling of his People victoriouſly to overcome Satan, and caſt him out of our ſelves or others. We muſt ſet an Edge upon our Faith by Prayer, and upon our Prayer by Faſting.

30 And they departed thence, and paſſed through Galilee, and he would not that any man ſhould know it. 31 For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The ſon of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him, and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day. 32 But they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to ask him.

Obſervable it is how frequently our Saviour fore-warned his Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings; and as the Time of his Suffering grew near, he did more frequently warn them of it. But all was little enough to arm them againſt the Scandal of the Croſs, and to reconcile their Thoughts to a ſuffering Condition. The Diſciples had taken up the common Opinion, that the Meſſiah was to be a Temporal Prince, and as ſuch to reign here upon Earth, and they knew not how to reconcile this, with his *being delivered up into the Hands of Men that ſhould kill him*, and yet *they were afraid to ask him concerning this Matter.* Now from Chriſt's frequent fore-warning his Diſciples of approaching Sufferings, we may gather, That we can never hear either too often, or too much, of the Doctrine of the Croſs, nor be to frequently inſtructed in our Duty to prepare for a Suffering State. As Chriſt went by his Croſs to his Crown, from a State of Abaſement to a State of Exaltation, ſo muſt all his Diſciples and Followers likewiſe.

33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the houſe, he asked them, What was it, that ye diſputed among your ſelves, by the way? 34 But they held their peace, for by the way, they had diſputed among themſelves, Who ſhould be the greateſt? 35 And he ſat down, and called the twelve, and ſaith unto them: If any man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all. 36 And he took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them, 37 Whoſoever ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me.

It may juſtly ſeem a Wonder, that when our Bleſſed Saviour diſcourſed ſo frequently with his Diſciples about his Sufferings, that they ſhould at the ſame time be diſputing among themſelves about Precedency and Preheminency, which of them ſhould be the greateſt, the firſt in Place, and the higheſt in Dignity and Honour. But from this Inſtance we may *Learn*, That the holieſt and beſt of Men are ſubject to Pride and Ambition, prone to covet worldly Dignity and Greatneſs, ready to catch at the Bait of Honour, to affect a Precedency before, and a Superiority over, others. The Apoſtles themſelves were touch'd, if not tainted, with the Itch of Ambition. To cure which, our Saviour preaches to them the Doctrine of Humility. Where *Obſerve*, 1. Our Lord doth not ſay, he that is the firſt, but *he that deſireth to be firſt, ſhall be laſt of all, and Servant of all. Teaching* us, That all Perſons in general, and Miniſters in particular, ought not to ſeek out Places of Dignity and Preheminency for themſelves, but be ſought out for them; he that is firſt in ſeeking them, uſually leaſt deſerves them, and laſt obtains them: *If any Man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all. Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour teaches his Diſciples Humility by the Type and Example of a little Child, which he ſets before them as the proper Emblem of Humility; ſhewing them, that they ought to be as free from Ambition as a young Child, which affects nothing of Precedency or Superiority. Such as are of higheſt Eminency in the Church of Chriſt ought to be adorned with Humility, and look upon themſelves as lying under the greateſt Obligations to be moſt eminently uſeful and ſerviceable for the Churches Good. *Obſerve* 3. How exceeding dear and precious ſuch Perſons are to Chriſt, who reſemble little Children in true Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind; aſſuring the World, that whatſoever Kindneſs or Reſpect they ſhew to them, he accounts ſhewn to himſelf. He that receiveth them, ſays Chriſt, receiveth me. So near is the Union, ſo dear the Relation, betwixt Chriſt and his Members, that whatever Good or Evil is done to them, he reckons it as done unto himſelf.

38 And John anſwered him, ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not us. 39 But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not, for there is no man that ſhall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me. 40 For he that is not againſt us, is on our part. 41 For whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water, to drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, Verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his reward. 42 And whoſoever ſhall offend one of theſe little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the ſea.

The Evangeliſt here ſets down a Conference betwixt our Saviour Chriſt and St. *John* his Diſciple. Where *Obſ.* 1. St. *John*'s Relation of a Matter of Fact to Chriſt, namely, his forbidding one to caſt out Devil's in Chriſt's Name that did not follow Chriſt as they did, being his profeſs'd Diſciples. Tho only the Diſciples which followed Chriſt had a Commiſſion to work Miracles, yet were there others, (no Enemies to Chriſt,) who, in Imitation of the Diſciples, did attempt to do the like; and God was pleaſed, for the Honour of his Son, in whoſe Name they caſt out Devils, to give them ſometimes Succeſs. Almighty God may, and ſometimes doth, give Succeſs to ſuch Actions and Enterprizes as are good in themſelves, tho' undertaken by Perſons that have no lawful Call, or Warrant from God, to do them. However, it was no ſmall Confirmation of the Truth of Chriſtianity, that Chriſt's Name was thus powerful, even among thoſe that did not follow him, and therefore could do nothing by compact with him. *Obſ.* 2. The Action of the Diſciples towards this Perſon, *We forbad him.* This ſhewed, 1 Their Ignorance, in ſuppoſing that none could be true Diſciples, nor work Miracles, but ſuch as followed them; *We forbad him, becauſe he followed not us.* 2. Their Raſhneſs, in forbidding him of their own Heads, before they had conſulted Chriſt about it. 3. Their Envy and Emulation, in that they were grieved and diſcontented at this Perſon's caſting out Devils, becauſe he was not a Follower of them. Oh the imperfect Compoſition of the beſt of Saints, how much Weakneſs, Infirmity and Corruption, doth *John* the Beloved Diſciple diſcover upon this Occaſion! The Sin of Envy and Emulation againſt the Gifts of God in others is very natural to Men, and to good Men; yea, to the beſt of Men. It is as difficult to look upon other Mens Gifts without Envy, as to look upon our own without Pride. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's Anſwer and Reply, *Forbid him not*, becauſe our Saviour knew that his Enterprize of caſting out Devils in his Name, would in ſome Manner and Meaſure redound to the Glory of his Name, altho' he undertook the

Matter without ſufficient Warrant from Chriſt. We ought not to cenſure and condemn thoſe who do that which is Good in it ſelf, tho' they fail in the Manner of it, and in the Means they uſe for effecting it. *Obſ.* 4. What Encouragement our Saviour gives the World to be kind to his Friends and Followers: He aſſures them, *that even a Cup of cold Water given for his ſake*, to ſuch as profeſs his Name, *ſhall not miſs of a Reward*. *Learn* thence, That the leaſt Office of Love and Reſpect, of Kindneſs and Charity, ſhewn to any of the Miniſters or Members of Jeſus Chriſt for his ſake, is reſented as done unto himſelf, and ſhall be rewarded by himſelf. *Obſ.* 2. He ſhall gain that which he cannot loſe, by parting with that which he could not keep. *Obſ.* 5. What a heinous and grievous Sin it is to ſcandalize or offend any of the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; he will moſt ſeverely judge and puniſh ſuch as give Offence to them, (by any Wrong or Injury done unto them) both in this Life and the next. *It were better a Milſtone were hanged about his Neck, and he were caſt into the Sea.*

43 And if thine hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, then having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that ſhall never be quenched, 44 Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, then having two feet to be caſt into hell: into the fire that never ſhall be quenched, 46 Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, then having two eyes to be caſt in to hell fire. 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

In the former Verſe our Saviour diſſwaded from the Sin of Scandal, or giving Offence to ſerious and ſincere Chriſtians, threatning a very grievous Judgment againſt ſuch as ſhould any ways offend them; now in theſe Six Verſes he preſcribes a Remedy againſt that and all other Sins, namely, by avoiding all Occaſions that leads to Sin. Here *Obſ.* 1. The Admonition or Warning given by Chriſt unto us, to remove far from us all Occaſions of Sin, tho' never ſo dear unto us. We are not to underſtand the Command literally, as if it were our Duty to maim our Bodily Members; but metaphorically, to cut off all Occaſions that may betray us unto Sin. Hence *Note*, That Sin may be avoided; it is our Duty to avoid whatever leads unto it, or may be the Inſtrument and Occaſion of it. *Obſ.* 2. A Reaſon enforcing the Admonition: This is drawn from the Benefit and Advantage that will come by cutting off ſuch Occaſions of Sin. It will farther us in our Attainment of Eternal Life, and prevent our being caſt into Hell Fire. Now our Saviour affirms, that it is better for a Man to enter into Life with the Loſs of all thoſe Things that are dear and precious to him in this World, rather than go into Hell with the Fruition and Enjoyment of them. *Learn* hence, That a diligent and daily Care to avoid Sin, and all Occaſions that lead unto it, will be a ſpecial Means to eſcape the Torments of Hell, and farther us in our Attainments of Heaven and Eternal Life. *Obſ.* 3. The Deſcription which our Saviour gives of the Torments of Hell; *Firſt*, by its Extremity; it is like a *gnawing Worm*, and a *conſuming Fire*. *Secondly*, and by its Eternity, a Worm that *never dieth*, and a Fire that is *never quenched*. Where *Note*, That the Remembrance of Things paſt, the Experience of Things preſent, and the Expectation of Things to come, are the Bitings of the Worm of Conſcience; at every Bite whereof damned Souls give a dreadful Shriek; ſuch as will not hear the Voice of Conſcience, ſhall feel, and that to purpoſe, the Sting of Conſcience. *Learn* hence, That there is moſt certainly a Place and State of Puniſhment and Torment in another World, for wicked Men to ſuffer in upon the Score of Sin committed in this World. *Secondly*, That the Puniſhment and Torment of the Wicked in Hell are intolerable and interminable, of exquiſite Pain, and endleſs Duration. *Their Worm never dieth, and their Fire is not quenched.*

49 For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt.

Every one ſhall be ſalted with Fire: That is, every one of them mentioned in the foregoing Verſes, who refuſe *to cut off a Right Hand*, and *pluck out a Right Eye*; that is, to mortifie their Boſom Luſts, and Beloved Corruptions, which are as dear as a Right Hand, or a Right Eye, every ſuch wicked and unmortified Perſon *ſhall be ſalted with Fire*; that is, *thrown into Hell Fire, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*. As our Saviour ſpeaks, *v.* 4. *And their being ſalted with Fire*, imports and implies, that as to their Beings they ſhall be preſerved, (even as Salt preſerves Things from Corruption,) that they may be the Objects of the Eternal Wrath of God. So that for Sinners *to be ſalted with Fire*, is to be given up to Everlaſting Deſtruction. *Learn* hence, That all ſuch unſavoury Sinners as indulge their corrupt Luſts and Affections ſhall be ſalted with Fire; that is, given up to Everlaſting Deſtruction in Hell Fire. *But every Sacrifice ſhall be ſalted with Salt*; that is, every Chriſtian who has given up himſelf a real Sacrifice unto God, he ſhall be ſalted, not with Fire, but with Salt; not with Fire, to be conſumed and deſtroyed; but with Salt, to be preſerved and kept ſavoury. The Grace of Mortification is that to the Soul which Salt is to the Body; it preſerves it from Putrefaction, and renders it ſavoury. *Learn* hence, 1. That every Chriſtian in this Life ought to be a Spiritual Sacrifice or Oblation unto God. 2. That there is a putrid and corrupt Part in every Sacrifice, in every Chriſtian, which muſt be purged out, and the Sacrifice purified and cleanſed from. 3. That the Grace of Mortification is the true Salt which muſt clarifie the Soul, and with which every Sacrifice muſt be ſalted, that will be a ſavoury Offering unto God. *Every one ſhall be ſalted with Fire, and every Sacrifice ſhall be ſalted with Salt.*

50 Salt is good; but if the ſalt hath loſt its ſaltneſs, wherewith will ye ſeaſon it? have ſalt in your ſelves, and have peace one with another.

Our Bleſſed Saviour here compares Chriſtians in general and his Miniſters in particular, unto Salt, for a double Reaſon. *Firſt*, Becauſe it is the Nature of Salt to preſerve Things from Corruption and Putrefaction, and to render them ſavoury and pleaſant. Thus are the Miniſters of Chriſt to labour and endeavour, by the Purity of their Doctrine, to ſweeten putrefying Sinners, that they may become ſavoury unto God and Man, and be kept from being fly-blown with Errors and falſe Doctrine. *Secondly*, Becauſe Salt has an Acrimony, a piercing Power in it, which ſubdues the whole Lump, and turns it into its own Nature. Such a piercing Power is there in the Miniſtry of the Word, that it ſubdues the whole Man to the Obedience of it ſelf. *Have Salt in your ſelves, and have Peace one with another*: That is, let all Perſons, eſpecially Miniſters, retain a ſeaſoning Vertue in themſelves, that they may ſweeten and ſeaſon others, even all that they converſe with; and as Salt has an uniting Power, and knits the Parts of the Body, ſalted, together; ſo the upholding of Union and Peace one with another, will declare that you have Salt in your ſelves. *Learn* hence, That it is the Duty of all Chriſtians, but eſpecially of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to maintain Brotherly Concord and Agreement among themſelves, both as an Argument of their Sincerity, and an ornament to their Profeſſion.

CHAP. X.

AND he aroſe from thence, and cometh into the coaſts of Judea, by the farther ſide of Jordan: and the people reſort unto him again, and as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 And the Phariſees came to him, and aſked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, What did Moſes command you? 4 And they ſaid, Moſes ſuffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, For the hardneſs of your heart he wrote you this precept: 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, 8 And they twain ſhall be one fleſh: ſo then they are no more twain, but one fleſh. 9 What therefore God hath joined

ed together, let no man put aſunder. 10 And in the
houſe the diſciples asked him again of the ſame matter.
11 And he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall put away
his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery a-
gainſt her. 12 And if a woman ſhall put away her Hus-
band, and be married to another, ſhe committeth
adultery.

The firſt Verſe of this Chapter acquaints us with the great Labour and Pains our Saviour took in the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry, travelling from Place to Place, in an hot Country, and that on Foot to preach the Goſpel, when he was here upon Earth: *Teaching* all Perſons, but eſpecially Miniſters, by his Example, to be willing to undergo Pains and Labour, even unto much Wearineſs, in the Service of God, and in the Duties of their Calling. For this is God's Ordinance, that every one ſhould feel the Burthen of his Calling, and the Painfulneſs of it. But, Lord, how nice and delicate are ſome Labourers in thy Vineyard, who are willing to do nothing but what they can do with Eaſe; they cannot endure to think of labouring unto Wearineſs, but are ſparing of their Pains for fear of ſhortning their Days, and haſtning their End? Whereas the Lamp of our Lives can never be better ſpent, or burnt out, than in lightning others to Heaven. The following Verſes acquaint us with an enſnaring Queſtion which the *Phariſees* put to our Saviour concerning the Matter of Divorce; concluding that they ſhould entrap him in his Anſwer, whatever it was: If he denied the Lawfulneſs of Divorce, then they would charge him with contradicting *Moſes*, who allowed it. If he affirmed it, then they would contemn him for contradicting his own Doctrine, St. *Mat.* v. 32. for favouring Mens Luſts, and complying with the wicked Cuſtom of the Jews, who upon every ſlight and frivolous Occaſion put away their Wives from them. But ſuch was the Wiſdom of our Saviour in all his Anſwers to the enſnaring Phariſees, that neither their Wit nor Malice could lay hold upon any thing to entangle him in his Talk. *Obſerve* therefore the Piety and Prudence of our Saviour's Anſwer to the Phariſees, he refers them to the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, when God made Husband and Wife one Fleſh, to the Intent that Matrimonial Love might be both incommunicable and indiſſoluble; and accordingly asks them, *What did* Moſes *command you*; Thereby *teaching* us, That the beſt Means for deciding all Doubts, and reſolving all Controverſies, about Matters of Religion, is to have Recourſe unto the Scriptures, or the written Word of God: *What did* Moſes *command you*? *Obſerve* farther, How our Saviour, to confute the Phariſees, and convince them of the Unlawfulneſs of Divorces uſed by the Jews, lays down the firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, and ſhews them firſt the Author, next the Time, and then the End, of the Inſtitution. The Author, God. *What God has joined together*, &c. Marriage is an Ordinance of God's own Appointment, as the Ground and Foundation of all Sacred and Civil Society. The Time of the Inſtitution was in the beginning; Marriage is almoſt as old as the World, as old as Nature it ſelf; there was no ſooner One Perſon, but God divided him into Two; and no ſooner was there Two, but he united them into One. And the End of the Inſtitution of Marriage Chriſt declares was this, that there might be not only an Intimacy and Nearneſs, but alſo an inſeparable Union and Oneneſs, by Means of this endearing Relation; the Conjugal Knot is tied ſo cloſe, that the Bonds of Matrimonial Love are ſtronger than thoſe of Nature. Stricter is the Tie betwixt Husband and Wife, than that betwixt Parent and Child, according to God's own Appointment. *For this Cauſe ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they Twain ſhall be One Fleſh.* And whereas our Saviour adds, *What God hath joined together, let no Man put aſunder.* Two Things are hereby intimated to us, 1. That God is the Author of the cloſe and intimate Union which is betwixt Man and Wife in a married Condition. 2. That it is not in the Power of Man to untie or diſſolve that Union which God has made betwixt Man and Wife in the married Eſtate; yea, it is a great Sin to adviſe unto, or endeavour after, the Seperation of them. *Obſ. Laſtly*, Our Saviour's private Conference with the Diſciples, after his publick Diſputation with the Phariſees, about this Matter of Divorce. He tells his Diſciples, and in them he tells all Chriſtians to the End of the World, that it is utterly unlawful for Man and Wife to be ſeperated by Divorcement one from another, *for any Cauſe whatſoever*, except *only for the Sin of Adultery* committed by either of them after the Marriage. *Learn* hence, That according to the Word and Will of God nothing can violate the Bonds of Marriage, and juſtifie a Divorce betwixt Man and Wife, ſave only the defiling of the Marriage Bed by Adultery and Uncleanneſs. This is the only Caſe in which Man and Wife may lawfully part; and being for this Cauſe parted, whether they may afterwards Marry again to other Perſons has been much diſputed; but that the innocent and injured Perſon, whether Man or Woman, (for there is an equal Right on both ſides) may not Marry again ſeems very unreaſonable; for why ſhould one ſuffer for another's Fault?

13 And they brought young children to him, that he
ſhould touch them, and his diſciples rebuked thoſe
that brought them. 14 But when Jeſus ſaw it, he was
much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them: Suffer the little
children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for
of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I ſay unto
you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God
as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein. 16 And he
took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them,
and bleſſed them.

Obſerve here a ſolemn Action performed; Children are brought to Chriſt to be bleſs'd by him. Where *Note*, 1. The Perſons brought, *Children*, young Children, ſucking Children, as the Word imports, St. *Luke* 18. 15. *They brought them in their Arms*, not led them by the Hands. 2. The Perſon they are brought unto, *Jeſus Chriſt*. But for what End? Not to Baptize them, but to Bleſs them: The Parents looking upon Chriſt as a Prophet, a great Prophet, the great Prophet, do bring their Infants to him, that they might receive the Benefit of his Bleſſing and Prayers. Whence *Learn*, 1. That Infants are capable of Benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt Office that Parents can perform unto their Children to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made Partakers of that Benefit. 3. If infants be capable of Benefit by Chriſt, if capable of his Bleſſing on Earth, and Preſence in Heaven, if they be Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and Heirs of his Kingdom of Glory, then may they be Baptized: For they that are in Covenant have a Right to the Seal of the Covenant. If Chriſt denies not Infants the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Greater, what Reaſon have Miniſters to deny them the Benefit of Baptiſm, which is the Leſs?

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Obſerve here, 1. A Perſon addreſſing himſelf to Chriſt with an important Queſtion in his Mouth. This Perſon was a young Man, a rich Man, and a Ruler; a young Man in the prime of his Age, a rich Man in the fulneſs of his Wealth, and a Ruler in the prime of his Authority and Power. From whence *Learn*, That for young Men, rich Men, eſpecially noble Men, to enquire the Way to Salvation, is very recommendable, but very rare. *Obſ.* 2. As the Perſon Addreſſing, ſo the manner of the Addreſs, he came running, and kneeled to Chriſt. Where *Obſerve* his Voluntarineſs, he *came* of himſelf; not drawn by others Importunity, nor drawn by his own perſonal Afflictions. And his Readineſs, he came *running*: This ſhewed his Zeal and Forwardneſs to meet with Chriſt, and be reſolved by him. And *Laſtly*, His Humility; he *kneeled to him* as an Eminent Prophet and Teacher, not knowing him to be the Son of God. *Obſ.* 3. The Addreſs it ſelf, *What ſhall I do to inherit Eternal Life*? Where *Note*, 1. He believes the Certainty of a future State. 2. He profeſſes his Deſire of an Eternal Happineſs in that State. 3. He declares his Readineſs to ſome good thing, in order to the obtaining of that Happineſs. Hence *Learn*, That the Light of Nature, or Natural Religion, teaches Men that good Works are neceſſary to Salvation; or that ſome good thing muſt be done by them, who at Death expect Eternal Life. It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, that entitles us to Heaven and Eternal Life.

18 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? there is none good, but one, that is God.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, *Why calleſt thou me good*, when thou doſt not believe or own me to be God! *For there is none good*, that is, eſſentially and originally good, abſolutely and immutably good, *but God* only; nor any derivatively good, but he that receiveth his Goodneſs from God alſo: There is no meer Man that is abſolutely and perfectly good of himſelf, but by Participation and Derivation from God only. See the Note on St. *Matth.* 19. 17.

19 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Obſerve here, That the Duties which our Saviour inſtances in are the Duties of the Second Table, which Hypocrites are moſt failing in: But nothing is a better Evidence of our unfeigned Love to God, than the ſincere Performance of our Duty to our Neighbours. Love to Man is a Fruit and Teſtimony of our Love to God; for *he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 John 4. 20. *Learn* hence, That ſuch as are defective in the Duties of the Second Table, Charity and Juſtice, do make but a counterfeit Shew of Religion, though they pretend to the higheſt Meaſures and Degrees of Love to God. Here *Note*, That there are Two Ways of injuring our Neighbour, which ought to be avoided; namely, 1. By Theft, and this either privately and clandeſtinely, without the Knowledge of the Owner; or openly, and by force, againſt the Conſent of the Owner; both theſe are forbidden in the Eighth Commandment. 2. By ſecret and cunning Devices, where the Law, and a Pretence of Right, is made uſe of to cover the Injury. This is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment, and here expreſſed by Thou ſhalt not defraud. And ſurely all ſuch Endeavours to defraud muſt ſhew a very covetous Mind, inclining a Perſon, againſt the Dictates of his own Conſcience, to defraud another of his Right.

20 And he anſwered and ſaid unto him, Maſter, all theſe have I obſerved from my youth.

This Aſſertion of the young Man might be very true, according to the Phariſees Senſe and Interpretation of the Law, which condemned only the groſs, outward Act, not the inward Luſt and Motion of the Heart. And outſide Obedience to the Law this young Man had performed, this made him think well of himſelf, and conclude the Goodneſs of his own Condition. *Learn* hence, How prone Men are to think the beſt of themſelves, and to have too high an Opinion of their own Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs before God: *All theſe Things have I kept from my Touth.* It is a natural Corruption in Men to thing too well of themſelves, and of their own Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs before God, but it is very dangerous and fatal ſo to do.

21 Then Jeſus beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt, go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven, and come take up the croſs, and follow me. 22 And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved, for he had great poſſeſſions.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's Compaſſion towards this young Man. He loved him with a Love of Pity and Compaſſion, with a Love of Courteſie and Reſpect. There may be ſome very amiable and lovely Qualities in natural and unregenarate Men; and Goodneſs, in what Kind or Degree ſoever it is, doth atract and draw forth Chriſt's Love towards a Perſon. If Chriſt did love Civility, what Reſpect has he for ſincere Sanctity? *Obſ.* 2. Our Lord's Admonition, *One Thing thou lackeſt*, which was true Self-denial, in renouncing the Sin of Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Love of worldly Wealth. We ought, upon God's Call, to maintain ſuch a Readineſs of Mind, as to be willing to part with all for God's Sake which is dear unto us in this World. *Obſ.* 3. Our Lord's Injunction, *Sell what thou haſt, and give to the Poor.* This was not a common, but a ſpecial Precept, belonging particularly of this young Man. It was a Commandment of Trial given to him, like that given to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22. to convince him of his corrupt Confidence in his Riches: Yet is it thus far of general uſe to us all, to teach us ſo to contemn worldly Poſſeſſions, as to be willing to part with them when they hinder our Happineſs and Salvation. It follows, *And take up the Croſs*, an Alluſion to the *Roman* Cuſtom, when the Malefactor was to be crucified, he bare his Croſs upon his Shoulder, and carried it to the Place of Execution. 'Tis not the making, but the patient bearing of the Croſs, which is our Duty. *Learn*, That all Chriſt's Followers ſhould prepare their Shoulders for Chriſt's Croſs. To bear the Croſs implies Faithfulneſs and Integrity without ſhifting, Patience and Submiſſion without murmuring, Joy and Cheerfulneſs without fainting. *Obſ.* 4 The Effect which our Saviour's Admonition had upon this young Perſon: *He was ſad, and grieved at that Saying.* Thence *Note*, 1. That Carnal Men are ſad, and exceeding ſorrowful, when they cannot win Heaven in their own Way. 2. That ſuch as are wedded to the World, will renounce Chriſt rather than the World, when the World and Chriſt ſtand in Competition.

23 And Jeſus looked round about, and ſaith unto his diſciples, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words. But Jeſus anſwered again, and ſaith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that truſt in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And Jeſus looking upon them, ſaith, With men it is poſſible, but not with God: for with God all things are poſſible.

From this Diſcourſe of our Holy Lord's, concerning the Danger of Riches, and the Difficulty that attends Rich Men in their Way to Heaven, we may collect and gather, *Firſt*, That Rich Men do certainly meet with more Difficulties in their Way to Heaven than other Men. 'Tis difficult to withdraw their Affections from Riches, to place their Supream Love upon God in the midſt of their Abundance. 'Tis difficult to depend entirely upon God in a Rich Condition; for *the Rich Man's Wealth is his Strong Tower.* *Secondly*, That yet the Fault lyes not in Riches, but in Rich Men; who by placing their Truſt, and repoſing their Confidence, in Riches, do render themſelves uncapable of the Kingdom of God. *Obſ.* 3. The Proverbial Speech which our Saviour makes uſe of to ſet forth the Difficulty of a Rich Man's Salvation; *It is eaſier for a Camel to go through a Needle's Eye.* This was a Proverb amongſt the Jews, ſignifying a thing of great Difficulty, next to an Impoſſibility; and it implies thus much, That it is not only a very great Difficulty, but an utter Impoſſibility, for ſuch as abound in worldly Wealth, and place their Confidence therein, to be ſaved without an extraordinary Grace and Aſſiſtance from God. 'Tis hard for God to make a Rich Man happy, becauſe he thinks himſelf happy without God. *Obſ.* 4. The Diſciples are affected with Wonder and Admiration at this Doctrine of our Saviour's, and cry out, *Who then can be ſaved?* *Learn* thence, that ſuch are the ſpecial and peculiar Difficulties which lye in the Rich Man's Way to Salvation, that their getting to Heaven is Matter of Wonder and Admiration to the Diſciples of Chriſt. *Obſ.* 5. How our Saviour reſolves this Doubt, by telling his Diſciples, That what was impoſſible with Men was poſſible with God: Implying, That it is impoſſible for any Man, Rich or Poor, by his own Natural Strength to get to Heaven. And, 2. That when we are diſcouraged with the Senſe of our own Impotency, we ſhould conſider the Power of God, and act our Faith upon it. *With God all Things are poſſible.*

28 Then Peter began to ſay unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my ſake and the goſpels, 30 But he ſhall receive an hundered fold, now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with perſecutions; and in the world to come eternal life: 31 But many that are firſt, ſhall be laſt; and the laſt, firſt.

The Apoſtles having heard our Saviour's Command to ſell all, and give to the Poor, St. *Peter*, in the Name of the reſt, tells Chriſt, That *they had left all to follow him.* Where *Note*, how *Peter* magnifies that Little which he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it with a Note of Admiration, *Lo! We have left all.* *Learn* hence, That though it be very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and have to forſake upon his Account, yet are we apt to magnifie and extol it, as if it were ſome great Matter, *Behold, we have left all, and followed thee.* *Obſerve* next, Our Lord's kind and gracious Anſwer, that thoſe that leave all to follow him ſhall be no Loſers by him: We may be Loſers for Chriſt, we ſhall never be Loſers by him; for whatever we part with in this World for the Sake of Chriſt, *Houſes or Lands, Brethren or Siſters, we ſhall receive an Hundred-fold now in this Life.* But how ſo? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter; non in ſpecie, ſed in valore: Not in Kind, but in Equivalency*: Not an Hundred Brethren, Siſters or Lands, in Kind, but he ſhall enjoy that in God which all Creatures would be to him if they were multiplied an Hundred times: And the Gifts and Graces, the Comforts and Conſolations, of the Holy Spirit, ſhall be an Hundred times better Portion than any thing we can part with for the Sake of Chriſt. For the Senſe of thoſe Words, *The firſt ſhall be laſt*, &c. ſee the Note on *Matth.* 20. 19.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jeruſalem: and Jeſus went before them, and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid: and he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things ſhould happen unto him, 33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be delivered unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes: and they ſhall condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the gentiles. 34 And they ſhall mock him, and ſhall ſcourge him, and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill him: and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

This is at leaſt the third time that Chriſt had acquainted his Diſciples with his approaching Sufferings. The firſt time he told his Diſciples of his Death in general; the ſecond time he declares the Means, by Treaſon; now he tells them the Manner, by Crucifying him: All this he did to prevent their Dejection at his Sufferings. *Learn* hence, That it is highly neceſſary that the Doctrine of the Croſs be often preached to us, that ſo being armed with Expectation of Sufferings before they come, we may be the leſs diſmayed and diſheartned when they come. Our Lord's forewar-ning his Diſciples ſo frequently of his Death and Sufferings, was to fore-arm them with Expectations of his Sufferings, and with Preparation for their own. *Obſerve* farther, who were the Perſons that were the Inſtrumental Cauſes of our Saviour's Death, they were both Jews and Gentiles; *The Son of Man ſhall be delivered to the Chief Prieſts, and they ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles.* As both Jews and Gentiles had a Hand in the Death and Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo are they by Faith capable of an Intereſt in the Merit of his Death, and in the Virtue and Efficacy of his Sufferings. Chriſt offered up his Blood to God on the Behalf of them that ſhed it.

35 And James and John the ſons of Zebedee come unto him, ſaying, Maſter, we would that thou ſhouldeſt do for us whatſoever we ſhall deſire. 36 And he ſaid unto them, What would ye that I ſhould do for you? 37 Then ſaid they, unto him, Grant unto us, that we may ſit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, ye know not what ye aſk: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? 39 And they ſaid unto him, We can. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptiſm that I am baptized withal, ſhall ye be baptized: 40 But to ſit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared. 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much diſpleaſed with James and John.

Obſerve here, 1. The Ambitious Suit and Requeſt of the Two Apoſtles *James* and *John* for Dignity and Superiority, *Grant that we may ſit, one on thy Right Hand, and the other on thy Left Hand, in thy Glory*, or *in thy Kingdom.* Where *Obſ.* That by Chriſt's Kingdom and Glory they underſtood an Earthly, Temporal Kingdom; for of that Sort the Jews did expect the Kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhould be, and the Diſciples themſelves were tainted with the common Errors. *Learn* hence, That Ambition and Inordinate Deſire of worldly Honour and Dignity, is a Sin very natural and incident to the beſt of Men: Who can wonder to ſee ſome Sparks of Ambition in the holieſt of God's Miniſter's, when Chriſt's own Apoſtles were not free from aſpiring Thoughts, even when they lay in the Boſom of our Saviour? *Obſ.* 2. Both the Unſeaſonableneſs and Unreaſonableneſs of this Requeſt made by *James* and *John*; Chriſt ſpeaks of his Sufferings to them, and they ſue for Dignity and great Places from him. *In optimis non nihil eſt peſſimi*: The Holieſt, the Wiſeſt, and the Beſt of Men are not wholly free from paſſionate Infirmities: Who could have thought that when our Saviour had been preaching the Doctrine of the Croſs to his Diſciples, that they ſhould at the ſame time be ſeeking and ſuing to him for Secular Dignity and Honour, Preheminency and Power? But the beſt of Men are but Men; none are in a State of Perfection on this ſide Heaven. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's Anſwer to the Diſciples Ambitious Requeſt, and the Courſe which he takes to cool their Ambition; he tells them, they muſt expect here not Crowns on their Heads, but a Croſs on their Backs; they muſt firſt taſte of his Sufferings before they partake of his Glory; and thoſe that ſuffer moſt for Chriſt, ſhall partake of the higheſt Dignity and Glory from him. *Obſerve* 4. The preſumptuous Confidence which the Apoſtles had of their own Strength and Ability for Sufferings, *Are ye able* (ſays Chriſt) *to drink of my Cup? We are able*, ſay the Diſciples. Alas, poor Men, when it came to the Trial they all cowardly forſook him and fled. Thoſe that are leaſt acquainted with Sufferings, are uſually the moſt confident Undertakers. See on *Matth.* 20. 22, 23.

42 But Jeſus called them to him, and ſaith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exerciſe lordſhip over them; and their great ones exerciſe authority upon them. 43 But ſo ſhall it not be among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, ſhall be your miniſter: 44 And whoſoever of you will be the chiefeſt, ſhall be ſervant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

To the end that our Bleſſed Saviour might effectually quench thoſe unhappy Sparks of Ambition which were kindled in his Apoſtles Minds, he tells them, That Supremacy and Dominion belong to Secular Princes, not to Goſpel Miniſters, who ought to carry themſelves with Humility and Condeſcention one towards another. Not that Chriſt directs to a Parity and Equality amongſt his Miniſters, but only condemns the Affection of Superiority, and the Love of Preheminency. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to be ſo far from Affecting a Domination and Superiority over their Brethren, that in Imitation of their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves Fellow-Servants: *The Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter.* *Obſ.* 2. That ſuch Miniſters as do love and affect Preheminence and Superiority are moſt unfit for it; and they deſerve it beſt who ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the Dignity and Honour which the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly, yea, only affect, is in another World; and the Way to be greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble, mean in our own Eyes, and little in our own Eſteem. See Note on *Matth.* 20.28.

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his diſciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the ſon of Timeus, ſat by the highway-ſide, begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jeſus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and ſay, Jeſus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called: and they call

the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe, he calleth thee. 50 And he caſting away his garment, roſe, and came to Jeſus. 51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? the blind man ſaid unto him, Lord, that I might receive my ſight. 52 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way.

This Chapter concludes with the Recital of a Famous Miracle wrought by our Bleſſed Saviour upon Blind *Bartimeus*, in the Sight of a great Multitude which followed him. Where *Note*, 1. The Blind Man's Faith, in acknowledging Jeſus to be the Meſſiah; for ſo much the Title of the Son of *David* ſignified. 2. His Fervency, in crying ſo earneſtly to Chriſt for Mercy and Healing, *Have Mercy upon me thou Son of David.* A true Senſe of Want will make the Soul cry unto Chriſt with Earneſtneſs and Importunity. *Obſerve* 3. The great Compaſſion and Condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards this poor Blind Man, *He ſtood ſtill, he called him, and enlightned his Eyes.* A mighty Inſtance of Chriſt's Divine Power: He that can open blind Eyes with a Touch of his Finger, and that by his own Power, is really God; his Touch is an Omnipotent Touch. *Obſ.* 4. Altho' Chriſt well knew the Condition of this Blind Man, yet before he will reſtore his Sight, he muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of Sight, and cry unto him for Help and Healing. Chriſt knows all his Creatures Wants, but takes no Notice of them till they make them known to him by Prayer. *Obſ.* 5. The Way and Courſe which the Blind Man takes to expreſs his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt for recovered Sight; *He aroſe and followed Jeſus.* Mercy from Chriſt is then well improved when it engages us to follow Chriſt. This ſhould be the Effect of all Salvations wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt that ſerveth him moſt: The Life of Thankfulneſs conſiſts in the Thankfulneſs of the Life.

CHAP. XI.

AND when they came nigh to Jeruſalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, 2 And ſaith unto them, Go your way into the village over-againſt you, and as ſoon as ye be entred into it, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon never Man ſat; looſe him, and bring him. 3 And if any man ſay unto you, Why do you this? ſay ye that the Lord hath need of him; and ſtraightway he will ſend him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied, by the door without in a place where two ways met: and they looſe him. 5 And certain of them that ſtood there, ſaid unto them, What do ye looſing the colt? 6 And they ſaid unto them even as Jeſus had commanded: and they let him go.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with our Saviour's ſolemn and triumphant riding into the City of *Jeruſalem.* He who in all his Journeys travell'd like a poor Man on Foot, without Noiſe, and without Train, now he goes up to *Jeruſalem* to die for Sinners; he rides, to ſhew his great Forwardneſs to lay down his Life for us: The Beaſt he rides on is *an Aſs*, as the manner of Kings and Great Perſons anciently was, and to fulfill that Prophecy, *Zach.* 9. 9. *Tell ye the Daughter of* Zion, *behold, thy King cometh riding upon an Aſs.* It was alſo an Aſs upon which *never Man ſat before*; ſignifying thereby, that the moſt unruly and untam'd Creatures becomes obſequious to Chriſt. *Grotius* obſerves, That ſuch Animals as had not been employed in the uſe of Man were wont to be choſen for Sacred Uſes. Even Heathens adjudged thoſe Things moſt proper for the Service of the Gods which had never been put to prophane Uſes. Thus in 1 *Sam.* 6. 7. we read, That the Philiſtians return the Ark in a new Cart, drawn by Heifers, never before put into the Yoke, they thinking them polluted by being put to prophane Work. Our Saviour here chuſeth an Aſs which had never been back'd before; and that the Colt ſhould ſo patiently ſuffer Chriſt to ride upon him was miraculous. And this was a borrow'd Aſs, whereby our Saviour's Right to all the Creatures was manifeſted; and accordingly he bids his Diſciples tell the Owner, *That the Lord hath need of him.* Not your Lord, or our Lord, but *the Lord*; that is he that is Lord of all, whoſe are *the Cattle on a thouſand hills.* *Obſerve* farther, That notwithſtanding Chriſt's Supream Right to the Colt, he will not have it taken without the Owner's Knowledge and Conſent, *Tell him that the Lord hath need of him.* *Obſerve laſtly*, What a clear and full Demonſtration Chriſt gave of his Divine Nature; of his Omniſciency, in foreſeeing and foretelling the Event; of his Omnipotency, in inclining the Heart, and over-ruling the Will, of the Owner to let the Colt go; and of his Soveraignty, as he was Lord of the Creatures, to command and call for their Service when he needed them.

7 And they brought the colt to Jeſus, and caſt their garments on him; and he ſat upon him. 8 And many ſpread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and ſtrawed them in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna, bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. 10 Bleſſed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hoſanna in the higheſt.

Obſerve here the Obedience of the Diſciples, *Firſt*, They did as Jeſus commanded; they do not diſpute their Lord's Commands, nor raiſe Objections, not are afraid of Dangers; when our Call is clear, our Obedience muſt be ſpeedy; what Chriſt commands we are not to diſpute, but to obey. *Obſ.* 2. The actions of the Multitude in acknowledging Chriſt to be their King; they caſt their Garments on the Ground for him to ride upon, according to the Cuſtom of Princes when they ride in State; and do not only diſrobe their Backs, but expend their Breath in joyful Acclamations, and loud Hoſannah's, wiſhing all manner of Proſperity to their meek, but mighty King. In this princely, yet poor and deſpicable Pomp doth our Saviour enter the Famous City of *Jeruſalem.* Oh! How far was our Holy Lord from affecting worldly Greatneſs and Grandeur! He deſpiſed that Glory which worldly Hearts fondly admire; yet becauſe he was a King he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his Kingdom confeſſed, applauded and bleſſed. But that it might appear that his Kingdom was not of this World, he abandons all worldly Magnificence. Oh glorious, yet homely Pomp! Oh meek, but mighty Prince!

11 And Jeſus entred into Jeruſalem, and into the Temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even tide was come, he went out unto Bethany, with the twelve. 12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 And ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his diſciples heard it.

Some move the Queſtion here, how Chriſt came to curſe a Tree for want of that Fruit which the Seaſon afforded not? It is anſwered, that Naturaliſts obſerve, that the Fig-tree puts forth her Fruit as ſoon as her Leaf; that Tree is always bearing; and whilſt one Fig is ripe another is green. And whereas it is ſaid, *That the time of Figs was not yet*; the meaning is, That the time of ingathering of Figs was not yet; but the Tree having Leaves, ſhewed it might have Fruit: Accordingly Chriſt goes in Expectation of its having Fruit; but finding none, either ripe or green, he curſes the Tree for totally diſappointing his Expectation. Beſides, Chriſt was wont not only to ſpeak, but to work Parables; and this action of his was Typical, an Emblem of *Jeruſalem's* Deſtruction in general, and of every perſon in particular, that ſatisfies himſelf with a withered Profeſſion; bearing Leaves only, but no Fruit; as this Fig-tree was, ſo are they, nigh unto curſing. From whence *Note*, That all ſuch as content themſelves with a fruitleſs Profeſſion of Religion, are in great Danger of having Gods Blaſting added to their Barrenneſs.

15 And they come to Jeruſalem: and Jeſus went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves. 16 And would not ſuffer that any man ſhould carry any veſſel through the temple. 17 And he taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, My houſe ſhall be called of all nations the houſe of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the ſcribes and chief prieſts heard it, and ſought how they might deſtroy him: for they feared him, becauſe all the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

No ſooner had our bleſſed Saviour entred *Jeruſalem*, but his firſt Walk was to the Temple, and his firſt Work there was to purge and reform. All Reformation of Manners muſt begin at the Houſe of God. Yet obſerve, our Lord's Buſineſs at the Temple was not to ruin, but reform it only. Places dedicated to publick Worſhip, if prophaned and polluted, ought to be purged from their Abuſes, not pull'd down and deſtroyed, becauſe they have been abuſed. But what was the Profanation of the Temple which ſo offended our Saviour? I anſwer, In the outward Court of the Temple there was a publick Mart or Market kept, where were ſold Oxen, Sheep, and Doves, for Sacrifice. Many of the Jews coming an hundred Miles to the Temple, it was burthenſome to bring their Sacrifices ſo far with them; wherefore the Prieſts ordered that Sheep and Oxen, Meal and Oil, and ſuch other Requiſites for Sacrifice, ſhould be had for Money cloſe by the Altar, to the great Eaſe of the Offerer; nothing could be more plauſible than this Plea. But the faireſt Pretences cannot bear out a Sin with God. Therefore our bleſſed Saviour, in a juſt Indignation, whips out theſe Chapmen, caſts down their Tables, and vindicates the honour and reputation of his Fathers Houſe. *Learn* hence, That there is a Reverence due to God's Houſe, for the Owner's ſake, and for the Service ſake. Nothing but Holineſs can become the Place where God is worſhipped in the Beauty of Holineſs. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for this Act of his, *Is it not written* (ſays he) *my Houſe ſhall be called the Houſe of Prayer?* Where by Prayer is to be underſtood the Whole Worſhip and Service of God, of which Prayer is an eminent and principal part. That which gives Denomination to an Houſe, is certainly the chief work to be done in that Houſe. Now God's Houſe being called an Houſe of Prayer, certainly implies that Prayer is the chief and principal Work to be performed in his Houſe. Yet take we heed that we ſet not the Ordinance of God at Variance; we muſt not idolize one Ordinance, and vilifie another, but reverence them all.

20 And in the morning as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, Maſter, behold the fig-tree which thou curſedſt, is withered away. 22 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, and ſhall not doubt in his heart; but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs, he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith. 24 Therefore I ſay unto you, What things ſoever ye deſire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.

The blaſting and ſudden withering of the Fig-tree at the Word of Chriſt plainly ſhewed his Divine Power, and by this miraculous Operation our Saviour deſigned to ſhew his Diſciples the mighty Power of Faith; That is, a full Perſwaſion of the Power of God, that he is able, and of the Goodneſs of God, that he is willing, to grant whatever we ask according to his Will, that has a tendency to his Glory and our Good. *Learn hence*, That Faith is a neceſſary and principal Ingredient in Prayer. Praying without Faith is like to a Man's ſhooting without Bullet; it makes a Noiſe, but doth no Execution. 2*dly*, That whatſoever good thing God has made the Matter of his Promiſe, ſhall be given to good Men in a Way of Performance, provided they pray in Faith. *Whatſoever ye deſire, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.*

25 And when ye ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt any: that your father alſo which is in heaven may forgive you your treſpaſſes. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your father which is in heaven forgive your treſpaſſes.

There are Two qualifications requiſite in Prayer, if we expect to find acceptance with God, namely, Faith and Love; to the firſt Chriſt had ſpoken in the former Verſe, to the latter in this, *When ye ſtand praying, forgive.* It was ordinary, for the Jews to pray ſtanding, yet in their ſolemn Days of faſting they did kneel, and proſtrate themſelves before the Lord; but the Chriſtians uſually kneeled down, and prayed *Acts* 9. 40. Now the Command here to forgive thoſe that offend us before we pray, ſhews 1. That no reſentments of what our Brother doth ſhould ſtick long upon our Spirits, becauſe they indiſpoſe us for that Duty we are to be continually prepared for. 2. That there is ſome ſort and kind of Forgiveneſs to be exerciſed towards an offending Brother before he asks it, and though he doth not ſhew any Token of Repentance and Sorrow for it; becauſe I am to pray for him out of Love unto him, and muſt lift pure Hands without Wrath. *Learn* hence, That they who are ſuing for, and expecting, Forgiveneſs from God, muſt exerciſe Forgiveneſs towards others, or elſe their Prayers are a ſort of Imprecations upon themſelves. 2. *Obſerve*, Chriſt ſpeaks indefinitely, *When ye pray, forgive.* He doth not ſay, your Brethren, but Men, *Mat.* 6. 14. *If ye forgive men their Treſpaſſes*; that is, all Men, good and bad, Friends and Enemies; if we forgive one another freely, our Heavenly Father will forgive us fully. Our forgiving one another is the indiſpenſable Condition of God's forgiving us, and of hearing the Prayers which are put up by us.

27 And they come again to Jeruſalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief Prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders, 28 And ſay unto him, by what authority doſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this authority to do theſe things? 29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo ask of you one queſtion, and anſwer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 30 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? anſwer me. 31 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, from heaven, he will ſay, why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men, they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33 And they anſwered and ſaid unto Jeſus, We cannot tell. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often queſtioned our Saviour's Doctrine before, they call in queſtion his Miſſion and Authority now, although they might eaſily have underſtood his Divine Miſſion by his daily Miracles; for Almighty God never impowered any to work Miracles that were not ſent by him. Our Bleſſed Saviour underſtanding their Deſign, anſwers them one Queſtion, by asking them another: Says Chriſt, *The Baptiſm of* John, *was it from Heaven, or of Men?* Was it of Divine Inſtitution, or of Humane Invention? Implying very plainly, that the calling of ſuch as call themſelves the Miniſters of God ought to be from God: *No Man ought to take that Honour upon him, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. 5. 4. The Phariſees reply, They could not tell whence *John* had his Miſſion and Authority; this was a manifeſt Untruth. By refuſing to tell the Truth, they fall into a Lie againſt the Truth; one Sin enſnares and draws Men into the Commiſſion of many more. Such as will not ſpeak exact Truth according to their Knowledge, they fall into the Sin of Lying againſt their Knowledge and their Conſcience.

our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what Authority I do theſe things.* He doth not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you, but I do not, I need not tell you, becauſe the Miracles which I work before you, are a ſufficient Demonſtration of my Divine Commiſſion, that I am ſent of God amongſt you; for God never ſet the Seal of his Omnipotence to a Lie, nor impowered an Impoſtor to work real Miracles.

CHAP. XII.

AND he began to ſpeak unto them by parables A certain man planted a vineyard, and ſet an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2 And at the ſeaſon, he ſent to the husbandmen a ſervant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and ſent him away empty. 4 And again he ſent unto them another ſervant; and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded him in the head, and ſent him away ſhamefully handled. 5 And again he ſent another; and him they killed: and many others, beating ſome, and killing ſome. 6 Having yet therefore one ſon, his well beloved, he ſent him alſo laſt unto them, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 7 But thoſe huſbandmen ſaid amongſt themſelves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance ſhall be ours. 8 And they took him, and killed him, and caſt him out of the vineyard.

In this Parable the Jewiſh Church is compared to a *Vineyard*, Almighty God to an *Houſholder*; his *Planting, Pruning*, and *Fencing his Vineyard*, denotes his Care to furniſh his Church with all needful Helps and Means to make it ſpiritually fruitful. *His letting it out to Huſbandmen*, ſignifies his committing the care of his Church to the Prieſts and Levites, the publick Paſtors and Governors of the Church; *His Servants* are the Prophets and Apoſtles, whom he ſent from time to time to admoniſh them to bring forth Fruit anſwerable to the Coſt which God had expended on them; *his Son* is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the Rulers of the Jewiſh Church Slew and Murthered. The Deſign and Scope of the Parable is to diſcover to the Jews, particularly to the Phariſees, their obſtinate Impenitency under all the Means of Grace, their bloody Cruelty towards the Prophets of God, their tremendous Guilt in Crucifying the Son of God; for all which God would unchurch them finally, ruin their Nation, and ſet up a Church among the Gentiles that ſhould bring forth better Fruit than the Jewiſh Church ever did. From the whole, *Note* 1. That the Church is Gods Vineyard. A Vineyard is a place Encloſed, a place well Planted, well Fruited, and exceeding Dear and Precious to the Planter and the Owner of it. 2. As dear as God's Vineyard is unto him, in caſe of Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, it is in great Danger of being deſtroyed and laid waſte by him. 3. That the only Way and Courſe to engage Gods Care over his Vineyard, and to prevent its being given to other Husbandmen, it is *to give him the Fruits of it*; it is but a Vineyard that God lets out; it is no Inheritance: No people ever had ſo many Promiſes of Gods Favour as the Jews had; nor ever enjoyed ſo many Priviledges whilſt they continued in his Favour as they did; yet tho' they were the firſt and the natural Branches, *they are broken off, and we Gentiles ſtand by Faith; let us not be high-minded, but fear.* Rom. 11. 20.

9 What ſhall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? he will come and deſtroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 And have ye not read the ſcripture? the ſtone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. 12 And they ſought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had ſpoken the parable againſt them: and they left him, and went their way.

Theſe Words of our Saviour are taken out of the 118th *Pſalm*, which the Jews underſtood to be a Prophecy of the Meſſiah, and accordingly Chriſt applies them to himſelf. The *Church* is the *Building* intended, Chriſt himſelf the *Stone* rejected. The *Rejecters*, or the Builders *Rejecting*, are the Heads of the Jewiſh Church; that is, the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees. God, the great Maſter-Builder of his Church, takes this precious Foundation-ſtone out of the Rubbiſh, and ſets it in the Head of the corner; nevertheleſs there are many that ſtumble at this Stone; ſome through ignorance, others through Malice: Some are offended at his Perſon, others at his Doctrine. *Theſe ſhall be broken in pieces; but on whomſoever this Stone ſhall fall it will grind them to powder*; that is, Chriſt himſelf will fall as a burthenſome Stone upon all them that knowingly and maliciouſly oppoſe him; and particularly upon the Jews, who not only rejected, but perſecuted and deſtroyed him. Thus Chriſt tells the chief Prieſts and Phariſees their own particular Doom, and alſo declares what will be the Fatal Iſſue of all that Oppoſition which is made againſt himſelf and his Church; it will terminate in the inevitable Deſtruction of all its Oppoſers: *Whoſoever ſhall fall on this Stone ſhall be broken, and on whomſoever it ſhall fall it will grind them to Powder.*

13 And they ſend unto him certain of the Phariſees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. 14 And when they were come, they ſay unto him, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and careſt for no man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men, but teacheſt the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Ceſar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or ſhall we not give? but he knowing their hypocriſie, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a peny, that I may ſee it. 16 And they brought it: and he ſaith unto them, Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? and they ſaid unto him, Ceſar's. 17 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſars, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Obſerve here a grand Deſign to entangle our Bleſſed Saviour in his Diſcourſe. Where *Note* 1. The Perſons imployed to put the enſnaring Queſtion to Chriſt, *Namely*, the Phariſees and Herodians. The Phariſees were againſt paying Tribute to *Ceſar*, looking upon themſelves as a free People, and the Emperor as an Uſurper; but the Herodians were for it. *Herod* being made by the Roman Emperor King over the Jews, he was very zealous for having the Jews pay Tribute to *Ceſar*, and ſuch of the Jews as ſided with him, particularly his Courtiers and Favourites, were called Herodians. *Note* 2. The Policy and wicked Craft here uſed in imploying theſe two contrary Parties to put this Queſtion to our Saviour concerning Tribute, thereby laying him under a Neceſſity, as they hoped, to offend one Side, let him anſwer how he would; if to pleaſe the Phariſees he denied paying Tribute to *Ceſar*, then he is accuſed of Sedition; if to gratifie the Herodians he voted for paying Tribute to *Ceſar*, then he is look'd upon as an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and expoſed to a popular *Odium*. Thus has it all along been the Practice of Satan and his Inſtruments to draw the Miniſters of God into Diſlike, either with the Magiſtrates, or with the People, that they may fall under the Cenſure of the one, or the Diſpleaſure of the other. *Obſ.* 3. With what Wiſdom and Caution our Lord anſwers them; he calls for the Roman Peny, anſwering to Seven pence Half-peny of our Money, Two of which they paid by way of Tribute, as Poll-Money for every Head to the Emperor. Chriſt asks them, *Whoſe Image or Superſcription* this their Coin bore? *They anſwer*, Ceſar's. *Render then*, ſays he, *to Ceſar the Things that are Ceſar*'s. As if our Lord had ſaid, your admitting of the Roman Coin amongſt you, is an Evidence that you are under Subjection to the Roman Emperor, becauſe the Coining and impoſing of Money is an Act of Sovereign Authority; therefore you having owned *Ceſar*'s Authority over you, by accepting of his Coin amongſt you, *Gvie unto him his juſt Dues*, and *render unto* Ceſar *the Things that are* Ceſar's. *Learn* hence 1. That our Saviour was no Enemy to Magiſtracy and Civil Government; there was no truer Pay-maſter of the King's Dues than he that was King of Kings; he preach'd it, and he practiſed it, *Matth.* 17. 27. 2. Where a Kingdom is in Subjection on to a Temporal Prince, whether his Right be by Deſcent, Election, or by Conqueſt, the Subjects ought from a Principle of Conſcience to pay Tribute to him. 3. That as Chriſt is no Enemy to the Civil Rights of Princes, and his Religion exempts none from paying their Civil Dues, ſo Princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his Divine Honour, as he is not to wrong them of their Civil Rights; as Chriſt requires all his Followers to *render unto* Ceſar *the Things that are* Ceſar's, ſo ſhould Princes oblige all their Subjects to *render unto God the Things that are God's.*

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which ſay there is no reſurrection; and they aſked him, ſaying, 19 Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 20 Now there were ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and dying left no ſeed. 21 And the ſecond took her, and died, neither left he any ſeed: and the third likewiſe. 22 And the ſeven had her, and left no ſeed: laſt of all the woman died alſo. 23 In the reſurrection therefore, when they ſhall riſe, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of them? for the ſeven had her to wife. 24 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Do ye not therefore err, becauſe ye know not the ſcriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage: but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they riſe: have ye not read in the book of Moſes, how in the buſh God ſpake unto him, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having put the Phariſees and Herodians to Silence in the former Verſes, here he Encounters the Sadducees. This Sect derived its Name from one *Sadock*, who denied the Immortality of the Soul, the Reſurrection of the Body, and Angels and Spirits. Here they propound a Caſe to our Saviour, of a Woman who had Seven Brethren ſucceſſively to her Husbands; they demand whoſe Wife of the Seven this Woman ſhall be at the Reſurrection? As if they had ſaid, If there be a Reſurrection of Bodies, ſurely there will be of Relations too; and the other World, if there be ſuch a Place, will be like this, in which Men will Marry, as they do here; and if ſo, whoſe Wife of the Seven ſhall this Woman be, they all having an equal Claim to her? Now our Saviour, for reſolving of this Queſtion, firſt ſhews the different State of Men in this and in the other World. The Children of this World, ſays our Saviour, Marry, and are given in Marriage, but in the Reſurrection they do neither. As if Chriſt had ſaid, After Men have lived a while in this World they die, and therefore Marriage is neceſſary to maintain a Succeſſion of Mankind; but in the other World Men ſhall become Immortal, and live for Ever, and then the Reaſon of Marriage will wholly ceaſe; for when Men can die no more, there will be no need of any new Supplies of Mankind. *Obſerve*, Secondly, That our Saviour having got clear of the Sadducees Objection, by taking away the foundation and ground of it, he produceth an Argument for the Proof of the Soul's Immortality, and the Body's Reſurrection. Thoſe to whom Almighty God pronounces himſelf a God are certainly alive; but God pronounced himſelf a God to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, many Hundred Years after their Bodies were dead, therefore their Souls are yet alive; for otherwiſe God could not be their God; becauſe *he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*. From the whole, *Note* 1. That there is no Opinion ſo monſtrous and abſurd, that having had a Mother, will die for lack of a Nurſe: The beaſtly Opinion of the Mortality of the Soul, and the Annihilation of the Body, finds Sadducees to profeſs and propagate it. *Note* 2. The Certainty of another Life after this, in which Men ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as they behave themſelves here. Tho' ſome Men live like Beaſts, yet they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their laſt End be like theirs. *Note* 3. That glorified Saints in the Morning of the Reſurrection ſhall be like the glorious Angels; not like them in Eſſence and Nature, but like them in their Properties and Qualities, in Holineſs and Purity, in Immortality and Incorruptibility; as alſo in their manner of living, they ſhall ſtand in no more need of Meat and Drink than the Angels do, but ſhall live the ſame Heavenly, Immortal, and Incorruptible Life, that the Angels live. *Note* 4. That all thoſe who are in Covenant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their Souls do immediately paſs into Glory, and their Bodies at the Reſurrection ſhall be Sharers in the ſame Happineſs with their Souls; if God be juſt, their Soul muſt live, and the Body muſt riſe; for Good Men muſt be rewarded, and Wicked Men puniſhed, ſomewhere, either in this Life, or in another: God will moſt certainly, at one time or other, plentifully reward the Righteous, and puniſh the Wicked Doers. But this being not always done in this Life, the Juſtice of God requires that it be done in the next.

28 And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, Which is the firſt commandment of all? 29 And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments is, Hear O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord; 30 And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: this is the firſt commandment. 31 And the ſecond is like, namely this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf: there is none other commandment greater than theſe. 32 And the Scribes ſaid unto him, Well Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he. 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love his neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. 34 And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt aſk him any queſtion.

Obſerve here, 1. A Queſtion propounded to our Bleſſed Saviour, and his Anſwer thereunto. The Queſtion propounded is this, *Which is the firſt and great Commandment?* Our Saviour tells them, *It is to love God with all their Heart and Soul, with all their Mind and Strength*; that is, with all the Powers, Faculties and Abilities of the Soul, with the higheſt Meaſures, and moſt intential Degrees, of Love; this is the Sum of the Duties of the firſt Table: *This is the firſt and great Commandment*, and *the ſecond is like unto it.* He doth not ſay equal with it. Altho' the Duties of the ſecond Table are of the ſame Authority, and of the ſame Neceſſity, with the firſt, as no Man can be ſaved without the Love of God, ſo neither without the Love of his Neighbour. Whence *Note*, 1. That the Fervency of all our Affections, and particularly the Supremacy of our Love, is required by God as his Right and Due: Love muſt paſs thorough, and poſſeſs all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls, the Mind muſt meditate upon God, the Will muſt chuſe and embrace him, and the Affections muſt delight in him. The Meaſure of loving God is to love him without Meaſure; God reckons that we love him not at all, if we love him not above all. *Note* 2. That thus to love God is *the firſt great Commandment: Great*, in regard of its Object, which is God, the Firſt Cauſe, and the Chief Good: *Great*, in regard of the Obligation of it. To love God is ſo indiſpenſable a Duty, that God himſelf cannot free us from the Obligation of it; for ſo long as he is God, and we his Creatures, we ſhall lye under a natural and neceſſary Obligation to love and ſerve him. *Great* alſo is this Command and Duty, in regard of the Duration and Continuance of it; when Faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in Viſion, and Hope in Fruition, Love will then be perfected in a full Enjoyment. *Note* 3. That every Man may, yea, ought, to love himſelf, not his ſinful ſelf, but his natural ſelf; eſpecially his ſpiritual ſelf, the new Nature in him. This, it ought to be his particular Care to ſtrengthen and increaſe. Indeed there is no expreſs Command in Scripture, for a Man to love himſelf, becauſe the Light of Nature directs, and the Law of Nature binds, every

Man ſo to do. God has put a Principle of Self-love, and of Self-preſervation, into all his Creatures, but eſpecially into Man. *Note* 4. That as every Man ought to love himſelf, ſo is it every Man's Duty *to love his Neighbour as himſelf*; not as he doth love himſelf, but as he ought to love himſelf; yet not in the ſame degree that he loves himſelf, but after the ſame manner, and with the ſame kind of Love, that he loves himſelf. As we love our ſelves freely and readily, ſincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and continually, ſo ſhould we love our Neighbour alſo; tho' we love him not as much as we love our ſelves, yet muſt we love him as truly as we love our ſelves. *Note* laſtly, That the Duties of the Firſt and Second Table are inſeparable, namely, Love to God, and Love to our Neighbour. Theſe Two muſt not be ſeparated; he that loveth not his Neighbour whom he hath ſeen, never loved God whom he hath not ſeen. A conſcientious Regard to the Duties of both Tables will be an Argument of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The favourable Cenſure which our Saviour paſſes upon this Scribe; he tells him, *He was not far from the Kingdom of God.* *Note* here, 1. Some Perſons may be ſaid to be far, and farther than others, from the Kingdom of Heaven; ſome are farther, in regard of the Means; they want the Ordinances, the Diſpenſation of the Word and Sacraments; others are far from the Kingdom of God in regard of Qualifications and Diſpoſitions; of the former Sort are all Heathens without the Pale of the Church; they are afar off, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Eph.* 2. 13. of the latter Sort are all groſs and cloſe Hypocrites within the Church; who, whilſt they continue ſuch, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. *Note* 2. As ſome Perſons may be ſaid to be far from the Kingdom of God, ſo are there others which may be ſaid *not to be far*; ſuch who have eſcaped the Pollutions of the World, abſtained from open and ſcandalous Sins, are leſs wicked than Multitudes are, but are Strangers to an inward, thorough and prevailing, Change in the Frame of their Hearts, and Courſe of their Lives; they have often ſaid, *I would be*, but they never ſaid, *I will be*, the Lord's. When the Work of Regeneration is brought to the Birth, after all it proves an Abortion. Lord! what a Diſappointment will this be, to periſh within Sight of the Promiſed Land; to be near Heaven in our Expectation, and yet never the nearer in the Iſſue and Event? Woe unto us if this be the Condition of any of us who have all our Days ſat under the Diſpenſation of thy Goſpel.

35 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, While he taught in the temple, How ſay the Scribes that Chriſt is the Son of David? 36 For David himſelf ſaid by the Holy Ghoſt, The Lord ſaid to my Lord, ſit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool. 37 David therefore himſelf calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his Son? and the common people heard him gladly.

The Phariſees had often put forth ſeveral Queſtions maliciouſly unto Chriſt, and now Chriſt puts forth one Queſtion innocently unto them; namely, What they thought of the Meſſiah whom they expected? They reply, That he was to be the Son of *David*; that is, a Secular Prince, deſcending from *David*, who ſhould deliver them from the Power of the *Romans*, and reſtore them to their Civil Rights. This was the Notion they had of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould be a meer Man, the Son of *David* according to the Fleſh, and nothing more. Our Saviour replies, *Whence is it* then *that* David *calls the Meſſiah Lord*? Pſal. 110. v. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou on my Right Hand.* How could he be both *David*'s Lord, and *David*'s Son? No Son being Lord to his own Father; therefore if Chriſt were *David*'s Sovereign, he muſt be more than Man, more than *David*'s Son; as Man, ſo he was *David*'s Son; as God-man, ſo he was *David*'s Lord. *Note* hence, 1. That altho' Chriſt was truly and really Man, yet he was more than a bare Man; he was Lord unto, and the Salvation of, his own Forefathers. *Note* 2. That the only Way to reconcile the Scriptures which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be God and Man in one Perſon; the Meſſiah, as Man, was to come forth out of *David*'s Loins; but as God-man, he was *David*'s Sovereign and Saviour: As Man, he was his Father's Son; as God, he was Lord to his own Father.

38 And he ſaid unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the Scribes, which love to go in long cloathing, and love ſalutations in the market places, 39 And the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts: 40 Which devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: theſe ſhall receive greater damnation.

Obſerve here, What it is that our Saviour condemns, not Civil Salutations in the Market-place, not the Chief Seats in Synagogues, not the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, but their fond affecting of theſe Things, and their ambitious aſpiring after them. It was not their taking, but their loving, the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts which Chriſt condemns. *Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour condemns the Phariſees for their groſs Hypocriſie, in colouring over their Covetouſneſs with a Pretence of Religion, making long Prayers in the Temple and Synagogues for Widows, and thereupon perſwading them to give bountifully to *Corban*; that is, the Common Treaſury for the Temple, ſome part of which was imployed for their Maintenance. Whence we *Learn*, That it is no new thing for deſigning Hypocrites to cover the fouleſt Tranſgreſſion with the Cloak of Religion. The Phariſees made long Prayers a Cloak and Cover for their Covetouſneſs.

41 And Jeſus ſat over againſt the treaſury, and beheld how the people caſt money into the treaſury: and many that were rich caſt in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and ſhe threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that this poor widow hath caſt more in, than all they which have caſt into the treaſury. 44 For all they did caſt in of their abundance: but ſhe of her want did caſt in all that ſhe had, even all her living.

As our Bleſſed Saviour ſat over againſt the Treaſury, that is, that part of the Court of the Temple where the *Corban*, or Cheſts, for receiving the Peoples Offerings and Gifts were ſet, he obſerved and took notice of thoſe that offered their Oblations; and ſome that were rich offered very liberally; but *a certain poor Woman came and offered Two Mites.* Our Saviour hereupon takes Occaſion to inſtruct his Diſciples in this comfortable Truth; namely, That Almighty God accepts the Will of thoſe that give cheerfully, though they cannot give largely: This poor Woman caſt in more in reſpect of the inward Affection of her Heart, and in Proportion to her Eſtate, than all thoſe that were Rich and Wealthy that had caſt in before her; a Mite to her being more than a Pound to them. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That the poorer, yea, the pooreſt, ſort of People are not exempted from good Works; even they muſt exerciſe Charity according to their Abilities. *Learn* 2. That in all Works of Pious Charity which we perform God looks at the Heart, the Will, and the Affection of the Giver, more than at the Largeneſs and Liberality of the Gift: *If there be a willing Mind*, ſays the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. *It is accepted according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* 3. That a Perſon ought ſometimes to give what he cannot very well ſpare himſelf; and be ready to diſtribute not only to his Power, but even above and beyond his Power, 2 *Cor.* 8. 2, 3.

CHAP. XIII.

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of ſtones, and what buildings are here? 2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great buildings? there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being now ready to depart from the Temple, never more after this entring into it, and his Diſciples ſhewing him with Wonder and Admiration the magnificent Structures and Buildings thereof; apprehending that in regard of its invincible Strength it could not be deſtroyed; or that at leaſt in regard of its incredible Magnificence it was great Pity it ſhould be deſtroyed, they ſay to Chriſt, *Maſter, behold what Buildings are here!* Not conſidering how Sin will undermine and blow up the moſt Famous Structures.

Sin brings Cities and Kingdoms, as well as particular Perſons, to their End; not one Stone of this Magnificent Structure (ſays Chriſt) ſhall remain unpulled down; which Threatning was exactly fulfilled after Chriſt's Death, when *Titus* the Roman Emperor deſtroyed the City, burnt the Temple, and *Turnus Rufus*, the General of his Army, ploughed up the very Foundation on which the Temple ſtood: Thus was the Threatning of God fulfilled, *Jer.* 26. 18. Zion *ſhall be ploughed as a Field, and* Jeruſalem *ſhall become an Heap. Learn* hence, 1. That Sin has laid the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms. 2. That the Threatnings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing Improbabilities there may be to the contrary. 'Tis neither the Temples Strength nor Beauty that can oppoſe or withſtand God's Power.

3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, over againſt the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſhall be the ſign when all theſe things ſhall be fulfilled?

A double Queſtion is here propounded to our Saviour by his Diſciples; namely, When the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* ſhall be? And what ſhould be the Signs of that Deſtruction? See here what an itching Curioſity there is in the beſt of Men to know Futurities; to know Things that ſhall come to paſs hereafter; and when that hereafter is to come to paſs. Oh! how happy were we, if as forward to obey the Declarations of God's revealed Will, as we are to pry into the hidden Counſels of his ſecret Will! *Tell us*, ſays the Diſciples, *when ſhall theſe Things be*?

5 And Jeſus anſwering them, began to ſay, Take heed leſt any man deceive you. 6 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt: and ſhall deceive many. 7 And when ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for ſuch things muſt needs be; but the end ſhall not be yet. 8 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be earthquakes in divers places, and there ſhall be famines, and troubles: theſe are the beginnings of ſorrow. 9 But take heed to your ſelves: for they ſhall deliver you up to councils; and in the ſynagogues ye ſhall be beaten, and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them. 10 And the goſpel muſt firſt be publiſhed among all nations.

Here, and in the following Verſes, our Saviour gives his Diſciples the Signs which ſhould forerun the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. The firſt of which was this, That *there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts, falſe Prophets, and Seducers*, ſuch as *Theudas*, and others, under the Name and Perſon of the Meſſias; ſome affirming themſelves to be Chriſt Perſonal, or the promiſed Meſſiah; others to be Chriſt Doctrinal, affirming their erroneous Opinions to be the Mind and Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn* hence, That as there will be many Seducers before the End of the World, (for *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction was a Type and Emblem of the World's Deſtruction) and many will be ſeduced and miſled by them; ſo it is the Duty of Chriſt's own Diſciples to take heed, leſt they *being alſo led away by the Error of the Wicked, do fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs: Take heed*, ſays Chriſt, *that no Man deceive you, for many will come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt, and will deceive many.* The Second Sign of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction was *Wars*, and *Rumours of Wars*; that is, Civil Broils, and Inteſtine Commotions, amongſt themſelves; as alſo *Famine and Earthquakes.* Whence *Note*, That War and Fire, Earthquakes and Famine, are Judgments and Calamities inflicted by God upon a ſinful People for their Contempt of Chriſt and Goſpel-Grace. 2. That altho' theſe be very terrible Judgments, and deſolating Calamities, yet to an incorrigible and irreclaimable People are they the Forerunners of worſer Judgments. *Theſe are*, ſays Chriſt, *the beginning of Sorrows.* The third Sign of this approaching Deſtruction was a general Perſecution of the Miniſters of the Goſpel for preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel to a loſt World: *Ye ſhall be beaten, and brought before Kings for my ſake, for a Teſtimony.* From whence *Note*, That the preaching of the Goſpel, where-ever it comes, it will be for a Teſtimony to them to whom it comes; either a Teſtimony for them, or againſt them; to the Humble it is a Teſtimony for, to Deſpiſers and Scorners it is a Teſtimony againſt; if the Duſt of the Miniſters Feet bear Witneſs againſt the Deſpiſers of the Goſpel, their Sermons much more. The Word of God delivered in the Scriptures, and diſpenſed in the Miniſtry thereof, hath its divers and contrary Effects upon different and contrary Subjects; from both which yet Almighty God knows how to raiſe his own Glory, to the Humble and Teachable the Goſpel is in *Adjutorium*, to the Scorners and Deſpiſers it will be in *Teſtimonium*; to ſome the Savour of Life unto Life, to others the Savour of Death unto Death.

11 But when they ſhall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt. 12 Now the brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the father the ſon: and children ſhall riſe up againſt their parents, and ſhall cauſe them to be put to death. 13 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my names ſakes: but he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

Here our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples, that for preaching the Goſpel they ſhould be brought before Kings and Rulers; but adviſes them when they ſhould be ſo brought, not to be anxiouſly thoughtful and ſollicitous what they ſhould ſay, for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt what to ſay in that Hour. *Note* here, That this Promiſe ſeems to be peculiar to the Apoſtles, and that it belong'd to them only, when they were brought before Kings and Rulers, to plead the Cauſe of Chriſt. *Learn* thence, That tho' the Truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the Defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a Tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his Holy Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch Arguments to them as all their Enemies ſhall not be able to gainſay. *Obſerve* farther, How our Saviour deſcribes the bitter Enmity of the World againſt the Preachers of the Goſpel, to be ſuch as would overcome and extinguiſh even the natural Affection of the neareſt Relations one towards another: *The Brother ſhall betray the Brother to Death.* Grace teaches us to lay down our Lives for the Brethren; but Corruption in general, and Enmity to the Goſpel in particular, teaches Brother to take away the Life of Brother; *The Brother ſhall betray the Brother to Death. Obſerve* Laſtly, How our Saviour comforts his Diſciples, that there would be an end of theſe their ſharp and bitter Sufferings; aſſuring them, that if their Faith and Patience did hold out *unto the end they ſhould be ſaved.* This is our Comfort, our Sufferings for Chriſt may be ſharp, but they ſhall be ſhort; if our Sufferings for Chriſt end not in our Lifetime, they will end with our Lives.

14 But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſpoken of by Daniel the Prophet, ſtanding where it ought not, (let him that readeth, underſtand)—

The Senſe is, When ye ſhall ſee the Roman Army, which is an Abomination to you, and an Occaſion of great Deſolation where-ever it goes; when you ſhall ſee that abominable deſolating Army, begirting the City of *Jeruſalem*, in order to her Ruin, and being laid waſte, then call to mind the Prophecy of *Daniel*, which primarily reſpected *Antiochus*, but ſecondarily *Titus* the *Roman* Emperor, and ſhall now be fully compleated; for the Siege ſhall not be raiſed till both City and Temple be razed to the Ground. From whence *Learn*, 1. That God has Inſtruments ready at his Call to lay waſte the ſtrongeſt Cities, and to ruine the moſt flouriſhing Kingdoms, which do reject his Son, and refuſe the Tenders of his Grace. 2. That God can, and ſometimes doth, make uſe of thoſe very Perſons whom Sinners moſt abhor, to be the Inſtruments of their Puniſhment, and the Occaſions of their Deſtruction. The Roman Army, which was an Abomination to the Jews, did God deſtroy them by.

14 —Then let them that be in Judea, flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the

houſe-top, not go down into the houſe, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his houſe. 16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

The Meaning is, as ſoon as ye ſhall ſee the Roman Army appear before the City of *Jeruſalem*, let every one that values his own Safety fly as far and as faſt as he can, as *Lot* fled from the Flames of *Sodom*, and be glad if by Flight he can ſave his Life, though he looſe Goods, and Cloaths, and all Things beſide. Whence *Learn*, That when Almighty God is pouring forth his Fury upon a ſinful People, it is both lawful, and a neceſſary Duty by Flight to endeavour to ſhelter and ſecure our ſelves from the approaching Calamity and Deſolation; when ye ſee *Jeruſalem encompaſſed with Armies flee to the Mountains.* 2. That in caſe of Flight before an enraged Enemy, and bloody Army, if we looſe all that we have, and our Lives be given us for a Prey, we fare well, and the Lord deals very graciouſly and mercifully with us. Next our Saviour declares the doleful Diſtreſs of thoſe that could not flee from the Roman Army encompaſſing *Jeruſalem, as Women great with Child*, and *others giving Suck*, who by that Means are like to loſe their Lives: And adds farther, That it would encreaſe the Calamity if their *Flight ſhould happen to be in the Winter*; or as St. *Matthew* adds, *On the Sabbath-day*, Matth. 24. 20. *Pray ye that your Flight be not in the Winter, nor on the Sabbath-day.* Flight in the Winter is ſad, becauſe we can then fly neither faſt nor far; and on the Sabbath-day it is very ſorrowful, that being the Day of our Spiritual Labour, and of our Bodily Reſt. *Learn* thence, That it is a great Addition to the Trouble and Diſquiet of a good Man's Spirit, when the Day of his Spiritual Reſt is interrupted; and inſtead of enjoying Communion with God in his Houſe, he is driven from Houſe and Home.

19 For in thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither ſhall be. 20 And except that the Lord had ſhortned thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved: but for the elects ſake, whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortned the days.

The dreadful Calamities which were coming upon the Jews in general, and *Jeruſalem* in particular, are here foretold by our Bleſſed Saviour, partly from the Roman Army without, and partly from the Seditions and Factions of the Zealots within, who committed ſuch Outrages and Slaughters, that there were no leſs than an Hundred Thouſand Jews Slain, and Ninety-ſeven Thouſand taken Priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for Thirty Pence, were now themſelves ſold Thirty for a Penny. Now did the Temple it ſelf become a Sacrifice, a whole Burnt-offering, and was conſumed to Aſhes. Yet *Obſerve*, Chriſt promiſes that *thoſe Days of* Vengeance *ſhould be ſhortned for the Elects ſake*; God had a Remnant which he deſigned ſhould ſurvive that Deſtruction, to be an Holy Seed; and accordingly the Providence of God ſo ordered it, that the City was taken in Six Months, and the whole Country depopulated in Eighteen. From whence *Obſerve*, How the Lord intermixes ſome Mercy with the extreameſt Miſery that doth befal a People for their Sin on this ſide Hell. No Sinners can ſay in this Life that they feel the Strokes of Juſtice to the utmoſt, or that they have Judgment without Mercy.

21 And then, if any man ſhall ſay to you, Lo, here is Chriſt, or lo, he is there: believe him not. 22 For falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, if it were poſſible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

The *Jews* had all along cheriſhed in themſelves a vain Expectation, that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a Temporal Deliverer, and ſet them at Liberty from the Power and Slavery of the *Romans*; and accordingly our Saviour declares to his Diſciples here, that immediately before *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, ſeveral Perſons taking the Advantage of this Expectation, would make themſelves Heads of Parties, and pretend that they were the true Meſſiah, who ſhould ſave and deliver them from Enemies, if they would follow them; hereupon our Saviour cautions his Diſciples againſt ſuch falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and bids them not believe them, tho' they did never ſo many great Signs and Wonders, and promiſed them never ſuch glorious Deliverances. From hence, *Note* 1. That the Churches great Danger is from Seducers that come in Chriſt's Name, and pretend to work Signs and Wonders by his Authority. *Note* 2. That ſuch is the Power of Seduction and Deluſion, that many, in all Ages of the Church, have been carried away with Seducers and falſe Teachers. 3. That the Elect themſelves, if left to themſelves, might be ſeduced; but being guarded by Divine Power againſt Seduction and Deluſion, they ſhall be preſerved from that Fatal Miſchief; *They ſhall ſeduce (if poſſible) even the Elect.*

24 But in thoſe days, after that tribulation, the ſun ſhall be darkned, and the moon ſhall not give her light: 25 And the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall, and the powers that are in heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 26 And then ſhall they ſee the ſon of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. 27 And then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermoſt part of the earth, to the uttermoſt part of heaven.

Our Saviour goes on in Figurative Expreſſions, to ſet forth the Calamities that ſhould befal the Jewiſh Nation immediately after *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction. *The Sun ſhall be darkned*; that is, all their Glory and Excellency ſhall be Eclipſed, all their Wealth and Proſperity ſhall be laid waſte, their whole Government, Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, deſtroyed; and ſuch Marks of Miſery found upon them, as never were ſeen upon a People. Thoſe that apply this to the general Judgment, underſtand the Words literally, that the *Sun and Moon will then* have their Influences ſuſpended; that the *Holy Angels* will *be ſent forth to gather the Elect from all Quarters of the World with the Sound of a Trumpet*, ſays St. *Matthew*. Probably as there was an audible Sound of a Trumpet at the giving of the Law, ſo there ſhall be the like Sound of a Trumpet when Chriſt ſhall ſummon the World to Judgment for tranſgreſſing of that Law. A joyful Sound will this be to the Friends of Chriſt; a doleful, dreadful Sound in the Ears of his Enemies.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is near: 29 So ye in likemanner, when ye ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. 30 Verily I ſay unto you, that this generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be done. 31 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away. 32 But of that day, and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Here our Bleſſed Saviour declares Two Things with Reference to his coming, 1. The Certainty of the Thing it ſelf. 2. The Uncertainty of the Time. The Certainty of his coming he ſets forth by the Similitude of the Fig-tree, whoſe beginning to bud *declares the Summer at hand*. Thus our Saviour tells them, that when they ſhould ſee the forementioned Signs, they might conclude the Deſtruction of their City and Temple to be nigh at hand; and accordingly ſome then living did ſee theſe Predictions fulfilled. *Obſ.* 2. The Uncertainty as to the preciſe Time when this Judgment ſhould come; no Angel in Heaven, nor Creature upon Earth, could determine the Time, only the Glorious Perſons in the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt. *Learn* hence, That all Things are not revealed to the Angels themſelves, but ſuch Things only as it concerns them to know, and the Wiſdom of God thinks fit to reveal. 2. That the preciſe Time of the Day of Judgment is kept by God as a Secret to himſelf; we are not to know the Hour, to the Intent we may be upon our Watch every Hour; Chriſt himſelf did not know it as Man, but as God only. The Knowledge and Revelation of this was no Part of Chriſt's Prophetick Office, it being one of thoſe Times and Seaſons which the Father has put in his own Power, *Act.* 1. 7. Conſider Chriſt as God, or the Second Perſon in the Trinity; and to affirm that there is any thing which he doth not know is Blaſphemy; but conſider him as the Meſſias; and to ſay that there were ſome Things which Chriſt (as ſuch) did not know, is no Blaſphemy. For tho' Chriſt, as God, was equal with the Father; yet, as Meſſias, or God-man, he was inferiour to the Father, his Servant or Meſſenger, and could do nothing of himſelf, and did not know all Things.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his houſe, and gave authority to his ſervants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore, (for ye know not when the maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning) 36 Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping. 37 And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

Our Bleſſed Saviour takes Occaſion from the foregoing Doctrine of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of his coming to Judgment, to inforce the Duty of diligent and induſtrious Watchfulneſs upon all his Diſciples and Followers; that is, to be upon their Guard againſt all Sin, and to be in an actual Readineſs for his Appearance and Approach. *Learn* hence, That it is the indiſpenſable Duty, and ought to be the indefatigable Endeavours, of every Chriſtian to ſtand upon his Guard in a prepared Readineſs for Chriſt's Appearance, both for his coming to them, and for their going to him. There is a twofold Readineſs for Chriſt's coming, namely, Habitual and Actual; an Habitual Readineſs is a Readineſs of the State and Condition, Actual Readineſs, is the Readineſs of the Perſon. When we are furniſhed with all the Graces and Vertues of a good Life, when our Lamps are burning, and our Loins girded, our Souls furniſhed with the Graces of God's Holy Spirit, and our Lives fruitful in good Works, *Bleſſed is that Servant, who when his Lord cometh ſhall be found thus Watching.*

CHAP. XIV.

AFter two days, was the feaſt of the paſſover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes ſought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they ſaid, not on the feaſt day, leſt there be an uproar of the people.

This Chapter gives us a ſad and ſorrowful Account of the High Prieſt's Conſpiracy againſt the Life of our Bleſſed Saviour; in which we have *Obſervable* the Perſons that made this Conſpiracy, the Manner of the Conſpiracy, and the Time when this Conſpiracy was made. 1. The Perſons conſpiring are the *chief Prieſts*, *Scribes* and *Elders*; that is, the whole Jewiſh Sanhedrim, or General Council: They lay their malicious Heads together to contrive the Deſtruction of the Innocent Jeſus. Thence *Learn*, That General Councils have erred, and may err fundamentally in Matters of Doctrine; ſo did this General Council at *Jeruſalem*, conſiſting of Chief Prieſts, Doctors and Elders, with the High Prieſt their Preſident, in not believing Jeſus to be the Meſſias, after all the Miracles wrought before their Eyes. *Obſ.* 2. The Manner of this Conſpiracy againſt our Savour's Life, it was Clandeſtine, Secret and Subtle; they conſult *how they may take him by Craft, and put him to Death.* Thence *Note*, That Satan makes uſe of the Subtilty of crafty Men, and abuſeth their Parts as well as their Power for his own Purpoſes and Deſigns; the Devil ſends no Fools of his Errand. *Obſ.* 3. The Circumſtance of Time when this Conſpiracy was managed, *at the Feaſt of the Paſſover*; it being a Cuſtom among the Jews to execute Malefactors at their Solemn Feaſts, as at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, the Feaſt of Weeks, and the Feaſt of Tabernacles; at which Times all the Jews came up to *Jeruſalem* to Sacrifice, and then they put Malefactors to Death, that all *Iſrael* might ſee, and fear, and not do ſo wickedly. Accordingly this Feaſt of the Paſſover was waited for by the Jews as a fit Opportunity to put our Saviour to Death; the only Objection was, That it might occaſion a Tumult amongſt the People, there being ſuch a mighty Concourſe at that time in *Jeruſalem.* But *Judas* making them a Profer, they readily comply with the Motion, and reſolve to take the firſt Opportunity to put our Saviour to Death.

3 And being in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaſter box of ointment of ſpikenard, very precious; and ſhe brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured againſt her. 6 And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone, why trouble ye her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what ſhe could, ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached throughout the whole world, this alſo that ſhe hath done, ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her.

Several Particulars are obſervable in this Piece of Hiſtory: As firſt, the Action which this Holy Woman performed, *She pours a Box of precious Ointment upon our Saviour's Head as he ſat at Meat*, according to the Cuſtom of the Eaſtern Countries at their Feaſts. Murmuring *Judas* valued this Ointment at Three Hundred Pence, which makes of our Money Nine Pounds Seven Shillings and Six pence, reckoning the Roman Penny at Seven pence Half-penny. I do not find that any of the Apoſtles were at thus much Coſt and Charge to put Honour upon our Saviour as this poor Woman was. *Learn* hence, That where ſtrong Love prevails in the Heart towards Chriſt, nothing is adjudged too dear for him, neither will it ſuffer it ſelf to be outſhined by any Examples; the weakeſt Woman that ſtrongly loves her Saviour, will piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt Apoſtle to expreſs the Fervour of her Affection towards him. *Obſ.* 2. How this Action was reſented and reflected upon by *Judas*, and ſome other Diſciples, whom he had influenced; *They had Indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, To what Purpoſe is this waſte?* Oh! how doth a Covetous Heart think every thing too good for Chriſt? Happy was it for this poor Woman that ſhe had a more Righteous Judge to paſs Sentence upon her Action than murmuring *Judas*. *Obſ.* 3. How readily our Holy Lord vindicates this good Woman; ſhe ſays nothing for her ſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſo good an Advocate. Firſt, he rebukes *Judas*, *Let her alone, why trouble ye the Woman?* Next, he juſtifies the Action, *She hath wronght a good Work*, becauſe it flow'd from a Principle of Love to Chriſt: And laſtly, he gives the Reaſon of her Action, *She did it for my Burial.* As Kings and Great Perſons were wont in thoſe Eaſtern Countries at their Funerals to be embalm'd with Odours and ſweet Perfumes, ſo, ſays our Saviour, this Woman, to declare her Faith in me, as her King and Lord, doth with this Box of Ointment, as it were beforehand, Embalm my Body for its Burial. True Faith puts Honour upon a crucified, as well as glorified Saviour. This Holy Woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all Honour in his Death, believing it would be a ſweet-ſmelling Sacrifice unto God, and the Savour of Life unto his People. *Obſ.* 4. Our Saviour doth not only juſtifie and defend the Action of this holy Woman, but magnifies and extols it, declaring that ſhe ſhould be rewarded for it with an honourable Memorial in all Ages of the Church; *Where-ever this Goſpel is preached, this ſhall be ſpoken of for a Memorial of her.* *Note* hence, The Care which Chriſt takes to have the good Deeds of his Children not buried in the Duſt with them, but had in everlaſting Remembrance. Tho' Sin cauſes Men to rot above Ground, to ſtink alive, and when they are dead leaves an Ignominy upon their Graves, yet will the Actions of the Juſt ſmell ſweet, and bloſſom in the Duſt.

10 And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief prieſts, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promiſed to

give him money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon betraying our Bleſſed Redeemer, *Judas*: *Judas*, a Profeſſor; *Judas*, a Preacher; *Judas*, an Apoſtle, and *One of the Twelve*, whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the World to be his deareſt Friends, his Family and Houſhold; ſhall we wonder to find Friends unfriendly or unfaithful to us, when our Saviour had a Traitor in his own Family? *Obſ.* 2. The heinous Nature of *Judas* his Sin, *he betrayed Jeſus*. Jeſus, his Maker; Jeſus, his Maſter. It is no ſtrange or uncommon thing for the vileſt of Sins, and moſt horrid Impieties, to be acted by ſuch Perſons as make the moſt eminent Profeſſion of Holineſs and Religion. *Obſ.* 3. What was the Occaſion that led *Judas* to the Commiſſion of this Sin? It was his inordinate Love of Money. I do not find that *Judas* had any particular Malice, Spite, or Ill-will, againſt our Saviour, but a baſe and unworthy Spirit of Covetouſneſs poſſeſs'd him, and this made him Sell his Maſter. Covetouſneſs is the Root-Sin. An eager and inſatiable Thirſt after the World, is the Parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural Sins; for which Reaſon our Saviour doubles his Caution, *Luke* 12. 15. *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs*. It ſhews us both the Danger of the Sin, and the great Care we ought to take to preſerve our ſelves from it.

12 And the firſt day of unleavened bread, when they killed the paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayeſt eat the paſſover? 13 And he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. 14 And whereſoever he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good man of the houſe, The maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 15 And he will ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed and prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his diſciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

The Time for the Celebration of the Paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends Two of his Diſciples to *Jeruſalem* to prepare Things neceſſary in order thereunto. And here we have *Obſervable*, 1. An eminent Proof of Chriſt's Divine Nature, in telling them all the Particulars which they ſhould meet with in the City, as *a Man bearing a Pitcher of Water*, &c. 2. How readily the Heart of this Houſholder was diſpoſed to receive our Saviour and his Diſciples, and to accommodate them with all Things needful upon this Occaſion. Our Bleſſed Saviour had not a Lamb of his own, and peradventure no Money wherewith to buy one, yet he finds as excellent Accommodation in this poor Man's Houſe, as if he had dwelt in *Ahab*'s Ivory Palace, and had the Proviſions of *Solomon*'s Table. When Chriſt has a Paſſover to Celebrate, he will diſpoſe the Heart to a free Reception of himſelf. The Room which Chriſt will enter into muſt be *a large Room*, an *upper Room*, a *Room furniſhed and prepared*; a *large Room* is an enlarged Heart, enlarged with Love and Thankfulneſs; an *upper Room* is an Heart exalted; not puft up with Pride, but lift up by Heavenly-mindedneſs; a *Room furniſhed* is a Soul adorned with the Graces of the Holy Spirit; into ſuch an Heart, and only ſuch, will Chriſt enter.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they ſat and did eat, Jeſus ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, One of you which eateth with me, ſhall betray me. 19 And they began to be ſorrowful, and to ſay unto him one by one, is it I? and another ſaid, Is it I? 20 And he anſwered, and ſaid unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the diſh. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; good were it for that man, if he had never been born.

Obſerve here, 1. The unexampled Boldneſs of this Impudent Traitor, *Judas*; he preſumed as ſoon as he had Sold his Maſter to ſit down at the Table with him, and eat the Paſſover with the Diſciples: Had the Preſence of *Judas* polluted this Ordinance to any but himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would never have ſuffered him to approach unto it. But hence we *Learn*, 1. That nothing is more ordinary than for unholy Perſons to preſs in unto the Holy Ordinances of God, which they have no Right (whilſt ſuch) to partake of. 2. That the Preſence of ſuch Perſons doth pollute the Ordinance only to themſelves; holy Perſons are not polluted by their Sins, therefore ought not to be diſcouraged from coming by their Preſence there. *Obſ.* 2. What a ſurpriſing and aſtoniſhing Word it was which dropt from our Saviour's Mouth amongſt his Diſciples; *One ſhall betray me*; yea, *one of you ſhall betray me*. Can any Church upon Earth expect Purity in all its Members, when Chriſt's own Family of Twelve had a Traitor and a Devil in it? Yet tho' it was very ſad to hear of one, it was Matter of Joy to underſtand that there was but one. One Hypocrite in a Congregation is too much, but there is Cauſe of rejoicing if there be no more. *Obſ.* 3. Chriſt did not name *Judas*, and ſay, Thou, O perfidious *Judas*, art the Traitor, *but one of you ſhall betray me*. Doubtleſs it was to draw him to Repentance, and to prevent the giving him any Provocation. Lord! How ſad is it for any of thy Family, who pretend Friendſhip to thee, to conſpire with thine Enemies againſt thee? For any *that eat of thy Bread, to lift up their Heel againſt thee*? *Obſ.* 4. The Diſciples Sorrow upon theſe Words of Chriſt, and the Effect of that Sorrow. Their Sorrow was (as well it might) exceeding great; well might Innocent Diſciples be overwhelm'd with Sorrow to hear that their Maſter ſhould die; that he ſhould die by Treaſon; that the Traitor ſhould be one of themſelves. But tho' their Sorrow was great, yet was the Effect of their Sorrow very good, it wrought in them an holy Suſpicion of themſelves, and cauſed every one to ſearch himſelf, and ſay, *Maſter, is it I?* *Learn* hence, That it is poſſible for ſuch ſecret Wickedneſs to lodge in the Heart as we never ſuſpected, till Time and Temptation drew it forth. None of the Diſciples ſuſpected, nay, *Judas* himſelf never apprehended, that Depth of Iniquity and Hypocriſie which was found lodging in him. Yet *Note*, That tho' the Diſciples were jealous and ſuſpicious, yet was it of themſelves, not of one another; nay, not of *Judas* himſelf; every one ſaid, *Maſter, is it I?* Not, Maſter, is it *Judas*: True Sincerity and Chriſtian Charity will make us more ſuſpicious of our ſelves than of any other; it hopes the beſt of others, and fears the worſt of our ſelves. *Obſ.* 5. That tho' *Judas* ſees himſelf pointed at by our Saviour, and hears the dreadful Threatnings denounced againſt him, *that it had been better for him that he had never been born*, yet he is no more blank'd than Innocence it ſelf. Reſolute Sinners run on deſperately in their Evil Courſes, and with open Eyes ſee and meet their own Deſtruction, without being either diſmayed at it, or concerned about it. This ſhameleſs Man had the Impudence to ſay to our Bleſſed Saviour, *Maſter, is it I?* Our Saviour gives him a direct Anſwer, *Thou ſaiſt it*. Did not *Judas* (think we) bluſh extreamly, caſt down his guilty Eyes, and let fall his drooping Head, at ſo gauling an Intimation? Nothing leſs; we read of nothing like it. Lord! How does Obduracy in Sin ſteel the Brow, and make it uncapable of all relenting Impreſſions? *Obſerve* laſtly, How our Saviour prefers Non-entity before Damnation; *It had been better for that Man he had never been born*. A Temporal, Miſerable Being is not worſe than no Being; but Eternal Miſery is much worſe than Non-entity; better to have no Being, than not to have a Being in Chriſt. *It had been better for* Judas *that he had never been born*, than to lye under everlaſting Wrath.

22 And as they did eat, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed, and brake it, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he ſaid unto them, This is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many. 25 Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Immediately after the Celebration of the Paſſover our Lord inſtitutes his Holy Supper; in which Inſtitution we have *Obſervable*, the Author, the Time, the Elements, and

Miniſterial Actions. *Obſerve* here, 1. The Author of this new Sacrament, *Jeſus took Bread*. *Note* thence, That to inſtitute a Sacrament is the Sole Prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt. The Church has no Power to make new Sacraments: It is only her Duty to celebrate thoſe which her Saviour has made. *Obſ.* 2. The Time of the Inſtitution, the Night before his Paſſion; *The Night in which he was betrayed Jeſus took Bread.* *Learn* thence, That it is very neceſſary, when Sufferings are approaching, to have Recourſe to the Table of the Lord, which affords both an Antidote againſt Fear, and is a Reſtaurative to our Faith. *Obſ.* 3. The Sacramental Elements, *Bread and Wine*; Bread repreſenting the Body, and Wine the Blood, of our Dear Redeemer. *Obſ.* 4. The Miniſterial Actions, *The Breaking of the Bread*, and *the Bleſſing of the Cup*; as to the Bread, *Jeſus took it*; that is, ſet it apart from common Uſe, and ſeparated it for Holy Ends and Purpoſes. He *Bleſſed it*; that is, Prayed for a Bleſſing upon it; and *Brake it*, thereby ſhadowing forth his Body broken upon the Croſs; and he *Gave it to his Diſciples, ſaying*, This broken Bread ſignifies my Body, ſuddenly to be broken upon the Croſs for the Redemption and Salvation of a loſt World; *Do this in Remembrance of my Death.* As to the Cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by Prayer and Thankſgiving, he commands his Diſciples to *Drink all of it*; and accordingly they *all drink of it*, ſays this Evangeliſt; and our Saviour gives his Reaſon for it, *v.* 24. *For this is my Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for Remiſſion of Sins*; that is, the Wine in this Cup repreſents the ſhedding of my Blood, by which the New Covenant betwixt GOD and Man is ratified and confirmed. Whence we *gather*, That every Communicant hath as undoubted a Right to the Cup, as to the Bread, in the Lord's Supper; *Drink ye all of this*, ſays Chriſt; therefore to deny the Cup to the common People is Sacriledge, and directly contrary to our Saviour's Inſtitution. And Chriſt calling the Cup *the Fruit of the Vine*, affords a ſtrong Argument againſt the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation thus: That which after Conſecration remains the Fruit of the Vine, is not ſubſtantially changed into the Blood of Chriſt. But Chriſt calls the Wine in the Cup the Fruit of the Vine after Conſecration; therefore that which Chriſt gave the Apoſtles to drink was not ſubſtantially changed into his Blood. Wine is metaphorically called the Blood of the Grape, why may it not, by a like Metaphor, be ſtiled the Blood of Chriſt? After the Celebration was over, our Saviour and his Diſciples *ſang an Hymn*, as the Jews were wont to do at the Paſſover, the Six Euchariſtical Pſalms, from the 113th to the 119th *Pſalm*. From Chriſt's Example we *gather*, how ſuitable it is to ſing a *Pſalm* after the Celebration of the Lord's Supper: How fit is it that God be glorified in his Church by ſinging of Pſalms; and in particular when the Lord's Supper is celebrated? *When they had ſung an Hymn, they went into the Mount of Olives.*

27 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered. 28 But after that I am riſen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter ſaid unto him, Although all ſhall be offended, yet will not I. 30 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 31 But he ſpake the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.

Obſerve here, 1. The Warning that our Saviour gives his Diſciples of their forſaking of him in the time of his Sufferings; *All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this Night.* *Learn*, That Chriſt's deareſt Friends forſook and left him alone in the midſt of his greateſt Diſtreſs and Danger. *Obſ.* 2. What was the Cauſe of their Flight; it was their Fear, the Weakneſs of their Faith, and the Prevalency of their Fear. Oh how ſad and dangerous is it for the beſt of Men to be left under the Power of their own Fears in the Day of Temptation! *Obſ.* 3. Notwithſtanding our Saviour's Prediction, St. *Peter's* Preſumption of his own Strength and Standing; *Though all Men forſake thee, yet will not I.* *Learn* thence, That Self-confidence, and a preſumptuous Opinion of their own Strength, is a Sin very incident to the holieſt and beſt of Men. This good Man reſolved honeſtly, no doubt, but too too much in his own Strength. Little, little did he think what a Feather he ſhould be in the Wind of Temptation, if once left to the Power and Prevalency of his own Fears. None are ſo near falling as thoſe who are moſt confident of their own ſtanding; if ever we ſtand in the Day of Trial, 'tis the fear of falling that muſt enable us to ſtand.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethſemani, and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here while I ſhall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy. 34 And he ſaith unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death; tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that if it were poſſible the hour might paſs from him. 36 And he ſaid, Abba, Father, all things are poſſible unto thee, take away this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh and findeth them ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt thou? couldeſt not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye, and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation. The ſpirit truly is ready, but the fleſh is weak. 39 And again he went away and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words. 40 And when he returned, he found them aſleep again, (for their eyes were heavy) neither wiſt they what to anſwer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt: it is enough, the hour is come, Behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 42 Riſe up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being now come with his Diſciples into the Garden, he falls there into a bitter and bloody Agony, in which he prayed with wonderful Fervency and Importunity to his Heavenly Father; his Sufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his Knees, and would be found in a praying Poſture. *Learn* thence, That Prayer is the beſt Preparative for, as well as the moſt powerful Support under, the heavieſt Sufferings that can befal us. As to this Prayer of our Saviour in the Garden many Things are very *Obſervable*; as, 1. The Place where he prayed, *the Garden*. But why went Chriſt thither? Not with our firſt Parents, to hide himſelf there amongſt the Trees of the Garden from the Notice and Obſervation of his Enemies. But as a Garden was the Place where our Miſery began, as the firſt Scene of Humane Sin and Miſery was acted in a Garden, ſo does our Lord chuſe a Garden as the fitteſt Place for his Agony and Satisfactory Pains to begin in: Again, this Garden was a Place of Privacy and Retirement, where our Lord might beſt attend the Offices of Devotion preparatory to his Paſſion: St. *John*, 18. 2. tells us, *That Jeſus ofttimes reſorted to this Garden with his Diſciples, and that* Judas *well knew the Place.* It is evident then that Chriſt went not into the Garden to ſhun his Sufferings, but to prepare himſelf, by Prayer, to meet his Enemies. 2. *Obſerve*, the Time when he entered into the Garden for Prayer, it was in the Evening before he ſuffered; here he ſpent ſome Hours in pouring forth his Soul to God; for about Midnight *Judas* with his Black Guard came and apprehended him in a praying Poſture. Our Lord *Teaching* us by his Example, That when Eminent Dangers are before us, eſpecially when Death is apprehended by us, to be very much in Prayer to God, and very fervent in our Wreſtlings with him. *Obſerve*, 3. The Matter of our Lord's Prayer, *That if poſſible the Cup might paſs from him*, and he might be kept from the Hour of Suffering, that his Soul might eſcape that dreadful Wrath at which he was ſo ſore amazed. But what! Did Chriſt then begin to repent of his Undertaking for Sinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when it came to the Pinch? No, nothing leſs; but as he had Two Natures, being GOD and Man, ſo he had Two diſtinct Wills; as Man he feared and ſhunned Death, as GOD-man he willingly ſubmitted to it. The Divine Nature, and the Humane Spirit, of Chriſt, did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing Intereſts. Again, this Prayer was not Abſolute, but Conditional; *If it be poſſible, Father, if it may be,* if thou art willing, if it pleaſe thee, *let this Cup paſs*; if not, *I will drink it.* The Cup of Sufferings we ſee is a very bitter and diſtaſteful Cup; a Cup which Humane Nature abhors, and cannot deſire, but pray againſt; yet God doth put this bitter Cup of Affliction into the Hands oft-times of thoſe whom he doth ſincerely love; and when he doth do ſo, it is their Duty to drink it with Silence and Submiſſion, as here their Lord did before them; *Father, let the Cup paſs; yet not my Will, but thine be done. Obſerve,* 4. The Manner of our Lord's Prayer in the Garden; and here we may remark, 1. It was a ſolitary Prayer; he went by himſelf *alone*, out of the hearing of his Diſciples. The Company of our beſt and deareſt Friends is not always ſeaſonable: There is a time to be ſolitary as well as to be ſociable; there are Times and Caſes when a Chriſtian would not be willing that the moſt intimate Friend he has in the World ſhould be with him, to hear what paſſes in ſecret betwixt him and his God. 2. It was an humble Prayer, that's evident by the Poſtures into which he caſt himſelf, ſometimes kneeling, ſometimes lying proſtrate upon his Face; he lyes in the very Duſt, and lower he cannot lye; and his Heart was as low as his Body. 3. It was a vehement, fervent, and moſt importunate, Prayer; ſuch was the Fervour of our Lord's Spirit, that he prayed himſelf into an Agony. Oh let us bluſh to think how unlike we are to Chriſt in Prayer, as to our praying Frame of Spirit. Lord! What Deadneſs and Drowſineſs, what Stupidity and Formality, what Dulneſs and Lazineſs, is found in our Prayers? How often do our Lips move when our Hearts ſtand ſtill? 4. It was a reiterated and repeated Prayer; he prayed the firſt, ſecond and third time, *for the paſſing of the Cup from him*; he returns upon God over and over again, reſolving to take no Denial. Let us not be diſcouraged, though we have ſought God often for a particular Mercy, and yet no Anſwer has been given in unto us. Our Prayers may be anſwered, though their Anſwer for the preſent is ſuſpended. A Prayer put up in Faith, according to the Will of God, though it may be delayed, it ſhall not be loſt. Our Saviour prayed the firſt, ſecond and third time for the paſſing of the Cup; and altho' he was not heard as to Exemption from Suffering, yet he was heard as to Support under Suffering. *Obſerve,* 5. The Poſture the Diſciples were found in when our Lord was in this Agony, praying to his Father; *They were faſt aſleep.* Good God! Could they poſſibly ſleep at ſuch a time as that was, when Chriſt's Soul was exceeding ſorrowful? Could their Eyes be thus heavy? *Learn* thence, That the beſt of Chriſt's Diſciples may be, and oft-times are, overtaken with Infirmities, with great Infirmities, when the moſt important Duties are performing; *He cometh to his Diſciples, and finds them ſleeping. Obſerve,* 6. The mild and gentle Reproof which he gives the Diſciples for their ſleeping; *Could ye not watch with me One Hour?* Could you not watch when your Maſter is in ſuch Danger? Could you not watch with me when I am going to deliver up my Life for you? What, not One Hour? And that the parting Hour too? After his Reprehenſion he ſubjoins an Exhortation, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*; and ſuperadds a forcible Reaſon, *for though the Spirit be willing, yet the Fleſh is weak.* Thence *Learn,* That the holieſt, and beſt reſolved, Chriſtians, who have willing Spirits for Chriſt and his Service, yet in regard of the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, or Frailty of Humane Nature, it is their Duty to Watch and Pray, and thereby guard themſelves againſt Temptation; *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation; for though the Spirit is willing, yet the Fleſh is weak.*

43 And immediately, while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he, take him, and lead him away ſafely. 45 And aſſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, Maſter, and kiſſed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that ſtood by, drew a Sword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his ear. 48 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords, and with ſtaves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: But the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled. 50 And they all forſook him, and fled.

The Hour is now almoſt come, even that Hour of Sorrow which Chriſt had ſo often ſpoken of, *Yet a little while, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the Hands of Sinners; for while he yet ſpake, cometh* Judas *with a Band of Soldiers,* to apprehend him: it was the Lot and Portion of our Dear Redeemer to be betrayed into the Hands of his Mortal Enemies by the Treachery of a falſe and diſſembling Friend. Here we have *Obſervable,* 1. The Traitor. 2. The Treaſon. 3. The Manner how. 4. The Time when this Treaſonable Deſign was executed. *Obſerve,* 1. The Traitor, *Judas.* All the Evangeliſts carefully deſcribe him by his Name, *Judas,* by his Sirname, *Judas Iſcariot,* leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for *Jude* the Brother of *James.* Almighty God takes great Care to preſerve the Names of his upright-hearted Servants. He is further deſcribed by his Office, *One of the Twelve.* The Eminency of his Place and Station was an high Aggravation of his Tranſgreſſion. *Learn* hence, That the greateſt Profeſſors had need be very jealous of themſelves, and ſuſpicious of their own Hearts, and look well to the Grounds and Principles of their Profeſſion; for a Profeſſion begun in Hypocriſie, will certainly end in Apoſtacy. *Learn* farther, That Perſons are never in ſuch Eminent Danger as when they meet with Temptations exactly ſuited to their Maſter Luſts. Covetouſneſs was *Judas* his Maſter Sin; the Love of the World made him a Slave to Satan, and the Devil lays a Temptation before him exactly ſuited to his Temper and Inclination, and it inſtantly overcomes him. Oh pray we that we may be kept from a ſtrong and ſuitable Temptation; a Temptation ſuited to our Inclination, and Predominant Luſt and Corruption. *Obſ.* 2. The Treaſon of this Traitor *Judas*; he led on an armed Multitude to the Place where Chriſt was, gave them a Signal to diſcover him by, and bids them lay Hands upon him, and *hold him faſt.* Some conjecture that when *Judas* bad them hold Chriſt faſt, he thought they could not do it; but that as Chriſt had at other Times conveyed himſelf from the Multitude, when they attempted to kill or ſtone him, ſo he would have done now: But his Hour was now come, and accordingly he ſuffers himſelf to be delivered by the Treachery of *Judas* into his Enemies Hands. And this his Treaſon is attended with theſe helliſh Aggravations; he had been a Witneſs to the Miracles which our Saviour had wrought by his Divine Power, and therefore could not Sin out of Ignorance; what he did was not at the Sollicitation and Perſwaſion of others, but he was a Voluntier in this Service; the High-Prieſts did not ſend to him, but he went to them, offering his Aſſiſtance; no doubt it was Matter of Surprize to the Chief Prieſts, to find one of Chriſt's own Diſciples at the Head of a Conſpiracy againſt him. Lord! How dangerous is it to allow our ſelves in any one ſecret or open Sin? None can ſay how far that one Sin may in time lead us. Should any have told *Judas* that his Love of Money would at laſt make him Sell his Saviour, he would have ſaid with *Hazael, Is thy Servant a Dog, that he ſhould do this thing?* That Soul can never be ſafe that harbours one Sin within its Breaſt. *Obſ.* 3. The manner how this Helliſh Plot was executed; partly by Force, and partly by Fraud; by Force, in that *Judas* came with a Multitude, armed with *Swords and Staves*; and by Fraud, *giving a Kiſs,* and ſaying, *Hail, Maſter.* Here was Honey in the Lips, but Poiſon in the Heart. *Obſ.* 4. The Time when, the Place where, and the Work which our Saviour was about, when this Treaſonable Deſign was executed, he was in the Garden with his Diſciples, exhorting them to Prayer and Watchfulneſs, dropping Heavenly Advice and Counſel upon them; while he yet ſpake, *Lo! Judas came.* Our Saviour was found in the moſt Heavenly and Excellent Employment when Enemies came to apprehend him. Lord! How happy is it when our Sufferings finds us in God's Way, engaged in his Work, and engaging his Aſſiſtance by fervent Supplication! Thus did our Lord's Sufferings meet him, may ours in like manner meet us. *Obſ.* 5. The Endeavours uſed by the Diſciples for their Maſter's Reſcue; *One of them* (St. *Matthew* ſays it was *Peter*) *draws his Sword, and cuts off the Ear of Malchus,* who probably was one of the forwardeſt to lay Hand on Chriſt. But why did not St. *Peter* draw upon *Judas*, rather than *Malchus*? Becauſe, tho' *Judas* was more faulty, yet *Malchus* was more forward to arreſt and carry off our Saviour. How do a Pious Breaſt ſwell with Indignation at the Sight of any open Affront offered to its Saviour? Yet tho' St. *Peter*'s Heart was ſincere, his Hand was raſh; good Intentions are no Warrant for irregular Actions; and accordingly Chriſt, who accepted the Affection reproves the Action? *Put up thy Sword, for they that take the Sword, ſhall periſh by the Sword*; Chriſt will thank no Man to fight for him without a Warrant and Commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a Lawful Magiſtrate, in Chriſt's own Defence, is raſh Zeal, and diſcountenanced by the Goſpel. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Effect which our Saviour's Apprehenſion had upon the Diſciples; *They all forſook him, and fled.* They that ſaid to Chriſt a little before, *Though we ſhould die with thee, yet will not we deny thee*, do all here deſert, and cowardly forſake him, when it came to the Trial. *Learn* hence, That the beſt and holieſt of Men know not their own Hearts, when great Temptations and Trials are before them, until ſuch time as they come to grapple with them. No Man knows his own Strength till Temptation puts it to the Proof.

51 And there followed him a certain young Man, having a linen cloth caſt about his naked body, and the young Man laid hold on him. 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. 53 And they led Jeſus away to the high prieſt, and with him were aſſembled all the chief prieſts, and the elders, and the ſcribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high prieſt; and he ſat with the ſervants, and warmed himſelf at the fire. 55 And the chief prieſts, and all the counſel ſought for witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to Death; and found none. 56 For many bare falſe witneſs againſt him, but their witneſs agreed not together. 57 And there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him, ſaying, 58 We heard him ſay, I will deſtroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together. 60 And the high prieſt ſtood up in the midſt, and asked Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what is it which theſe witneſs againſt thee? 61 But he held his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high prieſt asked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed? 62 And Jeſus ſaid, I am: and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high prieſt rent his cloaths, and ſaid, What need we any further witneſſes? 64 Ye have heard the blaſphemy: what think ye? and they all condemn him to be guilty of death. 65 And ſome began to ſpit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſie: and the Servants did ſtrike him with the palms of their hands.

Here we have the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Examination before the High Prieſt and Council, who ſat up all Night to Arraign and Try the Holy and Innocent Jeſus; for leſt his Death ſhould look like a downright Murther, they allow him a Mock-Trial, and abuſe the Law, by perverting it to Injuſtice and Bloodſhed. Accordingly falſe Witneſſes are ſuborned, who depoſe that they heard him ſay, *He would deſtroy their Temple, and build it again in Three Days.* It is not in the Power of the greateſt Innocency to protect the moſt Innocent and Holy Perſon from Slander and Falſe Accuſation; yea, no Perſon is ſo Innocent and Good whom falſe Witneſs may not condemn. *Obſ.* 2. Our Lord's Meekneſs and Patience, his Silence under all theſe wicked Suggeſtions and falſe Accuſations, *Jeſus held his Peace, and anſwered nothing*, v. 16. Guilt is naturally clamorous and impatient, but Innocency is ſilent, and careleſs of Miſreports. *Learn* hence, That to bear the Revilings, Contradictions, and falſe Accuſations of Men with a ſilent and ſubmiſſive Spirit, is an Excellent and Chriſt-like Temper. Our Lord ſtood before his unjuſt Judge, and falſe Accuſers, even as a Sheep before the Shearer, dumb, and not opening his Mouth, even then when a Trial for his Life was managed moſt maliciouſly and illegally againſt him; *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not.* May the ſame humble Mind and forgiving Spirit be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus. *Obſ.* 3. That although our Saviour was ſilent, and made no reply *to the falſe Witneſſes*, yet now, when the Queſtion was ſolemnly put by the High Prieſt, *Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?* He anſwered, *I am.* Thence *Learn*, That although we are not obliged by every enſnaring Queſtion to make Anſwer, yet are we bound faithfully to own, and freely to confeſs the Truth when ſolemnly called thereunto; when our Silence will be interpreted a Denial of the Truth, a Diſhonour to God, a Reproach and Scandal to our Brethren, it will be a great Sin to hold our Peace; and we muſt not be ſilent, tho' our Confeſſion of the Truth hazards our Liberty, yea, our Life. Chriſt knew that his Anſwer would coſt him his Life, and yet he durſt not but give it; *Art thou the Son of the Bleſſed? Jeſus ſaid, I am.* *Obſ.* 4. The Crime which the High Prieſt pronounces our Saviour to be guilty of, that of Blaſphemy; *He hath ſpoken blaſphemy.* Hereupon the High Prieſt rends his Cloaths; it being uſual with the Jews ſo to do, both to ſhew their Sorrow for it, and great Deteſtation of it, and Indignation againſt it. *Obſ.* 5. The vile Affronts, and horrid Abuſes, which the Enemies of our Saviour put upon him; they *ſpit in his Face*, they *blindfold him*, they *ſmite him with their Hands*, and in Contempt and Mockery *bid him Propheſie who it was that ſmote him.* Verily there is no Degree of Contempt, no Mark of Shame, no kind of Suffering, which we ought to decline or ſtick at for Chriſt's Sake, who hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting on our account. *Obſ.* 6. The High Prieſt rends his Cloaths at Chriſt's telling him, *v.* 62. *Ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on God's Right Hand, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* And well might his Cloaths and his Heart rend alſo. 'Twas as if our Lord had ſaid, I that am now your Priſoner, ſhall ſhortly be your Judge, I now ſtand at your Barr, and e'er long you muſt ſtand at my Tribunal; thoſe Eyes of yours that now ſee me in the Form of a Servant, ſhall behold me in the Clouds at the Right Hand of your God, and my Father.

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high prieſt, *67* And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, ſaying, I know him not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. *69* And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is one of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that ſtood by, ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth thereto. 71 But he began to curſe and to ſwear, ſaying, I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak. 72 And the ſecond time the cock crew: And Peter called to mind the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

This laſt Paragraph of the Chapter gives us an Account of the Fall and Riſing of *Peter*; of his Sin, in denying Chriſt, and of his Recovery, by Repentance. Both are conſidered diſtinctly in the Notes on St. *Matth.* 26. *v.* 69. that which is here farther to be taken notice of is as followeth. *Obſ.* 1. That amongſt all the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, we meet not with any ſo extraordinary, either for Faith or Obedience, as St. *Peter*. He was an early Profeſſor, St. *Mat.* 4. 18. and a glorious Confeſſor, St. *Mat.* 16. 16. *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the Living God.* Which Confeſſion of his Faith, like a Rock, was to be the Foundation of the Goſpel Church in all Ages; and Chriſt was pleaſed to put that Honour upon *Peter*, as to uſe his Miniſtry, in firſt laying the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church among Jews and Gentiles, he being the firſt Preacher to them of that Faith which he did here confeſs. To the Jews, *Acts* 2. where we read of 3000 Souls Converted and Baptized; and to the Gentiles, *Acts* 10. in the Converſion of *Cornelius* and his Friends, whom God directed to ſend; not to *Jeruſalem* for *James*, nor to *Damaſcus* for St. *Paul*, but to *Joppa* for *Peter*; whom Chriſt had appointed for that Work, that he might tell him Words by *which he and his whole Houſhold ſhould be ſaved*. *Obſ.* 2. The great and mighty Courage which was found in St. *Peter*, 1. At the Command of Chriſt he adventures to walk on the Waves of the Sea, *Matth.* 14. 28. being firmly perſwaded that whatſoever Chriſt commanded his Diſciples to do, he would give them Strength and Ability to perform. And, 2. It was a noble Courage which enabled him to ſay, *Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*. No doubt the good Man really reſolved to do as he ſaid, little ſuſpecting that he ſhould, with horrid Oaths, and bitter Imprecations, deny and abjure his dying Maſter. Lord! How prone are we to think our Hearts better than they are! Our Grace ſtronger than it is! Not all the Inſtances we have of Humane Frailty in our ſelves, nor all the Scars, Marks and Wounds, upon ſome of the beſt and holieſt of Men, by reaſon of their ſad and ſhameful Falls, will ſufficiently convince us of our wretched Impotency, and how unable we are to do Good, or reſiſt Evil, by our own ſhatter'd and impaired Strength. 3. An undaunted Courage, and Heroick Greatneſs of Mind, appeared in this Apoſtle, when he told the Jews to their Faces that they were guilty of Murder, and muſt never expect Salvation any other Way, than by Faith in that Jeſus whom they had ignominiouſly Crucified, and unjuſtly Slain. Nor did St. *Peter* ſay this in a Corner, or behind the Curtain, but in the Sanhedrim, that open Court of Judicature, which had ſo lately Sentenced and Condemned his Lord and Maſter. *Obſ.* 3. St. *Peter*'s profound Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind; it was a mighty Honour that Chriſt put upon him, in making uſe of his Miniſtry for laying the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church, both amongſt Jews and Gentiles. And accordingly *Cornelius*, *Act.* 10. would have entertained him with Expreſſions of more than ordinary Honour and Veneration, falling down at his Feet, and ready to adore him; but this humble Apoſtle was ſo far from complying with it, that he plainly told him that he was no other than ſuch a Man as himſelf. And when our Lord, by a ſtupendious Act of Condeſcenſion, ſtoop'd ſo low as to waſh his Diſciples Feet, St. *Peter* could by no Means be perſwaded to admit of it, neither could be induced perſonally to accept it, till Chriſt was in a ſort forced to threaten him into Obedience, and a Compliance with it, St. *John* 13. 8. *Obſ.* How admirable was his Love unto, and how burning his Zeal for his Lord and Maſter, inſomuch that he could and did appeal to his Omniſciency for the Truth and Sincerity of it; *Lord, Thou knoweſt all Things, thou knoweſt that I love thee*. A love that cauſed him to draw his Sword in his Maſter's Defence againſt a Band of Soldiers, and an armed Multitude. 'Twas Love that cauſed him to adventure on the greateſt Difficulties, and to expoſe his Life to the greateſt Hazards. 'Twas Love that cauſed him engage ſo deep, as to ſuffer and die, rather than deny him. Theſe were his Exemplary Vertues; his Failings were theſe: *Firſt*, Too great a Confidence of his own Strength, notwithſtanding Chriſt had particularly told him that Satan had deſired to winnow him as Wheat. None are ſo likely to be overcome by Temptation as thoſe that are leaſt afraid of it; none ſo ready to fall as thoſe that think it impoſſible to fall. It is a dangerous thing to believe, that becauſe we have long kept our Innocence, we can never loſe it; and to conclude, becauſe we have been once or twice victorious over Temptations, we muſt be ever Conquerors. 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*; that is, let him keep a jealous Eye upon the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of his Nature, and with a believing Eye look up to the Power and Promiſe of God, that he may be preſerved from falling, and preſented faultleſs in the Day of Chriſt. *Secondly*, His Fears overcame his Faith. The Inſolent Affronts offered to his injured Maſter cauſed him to forget his former Reſolutions, and inſtead of being a valiant Confeſſor, he turns a ſhameful Renegado, renouncing him, for whom a little before he reſolved to die. *Learn* hence, That ſlaviſh Fear is a moſt tumultuous and ungovernable Paſſion; its powerful Aſſaults not only vanquiſh the ſtrongeſt Reaſon, but ſometimes overcome the ſtrongeſt Faith. 'Tis a Weapon which the Tempter uſes, to the Diſcomfort of ſome, and Deſtruction of others, and therefore ought to be guarded againſt by thoſe who ſet any Value on the Peace and Comfort of their Souls. *Thirdly*, One Sin drew on another; his ſinful Equivocation, in ſaying, *I know not the Man*, prepared him for a downright Denial, and that for an Abjuration of him, with an Imprecation, and an Anathema, ſwearing that he knew not the Man! Ah *Peter*, is this thy owning thy Lord? Is this thy not being offended tho' all ſhould be offended? Is this thy dying with him, rather than deny him? What, haſt thou forgot all thy Promiſes and Engagements to him, and all the dear and ſweet Pledges of his Love, ſo lately ſhewn to thee? Surely I have learnt from thy Example, that it is as dangerous to truſt an Heart of Fleſh, as to rely upon an Arm of Fleſh; for had not thy denied and forſaken Maſter prayed for thee, and timely ſuccour'd thee, Satan would not only have winnowed thee like Wheat, but ground thee to Pouder. *Fourthly*, Obſerve how many complicated Sins were included in this Sin of *Peter*'s. The higheſt Ingratitude to his Maſter, unpardonable Raſhneſs, in venturing into ſuch Company, tarrying there ſo long, and, without a Call, making bold with a Temptation; and for a time there was Impenitence and Hardneſs of Heart. It is holy and ſafe to reſiſt the Beginnings of Sin; if we yield to Satan in one Temptation, he will certainly aſſault us with more and ſtronger. *Peter* proceeded here from a Denial to a Lie, from a Lie to an Oath, from an Oath to a Curſe. Let us reſiſt Sin at firſt, for then have we moſt Power, and Sin has leaſt. *And the Lord looked on* Peter, *and* Peter *remembred the Word of the Lord, and went out, and wept bitterly*. *Obſerve*, If Chriſt not looked towards *Peter*, *Peter* would never more have looked after Chriſt; nor was it barely the Turn of Chriſt's Bodily Eye that brought this Diſciple to a ſorrowful Remembrance of his Sin; had not this outward Look been accompanied with the inward and ſecret Influences of his Spirit, it had certainly proved ineffectual. Chriſt look'd on *Judas* after his Treaſon; ay, and reproved him too; but neither that Look, nor that Reproof, did break his Heart. As the Sun with the ſame Beams ſoftens Wax and hardens Clay, ſo a Look from the ſame Chriſt leaves *Judas* hard and impenitent, and melts down *Peter* into Tears. Tho' none can ſay that Tears are always a Sign of true Repentance, yet certainly when they flow from an Heart duly ſenſible of Sin, and deeply affected with Sorrow, it adminiſters Matter of Hope that there is ſincere Repentance. *Peter*, after he had wept bitterly for Sin, never more return'd to the After-commiſſion of Sin; but he that was before timerous as an Hare, became afterwards bold as a Lion. He that once ſo ſhamefully deny'd, nay, abjur'd his Maſter, afterwards openly confeſs'd him, and ſeal'd that Confeſſion joyfully with his Blood. 'Tis uſually obſerv'd, that a broken Bone once well ſet, never more breaks again in the ſame place; a returning Backſlider, when once reſtored, contracts ſuch an Hatred of former Sins, as never, never more to run into the Commiſſion of them. Let St. *Peter*'s Fall then be a Warning to all Profeſſors againſt preſumptuous Confidence, and his Reſtauration be an Encouragement to all Backſliders to renew their Faith and Repentance. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

AND ſtraightway in the morning, the chief prieſts held a Conſultation with the elders, and ſcribes, and the whole council, and bound Jeſus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

The foregoing Chapter gave us an Account of *Judas* his Treaſon, in delivering our Saviour into the Hands of the Chief Prieſts. In this Chapter we find our Holy Lord brought by the Chief Prieſts unto *Pontius Pilate* the Roman Governour, in order to his Condemnation. Whence *Obſerve*, That it has been the old Policy of Corrupt Church-Governours to abuſe the Power of the Civil Magiſtrates, in executing their cruel and unjuſt Cenſures and Sentences upon holy and innocent Perſons. The Chief Prieſt and Elders do not kill our Saviour themſelves, (for it was not lawful for them to put any Man to Death, being themſelves under the Power of the Roman Government) accordingly they deliver Chriſt over to the Secular Power, and deſire *Pilate*, the Civil Magiſtrate, to Sentence and Condemn him.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt it. 3 And the chief prieſts accuſed him of many things: but he anſwered nothing. 4 And Pilate asked him again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? behold how many things they witneſs againſt thee. 5 But Jeſus anſwered nothing; ſo that Pilate marvelled.

It is very *Obſervable* how readily our Saviour anſwers before *Pilate*; *Pilate* ſaid, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* Jeſus anſwered, *Thou ſayeſt it*; or it is as thou ſayeſt. But to all the Accuſations of the Chief Prieſts, and to all that they falſly laid to his Charge before *Pilate*, our Saviour anſwered never a Word; he anſwered *Pilate*, but would not anſwer the Chief Prieſts a Word before *Pilate*; probably for theſe Reaſons, becauſe his Innocency was ſuch as needed no Apology; becauſe their Calumnies and Accuſations were ſo notoriouſly falſe, that they needed no Confutation; to ſhew his Contempt of Death, and to teach us by his Example to deſpiſe the falſe Accuſations of malicious Men, and to learn us Patience and Submiſſion, when for his Sake we are ſlandered and traduced; for theſe Reaſons our Saviour was as a deaf Man, not anſwering the Calumnies of the Chief Prieſts; but when *Pilate* asks him a Queſtion, which our Saviour knew that a direct Anſwer too would coſt him his Life, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* He replies, *I am.* Hence, ſays the Apoſtles, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. That *Jeſus Chriſt before* Pontius Pilate *witneſſed a good Confeſſion.* Teaching us, That although we may, and ſometimes ought to hold our Peace when our Reputation is concerned, yet muſt we never be ſilent when the Honour of God, and his Truth, may effectually be promoted by a free and a full Confeſſion: *For*, ſays Chriſt, *whoever denies me before Men, him will I deny in the Preſence of my Father, and before all his Holy Angels.*

6 Now at that feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner, whomſoever they deſired. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made inſurrection with him, who had committed murder in the inſurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud, began to deſire him to do as he had ever done unto them. 9 But Pilate anſwered them, ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the king of the Jews? 10 (For he knew that the chief prieſts had delivered him for envy.) 11 But the chief prieſts moved the people, that he ſhould rather releaſe Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate anſwered, and ſaid again unto them, What will ye then that I ſhall do unto him whom ye call the king of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucifie him. 14 Then Pilate ſaid unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? and they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucifie him. 15 And ſo Pilate willing to content the people, releaſed Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jeſus, when he had ſcourged him, to be crucified.

Now *at the Feaſt*; that is, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, which by way of Eminency is called the *Feaſt*, the Governour uſed to Releaſe a Priſoner; (poſſibly by way of Memorial of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*) accordingly *Pilate* makes a Motion that Chriſt may be the Priſoner ſet at Liberty in Honour of their Feaſt; for he was ſenſible that what they did was out of Envy and Malice. *Obſerve* here, 1. What were the Sins which immediately occaſioned the Death of Chriſt; they were Covetouſneſs and Envy. Covetouſneſs cauſed *Judas* to Sell him to the Chief Prieſts, and Envy cauſed the Chief Prieſts to deliver him up to *Pilate* to Crucifie him. Envy is a killing and murthering Paſſion; *Envy ſlayeth the ſilly one*, Job 5. 2. That is, it ſlayeth the ſilly Perſon who harbours this peſtilent Luſt in his Breaſt and Boſom; being like a Fine in his Bones, continually preying upon his Spirits; and it is alſo the Occaſion of ſlaying many an holy and innocent Perſon; for who can ſtand before Envy? The Perſon envying wiſhes the envied out of the Way, yea, out of the World; and if need be, will not only wiſh it, but lend a Lift upon occaſion towards it alſo. Witneſs the Chief Prieſts here, whoſe Envy was ſo conſpicuous and barefaced, that *Pilate* himſelf takes notice of it; he knew that the Chief Prieſts had delivered him for Envy. *Obſerve* 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling, *Pilate* was to be the Inſtrument of our Saviour's Death. One while he expoſtulates with the Chief Prieſts, ſaying, *What Evil hath he done!* Another while he bids them, *Take him, and judge him according to their Law.* Nay, St. *Luke* ſays, that *Pilate* came forth Three ſeveral times, profeſſing, *That he found no Fault in him*, Luke 23. From hence *Note*, That Hypocrites within the Viſible Church may be guilty of ſuch Tremendous Acts of Wickedneſs, as the Conſciences of Infidels and Pagans without the Church may boggle at, and proteſt againſt. *Pilate*, a Pagan, abſolves Chriſt, whilſt the hypocritical Jews, that heard his Doctrine, and ſaw his Miracles, do condemn him. *Obſerve* laſtly, How *Pilate* ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the Jews Importunity, and contrary to the Light of his own Reaſon and Judgment delivers the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, firſt to be Scourged, and then Crucified. It is a vain Apology for Sin, when Perſons pretend that they were not committed with their own Conſent, but at the Inſtigation and Importunity of others; ſuch is the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, that none can make him either Wicked or Miſerable without his own Conſent. *Pilate*, willing to content the People, *when he had ſcourged Jeſus delivered him to be crucified.* Here *Obſerve*, That as the Death of the Croſs was a Roman Puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the Romans, firſt to whip their Malefactors, and then Crucifie them. Now the manner of the Roman ſcourging is ſaid to be thus: They ſtript the condemned Perſon, and bound him to a Poſt; Two ſtrong Men firſt ſcourged him with Rods of Thorns, then Two others ſcourged him with Whips of Cords full of Knots, and laſt of all Two more with Whips of Wyre, and therewith tore off the very Fleſh and Skin from the Malefactor's Back and Sides. That our Bleſſed Saviour was thus cruelly ſcourged by *Pilate*'s Command ſeems to ſome not improbable from that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 129. 3. *The Ploughers ploughed upon my Back, and made long Furrows*; which if ſpoken prophetically of Chriſt, was literally fulfilled in the Day of his Scourging. But why was the Precious and Tender Body of our Holy Lord thus galled, rent and torn, with ſcourging? Doubtleſs to fulfil that Prophecy, *Iſa.* 50. 6. *I gave my Back to the Smiters, and my Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, that by his Stripes we might be healed.* And from his Example *Learn* not to think it ſtrange if we find our ſelves ſcourged with Tongue, with Hand, or with both, when we ſee our Dear Redeemer bleeding by Stripes and Scourges before our Eyes.

16 And the ſoldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. 17 And they cloathed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, 18 And began to ſalute him, Hail king of the Jews. 19 And they ſmote him on the head with a reed, and did ſpit upon him, and bowing their knees, worſhipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own cloaths on him, and led him out to crucifie him.

The next Part of our Saviour's Sufferings conſiſted of cruel Mockings; he had owned himſelf to be the King of the Jews; that is, a Spiritual King in and over his Church; but the Jews expecting that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in the Pomp of an Earthly Prince, and finding themſelves diſappointed of their Expectation in our Saviour, they look upon him as a Deceiver and Impoſtor; and accordingly treat him as a Mock-king, with all the Marks of Deriſion and Scorn; for firſt, they put a Crown upon his Head, but a very ignominious and painful one, *a Crown of Thorns*; they place a Scepter in his Hand, but that of a *Reed*; a *Robe of Scarlet* or *Purple* upon his Body; and then *bowed their Knees unto him*, as they were wont to do before their Princes, crying, *Hail King*. Thus were all the Marks of Scorn imaginable put upon our Dear Redeemer; yet what they did in jeſt, God permitted to be done in earneſt, for all theſe things were Signs and Marks of Sovereignty;

and Almighty God cauſed the Regal Dignity of his Son to ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt Abaſement; whence was all this Jeering and Sport, but to flout Majeſty? And why did Chriſt undergo all this Ignominy, Diſgrace and Shame, but to ſhew what was due unto us for our Sins? As alſo to give us an Example to bear all the Scorn, Reproach and Shame, imaginable for his Sake, *who for the Joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the Shame, as well as endured the Croſs.*

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who paſſed by, coming out of the countrey, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his croſs. 22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull. 23 And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, caſting lots upon them, what every Man ſhould take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the ſuperſcription of his Accuſation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 And with him they crucifie two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, And he was numbered with the Tranſgreſſors. 29 And they that paſſed by, railed on him, wagging their heads, and ſaying, Ah, thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt it in three days, 30 Save thy ſelf, and come down from the croſs. 31 Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking, ſaid among themſelves, with the Scribes, he ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. 32 Let Chriſt the king of Iſrael deſcend now from the croſs, that we may ſee and believe. And they that were crucified with him, reviled him. 33 And when the ſixth hour was come, there was darkneſs over the whole land, until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour, Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eloi, Eloi, lama ſabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 35 And ſome of them that ſtood by, when they heard it, ſaid, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36 And one ran, and filled a ſpunge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, ſaying, Let alone; let us ſee whether Elias will come to take him down. 37 And Jeſus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt.

The Sentence of Death being paſt by *Pilate*, who can, with dry Eyes, behold the ſad Pomp of our Saviour's Bloody Execution? Forth comes the Bleſſed Jeſus out of *Pilate*'s Gate, bearing that Croſs which ſoon after was to bear him; with his Croſs on his Shoulder he marches towards *Golgotha*; and when they ſee he can go no faſter, they force *Simon* the *Cyrenian*, not out of Compaſſion, but Indignation, to be the Porter of his Croſs. This *Cyrenian being a Gentile*, not a *Jew*, that bare our Saviour's Croſs, thereby might be ſignified that the *Gentiles* ſhould have a Part in Chriſt, as well as the *Jews*, and be Sharers with them in the Benefits of the Croſs. At length our Holy Lord comes to *Golgotha*, the Place of his bitter and bloody Execution; here, in a publick Place, with infamous Company, betwixt Two Thieves, is he Crucified; that is, faſtned to a great Croſs of Wood, his Hands ſtretched forth abroad, and his Feet cloſed together, and both Hands and Feet faſtned with Nails; his Naked Body was lifted up in the open Air, hanging betwixt Heaven and Earth; ſignifying thereby, that the Crucified Perſon deſerved to live in neither. This ſhameful, painful and accurſed Death did the Holy and Innocent Jeſus ſuffer and undergo for ſhameleſs Sinners. Some obſerve all the Dimenſions of Length, Breadth and Depth, and Height, in our Saviour's Sufferings; for Length, his Paſſion was ſeveral Hours long, from Twelve to Three, expoſed all that Time both to Hunger and Cold. The Thieves that were Crucified with him endured only perſonal Pains, but he underwent the Miſeries of all Mankind. As to its Breadth, his Paſſion extended over all the Powers and Parts of his Soul and Body; no Part free but his Tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his Enemies. His Sight was tormented with the ſcornful Geſtures of thoſe *who paſſed by, wagging their Heads*; his Hearing grieved with the Taunts and Jeers of the Prieſts and People; his Smelling offended with noiſome Savours in the Place of Skulls; his Taſte with the Gall and Vinegar given him to drink; his Feeling was wonderfully affected by the Nails which pierced his tender Nerves with a Multiplicity of Wounds. And for the Depth of his Paſſion it was as deep as Hell it ſelf; enduring Tortures in his Soul, as well as Torments in his Body; groaning under the Burthen of Deſertion, and crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Laſtly, for the Height of his Paſſion, his Sufferings were as high as Heaven; his Perſon being Infinite as well as Innocent, no leſs than the Son of God, which adds infinite Worth and Value to his Sufferings. Lord! *Let us be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the Breadth and Length, Depth and Heighth of our Saviour's Love* in ſuffering for us, *and let us know that Love of his which paſſeth Knowledge.* *Obſerve* next, The Inſcription wrote by *Pilate* over our ſuffering Saviour, *This is Jeſus the King of the Jews*; it was the manner of the *Romans* when they Crucified a Malefactor to publiſh the Cauſe of his Death in Capital Letters, placed over the Head of the Perſon. Now it is obſervable, how wonderfully the Wiſdom of God over-ruled the Heart and Pen of *Pilate* to draw his Title, which was truly honourable, and fix it to his Croſs: *Pilate* is Chriſt's Herald, and proclaims him *King of the Jews*. *Learn* hence, That the Regal Dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an Enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt Sufferings and Reproaches; *Pilate* without his own Knowledge, did our Saviour an Eminent Piece of Service; he did that for Chriſt which none of his own Diſciples durſt do; not that he did it deſignedly, but from the ſpecial over-ruling Providence of God; no Thanks to *Pilate* for all this, becauſe the higheſt Services performed to Chriſt undeſignedly ſhall neither be accepted nor rewarded by God. *Obſerve* farther, The ſeveral Aggravations of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs. 1. From the Company he ſuffered with, *Two Thieves*; it had been a ſufficient Diſparagement to our Bleſſed Saviour to have been ſorted with the beſt of Men; but to be numbred with the Scum of Mankind is ſuch an Indignity as confounds our Thoughts. This was deſigned by the *Jews* to Diſhonour and Diſgrace our Saviour the more, and to perſwade the World that he was the greateſt of Offenders; but God over-ruled this alſo, for fulfilling an Ancient Prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, *Iſa.* 53. laſt *Ver. And he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors.* 2. Another Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs, was the Scorn and Mocking Deriſion which he met with in his dying Moments, both from the Common People, from the Chief Prieſts, and from the Thieves that ſuffered with him. The Common People *reviled him, wagging their Heads*; the Chief Prieſts, though Men of Age and Gravity, yet barbarouſly mock him in his Miſery; and not only ſo, but they Atheiſtically ſcoff and jeer at his Faith and Affiance in God; ſaying, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he would have him.* Where *Note*, That Perſecutors are generally Atheiſtical Scoffers; the Chief Prieſts and Elders, tho' knowing Men, yet they blaſpheme God; they mock at his Power, and deride his Providence, which is as bad as to deny his Being; ſo that from hence we may gather, That thoſe who Adminiſter to God in Holy Things by way of Office, if they be not the beſt, they are the worſt of Men. No ſuch bitter Enemies to the Power of Godlineſs as the Miniſters of Religion, who were never acquainted with the Efficacy and Power of it upon their own Hearts and Lives. Nothing on this ſide Hell is worſe than a wicked Prieſt, a Miniſter of God devoted to the Service of the Devil. A Third Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs was this, That the Thieves that ſuffered with him reviled him with the reſt, that is, one of them, as St. *Luke* has it; or perhaps both of them might do it at firſt; which if ſo, encreaſes the Wonder of the penitent Thief's Converſion. From the impenitent Thief's reviling Chriſt, we *Learn*, That neither Shame nor Pain will change the Mind of a reſolute Sinner, but even then when he is in the Suburbs of Hell will he blaſpheme. *They that were crucified with him, reviled him*; but the moſt aggravating Circumſtance of all the reſt in our Lord's Sufferings was this, that he was forſaken of his Father; *My God, my God,* *why haſt thou forſaken me?* Thence *Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt when ſuffering for our Sins was really deſerted and forſaken by his Father, and left deſtitute of all ſenſible Conſolation; *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* *Learn* farther, That under this Deſertion Chriſt deſpaired not, but ſtill retained a firm Perſwaſion of God's Love unto him, and experienced neceſſary Supports from him; *My God, my God*, theſe are Words of Affiance and Faith. Chriſt was thus forſaken for us, that we might never be forſaken by God; yet by God's forſaking of Chriſt, we are not to underſtand any abatement of Divine Love, but only a withdrawing from the Humane Nature the Senſe of his Love, and a letting out upon his Soul a deep afflicting Senſe of his Diſpleaſure againſt Sin: There is a Twofold Deſertion, the one total, final, and eternal, by which God utterly forſakes a Perſon, both as to Grace and Glory, being for Sin wholly caſt out of God's Preſence, and adjudged to Eternal Torments. This Chriſt was not capable of, nor could the Dignity of his Perſon admit it: The other is a partial, temporary Deſertion, when God, for a little Moment, hides his Face from his Children. Now this was both agreeable to Chriſt's Nature, and alſo ſuitable to his Office, who was to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God for our forſaking of him, and to bring us back again to God, that we might be received for ever. *Obſerve* laſtly, What a Miraculous Evidence Chriſt gave of his Godhead, inſtantly before he gave up the Ghoſt *he cried with a loud Voice.* This ſhews that he did not die according to the ordinary Courſe of Nature, gradually drawing on, as we expreſs it; but his Life was whole in him to the laſt, and Nature as ſtrong as it was at firſt. Other Men die by degrees, and towards their End their Senſe of Pain is much blunted; but Chriſt ſtood under the Pains of Death in his full ſtrength, and his Life was whole and entire in him to the very laſt Moment. This was evident by the mighty Outcry he made when he gave up the Ghoſt, contrary to the Senſe and Experience of all Perſons. Now he that could cry with ſuch a loud Voice as he did, *(in Articulo mortis)* could have kept himſelf from dying if he would. Hence we *Learn*, That when Chriſt died he rather conquered Death, than was conquered by it; he muſt voluntarily and freely lay down his Life before Death could come at him. Thus died Chriſt, the Captain of our Salvation, and, like *Sampſon*, became more Victorious by his Death, than he was in his Life.

38 And the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion which ſtood over-againſt him, ſaw that he ſo cried out, and gave up the ghoſt, he ſaid, Truly this Man was the Son of God. 40 There were alſo women looking on afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the leſs, and of Joſes, and Salome: 41 Who alſo when he was in Galilee, followed him, and miniſtred unto him; and many other women, which came up with him unto Jeruſalem.

Three Circumſtances are here *Obſervable*; 1. A ſtupendious Prodigy hapning upon the Death of our Saviour, *the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom*; the Vail was hanging which parted the moſt Holy Place from the Holy Sanctuary. By the rending of which God teſtified that he was now about to forſake his Temple; that the Ceremonial Law was now aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt, and that by the Blood of Jeſus we have acceſs unto God, and may enter into the Holy of Holies. See the Note on *Matth.* 27. 51. *Obſerve*, 2. What Influence the Manner and Circumſtances of our Saviour's Death had upon the Centurion, and the Soldiers with him; they cry out, *Verily this was the Son of God.* Where *Obſerve*, That the Heathen Soldiers are ſooner convinced of the Divinity of our Saviour, than the unbelieving Jewiſh Doctors. Obſtinacy and Unbelief filled their Minds with an invincible Prejudice againſt Chriſt, ſo that neither the Miracles wrought by him in his Life, or at his Death, could convince them that Chriſt was any thing better than an Impoſtor and Deceiver. None are ſo blind as thoſe who through malicious Obſtinacy and inveterate Prejudice will not ſee. *Obſerve*, 3. Who of Chriſt's Friends were Witneſs of his Death; they *are the Women that followed him, and miniſtred unto him*; not one of his dear Diſciples dare come near him, except St. *John*, who ſtood by the Croſs with the Virgin *Mary*. Oh! What a Shame was this for the Apoſtles to be abſent from a Spectacle upon which the Salvation of the whole World did depend? And what an Honour was this to the Female Sex in general, and to theſe holy Women in particular, that they had the Courage to follow Chriſt to his Croſs, *when all his Diſciples forſook him and fled.* God can make timerous and fearful Women bold and courageous Confeſſors of his Truth, and fortifie them againſt the Fears of his Suffering, contrary to the natural Timerouſneſs of their Temper; theſe Women wait upon Chriſt's Croſs, when Apoſtles fly, and durſt not come nigh it.

42 And now when the even was come, (becauſe it was the preparation, that is, the day before the ſabbath) 43 Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellor, which alſo waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jeſus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the Centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead? 45 And when he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the body to Joſeph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a ſepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock, and rouled a ſtone unto the door of the ſepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joſes, beheld where he was laid.

The Circumſtances of our Lord's Funeral, and honourable Interment in the Grave, are here recorded by the Evangeliſt; ſuch a Funeral as never was ſince Graves were firſt digged. Where *Obſerve*, 1. Our Lord's Body muſt be begg'd before it could be bury'd, the dead Bodies of Malefactors being in the Power and at the Diſpoſal of the Judge. *Pilate* grants it, and accordingly the dead Body is taken down, wrapped in Fine Linen, and prepared for the Sepulchre. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſon that beſtows this honourable Burial upon our Saviour, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*; a Diſciple no doubt, though he did not make a Publick and Open Profeſſion; a Worthy, though a Cloſe Diſciple. Grace doth not always make a publick and open Shew where it is; as there is much ſecret Riches in the Bowels of the Earth, which no Eye ever ſaw, ſo there is much Grace in the Hearts of ſome Chriſtians that the Eye of the World takes little Notice of. Some Gracious Perſons cannot put forward, and diſcover themſelves in Diſcourſe as others; and yet ſuch weak Chriſtians, as the World counts them, perhaps ſhall ſtand their Ground when ſtronger run away. We read of none of the Apoſtles at Chriſt's Funeral, Fear had chaſed them away, but *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* appears boldly; if God ſtrengthen the Weak, and leave the Strong to the Prevalency of their own Fears, *The Weak ſhall be as* David, *and the Strong as Tow.* *Obſerve*, 3. The Mourners that followed our Saviour's Hearſe, namely, the Women which came out of *Galilee*, and particularly the Two *Maries*; a very poor Train of Mourners; the Apoſtles were all ſcattered, and afraid to own their Lord and Maſter, either Dying or Dead. And as our Lord affected no Pomp nor Gallantry in his Life, ſo Funeral Pomp had been no way ſuitable, either to the End or Manner of his Death. Humiliation was deſigned in his Death, and his Burial was the loweſt Degree of his Humiliation, and therefore might not be pompous. *Obſerve*, 4. The Grave or Sepulchre in which our Lord was buried, it was in a Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock, in a new Sepulchre, in a Garden. 1. Our Lord was buried in a Garden. As by the Sin of the Firſt *Adam* we were driven out of the Garden of Pleaſure, the Earthly Paradiſe, ſo by the Sufferings of the Second *Adam*, who lay buried in a Garden, we may hope for Entrance into the Heavenly Paradiſe. 2. It was in a Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock, that ſo his Enemies might have no Occaſion to cavil, and ſay that his Diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret Holes, or unſeen Paſſages under Ground. 3. It was in a new Sepulchre, *in which never any Man was laid*, leſt his Adverſaries ſhould ſay it was ſome other that was riſen, who was buried there before him; or that he aroſe from the Dead by touching ſome other Corps. *Obſerve*, 5. The Manner of our Lord's Funeral, it was haſty, open, and decent; it was performed in haſte, by reaſon of the Straights of Time; the Sabbath was approaching, and they lay all Buſineſs aſide to prepare for that. *Learn* hence, How much it is our Duty to diſpatch our Worldly Buſineſs as early as we can towards the end of the Week, that we may be the better prepared to ſanctifie the Lord's Day if we live to enjoy it. Hence it is that we are called upon to remember that Day before it comes, and to ſanctifie it when it is come. Again, our Lord was buried openly, as well as haſtily; all Perſons had Liberty to be Spectators, leſt any ſhould object that there was Deceit and Fraud uſed in or about our Saviour's Burial; yet was he alſo interr'd decently, his Holy Body being wrapped in Fine Linen, and perfumed with Spices, according to the Jewiſh Cuſtom. *Obſerve*, 6. The Reaſons why our Lord was buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in as ſhort a time as other Men lye by the Walls; and had his dead Body remained a Thouſand Years unburied it could have ſeen no Corruption, having never been tainted with Sin. Sin is the Cauſe of the Bodies Corruption; 'tis Sin that makes our Bodies ſtink worſe than Carrion when they are dead. A Funeral then was not neceſſary for Chriſt's Body upon the ſame Accounts that it is neceſſary for ours. But, 1. Our Lord was buried, to declare the Certainty of his Death, and the Reality of his Reſurrection; and for this Reaſon did God's Providence order it, that he ſhould be Embalmed, to cut off all Pretenſions; for in this kind of Embalming, his Mouth, his Ears, and his Noſtrils, were all filled with Odours and Spices, ſo that there could be no latent Principle of Life in him; he being thus buried then, did demonſtrate him to be certainly dead. 2. Chriſt was buried to fulfil the Types and Prophecies that went before concerning him. *Jonas being Three Days and Three Nights in the Belly of the Whale*, was a Type of *Chriſts's being Three Days and Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth*; yea, the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Ch. 53. 9. declared our Lord's Funeral, and the Manner of it, long before he was Born; *he made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death*; pointing by that Expreſſion at this Tomb of *Joſeph's*, who was a rich Man, and laid him in the Tomb deſigned for himſelf. 3. He was buried to compleat his Humiliation; *They have brought me to the Duſt of Death*, ſays *David*, a Type of Chriſt. This was the loweſt Step he could poſſibly deſcend in his abaſed State; lower he could not be laid, and ſo low his Bleſſed Head muſt be laid, elſe he had not been humbled to the loweſt degree of Humiliation. 4. Chriſt went into the Grave, that he might conquer Death in its own Territories and Dominions. His Victory over the Grave cauſes his Saints to Triumph and Sing, *Oh Grave, where is thy Deſtruction?* Our dear Redeemer has perfumed the Bed of the Grave by his own lying in it, ſo that a Pillow of Down is not ſo ſoft to a Believer's Head as a Pillow of Duſt. *Obſerve* Laſtly, Of what Uſe the Doctrine of our Lord's Burial may be unto us his Diſciples and Followers. 1. For Inſtruction. Here we ſee the amazing Depths of our Lord's Humiliation, from what, and to what, his Love brought him; even from the Boſom of his Father, to the Boſom of the Grave: Oh how doth the Depth of his Humiliation ſhew us the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction, and therewith the Heinouſneſs of our Tranſgreſſion! 2. For Conſolation againſt the Fears of Death, and the Grave; the Grave received Chriſt, but could not retain him; Death ſwallowed him up, as the Fiſh did *Jonas*, but quickly vomited him up again; and ſo ſhall it fare with Chriſt Myſtical, as it did with Chriſt Perſonal: As it was done to the Head, ſo ſhall it be done to the Members; the Grave could not long keep him, it ſhall not always keep us; as his Body reſted in Hope, ſo ſhall ours alſo; and although we ſee Corruption, yet ſhall we not always lye under the Power of Corruption. In ſhort, Chriſt's lying in the Grave has changed and alter'd the Nature of the Grave; it was a Priſon before, a Bed of Reſt now; a loathſome Grave before, a perfumed Bed now; he whoſe Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his Feet into the Grave; *Awake, and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the Duſt*, for the Enmity of the Grave is ſlain by Chriſt. 3. For our Imitation: Let us Study and Endeavour to be buried with Chriſt, in reſpect of our Sins, I mean, *Rom*. 6. 4. *Buried with him into Death*. Our Sins ſhould be as a dead Body in ſeveral Reſpects. Are dead Bodies removed out of the Society of Men? So ſhould our Sins be removed far from us. Do dead Bodies in the Grave ſpend and conſume by degrees? So ſhould our Sins daily. Will dead Bodies grow every Day more and more loathſome to others? So ſhould our Sins be to our ſelves. Do dead Bodies wax out of Memory, and are quite forgotten? So ſhould our Sins alſo, in reſpect of any Delight that we take in the remembring of them; we ſhould always remember our Sins to our Humiliation, but never think or ſpeak of them with the leaſt Delight or Satisfaction; for this in God's Account is a new Commiſſion of them, and lays us under an aggravated Guilt and Condemnation.

CHAP. XVI.

This laſt Chapter of St. Mark*'s Goſpel contains the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and gives us an Account of what he did upon Earth, between the Time of his Triumphant Reſurrection, and Glorious Aſcenſion.*

AND when the ſabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought ſweet ſpices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning, the firſt day of the week, they came unto the ſepulchre at the riſing of the ſun.

The Lord of Life was buried on the *Friday*, in the Evening of that Day on which he was crucified, and his Holy Body reſted in the ſilent Grave all the next Day, and ſome part of the Day following. Thus roſe he again the Third Day, neither ſooner, nor later; not ſooner, leſt the Truth of his Death ſhould have been queſtioned, that he did not die at all; and not later, leſt the Faith of his Diſciples ſhould have failed. Accordingly when the Sabbath was paſt, *Mary Magdalene* getting the other Women together, ſhe and they ſet out before Day to viſit the Holy Sepulchre; and about Sun-riſing they get to it, intending with their Spices and Odours farther to embalm their Lord's Body. Here *Obſerve*, 1. That altho' the Hearts of theſe Holy Women did burn with an ardent Zeal and Affection to their crucified Lord, yet the commanded Duties of the Sabbath are not omitted by them; they keep cloſe, and ſilently ſpend that Holy Day in a Mixture of Grief and Hope. A good Pattern of Sabbath-Sanctification, and worthy of our Chriſtian Imitation. *Obſerve*, 2. Theſe Holy Women go, but not empty-handed: She that had beſtowed a coſtly Alabaſter Box of Ointment upon Chriſt whilſt alive, has prepared no leſs Precious Odours for him now dead; thereby paying their laſt Homage to our Saviour's Corps. But what need of Odours to perfume a Body which could not ſee Corruption! True, his Holy Body did not want them, but the Love and Affection of his Friends could not withhold them. *Obſerve*, 3. How great a Tribute of Reſpect and Honour is due and payable to the Memory of theſe Holy Women for their great Magnanimity and Courage; they followed Chriſt when his cowardly Diſciples left him; they accompanied him to his Croſs, they followed his Hearſe to the Grave, when his Diſciples durſt not appear; and now, very early in the Morning, they go to viſit his Sepulchre, fearing neither the Darkneſs of the Night, nor the Preſence of the Watchmen. *Learn* hence, That Courage is the ſpecial Gift of God; and if he gives it to the feebler Sex, even to timerous and fearful Women, it is not in the Power of Men to make them afraid.

3 And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roul us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre? 4 (And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rouled away) for it was very great. 5 And entring into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man ſitting on the right ſide, cloathed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is riſen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his diſciples, and Peter, that he goeth beſore you into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither ſaid they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Obſerve here, 1. With what Pomp and Triumph doth our Lord ariſe; an Angel is ſent from Heaven to roul away the Stone; but could not Chriſt have riſen without the Angel's Help? Yes doubtleſs; he that raiſed himſelf, could ſurely have rouled away the Stone; but God thinks fit to ſend an Officer from Heaven to open the Priſon Door of the Grave, and by ſetting our Surety at Liberty, proclaims our Debt to the Divine Juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit that the Angels who had been Witneſſes of our Saviour's Paſſion, ſhould alſo be Witneſſes of his Reſurrection. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Lord's Reſurrection declared, *He is riſen, he is not here.* Almighty God never intended that the Darling of his Soul ſhould be left in an obſcure Sepulchre; *He is not here*, ſaid the Angel, where you laid him, where you left him. Death has loſt its Prey, and the Grave has loſt its Priſoner. *Obſerve*, 3. It is not ſaid, He is not here, for he is raiſed, but *he is riſen.* The Word imports the Active Power of Chriſt, or the Self-quickning Principle by which Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the Dead, *Acts* 1. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf alive after his Paſſion.* Hence *Learn*, That it was the Divine Nature, or Godhead of Chriſt, which raiſed the Humane Nature from Death to Life; others were raiſed from the Grave by Chriſt's Power, but he raiſed himſelf by his own Power. *Obſerve*, 4. The Teſtimony or Witneſs given of our Lord's Reſurrection; that of an Angel in Humane Shape, *A young Man cloathed in a long white Garment.* But why is an Angel the firſt Publiſher of our Saviour's Reſurrection? Surely the Dignity of our Lord's Perſon, and the Excellency of his Reſurrection, required that it ſhould be thus publiſhed: How very ſerviceable and officious the Holy Angels were in attending upon our Saviour in the Days of his Fleſh, ſee in the Note on *Mat.* 28. 6, 7. *Obſerve*, 5. The Perſons to whom our Lord's Reſurrection was firſt declared and made known, to Women, to the Two *Maries.* But why to Women? And why to theſe Women? Why to Women? Becauſe God will make choice of weak Means for producing great Effects; knowing that the Weakneſs of the Inſtrument redounds to the greater Honour of the Agent. In the whole Diſpenſation of the Goſpel God intermixes Divine Power with Humane Weakneſs. Thus the Conception of Chriſt was by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, but his Mother a poor Woman, a Carpenter's Spouſe; ſo the Crucifixion of Chriſt was in much Meanneſs and outward Baſeneſs, being crucified between Two Thieves. But the Powers of Heaven and Earth trembling, the Rocks rending, the Graves opening, ſhewed a Mixture of Divine Power. Thus here, God will honour what Inſtruments he pleaſes for the Accompliſhment of his own Purpoſes; but why to theſe Women, the Two *Maries*, is the firſt Diſcovery made of our Saviour's Reſurrection? Poſſibly it was a Reward for their Magnanimity and Maſculine Courage; theſe Women cleave to Chriſt when the Apoſtles forſook him; they aſſiſted at his Croſs, they attended at his Funeral, they waited at his Sepulchre; theſe Women had more Courage than the Apoſtles, therefore God makes them Apoſtles to the Apoſtles. This was a tacite Rebuke, a ſecret Check given to the Apoſtles, that they ſhould be thus outdone by Women; theſe Holy Women went before the Apoſtles in the laſt Services that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the Apoſtles here come after them in their Rewards and Comforts. *Obſ.* 6. The Evidence which the Angel offers to the Women to evince and prove the Verity and Certainty of our Saviour's Reſurrection, namely, by an Appeal to their Senſes, *Behold the Place where they laid him*; the Senſes, when rightly diſpoſed, are the proper Judges of all ſenſible Objects, and accordingly Chriſt himſelf did appeal to his Diſciples Senſes concerning the Truth of his own Reſurrection, *Behold my Hands, and my Feet, that it is I my ſelf*; and indeed if we muſt not believe our Senſes, we ſhall want the beſt External Evidence for the Proof of the Certainty and Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; *namely*, the Miracles wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles: For what Aſſurance can we have of the Reality of thoſe Miracles but from our Senſes? Therefore ſays our Saviour, *if ye believe not me, yet believe the Works that I do*; that is, the Miracles which I have wrought before your Eyes. Now as my Senſes tell me that Chriſt's Miracles were true, ſo they aſſure me that the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is falſe. From the whole, *Note*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the Omnipotent Power of his Godhead, revived and roſe again from the Dead the Third Day, to the Terror and Conſternation of his Enemies, and the unſpeakable Joy and Conſolation of Believers. *Obſerve* laſtly, The quick Diſpatch made of the joyful News of our Lord's Reſurrection to the ſorrowful Diſciples, *Go tell the Diſciples*, ſays the Angel, *Go tell my Brethren*, ſays Chriſt, *Matth.* 28. 10. Chriſt might have ſaid, Go tell thoſe Apoſtate Apoſtles that cowardly left me in my Danger, that durſt not own me in the High Prieſt's Hall, that durſt not come within the ſhadow of my Croſs, nor within ſight of my Sepulchre; not a word of this by way of upbraiding them for their late ſhameful Cowardize, but all Words of Kindneſs; *Go tell my Brethren.* Where *Note*, That Chriſt calls them Brethren after his Reſurrection and Exaltation, thereby ſhewing that the Change of his Condition had wrought no Change in his Affection towards his poor Diſciples, but thoſe that were his Brethren before in the Time of his Abaſement, are ſo ſtill after his Exaltation and Advancement; *Go tell my Brethren*, ſays Chriſt, *Go tell my Diſciples and Peter*, ſays the Angel. Where *Note*, That St. *Peter* is here particularly named; not becauſe of his Primacy and Superiority over the reſt of the Apoſtles, as the Church of *Rome* would have it, but becauſe he had denied Chriſt, and for that Denial was ſwallowed up with Sorrow, and ſtood moſt in need of Comfort; therefore ſays Chriſt by the Angel, ſpeak particularly to *Peter*, be ſure that his ſad Heart be comforted with this joyful News, that he may know that I am Friends with him, notwithſtanding his late Cowardice; *Tell the Diſciples and* Peter *that he goeth before you into* Galilee; but why into *Galilee*? Becauſe *Jeruſalem* was now a forſaken Place, a People abandoned to Deſtruction; but *Galilee* was a Place where Chriſt's Miniſtry was more acceptable. Such Places ſhall be moſt honoured with Chriſt's Preſence where his Goſpel is moſt accepted.

9 Now when Jeſus was riſen early the firſt day of
the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out
of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. 10 And ſhe went
and told them that had been with him, as they
mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had
heard that he was alive, and had been ſeen of her,
believed not. 12 After that, he appeared in another
form unto two of them, as they walked, and went
into the country. 13 And they went and told it unto the reſidue: neither believed they them. 14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they ſat at
meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and
hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them
which had ſeen him after he was riſen.

An Account is here given of a Threefold Appearance of Chriſt after his Reſurrection. 1. To *Mary Magdalene*, not to the Virgin *Mary*; and it is obſervable that our Bleſſed Saviour, after his Reſurrection, Firſt appeared to *Mary Magdalene*, a grievous Sinner, for the Comfort of all true Penitents. *Mary* goes immediately to his Diſciples, whom ſhe finds weeping and mourning, and tells them, *She had ſeen the Lord, that they believed her not.* The Second Appearance was to the Two Diſciples going into the Countrey; that is, into the Village of *Emaus*; as they were in the Way, Jeſus joineth himſelf to their Company, *but their Eyes were holden* by the Power of God that they did not diſcern him in his own proper Shape, but apprehended him to be another Perſon whom they converſed with. His Third Appearance was *to the Eleven as they ſat at Meat, whom he upbraids with their Unbelief*; and to convince them effectually that he was riſen from the Dead, *he eats with them a piece of broiled Fiſh, and of an Honey-Comb.* Not that he needed it, being he was now become Immortal, but to aſſure them he had ſtill the ſame Body. From the whole, *Note*, How induſtriouſly our Lord endeavours to confirm his Diſciples Faith in the Doctrine of his Reſurrection: So ſlack and backward they were to believe that the Meſſiah was riſen again from the Dead, that all the Predictions of Scripture, all the Aſſurances they had received from our Saviour's Mouth, yea, all the Appearances of our Saviour to them, after he was actually riſen from the Dead, were little enough to confirm and eſtabliſh them in the certain Belief that he was riſen from the Dead.

15 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world,
and preach the goſpel to every creature. 16 He that
believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that
believeth not, ſhall be damned.

Here our Saviour gives Commiſſion to his Diſciples to congregate and gather a Chriſtian Church out of all Nations, *to go forth and preach the Goſpel to every Creature*; that is, to all reaſonable Creatures that are capable of it; not to the *Jews* only, but to the Gentiles alſo, without any diſtinction of Country, Age or Sex, whatſoever. *Learn* thence, That the Apoſtles and Firſt Planters of the Goſpel had a Commiſſion from Chriſt to go amongſt the Pagan Gentiles, without Limitation or Diſtinction, to inſtruct them in the Saving Myſteries of the Goſpel. The Second Branch of their Commiſſion was to Baptize. Where obſerve the encouraging Promiſe made by Chriſt, *He* *that Believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be Saved*; that is, he that receiveth and embraceth the Goſpel preached by you, and thereupon becomes a Proſelite and Diſciple of Chriſt, and receives Baptiſm, the Seal of the new Covenant, ſhall for all his former Sins receive Pardon, and upon his Perſeverance obtain Eternal Life, but he that ſtands out Obſtinately and Impenitently ſhall certainly be damned. The Two damning Sins under the Goſpel are Infidelity and Hypocriſie; not receiving Chriſt for Lord and Saviour by ſome, or doing this feignedly by others. Happy are they in whom the preaching of the Goſpel produces ſuch a Faith as is the Parent and Principle of Obedience; *He that ſo Believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be Saved.* Accordingly ſome Paraphraſe the Words thus, He that Believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be Saved; that is, he ſhall by Virtue of that Faith and Baptiſm be put into a State of Salvation; ſo that if he continue in that Faith, and do not wilfully recede from his Baptiſmal Covenant, he ſhall actually be Saved. *Note* farther, That they who hence conclude that Infants are not capable of Baptiſm, becauſe they cannot Believe; muſt alſo hence conclude that they cannot be Saved, becauſe they cannot Believe; for Faith is more expreſly required to Salvation than to Baptiſm. *Note* Laſtly, That tho' it be ſaid, *He that Believeth, and is Baptized, ſhall be Saved*, it is not ſaid, He that is not Baptized ſhall be Damned; becauſe it is not the Want, but the Contempt of Baptiſm that damns, otherwiſe Infants might be damn'd for their Parents Neglects.

17 And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; in my name ſhall they caſt out devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues. 18 They ſhall take up ſerpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.

Here we have a Gracious Promiſe of Chriſt, that in order to the ſpreading and propagating of the Goſpel as far as may be, the Spirit ſhould be poured forth abundantly from on high upon the Apoſtles, and thereby they ſhould be enabled to work Miracles, to caſt out Devils, to ſpeak ſtrange Languages, which we read they did, *Act.* 2. And this Power of working Miracles continued in the Church an Hundred Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, until Chriſtianity had taken rooting in the Hearts of Men. *Ireneus, lib.* 2. *ch.* 58. ſays, that many Believers beſides the Apoſtles had this Power of working Miracles; as new-ſet Plants are watered at firſt, till they have taken faſt rooting; ſo that the Chriſtian Faith might grow the faſter, God watered it with Miracles at its firſt Plantation. Yet *Obſerve*, That all the Miracles which they had Power to work were healing and beneficent; not terrifying Judgments, but Acts of Kindneſs and Mercy. It was our Saviour's Deſign to bring over Perſons to Chriſtianity by Lenity, Mildneſs and Gentleneſs, not to affright them into a Compliance with aſtoniſhing Judgments, which might affect their Fear, but little influence their Faith; for the Will and Conſent of Perſons to the Principles of any Religion (eſpecially the Chriſtian) is like a Royal Fort, which muſt not be ſtorm'd by Violence, but taken by Surrender.

19 So then, after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.

Here we have that grand Article of our Chriſtian Faith aſſerted, *namely*, our Saviour's Aſcenſion into Heaven, together with his Exaltation there, expreſſed by his *ſetting at God's Right Hand*; he aſcended now to Heaven in his Humane Nature, for in his Divine Nature he was there already; and it was neceſſary that he ſhould thus aſcend, in order to his own Perſonal Exaltation and Glorification. When he was on Earth, his Humility, Patience, and Self-denial, were exerciſed by undergoing God's Wrath, the Devil's Rage, and Man's Cruelty; now he goes to Heaven that they may be rewarded; he that is a patient Sufferer upon Earth, ſhall be a triumphant Conqueror in Heaven; alſo with reſpect to his Church on Earth it was needful and neceſſary that our Lord ſhould aſcend up into Heaven; namely, to ſend down the Holy Spirit upon his Apoſtles, which he did at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. *If I go not away* (ſays Chriſt) *the Comforter will not come; but if I depart I will ſend him to you.* And likewiſe to be a powerful Advocate and Interceſſor with his Father in Heaven, on the Behalf of his Church and Children here upon Earth, *Heb.* 9. 24. *Chriſt is entered into Heaven it ſelf, there to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* Finally, Chriſt aſcended into Heaven to give us an Aſſurance that in due time we ſhould aſcend after him, *John* 14. 2. *I go to prepare a Place for you.* Hence the Apoſtle calls our Saviour, *Our Forerunner*, Heb. 6. v. 19. Now if Chriſt in his Aſcenſion was a Forerunner, then there are ſome to follow after. To the ſame Purpoſe is that Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 2. 6. *He hath made us ſit together in Heavenly Places in Chriſt*; that is, we are already ſat down in him, and e'er long ſhall ſit down by him; we are already ſat down in him as our Head, and ſhall hereafter ſit down by him as his Members. The only Way to this, *namely*, to aſcend unto, and ſit down with Chriſt in Heaven, is to live like him, and to live unto him here on Earth: *If any Man love me, he will follow me, and where I am, there ſhall alſo my Servant be*, St. *John* 12. 26.

20 And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with ſigns following. Amen.

Obſerve here, *Firſt*, The general Publication of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles; they went forth and preached *everywhere*. *Secondly*, The Reaſon of the Efficacy and Succeſs of it, namely, that Divine and Miraculous Power which accompanied the preaching of it; *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with Signs following.* *Obſ.* 1. The general Publication of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles, *they went forth, and preached everywhere.* The Induſtry of the Holy Apoſtles was incredibly great, yet was their Succeſs greater than their Induſtry, even beyond all Humane Expectation, which will evidently appear if we conſider, 1. The vaſt ſpreading of the Goſpel ſo far in ſo ſhort a Space of Time, for in Thirty Years time after Chriſt's Death it was ſpread through the greateſt Part of the *Roman* Empire, and reached as far as *Parthia* and *India*. 2. The wonderful Power and Efficacy which the Goſpel had upon the Lives and Manners of Men, the Generality of thoſe that entertained the Goſpel were obedient to it, both in Word and Deed; becauſe Chriſtianity, being an hated and perſecuted Profeſſion, no Man could have any Inducement to embrace it, that did not reſolve to practice it, and live up unto it. 3. The Weakneſs and Meanneſs of the Inſtruments that were imployed in propagating the Goſpel ſhews the Succeſs of it to be very great and ſtrange; a Company of plain and illiterate Men, moſt of them deſtitute of the Advantages of Education, and unaſſiſted by the Countenance of any Authority whatſoever, yet did they in a ſhort Space draw the World after them. The powerful Oppoſition which was raiſed againſt the Goſpel; *namely*, the Prejudices of Education, the Power of Indwelling Luſts, and alſo the Powers of the World then in being, did ſtrongly combine againſt it; yet did Chriſtianity bear up againſt all this Oppoſition, and made its Way thorough all the Reſiſtance that the Luſts and Prejudices of Men, armed with the Power and Authority of the whole World, could make againſt it. 4. The great Diſcouragements that Men were then under to embrace the Goſpel and the Chriſtian Profeſſion; all the Evils of this World threatned them, Mockings and Scourgings, Baniſhment and Impriſonment, Reproach and Ruin; Death in all its fearful Shapes was preſented to them, to deter them from embracing this Religion. *Obſerve* therefore, 2. The Reaſon of this wonderful Succeſs, *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with Signs following. The Lord wrought with them*; this points at the inward Operation of the Holy Spirit upon the Minds of Men. O! 'tis ſweet and proſperous working in Fellowſhip with Chriſt and his Holy Spirit; he directs his Miniſters, he aſſiſts them, he guides their Lips, influences their Minds, quickens their Affections, ſets home their Inſtructions, and crowns all their Endeavours with his Bleſſing. *And confirmed the Word with Signs*; that is, confirming their Doctrine with Miracles; ſuch as healing Diſeaſes, raiſing the Dead, caſting out Devils, inflicting corporal Diſeaſes on Scandalous Perſons, and ſometimes Death it ſelf. From the whole we gather, the Truth and Divinity of the Chriſtian Religion, that it was, and is certainly of God, and therefore never could, never can, be overthrown.

The END of St. MARK.

The HOLY GOSPEL According to Saint LUKE.

CHAP. I.

FOraſmuch as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed amongſt us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the word: 3 It ſeemed good to me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt, to write unto thee in order, moſt excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mighteſt know the certainty of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.

This Goſpel together with the Acts of the Apoſtles, were written by St. *Luke*, the beloved Phyſician and Companion of St. *Paul*, who wrote, as did the reſt of the Evangeliſts, by the ſpecial Direction and Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt; where we may profitably Remark, the wonderful Wiſdom of God, who in order to the Confirming of our Faith in the Truth of the Goſpel, raiſed up a ſufficient number of Witneſſes to teſtify the Verity and infallible Certainty of all that the Goſpel delivers to us. Now this Evangeliſt St. *Luke* Dedicates this Goſpel, together with the Acts of the Apoſtles to *Theophilus*, who was, as ſome think, an Honourable Senator; or a Renowned and Eminent Perſon in the Church, as others ſuppoſe: But many take the word *Theophilus* not for a proper Name, but common Name, ſignifying every one that *Loveth God*; to whom St. *Luke* addreſſes his Diſcourſe. The firſt four Verſes of this Chapter are a Preface to the following Hiſtory, and acquaint us with the Reaſons, which induced St. *Luke* to write,namely, becauſe divers Perſons in that Age had imprudently and inconſiderately ſet upon writing Goſpels, without Direction from the Spirit of God, whoſe Errors and Miſtakes were to be corrected by a true Narrative. This St. *Luke* declares he was able to make, having had perfect Underſtanding and Knowledge of the Truth of thoſe Things he was about to Relate; partly by his familiarity with St. *Paul*, and partly by his Converſation with the other Apoſtles, who conſtantly attending our Saviour, were Eye, and Ear-witneſſes of Thoſe Things that are the Subject matter of the enſuing Hiſtory. Hence learn, (1.) That there were ſome Apocryphal Writings, (or Writings which were not of Divine Authority) Relating to the New Teſtament, as well as to the Old; as the Books of *Aſher*, *Gad*, and *Iddo*, are recited in the Old Teſtament, but were never received into the Canon of the Scripture: So were there ſome Goſpels, or Hiſtorical Relations of our Saviour's Life and Actions, wrote by Perſons which the Church never received, as not having the impreſs of God's Ordination. *Note*, Secondly, That the Goſpels which St. *Luke* and the other Evangeliſts wrote,have nothing of fallibility or uncertainty in them: They wrote nothing but what they either heard, or ſaw themſelves, or elſe received from thoſe that were Eye and Ear-witneſſes of Matter of Fact. *It ſeemed good to me to write, having had perfect knowledge of all things from the very firſt.*

5 THERE was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain prieſt named Zacharias, of the courſe of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.

In this and the following Verſes, the Holy Ghoſt gives us a Deſcription of *John the Baptiſt*, who was the Harbinger,and Fore-runner of our Saviour Chriſt; he is deſcrib'd, firſt by his Parentage, being the Son of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*. This *Zacharias* was a Prieſt, who had a Courſe in the Temple, or a right to Officiate there when it came to his Turn; for we read in 1 *Chron.* 24. 10. That *David appointed the Prieſts the Sons of Aaron, to miniſter by Turns, and divided them into Four and twenty Courſes*, Every one Miniſtring in the Temple by their Weeks. Here *Note*, That *Zacharias* a Prieſt, and attending the Service of the Temple, was a married Perſon, having one of the Daughters of *Aaron* to Wife, according to the Command of God *Levit.* 21. 14. where the Prieſt is required to marry one of his own People. *Learn hence*, That neither the Prieſts under the Law did, nor the Miniſters of Chriſt under the Goſpel ought to abhor the Marriage-Bed; nor judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker. The Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, *which forbiddeth to Marry*, St. *Paul* calls *a Doctrine of Devils*.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances, of the Lord, blameleſs.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſweet Harmony of this Religious Couple in the Ways of God, *They both walked in the Commandments of God*. It is an happy Match when Husband and Wife are one, not only in themſelves, but in the Lord. *Obſ.* (2.) The univerſality of their Holineſs and Obedience, *they walked*, not in ſome, but *in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord*. Such as will approve themſelves to be ſincerely Religious, muſt make Conſcience of every known Duty, and endeavour to obey every Precept and Command of God. *Obſ.* (3.) The high Commendation which the Holy Spirit of God gives of this their Religious Courſe of Holineſs and Obedience; They are pronounced *Blameleſs*. He that liveth without groſs Sin in a Goſpel Senſe, liveth blameleſs, and without Sin. To live without groſs Sin, is our Holineſs on Earth, to be without any Sin, will be our Happineſs in Heaven. Many Sins may be in him that has true Grace; but he, that has Truth of Grace, cannot allow himſelf in any Sin. Such are the Condeſcenſions of the Covenant of Grace that ſincere Obedience is called Perfection. Truth of Grace is our Perfection on Earth, but in Heaven we ſhall have Perfection as well as Truth. *Obſ. Laſtly*, A Pattern for their Imitation who wait at God's Altar, and are employ'd in and about Holy Things; ſuch ought all the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and their Wifes to be, what *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* are here ſaid to be; namely, *Blameleſs*; that is, very innocent and innoffenſive in their daily Converſation.

7 And they had no child, becauſe that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well ſtricken in years.

Obſerve here, (1.) This holy Pair *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, were Fruitful in Holy Obedience, but Barren in Children; a Fruitful Soul, and a Barren Womb are conſiſtent, and do ofttimes meet together. This Religious Couple made no leſs progreſs in Vertue than in Age, and yet their Vertue could not make their Age Fruitful. *Obſ.* (2.) *Elizabeth* was Barren in the Flower of her Age, but much more ſo in Old-Age. Here was a double Obſtacle, and conſequently a double Inſtance of Divine Power in the Birth of *John the Baptiſt*, ſhewing him to be a Prophet very extraordinary, and miraculouſly ſent by God. *Obſ.* (3.) That when Almighty God in Old Times did long delay to give the Bleſſing of Children to holy Women, he rewarded their Expectation with the Birth of ſome Eminent and Extraordinary Perſon: Thus *Sarah* after long Barrenneſs brought forth an *Iſaac*, *Rebeccah* a *Jacob*, *Rachel* a *Joſeph*, *Hannah* a *Samuel*, and *Elizabeth*, St. *John the Baptiſt*. When God makes his People wait long for a particular Mercy, if he ſees good for them, he gives it in at laſt with a double Reward for their Expectation.

8 And it came to paſs, that while he executed the prieſts office before God in order of his courſe, 9 According to the cuſtom of the prieſts office, his lot was to burn incenſe when he went into the temple of the Lord.

Here Note, (1.) That none but a Son of *Aaron* might offer Incenſe to God in the Temple; and not every Son of *Aaron* neither; nay, not any of them at all Seaſons. God is a God of Order, and hates Confuſion, no leſs than Irreligion. And as under the Law of Old, ſo under the Goſpel at this Day, *no Man ought to take this Honour upon him, but he that is called God, as was Aaron. Obſ.* (2.) That there were Courſes of Miniſtration in the Legal Services, in which the Prieſts did relieve one another Weekly. God never purpoſed to burthen any of his Servants with Devotion, nor is he pleaſed when his Service is made burthenſome, either to, or by his Miniſters. Many of the Sons of *Aaron* ſerved together in the Temple, according to the variety of their Imployments, which were aſſigned them by Lot: And accordingly it fell out this time, that *Zachary* was choſen by Lot to burn Incenſe. *Obſ.* (3.) That Morning and Evening, twice a Day, the Prieſts offered up their Incenſe to God, that both parts of the Day might be Conſecrated to him, who was the Maker and Giver of their Time. This Incenſe offered under the Law repreſents our Prayers offered to God under the Goſpel. Theſe Almighty God expects, that we ſhould (all his Church over) ſend up to him, Morning and Evening. The Ejaculatory Elevations of our Hearts ſhould be perpetual, but if twice a Day we do not preſent God with our Solemn Invocation; we make the Goſpel leſs officious than the Law; and can we reaſonably think that Almighty God will accept of leſs now, than would content him then?

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incenſe.

Obſerve here, (1.) While the Incenſe was burning, the People were Praying; while the Prieſts ſends up his Incenſe in the Temple within, the People ſend up their Prayers in the Court without. The Incenſe of the Prieſt, and the Prayers of the People meet, and go up to Heaven together. Hence *Learn*; That it is a bleſſed thing, when both Miniſter and People joyntly offer up their Prayers for each other at the ſame Throne of Grace, and mutually ſtrive together in their Supplications one with, and one for another, *Obſ.* (2.) How both Prieſt and People keep their Place and Station; the Prieſt Burns Incenſe in the Holy Place, and the People offer up their Prayers in the outward Court. The People might no more go into the Holy Place to offer up their Prayers, than *Zachary* might go into the *Holy of Holies* to burn Incenſe. Whilſt the Partition-Wall ſtood betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, there was alſo a Partition betwixt the *Jews* and themſelves. But now under the Goſpel every Man is a Prieſt to God, and may enter the Holy of Holies by the Blood of Jeſus. But Lord! What are we the better for this Great and Gracious Freedom of Acceſs to Thee, if we want Hearts to prize and to improve our Privilege from Thee!

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord ſtanding on the right ſide of the altar of incenſe.

Whilſt *Zachary* was praying to God, an Angel appears to *Zachary.* When we are neareſt God, the Good Angels are nigheſt us; they are moſt with us, when we are moſt with him. The preſence of Angels with us is no Novelty, but their Apparition to us is ſo. They are always with us, but rarely ſeen by us. Let our Faith ſee them, whom our Senſes cannot diſcern: their aſſumed Shapes do not make them more preſent, but only more viſible. *Obſ.* (2.) The Place as well as the Time where the Angel appeared in the Temple, and at the Altar, and *on the right ſide of the Altar of Incenſe.* As the holy Angels are always preſent with us in our Devotions, ſo eſpecially in Religious Aſſemblies; as in all places, ſo moſt of all in God's Houſe; They rejoyce to be with us, whilſt we are with God, but they turn their Faces from us when we go about our Sins.

12 And when Zacharias ſaw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

It was partly the Suddenneſs, partly the Unexpectedneſs, and partly the Glory of the Apparition, that affrighted this good Man. Glorious and ſudden Apparitions do affright even the holieſt and beſt of Men. We cannot bear the ſight and preſence of an Angel without Conſternation and Fear in this our frail and ſinful State. O happy Hour, when Mortality, and Sin being taken out of our Natures, we ſhall not only behold the glorified Angels without Fear, but the Glorious God, with Delight and Love. Lord! Let me now ſee Thee by Faith, hereafter by ſight. *Sit in alio Seculo, non in Hoc! viſio tua, merces mea. Gerſon.*

13 But the angel ſaid unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name John.

Obſerve here, (1.) How Apprehenſive this good Angel was of *Zachary*'s ſurprizing Fear, and encourages him againſt it. The holy Angels, tho' they do not expreſs it in Words, yet they pity our Frailties, and ſuggeſt Comfort to us. The Evil Angels, if they might, would kill us with Terror: The Good labour altogether for our Tranquility and Chearfulneſs. *The Angel ſaid unto him, Fear not. Obſerve* (2.) The Comfortable Words ſpoken by the Angel to *Zacharias, Thy Prayer is heard, and thy Wife Elizabeth ſhall bear thee a Son.* No doubt *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* had often prayed for a Child, and now God ſends them one, when they leaſt expected it. *Learn hence*, That ſometimes Gods gives in a Mercy to us, when we leaſt expect it; yea, when we have given over looking for it. No doubt, this was the Caſe here, *Zachary* and *Elizabeth being both well ſtricken in Age. Obſerve* (3.) The Name which the Angel directed *Zachary* to give his Son; *Thou ſhalt call his Name John*, which ſignifies *Gracious*, becauſe he was to open the Kingdom of Grace, and to preach the Grace of the Goſpel through Jeſus Chriſt. The giving of ſignificant Names to Children has been an ancient and pious Practice; Names which either carried a Remembrance of Duty, or of Mercy in them.

14 And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs, and many ſhall rejoyce at his birth. 15 For he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord, and ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink, and he ſhall be filled with the holy Ghoſt, even from his mothers womb. 16 And many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he ſhall go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Here the Angel declares to *Zachary*, what kind of Son ſhould be born unto him, even one of eminent Endowments, and deſigned for extraordinary Services. The proof of Children makes them either the Bleſſing or Croſſes of their Parents. What greater Comfort could *Zachary* deſire in a Child than is here promiſed to him? (1.) He hears of a Son that ſhould *bring Joy to himſelf, and many others*, even to all that did expect the Coming of the Meſſias, whoſe Fore-runner the *Baptiſt* was. (2.) *That he ſhould be great in the ſight of the Lord*, that is, a Perſon of great Eminency, and great Uſefulneſs in the Church. A Perſon of great Riches and Reputation is great in the ſight of Men; but the Man of great Ability and Uſefulneſs, the Man of great Integrity and Serviceableneſs, he is truly *great in the ſight of the Lord.* They are *little Men in the ſight of the Lord*, that live in the World to little Purpoſes; who do little Service to God, and bring little Honour and Glory to him: But the Man that does all the poſſible Service he can for God, and the utmoſt Good that he is capable of doing to all Mankind; he is a Perſon *great in the ſight of the Lord*; and ſuch was the *Holy Baptiſt.* (3.) It is foretold that he ſhould *drink neither Wine nor ſtrong Drink*, that is, That he ſhould be a very Temperate and Abſtemious Perſon, living after the manner of the *Nazarites*, tho' he was not ſeparated by any Vow of his Own, or his Parents; but by the ſpecial Deſignation and Appointment of God only. It was forbidden the Prieſts under the Law to drink either Wine or ſtrong Drink, upon pain of Death, during the time of their Miniſtration, *Levit.* 10. 9. And the Miniſters of Chriſt under the Goſpel are forbidden to *be lovers of Wine*, 1 Tim. 3. 3. (4.) *He ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his Mothers Womb*; that is, He ſhall be furniſhed abundantly with the extraordinary Gifts and ſanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit, which ſhall very early appear to be in him, and upon him. (5.) His High and Honourable Office is declared, *That he ſhould go before the Meſſiah*, as his Harbinger and Fore-runner, with the ſame Spirit of Zeal and Courage againſt Sin, which was found in the Old Prophet *Elias*, whom he did ſo nearly reſemble. (6.) The great Succeſs of his Miniſtry is foretold, Namely, *That he ſhould turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt*: That is, the Hearts of the *Jews* to the *Gentiles*, ſay ſome; that he ſhould bring Men (ſay others) even the moſt Diſobedient and Rebellious Phariſees and Sadduces, Publicans and Sinners unto Repentance unto the minding of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, and all Moral Duties; and *thus he made ready a People for the Lord*; by fitting Men to receive Chriſt upon his own Terms and Conditions; Namely, Faith and Repentance. From the whole, *Note*, That thoſe whom the Almighty deſigns for eminent Uſefulneſs in his Church, he furniſhes with Endowments ſuitable to their Employments, and when he calls to extraordinary Service, comes in with more than ordinary Aſſiſtance. Here was the holy *Baptiſt* extraordinarily called, and as extraordinarily furniſhed for his Office and Miniſtry.

18 And Zacharias ſaid unto the Angel, whereby ſhall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years. 19 And the Angel anſwering ſaid unto him, I am Gabriel that ſtand in the preſence of God, and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings. 20 And behold, thou ſhalt be dumb and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried ſo long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not ſpeak unto them: and they perceived that he had ſeen a viſion in the temple: for he beckned unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs.

Obſerve here, *Zachary* being ſlow to believe ſo ſtrange a Meſſage, asks the Angel by what Sign he ſhould know that this thing, ſo far above the ordinary Courſe of Nature, ſhould come to paſs. The Angel anſwers, that he was diſpatcht by God as a Meſſenger extraordinary to declare this good News to him. And ſeeing he was ſo hard to believe it, and requir'd a Sign, he ſhould have it, but ſuch an one as ſhould be a puniſhment of his Unbelief, as well as a Sign to confirm his Faith; Namely, he ſhould from thence forward, to the Birth of the Child, be Dumb and Deaf, as the Originally Word ſignifies; becauſe he had not hearkened to the Angel's Speech, he was ſtruck Deaf, and becauſe he gain-ſaid it, he was made Dumb. *Learn hence*, That the Word of God in the Mouth of his Meſſengers, is God's own Word, and as ſuch to be received and believed: (2.) That not believing their Word is a Sin which God will ſeverely puniſh; it is all one not to believe God, and not to believe the Meſſengers of God ſpeaking from him. Some Expoſitors will have this Dumbneſs of *Zachary* to be prefigurative. The Prieſt at the diſmiſſion of the People, when the Service of the Temple was finiſhed, was to pronounce the Bleſſing Recorded, *Numb.* 6. 24, 25. which when *Zachary* was about to do, he is ſtruck Dumb, and cannot perform it; ſignifying thereby, that the ſilencing of the Levitical Prieſthood was now at hand; that they muſt expect another kind of Worſhip, and that he who was to Bleſs indeed, namely, the Meſſias, was near at hand. *Obſerve laſtly*, That though *Zachary* ceaſed to ſpeak, yet he did not ceaſe to Miniſter; he takes not his Dumbneſs for a diſmiſſion, but ſtays out the eight Days of his Courſe, knowing that the Service of his Heart and Hand would be accepted of that God which had bereaved him of his Tongue. Thoſe Powers which we have, we muſt make uſe of in the publick Service of God, who will accept us according to what we have; pardoning our Infirmity, and rewarding our Sincerity.

23 And it came to paſs, that as ſoon as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe. 24 And after thoſe days, his wife Elizabeth conceived, and hid her ſelf five months, ſaying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The Prieſts during the time of their Adminiſtration, had their Lodgings in Buildings appertaining to the Temple. *Zachary* having ended his Adminiſtration, leaves his Lodgings and returns to his Houſe, where his Wife *Elizbeth* Conceiving, *ſhe hides her ſelf*; that is, retires from Company, partly to prevent the Diſcourſe of People, until it was out of all doubt that ſhe had Conceived; And partly to give her ſelf opportunity of returning her thankful Acknowledgments unto God, who had given her this Miraculous Mercy; and had thereby taken away her Reproach and Barrenneſs, which was ſo heavy and inſupportable among the *Jews*. *Note*, here two Things, (1.) How piouſly *Elizabeth* aſcribes this Mercy to the Power of God, *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me.* 'Tis God that keeps the Key of the Womb in his own Hand, and maketh the Fruit of it his Reward, and therefore Children are to be own'd as his ſpecial Gift. *Note*, (2.) How great a Reproach Bodily Barrenneſs is, in the ſight of Man; but not ſo great as Spiritual Barrenneſs in the ſight of God: For this is at once a Reproach to God, a Reproach to Religion, a Reproach to Profeſſors, and to ourſelves.

26 And in the ſixth month, the angel Gabriel was ſent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin eſpouſed to a man whoſe name was Joſeph, of the houſe of David; and the virgins name *was* Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and ſaid, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: bleſſed *art* thou among women. 29 And when ſhe ſaw him, ſhe was troubled at his ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be. 30 And the Angel ſaid unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou haſt found favour with God. 31 And behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus. 32 He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt; and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33 And he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.

In this Hiſtory of our Saviour's Miraculous and Immaculate Conception, we have ſeveral things *Obſervable*, as (1.) The Meſſenger ſent from Heaven to publiſh the News of the Conception of the Son of God, an *Angel*: An Evil Angel was the firſt Author of our Ruin; a Good Angel could not be the *Author* of our Reſtauration, but is the joyful Reporter of it: *Obſ.* (2.) The Angel's Name, *Gabriel*, which ſignifies the Power of God. The ſame Angel who had many hundred Years before declared to the Prophet *Daniel*, the Coming of the Meſſiah. *Obſ.* (3.) The Place which the Angel is ſent unto, *Nazareth*, an obſcure place, little taken notice of; yea, a City in *Galilee*, out of which ariſes no Prophet; even there doth the God of Prophets condeſcend to be Conceived. No blind corner of *Nazareth* can hide the Bleſſed Virgin from the Angel. The Favours of God will find out his Children whereever they are withdrawn. *Obſ.* (4.) The Perſon whom the Angel is ſent unto, *To a Virgin eſpouſed, whoſe Name was Mary.* For the Honour of Virginity, Chriſt choſe a Virgin for his Mother; for the Honour of Marriage, a Virgin eſpouſed to an Husband. *Obſ.* (5.) The Meſſage it ſelf, *Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee*; *Bleſſed art thou among Women.* Where *Note*, That the Angel Salutes the Virgin as a *Saint*, he doth not pray to her as a *Goddeſs*. The Church of *Rome* Idolatrouſly uſe theſe Words, as a Prayer to the Holy Virgin, (ſaying, Ten *Ave Maries* for one *Pater Noſter*) whereas they are only a Salutation; declaring that ſhe above all Women, had the Honour freely conferred by God upon her, to be the Mother of the Meſſiah. The Original Word ſignifies, not *full of Grace*, but *freely Beloved*. Compare *Mary* with other renowned Women, and what had ſhe (beſides this Favour) more than they? Had ſhe the Spirit of Prophecy? ſo had they: Had ſhe the Spirit of Sanctification? ſo had they: And ſhe had no more Immunity and freedom from Sin and Death than they. Accordingly ſays the Angel, *Bleſſed art thou among Women*: He doth not ſay, Bleſſed art thou *above Women*. Let the Church of *Rome* be as copious as they will in the Commendation of the Mother, ſo they do not derogate from the Glory of the Son; But how ſenſeleſs are they, (1.) In turning a Salutation into a Prayer? (2.) In making uſe of theſe Words upon every Occaſion, which were ſpoken by an Angel upon a ſpecial Occaſion? (3.) In applying theſe Words to her now in Heaven, which ſuited with her only when ſhe was here on Earth, ſaying, *Full of Grace* to her who is full of Glory; and *The Lord is with Thee*, to her that is *with the Lord*? *Obſ.* (6.) The effect which the Sight and Salutation of the Angel had upon the holy Virgin; ſhe was afraid. If *Zachary* before her was amazed at the ſight of the Angel, much more the Virgin, her Sex ſubjecting her to Fear. All Paſſions, but particularly the Paſſion of Fear, diſquiets the Heart, and makes it unfit to receive the Meſſages of God. Therefore the Angel inſtantly ſays unto her, *Fear not*; let Joy enter into thy Heart, out of whoſe Womb ſhall come Salvation. Thus the Fears of holy Perſons do end in Comfort: Joy was the Errand which the Angel came upon, and not Terror; what little cauſe had ſhe to fear the Preſence of an Angel, who was ſo highly favoured of him at whoſe Preſence the Angels tremble? But we ſee the holieſt Perſons on Earth cannot bear the Preſence of an *Holy Angel*, much leſs the Preſence of an *Holy God*; nor ſtand before the manifeſtations of his Favours: Lord! How unable then will the Wicked be at the Great Day, to ſtand before the manifeſtation of thy Fury? If the ſight of an Holy Angel now makes the beſt of Saints to quake and tremble, what will the ſight of an Infinitely Holy and Juſt God then do, when the Wicked ſhall be ſlain by the Brightneſs of his Preſence? *Obſ. Laſtly*, The Character which the Angel gives of the Perſon that ſhould be born of the Bleſſed Virgin, *He ſhall be Great, and called the Son of the Higheſt*. *Great*, in reſpect of his Perſon: *Great*, in reſpect of his Offices: *Great*, in reſpect of his Kingdom; for God would ſettle upon him a Spiritual Kingdom, (of which *David*'s Earthly one was a Type) which ſhall never he aboliſhed; tho' the Adminiſtration of it by the Word and Sacraments ſhall ceaſe at the Day of Judgment, when he ſhall deliver up the Kingdom, (in that reſpect) to his Father. All other Kingdoms have had, or ſhall have their periods, but the Goſpel-Church, which is Chriſt's Kingdom, ſhall continue till his Kingdom of Glory be revealed.

34 Then ſaid Mary unto the angel, How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man 35 And the angel anſwering ſaid unto her, The holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the higheſt ſhall over-ſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, thy couſin Elizabeth; ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old age: and this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing ſhall be unpoſſible. 38 And Mary ſaid, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Virgins Queſtion, *How ſhall this be?* This Queſtion did not import her denial of the poſſibility of the thing, but her wonder at the ſtrangeneſs of the thing; it proceeded rather from a deſire of information, than from a doubt of Infidelity. Therefore ſhe doth not ſay, this cannot be, nor how can this be? but *how ſhall this be?* She doth not diſtruſt, but demand, how her Virginity ſhould become fruitful; and how ſhe, being a Virgin, could bring forth a Son? *Obſ.* (2.) The Angel's Reply to the Virgin's Queſtion, *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee. Where Note*, The Angel declares the Author Who, but not the manner How: The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, but in what way, and after what manner is not declared: No Mother knows the manner of her Natural Conception: What Preſumption had it then been, for the Mother of the Meſſiah to have inquired how the Son of God could take Fleſh and Blood of his Creature; 'tis for none but the Almighty to know thoſe Works which do immediately concern himſelf. *Obſ.* (3) The Holy and Immaculate Conception of our Bleſſed Redeemer: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the moſt High ſhall over-ſhadow thee, wherefore that Holy Thing which ſhall be Born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God*; That is, the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall prepare and Sanctifie ſo much of thy Fleſh, Blood, or Seed, as ſhall conſtitute the Body of Chriſt. For tho' it was the Work of the whole Trinity, yet it is aſcribed particularly to the Holy Ghoſt, Sanctification being his peculiar Work. And the Title and Epithet of *That Holy Thing*, ſheweth the Purity and Immaculateneſs of Chriſt's Human Nature, and that none was ever Born thus Holy and Immaculate but Chriſt only; becauſe none had ever ſuch a way and means of Conception, but only he. *Therefore that Holy Thing ſhall be called the Son of God*; not conſtituted and made, but evidenced and declared. Chriſt was God before he aſſumed Fleſh even from Eternity; but his taking Fleſh in this manner evidences him to be the Son of God. *Obſ.* (4.) The Argument uſed by the Angel to confirm *Mary* in the Belief of what he had told her, namely, The wonderful Conception of her Couſin *Elizabeth in her Old-age*, who was now *ſix Months gone with Child*. Where *Obſ.* (1.) What an exact Knowledge God has, and what a particular notice he takes of all the Children of Men; he knoweth not only our ſelves, but our Relations alſo; *Behold thy Couſin Elizabeth*; the knowledge which God has of every Perſon, and every Action, is a clear and diſtinct Knowledge. *Note* (2.) How the Angel ſtrengthens her Faith by a Conſideration drawn from the Almighty Power of God; *With God nothing ſhall be unpoſſible*; be it never ſo ſtrange and difficult. There is no ſuch way to overcome Difficulties, as by ſtrengthning our Faith in the Almighty Power of God. Faith will enable us to aſſent to Truths, tho' ſeemingly incredible, and to believe the poſſibility of Things tho' appearingly impoſſible. *Obſ. Laſtly*, How the Virgin expreſſes her Faith and Obedience, her Submiſſion and entire Reſignation to the Divine Pleaſure, to be diſpoſed of by God as he thought fit; *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word*. We hear of no more Objections or Interrogations, but an humble and ſubmiſſive Silence. *Learn hence*, That a Gracious Heart, when once it underſtands the Pleaſure of God, argues no farther, but quietly reſts in a believing Expectation of what God will do. All Diſputations with God, after his Will is made known and underſtood, ariſe from Infidelity and Unbelief. The Virgin having thus conſented, inſtantly Conceived by the Over-ſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt.

29 And Mary aroſe in thoſe days, and went into the hill-country with haſte, into a city of Judah. 40 And entred into the houſe of *Zacharias*, and ſaluted Elizabeth. 41 And it came to paſs, that when Elizabeth heard the ſalutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: And Elizabeth was filled with the holy Ghoſt. 42 And ſhe ſpake out with a loud voice, and ſaid, Bleſſed *art* thou among women, and bleſſed *is* the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me? 44 For lo, as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And bleſſed *is* ſhe that believed: for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which were told her from the Lord.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Viſit made by the Virgin *Mary* to her Couſin *Elizabeth*. The Holy Virgin had underſtood by the Angel, that *Elizabeth* was no leſs akin to her in Condition than in Relation; being both Fruitful in Conception; ſhe haſtens into the Hill-country to Viſit that holy Matron: The two Wonders of the World were now met under one Roof to Congratulate their mutual Happineſs; only the meeting of the Saints in Heaven can parallel the meeting of theſe two Saints on Earth. *Obſerve* (2.) The deſign and intention of this Viſit, which was partly to communicate their Joys each to other, and partly to ſtrengthen the Faith of each other: Such a Soul as has Chriſt Spiritually Conceived in it, is reſtleſs, and cannot be quiet till it has imparted its Joy. *Obſerve* (3.) The effect of the Virgin's Salutation; She had no ſooner Saluted *Elizabeth, but the Babe in* Elizabeth*'s Womb leaped for joy*, doing Homage, and paying Adoration to his Lord, who was then in preſence. If *Elizabeth* and her holy Babe thus rejoyced, when Chriſt came under their Roof, how ſhould our Hearts leap within us, when the Son of God vouchſafes to come into the Secret of our Souls, not to viſit us for an Hour, but to dwell with us, yea, to dwell in us, and that for ever? *Obſ.* (4.) How *Elizabeth* by an extraordinary Spirit of Prophecy confirms, what the Angel before had told the Holy Virgin. *Bleſſed* (ſays ſhe) *art thou among Women, and Bleſſed is the Fruit of thy Womb; and what an Honour is this, that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?* Where *Note*, How *Elizabeth* acknowledgeth the Incarnation of Chriſt, and the Union of the Divine and Human Nature in the Perſon of the Mediator. She acknowledges Chriſt her *Lord*, and *Mary* to be the *Mother* of the Son of God. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the Virgin is pronounced *Bleſſed*, not ſo much for carrying Chriſt in her Womb by Senſe, as for bearing him in her Heart by Faith; *Bleſſed is ſhe that believed*. *Mary* was not ſo Bleſſed in bringing forth Chriſt, as in Believing in him; yet the Believing here mention'd, I take to be her firm Aſſent to the Meſſage, which was brought her by the Angel; as if *Elizabeth* had ſaid, Dumbneſs was inflicted on my Husband for his Unbelief of what the Angel ſaid, but *Bleſſed art thou that* *didſt believe the Angel:* My Huband a Man, an aged Man, a learned and eminent Man, a Prieſt of the Moſt High God; and the Meſſage to him of more appearing poſſibility, yet he disbelieved; But thou, a Woman, a mean, unlearned Woman, of a private Condition, and the Meſſage brought moſt incredible both to Nature and Reaſon, and yet is it believed by thee! *Bleſſed therefore is ſhe that believed*; and know, that as a Reward for thy Faith, *all things ſhall certainly be performed that were foretold thee from the Lord. Learn hence,* (1.) It is the Property of God to do Great and Wonderful Things. Our Faith muſt be great, and our Expectation great; great Expectations from God honour the Greatneſs of God. (2.) If our Faith be great, God's Performances will be gracious and full. *Bleſſed is ſhe that believed, for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe Things which were told her from the Lord.*

46 And Mary ſaid, My ſoul doth magnifie the
Lord, 47 And my ſpirit hath rejoyced in God my *Sa-*
viour. 48 For he hath regarded the low eſtate of
his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all gene-
rations ſhall call me bleſſed. 49 For he that is migh-
ty hath done to me great things, and holy *is* his name.
50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from ge-
neration to generation. 51 He hath ſhewed ſtrength
with his arm, he hath ſcattered the proud, in the
imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down
the mighty from *their* ſeats, and exalted them of
low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good
things, and the rich he hath ſent empty away. 54 He
hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael, in remembrance of *his*
mercy. 55 As he ſpake to our fathers, to Abraham
and to his ſeed for ever.

This is the firſt Canticle, or Song of Praiſe Recorded in the New Teſtament, compoſed by the Bleſſed Virgin with unſpeakable Joy, for deſigning her to be the Inſtrument of the Conception and Birth of the Saviour of the World: Where *Obſerve* (1.) The manner of her Praiſe, her Soul and Spirit bear their part in the Work of Thankſgiving, *My Soul doth magnifie, my Spirit hath rejoyced.* As the ſweeteſt Muſick is made in the Belly of the Inſtrument, ſo the moſt delightful Praiſe ariſes from the bottom of the Heart. *Obſerve* (2.) The Object of her Praiſe; ſhe doth not magnifie her ſelf, but the Lord; yea, ſhe doth not Rejoyce ſo much in her Son, as in *her Saviour.* Where *Note* (1.) That ſhe doth implicitely own and confeſs her ſelf a Sinner; for none need a Saviour but a Sinner: And (2.) By rejoycing in Chriſt as her Saviour, ſhe declares how ſhe values herſelf, rather by her Spiritual Relation to Chriſt as his Member, than by her Natural Relation to him as his Mother; according to that of St. *Auſtin, Beatior fuit Maria percipiendo Chriſti fidem: quam concipiendo Carnem:* She might have been miſerable, notwithſtanding ſhe bore him as her Son, had ſhe not believed in him as her Saviour: Therefore ſhe ſings, *My Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour. Obſerve* (3.) How ſhe admires and magnifies God's peculiar Favour towards herſelf, in caſting an Eye upon her Poverty and lowly Condition; that ſhe, a poor, obſcure Maid, unknown to the World, ſhould be lookt upon with an Eye of Regard by him that dwells in the higheſt Heavens. Where *Note,* That as God magnified her, ſhe magnified him, aſcribing all Honour and Glory to him that had thus dignified and exalted her, *He that is mighty hath done for me great Things, and glorified be his Name. Obſerve* (4.) She thankfully takes notice, that it was not only an high Honour, but a laſting Honour, which was conferred upon her, *All Generations ſhall call me Bleſſed.* She beholds an infinite laſting Honour prepared for her, as being the Mother of an Univerſal and Everlaſting Bleſſing, which all former Ages had deſired, and all ſucceeding Ages ſhould rejoyce in, and proclaim her Happy for being the Inſtrument of. *Obſerve* (5.) How the Holy Virgin paſſes from the Conſideration of her Perſonal Priviledges to the Univerſal Goodneſs of God; ſhewing us that the Mercies and Favours of God were not confined and limited to her ſelf, *But his Mercy is on all them that Fear him throughout all Generations.* She declares the general Providence of God towards all Perſons, his Mercy to the Pious, *his Mercy is on all them that Fear him*; his Juſtice on the Proud, *he hath put down the mighty from their Seat, and ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their Hearts; his* Bounty to the Poor, *he fills the hungry with good Things. Learn hence,* The excellency and advantageous Uſefulneſs of the Grace of Humility; how good it is to be meek and lowly in Heart. This will render us lovely in God's Eye; and tho' the World trample upon us, he will exalt us to the Admiration of our ſelves, and the Envy of our Deſpiſers. *Obſerve Laſtly,* How ſhe magnifies the ſpecial Grace of God in our Redemption, *he hath holpen his Servant Iſrael,* that is, Bleſt them with a Saviour, who lived in the Faith, Hope, and Expectation of the promiſed Meſſiah; and this Bleſſing ſhe declares was (1.) The Reſult of great Mercy, *He remembring his Mercy hath holpen his Servant Iſrael.* (2.) The Effect of his Truth and Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes; *as he promiſed to our Fore-fathers Abraham and his Seed for ever. Learn hence,* That the appearance of the Promiſed Meſſiah in the Fulneſs of Time, in order to the Redemption and Salvation of a loſt World, it was the Fruit of God's tender Love, and the Effect of his Faithfulneſs in the Promiſes made of Old to his Church and Children, *He hath holpen his Servant Iſrael in remembrance of his Mercy, as he ſpake to our Fore-fathers, to Abraham, and to his Seed for ever.*

56 And Mary abode with her about three months,
and returned to her own houſe. 57 Now Elizabeths
full time came, that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and
ſhe brought forth a ſon. 58 And her neighbours,
and her couſins heard how the Lord had ſhewed
great mercy upon her; and they rejoyced with her.

Two things are here *Obſervable* (1.) The civil Courteſie of the Virgin *Mary* towards her Couſin *Elizabeth.* She ſtays with her three Months, probably till ſhe was Delivered and brought to Bed, not leaving her juſt at the time of her Travel, for the Angel told *Mary, v.* 36. That it was then the *ſixth Month,* with *Elizabeth*; after which *Mary* ſtays with her *three Months,* which made up the full time. To Viſit and accompany our Friends in the time of their Diſtreſs, is not only an Act of civil Courteſy, but of Religion and Piety; not a Matter of Indifferency but of Duty, *James* 1. 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled is this, to viſit in Affliction*; that is, this is an eminent Act and Exerciſe of Religion, the Evidence and Fruit of Sincere Religion; and the Virgin's doing this, was an Act and Inſtance of her Piety, as well as of her civil Courteſie. *Obſerve* (2.) The Religious Joy, and Spiritual Rejoycing, which the Neighbours and Kindred expreſs at the Lying-in of *Elizabeth*: They did not meet together upon that great Occaſion only to Eat and Drink, and make Merry, *but they rejoyced that the Lord had ſhewed great Mercy upon her*: Oh, how rarely is this Example followed in our Age! at the Delivery of the Mother, and at the Birth of the Child, how little is God taken notice of? How little is this Power magnified, and his Goodneſs celebrated in opening the Womb, in giving ſtrength to bring forth? And how rarely is this the Subject of Diſcourſe at the Woman's Labour? Verily, if the Mercy of a Child, and the ſafe Delivery of the Mother be not the firſt and principal things taken notice of at ſuch Rejoycing Meetings, they look more like Pagan then Chriſtian Rejoycings.

59 And it came to paſs, that on the eighth day they
came to circumciſe the child; and they called him
Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his
mother anſwered and ſaid, Not *ſo*; but he ſhall be
called John. 61 And they ſaid unto her, there is
none of thy kindred that is called by this name.
62 And they made ſigns to his father, how he would
have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing table,
and wrote, ſaying, His name is John. And they mar-
velled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immedia-
tely, and his tongue *looſed,* and he ſpake, and praiſed
God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round a-
bout them: and all theſe ſayings were noiſed abroad,
throughout all the Hill country of Judea. 66 And all
they that had heard *them,* laid *them* up in their hearts,
ſaying, What manner of child ſhall this be? And the
hand of the Lord was with him.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Circumciſion of the Child at eight Days old, according to the Commandment, *Gen.* 17. Where

Note, Firſt, The Act *Circumciſing*. Secondly, The Time, *At eight Days old*. God commanded every Male Child to be Circumciſed, becauſe the Males by the Fore-skin propagate Sin, and convey Original Impurity. By this Ordinance God gave his People to underſtand the exceeding filthineſs of Sin, and that Man brings ſomething into the World with him, which ought preſently to be cut off. *Note alſo*, The Time of Circumciſing the Child, *At eight Days old*: Not before, leſt the Child ſhould be too weak to bear the Pain; and it muſt not be deferred longer, leſt God interpret the delay to be a Contempt of the Ordinance. Hence, by the way, we may *Learn*, That God did not tye Salvation to the outward Sacrament; for if the Child had periſh'd that dy'd Uncircumciſed, it had been an hard thing to defer Circumciſion eight Hours. 'Tis not the want, but the Contempt and Neglect of the Sacraments that dams. *It came to paſs on the eighth Day they came to Circumciſe the Child:* We find in Scripture the Ordinance appointed, and the Time limited, but neither the Perſon nor the Place declared; *Moſes*'s Wife *Circumciſed the Child, and that in an Inn*, Exod. 4. A Duty is ſometimes poſitively enjoyn'd in the Scriptures, when the Circumſtances belonging to the Duty are undetermined. Thus the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is appointed by Chriſt, but the Time, the Place, the Geſture, not poſitively commanded, but to be prudentially determined. *Obſerve* (2.) The Name is given, or at leaſt declared at the time of the Child's Circumciſing, and that by its Parents, *His Mother ſaid, he ſhall be called John*. But how did his Mother know *That*, when her Husband was Dumb? *Anſwer*, 'Tis like her Husband *Zachary* had by a Writing informed his Wife concerning the whole Viſion, and what Name was impoſed upon him by the Angel; therefore ſhe ſays, *He ſhall be called John*, and *Zachary* ratifies it, *His Name is John*. The Nomination was originally from the Angel, the Impoſition of the Name is now at Circumciſion from the Parents. *Obſ.* (3.) How Ancient a Cuſtom it has been to give Names to Children, according to the Names of their Fathers or Kindred. *There is none of thy Kindered of this Name*. ſay they: The *Jews* made it a part of Religion to give ſuitable Names to their Children, and ſignificant Names. Accordingly they either gave them Names to put them in remembrance of God's Mercy to them, or of their Duty to him. Thus *Zachary* ſignifies *the Remembrance of God*; which Name points at God's Mercy in remembring him, and his Duty in remembring God. Well then, is it uſual and uſeful for Parents to give ſignificant Names to their Children? Then let Children have a holy Ambition to make good the Signification of their Names. Thus *John* ſignifies *the Grace of God*; but how will that gracious Name riſe up in Judgment againſt that Child that is Graceleſs? *Obſerve* (4.) How *Zachary*'s Speech is immediately reſtored to him upon the naming of his Child. The Angel, *v.* 20. told him, *He ſhould be Dumb till the things he told him ſhould be performed*; and now that they were performed, *his Tongue is looſed, and he Praiſed God*, in a moſt thankful manner. *Obſerve* (5.) The Effect which all this had upon the Neighbourhood; *Fear came upon all them that dwelt round about them*; that is, an Awful and Religious Fear of God, occaſioned by theſe Miraculous Operations; and they *laid up theſe Sayings in their Hearts*, that is, conſidered of them, and pondered upon them: It argues a very vain Spirit and temper of Mind, when we paſs over the Obſervation of God's Wonderful Acts with a ſlight Regard. The true Reaſon why we do ſo little admire the Wonderful Works of God, is, becauſe we conſider ſo little of them. *Obſ.* (6.) The ſpecial Favour vouchſafed by God to this Child *John*, *The Hand of the Lord was with him*; that is, God was in a ſpecial manner preſent with him, to direct and aſſiſt him, to protect and proſper him. The Hand of God in Scripture ſignifies the Help of God, the Strength and Aſſiſtance of God. The Hand of Man is a weak and impotent Hand, a ſhort and ineffectual Hand: but the Hand of God is a Strong Hand, an Almighty Hand, able to aſſiſt and help, able to protect and preſerve: *The Hand of the Lord was with him*; that is, the Heart of God, and the Help of God, the Love and Favour of God to ſupport him, and the Power and Providence of God to protect and preſerve him. Lord, let our Hearts be with thee, and then thy Heart, and thy helping Hand will be with us.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and propheſied, ſaying, 68 Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people, *69* And hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David; 70 As he ſpake by the mouth, of his holy prophets, which have been ſince the world began; 71 That we ſhould be ſaved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. 72 To perform the mercy *promiſed* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: 73 The oath which he ſware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would give unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, 75 In holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou child ſhalt be called the prophet of the Higheſt: for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people, by the remiſſion of their ſins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us. *79* To give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace.

Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That no ſooner was *Zachary* recovered and reſtored to his Speech, but he ſings the Praiſes of his Redeemer, and offers up a Thankſgiving to God: The beſt Return we can make to God for the uſe of our Tongue, for the giving or reſtoring of our Speech, is to publiſh our Creator's Praiſe, to plead his Cauſe, and vindicate his Honour. *Obſerve* (2.) What it is that *Zachary* makes the ſubject Matter of his Song. What is the particular and ſpecial Mercy which he praiſes and bleſſes God for? It is not for his own particular and private Mercy; namely the Recovery of his Speech, (tho' undoubtedly he was very thankful to God for that Mercy) but he Bleſſes and Praiſes God for Catholick and Univerſal Mercies beſtowed upon his Church and People: He doth not ſay, Bleſſed be the Lord God of *Iſrael* that hath viſited me in Mercy, that hath once more looſed my Tongue, and reſtored my Speech: But, *Bleſſed be God that hath viſited and redeemed his People.* Whence *Learn*, That it is both the Duty and Diſpoſition of a gracious Soul to abound in Praiſe and Thankfulneſs to God, more for Catholick and Univerſal Mercies towards the Church of God, than for any particular and private Mercies, how great ſoever towards himſelf. *Bleſſed be God for viſiting and redeeming his People.* *Obſerve* (3.) In this Evangelical Hymn, there is a Prophetical Prediction; both concerning Chriſt, and concerning *John*. Concerning Chriſt he declares, That God the Father had ſent him of his free Mercy and rich Grace, yet in performance of his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and according to his Promiſe and Oath which he made to *Abraham*, and the Fathers of the Old Teſtament. Where *Note* (1.) He bleſſes God for the Comprehenſive Bleſſing of the Meſſiah, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael who hath viſited his People*; namely, in his Son's Incarnation. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the Fulneſs of Time made ſuch a viſit to this ſinful World, as Men and Angels admired at, and will admire to all Eternity. *Note*, (2.) The ſpecial fruit and benefit of this gracious and merciful Viſitation, and that was the Redemption of a loſt World; *he hath viſited and redeemed his People.* This implies that miſerable Thraldom and Bondage, which we were under to Sin and Satan, and expreſſes the ſtupendious Love of Chriſt, in buying our Lives with his deareſt Blood; and both by Price and Power reſcuing us out of the Hands of our Spiritual Enemies. *Note* (3.) The Character given of This Saviour and Reedemer; he is *an Horn of Salvation*; that is a Royal and Glorious, a Strong and Powerful Saviour to his Church and People. The Horn in Scripture ſignifies Glory and Dignity, Strength and Power; as the Beauty, ſo the Strength of the Beaſt lies in its Horn: Now Chriſt being ſtiled an Horn of Salvation, intimates, that he himſelf is a Royal and Princely Saviour, and that the Salvation, which he brings, is great and plentiful, glorious and powerful; *God hath raiſed up an horn of Salvation for us in the houſe of his Servant David.* *Note* (4.) The Nature and Quality of that Salvation and Deliverance, which the Son of God came to accompliſh for us. Not a Temporal Deliverance, as the *Jews* expected from the power of the *Romans*, but Spiritual from the hands of Sin and Satan, Death and Hell; his Deſign was to purchaſe a Spiritual Freedom and Liberty for us, *that we might be enabled to ſerve him without fear*; that is, without the ſervile and offending Fear of a Slave, but with the Dutiful and ingenuous Fear of a Child; and this *in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*; that is, in the Duties of the Firſt and Second Table, *all the days of our Life.* *Learn hence*, That Believers, who were Slaves of Satan, are by Chriſt made God's free Men. 2*ly*, That as ſuch they owe God a Service, a willing, chearful, and delightful Service, *without fear*; and a conſtant perſevering Service *all the days of their Life*, that *we being delivered out of the hands*, &c. *Note* (5.) The Scource and Fountain from whence this Glorious Saviour, and Gracious Salvation did ariſe and ſpring; namely, from the Mercy and Faithfulneſs of God; *To perform the mercy promiſed to our Fore-fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant, the Oath which he ſware to our Father Abraham. Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Mercy of Mercies, was graciouſly promiſed, and faithfully performed by God to his Church and People. Chriſt was a free and full Mercy; a ſuitable, a ſeaſonable, and a ſatisfying Mercy; an incomparable, unſearchable, and everlaſting Mercy, which God graciouſly promiſed in the beginning of Time, and faithfully performed in the fulneſs of Time. Thus far this Hymn of *Zachary* reſpects the Meſſiah. *Obſ.* (4.) How he next turns himſelf to his Child, and Prophecies concerning him; *And thou Child ſhalt be called the Prophet of the Higheſt*, &c. Where *Note*, (1.) The Nature of his Office, *thou ſhalt be a Prophet*; not a common and ordinary one, but a Prophet of the higheſt Rank: the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts. A Prophet thou ſhalt be, and more than a Prophet. *Note* (2.) As the Nature of his Office, ſo the quality of his Work, *Thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way*: Thou ſhalt be an Herald and Harbinger to the moſt High; thou ſhalt go before the Face of the Meſſias, and by thy ſevere Reproofs, and powerful Exhortations, ſhalt prepare his way before him, and make Men fit and ready to receive this mighty Saviour. Thou Child ſhalt be as the Morning Star to foretel the Glorious ariſing of this Sun of Righteouſneſs. *Learn hence*, (1.) That it is the higheſt Honour and Dignity to ſerve Chriſt in the quality and relation of a Prophet. (2.) That it is the Office and Duty of the Prophets of Chriſt, to prepare and make fit the Hearts of Men to receive and embrace him. *Obſ.* (5.) That *Zachary* having ſpoken a few Words concerning his Son, he returns inſtantly to Celebrate the Praiſes of our Saviour, comparing him to the Riſing Sun, which ſhined forth in the Brightneſs of his Goſpel, to enlighten the dark corners of the World, *Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us, to give Light to them that ſit in Darkneſs. Learn here*, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt is that true Son of Righteouſneſs, which in the fulneſs of Time did ſpring from on high, to viſit a loſt and undone World. (2.) That the great Errand of Chriſt's coming into the World, and the particular End of his Appearing in the Fleſh, it was *to give Light to them that ſit in Darkeneſs*. (3.) That it was nothing leſs than Infinite Mercy and Bowels of Compaſſion in God and Chriſt, which inclined him to come from on high to viſit them that ſit in Darkneſs: *Through the tender Bowels of Mercy in our God, whereby his own and only Son ſprung from on high to viſit us here below, who ſat in Darkneſs and the ſhadow of Death; and to guide our Feet into the way that leads to everlaſting peace.*

8 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, and was in the deſerts, till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael.

Here we have a ſhort account of *John*'s private Life before he entred upon his publck Miniſtry, which was at Thirty Years of Age; *He grew*, that is, in Bodily Stature, *and waxed ſtrong in Spirit*, that is, in the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit which increaſed with his Age, and ſhewed themſelves in him every Day more and more; *And he was in the Deſerts*, that is, in the Mountainous Country of *Judea* where he was Born, till the time of his Preaching to, and amongſt the *Jews*; not that he lived like an Hermit, Recluſe from all Society with Men, but contented himſelf to continue in an obſcure Privacy, till called forth to Promulge and Preach the Goſpel; and when that time was come, *John* leaves the Hilly-country, and enters with Reſolution and unwearied Diligence upon his publick Miniſtry: *Teaching* us by his Example, That when we are fit and ripe for publick Service, we ſhould no leſs willingly leave our Obſcurity, than we took the benefit of it for our Preparation. *John abode in the Deſerts till his ſhewing unto Iſrael*; that is, Till the time of his ſetting forth to execute his Office among the *Jews*.

CHAP. II.

AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was firſt made when Cyrenius was Governour of Syria) 3 And all went to be taxed; every one into his own city. 4 And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (becauſe he was of the houſe and lineage of David) 5 To be taxed with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child. 6 And ſo it was, that while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered. 7 And ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwadling cloaths, and laid him in a manger, becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.

The Concluſion of the former Chapter acquainted us with the Birth of *John the Baptiſt*; the beginning of this Chapter relates the Birth of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and the remarkable Circumſtances which did attend it. And here we have *Obſervable*, (1.) The Place where he was Born, not at *Nazareth*, but at *Bethlehem*, according to the Prediction of the Prophet *Micah*, chap. 5. 2. *And thou Bethlehem in the Land of Judah, are not the leaſt among the Princes of Judah, for out of thee ſhall come a Governour, that ſhall rule my People Iſrael.* We may ſuppoſe, that the Bleſſed Virgin little thought of changing her Place, but to have been delivered of her Holy Burthen at *Nazareth*, where it was Conceived; her Houſe at *Nazareth* was honoured by the Preſence of the Angel; yea, by the Overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt: That Houſe therefore, we may ſuppoſe, was moſt ſatisfactory to the Virgin's deſire. But he that made choice of the Womb, where his Son ſhould be Conceived, it was fit he ſhould alſo chooſe the Place where his Son ſhould be Born. And this Place many Hundred Years before the Nativity was foretold ſhould be *Bethlehem*. *Obſ.* (2.) How remarkable the Providence of God was in bringing the Virgin up from *Nazareth* to *Bethlehem*, that Chriſt (as it was Prophecied to him) might be Born there. *Auguſtus* the *Roman* Emperor, to whom the Nation of the *Jews* was now become Tributary, puts forth a Decree, that all the *Roman* Empire ſhould have their Names and Families Inroll'd in order to their being Taxed. This Edict required, That every Family ſhould repair to that City to which they did belong, to be Inroll'd and Taxed there. Accordingly *Joſeph* and *Mary*, being of the Houſe and Lineage of *David*, have recourſe to *Bethlehem* the City of *David*, where according to the Prophecy the Meſſiah was to be Born. Here *Note*, How the Wiſdom of God over-rules the Actions of Men, for higher and nobler Ends, than what they aimed at. The Emperor's Aim by this Edict was to fill his Coffers, God's End was to fulfil his Prophecies. *Obſ.* (3.) How readily *Joſeph* and *Mary* yielded Obedience to the Edict and Decree of this Heathen Emperor. It was no leſs than four Days Journey from *Nazareth* to *Bethlehem*; How juſt an Excuſe might the Virgin have pleaded for her abſence? What Woman ever undertook ſo hazardous a Journey, that was ſo near her Delivery? And *Joſeph* no doubt was ſufficiently unwilling to draw her forth into ſo manifeſt an Hazard. But as the Emperor's Command was peremptory, ſo their Obedience was exemplary. We muſt not plead difficulty for withdrawing our Obedience to Supreme Commands. How did our Bleſſed Saviour, even in the Womb of his Mother, yield Homage to Civil Rulers and Governours. The firſt Leſſon which Chriſt's Example taught the World, was Loyalty and Obedience to the Supreme Magiſtrate. *Obſ.* (4.) After many weary Steps, the Holy Virgin comes to *Bethlehem*, where every Houſe is taken up, by reaſon of the great Confluence of People that came to be Taxed; and there is no room for Chriſt but in a Stable: The Stable is our Lord's Palace, the Manger is his Cradle. O how can we be abaſed low enough for him, that thus neglected himſelf for us! What an early indication was this, that our Lord's Kingdom was not of this World? Yet ſome obſerve a Myſtery in all this: An Inn is *Domus publici Juris*; not a private Houſe, but open and free for all Paſſengers, and the Stable is the commoneſt place in the Inn; to mind us, that he who was Born there, ſhould be a Common Saviour, to High and Low, Noble and Baſe, Rich and Poor, Jew and and Gentile; called therefore ſo often the Son of Man; the Deſign of his Birth being the Benefit of Mankind.

8 And there were in the ſame country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over

their flock by night: 9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and they were ſore afraid. 10 And the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. 12 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you; ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwadling cloaths lying in a manger.

Here we have the promulgation, and firſt publiſhing of our Saviour's Birth to the World. *The Angel ſaid unto the Shepherds, I bring you glad Tidings*, a Saviour is Born. Where *Obſ.* (1.) The Meſſenger imployed by God to publiſh the joyful News of a Saviour's Birth; the Holy Angels Heavenly Meſſengers imployed about an Heavenly Work: It is worth our Notice, how ſerviceable the Angels were to Chriſt upon all Occaſions, when he was here upon Earth; an Angel declares his *Conception*, an Hoſt of Angels publiſh his Birth; in his *Temptation*, an Angel ſtrengthn'd him; in his *Agony* an Angel Comforts him; at his *Reſurrection* an Angel rolls away a Stone from the Door of the Sepulcher; At his *Aſcenſion* the Angel attend him up to Heaven, and at his *Second coming to judge the World*, he ſhall be Revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. And great Reaſon there is, that the Angels ſhould be thus Officious in their Attendances upon Chriſt, who is an Head of Confirmation to them, as he was an Head of Redemption to fallen Man. *Obſ.* (2.) The Perſons to whom this joyful Meſſage of a Saviour's Birth is firſt brought, and they are the Shepherds, *the Angel ſaid unto the Shepherds, Fear not.* (1.) Becauſe Chriſt the great Shepherd of his Church was now come into the World; (2.) Becauſe he was of old promiſed unto Shepherds, the old Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, who by their Occupation where Shepherds. *Obſ.* (3.) The time when theſe Shepherds had the Honour of this Revelation; it was not when they were aſleep on their Beds of Idleneſs and Sloth, *but when they were lying abroad, and watching their Flocks.* The Bleſſings of Heaven uſually meet us in the way of an honeſt and induſtrious Diligence; whereas the idle are fit for nothing but Temptation to work upon. If theſe Shepherds had been ſnorting in their Beds, they had no more ſeen Angels, nor yet heard the News of a Saviour, than their Neighbours. *Obſ.* (4.) The nature and quality of the Meſſage which the Angel brought, it was a *Meſſage of Joy*, a Meſſage of *great Joy*, a Meſſage of *great Joy unto all People.* For here was Born a Son, that Son a Prince, that Prince a Saviour, that Saviour not a particular Saviour of the *Jews* only, but an univerſal Saviour, whoſe *Salvation is to the ends of the Earth.* Well might the Angel call it a Meſſage, or glad Tidings of Great Joy unto all People. *Obſ.* (5.) The ground and occaſion of this Joy, the Foundation of all this good News which was proclaimed in the Ears of a loſt World, and that was the Birth of a Saviour: *Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord.* Hence *Learn*, (1.) That the Incarnation and Birth of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his Manifeſtation in our Fleſh, and Nature, was and is matter of exceeding joy and rejoycing unto all People. (2.) That the great End and Deſign of our Lord's Incarnation and Coming into the World, it was to be the Saviour of loſt Sinners; *unto you is born a Saviour which is Chriſt the Lord.*

13 And ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God, and ſaying, 14 Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

Although the Birth of our Bleſſed Saviour was publiſhed by one Angel, yet is it Celebrated by an Hoſt of Angels; A whole Choir of Angels chaunt forth the Praiſes of Almighty God, upon this great and joyful Occaſion. Here *Obſerve* (1.) The Singers, (2.) The Song it ſelf. The Singers of this Heavenly Anthem are the holy Angels; called *an Hoſt*, partly, for their Number, and partly for their Order. Where *Learn*, (1.) The goodneſs and ſweet diſpoſition of theſe Bleſſed *Spirits*, in whoſe Boſoms that Cankered Paſſion of Envy has no place; if it had, there was never ſuch an occaſion to ſtir it up, as now: But Heaven admits of no ſuch Paſſion; Envy is a Native of Hell, 'tis the ſmoke of the Bottomleſs Pit, the character and temper of the Apoſtate ſpirits; theſe grieve at the Happineſs of Man, as much as the Angels rejoyce. O ye Bleſſed Angels, what did theſe Tidings concern you, that ruin'd Mankind ſhould be taken again into Favour; whereas thoſe of your own Hoſt, which fell likewiſe, remained ſtill in the gulph of Perdition into which their Sin had plung'd them, without either hope of Mercy, or poſſibility of Recovery. The leſs we repine at the Good, and the more we rejoyce at the Happineſs of others, the more like we are to the Holy Angels; yea, the more we reſemble God himſelf. *Learn* (2.) Did the Angels thus joy and rejoyce for us? then what joy ought we to expreſs for our ſelves? Had we the Tongue of Angels; we could not ſufficiently chaunt forth the Praiſes of our Redeemer. Eternity it ſelf, it will be too ſhort to ſpend in the Rapturous Contemplation of Redeeming Mercy. *Obſ.* (2.) The Anthem, or Song it ſelf, which begins with a Doxology, *Glory be to God in the Higheſt*; that is, let God in the higheſt Heavens be glorified by the Angels that dwell on high. The Angelical Quire excite themſelves, and all the Hoſt of Angels, to give glory to God for theſe wonderful Tidings; as if they had ſaid, Let the Power, the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, be acknowledged and revered by all the Hoſt of Heaven; for ever and ever. Next to the Doxology follows a Gratulation: Glory be to God in the Higheſt, *for there is peace on Earth*, and *good will towards Men.* The Birth of Chriſt has brought a peace of Reconciliation betwixt G O D and Man upon Earth; and alſo a peace of Amity and Concord betwixt Man and Man, and therefore to be Celebrated with Acclamations of Joy.

15 And it came to paſs, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the ſhepherds ſaid one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had ſeen *it*, they made known abroad the ſaying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard *it*, wondered at thoſe things, which were told them by the ſhepherds. 19 But Mary kept all theſe things, and pondered *them* in her heart. 20 And the ſhepherds returned, glorifying and praiſing God for all the things that they had heard and ſeen as it was told unto them.

Several particulars are here obſervable, as (1.) That the Shepherds no ſooner hear the News of a Saviour, but they run to *Bethlehem* to ſeek him: And tho' it was at Midnight, yet they delayed not to go. Thoſe that left their Beds to attend their Flocks, now leave their Flocks to enquire after their Saviour. *Learn thence*, That a gracious Soul no ſooner hears where Chriſt is, but inſtantly makes out after him, and judges no earthly Comfort too dear to be left and forſaken for him. Theſe Shepherds ſhew, That they preferred their Saviour before their Sheep. *Obſ.* (2.) Theſe Shepherds having found Chriſt themſelves do make him known to others. v. 17. *When they had ſeen it, they made known abroad the ſaying, which was told them concerning this child.* *Learn*, That ſuch as have found Chriſt to their Comfort, and taſted that the Lord is gracious to themſelves, cannot but recommend him to the Love and Admiration of others. *Obſ.* (3.) What effect this relation had upon the generality of People that heard it: It wrought in them amazement and aſtoniſhment but not Faith: *The People wondered*, but not believed. 'Tis not the hearing of Chriſt with the hearing of the Ear, nor the ſeeing of Chriſt with the ſight of the outward Eye; neither the hearing of his Doctrine, nor the ſight of his Miracles, will work Divine Faith in the Soul, without the concurring Operation of the holy Spirit; the one may make us marvel, but the other makes us believe, *All that heard it wondered at theſe things.* *Laſtly, Note*, The effect which theſe things had upon *Mary*, quite different from what they had upon the Common People; *they wondered, ſhe pondered*; the things that affected their Heads, influenced her Heart, *ſhe kept all theſe things, and laid them up in her Heart.*

21 And when eight days were accompliſhed for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was ſo named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Two things are here *obſervable*; our Saviour's Circumciſion, and the Name given him at his Circumciſion. There was no Impurity in the Son of God, and yet is he Circumciſed, and Baptized alſo, tho' he had neither Filth nor Foreskin, which wanted either the Circumciſing Knife, or the Baptiſmal Water, yet he condeſcends to be both Circumciſed and Baptized; thereby ſhewing, that as he was made of a Woman, ſo he would be made under the Law, which he punctually obſerved to a tittle. And accordingly he was not only Circumciſed, but Circumciſed the eighth Day, as the Ceremonial Law required: And thus our Lord *fulfilled all Righteouſneſs*, St. *Matth.* 3. 15. *Obſ.* (2.) The Name given at our Saviour's Circumciſion; *His Name was called Jeſus*; that is, a Saviour, he being *to ſave his People from their Sins*, St. *Matth.* 1. 21. The great End of Chriſt's coming into the World was to ſave Perſons from the puniſhment and power of their Sins. Had he not ſaved us from our Sins, we muſt have dyed in our Sins, and dyed for our Sins, and that Eternally. Never let us then ſit down deſponding, either under the Guilt, or under the Power of our Sins, and conclude, that they are either ſo great, that they cannot be forgiven, or ſo ſtrong, that they can never be overcome.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent him to the Lord, 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb ſhall be called holy to the Lord.) 24 And to offer a ſacrifice according to that which is ſaid in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pidgeons.

A Twofold Act of Obedience doth the Holy Virgin here perform to two Ceremonial Laws; The one concerning the Purification of Women after Child birth, the other concerning the Preſenting the Male-Child before the Lord. The Law concerning the Purification of Women, we have Recorded, *Levit.* 12. where the Time mentioned for the Woman's Purification is ſet down; namely, after a Male-Child *forty Days*, after a Female, *fourſcore Days*; after which time ſhe was to bring a *Lamb of a Year old*, for a Burnt-offering, in caſe ſhe was a Perſon of Ability; or *a pair of Turtle-Doves*, or *two young Pigeons*, in caſe of extreme Poverty. Now as to the Virgin's Purification. *Obſ.* (1.) That no ſooner was ſhe able and allowed to walk, but ſhe travels to the Temple. Where *Note*, That ſhe viſited God's Houſe at *Jeruſalem*, before her own Houſe at *Nazareth*. *Learn thence*, That ſuch Women, whom God has bleſt with ſafety of Deliverance, if they make not their firſt Viſit to the Temple of God, to offer up their Praiſes and Thankſgivings there, they are ſtrangers to the Virgin's Piety and Devotion. *Obſ.* 2. Another Act of *Mary*'s Obedience to the Ceremonial Law, *She preſented her Child at Jeruſalem to the Lord.* But how durſt the Bleſſed Virgin carry her Holy Babe to *Jeruſalem* into *Herod*'s mouth? It was but a little before, that *Herod* ſought the young Child's Life to deſtroy it; yet the Virgin ſticks not, in obedience to the Commands of God, to carry him to *Jeruſalem*. *Learn hence*, That no apprehenſion of Dangers, either eminent or approaching, either at hand, or afar off, ought to hinder us from performing our Duty to Almighty God: we ought not to neglect a certain Duty, to eſcape an uncertain Danger. *Obſerve further*, As the Obedience, ſo the Humility of the Holy Virgin, in ſubmitting to the Law for purifying of Uncleanneſs: For thus ſhe might have pleaded; What need have I of Purging, who did not Conceive in Sin? Other Births are from Men, but mine is from the Holy Ghoſt, who is Purity it ſelf. Other Womens Children are under the Law, mine is above the Law; but like the Mother of him, whom it behoved to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, ſhe dutifully fulfils the Law of God without quarrelling or diſputing. *Obſ. Laſtly*, As the exemplary Humility, ſo the great Poverty of the Holy Virgin: She has not a Lamb, but comes with her two Doves to God. Her Offering declares her Penury. The Beſt are ſometimes the pooreſt, ſeldom the wealthieſt: Yet none are ſo poor but God expects an Offering from them; he looks for ſomewhat from every one, not from every one alike. The Providence of God it is that makes difference in Perſons Abilities, but his Pleaſure will make no difference in the Acceptation. *Where there is a willing Mind it ſhall be accepted according to what a Perſon hath*, 2 Cor. 8. 12.

25 And behold, there was a man in Jeruſalem, whoſe name was Simeon; and the ſame man was juſt and devout, waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael: and the holy Ghoſt was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death, before he had ſeen the Lords Chriſt. 27 And he came by the ſpirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and bleſſed God, and ſaid,

No ſooner was our Saviour brought into the Temple, and preſented to the Lord by his holy Parents, but in ſprings old *Simeon*, a pious and devout Man, who had a Revelation from God, That he ſhould not dye until he had with his Bodily Eye ſeen the promiſed Meſſiah. Accordingly, *he takes up the Child Jeſus in his Arms*, but hugs him faſter by his Faith than by his feeble Arms; and with Raviſhment of Heart, Praiſes God for the ſight of his Saviour, whom he calls the *Conſolation of Iſrael*; that is, the Meſſiah, whom the *Iſrael* of God had long look'd and waited for, and now took Comfort and Conſolation in. *Note here*, (1.) How God always performs his promiſes to his Children, with wonderful Advantage. *Simeon* had a Revelation, that he ſhould not Dye until he had ſeen Chriſt; now he not only ſees him, but feels him too; he not only has him in his Eye, but holds him in his Hands. Tho' God ſtays long before he fulfils his Promiſes, he certainly comes at laſt, with a double Reward for our Expectation. *Note* (2.) That the Coming of the Meſſiah in the fulneſs of Time, and his appearing in our Fleſh and Nature, was, and is Matter of unſpeakable Conſolation to the *Iſrael* of God. And now that he is come, let us live by Faith upon him, as the Foundation of all Comfort and Conſolation, both in Life and Death. Alas! What are all other Conſolations beſides this, and without this? They are impotent and inſufficient Conſolations, they are dying and periſhing Conſolations; nay, they are ſometimes afflictive and diſtreſſing Conſolations. The Bitterneſs accompanying them, is ſometimes more than the Sweetneſs that is taſted in them; but in Chriſt, who is *the Conſolation of Iſrael*, there is Light without Darkneſs, Joy without Sorrow, all Conſolation, without any mixture of Diſcomfort.

29 Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word, 30 For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation: 31 Which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people: 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Iſrael. 33 And Joſeph and his mother marvelled at thoſe things which were ſpoken of him.

Theſe Words are a ſweet Canticle, or Swan-like Song of old *Simeon*, a little before his Diſſolution. He had ſeen the Meſſias before by Faith, now by Sight, and wiſhes to have his Eyes cloſed, that he might ſee nothing after this deſirable Sight. It is ſaid of ſome *Turks*, that after they have ſeen *Mahomet*'s Tomb, they put out their Eyes, that they may never defile them after they have ſeen ſo glorious an Object: Thus old *Simeon* deſires to ſee no more of this World, after he had ſeen Chriſt the Saviour of the World; but ſues for his Diſmiſſion, *Lord, Let thy Servant depart.* *Note here*, 1. That a good Man having ſerved his Generation, and God in his Generation faithfully, is weary of the World, and willing to be diſmiſt from it. 2. That the Death of a good Man is nothing elſe but a quiet and peaceable Departure; 'tis a Departure *in Peace, to the God of Peace.* 3. That it is only a Spiritual Sight of Chriſt by Faith that can welcome the approach of Death, and render it an Object deſirable to the Chriſtian's Choice; he only that can ſay, *My Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation*, will be able to ſay, *Lord, let thy Servant depart.* *Obſerve farther*, Holy *Simeon* having declared the Faithfulneſs of God to himſelf in the Gift of Chriſt; next he celebrates the Mercy of God in beſtowing this invaluable Gift of a Saviour upon the whole World. The World conſiſts of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Chriſt is *a Light to the one*, and *the Glory of the other*. A Light to the blind and dark *Gentiles*, and the Glory of the renowned Church of the *Jews*; the Meſſias being promiſed to them, born and bred up with them, living amongſt them, Preaching his Doctrine to them, and working his Miracles before them: And thus was Chriſt *the Glory of his People Iſrael*.

34 And Simeon bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael; and for a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt: 35 (Yea, a ſword ſhall paſs through thine own ſoul alſo) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Two things are here obſerved, *Simeon*'s Bleſſing, and *Simeon*'s Prediction; *he bleſſed them*, that is, the Parents, and the Child Jeſus, not Authoritatively, but Prophetically, declaring how God would bleſs them, his Prediction is Twofold, (1.) Concerning Chriſt. (2.) Concerning his Mother; Concerning Chriſt *Simeon* declares, That he ſhould be *for the riſe of many in Iſrael*; namely, all ſuch as ſhould embrace and obey his Doctrine, and imitate and follow his Example; and *for the fall of others*; that is, ſhall bring Puniſhment and Ruin upon all obdurate and impenitent Sinners; and a *Sign to be ſpoken againſt*; that is, he ſhall be as a Mark for obſtinate Sinners to ſet themſelves againſt. Chriſt himſelf when here in the World, was *a Stone of ſtumbling*, and a *Rock of Offence* to the Men of the World, *enduring the contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*, both the virulence of their Tongues, and the violence of their Hands. Doubtleſs God's firſt Deſign in ſending his Son into the World, was, *That through Him the World might be Saved*, John 3. 16. But to ſuch Perſons, whoſe Mind had no Reliſh for Spiritual Things, he became accidentally a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence. (2.) Concerning the Mother of Chriſt, *Simeon* declares, That the ſight of her Son's Bitter Sufferings would like *a Sword pierce her Heart*; for tho' he might be Born, yet ſhould he not Dye without the Pains of his Mother; as if the Throws ſuffered by other Women at the Birth were reſerved for her to endure at the Death of her Son. The Sufferings of the Holy Jeſus on the Croſs, were as a Sword or Dagger at the Heart of the Holy Virgin, and ſhe ſuffered with him, both as a tender Mother, and as a Sympathizing Member of his Body. Yea, ſuffered Martyrdom after Him, ſaith *Epiphanius*.

36 And there was one Anna a propheteſs, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aſer; ſhe was of a great age, and had lived with an husband ſeven years from her virginity: 37 And ſhe *was* a widow of about fourſcore and four years: which departed not from the temple, but ſerved *God* with faſtings and prayers night and day. 38 And ſhe coming in that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Iſrael.

Simeon is ſeconded by *Anna* a Propheteſs; ſhe alſo declares, that the Child Jeſus was the promiſed and expected Meſſias; and thus Chriſt was proclaimed in the Temple by two Heralds of different Sexes. Concerning this Aged Woman *Anna*, it is ſaid, that *ſhe departed not from the Temple Night nor Day*; not that ſhe lived and lodged there, but by her never departing from, underſtand her daily repairing to the Temple. That which is often done, is ſaid in Scripture to be always done; We are ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably: Thus we pray continually, when we pray as often as Duty requires us to pray. *Learn hence*, That ſuch Duties as a Chriſtian performs out of Conſcience, he will perform with Conſtancy and Perſeverance; Nature will have her good Moods, but Grace is ſteddy. The Devotions of a Pious Soul, like *Anna*'s, are as conſtant, but more frequent than the returns of Day and Night.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, filled with wiſdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

Here we ſee the Truth and Reality of Chriſt's Human Nature; he grew as we do, from Infancy to Childhood, from Childhood to Youth and Manhood. To his Divine Nature no Acceſſion or Addition could be made; for that which is Infinite cannot increaſe. The Deity was Infinite in Chriſt, ſo was not the Humanity, but capable of Additions; and accordingly as Chriſt grew up in the Stature of his Body, the Faculties of his Mind increaſed, thro' the Grace and Power of God's Spirit upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the paſſover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt.

Obſerve here, The Perſons making this Yearly Journey to *Jeruſalem*, our Saviour's Parents and himſelf. (1.) *Joſeph*, who is called Chriſt's Father; not that he was his Natural Father, for Chriſt had no Father upon Earth; but *Joſeph* was his reputed and ſuppoſed Father, his nurſing Father, who by the Appointment of God took a Fatherly care of him; and his Father-in-law, being Husband to *Mary*. (2.) *Mary* the Mother of Chriſt went up to *Jeruſalem*, with her Husband and her Son: God commanded only the Males to go up to *Jeruſalem*, the weaker Sex were excuſed; but the Holy Virgin well knowing the Spiritual Profit of that long Journey, would not ſtay at home. Such as will go no farther than they are dragged in Religious Exerciſes, are ſtrangers to the Virgin's Piety and Devotion. But (3.) *The Child Jeſus* in his Minority goes up with his Parents to this holy Solemnity, thereby no doubt intending our Inſtruction, when we are Young to give God an early Poſſeſſion of our Souls, to conſecrate the Virgin Operations of our Minds to him; and in our Youth to keep cloſe to the Worſhip and Service of God, when we are ſo importunately courted by the World. *Obſerve farther*, This holy Family came not to look at the Feaſt and be gone, but they duly ſtay'd out all the appointed Time. *Joſeph*'s Calling, and the Virgin's Houſhold-Buſineſs could neither keep them at home, nor haſten them home before the Publick Duties in the Temple were diſpatcht and ended. All worldly Buſineſs muſt give place to Divine Offices; and we muſt attend God's Service to the end, except we will depart unbleſt. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The conſtant Returns of their Devotion, *They went up to Jeruſalem every Year*. No Difficulties, no Diſcouragements could hinder their Attendance. Tho' 'tis no certain Evidence of the Truth of Grace, to frequent the Publick Aſſemblies, yet 'tis an infallible Sign of the want of Grace cuſtomarily to neglect them.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; and Joſeph and his mother knew not *of it*. 44 But they ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a days journey; and they ſought him among their kinſfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him.

The Service of the Temple being ended, they return home to *Nazareth*. Religious Duties are not to be attended to the prejudice and neglect of our particular Callings. God calls us as well from his Houſe, as to his Houſe. They are much miſtaken, who think God is pleaſed with nothing but Devotion; he that ſays, *Be fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*, ſays alſo, *be not ſlothful in Buſineſs*. Piety and Induſtry muſt keep pace with one another; God is as well pleaſed with our Return to *Nazareth*, as with our going up to *Jeruſalem*. *Obſerve farther*, Tho' *Joſeph* and *Mary* returned home, the Child Jeſus, unknown to them, ſtays behind. Their Back was no ſooner turn'd upon the Temple, but his Face was towards it; Chriſt had Buſineſs in that place, which his Parents knew not of. They miſſing him, *ſeek him in the Company*, concluding him with their *Kinſfolk and Acquaintance*; from whence we may *gather*, That the Parents of Chriſt knew him to be of a Sweet and Sociable, of a Free and Converſative, not of a ſullen and moroſe Diſpoſition. They did not ſuſpect him to be wandered into Fields or Deſerts, but when they miſt him, ſought him among their Kinsfolk: Had he not wont to Converſe formerly with them, he had not now been ſought amongſt them. Our Bleſſed Saviour, when on Earth, did not take pleaſure in a wild Retiredneſs, in a froward Auſterity, but in a mild Affability and amiable Converſation, and herein alſo his Example is very Inſtructive to us.

46 And it came to paſs, that after three days they found him in the temple, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them queſtions. 47 And all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers.

Obſerve here (1.) The Place where the Child Jeſus is found, *In the Temple*; Where could there be a more likely Place to find the Son of God, than in the Houſe of his Father? No wonder, that his Parents found him there: But that they went not firſt to ſeek Him there. *Obſerve* (2.) At Twelve Years old, our Saviour Diſputes in the Temple with the Doctors of the Law: Never had thoſe great Rabbies heard the Voice of ſuch a Tutor. Thus in our Saviour's Nonage he gives us a proof of his Proficiency, even as the Spring ſhews us, what we may hope for of the Tree in Summer. Our Saviour diſcovered his Accompliſhments by degrees; had his Perfections appeared all at once, they had rather dazled, than delighted the eyes of the Beholders; even as the Sun would confound all Eyes, ſhould it appear at its firſt Riſing in its full ſtrength. Chriſt could now have taught all thoſe great Rabbies the deep Myſteries of God, but being not yet called by his Father to be a publick Teacher, he contents himſelf to hear with Diligence, and to ask with Modeſty. *Learn hence*, That Parts and Abilities for the Miniſterial Function are not ſufficient to warrant our Undertaking of it without a regular Call. Chriſt himſelf would not run, no not of his Heavenly Father's Errand, before he was ſent, much leſs ſhould we.

48 And when they ſaw him, they were amazed: and his mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing.

Without doubt it was impoſſible to expreſs the ſorrow of the Holy Virgin's Soul, when all the ſearch of three days could bring them no tidings of their Holy Child. How did ſhe blame her Eyes for once looking off this Object of her Love, and ſpend both Days and Nights in a paſſionate bemoaning of her Loſs! O bleſſed Saviour, who can miſs Thee, and not mourn for Thee? Never any Soul conceived Thee by Faith, but was apprehenſive of thy worth, and ſenſibly of thy want: What Comforts are we capable of, while we want Thee? And what reliſh can we taſte in any earthly Delight without Thee?

49 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my fathers buſineſs?

Obſerve here, That Chriſt blames not his Parents for their ſollicitous care of him; but ſhews them how able he was to live without any dependency upon them and their care; and alſo to let them underſtand, that higher reſpects had called him away; that as he had meat to eat, ſo had he work to do, which they knew not of. For, ſays he, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs*? As if he had ſaid, altho' I owe reſpect to you as my natural Parents, yet my Duty to my Heavenly Father muſt be preferred. I am about his Work, promoting his Glory, and propagating his Truth. We have alſo a Father in Heaven. Oh how good it is to ſteal away from our Earthly Diſtractions, that we may employ our ſelves immediately in his Service; that when the World makes inquiry after us, we may ſay as our Saviour did before us, *Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs?*

50 And they underſtood not the ſaying which he ſpake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them: but his mother kept all theſe ſayings in her heart. 52 And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man.

The moſt material paſſage of our Saviour's Life for the firſt Twelve Years is here Recorded; namely, his diſputing with the Doctors in the Temple; how he ſpent the next eighteen Years, namely, till he was Thirty, the Scripture doth not mention. It is here ſaid, that he lived with, and was ſubject to his Parents, obeying their commands, and as it is believed, following their Employments, working upon the Trade of a Carpenter, as was obſerved, *Mark* 6. 3. doubtleſs he did not live an idle Life; and why ſhould he, that did not abhor the Virgins Womb, a Stable and a Manger, be ſuppoſed to abhor the works of an honeſt Vocation? *Obſerve farther*, What a ſingular pattern is here for Children to imitate and follow in their Subjection to their Parents: If the greateſt and higheſt of Mortals think themſelves above their Parents commands, our Saviour did not ſo, he pay'd Homage to the Womb that bare him, and to his ſuppoſed Father that provided for him. Let a Perſon be never ſo high above others, he is ſtill below and inferiour to his Parents. Jeſus dwelt with his Parents, and *was ſubject to them*. *Obſerve laſtly*, A further Evidence of our Saviour's Humanity, with reſpect to his Humane Nature, which conſiſted of Body and Soul, he did grow and improve, his Body in Stature, his Soul in Wiſdom; and he became every Day a more eminent and illuſtrious Perſon in the eyes of all, *being highly in favour both with God and Man*. Vain then is the Concluſion of the *Socinians* from this Text, that Chriſt could not be God: Becauſe God cannot wax ſtrong in Spirit, or increaſe in Wiſdom, as Chriſt is here ſaid to do; for God's Perfections are Infinite, and will admit of no encreaſe. Whereas it is plain, that this encreaſe here attributed to Chriſt, in Age and Stature, reſpects his Humanity, the Wiſdom and Endowments of his Humane Mind were capable of encreaſe, tho' his Divine Perfections were abſolutely Perfect; ſo glad are theſe Men of the leaſt Shadow of a Text, that may Cloud the Divinity of the Son of God.

CHAP. III.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Ceſar, Pontius Pilate being governour of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyſanias the tetrarch of Abilene. 2 Annas and Caiphas being the high prieſts, the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias in the wilderneſs.

The two foregoing Chapters gave us an Account of the Birth of our Saviour Chriſt, and of *John* the Baptiſt. The Evangeliſt now leaving the Hiſtory of our Bleſſed Saviour for eighteen Years, namely, till he was Thirty years old (the Holy Ghoſt having thought fit to conceal that part of our Saviour's private Life from our Knowledge) he begins this Chapter with a Relation of the Baptiſt's Miniſtry, acquainting us with the Time when, and the Place where, and the Doctrine which the Baptiſt taught. *Obſ.* (1.) The Time deſcribed when St. *John* began his publick Miniſtry, namely, when *Tiberius* was Emperor, and *Annas* and *Caiphas* High-prieſts. *Obſ.* (2.) In the Fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*, when the *Jews* were intirely under the Power of the *Romans*, who ſet four Governours over them, called Tetrarchs, ſo named from their ruling over a fourth part of the Kingdom. From hence the *Jews* might have obſerved, had not prejudice blinded their Eyes, that the Scepter being thus departed from *Judah* according to *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *Gen.* 49. *Shilo*, or the Meſſias was now come. Again, the Time when St. *John* began his Miniſtry was, when *Annas* and *Caiphas were High-Prieſts*; under the Law there were three ſorts of Miniſters, that attended the Service of the Temple, namely, Prieſts, Levites, and Nethinims, over theſe the High-Prieſt was chief, who by God's Command was to be the firſt-born of *Aaron*'s Family. But how came two High-Prieſts here, ſeeing God never appointed but one at a time? In Anſwer to this, ſay ſome, the power and covetouſneſs of the *Romans*, put High-Prieſts at pleaſure to officiate for gain: Say others, the High-prieſt was allowed his Aſſiſtant or Deputy, who in caſe of his Pollution or Sickneſs, did officiate in his Place. But that which we may profitably obſerve from hence is this, The exactneſs and faithfulneſs of this Hiſtorian St. *Luke*, in relating the Circumſtances of our Saviour's Nativity, and the Baptiſt's Miniſtry. That the Truth might evidently appear, he is exact in Recording the Time.

3 And he came into all the countrey about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 5 Every valley ſhall be filled, and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth; 6 And all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The place where the Baptiſt exerciſed his Miniſtry, in the Wilderneſs of *Judea*, where were ſome Cities and Villages, tho' thinly inhabited. *Note* here, The great Humility of the Baptiſt, in preaching in an obſcure place, and to a ſmall handful of people: *Jeruſalem* ſome might think a fitter place for ſo celebrated a Preacher, but God had called him to preach in the Wilderneſs, and there he opens his Commiſſion. *Learn hence*, That the moſt eminent of God's Miniſters muſt be content to execute their Office, and exerciſe their Miniſtry where God calls them, be the Place never ſo mean and obſcure, and the People never ſo rude and barbarous. In the Place where God by his Providence fixes us, we muſt abide, till he that called us thither, removes us thence. And this was the Baptiſt's caſe here. He leaves the Wilderneſs at God's command, and comes to more Inhabited Places; *he came into the Country about Jordan*, preaching. It is not only lawful, but a neceſſary Duty for the Miniſters of God, to remove from one Place and People to another, provided their Call be clear, their way plain, the good of Souls their Motive, and the Glory of God their end. *Obſerve* (2.) The Doctrine which the Baptiſt preached, namely, *The Baptiſm of Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins*; that is, the Doctrine of Baptiſm, which ſealeth Remiſſion of Sins to the Party baptized. *Learn hence*, That the preaching of the Doctrine of Repentance is the indiſpenſable Duty of every Goſpel Miniſter; *John* the Baptiſt preacht it, our Saviour preacht it, his Apoſtles preacht it; *they went out every where preaching*, that Men ſhould Repent: Till we are in a State of Sinleſs Perfection, the Doctrine of Repentance muſt be preacht unto us, and practiced by us. *Obſ.* (3.) The Motive and Inducement which prompted the Baptiſt to his Duty, which was to fulfil the Prophecies that went before of him, *as it is written in the Book of the Prophecies, The voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtreight; every valley ſhall be filled*, &c. *Where Note* (1.) The Title given to *John the Baptiſt*, a *Voice*, a crying Voice. This implies both his vehemency and earneſtneſs, and alſo his freedom and boldneſs in delivering of his Meſſage; when a Miniſters own Heart is warmly affected with what he preaches, he may hope to affect the Hearts of others. *Note* (2.) The Sum and Subſtance of what he cry'd, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*, &c. that is, make your ſelves ready to receive the Meſſiah, to embrace and entertain his Doctrine. As loyal Subjects, when their Prince is coming near their City, they remove every thing out of the way that may hinder his Progreſs; all Annoyances, and all Impediments. In like manner the preparatory Work of the Goſpel upon the Hearts of Sinners, lies in pulling down Mountains, and filling up Valleys: that is, in humbling the proud Hearts of Sinners puft up, (as the Phariſees were) with a conceit of their own Righteouſneſs, who would be their own Saviours, and not beholding to Chriſt and his free-Grace for Salvation. *Learn hence* (1.) That Man's Heart is naturally very unfit to receive and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his holy Doctrine; we have naturally no fitneſs, no inclination, nor diſpoſition to believe in him, or ſubmit unto him. (2.) That if ever we deſign to entertain Chriſt in our Hearts, we muſt firſt prepare and make ready our Hearts for the receiving and embracing of him. For tho' *the preparation of the heart be from the Lord*, yet he requires the exerciſe of our Faculties, and the uſe of our endeavours; he prepares our Hearts by enabling us to prepare our own Hearts, by getting a ſight of the evil of Sin, and a Senſe of our Miſery without Chriſt; an hungring deſire after him, and a lively Faith in him. God does not work upon Man, as Maſons work upon Stone; what he doth in us and for us, he doth it by us, he works by ſetting us to work; therefore ſays the Holy Baptiſt, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make*, &c. The Act of Endeavour is ours, the aid and aſſiſtance is God's. *Obſ. Laſtly*, The encouragement which the Baptiſt gives to Perſons to prepare the way of the Lord; *for* (ſays he) *all fleſh ſhall ſee the Salvation of God*; that is, now is the time that all Perſons, Jews and Gentiles, may ſee the Author of Salvation, whom God has promiſed to the World, and may by Faith be made partakers of that Salvattion which the Meſſiah ſhall purchaſe for them, and in his Goſpel tender to them. The great End of Chriſt's coming into the World, was to purchaſe Salvation for all Fleſh, willing to be ſaved by him.

7 Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to ſay within your ſelves, We have Abraham to our father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham.

St. *Matthew*, Chap. 3. 7, 8. ſays, that the Baptiſt ſpake theſe Words to the Phariſees and Sadducees, whom he gives, firſt a quick and cutting Compellation, *O Generation of Vipers*; then a ſharp and ſevere Reprehenſion, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* And laſt of all, a ſeaſonable Exhortation, *bring forth therefore fruits meet for Repentance.* As if he had ſaid, O ye Phariſees and worſt of Men, I perceive by your coming hither, ſome Body has Alarm'd you with the Notices of that dreadful Vengeance that is coming upon this Generation, to prevent which, you pretend Repentance of your Sins, but let me ſee by your Actions, that you are not only demure but ſincere Penitents; let me ſee the Fruits of your Repentance in the daily Courſe of your Converſation, *Learn here*, (1.) That the Condition of proud Phariſees pretending and falſe hearted Hypocrites, tho' very dangerous, yet is not hopeleſs and deſperate, and their Salvation, tho' the worſt of Men muſt not be deſpaired of. St. *John* reproves them for their Sin, but yet enrages their Repentance. (2.) That ſincere Repentance is not a barren thing, but does conſtantly bring forth Fruits anſwerable to its Nature; as Faith without Works, ſo Repentance without Fruits is dead alſo. The genuine Fruits of Repentance, are humility of Heart, and holineſs of Life. *Obſ. Laſtly*, The cautionary Direction which he gives to theſe Hypocrites, not to reſt in their external Priviledges; *Think not to ſay within your ſelves, we have Abraham to our Father*; glory not in this, that you are the only viſible Church, that God has upon Earth; for God can out of the obdurate Gentile World raiſe up a People to himſelf, take them into Covenant with himſelf, and caſt you out. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Men are exceeding apt to boaſt of, and glory in their external Priviledges, and to place Religion in thoſe things wherein God places it leaſt. How did the *Jews* Glory in their fleſhly deſcent from *Abraham*, as if God were ty'd to *Abraham*'s Line, and could have no People, if he had not them for his People. (2.) That it is a vain thing to expect exemption from the Judgments of God, becauſe of outward Priviledges enjoyed by us. If we be not born again of the Spirit, it will avail us nothing to be born of *Abraham*'s Fleſh: If *Abraham*'s Faith be not found in our Hearts, it will be to no advantage to us, that *Abraham*'s Blood is running in our Veins; *Think not to ſay, we have Abraham to our Father.*

9 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and caſt into the fire.

St. *John* having preach'd the Doctrine of Repentance in the foregoing Verſes, he backs it with a powerful Argument in this Verſe drawn from the certainty and ſeverity of that Judgment, which ſhould come upon them if they continued in their Sins; *Now is the Ax laid to the root of the Tree. Learn* (1.) That it is not unſuitable for Goſpel-preachers, to preſs Repentance and Holineſs of Life upon their Hearers, from Arguments of Terrour; *John* does it here, and Chriſt elſewhere. (2.) That thoſe whoſe Hearts are not pierced with the Sword of God's Word, ſhall certainly be cut down and deſtroyed by the Ax of his Judgments. *Obſ. further*, That foraſmuch as the Sin here ſpecified is a Sin of Omiſſion, *every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit*, as well as that which bringeth forth evil Fruit, *is hewen down, and caſt into the fire. We learn*, That Sins of Omiſſion are certainly damning, as well as Sins of Commiſſion. The neglects of Duty are as dangerous and damnable as the Acts of Sin. Such Trees as ſtand in God's Orchard the Church, and bring forth no good Fruit, are markt out as Fewel for the Devil's Fire.

10 And the people asked him, ſaying, What ſhall we do then? 11 He anſwereth and ſaith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe.

The Baptiſt having preſt his Hearers to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance; here they inquire of him what Fruits they ſhould bring forth; he tells them firſt the fruits of Charity and Mercy, *he that hath two Coats, let him give to him that hath none.* This is not to be underſtood ſtrictly, as if the Command required us to give the Cloaths off our Back, to every one that wanted them: But it directs thoſe that have the things of this Life in abundance, to diſtribute and communicate to thoſe that are in want. *Learn hence*, That an extenſive Liberality, and diffuſive Charity in diſtributing ſuch things as we can well ſpare towards the relief of others Neceſſities is an excellent fruit of Repentance, and a good proof and evidence of the truth and ſincerity of it; *Let him that hath two coats, impart to him that hath none.* *Note*, That the Baptiſt here doth not make it unlawful for a Man to have two Coats, but means only, that he that has one Coat, which his Brother wants, and he at preſent doth not, ſhould rather give it him, than ſuffer him to be in want of it: *Teaching us*, That it is not lawful to abound in thoſe things which our Brother wants; when we have ſufficient, both to relieve his, and our Neceſſities.

12 Then came alſo publicans to be baptized, and

ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? 13 And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

The Publicans were Perſons employed by the *Romans* to gather the Tax of Tribute among the *Jews*, who were now Tributaries to the *Romans*, and paid them a publick Revenue. Theſe Publicans were great Oppreſſors, exacting more than was the Emperor's due, therefore we find Publicans and Sinners ſo often joyned together in the Goſpel. Theſe Men inquiring what Fruits of Repentance they ſhould bring forth, St. *John* directs them to Acts of Juſtice, *Exact not*. Where *Note*, (1.) That Acts of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, as well as of Charity and Mercy, are real Fruits of ſincere Repentance. *Obſ.* (2.) *John* doth not condemn the Office, but cautions the Officer. If Magiſtrates may impoſe Taxes, they may doubtleſs appoint Officers to Collect thoſe Taxes: Chriſtian Charity then muſt always teach us to diſtinguiſh betwixt the Calling and the Crime. We muſt not cenſure any Officer, either in Church or State, for the ſake of their Male Adminiſtration, who are imploy'd in that Office.

14 And the ſoldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe *any* falſly, and be content with your wages.

Obſerve here, What a general Reſort there was of all ſorts of Perſons to *John*'s Miniſtry, Phariſees, Sadducees, Publicans, Soldiers; theſe laſt here inquire of him, What they ſhould do to gain Acceptance with God? He anſwers, *Do no Violence, Defraud no Man of his own* by falſe Accuſation, but be content with the Allowance aſſigned for your Maintenance. Where it is, (1.) ſtrongly ſuppoſed, that Soldiers are inſolent Oppreſſors, making no Conſcience of Injuſtice, falſe Accuſation, and violent Oppreſſion: Yet, (2.) The Office and Employment of a Soldier is not condemned, but regulated; he does not bid them caſt away their Arms, abandon War, appear no more as Military Men in the Field, but manage their Employment inoffenſively. *Whence we Learn*, That in ſome Caſes, and under ſome Circumſtances, for Chriſtians to make War is both Lawful and Neceſſary. To make a War Lawful, there is required a Lawful Authority, a Righteous Cauſe, an honourable Aim and Intention, and a juſt and righteous manner of Proſecution, without Vanity and Oſtentation, without Cruelty and Oppreſſion; Courage and Compaſſion on the one hand, and Cowardiſe and Cruelty on the other hand, do frequently accompany one another.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt or not; 16 John anſwered, ſaying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe; he ſhall baptize you with the holy Ghoſt, and with fire. 17 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the extraordinarineſs of *John the Baptiſt*'s Perſon, the earneſtneſs of his Preaching, the acceptableneſs of his Doctrine, and the exemplarineſs of his Converſation, drew all Perſons to an Admiration of him, inſomuch, that they began to think within themſelves, whether he were not the Meſſias himſelf. He plainly tells them, he was not, but only his Servant, his Harbinger and Fore-runner. *Obſ.* (3.) The high Opinion which *John* had of Chriſt, *He is mightier than I*; that is, a Perſon of greater Authority, Dignity and Excellency than my ſelf. From whence may be *gathered*, That tho' Chriſt was Man, he was more than Man, even very God, equal with the Father; for *John* himſelf was the greateſt of them that were born of Women, *Mat.* 11. 11. yet ſays *John* Chriſt is mightier than I. How ſo? but in regard of the Dignity of his Perſon, being both God and Man; *He that cometh after me is mightier than I.* *Obſ.* (3.) The humble and low Eſtimation that the holy *Baptiſt* had of himſelf, *his ſhoe-latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe*; a Proverbial Speech, implying, that he was unworthy to do the loweſt Offices, and meaneſt Services for Chriſt: Lord, how well does humility of Mind, an humble Apprehenſion, and a low Opinion of themſelves, become the Meſſengers and Miniſters of Chriſt? *John* was a Man of eminent Abilities, yet of exemplary Humility; he thought himſelf unworthy to unlooſe Chriſt's Shoe. *Obſ.* (4.) *John* does not only declare the Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon, but the Excellency of his Office; *He ſhall Baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire*: as if he had ſaid, I only waſh the Body with Water, but Chriſt cleanſes the Soul by the Operation of his Holy Spirit, which is as Fire in the Effects of it, purifying the Hearts of his People from Sin, and conſuming their Luſts and Corruptions; yet at the ſame time having fiery Indignation, and flaming Judgments to deſtroy and burn up Impenitent Sinners like dry ſtubble. Obſervable it is in Scripture, that Chriſt is repreſented by one and the ſame Metaphor of Fire, in a way of Comfort to his Children, and in a way of Terror to his Enemies; he is Fire unto both. He ſits in the Hearts of his People as a Refiner's Fire; he is amongſt his Enemies as a Conſuming Fire; a Fire for his Church to take Comfort in, a Fire for his Enemies to periſh by. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the holy *Baptiſt* compares our Saviour to an Huſband-man, and the Jewiſh Church to a Barn-floor; the Office of the Huſbandman is to Threſh, Fan and Winnow his Corn, ſeparating it from the Chaff, preſerving the one, and conſuming the other. *Obſ.* (1.) That the Church is Chriſt's Floor. (2.) That this Floor Chriſt will purge, and that thoroughly. (3.) That the Word of Chriſt is the Fan in his Hand, by and with which he will thoroughly purge his Floor. The Church is compared to a Floor upon the account of that Mixture which is in the Church. In a Floor there is Straw as well as Grain, Chaff as well as Corn, Tares as well as Wheat, Cokel and Darnel as well as good Seed. Thus in the Church there has been, there is, and ever will be, a mixture of Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, Hypocrites and Sincere Chriſtians; but this Floor Chriſt will purge, purge it, but not break it up; purge out its Corruptions, but not deſtroy its Eſſence and Exiſtence: And the Fan in Chriſt's Hand, with which he will purge his Floor, is his Holy Word, accompanied with the Wing of Diſcipline. The Fan detects and diſcovers the Chaff, and the Wing diſſipates and ſcatters it, and by the help of both the Floor is purged; *His Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge*, &c.

18 And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philips wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he ſhut up John in priſon.

Obſerve here, (1.) In *John the Baptiſt* the Character of a Zealous and Faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel, he is one that deals plainly, and durſt tell the greateſt Perſons of their Faults. *Herod*, tho' a King, is reproved by him for his Adultery and Inceſt. The Crown and Scepter of *Herod* could not daunt the Faithful Meſſenger of God. There ought to meet in the Miniſters of Chriſt both Courage and Impartiality; Courage in fearing no Faces, and Impartiality in ſparing no Sins. *Obſ.* (2.) Who it was that Impriſoned and Beheaded the holy *Baptiſt*, *Herod* a King: How ſad is it, when Kings, who ſhould be Nurſing Fathers to the Church, do prove the bloody Butchers of the Prophets of God. Many of the ſevereſt Perſecutions which the Miniſters of God have fallen under, have been occaſioned by their telling great Men of their Crimes; Men in Power are impatient of Reproof, and imagine that their Authority gives them a Licenſe to tranſgreſs. *Obſ.* (3.) The heinous aggravations of this Sin in *Herod*, *He added this to all his other Sins, that he ſhut John up in Priſon*. This evidenced him incorrigible and unreclaimable. *John* had Preacht before *Herod*, and *Herod* had heard *John* with ſome delight, but he had a darling Luſt, which occaſioned his Deſtruction. *Learn thence*, That Hypocrites may hear the Word with ſome pleaſure, and do many Things with ſome delight, but they have always ſome beloved Luſt that muſt be ſpared, they will neither part with it, nor bear Reproof for it. *Herod* ſticks not to cut off that Head, whoſe Tongue was ſo bold to reprove him for his Luſts.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to paſs that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened:

Obſerve, (1.) The great Condeſcenſion of Chriſt in ſeeking and ſubmitting to the Baptiſm of *John*. Chriſt, tho' *John*'s Lord and Maſter, yet yields to be Baptized of his Servant and Meſſenger. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Reaſons why Chriſt would be Baptized, (1.) That by this Rite he might enter himſelf into the Society of Chriſtians, as he had before by Circumciſion entred into the Society of the *Jews*. (2.) That he might by his own Baptiſm ſanctifie the Ordinance of Baptiſm unto us. (3.) That thereby he might fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the

Ceremonial Law, which required the waſhing of the Prieſts in Water, before they entred upon their Office, as appears, E[illegible]d. 29.4. *Obſerve* (3.) How the Duty of Prayer accompanieth the Ordinance of Baptiſm; *Jeſus being Baptized, and Praying*: *Teaching* us by his Example to ſanctifie every Ordinance, and every Action with Prayer; Chriſt when he was Baptized, he Prayed, when he was Tempted he Prayed, when he brake Bread he Prayed, when he wrought Miracles he Prayed, in his Agony in the Garden he Prayed, when he Suffered on the Croſs he Prayed; what was the ſubject matter of the Lord's Prayer at this Time is not expreſt, but by what followed, namely, the Heavens opening, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending, it is probably conjectured, that he Prayed for ſome Teſtimony to be given from Heaven concerning himſelf; for it immediately follows.

22 And the holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleaſed.

Obſerve here, The Solemn Inveſting of Chriſt into his Office as Mediator is attended with a threefold Miracle, namely, the Opening of the Heavens, the Deſcending of the Holy Ghoſt, and God the Father's Voice concerning his Son, *the Heavens were opened*, to ſhew, that Heaven which was cloſed and ſhut againſt us for our Sins, is now opened to us, by Chriſt's Undertaking for us: *Next, the Holy Ghoſt deſcends like a Dove upon our Saviour*; here we have a Proof and Evidence of the Bleſſed Trinity; the Father ſpeaks from Heaven, the Son comes out of the Water, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcends after the manner of a *Dove*, hovering and over-ſhadowing Him. But why did the Holy Ghoſt now Deſcend upon Chriſt? *Firſt*, For the Deſignation of his Perſon, to ſhew that he was the Perſon ſet apart for the Work and Office of a Mediator. *Secondly*, For the Unction and Sanctification of his Perſon for the performance of that Office: Now was he appointed to be the King, Prieſt and Prophet of his Church. *Laſtly*, We have here *the Voice of God the Father*, pronouncing (1.) The nearneſs of Chriſt's Relation; *This is my Son*: (2.) The endearedneſs of his Perſon, *This is my beloved Son*: (3.) The Fruit and Benefit of this near Relation unto us; *in Thee I am well pleaſed. Hence Learn*, (1.) That there is no poſſibility for any Perſon to pleaſe God out of Chriſt; neither our Perſons nor our Performances can find Acceptance with God, but only in and through him, and for his ſake. (2.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Ground and Cauſe of all that Love and Good-will, which God the Father ſheweth to the Sons of Men; *In Chriſt* God is well pleaſed with us as a Reconciled Father, out of him a conſuming Fire; *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleaſed.*

23 And Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was ſuppoſed) the ſon of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Heli.

At Thirty Years of Age, the Prieſts under the Law, entred upon their publick Office; accordingly Chriſt ſtays the full Time preſcribed by the Law, before he undertakes his publick Miniſtry; and he gives the Reaſon for it, *Mat.* 3. 15. *That he might fulfil all Righteouſneſs*; that is, the Righteouſneſs of the Ceremonial Law, which required Perſons to be of that Age before they entred that Office; and alſo injoyned them to be Baptized or waſht in Water, when they undertook their Office. See *Exod.* 29. 4. *Learn hence*, That whatever the Law required in order to perfect Righteouſneſs, *That* Chriſt fulfilled in moſt abſolute Perfection, both in his own Perſon, and alſo in the Name of all Believers. *Obſerve farther*, The Title given to *Joſeph* here; he is called the ſuppoſed Father of Chriſt. *Joſeph* was not his natural Father, (tho' ſo ſuppoſed by the *Jews*) but he was his Legal Father, being Married to the Virgin when our Saviour was Born; and he was his nurſing Father that took care of him, and provided for him, tho' Chriſt ſometimes ſhewed both his Parents, that if he pleaſed he could live without any dependance upon their Care. See *Luke* 2. 49.

24 Which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, which was *the ſon of* Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Janna, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, 25 Which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Amos, which was *the ſon* of Naum, which was *the ſon* of Eſli, which was *the ſon* of Nagge, 26 Which was *the ſon* of Maath, which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Semei, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Judah, 27 Which was *the ſon* of Joanna, which was *the ſon* of Rheſa, which was *the ſon* of Zorobabel, which was *the ſon* of Salathiel, which was *the ſon* of Neri, 28 Which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Addi, which was *the ſon* of Coſam, which was *the ſon* of Elmodam, which was *the ſon* of Er, 29 Which was *the ſon* of Joſe, which was *the ſon* of Eliezer, which was *the ſon* of Jorim, which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, 30 Which was *the ſon* of Simeon, which was *the ſon* of Juda, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Jonan, which was *the ſon* of Eliakim, 31 Which was *the ſon* of Melea, which was *the ſon* of Menan, which was *the ſon* of Mattatha, which was *the ſon* of Nathan, which was *the ſon* of David, 32 Which was *the ſon* of Jeſſe, which was *the ſon* of Obed, which was *the ſon* of Boaz, which was *the ſon* of Salmon, which was *the ſon* of Naaſon, 33 Which was *the ſon* of Aminadab, which was *the ſon* of Aram, which was *the ſon* of Eſrom, which was *the ſon* of Phares, which was *the ſon* of Juda, 34 Which was *the ſon* of Jacob, which was *the ſon* of Iſaac, which was *the ſon* of Abraham, which was *the ſon* of Thara, which was *the ſon* of Nachor, 35 Which was *the ſon* of Saruch, which was *the ſon* of Ragan, which was *the ſon* of Phaleg, which was *the ſon* of Heber, which was *the ſon* of Sala, 36 Which was *the ſon* of Cainan, which was *the ſon* of Arphaxad, which was *the ſon* of Sem, which was *the ſon* of Noah, which was *the ſon* of Lamech, 37 Which was *the ſon* of Mathuſala, which was *the ſon* of Enoch, which was *the ſon* of Jared, which was *the ſon* of Maleleel, which was *the ſon* of Cainan, 38 Which was *the ſon* of Enos, which was *the ſon* of Seth, which was *the ſon* of Adam, which was *the ſon* of God.

We find the Genealogy of our Bleſſed Saviour Recorded by two Evangeliſts, St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*: His Pedigree is ſet forth by St. *Matthew* from his Father *Joſeph*, by St. *Luke* from his Mother *Mary*; the deſign of both is to prove him lineally deſcended from *Abraham* and *David*, and conſequently the true and promiſed Meſſias; St. *Matthew* intending his Hiſtory primarily for the *Jews*, proves him to be the Son of *Abraham* and *David*, for their Comfort: St. *Luke* deſigning the Information and Comfort of the *Gentiles*, derives our Lord's Pedigree from *Adam*, the common Parent of Mankind, to aſſure the *Gentiles* of their poſſibility of an Intereſt in Chriſt, they being Sons of *Adam*. Neither of theſe Evangeliſts are ſtrict and accurate in enumerating every individual Perſon; which ſhould *Teach* us not to be over-curious in ſcanning the parts of this Genealogy, much leſs captiouſly to Object againſt it, becauſe of ſome ſeeming Contradictions in it. For if the Evangeliſts were not nice and critical in compoſing this Genealogy, why ſhould we be ſo in examining of it? Let us rather attend the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in Writing of it, which was Twofold. (1.) For the Honour of our Saviour as Man, ſhewing who were his Noble and Royal Progenitors according to the Fleſh. (2.) For the Confirmation of our Faith touching the Reality of our Saviour's Incarnation; the Scripture making mention of all his Progenitors from the firſt Man *Adam*, to his Reputed Father *Joſeph*, we cannot reaſonably doubt either of the Truth of his humane Nature, or of the certainty of his being the promiſed Meſſias. *Hence we may learn*, That the Wiſdom of God has taken all neceſſary care, and uſed all needful Means for ſatisfying the Minds of all unprejudiced Perſons, touching the Reality of Chriſt's Humane Nature, and the certainty of his being the promiſed Meſſias; for both theſe Ends is our Saviour's Genealogy, Deſcent and Pedigree Recorded in Holy Scripture.

CHAP. IV.

AND Jeſus being full of the holy Ghoſt, returned from Jordan, and was led by the ſpirit into the wilderneſs.

At the 22 Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, we find the Holy Ghoſt deſcending in a Bodily Shape, like a Dove upon our Saviour; in this Verſe we find the extraordinary Effects and Fruits of the Holy Ghoſt's Deſcent upon our Saviour; he was filled with all the Gifts and Graces of the Bleſſed Spirit, to fit and furniſh him for that Miniſterial Service which he was now entring upon. But obſervable it is, that before our Saviour undertook the Miniſterial Office, *He is led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs*, and there furiouſly aſſaulted with Satan's Temptations. Temptation, Meditation and Prayer, ſays *Luther*, make a Miniſter; great Temptations from Satan, do fit us for greater Services for God. And whereas it is ſaid, *That Chriſt was led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, to be Tempted of the Devil*; by the Spirit, we muſt underſtand the Holy Spirit of God; for the Devil (I think) is never called the Spirit, but has always a brand of Reproach annexed, as the evil Spirit, the unclean Spirit, and the like. By his *being led by the Spirit*, (St. *Mark* ſays, *he was drove by the Spirit)* we may either underſtand a potent and efficacious Perſwaſion, without any violent Motion; or elſe as the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, Chriſt was bodily caught up by the Holy Spirit into the Air, and carried from *Jordan* where he was Baptized, into the Wilderneſs where he was Tempted. God had put great Honour upon Chriſt at his Baptiſm, declaring him to be his well-beloved Son in whom he was well pleaſed; and the next News we hear, is the Devil's aſſaulting him with his Temptations. *Learn thence*, That the more any are beloved of God, and dignified with more eminent Teſtimonies of his Favour, ſo much the more is the Devil enraged, and maliciouſly bent againſt them.

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil, and in thoſe days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungred.

Obſerve here, How the Divine Power upheld Chriſt's Humane Nature without Food; what *Moſes* did at the giving of the Law, Chriſt doth at the beginning of the Goſpel; namely, *Faſt forty days and forty nights.* Chriſt hereby intended our Admiration, rather than our Imitation; or if our Imitation of the Action only, not of the Time. From this Example of Chriſt we *Learn*, That it is our Duty by Faſting and Prayer, to prepare our ſelves for a Conflict with our Spiritual Enemies. As Chriſt prepared himſelf by faſting to grapple with the Tempter, ſo ſhould we.

3 And the devil ſaid unto him, If thou be the ſon of God, command this ſtone that it be made bread.

Obſerve here (1.) The Occaſion of the Temptation; and (2.) The Temptation it ſelf; the Occaſion of the Temptation was our Saviour's hunger and want of Bread. *Learn thence*, That when God ſuffers any of his Children to fall into want, and to be ſtraightned for outward things, Satan takes a mighty advantage thereupon to tempt, and aſſault them. *Obſerve* (2.) What Sin it is he tempts our Saviour to, it is the Sin of Diſtruſt, to call in queſtion his Sonſhip; *If thou be the Son of God*, and then to Diſtruſt God's Providence and Care, *Command that theſe ſtones be made Bread:* It is the grand Policy of Satan, firſt to tempt the Children of God to doubt of their Adoption; next to Diſtruſt God's fatherly care and Proviſion, and laſt of all to uſe unwarrantable Means to help themſelves. Thus Satan dealt with Chriſt, and thus he deals with Chriſtians; for to work a Miracle at Satan's Direction, was not a lawful Means of providing Food for himſelf.

4 And Jeſus anſwered him, ſaying, It is written, That man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Note Firſt, That tho' the Devil abuſed Scripture, yet Chriſt uſes it. Good things are never the worſe for being abuſed by Satan, and his Inſtruments. *Note Secondly*, The weapon which our Saviour made uſe of to vanquiſh Satan; it was the Word of God: *It is written*, ſays Chriſt. *Learn thence*, That the Scripture, or the written Word of God is the only ſure Weapon wherewith to vanquiſh Satan, and beat back all his fiery Temptations. The Scripture is God's Armoury, out of which all our Weapons of War muſt be taken for managing our Conflict with Sin and Satan.

5 And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, ſhewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil ſaid unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will, I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine. 8 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.

Obſerve (1.) The next Sin which Satan tempts our Saviour to, is the Sin of Idolatry, even to worſhip the Devil himſelf; Oh thou impudent and foul Spirit, to deſire thy Creator to worſhip thee an Apoſtate-Creature! Doubtleſs there is no Sin ſo black and foul, ſo horrid and monſtrous, but the Chriſtian may be tempted to it, when Chriſt himſelf was tempted to Worſhip the Tempter, even the Devil himſelf; St. *Matthew* reads it, *If thou wilt worſhip me*, St. *Luke*, *If thou wilt worſhip before me*; from whence we may gather, that if to worſhip before the Devil, be to worſhip the Devil, then to worſhip before an Image, is to worſhip the Image, Dr. *Lightfoot*. *Obſerve* (2.) The Bait which Satan makes uſe of to alure our Saviour to the Sin of Idolatry, repreſenting to his eye and view all the glories of the World in a moſt inviting manner, and that in a moment of Time, that ſo he might affect him the more, and prevail the ſooner. *Learn thence*, That the Pomp and Grandeur of the World is made uſe of by Satan, as a dangerous Snare to draw Men into a compliance with him in his Temptations unto Sin; *He ſhewed him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them. Obſerve* (3.) What an impudent Lyar and proud Boaſter the Devil is; he was a Lyar from the beginning; *All this will I give thee, for it was delivered unto me*; an impudent untruth, for the Dominion over the things of the World was never given to the Angels; neither has the Devil any Power over the Creatures, but by Permiſſion from God. The Devil is a moſt impudent Lyar, he told the firſt Lye, and by long Practice is become a perfect Maſter in the Art of Lying. *Obſerve alſo*, The Devil's Boaſting as well as Lying, *All this, will I give thee*, when he had not one Foot of Ground to diſpoſe of. Great Boaſters are for the moſt part great Lyars, and ſuch Boaſters and Lyars are like the Devil. *Obſerve* (4.) How our Saviour declares the true and only Object of Religious worſhip, namely, God himſelf; *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Religious Worſhip is to be given to none of the Creatures, neither to Angels nor Men, how excellent ſoever, but to God alone. We read but of two Creatures that ever deſired in Scripture to be Worſhipped with Divine Worſhip; namely, the Devil and Antichriſt; but the command is peremptory, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord, and him only.*

9 And he brought him to Jeruſalem, and ſet him on a pinacle of the temple, and ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf down from hence. 10 For it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee. 11 And in their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 12 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, It is ſaid, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the Devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a ſeaſon.

Obſerve here, (1.) The power which Satan, by God's permiſſion, had over the Body of our Bleſſed Saviour; He took him up and he carried his Body through the Air, from the Wilderneſs to *Jeruſalem*, and there ſets him upon one of the Pinacles of the Temple. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Satan by God's permiſſion may have power over the Bodies of Men, yea, over the Bodies of the beſt of Men. (2.) That this exerciſe of Satan's power over the Bodies of Men, is no Argument that ſuch Perſons do not belong to God. Our Saviour himſelf, who was dear to God, is yet left for a time in Satan's hands. But tho' Satan had a power to ſet him upon the Pinacle of the Temple, yet he had no Power to caſt him down; tho' Satan's Malice be infinite, his power is limited and bounded; he cannot do all the Miſchief he would, and he ſhould not do all he can. *Obſ.* (2.) The Sin which Satan tempts Chriſt to, the Sin of Self-Murther, *Caſt thy ſelf down.* *Learn*, That Self-murther is a Sin which Chriſt himſelf was, and the beſt of Children may be ſollicited and tempted to; yet tho' Satan ſollicited Chriſt to the Sin, he could not compel him to comply with the Temptation. *Thence Note*, That how much earneſtneſs and importunity ſoever Satan uſes in preſſing his Temptation, he can only perſwade, he cannot compel; he may entice, but cannot enforce. *Obſ.* 3. The Argument which Satan uſes to perſwade Chriſt to the Sin of Self-murther, it is a Scripture-Argument; he quotes a Promiſe, *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee*; What a wonder is here, to ſee the Devil with a Bible under his Arm, and with a Text of Scripture in his Mouth; Chriſt had alledged Scripture before to Satan; here Satan retorts Scripture back again to Chriſt: *It is written*, ſays Chriſt, *It is written*, ſays Satan. *Learn*, That Satan knows how to abuſe the moſt excellent and comfortable Scriptures, to the moſt horrid and prodigious Ends and Purpoſes; He that had Prophanely toucht the Sacred Body of Chriſt with his hand, ſticks not preſumptuouſly to handle the Holy Scriptures with his Tongue. *Obſ.* 4. The Text of Scripture which Satan makes uſe of, *Pſal.* 91. 11, 12. *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee*; Where the Doctrine is good, but the Application bad: The Doctrine is true, that God is pleaſed to employ his Angels for the good of his Servants, and particularly for their preſervation in times of Danger. But ſee how falſely the Devil perverts, miſapplies, and wreſts that Sacred Scripture: When God promiſes that his Angels ſhall keep us, it is *in all his ways*, not in our own crooked paths. *Learn*, That altho' the Children of God have the promiſe of the Guardianſhip of his Holy Angels, yet then only may they expect their Protection, when walking in the way of their Duty. *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* *Obſ. Laſtly*, The Iſſue of this Combat, Satan is Vanquiſhed and departs from our Saviour. St. *Matthew* ſays, *The Devil left him, and Angels came and miniſtred unto him:* Satan is Conquered and quits the Field. *Teaching us*, That nothing like a vigorous reſiſtance of Temptation, cauſes the Tempter to flee from us. Satan is both a Cowardly Enemy, and a Conquered Enemy; reſiſt him and he will run.

14 And Jeſus returned in the power of the ſpirit
into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him
through all the region round about. 15 And he
taught in their ſynagogues, being glorified of all.
16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been
brought up: and as his cuſtom was, he went into the
ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read
17 And there was delivered unto him the book of
the prophet Eſaias; and when he had opened the book,
he found the place where it was written, 18 The
ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anoint-
ed me to preach the Goſpel to the poor, he hath ſent
me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance
to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind,
to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, 19 To preach
the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he cloſed
the book, and gave it again to the miniſter, and ſat
down: and the eyes of all them that were in the
ſynagogue were faſtned on him. 21 And he began to
ſay unto them, This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in
your ears.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being thus fitted and prepared by his Baptiſm and Temptations for the Execution of his Miniſterial Office, he now enters upon the great Work of Preaching the Goſpel, and St. *Luke* here declares the firſt place he Preacht at; namely, *Nazareth*, and the firſt Text he preacht upon, *Iſa.* 61. 1. *Obſerve* 1. The Place which our Saviour Preacht at; he beſtowed his firſt Sermon upon *Nazareth*, the place of his Conception and Education: For tho' Chriſt was Born at *Bethlehem*, yet he was bred and brought up at *Nazareth*; there he had his poor, but painful Education, working on his Father's Trade, that of a Carpenter; This prejudiced the *Jews* againſt him, who lookt for a Scepter, not an Ax, in the Hand of him that was born King of the *Jews*. Our Saviour's ſhort and ſecret abode at *Bethlehem*, and his long and publick living at *Nazareth*, occaſioned him to be called *Jeſus of Nazareth*: Yet ſome conceive it was a Nick-name faſtened by the Devil upon our Saviour, that he might diſguiſe the place of Chriſt's Nativity, and leave the *Jews* at the greater loſs concerning their Meſſiah. Sure it is, that this Name *Jeſus of Nazareth*, ſtuck upon our Saviour all his Life; and at his Death was fixed by *Pilate* on his Croſs. Yea, after his Aſcenſion, ſuch as believed on him were called, *The Sect of the Nazarens*, or *the Followers of Jeſus of Nazareth*. *Obſ.* 2. The Text which our Saviour preacht upon at *Nazareth*; he takes it out of the Prophet *Eſaias*, chap. 61. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath Appointed me to Preach the Goſpel to the Poor*; that is, God the Father hath poured forth his Holy Spirit without meaſure upon me, in all the Gifts and Graces of it, to fit and furniſh me for the Work of a Mediator; and particularly, *to Preach the Goſpel to the poor* in Spirit, and to ſuch as are poor in outward Condition alſo, if meekned and humbled with the ſight and ſenſe of their Sins; *To bind up the broken-hearted*; that is, to comfort them with the glad Tydings of the Goſpel. *To Preach Deliverance to the Captives*; to let ſuch Sinners know, who were Slaves to Sin and Satan, that a Deliverer is come, if they be willing to be delivered by him, *To Preach the Acceptable Year of the Lord*, or to proclaim a Spiritual Jubilee, in which God proffers Pardon of Sin and Reconciliation with himſelf upon the Terms of the Goſpel. *Learn hence*, 1. That God ſtirreth up none to take upon them the Office of the Miniſtry, whom he hath not fitted and furniſhed with Gifts for the regular Diſcharge of it. 2. That Chriſt himſelf did not undertake the Office of a Mediator, but by the Ordination of God the Holy Spirit, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath ſent me to Preach the Goſpel.* 3. That no Creature, Angel or Man, could perform the Office of a Mediator, but only Chriſt, who was Conſecrated to that Office by an Anointing from the Holy Spirit without meaſure; *The Spirit of the Lord* hath Anointed me. 4. That the Preaching of the Goſpel is the great Ordinance, which Chriſt himſelf made uſe of, and recommended to his Apoſtles and Miniſters, for inlighting blind Sinners, for comforting broken Hearts, and for delivering Captive Souls from the ſlavery and dominion of Sin and Satan; *He hath ſent me to Preach the Goſpel to the Poor, to heal the broken Hearted, to publiſh Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Sight to the Blind.* What Enemies then are they to the Souls of Men, who have mean and low Thoughts of this high and honourable Ordinance of God, the Preaching of the Everlaſting Goſpel, which is the Power of God unto Salvation? *Obſ.* 3. The Behaviour of our Saviour's Auditors, (the Men of *Nazareth*) under his Preaching; their Eyes were fixt, and their Minds intent upon him, and upon what was ſpoken by him, *The Eyes of all that were in the Synagogue were faſtened upon him*; not cloſed with Sleep, nor gazing about upon others, but fixed upon Chriſt the Preacher; Fixing of the Eye, is a great help to the attention of the Ear, and the intention of the Mind; a faſtned Eye is a means to help us to a fixed Heart; as a wandring Eye is both a ſign and a cauſe of a wandring Heart. O that our Hearers would imitate our Saviour's Hearers under the Word: They faſtned their Eyes upon him, as if they meant to hear with their Eyes as well as with their Ears: And yet we have cauſe to ſuſpect, that Curioſity rather than Piety cauſed this their Attention, ſeeing, as you will find, *ver.* 29. That theſe very Perſons, who out of Novelty were ready to eat his Words, ſoon after, out of Cruelty were ready to devour the Speaker; *for they thruſt him out of the City, led him to the Brow of the Hill, and would have caſt him down headlong*: O bleſſed Saviour! What wonder is it, that the Perſons of thy Miniſters are deſpiſed, and their Doctrine neglected, when thou thy ſelf the firſt Preacher of the Goſpel, and for thy firſt Sermon at *Nazareth* wert thus ignominiouſly treated! *Obſ. Laſtly*, How Chriſt conforms to the Ceremonies of the Jewiſh Doctrine, who in honour of the Law and the Prophets *ſtood* up when they Read them, and according to Cuſtom, *ſate down* when they Explained them. And altho' the Synagogal Worſhip was then loaden with Rules and Ceremonies of Human Invention, and alſo the Lives and Manners both of Prieſts and People were much Corrupted, yet both our Saviour and his Diſciples went to the Synagogue as Members of the Church of *Nazareth* every Sabbath Day, joyning with them in the publick Worſhip. From whence we may reaſonably infer, that ſuch Chriſtians as do quietly and peaceably comply with the Practice of the Church, in whoſe Communion they live, in the obſervation of ſuch indifferent Rites as are uſed by Her, act moſt agreeable to our Saviour's Practice and Example.

22 And all bare him witneſs, and wondred at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they ſaid, Is not this Joſephs ſon?

23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye will ſurely ſay unto me this proverb, Phyſician heal thy ſelf: whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy country. 24 And he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Effect of our Saviour's Miniſtry at *Nazareth*, it created Wonder, but did not produce Faith; they marvelled, but not believed; they admire the Wiſdom of his Diſcourſes, but will not own him to be the promiſed Meſſias, becauſe of the Poverty and Meanneſs of his Condition; *Is this not Joſeph's Son?* They expect the Son of a Prince, not the Son of a Carpenter to be their Meſſiah. *Thence Note*, That the Poverty and Meanneſs of Chriſt's Condition, was that which Multitudes ſtumbled at, and which kept many, yea, moſt from Believing on him. None but a Spiritual Eye can diſcern Beauty in an humbled and abaſed Saviour. *Obſ.* (2.) Our Saviour wonders not, that ſo few of his Country-men, among whom he had been bred and brought up, and with whom he had lived moſt part of his time, did deſpiſe his Perſon, and reject his Doctrine: he tells them, *No Prophet has Honour in his own Country*; that is, very ſeldom has: *Teaching us*, that uſually the Miniſters of God are moſt deſpiſed, where they are moſt familiarly known; ſometimes the remembrance of their mean Original and Extraction, ſometimes the Poverty of their Parents, ſometimes the Indecencies of their Childhood, ſometimes the Follies of their Youth, ſometimes the Faults of their Family and Relations, are ript up, and made occaſions of Contempt; and therefore that Prophet that comes from afar, and has not been much known, gains the greateſt Reputation amongſt a People, who being ignorant of his Extraction, look upon his Breeding as well as his Calling to be Divine. This good uſe ought to be made of our Saviour's Obſervation, That his Miniſters be very Wiſe and Diſcreet in Converſation with their People, not making themſelves cheap and common in every Company, nor light and vain in any Company: For ſuch Familiarity will breed Contempt, both of their Perſons and their Doctrine. But our Duty is, by ſtrictneſs and gravity of Deportment, to keep up an Awe and Eſteem in the Conſciences of our People; always tempering our Gravity with Courteſy, and a condeſcending Affability. The Miniſter which proſtitutes his Authority, fruſtrates the End of his Miniſtry, and is the occaſion of his own Contempt.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, when the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months, when great famine was throughout all the land. 26 But unto none of them was Elias ſent, ſave unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſeus the prophet: and none of them was cleanſed, ſaving Naaman the Syrian.

Here our Saviour by a double inſtance, confirms what he had laſt told his Country-men at *Nazareth*, namely, that Prophets are moſt deſpiſed by their own Country-men and Acquaintance, and that Strangers oft-times have more Advantage by a Prophet than his own People. The firſt Inſtance of this which our Saviour gives them, is in the Days of *Elias*, tho' there were many Widows then in his own Nation, yet none of them were qualified to receive his Miracles, but a Stranger, *a Widow of Sarepta*. The ſecond Inſtance was in the Days of *Eliſha*; when tho' they were many Lepers in and about the Neighbourhood, yet they being his Country-men deſpiſed him; and none were qualified for a Cure but *Naaman the Syrian*, a Man of another Country. Thus the Prophets of God, like ſome Fiſhermen, catch leaſt in their own Pond, and do more good by their Miniſtry among Strangers, than among their own Country-men, Kinſfolk, and near Relations; *No Prophet is accepted in his own Country.*

28 And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath. 29 And roſe up, and thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built) that they might caſt him down headlong. 30 But he paſſing through the midſt of them, went his way:

Obſerve here, (1.) The horrid Impiety of the People of *Nazareth*, in thruſting their Saviour out of their City, and their barbarous and bloody Cruelty in bringing him to the Brow of the Hill, with full intent to caſt him down headlong. But Chriſt was to dye a clean contrary way, not by throwing down, but by lifting up. O ungrateful and unhappy *Nazareth*, is this the Return you make that Divine Gueſt, which for Thirty Years had ſojourned in your Coaſts? No wonder that the ableſt Preaching, and moſt exemplary Living of the holieſt and beſt of Chriſt's Miniſters, obtain no greater ſucceſs at this Day amongſt a People, when the Preſence of Chriſt at *Nazareth* for Thirty Years together, had no better influence upon the Minds and Manners of that people; but inſtead of Reciving his Meſſage, they rage at the Meſſenger: Neither let any of the Miniſters of Chriſt think it ſtrange, that they are ignominiouſly deſpiſed, when our Maſter before us, was in danger of being barbarouſly Murthered, and that for his plain Preaching to his own People, the Men of *Nazareth*. But *Obſ.* (2.) The Miraculous Eſcape of our Bleſſed Lord from the murdering Hands of the Wicked *Nazarites*; *He paſſing through the midſt of them went his way*: How and after what manner he eſcaped, is not declared, and therefore cannot without preſumption be determined. Altho' the *Romaniſts*, to make way for their Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, poſitively affirm, that contrary to the nature of a Body, he penetrated through the Breaſts of the People. But whether he ſtruck them with Blindneſs that they did not ſee, or ſmote them with Fear that they durſt not hold him; or whether by a greater Strength than theirs (which his Godhead could eaſily ſupply his Human Nature with) he eſcaped from them, it is neither prudent to inquire nor poſſible to determine; we know it was an eaſy thing for him, who was God as well as Man, to quit himſelf of any mortal Enemies; and at the ſame time, when he reſcued himſelf, could have ruined them, by frowning them into Hell, or looking them into nothing.

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the ſabbath-days. 32 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33 And in the ſynagogue there was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art; the holy one of God. 25 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midſt, he came out of him and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and ſpake among themſelves, ſaying, What a word *is* this? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they come out. 37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being driven out of *Nazareth* by the Fury of his Country-men, departs to *Capernaum*, where he enters into their Synagogues and Taught. Who can declare the Pains that our Saviour took, and the Hazards which he ran in Preaching the Everlaſting Goſpel to loſt Sinners? But obſerve the ſmalneſs of his Succeſs; the People were aſtoniſhed, but not believed; his Doctrine produced Admiration, but not Faith; his Auditors were Admirers but not Believers; *The People were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine*; The reaſon of which Aſtoniſhment is added, *for his Word was with Power*; that is, there was Majeſty in his Perſon, Spirituality in his Preaching, and Powerful Miracles accompanying both, and confirming both, of which the Evangeliſt here gives us an account, namely, the caſting out of a Devil in one poſſeſſed, *ver.* 33. *There was a Man which had a Spirit of an unclean Devil, and he cried out*; that is, The Devil, that unclean Spirit, did enter into him, and bodily poſſeſs him. Amongſt many other Calamities which Sin has brought upon our Bodies, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſt by Satan. The Devil has an inveterate Malice againſt Mankind, ſeeking to ruin our Souls by his Suggeſtions and Temptations; and to deſtroy our Bodies by ſome means or other. O how much is it our Intereſt as well as our Duty, by Prayer to put our ſelves Morning and Evening under the Divine Care and Protection, that we may be preſerved from the Power and Malice of Evil Spirits. *Obſ.* (2.) The Title here given to the Devil, he is called the *Unclean Spirit*. The Devils, thoſe wicked Spirits of Hell are moſt impure and filthy Creatures; impure by reaſon of their original Apoſtacy, impure by means of their actual and daily Sins, ſuch are Murder and Malice, Lying, and the like by which they continually pollute themſelves; and impure, by means of their continual deſire and endeavours to pollute Mankind with the Contagion of their own Sins. Lord! how foul is the nature of Sin, which makes the Devil ſuch a foul and filthy, ſuch an impure and unclean Creature. *Obſ.* (3.) The ſubſtance of the Devil's outcry, *Let us alone, What have we to do with thee? art thou come to deſtroy us?* That is, to reſtrain us from the exerciſe of our Power; the Devil thinks himſelf deſtroyed, when he is reſtrained from doing Miſchief. *Obſ.* (4.) The Title given by the Devil to our Saviour, he ſtyles him, *The Holy One of God*: How comes this Acknowledgment out of the Devil's Mouth? could an Apoſtle make a Profeſſion beyond this? but how comes Satan to make it? For no good end, and with no good intention we may be ſure; for the Devil never ſpeaks Truth for Truths ſake, but for Advantage-ſake: Probably, (1.) he might make this Profeſſion, that ſo he might bring the Truth profeſt into queſtion; hoping that the Truth, which received Teſtimony from the Father of Lies, would be ſuſpected: Or, (2.) It might perhaps be done to make the People believe that our Saviour had ſome familiarity with Satan, and did work Miracles by his help, becauſe he did confeſs him, and ſeem to put Honour upon him: Hence we may *Learn*, That it is poſſible, for a Perſon to own and acknowledge Chriſt to be the True and only Saviour, and yet to miſs of Salvation by him: If a Speculative Knowledge, and a verbal Profeſſion of Chriſt were ſufficient to Salvation, the Devil himſelf would not miſs of Happineſs. *Obſ.* (5.) How our Saviour rebukes the Devil for this Confeſſion, and commands him Silence: *Jeſus rebuked him ſaying, hold thy peace.* But why was this Rebuke given the Devil, and his Mouth ſtopt when he ſpake the Truth? *Anſwer* (1.) Becauſe Chriſt knew that the Devil confeſt this Truth on purpoſe to Diſgrace the Truth. (2.) Becauſe the Devil was no fit Perſon to make this Profeſſion; a Teſtimony of Truth from the Father of Lies, is enough to render Truth it ſelf ſuſpected. Yet the Devil's Evidence, That Chriſt was the Holy One of God, will riſe up in Judgment againſt the wicked Phariſees, who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Miracles, and ſtopt their Ears againſt the Doctrine of the Holy One of God. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the unclean Spirit obeys the Voice of Chriſt, but with great Reluctancy and Regret; when the unclean Spirit had thrown him in the midſt he came out. Where *Obſerve*, The Devil's Spite at parting; he tears the Man, throws him violently from place to place, ſhewing, how loth he was to be diſpoſſeſſed. Where Satan has once gotten an hold, and ſettled himſelf for a time, how unwilling is he to be caſt out of Poſſeſſion? Yea, it is a Torment and Vexation to him to be caſt out. It is much eaſier to keep out Satan, than to caſt him out: Satan may poſſeſs the Body by God's Permiſſion, but he cannot poſſeſs our Hearts without our own Conſent and Approbation: It will be our Wiſdom to deny him Entrance into our Souls at firſt, by rejecting his Wicked Motions and Suggeſtions; for when once entered he will like the ſtrong Man Armed keep the Houſe, till a ſtronger than he caſts him out.

38 And he aroſe out of the ſynagogue, and entred
into Simons houſe: and Simons wives mother was
taken with a fever; and they beſought him for her.
39 And he ſtood over her, and rebuked the fever, and
it left her. And immediately ſhe aroſe and miniſtred
unto them.

Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That St. *Peter*, a Diſciple, yea, an Apoſtle, was a married Perſon. Neither the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the Apoſtles of the New, did abhor the Marriage-Bed, nor judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker. The Church of *Rome*, by denying the Lawfulneſs of Prieſt's Marriage, makes her ſelf wiſer than God, who ſays, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Marriage is Honourable amongſt all Men.* *Obſerve* (2.) *Peter*, tho' a good Man, and his Wife's Mother, probably a gracious Woman, yet is his Family viſited with Sickneſs. Strength of Grace, and dearneſs of Reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail againſt Diſeaſes. God's own Children are viſited with Bodily Sickneſs as well as others. *Obſ.* (3.) The Divine Power of Chriſt manifeſted in this Miraculous Cure: *He ſtood over her*, ſays St. *Luke*, *He took her by the Hand and lift her up*, ſays St. *Mark*: Here was an ordinary Diſtemper cured after an extraordinary manner, by a touch of Chriſt's Hand, in an inſtant; *Immediately the Fever left her, and ſhe aroſe and miniſtred unto them.* That ſhe could ariſe, argued her Cure Miraculous; that ſhe could and did ariſe, and adminiſter to Chriſt and his Diſciples, argued her Thankfulneſs. After Chriſt hath healed any of us, it ought to be our firſt Care to Adminiſter unto him; that is, to employ our recovered Strength in the Service of Chriſt, and to improve our reſtored Health to the Honour and Glory of Chriſt.

40 Now when the ſun was ſetting all they that
had any ſick with divers diſeaſes, brought them unto
him: and he laid his hands on every one of them,
and healed them. 41 And devils alſo came out of
many, crying out, and ſaying, Thou art Chriſt the Son
of God. And he rebuking them, ſuffered them not to
ſpeak: for they knew that he was Chriſt.

The Evangeliſt here declares ſundry other Cures wrought by our Saviour; he healed the Sick, and diſpoſſeſſed the Devils. In our Saviour's time we read of many poſſeſſed with Devils, and but of few, either before or afterward. Probably, (1.) Becauſe Satan perceiving the Meſſiah to be come in the Fleſh to deſtroy his Kingdom, did rage the more, and diſcover greater Malice and Enmity againſt Mankind. (2.) Perhaps Almighty God ſuffered Satan at that time to poſſeſs ſo many, that Chriſt might have occaſion to manifeſt his Divine Power, by caſting Satan out. And accordingly we find our Saviour diſpoſſeſſing all that were poſſeſt by Satan. It is added, *That he ſuffered not the Devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him*; that is, Chriſt would not be made known to be the Son of God by the Preaching of the Devil, leſt the World ſhould from thence take occaſion to think, that our Saviour held a Correſpondency with thoſe wicked Spirits, and that the Miracles which he wrought were performed by the Devil's Aſſiſtance, as being one in Combination with him. Poſſibly from the Devil's owning Chriſt to be the Holy one of God, the Phariſees concluded, that there was a compact and agreement betwixt them: and thereupon their Affirmation was Grounded, *he caſteth out Devils, by Belzebub the Prince of Devils.*

42 And when it was day, he departed and went
into a deſart place: and the people ſought him, and
came unto him, and ſtayed him, that he ſhould not
depart from them. 43 And he ſaid unto them, I
muſt preach the kingdom of God to other cities alſo:
for therefore am I ſent. 44 And he preached in the
ſynagogue of Galilee.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great work and buſineſs of our Saviour's Life, to preach the Goſpel, *I muſt preach the Kingdom of God, for therefore came I forth.* Preaching was Chriſt's great work, it is undoubtedly his Miniſters. Chriſt omitted ſome Opportunities of working Miracles, that he might preach to other Cities. This was his great Work. *Obſ.* (2.) it being Chriſt's great Deſign to plant and propagate the Goſpel, he would not confine his Miniſtry to one particular place, no not to the great City of *Capernaum*, but reſolves to preach the word in ſmaller Towns and Villages; leaving his Miniſters herein an Inſtructive Example, to be as willing to preach the Goſpel in the ſmalleſt Villages, as in the largeſt and moſt populous Cities, if God calls thereunto. Let the place be never ſo obſcure and mean, and the Congregation never ſo ſmall and little, if God ſends us thither, the greatneſs of us muſt not think it beneath us, to go and inſtruct an handful of People.

CHAP. V.

AND it came to paſs, that as the people preſſed
upon him to hear the word of God, he ſtood
by the lake of Genneſareth, 2 And ſaw two ſhips ſtanding
by the Lake: but the fiſhermen were gone out
of them, and were waſhing *their* nets. 3 And he entred
into one of the ſhips, which was Simons, and
prayed him that he would thruſt out a little from the
land: and he ſat down, and taught the people out of
the ſhip.

Here Obſerve (1.) That our Saviour uſed the Sea, as well as the Land in his paſſage from place to place to preach the Goſpel; and the reaſons, why he did ſo, might probably be theſe, (1.) To ſhew Natures's intent in making of the Sea, namely, to be Sailed upon, as the Land to be walked upon. (2.) That Chriſt might take occaſion to manifeſt his Deity, in working Miracles upon the Sea; namely, by calming of the

Waves, and ſtilling of the Winds. (3.) It might be to comfort Sea-faring Men in their Diſtreſſes, and to encourage them to Pray to ſuch a Saviour as had an experimental Knowledge of the Dangers of the Sea; it were well if Sailors would conſider this, and inſtead of inuring themſelves to the Language of Hell, when they go down into the Deeps, would direct their Prayer unto Chriſt, and look up to him; who now in Heaven has the remembrance of what he himſelf endured and underwent here on Earth, and on the Sea. *Obſ.* (2.) The circumſtance of time when Chriſt uſed to put forth to Sea; it was uſually after he had wrought ſome extraordinary Miracle, which ſet them on admiring and commending of him; as after he had fed ſo many Thouſands with a few Barley Loaves and Fiſhes, preſently he put forth to Sea, ſhunning thereby all Popularity and vain-glorious Applauſe from the Multitude, which he was never ambitious of, but induſtriouſly avoided. *Obſ.* (3.) That after our Saviour's Reſurrection, we never find him Sailing any more upon the Seas. For ſuch a Fluctuating and Turbulent Condition, which neceſſarily attends Sea Voyages, was utterly inconſiſtent with the Conſtancy, Stability and Perpetuity of Chriſt's Eſtate when riſen from the Grave. The firm Land better agreeing with his fixed State, he keeps upon it till his Aſcenſion into Heaven. *Obſ.* (4.) That Chriſt ſcruples not to Preach to the People in, and out of the Ship, *He ſat down, and* Taught *the People out of the Ship*: Sometimes we find our Holy Lord Preaching upon a Mountain, ſometimes in a Ship, ſometimes in an Houſe, as often as may be in the Synagogue: He that laid hold on Seaſons for Preaching the Goſpel, never ſcrupled any place which conveniency offered to Preach in; well knowing, that it is the Ordinance that Sanctifies the Place, and not the Place the Ordinance.

4 Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon anſwering ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheleſs at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had done, they encloſed a great multitude of fiſhes; and their net brake. 7 And they beckned unto *their* partners which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came and filled both the ſhips, ſo that they began to ſink. 8 When Simon Peter ſaw *it*, he fell down at Jeſus knees, ſaying, Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fiſhes which they had taken: 10 And ſo *was* alſo James and John the ſons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou ſhalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ſhips to land, they forſook all, and followed him.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Saviour having delivered his Doctrine to the People, confirms his Doctrine with a Miracle, and with ſuch a Miracle as did once inſtruct and encourage his Apoſtles; the miraculous number of Fiſh which they caught, did preſage and prefigure their miraculous Succeſs in Preaching, Planting and Propagating of the Goſpel. *Obſ.* (2.) Our Saviour's Command to *Peter*, and his ready compliance with Chriſt's Command; *Let down your Net for a Draught*, ſays Chriſt: *We have toiled all Night*, ſays St. *Peter*, *and caught nothing: nevertheleſs at thy Word, we will let down the Net*: This Myſtically repreſents to us, (1.) That the Fiſhers of Men may Labour all Night, and all Day too, and catch nothing. This is ſometimes the Fiſher-mens Fault, but oftner the Fiſhes. 'Tis the Fiſhers Fault that nothing is taken, if he doth only play upon the Sands, and not *launch out into the Deep*; deliver ſome ſuperficial and leſs neceſſary Truths, without opening to the People the great Myſteries of Godlineſs. If they Fiſh with broken Nets, either deliver unſound Doctrine, or lead unexemplary Lives; *If they do not caſt the Net on the right ſide of the Ship*, that is, rightly divide the Word, as Workmen that need not to be aſhamed: And if they do not fiſh at Chriſt's Command, but run a fiſhing unſent, it is then no wonder, that they Labour all their Days and catch nothing. But very often is it the Fiſhes Fault, rather than the Fiſherman's. Worldly Men are Crafty and Cunning, they will not come near the Net. Hypocrites are ſlippery like Eels, the Fiſherman cannot long hold them, but they dart into their holes; priding themſelves in their external Performances, and ſatisfying themſelves with a round of Duties. The great Men of the World break thro' the Net, the Divine Commands cannot bind them, *Jer.* 5. 5. *I will go to the great Men, and ſpeak to them, but they have broken the Yoke, and burſt the Bonds.* *Obſ.* (3.) The miraculous Succeſs which St. *Peter* had when at Chriſt's Command he let down the Net; *They incloſed ſuch a multitude of Fiſhes that their Net brake.* Two things our Saviour aimed at in this Miracle; (1.) To manifeſt to his Diſciples the Power of his Godhead, that they might not be offended at the Poverty and Meanneſs of his Manhood. (2.) To aſſure them of the great Succeſs which his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors might expect in Planting and Propagating of the Goſpel. If the Miniſters of Chriſt, whom he calls Fiſhers of Men, be Faithful in the Caſt, his Power ſhall be magnified in the Draught. Some of our Fiſh will cleave Eternally to the Rocks, other play upon the Sands, more will wallow in the Mud, and continue all their Days in the filth of Sin, if our Maſter, at whoſe Command we let down the Net, doth not incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in the caſting of it. *Obſ.* (4.) What influence the Sight of this Miracle had upon St. *Peter*, it occaſioned Fear and amazement, and cauſed him to adore Chriſt, and declare himſelf unworthy of his Preſence. *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man, O Lord*; not that the good Man was weary of Chriſt's Preſence, but acknowledged himſelf unworthy of it. 'Tis a great diſcovery of our Holineſs to revere God and fear before him, when he doth wonderful things before us, tho' they be Wonders of Love and Mercy; here was a wonderful appearance of Chriſt's Power and Mercy to St. *Peter*; But it affects him with a Reverential Fear, and awful Aſtoniſhment. *Obſerve* (5.) How St. *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles at Chriſt's Call, forſook all and followed him; they left Father and Friends, Ship and Nets, and followed Jeſus; whom Chriſt calls, he calls effectually; he draws whom he calls, and works their Hearts to a ready compliance with their Duty. And altho' when they were firſt called to be Diſciples, they followed their Trades of Fiſhing for a time, yet upon their ſecond Call to the Apoſtleſhip, they left off their Trade, and forſook all to follow the Miniſtry; Teaching the Miniſters of the Goſpel, that it is their Duty to give themſelves wholly up to their great Work, and not to incumber themſelves with Secular Affairs and Worldly Buſineſs. Nothing but an indiſpenſible Neceſſity in providing for a Family, can excuſe a Miniſter's incumbring himſelf with worldly Concerns and Buſineſs; *They forſook all and followed Jeſus.*

12 And it came to paſs, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leproſy: who ſeeing Jeſus, fell on *his* face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leproſy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and ſhew thy ſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing, according as Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them. 15 But ſo much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Petitioner, that in a very humble and ſubmiſſive manner ſues unto Chriſt for Cure and Healing; *A Leper fell on his Face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean*: He doth not queſtion Chriſt's Power, but diſtruſts his willingneſs to help and heal him. Chriſt's Divine Power muſt be fully aſſented to, and firmly believed by all thoſe that expect Benefit by him, and Healing from him. *Obſ.* (2.) The great readineſs of Chriſt to help and heal this diſtreſſed Perſon; *Jeſus touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean.* By the Ceremonial Law, the Leper was forbidden to be touched, therefore Chriſt touching this Leper ſhews himſelf to be above the Law; that he was the Lord of it, and might diſpenſe with it; and his healing this Leper by the word of his Mouth, and the touch of his Hand, ſhewed him to be truly *and really ſent of God*; for Leproſy among the *Jews* was accounted an incurable Diſtemper, called the Finger of God; a Diſeaſe of his ſending, and of his removing. Our Saviour therefore, as a proof of his being the Meſſias, tells *John*'s Diſciples, *Matth.* 11. 5. *That the Lepers were cleanſed, and the Dead raiſed by him*; which two being joyned together do imply, that the cleanſing of the Lepers is as much an Act of Divine Power, as the raiſing of the Dead; and accordingly, 2 *Kings* 5. 8. it is ſaid, *Am I God, that this Man ſends unto me to cure a Perſon of his Leproſy.* *Obſ.* (3.) The certainty and the ſuddenneſs of the Cure was a farther proof of Chriſt's Divine Power, *Immediately the Leproſy departed.* Chriſt not only Cured him immediately, but inſtantaneouſly; not only without Means, but without the ordinary time required for ſuch a Cure. Thus Chriſt ſhewed both Power and Will to Cure him miraculouſly, who believed his Power, but queſtioned his Willingneſs. *Obſ.* (4.) A twofold Charge and Command given by Chriſt to the Leper, (1.) To tell it to no Man: Where the great Modeſty, Piety and Humility of our Saviour is diſcovered, together with the prudent Care he took of his own Safety; his Modeſty in concealing his own Praiſes; his Humility in ſhunning all vain-glorious Applauſe and Commendation; his Piety in referring all the Honour and Glory to God his Father; and the care of his own Safety appeared, leſt the publiſhing of his Miracles ſhould create untimely Danger from the Phariſees. (2.) The next part of the Charge given to the Recovered Leper is to go and ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt, and to offer the Gift which *Moſes* Commanded for a Teſtimony unto them; that is, to teſtifie to the *Jews*, that he did not oppoſe the Ceremonial Law, which required a Thank-offering at his Hand; and alſo that the Miracle might teſtify that he was the true and promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn hence,* That our Bleſſed Saviour would have the Ceremonial Law punctually obſerved, ſo long as the time of its continuance did endure; tho he came to deſtroy that Law, yet whilſt it ſtood, he would have it exactly obſerved: See Note on St. *Matth.* 8. 2.

16 And he withdrew himſelf into the wilderneſs, and prayed.

The Duty of private and ſolitary Prayer is not more ſtrictly injoyn'd by our Saviour's Command, than it is recommended to us by his Example. *Obſerve* (1.) The Duty which our Holy Lord performed, *Prayer*; We have much more Buſineſs with God in Prayer, than Chriſt had; he had no Sins to be humbled for, nor beg pardon of; no need to pray for any Sanctifying Habits of Grace, the Holy Spirit being given to him without meaſure; yet did our Holy Lord ſpend much of his time in Prayer; he took delight in paying this Homage to his Heavenly Father. *Obſ.* (2.) What kind of Prayer our Lord did eminently delight in, it was *ſolitary and private* Prayer. He often went alone, even out of the hearing of his own Diſciples. The Company of our beſt Friends is not always ſeaſonable nor acceptable. There are Times and Seaſons, when a Chriſtian would not be willing, that his deareſt Relations upon Earth ſhould hear that Intercourſe which paſſes betwixt him and his God. *Obſ.* (3.) The Place our Lord withdraws to for private Prayer; it is *the Deſert*; he withdrew into the Wilderneſs and Prayed, both to avoid Oſtentation, and alſo to enjoy Communion with his Father. The modeſt Bridegroom of his Church, ſays St. *Bernard*, will not impart himſelf ſo freely to his Spouſe before. St. *Mark* 1. 35. adds, *That our Saviour roſe up a great while before Day, and went into this Deſart place to Pray*; *Teaching us,* That the Morning is the fit Seaſon; yea, the beſt of Seaſons for private Duties; now are our Spirits freſheſt, and our Minds freeſt, before the Diſtraction of the Day break in upon us: It is certainly much better to go from Prayer to Buſineſs, than from Buſineſs to Prayer. *Note Laſtly,* That our Bleſſed Saviour had no idle Hours here in the World; his Time did not lie upon his Hand as ours does; he was always either Preaching or Praying, or working Miracles; either paying Homage to God, or doing good to Man. Lord! help us to imitate this thy inſtructive Example, by imbracing all Opportunities of Glorifying God, and doing good to one another.

17 And it came to paſs on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Phariſees and doctors of the law ſitting by which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem: and the power of the Lord was *preſent* to heal them. 18 And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palſey: and they ſought means to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him. *19* And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, becauſe of the multitude, they went upon the houſe top, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midſt before Jeſus. 20 And when he ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto him, Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee. 21 And the ſcribes and the Phariſees began to reaſon, ſaying, Who is this which ſpeaketh blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins, but God alone? 22 But when Jeſus perceived their thoughts, he anſwering ſaid unto them, What reaſon ye in your hearts? 23 Whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee? or to ſay, Riſe up and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the ſon of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy couch, and go into thine houſe. 25 And immediately he roſe up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own houſe, glorifying God. *26* And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to day.

As the great End of our Saviour's Miracles was to confirm his Doctrine, ſo commonly after his Preaching he wrought his Miracles: The Scribes and Phariſees, tho' they had no love for our Saviour's Perſon, nor value for his Miniſtry, yet they frequently accompanied him wherever he went, partly to cavil at his Doctrine, and partly out of Curioſity to ſee his Miracles; but *Obſerve* the gracious Condeſcention of our Saviour, altho' he well knew that the Phariſees at this time attended upon him with no good intention, yet he puts forth his Divine Power in working Miracles before them; *The Power of the Lord was preſent to heal*; Not that Chriſt's Power was at any time abſent, but it is ſaid now to be preſent, becauſe it was now exerted and put forth at his Will and Pleaſure. And accordingly at this time, before the Phariſees Eyes he Miraculouſly Cures a Perſon ſick of the Palſey, as the Paragraph before us does inform us. Wherein *Obſerve,* (1.) The Diſeaſed and Diſtreſſed Perſon, *one ſick of the Palſey*, which being a reſolution and weakneſs of the Nerves enfeebles the Joynts, and confines a Perſon to his Bed or Couch. As a Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Power, he was pleaſed to ſingle out the Palſy and Leproſy, incurable Diſeaſes to work a Cure upon. Now this Perſon was ſo great a Cripple, by reaſon of the Palſy, that he could not go out, nor be led, but was carried in his Bed or Couch. *Obſ.* (2.) As the grievouſneſs of the Diſeaſe, ſo the greatneſs of the Peoples Faith. The Man and his Friends had a firm full perſuaſion, that Chriſt was cloathed with a Divine Power, and able to help him; and they hope in his Goodneſs that he was willing as well as able. And accordingly the Roof of the Jewiſh Houſes being flat, they uncover ſome part of it, and let the Bed down, with the ſick Man in it, and lay him at the Foot of Chriſt, in hopes of help and healing. *Obſ.* (3.) That no ſooner did they exerciſe their Faith in Believing, but Chriſt exerts his Divine Power in his Healing; yet the Object of their Faith probably was not Chriſt's Divine Power as God, but they look upon him as an extraordinary Prophet, to whom God had Communicated ſuch a Divine Power as *Elijah* and *Eliſha* had before him. Yet, ſee the marvellous Efficacy even of his Faith, which obtained not only what was deſired, but more than was expected. They deſired only the healing of the Body, but Chriſt heals Body and Soul too, ſaying, *Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*; Thereby our Saviour ſignifies to them, that Sin is the meritorious Cauſe of Sickneſs, and conſequently that in Sickneſs the beſt way to find eaſe and deliverance from Pain is firſt to ſeek for Pardon; for the ſenſe of Pardon will in ſome degree take away the ſenſe of Pain. *Obſerve* (4.) The Exception which the Phariſees take againſt our Saviour for pronouncing, that this Man's Sins were forgiven him; they charged him with Blaſphemy, urging, that it is God's peculiar Prerogative to pardon Sin; indeed their propoſition was true, but their application was falſe. Nothing more true, than that it is the higheſt Blaſphemy for any meer Man to arrogate and aſſume to himſelf the incommunicable Property of God, abſolutely and authoritatively to forgive Sin. But then their denying this Power to Chriſt of forgiving Sins, which he had as God from all Eternity, and as Mediator GOD and Man in one Perſon, when here on Earth; this was Blaſphemy in them; but the aſſuming and challenging of it none in him. *Obſerve* (5.) To cure if poſſible, the obſtinacy and blindeſs of the *Phariſees*, our Saviour gives them a Two-fold Demonſtration of his Godhead, (1.) By letting them underſtand, that he knew their Thoughts; *Jeſus perceived their Thoughts*; v. 22. To know the Thoughts, to ſearch the Hearts, and underſtand the reaſonings of Men, is not in the Power of Angels or Men, but the Prerogative of God only. (2.) By aſſuming to himſelf a Power to forgive Sins; for our Saviour here, by taking upon him to forgive Sins in his own Name, and by his own Authority, doth give the World an undeniable proof, and convincing Evidence of his Godhead; *For who can forgive ſins, but God only?* *Obſerve* (6.) The effect which this Miracle had upon the Minds of the People, they marvelled and were amazed, were filled with fear, but not with Faith; Aſtoniſhed, but not Believed. *Learn hence*, That the ſight of Chriſt's own Miracles is not ſufficient to work Faith in the Soul, without the efficacious Grace of God; the one may make us marvel, the other muſt make us believe.

27 And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a Publican named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaid unto him, Follow me. 28 And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feaſt in his own Houſe: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that ſat down with them. 30 But the ſcribes and Phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners? 31 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician: but they that are ſick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

The number of our Lord's Apoſtles not being filled up, *Obſerve* (1.) What a free and gracious, what an unexpected and undeſerved Choice Chriſt makes. *Levi*, that is, *Matthew*, (for he had both Names) a grinding *Publican*, who gathered the Tax for the *Roman* Emperor, and was probably Guilty, as others were of the Sins of Covetouſneſs and Extortion, yet is he called to follow Chriſt as a ſpecial Diſciple. *Learn hence*, That ſuch is the freeneſs of Divine Grace, that it ſometimes calls and Converts Sinners unto Chriſt, when they think not of him, nor ſeek unto him. Little did *Levi* now think of a Saviour, much leſs ſeek after him, yet is he here called by him, and that with an efficacious Call; *Matthew*, a Publican, *Zaccheus*, an Extortioner, *Saul*, a Perſecutor, all theſe are effectually called by Chriſt, as inſtances and evidences of the mighty Power of Converting Grace. *Obſ.* (2.) *Levi* or *Matthew*'s ready Compliance with Chriſt's Call, *He preſently aroſe and followed him*; when the inward Call of the Holy Spirit accompanieth the outward Call of the Word, the Soul readily complies and yields Obedience to the voice of Chriſt. Our Saviour (ſays the pious Biſhop *Hall*) ſpeaks by his Word to our Ears, and we hear not, we ſtir not; but when he ſpeaks by his Spirit efficaciouſly to our Hearts, Satan cannot hold us down, the World ſhall not keep us back; but we ſhall with *Levi*, inſtantly ariſe and follow our Saviour. *Obſ.* (3.) *Levi*, to ſhew his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt, makes him a great Feaſt, Chriſt invited *Levi* to a Diſcipleſhip, *Levi* invites Chriſt to a Dinner; the Servant invites his Maſter, a Sinner invites his Saviour; a Better Gueſt he could not invite, Chriſt always comes with his coſt with him. We do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any Table, that his ever refuſed to go; if a Publican, if a Phariſee invited him, he conſtantly went; not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of Converſing, and doing good; Chriſt Feaſts us when we feed him. *Levi* to give Chriſt a pledge and ſpecimen of his Love, makes him a Feaſt. *Learn thence*, That new Converts are full of Affection towards Chriſt, and very expreſſive of their Love unto him. *Levi*'s Heart being toucht with a ſenſe of Chriſt's rich Love makes him a Royal Feaſt. *Obſerve* (4.) The cavil and exception which the Scribes and Phariſees made at our Lord's free Converſation. They cenſure him for converſing with Sinners; malice will never want matter of Accuſation. Our Saviour juſtifies himſelf, telling them he convers'd with Sinners as their Phyſician, not as their Companion; *They that are whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick*: as if our Lord had ſaid, With whom ſhould a Phyſician converſe, but with ſick Patients? and is he to be accuſed for that? now this is my caſe. I am come into the World to do the Office of a kind Phyſician unto Men; ſurely then I am to take all oportunities of converſing with them, that I may help and heal them, *for they that are ſick need the Phyſician*; but as for you Scribes and Phariſees, who are well and whole in your Opinion and Conceit, I have no hopes of doing good upon you; for ſuch as think themſelves whole deſire not the Phyſicians help. Now from this Aſſertion of our Saviour, *The whole need not the Phyſician, but the ſick*, theſe Truths are ſuggeſted to us, (1.) That Sin is the Souls malady, its Spiritual diſeaſe and ſickneſs. (2.) That Chriſt is the Phyſician appointed by God for the cure and healing of this Diſeaſe. (3.) That there are multitudes of ſinners ſpiritually ſick, who yet think themſelves ſound and whole. (4.) That ſuch, and only ſuch as find themſelves ſin ſick, and ſpiritually diſeaſed, are Subjects capable of Chriſt's healing; *They that are whole need not the Phyſician, but they that are ſick. I came not* (ſays Chriſt) *to call the* (Opinionately) *Righteous, but the* (Senſible) *Sinner to Repentance.*

33 And they ſaid unto him, Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt, whilſt the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegrooom ſhall be taken away from them, and then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 36 And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them, No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, agreeth not with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh. 38 But new wine muſt be put into new bottles; and both are preſerved. 39 No man alſo having drunk old *wine*, ſtraightway deſireth new: for he ſaith, The old is better.

An Objection is here made againſt the Diſciples of our Saviour, that they did not faſt ſo much and ſo often as *John Baptiſt*'s Diſciples did. *John*'s Diſciples imitated their Maſter, who was a Man of an auſtere Life; Chriſt's Diſciples imitated him who was of a more free Converſation. *Obſerve* therefore our Saviour's Defence which he makes for the not faſting of his Diſciples; he delares, that at preſent it was neither ſuitable nor tolerable; *not ſuitable*, in regard of Chriſt's Bodily Preſence with them, who being their *Bridegroom*, and his Diſciples Children of the *Bride-chamber*, it was now a day of Joy and Rejoycing to them, and mourning and faſting would be very improper for them But when the Bridegroom *ſhall be taken away*, that is Chriſt's bodily Preſence removed, then there will be cauſe enough for the Diſciples *to faſt*, and mourn. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt is the Bridegroom of his Spouſe the Church. (2.) That this Bridegroom was to be taken away. (3.) That becauſe of the Bridegroom's Removal, the Church did, ſhall and muſt Faſt; *The days will come, when the Bridegroom ſhall be taken away, and then ſhall they faſt.* Again our Saviour declares, that this Diſcipline of faſting was not at preſent *tolerable* for his Diſciples, for they were at preſent but raw, green and tender, unable to bear the Severities, and rigours of Religion, any more than an old Garment can bear a piece of new cloath to be ſet into it, or any more than old Bottles can bear new Wine to be put into them. The ſenſe of our Saviour's Words ſeems to be this, My Diſciples at preſent are tender and weak, newly called and converted, they cannot therefore at preſent undergo the auſterities of Religion, Faſtings, Weepings, and Watchings; but e're long I ſhall leave them, and go to Heaven, from whence I will ſend down my Holy Spirit upon them, which ſhall enable them to all the Duties that the Goſpel enjoyns. The Leſſon of Inſtruction, which we may profitably gather from hence, is this, That it is hurtful and dangerous for young Converts, for weak Chriſtians to be put upon the ſeverer Exerciſes of Religion, or to be urged to the performance of ſuch Duties as are above their ſtrength, but they ought to be treated with that tenderneſs which becomes the mild and gentle diſpenſation of the Goſpel. Our Saviour (ſays one) doth here commend prudence to his Miniſters, in treating their People according to their ſtrength, and putting them upon Duties according to their Time and Standing: We muſt conſult what Progreſs our People have made in Chriſtianity, and manage accordingly.

CHAP. VI.

AND it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the corn-fields:

and his diſciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2 And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-days? 3 And Jeſus anſwering them, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, what David did, when himſelf was hungred, and they which were with him: 4 How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him, which is not lawful to eat but for the prieſts alone? 5 And he ſaid unto them, that the ſon of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

In the former part of this Chapter we find our Bleſſed Saviour defending his Diſciples from the clamorous accuſations of the Phariſees for breaking the Sabbath-day, becauſe they plucked the ears of Corn, and rubbed them in their hands in order to the ſatisfying of their Hunger. *Where Note* (1.) The great Poverty, the low eſtate and condition of Chriſt's own Diſciples in the World. They wanted Bread, and are forced to pluck the ears of Corn to ſatisfie their Hunger: God may, and ſometimes does ſuffer his deareſt Children to fall into ſtraights, and to taſte of want, for the trial of their Faith and Dependance upon his Power and Goodneſs. *Note*, (2.) How the hypocritical Phariſees blame this Action of the Diſciples, namely, their plucking of the ears of Corn, yet did they not charge them with Theft for ſo doing; becauſe to take in our great Neceſſity ſo much of our Neighbour's Goods, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if he were preſent and knew our Circumſtances he would not deny us, is not Theft. But it was the ſervile Labours on the Sabbath, in gathering the ears of Corn, which the Phariſees Scruple and Object againſt: *Where Note*, How Hypocrites expend their Zeal in and upon the leſſer things of the Law, whilſt they neglect the greater; placing all Holineſs in the obſervation of outward Ceremonies, whilſt they neglect moral Duties. *Note* (3.) The Argument with which our Saviour defends this action of his Diſciples, it is taken from the example of *David*: Neceſſity freed him from fault and blame in eating the Conſecrated Bread, which none but the Prieſts might lawfully eat: For in caſes of Neceſſity, a Ceremonial Precept muſt give place to a moral Duty. Works of mercy, for the preſerving our Lives, and the better fitting us for Sabbath ſervices, are certainly lawful on the Sabbath-day. *Note Laſtly*, The Argument which our Saviour uſes to prove the Sabbath's Obſervation, may be diſpens'd with in a caſe of abſolute Neceſſity; and that is drawn from that Authority which Chriſt the Inſtitutor and Lord of the Sabbath had over it; *The Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*, That is, he has Authority and Power, as God, and as Mediator, to inſtitute and appoint a Sabbath, to alter and change it, to diſpenſe with the breach of it upon a juſt and great occaſion; and conſequently acts of Mercy, which tend to fit us for Works of Piety not only may, but ought to be done upon the Sabbath-day. This Action of the Diſciples being of that Nature, is without juſt cauſe cenſured and condemned by the Phariſees; a ſort of Men who were reſolved to cavil at, and quarrel with whatever our Saviour or his Diſciples either did or ſaid.

6 And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath, that he entered into the ſynagogue and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered. 7 And the ſcribes and Phariſees watched him, whether he would heal on the ſabbath-day: that they might find an accuſation againſt him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the midſt. And he aroſe, and ſtood forth. 9 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will ask you one thing, Is it lawful on the ſabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it*? 10 And looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, ſtretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 11 And they were filled with madneſs, and communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

Obſerve here, (1.) The miraculous cure which our Saviour wrought upon the man which had the withered hand, and (2.) The effect which this Miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees; in the former, *Note*, the place where our Saviour wrought this Miracle, *in the Synagogue*; the Time when, *on the Sabbath-day*; the manner how, by ſpeaking *of a word*; the Perſons before whom, namely, the envious and malicious *Phariſees*. Theſe men were always ſlandering Chriſt's Doctrine, and cavilling at his Miracles, yet does our Holy Lord go on with his Work before their Faces without Diſcouragement. *Learn thence*, That the unjuſt Cenſures and malicious Cavils of wicked Men againſt us for well-doing, muſt not diſcourage us from doing our Duty, either towards God, or towards our Neighbour. Altho' the Phariſees watcht our Saviour wherever he went, and when they could find no occaſion of Quarrel, would invent and make one, yet ſuch was our Lord's Courage and Reſolution, that *He bids the Man which had the withered Hand ſtand forth*, to ſhew that he was reſolved to heal him, notwithſtanding their malicious Purpoſe, to accuſe him for it, as a Breaker of the Sabbath. Oppoſition met with in doing our Duty, muſt not diſcourage us from doing good, if we follow the Example of our Bleſſed Redeemer. *Obſerve* (2.) The Influence and Effect which this Miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees; they were filled with Madneſs and took Counſel to kill him: Inſtead of being Convinced by this Miracle, they Conſpire againſt him for it. The Enemies of Chriſt and his Holy Religion, when Arguments fail, fall to Violence. It is a certain Sign of a weak Cauſe, that muſt be ſupported by Paſſion, which is all Tongue, and no Ear.

12 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty which our Holy Lord performed, the Duty of Prayer. We have much more Buſineſs with God in Prayer, than Chriſt had; he had no Sins to confeſs, no want of Grace to make known, yet did our Lord ſpend much time, even a whole Night in this Duty. Lord, what delight didſt thou take in paying this Homage to thy Heavenly Father? O how doth thy Zeal and Forwardneſs condemn our Remiſneſs and Lukewarmneſs? *Obſerve* (2.) It was ſolitary Prayer that our Lord did ſo exceedingly delight in; *He went into the Mountain alone to Pray*, not ſuffering his very Diſciples to be with him. There are Times and Seaſons, when a Chriſtian would not be willing that his deareſt Relations upon Earth ſhould hear that Intercourſe which paſſes betwixt him and his God. *Obſerve* (3.) The Place which our Lord withdraws to for privacy in Prayer. *He went into a Mountain*, as a Place of Retiredneſs; God delights to meet his Children alone. The modeſt Bridegroom of the Church, ſays St. *Bernard*, will not impart himſelf to his Spouſe before Company. *Obſ.* (4.) The Time when Chriſt retired into this Mountain to Pray, and ſpend a whole Night in Prayer to God. If we look back to the former part of the Chapter, we ſhall find that it was at a time when the Phariſees were filled with Rage and Madneſs againſt him, and conſpired to take away his Life. *Thence Learn*, That it is our Duty, at ſuch times eſpecially when Enemies lie in wait to do us hurt, to give our ſelves much unto Prayer. Again, if we look forward, the next Verſe tells us, that our Saviour was now about to ſend forth his Twelve Apoſtles to Preach and Propagate the Goſpel. Chriſt thought ſo great a Work was not to be done without ſolemn and extraordinary Prayer. Accordingly he ſpends an whole Night in Prayer to God upon that Occaſion; leaving herein a moſt inſtructive Example to his Church, to continue in Prayer at all times; but then eſpecially to abound in it, when Perſons are to be ſet apart for the momentous Work of the Miniſtry, that they may enterprize it with extraordinary Dread and Caution, not with aſpiring, but tremendous Thoughts; for who is ſufficient for theſe Things?

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his Diſciples: And of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named apoſtles: 14 Simon (whom he alſo named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 25 Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes. 16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which *was alſo* the traitor.

As the Jewiſh Church aroſe from Twelve Patriarchs, ſo the Chriſtian Church became Planted by Twelve Apoſtles. The Perſon ſending them forth was Chriſt; none may undertake the Work and Calling of the Miniſtry but thoſe whom

Chriſt appoints and calls, not immediately by himſelf, but mediately by the Governours of his Church; The Perſons Commiſſioned were Diſciples before they were Apoſtles; to *Teach* us, That Chriſt will have ſuch as preach the Goſpel, to be Diſciples before they are Miniſters; Trained up in the Faith and Doctrine of the Goſpel, before they undertake a publick Charge. *Obſ. next*, How carefully the names of the Twelve Apoſtles, thoſe Laborious Perſons in the ſervice of Souls, are Recorded, and tranſmitted with honour to Poſterity. God will ſignally honour thoſe who ſingularly honour him, and are the ſpecial Inſtruments of his Glory. Of the Twelve Apoſtles, *Peter* is named firſt, and *Judas* laſt; *Peter* is firſt named, becauſe probably elder than the reſt, or becauſe for order ſake he might ſpeak before the reſt; from whence may be inſerted a Primacy, but no Supremacy; a priority of Order, but no Superiority of Degree; as the Fore-man of a Grand-Jury has a precedency, but no preheminency; he is firſt in order before the reſt, but has no Authority over the reſt; neither did St. *Peter* ever aſſume to himſelf a power of deciding Controverſies; but we find St. *James* in that firſt General Council mentioned; *Acts* 15. 13. ſpeaking ſomewhat definitively, *This I judge* or determine the matter, and yet St. *Peter* was then and there preſent. Had the champions of the Church of *Rome* ſuch a paſſage in all the Scripture for St. *Peter*'s Authority, it would make a louder noiſe than *Paſce Oves*, Feed my Sheep, St. *John* 21. 16. Again, as St. *Peter* is named firſt, ſo *Judas* is mention'd laſt, with a Brand of Infamy upon him; the Traitor, the Perſon that Betray'd his Lord and Maſter: From whence we may gather, that tho' the Truth of Grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a Miniſter's Salvation, yet the want of it doth not diſannul his Office, nor hinder the lawfulneſs of his Miniſtry. *Judas*, tho' a Traytor was yet a lawful Miniſter; and a Heart-hypocrite is no hypocrite, *in foro Eccleſiæ*, before the Church, tho' he ſhall be damn'd for his Hypocriſy before God.

17 And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain, and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes; 18 And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for there went vertue out of him, and healed them all.

Obſ. here (1.) The great Zeal and Forwardneſs of the People in attending upon our Saviour's Miniſtry; he had newly begun to preach in this place, and the People flock after him from all parts, from *Judea*, from *Jeruſalem*, from *Tyre* and *Sidon*, to hear his Doctrine and ſee his Miracles. When our Saviour firſt began to Preach, the People came unto him from every quarter. His Miniſters find it thus; at our firſt coming among a People, our Labours are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt good. Our Peoples Affections are then warmeſt, and perhaps our own too. *Obſ.* (2.) What ſort of People they were who attended thus zealouſly on our Saviour's Miniſtry; they were the common and ordinary People; the Poor received the Goſpel; the learned Scribes, the knowing Phariſees; thoſe wiſe men after the Fleſh, the Mighty, the Noble, the great and Honourable, theſe deſpiſed our Saviour's Perſon, ſlighted his Miniſtry, yea, ſought to take away his Life. Thus from the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel to this day, the poorer and meaner ſort of People have entertained the glad Tidings of Salvation; it is a ſad, but a certain Truth, that Heaven is a place where few(comparatively, but very few) of the great Men of the World are like to come: Their Temptations are many, their Corruptions ſtrong, and their great Eſtates, thro' their own abuſe, become fewel to their Luſt's: Lord! how rare is it to find thoſe that are Eminently Great, Exemplary Good. *Obſ.* (3.) The Nature of our Saviour's Miracles; *Moſes*'s Miracles were as great Judgments as Wonders, but Chriſt's Miracles were as great Mercies as Wonders; they were ſalubrious and healing; there went Vertue out of him, and he healed them all. Chriſt's Miracles were like the Author of them, full of Goodneſs, yet would not the obſtinate Phariſees be convinced, either by the Goodneſs that was in them, or by that omnipotent power which wrought them: All our Saviours Miracles were wonderful, but Wonders of the Love and Mercy.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

As our Saviour's Condition in this World was very poor, ſo was his Diſciples condition alſo; therefore to relieve them againſt their Poverty and low Eſtate in the World, he thus beſpeaks them, *Bleſſed be ye poor*, you that believe in me, and follow me, are in a happier Condition, than thoſe that are Rich, and received their conſolation, *for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven*. Chriſt was the Poor Man's Preacher, and the Poor Man's Comforter; yet a bare outward Poverty, or an avowed voluntary Poverty, will entitle none to the Bleſſing. 'Tis not a Poverty of Poſſeſſion, but a poverty of Spirit, that makes us members of the Kingdom of Grace, and heirs of the Kingdom of Glory.

21 Bleſſed *are* ye that hunger now: for ye ſhall be filled. Bleſſed *are* ye that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh.

Hunger and Thirſt are not Bleſſings in themſelves, nor yet are they curſes in themſelves. Sanctified hunger is a far greater Bleſſing, than ſurfeiting Fulneſs; St. *Matthew* therefore adds, *Ch.* 5. *v.* 6. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs. Learn thence* (1.) That ſuch as ſpiritually hunger and thirſt after Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs, are certainly in an Happy and Bleſſed Condition. (2.) That the Happineſs of thoſe who do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs conſiſts in *being filled. Bleſſed are they that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, you my Diſciples that are now in a ſad, mornful, and afflicted State are Bleſſed, for there will come a time when he ſhall be Comforted, a time when God ſhall wipe away all Tears from your Eyes; yet muſt we not think, that we have nothing to do but to Mourn; there is a time to Rejoyce, as well as to Mourn, not that bare Mourning and Weeping is in it ſelf, and for its own ſake acceptable unto God. But when we mourn rationally for our Sins, and the ſins of others, God will comfort us in this World by his Word and Spirit, and in the World to come with the ſight of himſelf.

22 Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeperate you *from their company*, and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of mans ſake. 23 Rejoyce ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Obſerve here (1.) The Sufferers deſcribed, the Diſciples and their Sufferings foretold, ye ſhall be hated, ſeperated, and reproached. Hatred of Chriſt's Diſciples is the bitter Root from which Perſecution grows; where there is Hatred in the Heart, no wonder that Reviling is in the Lips. And as the Diſciples of Chriſt then were for his ſake hated, reproached, and caſt out of the Jewiſh Church; ſo now ſuch Diſciples as will cordially embrace, and ſtedfaſtly hold faſt the Faith delivered by our Saviour, muſt expect and prepare for hatred and perſecution, to be ſeperated from civil Society, excommunicated from Church-fellowſhip, and all this by them who ſhall call themſelves the Guides and Governours of an Infallible Church.

24 But wo unto you that are rich: for ye have received your conſolation. 25 Wo unto you that are full: for ye ſhall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now: for ye ſhall mourn and weep.

Obſerve here (1.) That tho' St. *Luke* omits divers of the Beatitudes mentioned by St. *Matthew*, *chap.* 5. yet he reciteth the Woes which St. *Matthew* omitteth. If we will underſtand our Saviour's Doctrine fully, we muſt conſult all the Evangeliſts thoroughly. *Obſ.* (2.) Theſe Woes are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but reſtrainedly; the Wo does not belong to Men, becauſe they are *Rich*, becauſe they are *full*, becauſe they do *laugh*; but becauſe they place their happineſs in theſe things, take up with them for their Portion, rejoyce in them as their chief Good; Valuing themſelves by what they have in hand, not by what they have in hope: He that is Rich and Righteous, he that is Great and Gracious; he that has his hands full of this World, and his Heart empty of Pride and vain Confidence; he that laughs when God ſmiles, he that expreſſes himſelf joyfully, when God expreſſes himſelf Graciouſly; ſuch a Man is rich in Grace who is thus gracious in the midſt of Riches; for to be Rich and Holy, argues much Riches of Holineſs.

26 Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak
well

well of you: for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets.

Our Saviour's deſign in theſe Words, is not to condemn any of his Diſciples or Miniſters; who have, by doing their Duty, gain'd a fair Reputation amongſt the men of the World; but to let us underſtand how rarely and ſeldom it is attained; for uſually the beſt Men are worſt ſpoken of; neither the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor *John Baptiſt* the Prophet of the New Teſtament, nor Chriſt himſelf, nor his Apoſtles, did ever gain either the good Will, or the good Word of the Men of that Generation, in which they Lived. The Applauſe of the Multitude (that contingent Judge of Good and Evil) rather attends the Vain than the Vertuous. None have ever been ſo much reproached by man as the Faithful Miniſters of God, who have learnt to take pleaſure in Reproaches: For tho' Grace does not bid us invite Reproaches, yet it teaches us to bid them welcome. The World has all along taken effectual care, by their cruel mockings, bitter Reproaches, ſharp invectives, to free the Miniſters of God in all Ages, from the danger of our Saviour's Wo here denounced; *Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you.*

27 But I ſay unto you which hear, Love your enimies, do good to them which hate you: 28 Bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you. 29 And unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo.

Obſerve here (1.) The Noble Spirit of Chriſtianity, and the large extent of Chriſtian Charity; the Jewiſh kindneſs was limited and confined to thoſe of their own Religion, Kindered and Nation, their Charity began and ended at home; but our Saviour obliges his Followers to the exerciſe of a more extenſive Charity, even to all Mankind, even the worſt of Men, our Enemies that ſeek our Deſtruction. Chriſtianity is ſo far from allowing us to perſecute them that hate us, that it commands us to love them that perſecute us. *Obſerve* (2.) The Nature and quality of the Duty enjoyn'd, *Love your Enemies*; there the inward affection is required; *Bleſs them that curſe you*; there outward civility and affability is required; *Do good to them that hate you*; here real acts of kindneſs and beneficence are required to be done to the worſt of Enemies, tho' they be guilty of the worſt of Crimes, calumny and cruelty, ſtriking both at our Reputation, and our Life. *Learn*, That Chriſtianity obliges us to bear a ſincere Love to our moſt malicious Enemies, to be ready at all times to pray for them, and upon all occaſions to do good unto them; Thus to do, is an imitation of God our Maker, of Chriſt our Maſter: 'Tis for the good of this lower World, and the way to a Better; 'Tis the Ornament of our Religion, and the perfection of our Nature, and an high degree and pitch of Vertue. To which may be added the next Duty, *not to revenge injuries*; where private Revenge is the thing forbidden; and we are directed, rather to ſuffer a double Wrong, than to ſeek a private Revenge: Chriſtianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently, rather than to Revenge one privately; we muſt leave the matter to God, and the Magiſtrate. The truth is, Revenge is a very troubleſome and vexatious Paſſion, the man's Soul ſwells and boils, and is in pain and anguiſh, and has no eaſe. Beſides, by our Revenging of one injury, we neceſſarily draw one another, and ſo bring on a perpetual Circulation of Injuries and Revenges; whereas forgiveneſs prevents vexation to others, and diſquietment to our ſelves.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask *them* not again.

Theſe, and the like Precepts of our Saviour are not to be taken ſtrictly but reſtrainedly; we are thereby obliged to Charity according to others Neceſſities, and our own Abilities, but not bound to give to every one that has the Confidence to ask for what we have. Indeed every Man that really wants is the proper Object of our Chriſtian Charity; and we muſt with a compaſſionate Heart and open Hand relieve him, according to his Neceſſity, but anſwerable to our Ability. Nor muſt the ſecond part of the Verſe be underſtood as forbiding Chriſtians to ſeek the Recovery of their juſt Rights, by purſuing Thieves, and following the Law upon Oppreſſors; but requiring us to forbear all Acts of private Revenge, as directly contrary to the Spirit and Temper of Chriſtianity. As Jealouſie is the Rage of a Man, ſo Revenge is the Rage of the Devil, 'tis the very Soul and Spirit of the Apoſtate Nature.

31 And as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe.

Here our Saviour lays down a moſt excellent Rule of Life for all his Diſciples and Followers to walk by, namely, always to do as we would be done by. The Golden Rule of Juſtice and Equity in all our Dealings with Men, is this, *To do as we would be done unto.* It is a full Rule, a clean Rule, a moſt juſt and equitable Rule, which is the Light of Nature, and the Law of Chriſt binds upon us. St. *Matthew*, Ch. 7. 12. adds, That *this is the Law and the Prophets*, that is, the Sum of the Old Teſtament, and the Subſtance of the Second Table. The whole of the Law is this, to Love GOD above our ſelves, and to Love our Neighbour as our ſelves.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the thankful, and *to* the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful as your father alſo is merciful.

The Deſign of our Bleſſed Saviour in all and every of theſe Precepts, is to recommend unto us, all ſorts and kinds of Mercy and Charity; namely, Charity in Giving, Charity in Forgiving, Charity in Lending; it is ſometimes our Duty (if we have ability) to Lend to ſuch poor Perſons as we cannot expect will ever be in a Capacity, either to repay, or to requite us. This is to imitate the Divine Bounty, which does Good to all, even to the unthankful, and to the unholy. Love for Love, is juſtice; Love for no Love, is favour and kindneſs; but Love and Charity, Mercy and Compaſſion to all Perſons, even the undeſerving and ill-deſerving, this is Divine Goodneſs, a Chriſt-like Temper, which will render us illuſtrious on Earth, and glorious in Heaven. St. *Luke* ſays here, *Be ye merciful, as your Father is merciful.* St. *Matthew* ſays, ch. 5. laſt, *Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect*, implying, that Love and Mercy Charity and Compaſſion, is the perfection of a Chriſtian's Graces; he that is made perfect in Love, is perfect in all Divine Graces in the Account of God. Perfection in all Gra- but eſpecially in Love and Charity, ought to be our Aim in this Life, and ſhall be our Attaintment in the next.

37 Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven:

This Prohibition. *Judge not*, is not to be underſtood of our ſelves, but our Neighbours. Self-judging is a great and neceſſary Duty; raſh judging of others, is an heinous and grievous Sin, which expoſes to the Righteous Judgment of God: It is private judging, and private condemning of Perſons which Chriſt forbids; it follows, *Forgive and ye ſhall be forgiven*; not that a bare forgiving of others, is all that God requires in order to our forgiveneſs, but it is one part of that Obedience which we owe to God, without which it is in vain to expect forgiveneſs from God; *Forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven.* See the Note on *Matth.* 7. 1.

38 Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

I think there is not any one Text of Scripture that declares the Bounty of God more fully in Rewarding Acts of Charity and Mercy, than this before us. Oh how liberal a Paymaſter is God? How ſure and bountiful are the returns Chriſt makes to us for the relief given to him in his Members: He promiſes us here (1.) Not bare meaſure, but *good meaſure.* (2.) *Preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over*; nothing adds more to the Meaſure than the ſhaking of the Buſhel, the crowding and preſſing of the Corn, and heaping till the meaſure runneth over; now a meaſure will run over as long as you will pour. *Learn hence*, That Charities done in

Faith, in Obedience to God, and with an eye to the Glory of God, will produce a certain and plentiful Increaſe. Liberality is the way to Riches; Giving is the beſt and ſureſt way of Thriving; a little Charity from us, if we have but a little, is look'd upon by God as a great deal. But it is the greateſt Imprudence as well as Impiety, to do but a little when we have Ability to do much; for he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully; *good meaſure, preſſed down, and running over.*

39 And he ſpake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch?

Our Saviour doubtleſs apply'd theſe Words to the Scribes and Phariſees, the Jewiſh Leaders, Doctors and Teachers, who being ignorant of the Spiritual Senſe of the Law (interpreting it only to the reſtraining of the outward Men) they were very unfit to inſtruct and lead others; for where one blind Man leads another, both are in danger of the Ditch, that is, to run into Ruin and Deſtruction. *Learn* 1. That ignorant, erroneous, or unfaithful Miniſters, are the greateſt Plague, and ſoreſt Puniſhment that can befal a People. 2. That Chriſt having forewarned us of ſuch Guides, to follow them will be an inexcuſable Sin and Folly, and never free us from the danger of Deſtruction, but rather be an aggravation of our Condemnation: *If the Blind follow the Blind, both will* inevitably, yet inexcuſably *fall into the Ditch.*

40 The diſciple is not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his maſter.

The Application of theſe Words, no doubt our Saviour intended to his own Diſciples, partly to comfort them under Sufferings, and partly to incourage them to Obedience: Did they ſuffer hard things from an unkind World? The remembrance of what their Maſter ſuffered before them may ſupport them? Did they meet with hard and difficult Duties, ſuch as loving Enemies, doing good to them that hate and perſecute them? Their Lord's Example may encourage and inſtruct them, who loved them when they were Enemies, who prayed for his Murtherers, and offered up his Blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it. *Learn hence*, That the Perfection of a Chriſtian in this World, conſiſteth in his imitation of Chriſt Jeſus, *in being as our Maſter*; in coming as near to his Example as it is poſſible for Perſons cloathed with Fleſh and Blood to arrive it, *Every one that is perfect muſt be as his Maſter.*

41 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but perceiveſt not the beam that is in thy own eye? 42 Either how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thy ſelf beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brothers eye.

By the Mote in our Brother's Eye, is meant ſome ſmall and little Sins diſcerned, or ſome Sin ſuſpected. By the Beam in our own Eye, ſome greater Sin undiſcerned: Now ſays our Saviour, there is no greater ſign of Hypocriſy, than to be curious in ſpying out the ſmaller Faults of others, and at the ſame time indulge greater in our ſelves. *Learn hence*, That there is no ſuch way to teach us Charity in judging of others, as to exerciſe Severity in judging of our ſelves. 2. That thoſe who deſire others ſhould look upon their Failings with a Compaſſionate Eye, muſt not look upon the Failings of others with a Cenſorious Eye, *For with what meaſure we meet, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.*

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they grapes. 45 A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh.

Our Saviour here and elſewhere frequently compares Perſons to Trees; the Heart of Man is as the Root, the Actions as the Fruit; as the Root is the Principle from which the Fruit ſprings, ſo the Heart of Man is the Principle from which all Humane Actions flow; an holy Heart will be accompanied with an holy Life; where there is a Vital Principle of Grace within, there will be the Actings of Grace without, a good Conſcience will be accompanied with a good Converſation. *Obſerve farther*, A double Treaſure diſcovered in the Heart of Man; 1. An evil Treaſure of Sin and Corruption, from whence flow evil Things; But why ſhould Sin be called a Treaſure? not for the preciouſneſs of it, but for the abundance of it; a little doth not make a Treaſure; and alſo for the continuance of it: for tho' Sin be perpetually overflowing in the Life, yet doth the Heart continue full. The Treaſure of Original Corruption in Man's Heart and Nature, tho' by Sanctifying Grace it be drawn low, yet it is never in this Life drawn dry. 2. Here is a good Treaſure of Grace diſcovered in a Sanctified and Renewed Man, which is the ſource and ſpring from whence all gracious Actions do proceed and flow, namely, a Sanctified and Renewed Heart and Nature. When once the Will of Man is made conformable to the Will of God, it doth will and deſire, chooſe and embrace, take pleaſure and delight in what God Approves, Commands, and Loves; and it will lay an Injunction upon all the Members of the Body to act conformably thereunto.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? 47 Whoſoever cometh to me, and heareth my ſayings, and doth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like. 48 He is like a man which built an houſe, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an houſe upon the earth, againſt which the ſtream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that houſe was great.

Our Saviour here concludes his Sermon with an Elegant Similitude: He compares the Faithful doer of the Word to a wiſe Builder, which founded his Houſe upon a Rock. Others he reſembles to a fooliſh Builder, that built his Houſe upon the Sand; the *Houſe* is the hope of Heaven and Eternal Life, the Rock is Chriſt, the building upon the Sand, is reſting upon the bare performance of outward Duties; the *Rain*, the *Winds*, and the *Flouds*, are all kinds of afflicting Evils, Sufferings and Perſecutions that may befal us. The Sum is, Men's hopes of Salvation built upon any other beſides Chriſt, or built upon Chriſt without a ſincere and uniform Obedience to him, are vain hopes, deceitful hopes; for when the Storm ariſes, when Affliction or Perſecution comes, their Confidence will fail them, their Foundation will be ſhaken. *Learn* 1. That the Obedient Believer is the only wiſe Man, that builds his hopes of Heaven upon a ſure and abiding Foundation; Chriſt is the Rock that he builds upon, and one Chriſt is before a thouſand Creatures; one Rock better than Millions of Sands to build upon. 2. That ſuch Profeſſors as reſt in the bare performance of outward Duties, are fooliſh Builders, their Foundation is weak and ſandy, and all their hopes of Salvation vain and deceitful. Lord, how does the carnal World build all their hopes upon the Sand, on the Wiſdom of the Fleſh, on their Policies, Counſels, Friends and Riches! They bottom their very Souls upon Fancies, Preſumptions, Deluſions, and vain Hopes; they expect to be Happy without being Holy, which is to expect to be eaſy without being Healthy. Wo to that Man whoſe Portion lies in the Creatures Hands, who builds all his hopes upon this Earth, for when the Earth is ſhaken, his Hopes are ſhaken, Heart is ſhaken, and he is even at his Wits end: Whereas the Chriſtian that builds upon the Rock, he ſtands firm and ſure; for if ever the Chriſtian falls, Chriſt muſt fall with him: he ſhall never be diſappointed of his Hopes, unleſs Faithfulneſs can diſappoint; he ſhall never be deceived, unleſs Truth it ſelf can deceive. If it be impoſſible for God to Lye, then it is impoſſible for the Obedient, Holy and Circumſpect Chriſtian finally to miſcarry.

CHAP. VII.

The former part of this Chapter relates to us a double Miracle wrought by our Bleſſed Saviour, the one in raiſing the Centurion's Servant from his Bed, the other in raiſing the Widow's Son from his Bier; both of them eminent Acts and Inſtances of Divine and Almighty Power. The Hiſtory of the former ſtands thus:

NOW when he had ended all his ſayings in the audience of the people, he entred into Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurions ſervant, who was dear unto him, was ſick and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jeſus, he ſent unto him the elders of the Jews, beſeeching him that he would come and heal his ſervant. 4 And when they came to Jeſus, they beſought him inſtantly, ſaying, That he was worthy for whom he ſhould do this. 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a ſynagogue. 6 Then Jeſus went with them. And when he was now not far from the houſe, the centurion ſent friends to him, ſaying unto him, Lord, trouble not thy ſelf, for I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt enter under my roof. 7 Wherefore neither thought I my ſelf worthy to come unto thee: but ſay in a word, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 8 For I alſo am a man ſet under authority, having under me ſoldiers, and I ſay unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doth it. 9 When Jeſus heard theſe things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and ſaid unto the people that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael. 10 And they that were ſent, returning to the houſe, found the ſervant whole that had been ſick.

In our Saviour's miraculous Cure of the Centurion's Servant, we have ſeveral Particulars very *Obſervable*, as 1. The Perſon applying himſelf to our Bleſſed Saviour for help and healing; he was a Gentile, an Heathen, a *Roman* Soldier, an Officer and Commander; yet he believes in, and relies upon the Power of Chriſt. *Note*, That ſuch is the freeneſs of Divine Grace, that it extends it ſelf to all Sorts and Ranks, to all Orders and Degrees of Men without Exception; even the Bloody Trade of War yields worthy Clients to Chriſt; he doth not ſo much Regard what we are, and whence we are, as with what Diſpoſitions and Deſires, with what Purpoſes and Inclinations we come unto him. *Obſ.* 2. The Perſon whom the Centurion came to Chriſt for; not for himſelf, not for his Son, but for his Servant; *His Servant was ſick*: He doth not drive him out of Doors, nor ſtand gazing by his Bed-ſide, but looks out for help and relief for him; a worthy Example of Humanity. Some Maſters have not ſo much regard to their ſick Servants, as they have to their Oxen and their Swine. But he is not worthy of a good Servant that in time of Sickneſs is not willing to ſerve his Servant. *Obſerve* 3. Unto whom the Centurion ſeeks, and with what Zeal and Application; he ſeeks not to Wizards and Conjurers, but to the Phyſician for his ſick Servant, yea, to Chriſt the chief Phyſician; and this not with a formal Relation in his Mouth, but with a vehement aggravation of his Diſeaſe, *My Servant lyes ſick of the Palſy, grievouſly tormented.* St. *Matth.* 8. 6. where the Maſter's Condolency, and tender Sympathy with his afflicted Servant, is both matter of Commendation and Imitation. *Obſerve* 4. The happy mixture of Humility and Faith, which was found in this Centurion. See his wonderful Humility in not thinking himſelf worthy to come into Chriſt's Preſence, or that Chriſt ſhould come under his Roof. The beſt Men have always the loweſt Thoughts of themſelves; when we eſteem our ſelves unworthy of any Favours, Chriſt accounts us worthy of all. See alſo his Faith in Chriſt's Divine Power; he believed that Chriſt was able at a Diſtance, and by a ſingle Word to command off the Diſtemper of his Servant; he tells him, That Diſeaſes were as much at Chriſt's command, as his Servants were at his command. Humility we ſee is both the Fruit of Faith, and the Companion of Faith. An humble Soul has evermore an high eſteem of Chriſt's Power, and a low eſteem of its ſelf. *Obſ.* 5. How our Bleſſed Saviour exceeds not only the Centurion's Deſires, but his Expectations alſo, St. *Matth.* 8. 7. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him.* O wonderful Condeſcenſion! In St. *John* 4. 47. We read of a certain Noble-man and Ruler that twice intreated our Saviour to come to his Houſe, and heal his Son, but our Lord refuſed. Here the Centurion doth but barely tell Chriſt of his poor Servant's Sickneſs, and Chriſt both unask'd and undeſired, ſays, *I will come and heal him*: O how far was Chriſt from ſeeming in the leaſt to honour Riches and deſpiſe Poverty; he that came in the form of a Servant, goes down to viſit a ſick Servant upon his poor Pallet-bed, who did not come near the rich Couch of the Ruler's Son. *Obſerve* 6. The Notice and Obſervation which our Saviour takes of the Centurion's Faith; he wondered at it from him: Admiration agreed not to Chriſt as God, but as Man it did: Chriſt wrought this Faith as God, and wondered at is as Man: What can be more wonderful, than to ſee Chriſt wonder? We find not our Saviour wondring at Worldly Pomp and Greatneſs; when the Diſciples wondred at the Magnificence and Stately Buildings of the Temple, Chriſt rather rebuked them than wondred with them; But when he ſees the gracious Acts and Exerciſe of Faith, he is raviſhed with wonder. Let it *teach* us to place our Admiration where Chriſt fixes his; let us be more affected with the leaſt meaſures of Grace in a good Man, than with all the Gaieties and Glories of a great Man; let us not Envy the one, but admire and imitate the other. *Obſ. Laſtly*, Chriſt doth not only admire the Centurion's Faith, but publiſhes it, *Verily, I have not found ſo great Faith, no not in Iſrael*; that is, amongſt the generality of the Jewiſh Nation. For as to particular Perſons, ſeveral had ſhewed a greater Faith than this, as *Joſeph* and *Mary*: This Expreſſion lets us know, that where the Means of Faith are but ſmall, the Noble Acts and Exerciſe of Faith are wonderful, and Soul-amazing.

11 And it came to paſs the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his diſciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier (and they that bare him ſtood ſtill) and he ſaid, Young man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe. 15 And he that was dead, ſate up, and began to ſpeak, and he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, ſaying, That a great Prophet is riſen up among us; and, that God hath viſited his people. 17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

There were three Perſons raiſed from Death to Life by the powerful Word of Chriſt's Mouth; namely, *Jairus*'s Daughter, mentioned by St. *Matthew*; *Lazarus*, Recorded by St. *John*; and here the Widow's Son, only taken notice of by St. *Luke*. The place where this Miracle was wrought was the City of *Nain*; out of their Cities, and not within them, the *Jews* were wont to bury their Dead. Our Saviour at the Gates of this City meets with the ſad Pomp of a Funeral; a ſorrowful Widow attended with her mournful Neighbours, following her only Son to the Grave. Where *Note*, 1. The doleful and diſtreſſed Condition of the Widow; there were many Heart-piercing Circumſtances in her Affliction; 1. It was the Death of a Son; to bury a Child rends the Heart of a Parent, for what are Children but the Parent multiplied? but to lay a Son in the Grave, which continues the Name, and ſupports the Family, is a ſore Affliction. 2. This Son was a young Man in the ſtrength and flower of his Age, not carried from the Cradle to the Coffin: had he dy'd an Infant he had not been ſo much lamented; but then, when the Mother's Expectations were higheſt, and the Endearments greateſt, even in the flower of his Age he is cut off. 3. He was not only a Son, but an only Son; one in whom all his Mother's Hopes and Comforts were bound up. The Death of one out of many is much more tolerable, than of all in one. The Loſs of one that admits of no Conſolation. 4. Still to heighten the Affliction, it is added, That *ſhe was a Widow*; ſhe wanted the Counſel and Support of a loving Yoke-fellow. Had the Root been left entire, ſhe might better have ſpared the Branch; now both are cut down, and ſhe has none left to comfort her in her comfortleſs State of Widowhood. In this diſtreſſed Condition, Chriſt the God of Comfort meets her, pities her, relieves her. *Obſerve* 2. The Compaſſion of Chriſt towards this diſtreſſed Widow; *He ſaw her, and had Compaſſion on her.* Chriſt ſaw her, ſhe did not ſpeak to him; no Tears, no Prayers can move Chriſt ſo much as our Afflictions and his own Compaſſions: Chriſt's Heart pitied her, his Tongue ſaid to her, *Weep not*, his Feet went to the Bier, his Hand *touched the Coffin*, and the Power of his Godhead *raiſed the Dead.* But how ſtrange doth Chriſt's Counſel ſeem! To bid a Mother not Weep for ſuch a Loſs, was to perſuade her to be miſerable, and not feel it; to feel it, and not regard it; to regard it, and yet conceal and hide it: It is not the decent Expreſſion of our Sorrow then, which Chriſt condemns, but the undue Exceſs, and Extravagancies of it, which our Saviour blames. And the Leſſon of Inſtruction which we *Learn* from hence, is this, That *Chriſtians* ought to moderate their Sorrow for their dead Relations, how many afflicting Circumſtances and Aggravations ſoever do meet together in their Death; here was a Child, that Child a Son, that Son an only Son, that only Son carried to the Grave in the flower of his Age; yet *Chriſt* ſays to the penſive Mother, a ſorrowful Widow, *Weep not*. *Obſerve* 3. The Power of *Chriſt*, in raiſing the Widow's Son to Life. The Lord of Life Arreſts the Serjeant Death, and Reſcues the Priſoner out of his Hand; *Chriſt* ſays not, In the Name of God, young Man, ariſe, but *I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*. *Chriſt* had a Power in himſelf, and of himſelf, to command the Dead to ariſe, and the ſame Powerful Voice which Raiſed this young Man, ſhall in the laſt Day, Raiſe up our vaniſhed Bodies: For is it not as eaſie for Omnipotency to ſay, Let them be Repaired, as to ſay at firſt, Let them be Made? The *Socinians* here own, that *Chriſt* raiſed this young Man by a Divine Power, which God had communicated to him; yet deny him at the ſame time to be Eſſentially God. But let them prove, if they can, That a Divine Power, which is proper to God alone, ever was, or ever can be communicated to a Creature, without the communication of the Divine Nature: True, we find St. *Peter*, Acts 9. 40. commanding *Tabitha* to ariſe; but we find all he did was by Faith in *Chriſt*, and by Prayer unto *Chriſt*, Acts 3. 34. *Jeſus Chriſt healeth thee, ariſe*; But *Chriſt*, here raiſed the Widow's Son without Prayer, purely by his own Power, which undeniably proves him to be God. *Obſerve* 4. The Reality of the Miracle, *He ſits up*, he *begins to ſpeak*, and *is delivered to his Mother*: Death has no power to hold that Man down, whom the Son of God bids riſe up; *immediately he that was dead ſate up*; and the ſame Power which raiſed one Man, can raiſe a Thouſand, a Million, a World; no Power can raiſe one Man, but an Almighty Power, and that which is Almighty can raiſe all Men. It was not ſo much for the Child's ſake, as the Mother's ſake that the Son was Raiſed; it was an injury to the Son, tho' a kindneſs to the Mother, for he muſt twice paſs thro' the Gates of Death, to other's once; it returned him from Reſt to Labour, from the peaceful Harbour back again to the tempeſtuous Ocean. *Obſerve Laſtly*, What Effects this Miracle had upon the Multitude; ſeeing the Divine Power thus manifeſtly exerted, they are filled with Aſtoniſhment and Amazement; they look upon our Saviour with awful and admiring Looks; *They glorify and praiſe God for ſending a great Prophet amongſt them*, accounting it a great Act of Favour that God had in this wonderful manner viſited his People; yet a Prophet was the higheſt Name they could find for him, whom they ſaw like themſelves in ſhape, but above themſelves in power, *A great Prophet is riſen up amongſt us, and God hath viſited his People.*

18 And the diſciples of John ſhewed him of all
theſe things. 19 And John calling unto him two of
his diſciples, ſent them unto Jeſus, ſaying, Art thou
he that ſhould come, or look we for another? 20
When the men were come unto him, they ſaid, John
Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying, Art thou he
that ſhould come, or look we for another? 21 And
in that ſame hour he cured many of their infirmities,
and plagues, and of evil ſpirits, and unto many that
were blind, he gave ſight. 22 Then Jeſus anſwering,
ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what
things ye have ſeen and heard, how that the blind ſee,
the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the
dead are raiſed, to the poor the goſpel is preached, 23
And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

About the time of our Saviour's appearing in the World, there was a general Expectation of a great Prince that ſhould come out of *Judea*, and govern all Nations: This Prince the *Jews* called the Meſſias, or the Anointed, and waited for his Appearance. Accordingly, when *John the Baptiſt* appeared in the quality of an extraordinary Prophet, the *Jews* ſent to know of him, whether he was the Meſſias or not, *John* 1. 19. he anſwered, That he was not, but only the Harbinger and Forerunner of the Meſſias: So that it was very evident that it was not for *John*'s own Information, that he ſent two of his Diſciples to Chriſt, to know whether he was the Meſſias or not; for *John* was aſſured of it himſelf by a Voice from Heaven at our Saviour's Baptiſm, *Matth*. 3. *ult*. but it was for his Diſciples Satisfaction that he ſent them to Jeſus; becauſe *John*'s Diſciples were unwilling to acknowledge Chriſt to be the Meſſias, out of a great Zeal for the honour of him their Maſter; they were not willing to own any Perſon greater than *John* their Maſter, leſt ſuch an Acknowledgment ſhould eclipſe and cloud him; from whence we may *Note*, How the Judgments of the Beſt of Men are very apt to be byaſſed and perverted by Faction or Intereſt; no doubt *John*'s Diſciples were good Men, and no doubt their Maſter had often told them as he did others, That he was not the Meſſias, yet they will not believe their own Maſter, when they apprehend him to ſpeak againſt their own Intereſt; for they knew, that they muſt Riſe and Fall in their Reputation and Eſteem, as their Maſter did; therefore that *John*'s Diſciples might receive full Satisfaction from Chriſt, he ſends two of his Diſciples to him, to hear his Doctrine, and ſee his Miracles; for *John* perceiving his Diſciples to be ill-affected towards our Saviour, and hearing them ſpeak with ſome Envy of his Miracles, he ſent them to him, that being Eye-witneſſes of what he did, they might be convinced who he was. *Obſerve next*, The way and means which our Saviour takes to convince and ſatisfy *John*'s Diſciples that he was the True Meſſias; he appeals to the Miracles wrought by himſelf, and ſubmits thoſe Miracles to the Judgment and Examination of their Senſes; *Go and ſhew John the Miracles which you hear and ſee; the Blind receive their ſight, the Lame walk, the Deaf hear*; Chriſt was all this in a Literal and Spiritual Senſe alſo; he was an Eye of Underſtanding to the Ignorant, a Foot of Power to the Weak, he opened an Ear in Deaf Hearts to receive the Word of Life; and the Poor receive and embrace the Goſpel. Miracles are the higheſt Atteſtation, and the greateſt external Confirmation and Evidence, that can be given to the Truth and Divinity of any Doctrine. Now our Saviour's Miracles for their Nature, were Divine and God-like, they were healing and beneficial to Mankind, freeing Men from the greateſt Calamities of Human Life; for their number they were many, for the manner of their Operation they were publickly wrought in the Sight and View of Multitudes of People, to free them from all ſuſpicion of Fraud and Impoſture; he wrought them before his Enemies, as well as in the preſence of his Friends and Followers, and this not done once or twice, or in one place, but at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral places wherever he came, and this for a long time, even for three Years and a half; ſo that our Bleſſed Saviour had all the Atteſtation that Miracles can give, to Evidence himſelf the True and Promiſed Meſſias. The Poor hear and receive the Goſpel. See on *Matth*. 11.

Note, That all along in our Saviour's time, and ſince, the Poor of the World have been more diſpoſed to hear and embrace the Goſpel than other Men, and the Reaſons of it are theſe; 1. Becauſe the Poor have no Worldly Intereſt to engage them to reject Chriſt and his Goſpel; the High Prieſt, the Scribes and Phariſees had a plain Worldly Intereſt to engage them to oppoſe Chriſt and his Doctrine; but the Poor were free from theſe Incumbrances and Temptations. They had nothing to loſe, therefore our Saviour's Doctrine went down more eaſily with them, becauſe it did not contradict their Intereſts, as it did the Intereſt of thoſe who had great Poſſeſſions. 2. Thoſe that are Poor and enjoy little of the good things of this Life, are willing to entertain the glad Tidings of Happineſs in another Life. Such as are in a State of Miſery here, are glad to underſtand that it ſhall be well with them hereafter, and are willing to liſten to the good News of a future Happineſs; whereas the Rich who have had their Conſolation here, are not much concerned what will become of them hereafter, *v*. 23. *And Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.* No doubt our Saviour uttered theſe Words with particular Reſpect and Reference to *John*'s Diſciples, who out of an extraordinary Zeal for the Honour of their Maſter were prejudiced againſt our Saviour; but the general import of the Words doth ſhew, that there are many to whom Chriſt is a Rock of Offence; the *Jews* were offended at the meanneſs of his Extraction, at the poverty of his Parents, at the lowneſs of his Breeding, at his ſuffering Condition; from their Traditions they expected the Meſſias ſhould be a Temporal Prince, whereas the Prophets declared, he ſhould be a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs*; be deſpiſed, and put to Death. Thus at this Day, many are offended at Chriſt; ſome are offended at the aſſerted Divinity of his Perſon, and the meritoriouſneſs of his Satisfaction. Some are offended at the Sublimity of his Doctrine, others at the Sanctity and Strictneſs of his Laws; ſome are offended at the free Diſpenſation of his Grace; others, that the Terms of Chriſtianity are very hard, and lay too great a Reſtraint upon Humane Nature; *But bleſſed is he* (ſays Chriſt) *that ſhall not be offended in me*; intimating, that ſuch, as inſtead of being offended at Chriſt do believe in him, and ground their Expectations of Heaven and Salvation wholly upon him, are in a happy and bleſſed Condition; *Bleſſed is he that ſhall not be offended in me.*

24 And when the meſſengers of John were departed, he began to ſpeak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeouſly apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings courts. 26 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? Yea, I ſay unto you, and much more then a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee.

Our Saviour having given (as we may ſuppoſe) full Satiſfaction to *John*'s Diſciples, and ſent them away, he enters upon a large Commendation of *John* himſelf: Where we have *Obſervable* 1. The Perſons whom he commended *John* before, not his own Diſciples, but before the Multitude: For *John's* Diſciples had too high an Opinion of their Maſter already, inſomuch, that they envied our Saviour for overſhadowing their Maſter, *John* 7. 26. *Behold, Chriſt Baptizeth, and all Men come unto him.* It was a great Eye-ſore to *John*'s Diſciples, that Chriſt had more Hearers and Followers than their Maſter; therefore not before *John's* Diſciples, but before the Multitude is *John* commended; for as *John's* Diſciples had too high, ſo the Multitude had too low an Opinion of *John*; poſſibly becauſe of his Impriſonment and Sufferings: There was a time when the People had high Thoughts of *John*'s Perſon and Miniſtry; but being now clouded with Sufferings, they diſeſteem and undervalue him. *Learn hence,* How vain it is for any Men, but eſpecially for the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to value themſelves by popular Applauſe: The People contemn to Day, whom they admired Yeſterday; he who to Day is cryed up, to Morrow is trodden down; the Word and Miniſters are the ſame, but this proceeds from the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of the People; nothing is ſo mutable as the Mind of Man: nothing ſo variable as the Opinion of the Multitude. *Obſerve* 2. The Time when our Saviour thus commended *John*; *when he was caſt into Priſon by Herod*; not when he was in Proſperity, when the People flock'd after him, when he Preach'd at Court, and was reverenced by *Herod*, but when the giddy Multitude had forſaken him; when he was diſgraced at Court, and had preach'd himſelf into a Priſon: Now it is that Chriſt proclaims his worth, maintains his honour, and tells the People, that the World was not worthy of ſuch a Preacher. *Learn thence,* That Chriſt will evermore ſtand by, and ſtick faſt unto his Faithful Miniſters, when all the World forſakes them: Let the World ſlight and deſpiſe them at their pleaſure; yet Chriſt will maintain their Honour, and ſupport their Cauſe; as they bear a faithful Witneſs to Chriſt, ſo Chriſt will bear Witneſs to their Faithfulneſs for him. *Obſ.* 3. The Commendation it ſelf. Our Saviour commends *John* for four Things; for his Conſtancy, for his Sobriety, for his Humility, for his Goſpel-Miniſtry. 1. For his Conſtancy, he was not *a Reed ſhaken with the Wind*; that is, a Man of an unſtable and unſettled Judgment, but fixt and ſteady. 2. For his Sobriety, Auſterity, and high Degrees of Mortification and Self-denial; he was no Delicate, Voluptuous Perſon, but Grave, Sober, and Severe; he was mortified to the Glory and Honour, to the Eaſe and Pleaſures of the World: *John* wrought no Miracles, but his Converſation was almoſt Miraculous, and as effectual as Miracles to prevail upon the People. 3. For his Humility; *John* might once have been what he would, the People were ready to cry him up for the Meſſias, the Chriſt of God, but *John*'s humble and lowly Spirit refuſes all; *He confeſſed, and denied not, ſaying, I am not the Chriſt*, but a poor Miniſter of his, willing, but not worthy, to do him the meaneſt Service. This will commend our Miniſtry to the Conſciences of our People, when we ſeek not our own Glory, but the Glory of Chriſt. 4. Our Saviour commends *John* for his clear Preaching the Goſpel, and for his making known the coming of the Meſſiah to the People, *He was more than a Prophet*, becauſe he pointed out Chriſt more clearly and fully than any of the Prophets before him: The Ancient Prophets beheld Chriſt a-far off, but *John* ſaw him Face to Face. They Prophecy'd of him, he pointed at him; ſaying, *This is he*; The clearer any Miniſtry is in Diſcovering of Chriſt, the more Excellent and Uſeful it is.

28 For I ſay unto you, Among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet then John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God, is greater then he.

Our Saviour having highly commended *John* in the former Verſes, here he ſets Bounds to the Honour of his Miniſtry; adding, that tho' *John* was greater than all the Prophets that went before him, ſeeing more of Chriſt than all them, yet he ſaw leſs than thoſe that come after him. The meaneſt Goſpel-Miniſter that Preaches Chriſt as come, is to be preferred before all the old Prophets, who Prophecy'd of Chriſt to come. That Miniſter who ſets forth the Life and Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt, is greater in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, has an higher Office in the Church, and a more excellent Miniſtry than all the Prophets, yea, than *John* himſelf. The Excellency of a Miniſtry conſiſts in the Light and Clearneſs of it: Now tho' *John*'s Light did exceed all that went before him, yet it fell ſhort of them that came after him; and thus he that was leaſt in the Kingdom of Grace on Earth, much more he that was leaſt in the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven, was greater than *John*. See on *Matth.* 11. 11.

29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans juſtified God, being baptized with the baptiſm of John. 30 But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him.

Theſe Words are our Saviour's farther Commendation of *John the Baptiſt*; he tells us, That *John* had two ſorts of Hearers; 1. The common People and Publicans; 2. The Phariſees and Lawyers, and declares that different Effect which *John*'s Miniſtry had upon theſe two different ſorts of Perſons. As to the former, the common People and the Publicans; the common People were accounted by the Jewiſh Doctors as the Dregs of Mankind, an Ignorant and Rude Mob; the Publicans were eſteemed notoriouſly Wicked, guilty of great Injuſtice, Oppreſſion and Extortion; yet theſe Vile Perſons were Converted ſooner than the knowing Men of the Time, the Self-juſtifying Phariſees and Lawyers; for it is ſaid, *The Publicans were Baptized of* John *and juſtified God*; that is, they looked upon *John* as a Prophet ſent of God, they owned his Miniſtry, received his Meſſage, and ſubmitted to his Baptiſm. Thoſe which believe the Meſſage that God ſendeth, and obey it, they juſtify God: They that do not believe and obey, accuſe and condemn God. But of the others it is ſaid, namely, of the Phariſees and Lawyers, That *they rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*; that is, the revealed Will of God, refuſing to be Baptized of him; this rejecting the Counſel of God we are guilty of, when we have low and undervaluing thoughts of Chriſt and his Goſpel, when we are aſhamed in times of Perſecution to own and profeſs him, when we ſtop our Ears to the Voice of his Miniſters and Meſſengers, when we ſubmit not our ſelves to the Reaſonable Laws and Commands of Chriſt; and this Rejection of Chriſt at the Great Day, will render our Condition worſe than the Condition of Heathens, that never heard of a Saviour, than the Condition of *Jews*, which Crucified their Saviour, yea, than the Condition of Devils for whom a Saviour was never intended: Lord! Where ſhall we appear, if we either Reject or Neglect thy great Salvation? The chief thing then Obſervable here, is this, That in Rejecting *John*'s Baptiſm and Miniſtry, they are ſaid to reject the Counſel of God towards themſelves; that is, the gracious Deſign of GOD in calling them to Repentance by *John*'s Miniſtry, by which Refuſal they declared, that they approved not of God's Counſel as Juſt and Righteous in calling them to Repentance, who were ſuch Zealots for the Law, and ſo unblameable in their Converſation, that it became a Proverb amongſt them, That if but two Perſons went to Heaven, one of them muſt be a Phariſee. They therefore judged it an incongruous thing to call ſuch Righteous Perſons to Repentance, as they took themſelves to be, and to threaten them with Ruin, who were ſo dear to God: But the Publicans and common People, being conſcious to themſelves of their Sin and Guilt, did approve of this Counſel which God ſent them by his Meſſenger, and ſubmitted to this Baptiſm of Repentance for the remiſſion of Sins, to which God by the *Baptiſt* now called them.

31 And the Lord ſaid, Whereunto then ſhall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced: we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. 33 For John the Baptiſt came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye ſay, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye ſay, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners. 35 But wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

Our Bleſſed Saviour in theſe Words deſcribes the perverſe Humour of the Phariſees, whom nothing could allure to the embracing of the Goſpel, neither *John*'s Miniſtry nor Chriſt's. This our Saviour ſets forth two ways, allegorically and properly; by way of Allegory he compares them to ſullen Children, whom nothing would pleaſe, neither Mirth nor Mourning; if their Fellows piped before them, they would not Dance; if they ſang mournful Songs to them they would not lament; that is, the Phariſees were of ſuch a cenſorious and capricious Humour, that God himſelf could not pleaſe them; altho' he uſed variety of Means and Methods in order to that end: Next our Lord plainly interprets this Allegory, by telling them, that *John* came to them, neither eating nor drinking; that is, not ſo freely and plentifully as other Men, being a very auſtere and mortified Man, both in his Dyet and Habit, all which was deſigned by God to bring the Phariſees to Repentance and Amendment of Life. But inſtead of this, they Cenſure him for having a Devil, becauſe he delighted in Solitude, and was not ſo free in Converſation as ſome Men? according to the ancient Obſervation, *That he that delighteth in Solitude, is either an Angel or a Devil*, either a wild Beaſt, or a God. *John* being thus rejected. Chriſt himſelf comes to them, who being of a free and familiar Converſation, not ſhunning the Society of the worſt of Men, no not of the Phariſees themſelves, but complying with their Cuſtoms, and accompanying them innocently at their Feaſts, yet the freedom of our Saviour's Converſation diſpleas'd them, as much as *John*'s reſervedneſs of Temper; for they cry, *Behold a Man gluttonous, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*; Chriſt's Affability towards Sinners they account an Approbation of their Sins, and his Sociable Diſpoſition, Looſneſs and Luxury. *Learn hence*, That the Faithful and Zealous Miniſters of Chriſt, let their Temper and Converſe be what it will, cannot pleaſe the Enemies of Religion, and the Haters of the Power of Godlineſs; neither *John*'s Auſterity, nor Chriſt's Familiarity could gain upon the Phariſees: It is the Duty of the Miniſters of God, in the courſe of their Miniſtry to ſeek to pleaſe all Men for their good: But after all our Endeavours to pleaſe all, if we ſtrenuouſly oppoſe the Errors and Vices of the Times, we ſhall pleaſe but very few. But if God and Conſcience be of the number of thoſe few, we are Safe and Happy. *Obſerve* 2. That it has been the old Policy of the Devil, that he might hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel, to fill the Minds of Perſons with an invincible Prejudice againſt the Miniſters and Diſpenſers of the Goſpel. Here the *Phariſees* are prejudiced unreaſonably, both againſt *John* and againſt Chriſt, that the Succeſs of both their Miniſtry muſt be fruſtrated and diſappointed. *Obſerve* 3. That after all the ſcandalous Reproaches caſt upon the Chriſtian Religion, and the Miniſters and Profeſſors of it, ſuch as are Wiſdom's Children, Wiſe and Good Men, will juſtifie Religion, that is, approve it in their Judgments, honour it in their Diſcourſes, and adorn it in their Lives; *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her Children.*

36 And one of the Phariſees deſired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Phariſees houſe, and ſate down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſate at meat in the Phariſees houſe, brought an alabaſter box of ointment, 38 And ſtood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Phariſee*'s Civility, and our Saviour's Courteſie; the *Phariſee* invites Chriſt to eat with him, Chriſt readily accepts the Invitation, never refuſing any opportunity for doing good. There is a Duty of Civil Courteſie which we owe to the worſt of Men; none are ſo bad, but we may ſoberly eat and drink with them; only let us take care, that if our Converſe do not make them better, their Example may not make us worſe. *Obſerve* 2. What an opportunity our Saviour lays hold upon in the *Phariſee*'s Houſe of doing good to a Sinful Woman; who coming to Chriſt bowed down in a ſorrowful ſight and ſenſe of her Sins, finds an hearty Welcome to him, and is diſmiſſed with Comfort from him. The Hiſtory runs thus; *Behold a Woman in the City, which was a Sinner*, that is, a *Gentile*, ſay ſome, a remarkable, notorious, and infamous Sinner, ſay others; probably a lewd, unclean Woman; ſhe is led in with a Note of Admiration, *Behold a Woman that was a Sinner. Learn*, That to ſee a ſenſual and notorious Sinner, out of true remorſe of Conſcience, to ſeek unto a Saviour, is a rare and wonderful Sight. *Obſerve farther*, It is not ſaid, Behold, a Woman that had ſinned, but *Behold a Woman that was a Sinner*: One Action does not denominate a Perſon a Sinner, but an Habit and Trade of Sin. *Again*, it is ſaid, *Behold a Woman in the City*; the Place where ſhe acted her Lewdneſs, added to the heinouſneſs of her Sin, *it was in the City*; the more publick the Offence, the greater the Scandal. Sin is Sin, tho' in the Deſert, where no Eye ſees it, but the offence is aggravated by the number and multitude of Beholders: Yet obſervable it is, that there is no mention made, either of the Woman's Name, or of the Cities Name; and it is both Preſumption and Injuriouſneſs for any to Name her, whoſe Name God has been pleaſed to conceal; for this is not the ſame Woman that Anointed Chriſt's Feet, *Matth.* 26. *Mark* 14. and *John* 12. that was in *Bethany*, this in *Galilee*, that in the Houſe of *Simon* the Leper, this of *Simon* the *Phariſee*. *Obſerve* 3. The Behaviour and Demeanour of this poor Woman, ſhe appears in the poſture of a penitent; *She ſtood at Chriſt's feet behind him, weeping. Where Note*, 1. The great change wrought in this ſinful Woman, and the evident Effects of it; her Eyes, which had been formerly Lamps of Fire by Luſt, are now an holy Fountain of penitential Tears; her Hair, which ſhe had uſed as a Net to catch her fond and fooliſh Lovers, doth now become a Towel for her Saviour's Feet. Verily ſuch an Heart as has once felt the ſting and ſmart of Sin, will make plentiful Expreſſions of the greatneſs of its Sorrow. Again, 2. *She ſtands behind Chriſt and weeps*; this proceeded, no doubt, from an holy Baſhfulneſs; ſhe that was wont to look boldly upon the Face of her Lovers, dares not now behold the Face of our Saviour; ſhe that was wont to ſend her alluring Beams forth into the Eyes of her wanton Lovers, now caſts her dejected Eyes down upon the Earth; and behold the plenty of her Tears; they flow in ſuch abundance, that ſhe waſhes Chriſt's Feet with them; *She began to waſh his feet*, ſays the Text, but we read not when ſhe ended; never were our Saviour's Feet bedewed with more precious Liquor than this of remorſeful Tears. Thus doth an Holy Penitent account no Office too mean that is done to the Honour of its Saviour.

39 Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw it, he ſpake within himſelf, ſaying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for ſhe is a ſinner. 40 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on. 41 There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one ought five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt?

43 Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him, thou haſt rightly judged.

Obſerve here (1.) How unreaſonable the *Phariſee* was offended with Chriſt for permitting this poor Woman to come near him, and touch him. Admit ſhe had been the greateſt of Sinners, might not ſuch come to Chriſt, when he was come from Heaven to them? Oh Bleſſed Saviour! There is Merit enough in thy Blood, and Mercy enough in thy Bowels to juſtifie and ſave the vileſt Sinners, which by Repentance and Faith do make a timely Application to thee. *Obſerve* (2.) The Parable which Chriſt makes uſe of for the *Phariſee*'s Conviction, and the Woman's Comfort: namely, the Parable of two Debtors, one of whom owed a greater Sum, and the other a leſs, who both having nothing to pay, were both freely forgiven; and both upon their Forgiveneſs loved their Creditor much, but he moſt to whom moſt was given. Now from this Parable we gather theſe Leſſons of Inſtruction; (1.) That great is the Debt which all Mankind has Contracted, and lies under to the Juſtice of God; 'Tis here expreſt by *Five hundred pence.* Our Debt is infinite, and had not miraculous Mercy interpoſed, Divine Juſtice could never have been ſatisfied, but by undergoing an infinite Puniſhment. (2.) That yet all Sinners ſtand not alike indebted to the Juſtice of God, ſome owe more and others leſs; all are Guilty, but not all alike; Some owe Five hundred Talents, others Fifty Pence. (3.) That be Mens Debts greater or leſs, their Sins more or fewer, 'tis utterly impoſſible for any Perſon of himſelf to clear his Debt, and make Satisfaction, but they that owe leaſt ſtand in need of Mercy and Forgiveneſs; *He forgave them both.* (4.) That the Forgiveneſs that is in God is a Free, Gratuitous, and Gracious Forgiveneſs, he *frankly* forgave them both. *Gracious art thou, Oh Lord, in thy doings towards thy Children, and thy tender mercy is over all thy Works.*

44 And he turned to the woman, and ſaid unto Simon, Seeſt thou this woman? I entred into thine houſe, thou gaveſt me no water for my feet: but ſhe hath waſhed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gaveſt me no kiſs: but this woman, ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſs my feet. 46 Mine head with oyl thou didſt not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I ſay unto thee, Her ſins which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little. 48 And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven. 49 And they that ſat at meat with him, began to ſay within themſelves, Who is this that forgiveth ſins alſo? 50 And he ſaid to the woman, Thy faith hath ſaved thee; go in peace.

Obſerve here (1.) How our Saviour Recounts and Sums up the ſeveral particular Inſtances of this Woman's Love and Reſpect towards himſelf; ſhe waſh'd, wip'd, kiſt, and anointed his Feet, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Eaſtern Countries. Love will creep where it cannot go, it will ſtoop to the meaneſt Offices, and is ambitious of the higheſt Services, for and towards the Perſons we ſincerely Love. *Obſerve* (2.) The words of Comfort, given by our Saviour to this poor Woman, *Thy, Sins, which are many, are forgiven thee. Thence Learn,* That the pardoning Mercy of God is boundleſs and unlimited; it is not limited to any ſort of Sins or Sinners, it is not limited to any degree of Sins or Sinners: *Thy Sins that are many are forgiven thee,* and thy Sins which are heinous are forgiven alſo. *Obſerve* (3.) What is the Effect and Fruit of great pardoning Mercy, it is great Love; her Sins, which are many, are forgiven, *for ſhe loved much:* Her Love to Chriſt was the Effect of his pardoning Love to her, and not the Cauſe of it: She did not firſt Love much, and then Chriſt forgave her; but Chriſt firſt forgave her, and then ſhe loved much. Her Love was a Love of Gratitude, becauſe ſhe was pardoned, and not a Love of Merit to purchaſe and procure her Pardon. The Papiſts interpret this Word (*for*) as if it were the Antecedent Cauſe of her Forgiveneſs; whereas it is a conſequental Sign and Evidence, that the free Grace and Mercy of Chriſt had forgiven her; her many and great Sins were forgiven her, and therefore ſhe Loved much. The Debt is not forgiven, becauſe the Debtor loves his Creditor, but the Debtor therefore Loves, becauſe the Debt is Forgiven, forgiveneſs goes before, and Love follows after. *Hence Learn,* That much Love will follow great Forgiveneſs. Love will work in the Heart towards God, in ſome proportion to that Love which we have experienced from God. *Obſerve Laſtly,* The very gracious Diſmiſſion which this Woman meets with from our Bleſſed Saviour: What could ſhe deſire that is not here granted to her? Here is Remiſſion, Safety, Faith and Peace; all theſe here meet to make a Contrite Soul Happy: Remiſſion is the Ground of her Safety, Faith the Ground of her Peace, Peace the Fruit of her Faith, and Salvation the Iſſue of her Remiſſion: O Woman! Great was thy Sin, Great was Chriſts pardoning Grace, and Great was thy Joy and Comfort: *Thy Sins are forgiven thee, thy Faith hath ſaved thee, go in Peace.*

CHAP. VIII.

AND it came to paſs afterward, that he went throughout every city and village preaching, and ſhewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.

Obſerve here, The great Work and Buſineſs, which not only the Apoſtles, but Chriſt himſelf was engaged in, and imploy'd about, namely, Preaching the Goſpel, thoſe glad Tidings of Salvation to a loſt World. Where *Note,* That Chriſt himſelf laboured in this Work of publick Preaching; he did not ſend forth his Apoſtles as his Curates to Work and Sweat in the Vineyard, whilſt he himſelf took his eaſe at home; but he accompanieth them himſelf, yea, he goes before them himſelf, in this great and excellent Work; *Jeſus went Preaching the glad tidings of the Goſpel, and the Twelve were with him. Learn thence,* That Preaching of the Goſpel is a great and neceſſary Work, incumbent upon all the Miniſters of Chriſt, let their Dignity and Preheminence in the Church be what it will. Surely none of the Servants are above their Lord and Maſter; Did he labour in the Word and Doctrine? well may they. *Obſerve* (2.) The places where Chriſt and his Apoſtles Preached, not only in the populous Cities, but in the poor Country Villages; *They went through every City and Village Preaching the Goſpel.* Some will Preach the Goſpel, provided they may Preach at Court, or in the Capital Cities of the Nation, but the poor Country Villages are over-look'd by them. Our Saviour and his Apoſtles were not of this mind; it's true, they were Itinerary Preachers, we are ſetled; but be the Place never ſo mean and obſcure, and the People never ſo rude and barbarous, we muſt not think it beneath the greateſt of us to exerciſe our Miniſtry there, if God calls us thither: *Chriſt went through the Villages* as well as *Cities, Preaching.*

2 And certain women which had been healed of evil ſpirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went ſeven devils. 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herods ſteward, and Suſanna, and many others, which miniſtred unto him of their ſubſtance.

Amongſt the number of thoſe that did accompany our Saviour and his Apoſtles, mention is here made of certain Women, who had been healed by Chriſt of Evil Spirits and Infirmities, that is, of Spiritual and Corporeal Diſeaſes, for the *Jews* were wont to call Vices and Evil Habits, by the Name of Devils, as the Devil of Pride, the Devil of Malice, *&c.* Now as concerning theſe Womens following of Chriſt, and adminiſtring to him, ſeveral Circumſtances are *Obſervable,* as (1.) That Women did make up a conſiderable number of Chriſt's Followers, ay, and of his Apoſtles Followers too, *The devout Women not a few,* Acts 17. 4. And verily it is no Diſgrace or Shame, but matter of Glory and cauſe of Thankfulneſs, if our Miniſtry be attended by, and bleſt unto the weaker Sex. I believe in many of our Congregations, and at moſt of our Communions, are found two Women for one Man; God grant them Knowledge anſwerable to their Zeal, and Obedience proportionable to their Devotion. *Obſerve* (2.) One of theſe Women that followed Chriſt, was *Joanna the Wife of Herod's Steward.* What, one of *Herod's* Family tranſplanted into Chriſt's Houſhold? O the freeneſs of the Grace of God. Even in the worſt Societies and Places, God has a number to ſtand up for his Name and bear witneſs to his Truth; we read of a *Joſeph* in *Pharaoh's* Court; of an *Obadiah* in *Ahab's* Court; of a *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezar's* *chadnezar*'s Court; of a Church in *Nero*'s Houſe; and of a *Joanna* here in a bloody *Herod*'s Family, who had put *John the Baptiſt* to Death. *Obſerve* (3.) The holy Courage and Reſolution of our Saviour's Female Followers; no doubt they met with Taunts and Jeers, with Scoffs and Scorns enough, and perhaps from their Husbands too, for following the Carpenter's Son, and a few Fiſhermen; but this does not damp but inflame their Zeal. The Holy Goſpel acquaints us with ſeveral Inſtances of Maſculine Courage, and Manly Reſolutions in the Women that followed Chriſt, as his Female Diſciples. At our Saviour's Tryal, the Women cleave to him, when his Diſciples fled from him; they accompanied him to his Croſs, they aſſiſted at his Funeral, they attended at his Hearſe to the Grave, they watched his Sepulchre, fearing neither the Darkneſs of the Night, nor the Rudeneſs of the Souldiers. Theſe feeble Women had more Courage than all the Apoſtles. *Learn*, That Courage is the ſpecial and peculiar Gift of God; and where he gives Courage, it is not in Man to make afraid. *Obſ.* (4.) The pious and charitable Care of theſe holy Women, to ſupply the Wants and outward Neceſſities of our Saviour, *They adminiſtred to him of their Subſtance.* Where *Note*, (1) The great Poverty of Chriſt, he lived upon the Basket; he would not honour the World ſo far as to have any part of it in his own Hand, but was beholding to others for what he eat and drank; ye muſt we not ſuppoſe that either Chriſt or his Apoſtles were common Beggars, but it is probable there was a Bag or common Purſe amongſt them, which upon occaſion ſupplied their Neceſſities; and there were certain ; Siſters or Chriſtian Women, as the Learned Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, who accompanied Chriſt and his Apoſtles in their Travels, and provided neceſſaries for them, when they went up and down Preaching the Goſpel. *Note* alſo (2.) The condeſcending Grace and Humility of Chriſt, he was not aſhamed either of theſe Womens following of him, or adminiſtring to him, becauſe of their former vicious Courſe of Life; it is not what we formerly were, but what now we are that Chriſt conſiders: It is a Glory to him, to have great and notorious Sinners brought to a cloſure and compliance with him. The Reproach is not that they have been Sinners, for Chriſt did not give himſelf for a People that were pure and holy, without ſpot or wrinkle, but to make them ſo by his Word and Spirit, *Eph.* 5. 26. Chriſt is only aſhamed of thoſe that eat of his Bread, and lift up the Heel againſt him.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he ſpake by a parable: 5 A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed, and as he ſowed, ſome fell by the ways ſide, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And ſome fell upon a rock, and as ſoon as it was ſprung up it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture. 7 And ſome fell among thornes, and the thorns ſprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And others fell on good ground, and ſprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things, he cryed, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The Deſign and Scope of this Parable is to ſhew, what are the Cauſes of Men Improving or not Improving under the Hearing of the Word; and to let us know that there are three ſorts of bad Hearers, and but one good one. The careleſs and inconſiderate Hearer is like the *High-way-ground*, where the Seed is trodden down and trampled upon. Hard hearted Sinners, whom the mollifying Word doth not ſoften; theſe are like *Stony-ground*, where the Seed takes no Root, the Word maks no Impreſſion. Thoſe whoſe Heads and Hearts are ſtuft with the Cares of the World, are like the *Thorney-ground*, in which the Seed is choaked, which ſhould fructify to an holy Immortality: This is the ſcope of the Parable. Now from the Subject-matter of it. *Learn* (1.) That by the *Sower* you are to underſtand Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, the Miniſters of the Goſpel. Chriſt the principal Sower, they the Subordinate Seedſmen. Chriſt Sows his own Field, they Sow his Field; he Sows his own Seed, they his Seed: Wo unto us if we Sow our own Seed and not Chriſt's. *Learn* (2.) The *Seed* Sown is the Word of God: Fabulous Legends, and unwritten Traditions which the Seeds-men of the Church of *Rome* Sow, theſe are not Seed but Chaff; or if Seed (for they fructify too faſt in the Minds of their People) their own, not Chriſt's. Our Lord's Field muſt be all Sown with his own Seed, with no mixt Grain. *Learn then*, that the Word Preach'd is like the Seed Sown in the Furrows of the Field. Seed has a fructifying, growing, and increaſing Nature; it has in it an active Principle, and will ſpring up, if not kill'd by accidental Injuries; ſuch a quickning Power has the Word of God, to regenerate and make alive dead Souls, if we ſuffer it to take Rooting in our Hearts; yet is not this Seed alike fruitful in every Soil; all Ground is not alike, neither doth the Word fructify alike in the Souls of Men; there is a difference both from the Nature of the Soil, and the influence of the Spirit; for tho' no Ground is naturally good, yet ſome is worſe than other; nay, even the beſt Ground doth not bring forth increaſe alike: Some good Ground brings forth an Hundredfold, others but Sixty, and ſome but Thirty: In like manner a Chriſtian may be a profitable Hearer of the Word, altho' he doth not bring forth ſo great a Proportion of Fruit as others, provided he bring forth as much as he can.

9 And his diſciples asked him, ſaying, What might this parable be? 10 And he ſaid, Unto you it is given to know the miſteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables? that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand.

Here we have the Diſciples Queſtion, and our Saviour's Reply; their Enquiry is concerning the ſence and ſignification of the Parable, they own their Ignorance, and deſire better Information: It is no ſhame for the beſt of Miniſters, yea, for the beſt of Men, to acknowledge their own Ignorance in the Myſteries of Religion; and to attend upon the means of Inſtruction, in order to their farther Information. In our Saviour's Anſwer, *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God*, &c. *Obſerve*, (1.) That the Doctrines of the Goſpel are great Myſteries. (2.) That it is an invaluable Privilege rightly to underſtand and know Goſpel Myſteries: (3.) That this Privilege all are not Sharers in, and Partakers of, but only thoſe to whom it is given. (4.) That it is a righteous thing with God to give ſuch Perſons over to farther Blindneſs and Ignorance in Spiritual Things, who wilfully reject the Truth, and ſhut their Eyes againſt the Evidence of it. The Phariſees had all along ſhut their Eyes and ſaid, they would not ſee; and now Chriſt cloſes their Eyes judicially, and ſays they ſhall not ſee.

11 Now the Parable is this: The ſeed is the word of God. 12 Thoſe by the way-ſide, are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved. 13 They on the rock, are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and theſe have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thornes, are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleaſures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honeſt and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Hear our Saviour applies himſelf to interpret and explain the foregoing Parable to his Diſciples, he tells them, *The Seed is the Word*, the *Sower* is the Preacher, the *Soyl*, or *Ground*, is the Heart and Soul of Man; ſome Hearers he compares to the *High-way-ground*, in which the Seed lies uncovered for want of the Harrow of Meditation; others to *Stony-ground*, in which the Word has no Root; no Root in their Underſtandings, no Root in their Memories, in their Wills, or in their Affections, but they are inſtantly offended, either at the depth and profoundneſs of the Word, or at the ſanctity and ſtrictneſs of the Word, or elſe at the plainneſs and ſimplicity of it. Again, ſome Hearers our Lord compares to *Thorny-ground.* Worldly Deſires, and inordinate Cares for the Things of this Life, choak the Word, as Thorns over-ſhadow the Corn, draw away the Heart of the Earth from it, hinder the Influences of the Sun from cheriſhing it; the like ill Effects have worldly Affections and Deſires in the Soul of Man, rendring the Seed of the Word unfruitful. But the good Chriſtian hears the Word attentively, keeps it retentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, practiſes it univerſally, and brings forth Fruit perſeveringly.

Learn hence, (1.) That no Hearers are in Chriſt's Account good Hearers of the Word, but ſuch as bring forth Fruit anſwerably to their Hearing. (2.) That a Perſon may be a good Hearer of the Word in Chriſt's Account, if he bring forth the beſt Fruit he can, tho' not in ſo great a Proportion as others do; as ſome Ground brings forth *Thirty*, ſome *Sixty*, ſome *an Hundred-fold*; in like manner do all the ſincere Hearers of the Word; they all bring forth Fruit, tho' not all alike; all in Sincerity, tho' not all Equally, and none to Perfection. *Learn* (3.) That it is not ſufficient, that we do at preſent believe, Proofs and Practice, the Truth delivered to us, or that we are affected with the Word, and receive it with ſome kind of Joy, Delight, and Pleaſure; unleſs we perſiſt and perſevere in Obedience to all its Precepts, and continue to bring forth Fruit with Patience.

16 No man when he hath lighted a candle covereth it with a veſſel, or putteth it under a bed: but ſetteth it on a candleſtick, that they which enter in may ſee the light. 17 For nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be made manifeſt: neither any thing hid, that ſhall not be known, and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore how you hear: for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given; and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he ſeemeth to have.

In theſe Words Chriſt declares his End and Deſign in Revealing unto his Diſciples the foregoing Parable, and why he communicated to them the Light of Scripture-Knowledge and Goſpel-Myſteries, namely, that they may communicate it to others, and not keep it cloſe unto themſelves, even as the Candle in an Houſe diffuſes and diſperſes its Light to all that come within the reach of it. Such as are enlightened by God in any meaſure with the Knowledge and Underſtanding of his Word, ought not to conceal and hide this Knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and improve it for the good and benefit of others. *Obſerve* alſo, the Argument which our Saviour makes uſe of to quicken his Diſciples to communicate their Knowledge, and improve the Grace they had received for the good and advantage of others; *To him that hath ſhall be given*, that is, ſuch as improve their Spiritual Gifts, ſhall have them increaſed, ſuch as improve them not ſhall have them blaſted. *Learn hence*, That there is no ſuch way to thrive in Grace, and increaſe in Gifts as to exerciſe and improve them; he that hides his Talent, forfeits it, is in danger of loſing it, and alſo of being puniſhed for not improving of it. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How our Lord ſhuts up this Parable of the Sower and the Seed, with a cautionary Direction to all his Auditors, to take heed how they hear the Word; *Take heed therefore how you hear*; Such as would profit by hearing the Word, muſt diligently attend to the matter of the Doctrine which they hear, and alſo to the manner how they hear; ſuch is the Majeſty and Authority of the Perſon that ſpeaks to us in the Word, ſuch is the Sublimity and Spirituality of the Matter, and ſo great is our danger if we miſcarry under the Word, that it nearly concerns us to take heed both what we hear, whom we hear, and how we hear.

19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the preſs. 20 And it was told him by certain, which ſaid, Thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſee thee. 21 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, My mother and my brethren are theſe which hear the word of God, and do it.

Two Things are here *Obſervable*, (1.) The Truth and Verity of Chriſt's Human Nature; He had affinity and conſanguinity with Men, Perſons near in Blood to him by the Mother's ſide, called here his Kinſmen. *Obſerve* (2.) That Chriſt's Spiritual Kindred were much dearer to him, than his Natural, Alliance by Faith is more valued by Chriſt than Alliance by Blood; to bear Chriſt in the Heart, is a greater honour than to carry him in the Womb. Bleſſed be God, this great and gracious Privilege is not denyed us even now. Altho' we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may; his Bodily Preſence cannot be enjoy'd by us, but his Spiritual Preſence is not denyed to us: Tho' Chriſt be not ours in Houſe, in Arms, in Affinity and Conſanguinity, yet in Heart, in Faith, in Love and Service, he is or may be ours. Verily, Spiritual Regeneration bringeth Men into a more honourable Relation to Chriſt, than Natural Generation ever did. O how dear are Obedient Chriſtians to Chriſt! he prefers them in Eſteem before thoſe of his own Fleſh and Blood; *My Brethren are theſe, which hear the Word of God and do it.*

22 Now it came to paſs on a certain day, that he went into a ſhip with his diſciples: and he ſaid unto them, Let us go over unto the other ſide of the lake. And they lanched forth. 23 But as they ſailed he fell aſleep: and there came down a ſtorm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him and awoke him, ſaying, Maſter, maſter, we periſh; then he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceaſed, and there was a calm. 25 And he ſaid unto them, Where is your faith? and they being afraid, wondred, ſaying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Here Obſerve (1.) Our Saviour and his Diſciples no ſooner put forth to Sea, but Difficulty attends them, and Danger overtakes them; a Tempeſt aroſe, and that ſhip was covered with Waves which Chriſt himſelf was in with his Diſciples. *Learn thence*, That the Preſence of Chriſt it ſelf doth not exempt his Diſciples and Followers from Trouble and Danger. Here is a great Tempeſt about the Diſciples Ears, tho' Chriſt himſelf was in their Company. *Obſerve* (2.) The Poſture our Saviour was in, when this Tempeſt aroſe; being wearied with the Labours of the Day, he was laid down to Sleep; thereby ſhewing himſelf to be truly and really Man; and that he not only took upon him the Human Nature, but the Infirmities of that Nature alſo; he was ſubject to Pain and Wearineſs, to Hunger and Thirſt. *Obſ.* (3.) The Diſciples Application made to Chriſt; they awake him with a ſad outcry, *Maſter, Maſter, we periſh*; here was Faith mixed with Human Frailty. They believe that he could ſave them, but being aſleep they concluded he muſt be awaked before he could ſave them: Whereas, tho' his Human Nature was aſleep, yet his Divine Nature neither ſlumbred nor ſlept. *Learn hence*, That the prevalency of Fear in a time of great and imminent Danger, tho' it may evidence weakneſs of Faith, yet it is no evidence of a total want of Faith; in the midſt of the Diſciples Fears, they believed Chriſt's Power and Ability to ſave them; *Maſter, ſave us, we periſh.* *Obſ.* (4.) A double Rebuke given by our Saviour, (1.) to the Winds, (2.) to the Fears of his Diſciples; *Chriſt rebuked the Winds, and inſtantly they were calm*; when the Sea was as furious as a Mad Man, Chriſt with a ſingle Word calms it. *Learn thence*, That the moſt raging Winds and out-ragious Seas cannot ſtand before the Rebukes of Chriſt; Chriſt as God lays a Law upon the moſt Lawful Creatures, even when they ſeem to act moſt Lawleſly. *Obſerve farther*, Chriſt rebukes his Diſciples Fears, and their want of Faith, *Why are ye fearful? Where is your Faith?* No ſooner was the Storm up, but their Fears were up, and their Faith was down. They forgot that the Lord High Admiral of the Ocean was now on Board their Ship, and were as much overſet with their boyſterous Paſſions, as the Ship was with tempeſtuous Winds; and accordingly Chriſt rebukes the Tempeſt within, before he calms the Storm without; firſt he quickens their Faith, then he quiets the Seas. *Note* from hence, That great Faith in the Habit may appear but little in Act and Exerciſe. The Diſciples Faith in forſaking all and following Chriſt was great Faith; but in this preſent Act, their Faith was weak, thro' the prevalency of their Fear: O the imperfect Compoſition of the beſt of Saints! Faith and Fear will take their Turns, and act their ſeveral Parts whilſt we are here; e're long our Fears will be vanquiſhed, and our Faith ſwallowed up in Viſion, our Hopes in Fruition. Then ſhall we Obey with Vigour, Praiſe with Chearfulneſs, Love without Meaſure, Fear without Torment, Truſt without Deſpondency. Lord ſtrengthen our Faith in the belief of this deſirable Happineſs, and ſet our Souls a longing for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of it.

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over againſt Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city, a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no cloths, neither abode in any

houſe, but in the tombs. 28 When he ſaw Jeſus, he
cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud
voice ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou
ſon of God moſt High ? I beſeech thee torment me
not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean ſpirit
to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught
him : and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters ;
and he brake the bands, and was driven of the
devil into the wilderneſs.) 30 And Jeſus aſked him,
ſaying, What is thy name ? and he ſaid, Legion : becauſe
many devils were entred into him. 31 And they
beſought him that he would not command them to go
out into the deep. 32 And there were there an herd
of many ſwine feeding on the mountain : and they beſought
him that he would ſuffer them to enter into
them. And he ſuffered them. 33 Then went the
devils out of the man, and entred into the ſwine ; and
the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the
lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them
ſaw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in
the city, and in the country. 35 Then they went out
to ſee what was done ; and came to Jeſus, and found
the man out of whom the devils were departed, ſitting
at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in his right mind :
and they were afraid. 36 They alſo which ſaw it,
told them by what means he that was poſſeſſed of the
devils, was healed. 37 Then the whole multitude of
the country of the Gadarenes round about, beſought
him to depart from them ; for they were taken with
great fear : and he went up into the ſhip, and returned
back again. 38 Now the man out of whom the
devils were departed, beſought him that he might be
with him : but Jeſus ſent him away, ſaying, 39 Return
to thine own houſe, and ſhew how great things
God hath done unto thee : And he went his way, and
publiſhed throughout the whole city, how great things
Jeſus had done unto him. 40 And it came to paſs,
that when Jeſus was returned, the people gladly received
him : for they were all waiting for him.

This piece of Hiſtory gives us a very ſad Relation of a Perſon that was poſſeſſed with a Legion of Devils; we read of few, if any in the Old Teſtament that were thus poſſeſt, but of many in the New. Our Saviour came into the World to deſtroy the Works of the Devil ; therefore he ſuffered Satan to enter ſome Human Bodies, to ſhew his Divine Power in caſting him out. *Obſerve here*, 1. That the Evil Angels by their Fall loſt their Purity, but not their Power ; for with God's Permiſſion they have Power not only to enter Men's Bodies, and to poſſeſs them, but alſo to diſtemper their Minds, and to drive them to Frenzy and Madneſs ; ſuch was the deplorable Caſe here. *Note* 2. That the Reaſon why the Evil Angels do no oftner exert their Power in doing Miſchief to the Bodies and Lives of Men, is from the reſtraining Power of God ; the Devil cannot do all the Miſchief he would, and he ſhall not do all he can. *Obſerve* 3. The Place where theſe Evil Spirits delighted to make their abode, *amongſt the Tombs* or Graves, places deſolate, forlorn and ſolitary, which are apt to breed horror of Mind, and to give advantage to Temptation ; from whence I *gather*, That it is very dangerous and unſafe for Perſons, eſpecially in whom Melancholy prevails, to give themſelves too much to Solitarineſs, to frequent deſolate places, and to affect being much alone ; for it gives advantage to Satan, to ſet upon them with powerful Temptations. It is much better to frequent Human Society, eſpecially to delight in the Communion of the Saints, by means whereof we may be more and more ſtrengthened againſt Satan's Temptations. *Obſerve* 4. How the Devil's own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and pay unwillingly Worſhip and Homage to him, yielding Subjection to him as his Slaves and Vaſſals, not a free and voluntary Service, *They cryed out, and fell down before him, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God* ? Where by calling him Jeſus, they own him to be a Saviour, but none of their Saviour, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſu* ? O what an uncomfortable Expreſſion is this ? to own Chriſt to be a Saviour, and at the ſame time to know and declare, that he is none of our Saviour ; *Quid eſt Deus, ſi non ſit meus, What is God, if he be not my God* ? What comfort in a Saviour, if he be not my Saviour ? *Obſerve* 5. What a multitude of Evil Spirits do enter into one Man. O the extreme Malice and Enmity of the Devil againſt Mankind, in that ſo many Evil Spirits ſhould at once afflict and torment a ſingle Perſon, even a Legion, many thouſands of them. *Note* likewiſe, The Unity and Agreement which is amongſt theſe Evil Spirits in doing Miſchief ; tho' there was a multitude of them in this one Perſon, yet have they all but one Name ; we ſee the very Devils have a ſort of Unity amongſt themſelves, and in their malicious and miſchievous Deſigns againſt Mankind, they are as one. O how happy were it, if good Men were as united in their Deſigns and Endeavours for the Glory of God, and the good of one another, as Devils conſpire and contrive againſt them. *Obſerve* 6. The Requeſt which the Devils make to Chriſt, *We beſeech thee, torment us not*. From whence we may gather, 1. That there are Torments appointed to the Spiritual Nature of Evil Angels. 2. That the Evil Angels or Devils are not ſo full of Torment as they ſhall be, altho' they are as full of Sin and Diſcontent as they can be ; there will be a time when their Torments ſhall be increaſed ; therefore they pray, *Torment us not before the Time* ; that is, Do not increaſe our Torments before the appointed time of their Increaſe. *Obſerve* 7. The Devil's Requeſt for Permiſſion and Leave to go into the Herd of Swine. *Where Note*, 1. The Devil's Malice, he will hurt the poor Beaſts rather than not hurt at all. 2. His powerful Reſtraint, he cannot hurt a poor Pig without a Permiſſion, *Suffer us to enter*. Satan's Malice indeed is infinite, but his Power is bounded : It is *poteſtas ſub poteſtate*, a Power under a Power ; if he could not hurt the Swine, much leſs can he afflict the Children of Men without Leave. *Obſerve* 8. How Satan's Requeſt is yielded to by our Saviour. *He ſuffered them to go* into the Swine, not to gratify their Deſire in doing Miſchief, but firſt hereby Chriſt ſhewed his Power over the Devils, that they could not Act without his Permiſſion and Leave ; next to ſhew how great the Malice and Power of the Devil is, if not reſtrained ; and *Laſtly*, That the Miracle of caſting out ſo many Devils might appear to be the greater. *Learn hence*, That ſometimes Almighty God for wiſe Ends, and juſt Cauſes, doth ſuffer the Devil to enjoy his Deſire, in doing Miſchief unto the Creatures ; *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Go*. *Obſerve* 9. What a bad Effect this Miracle had upon the Minds of the *Gadarenes*, inſtead of believing and owning Chriſt's Divine Power, the loſs of their Swine inrages them, and makes them deſire Chriſt's departure from them. *Learn*, That Carnal Hearts prefer their Swine before their Saviour, and would rather loſe Chriſt's Preſence than their worldly Profit ; *They beſought him to depart from them* : Sad is the Condition of thoſe from whom Chriſt departs, more ſad the Condition of ſuch, who ſay unto Chriſt depart ; but moſt ſad the Condition of them who beſeech and intreat Chriſt to depart from them ; thus did the *Gadarenes* here, and we do not read that ever Chriſt returned more to them. *Obſerve* 10. How deſirous the poſſeſſed Man was to continue with Chriſt after he was come to himſelf, *He prayed that he might be with him* : This he might deſire, partly to teſtifie his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt, partly out of fear of being Re-poſſeſſed again by Satan, or perhaps to have the opportunity of hearing Chriſt's Doctrine, and ſeeing his Miracles ; for ſuch as have once taſted that the Lord is Gracious, and experienced the Pleaſure and Profit of Chriſt's Company, are very deſirous of the continuance of it, and exceeding loth to part with it. However our Saviour at this time did not think fit to ſuffer him, knowing that more Glory would redound to God by publiſhing this Miracle to his Friends. Chriſt expects after eminent Deliverances wrought for us, that we ſhould be the Publiſhers of his Praiſes, and declare to all, far and near, the great and wonderful things which he has done for us. *Obſ. Laſtly*, How Chriſt aſcribes that Power to God, by which he had wrought this Miracle of Healing. *Shew how great things God has done for thee* : From whence the *Socinians* infer, that had he been God Moſt High, and the Author of that Power by which he wrought this Miracle, he would have aſcribed it to himſelf. *Anſwer*, Chriſt doth this, as not ſeeking his own Glory, but the Glory of him that ſent him : That is, as executing his Prophetick Office in his Father's Name, and caſting out Devils by that Spirit, which he had received from his Father.

41 And behold, there came a man named Jairus,
and he was a ruler of the ſynagogue : and he fell

down at Jeſus feet, and beſought him that he would come into his houſe: 42 For he had only one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay a dying. (But as he went, the people thronged him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon deſcribed who came to Chriſt on behalf of his ſick Daughter, by his Name *Jairus*, by his Office, *a Ruler of the Synagogue*, by his Geſture, *he fell down at Jeſus Feet*; this Geſture of his was not only a Sign of tender Affection in him towards his Daughter, but alſo an Evidence of his Faith in our Bleſſed Saviour; He believed him either to be God, or an extraordinary Man, who had a Miraculous Power of Healing. *Obſerve* 2. How readily Chriſt complies with *Jairus*'s Requeſt, *Jeſus went with him*. Altho' his Faith was but weak, yet our Saviour doth not reject him, or deny his Suit: O how ready ſhould we be to go to Chriſt in all our Diſtreſſes, who is ſo ready to hear, and ſo forward to help us, if we ſeek him in Sincerity, tho' our Faith be Weak and Feeble. *Obſ.* 3. The great Humility of our Bleſſed Saviour in ſuffering himſelf to be thronged by poor People; much People followed him and thronged him. O Humble and Lowly Saviour! how free was thy Converſation from Pride and Haughtineſs, how willing to Converſe with the meaneſt of the People for their Advantage! Chriſt did not only ſuffer them to come near him, but even to throng him: Let not then the greateſt Perſons upon Earth, deſpiſe or diſdain the pooreſt of the People; but look upon ſome with an eye of Favour, upon others with an eye of Pity, upon none with an eye of Contempt.

43 And a woman having an iſſue of blood twelve years, which had ſpent all her living upon phyſicians, neither could be healed of any, 44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtanched. 45 And Jeſus ſaid, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, ſaid, Maſter, the multitude throng thee, and preſs thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 46 And Jeſus ſaid, Some body hath touched me, for I perceive that vertue is gone out of me. 47 And when the woman ſaw that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came trembling, and falling down before him, ſhe declared unto him before all the people, for what cauſe ſhe had touched him, and how ſhe was healed immediately. 48 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.)

As our Saviour was on his way to *Jairus*'s Houſe, a Diſeaſed Woman cometh behind him, toucheth his Cloaths, and is preſently healed. The Virtue lay not in her Finger, but in her Faith; or rather in Chriſt which her Faith inſtrumentally drew forth. *Obſerve* 1. The Diſeaſed Woman, one with a bloody Flux; let Women here take take notice of the Miſeries which the Sin of the firſt Woman brought upon all Women: amongſt which this is one, that it has made their Bodies ſubject to preternatural Iſſues and Fluxes of Blood. *Obſerve* 2. The long continuance of this Diſeaſe, *twelve Years*; it pleaſes God to lay long and tedious Afflictions upon ſome of his Children in this Life, and particularly to keep ſome of them a very long time under Bodily Weakneſs, to manifeſt his Power in ſupporting them, and to magnify his Mercy in delivering them. *Obſerve* 3. This poor Woman was found in the uſe of Means; ſhe ſought to Phyſicians for help, and is not blamed for ſo doing, altho' ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon them. The uſe and help of Phyſick is by no means to be neglected by us in times of Sickneſs, eſpecially in dangerous Diſeaſes of the Body; to truſt to Means is to neglect God, and to neglect the Means, is to tempt God. The Health of our Bodies ought to be dear unto us, and all lawful Means uſed both to preſerve it, to recover it, and to confirm it. *Obſerve* 4. The Actings of this poor Woman's Faith; her Diſeaſe was unclean by the Ceremonial Law, and ſhe to be ſeparated from Society: Accordingly ſhe is aſhamed to appear before Chriſt, but comes behind him to touch his Cloaths, being firmly perſwaded, that Chriſt had a Power Communicated to him miraculouſly to Cure incurable Diſeaſes; and ſee how our Saviour encouraged her Faith, he ſaith, *This thy Faith hath made thee whole. Learn hence*, That Faith oft-times meets with a better welcome from Chriſt, than it did or could expect; this poor Woman came to Chriſt Trembling, but went away Triumphing. *Obſerve* 5. Chriſt would have this Miracle diſcovered, he therefore ſays, *Who toucheth me? for I perceive that Vertue is gone out of me.* Chriſt ſays this, firſt in reference to himſelf, to manifeſt his Divine Power, that by the touch of his Cloaths he could Cure ſuch an incurable Diſeaſe: Secondly, In relation to the Woman, that ſhe might have opportunity to give God the Praiſe and Glory for the Cure: And Thirdly, With reſpect to *Jairus*, that his Faith might be ſtrengthened in belief of Chriſt's Power to raiſe his Daughter.

49 While he yet ſpake, there cometh one from the ruler of the ſynagogues houſe, ſaying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Maſter. 50 But when Jeſus heard it, he anſwered him, ſaying, Fear not: believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the houſe, he ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he ſaid, Weep not: ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to ſcorn, knowing that ſhe was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, ſaying, Maid, ariſe. 55 And her ſpirit came again, and ſhe aroſe ſtraightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were aſtoniſhed: but he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what was done.

Obſerve here, 1. The Doleful News brought to *Jairus*'s Ear, *Thy Daughter is dead*. The Lord doth ſometimes ſuffer the Faith and Patience of his Children to be greatly exerciſed and tryed. The Loſs of dear Relations, particularly of Children, eſpecially of an only Child, is one of the greateſt Sorrows of Human Life; a Trial which has often ſhockt an ordinary Patience and Conſtancy of Mind. *Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour's ſeaſonable Word of Advice and Comfort, *Fear not, only believe.* Chriſt ſtands ready to Comfort Believers in the Hour of their greateſt Trials and Temptations. *Obſerve* 3. Chriſt's Application of himſelf in order to the raiſing unto Life *Jairus*'s dead Daughter. And here 1. He goes into the Houſe only with three of his Diſciples, and the Father and Mother of the Maid, which were ſufficient to bear Witneſs to the truth of the Miracle. Our Saviour to avoid all ſhew of Vain-glory, would not work this Miracle publickly before all the People. 2. Our Saviour rebukes them for the ſhew they made of immoderate Grief and Sorrow for the dead Damſel; they wept and wailed greatly, with Minſtrels making a noiſe, ſay the other Evangeliſts; according to the Cuſtom of the Heathens, who by a mournful ſort of Muſick did ſeek to ſtir up the Paſſion of Grief at their Funerals. To mourn immoderately for the Dead is an Heatheniſh Cuſtom and Practice; 'tis hurtful to the Living, 'tis diſhonourable to the Dead; nor is it an Argument of more Love, but an Evidence of leſs Grace. 3. Chriſt adds a Reaſon for this Rebuke given by him, *for the Damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth*; *Vobis mortua, mihi dormit, She is dead to you, but aſleep to me*; not ſo dead as to be beyond my Power to raiſe her to Life. Souls departed are under the Conduct of Angels to their ſeveral Regions of Bliſs or Miſery: It is very probable, That the Soul of this Damſel was under the Guard of Angels, near her dead Body, waiting the Pleaſure of God in order to its Diſpoſal, either to reſtore it again to the Body, or to tranſlate it to its Eternal Manſion. *Obſerve farther*, The Nature of Death in general, and of the Saints Death in particular; 'tis a Sleep. Sleep is a ſtate of Reſt; Sleep is a ſudden Surpriſal; in Sleep there is an inſenſible paſſage of our Time; the Perſon ſleeping ſhall certainly awake. O how much is it our Wiſdom to prepare for the Bed of the Grave; and ſo to Live that when we lie down in it, there may be nothing to diſturb our Reſt. *Obſerve farther*, With what facility and eaſe our Saviour Raiſes the dead Damſel with a Word ſpeaking; and St. *Mark* tells us what the Word was, *Talitha Cumi.* Syriac Words, to ſhew the Truth of the Miracle; not like a Conjurer, muttering a Charm in an unknown Tongue. The Miracles which Chriſt wrought were real Miracles, and carried their own Evidence along with them. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The charge given by our Saviour, not to publiſh this Miracle; he charged them to tell no Man what was done, that is, Divulge it not imprudently to ſuch of the Scribes and Phariſees as would not be Convinced by it, but only to cavil at it, and be the more enraged againſt him for it, and ſeek his Death before his appointed time was come. Again, tell it to no Man unſeaſonably, and all at once, but gradually, and by degrees: For it was the Will of God, that the Divine Glory of Chriſt ſhould not be manifeſted to the World all at once, and on the ſudden, but by little and little, during his State of Humiliation; for his Reſurrection was the time appointed by God for the full manifeſtation of Chriſt's Godhead, *Rom.* 1. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

C H A P. IX.

THen he called his twelve diſciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diſeaſes. 2 And he ſent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the ſick. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither ſtaves nor ſcrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 4 And whatſoever houſe ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And whoſoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, ſhake off the very duſt from your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. 6 And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the goſpel, and healing every where.

We heard before, *Ch.* 6. 13. of our Saviour's chooſing his Twelve Apoſtles, and their ſeveral Names; they were firſt choſen Diſciples, to be with Chriſt, to Learn of him, and be Inſtructed by him, and to be Witneſſes of what he ſaid and did: Now after ſome time thus ſpent in preparing and fitting them for publick Service, our Saviour ſends them forth to Preach the Goſpel, and gives them a Power to confirm their Doctrine by Miracles. *Obſ. here,* 1. The Perſon that ſends the Apoſtles forth to Preach the Goſpel; it is Chriſt himſelf. *Learn thence,* That none ought to take upon them the Office of Preaching, or any other Miniſterial Function of the Church, till thereunto called by Chriſt himſelf. The Apoſtles were called by Chriſt, and immediately ſent forth by himſelf. The Miniſters of the Goſpel now are called Mediately, and receive Authority from Chriſt, by the Hand of the Governours of the Church. *Obſ.* 2. The Power given to the Apoſtles by our Saviour to Work Miracles, for confirming that Doctrine which they preached, *He gave them Power over unclean Spirits,* &c. Now this miraculous Power given to the Apoſtles was neceſſary, partly to procure Reverence to their Perſons, being poor and unlearned Men; but principally to gain Credit and Authority to their Doctrine; for the Doctrine of Faith in the Meſſiah as now come, and exhibited in the Fleſh, being a ſtrange and new Doctrine to the *Jews*, the Truth and Certainty of it was to be extraordinarily ratify'd by Miracles, which are the Broad-Seal of Heaven, to teſtify, that ſuch a Doctrine comes from God. *Obſ.* 3. The Charge here given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles at the time of their ſending forth, and this is Threefold. Firſt, Touching their preparation for their Journey; he forbids them to take much Care, or to ſpend much Time in furniſhing themſelves with Victuals, Money or Cloaths; becauſe they were to finiſh their Journey ſpeedily, and to return again to Chriſt their Maſter. This Command of our Saviour to his Apoſtles not to incumber themſelves, when going forth to Preach the Goſpel, *Teaches* his Miniſters their Duty, to free themſelves as much as poſſibly they can, from worldly Incumbrances, which may hinder them in their miniſterial Services, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *No Man that warreth, entangleth himſelf with the Affairs of this Life.* Secondly, Touching their Lodging in their Journey, Chriſt Adviſes them not to change it, during their ſtay in one Place: *But into whatſoever Houſe they entred, they ſhould there continue, till they departed out of that Place,* that ſo they might avoid all ſhew of lightneſs and inconſtancy, and teſtify all gravity and ſtayedneſs in their Behaviour; this being a ſpecial means to gain Reverence to their Perſons, and Authority to their Doctrine. Thirdly, Chriſt gives a ſpecial Charge to his Apoſtles concerning their Carriage towards ſuch, as ſhould refuſe to give Entertainment to them and their Doctrine, they were to denounce the Judgments of God againſt ſuch Contemners, *by ſhaking off the Duſt of their Feet for a Teſtimony againſt them.* This Action was Emblematical, ſignifying that Almighty God would in like manner ſhake them off, as the vileſt Duſt; for wherever the Word is Preached, it is for a Teſtimony, either a Teſtimony for, or againſt a People; for if the Duſt of a Miniſter's Feet whilſt alive, and the Aſhes of his Grave when dead, do bear Witneſs againſt the Deſpiſers of his Goſpel, their Sermons much more.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him, and he was perplexed, becauſe that it was ſaid of ſome, that John was riſen from the dead. 8 And of ſome, that Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again. 9 And Herod ſaid, John have I beheaded: but who is this of whom I hear ſuch things? And he deſired to ſee him.

The Hiſtory of the Holy *Baptiſt's* Beheading by *Herod* is briefly here hinted at by St. *Luke*, but not ſo largely ſet forth by him, as we find it by St. *Matthew*, ch. 14. and St. *Mark*, ch. 6. See the *Notes* there. That which St. *Luke* takes particular notice of, is, That great perplexity of Mind, which *Herod's* guilty Conſcience did occaſion; he had murthered *John*, and now is afraid his Ghoſt haunted him: *Herod was perplexed. Learn hence,* That Guilt is naturally troubleſome and uneaſy; it diſturbs the Peace and Serenity of the Mind, and fills the Soul with Storms and Thunder. Guilt is always full of Fear; every thing affrights the Guilty: A bad Man is a Terror to himſelf, and needs no farther Diſquietment, than what his own guilty Conſcience doth occaſion him.

10 And the apoſtles when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aſide privately into a deſert place, belonging to the city called Bethſaida. 11 And the people when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

St. *Luke* here gives a ſhort account of ſeveral material paſſages; as 1. Concerning the Apoſtles return to Chriſt after their firſt Miſſion and ſending forth; they acquaint their Maſter, how they had executed their Office, and diſcharged the Truſt he had repoſed in them. 2. He withdraws privately into a deſert place from the Multitude, that he might enjoy himſelf and his Diſciples; but there the People find him out, and flock after him; and Chriſt whoſe Meat it was by Day, and ſleep by Night to do good, embraces the Opportunity, beſtowing upon their Souls Inſtruction, Reproof and Counſel, upon their Bodies Health and Healing, teaching us by his Example to mix Spiritual Alms with Bodily Relief. We muſt be in fee with the Body ſometimes, that we may come at the Soul. Happy is that Chriſtian whom God has made both able and willing to intermix Spiritual Alms with Corporeal, and knows how to feed two at once, Soul and Body both. This is the Duty of all, but eſpecially of Spiritual Perſons; the Lord give us Wiſdom and Grace to manage it to advantage.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and ſaid unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a deſert place. 13 But he ſaid unto them, give ye them to eat. And they ſaid, We have no more but five loaves and two fiſhes; except we ſhould go and buy meat for all this people. 14 For they were about five thouſand men. And he ſaid to his diſciples, Make them ſit down by fifties in a company. 15 And they did ſo, and made them all ſit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed them, and brake, and gave to the diſciples to ſet before the multitude. 17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets.

This Miracle of our Saviour's Feeding five Thouſand with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, is Recorded by all the Evangeliſts, and in the Hiſtory of it we have theſe *Obſervable* particulars, 1. The ſeaſonable expreſſion of the Diſciples Pity towards the Multitude, who had long faſted, and wanted now the ordinary comforts and ſupports of Life; it well becomes the *Miniſters* of Chriſt to have reſpect to the bodily wants, as well as to the Spiritual Neceſſities of their People. *Obſ.* 2. The motion which the Diſciples make to Chriſt on the behalf of the multitude, *Send them away, that they may go into the Towns and Country, and get Victuals*: Here was a ſtrong Charity, but a weak Faith; a ſtrong Charity in deſiring the Peoples Relief, but a weak Faith in ſuppoſing that they could no other way be relieved, but by ſending them away; forgetting that Chriſt, who had healed the Multitude miraculouſly, could alſo feed them miraculouſly whenever he pleaſed; all things being equally eaſie to an Almighty Power. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's ſtrange Reply to the Diſciples Requeſt, *They need not depart, give ye them to eat.* Need not depart? Why? the People muſt either feed or famiſh, Victuals they muſt have, and a dry Deſert will afford none; yet ſays Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Give ye them to eat.* Alas! poor Diſciples, they had nothing for themſelves to eat. How then ſhould they give the Multitude to eat? When Chriſt requires of us what we of our ſelves are unable to perform, it is to diſcover to us our own impotency and weakneſs, to provoke us to look up to him, and to depend by Faith on his Almighty Power. *Obſ.* 4. What a poor and ſlender Proviſion the Lord of the whole Earth has for himſelf and his Family, *Five Barley-loaves, and two Fiſhes*; Teaching us, that theſe Bodies of ours muſt be fed, but not pamper'd: Our Belly muſt not be our Maſter, much leſs our God. The end of Food is to ſuſtain Nature; we muſt not ſtifle her with a Gluttonous variety. And as the quality of the Victuals was plain, ſo the quantity of it was ſmall, *Five* Loaves and *Two* Fiſhes; well might the Diſciples ſay, *What are theſe among ſo many?* The Eye of Senſe and Reaſon ſees an utter impoſſibility of thoſe effects which Faith can eaſily apprehend, and a Divine Power more eaſily produce. *Obſ.* 5. How Chriſt the great Maſter of the Feaſt doth marſhal his Gueſts, *He commands them all to ſit down by fifties in a Company.* None of them reply, ſit down, but to what? Here are the Mouths, but where's the Meat? We may ſoon be ſet, but whence ſhall we be ſerved? Not a Word like this, but they obey and expect. Lord! how eaſie is it to truſt thy Providence, and rely upon thy Power, when there is Corn in the Barn, Bread in the Cup-board, Money in the Purſe; But when our ſtores are empty, when we have nothing in hand, then to depend upon an Inviſible Bounty, is a Noble Act of Faith indeed. *Obſ.* 6. The Actions performed by our Bleſſed Saviour, he *Bleſſed and Brake, and gave the Loaves to his Diſciples, and they to the multitude.* 1. He *Bleſſed them*, teaching us by his Example, never to uſe or receive the good Creatures of God, without Prayer and Praiſe; never to ſit down to our Food, as a Beaſt to his Fodder. 2. Chriſt *Brake* the Loaves; he could have multiplied them whole. Why then would he rather do it in the breaking? perhaps to teach us, that we may rather expect his Bleſſing in the Diſtribution of his Bounty, than in the Reſervation of it. Scattering is the way to encreaſing: Liberality is the way to Riches. 3. Chriſt gave the Loaves thus broken to the Diſciples, that they might diſtribute to the Multitude. But why did Chriſt diſtribute by the Diſciples hands? doubtleſs to gain reſpect to his Diſciples from the People; and the ſame courſe doth our Lord take in ſpiritual Diſtribution: He that could feed the World by his own immediate hand, chooſes rather by the hand of his Miniſters to divide the Bread of Life amongſt his People. *Obſ.* 7. The certainty and greatneſs of the Miracle, *They did all eat, and were filled*; They did all eat, not a crumb or a bit, to ſatiety and fulneſs, all that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied; and yet *twelve Baskets of Fragments remain*; more is left than was at firſt ſet on. 'Tis hard to ſay which was the greateſt Miracle, the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. If we conſider what they left, we may wonder that they eat any thing; if what they eat, that they left any thing. *Obſ. Laſtly*, Theſe Fragments, tho' of Barley-Loaves and Fiſh-Bones muſt not be loſt, but at our Saviour's Command gathered up; the great Houſe-keeper of the World will not allow the Loſs of his Orts. Lord! how tremendous will their Accounts be, who having large and plentiful Eſtates, do conſume them upon their Luſts; How will they wiſh they had been born to Poverty and Want, when they appear to make up their accounts before God!

18 And it came to paſs as he was alone, praying, his diſciples were with him; and he asked them, ſaying, Whom ſay the people that I am? 19 They anſwering, ſaid, John the Baptiſt: but ſome ſay, Elias: and others ſay, that one of the old prophets is riſen again. 20 He ſaid unto them, but whom ſay ye that I am? Peter anſwering, ſaid, The Chriſt of God. 21 And he ſtraitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing, 22 Saying, The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day.

Theſe Verſes relate to us a private Conference which our Saviour had with his Diſciples, touching their own and others Opinion concerning himſelf. Where *Obſ.* 1. Our Saviour's inquiry, What the generality of the People thought and ſaid of him, *Whom do men ſay that I am?* not as if Chriſt were ignorant, or did vain-gloriouſly inquire after the Opinion of the Multitude; But his intention and deſign was to ſettle and more firmly eſtabliſh his Diſciples in the Belief of his being the True and Promiſed Meſſias. The Diſciples tell him, ſome took him to be *John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, ſome one of the Prophets.* 'Tis no new thing it ſeems, to find Diverſity of Judgments and Opinions, concerning Chriſt and the affairs of his Kingdom. *Obſ.* 2. *Peter* as the Mouth of all the Apoſtles, and in their Names makes a full and open Confeſſion of Chriſt, acknowledging him to be the True and Promiſed Meſſias; *Thou art the Chriſt of God. Learn thence,* That the vail of Chriſt's Humane Nature, did not keep the Eye of his Diſciples Faith from diſcerning him to be Truly and Really God. *Thou art the Chriſt of God. Obſ.* 3. The Charge and ſpecial Injunction given by Chriſt, *To tell no man of him*; that is, not commonly to Publiſh, and openly to declare him to be the Son of God; becauſe being in his State of Humiliation, the Glory of his Divinity was to be concealed till his Reſurrection; *He was then declared to be the Son of God with power,* Rom. 1. 4. *Obſ. Laſtly,* The great Wiſdom of our Saviour in acquainting his Diſciples with the near approach of his Death and Sufferings; *The Son of Man muſt ſuffer many things,* &c. This our Saviour did, 1. To prevent that Scandal and Offence which otherwiſe they might have taken at his Sufferings. 2. The better to fit and prepare them to bear that great Tryal when it did come. 3. To correct the Error which they had entertained concerning the Temporal Kingdom of the Meſſias, and that he was to be a great and mighty Prince here upon Earth; for theſe Reaſons did Chriſt frequently acquaint his Diſciples with his Sufferings.

23 And he ſaid to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me. 24 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Saviour recommends his Religion to every Perſons Election and Choice, not compelling any one by Force and Violence to embrace or entertain it: *If any man will be my Diſciple,* that is, if any Man chooſes and reſolves to be a Chriſtian. *Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour's Terms propounded, namely, Self-denial, Goſpel-ſuffering, and Goſpel-ſervice. 1. *Self-denial, Let him deny himſelf*: by which we are not to underſtand either the denying of our Senſes in matters of Faith, or the Renouncing of our Reaſon in matters of Religion; but a willingneſs to part with all our Earthly Comforts and Temporal Enjoyments for the ſake of Chriſt, when called thereunto. They to whom we bear the greateſt Natural Affection, even the Wife of our Boſom, and the Offſpring of our Bowels, and thoſe to whom we yield the higheſt Reverence, and to whoſe Commands we owe moſt entire Obedience, as our Fathers and Mothers; if the Authority of Natural, Civil, or Eccleſiaſtical Superiours ſhould combine to Tempt us to do what Chriſt forbids, yet Chriſt muſt be loved more than theſe, and obeyed before all theſe; yea, all theſe muſt be comparatively hated in reſpect of him. Farther, this precept requires us to deny our Honour and Reputation, our Wealth and outward Eſtate, our whole Subſtance, and all our Temporal good Things, even Life it ſelf, when the intereſt of Chriſt and Religion calls for it; otherwiſe we cannot be his Diſciples. 2. *Goſpel Sufferings*; he muſt take up his Croſs daily; an alluſion to a *Roman* Cuſtom, when a Malefactor was to be Crucified, he took his Croſs up upon his Shoulder, and carried it to the Place of Execution. *Here Note,* That not the making of the Croſs, but patient bearing of it, when God has made it, and laid it upon our Shoulder, is the Duty enjoin'd; *Let him take up his Croſs.* (3.) *Goſpel-ſervice*; *Let him follow me,* ſays Chriſt, that is, obey my Commands, and imitate my Example: He muſt ſet my Life and

Doctrine continually before him, and be daily Correcting and Reforming of his Life by that Rule and Pattern. *Obſerve* (3.) The Arguments urged by our Saviour to induce Men to a willingneſs to lay down their Lives for the ſake of Chriſt and his Holy Religion; *He that will ſave his Life ſhall loſe it, and he that is willing to loſe his life for the ſake of the Goſpel, he ſhall find it*; intimating to us, (1.) That the Love of this Temporal Life is a great Temptation to Men to deny Chriſt, and to renounce his Holy Religion. (2.) That the ſureſt way to attain Eternal Life, is cheerfully to lay down our Temporal Life, when the Glory of Chriſt, and the Honour of Religion requires it at our hands.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf or be caſt away?

Here our Saviour goes on to ſhew the Folly of thoſe that for ſaving their Temporal Lives, will expoſe their Eternal Life, or the Life of their Souls to hazard and danger; yea ſometimes by refuſing to lay down our Temporal Life for Chriſt, we loſe that alſo; which renders it the greateſt folly in the World to refuſe to part with any enjoyment, even Life it ſelf, at the Call and Command of Chriſt.

26 For whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Fathers, and of the holy angels.

That is, whoſoever ſhall deny and diſown me, either in my Perſon, in my Doctrine, or my Members, for any fear or favour of Man, he ſhall with ſhame be diſowned by me, and rejected of me at the Great Day. There are two Paſſions which cauſe Men to diſown Chriſt in the day of Temptation, namely, Fear and Shame. Many good Men have been overcome by the former, as St. *Peter* and others; but we find not any good Man in Scripture guilty of the latter, namely, that denied Chriſt out of Shame; this argues a rotten unſound and corrupt Heart: If any Man thinks it beneath his Honour and Quality to own the oppoſed Truths, and deſpiſed Members of Chriſt: Chriſt will think it beneath him to own ſuch Perſons at the Great Day. *Learn hence*, (1.) That ſuch as are aſhamed of Chriſt's Doctrine, or Members, are in God's Account aſhamed of Chriſt himſelf. (2.) That ſuch as either for fear dare not, or for ſhame will not, own the Doctrine and Members of Chriſt now, ſhall certainly find Chriſt aſhamed to own and confeſs them at the great Day.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the kingdom of God.

There is a Threefold ſenſe and interpretation of theſe Words given by Expoſitors; (1.) Some refer the Words to the Times of the Goſpel after Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, when the Goſpel was Propagated far and near, and the Kingdom of God came with Power. *Learn thence*, That where the Goſpel is powerfully preached, and chearfully obey'd, there Chriſt cometh moſt glorioully in his Kingdom, Exerciſing his Kingly Power in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which ſome of the Apoſtles then ſtanding by Lived to ſee. (3.) Others (as moſt agreeable to the Context) underſtand the words with Reference to our Saviour's Transfiguration; as if he had ſaid, *Some of you*, meaning *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon Mount *Tabor*, and that in ſuch Splendour and Glory, as ſhall be a Preludium, a Shadow and Repreſentation of that Glory which I ſhall appear in, when I ſhall come with Power to Judge the World at the Great Day. And whereas our Saviour ſaith not, there are ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not die, but *which ſhall not taſte of Death*, till they had ſeen this glorious ſight; This implies two things, (1.) That after they had ſeen this Transfiguration, they muſt taſte of Death as well as others; (2.) That they ſhould but taſte of it, and no more. From whence *Learn*, (1.) That the moſt Renowned Servants of Chriſt, for Faith, Holineſs, and Service, muſt at length, in God's appointed time, taſte and have experience of Death as well as others. (2.) That altho' they muſt taſte, yet they ſhall but taſte of Death; they ſhall not drink of the Dregs of that bitter Cup; tho' they fall by the hand of Death, yet ſhall they not be hurt by it, but in the very fall be victorious over it.

28 And it came to paſs about eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and gliſtring. 30 And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moſes and Elias. 31 Who appeared in glory and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem. 32 But Peter and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory and the two men that ſtood with him. 33 And it came to paſs, as they departed from him, Peter ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias; not knowing what he ſaid. 34 While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud, and overſhadowed them: and they feared as they entred into the cloud. 35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son, hear him. 36 And when the voice was paſt, Jeſus was found alone: and they kept it cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.

Here we have Recorded the Hiſtory of our Holy Saviours Transfiguration; when he laid, as it were, the Garments of our frail humanity aſide for a little Seaſon; and put on the Robes of his Divine Glory, to Demonſtrate and Teſtifie the Truth of his Divinity; for this Divine Glory was an Evidence of his Divine Nature, and alſo an Emblem of that Glory which he and his Diſciples, and all his Faithful Servants and Followers, ſhall enjoy together in Heaven. *Obſ.* (1.) The deſign of our Saviour in this his Transfiguration, namely, to confirm his Diſciples Faith in the Truth of his Divine Nature; he was therefore pleaſed to ſuffer the Rays of his Divinity to dart forth before their Eyes, ſo far as they were able to bear it; his Face ſhined with a pleaſing Brightneſs, and his Raiment with ſuch a Glorious Luſtre, as did at once both delight and dazzle the Eyes of his Diſciples. *Obſ.* (2.) The choice which our Saviour makes of the Witneſſes of his Transfiguration, his three Diſciples, *Peter*, *James* and *John*; But why Diſciples? why three Diſciples? and why theſe three? (1.) Why Diſciples? Becauſe this Transfiguration was a Type of Heaven; Chriſt vouchſafes therefore the Earneſt and Firſt Fruits of that Glory only to Saints upon Earth, on whom he intended to beſtow the full Crop in due time. (2.) Why three Diſciples? Becauſe three were ſufficient to Witneſs the Truth of this Miracle; *Judas* was unworthy of this Favour, yet leſt he ſhould murmer or be diſcontented, others are left out as well he. (3.) But why theſe three rather than others? Probably, (1.) Becauſe theſe three were more eminent for great Zeal and love towards Chriſt; now the moſt eminent Manifeſtations of Glory are made to thoſe that are moſt excelling in Grace. (2.) Becauſe theſe three Diſciples were to be Witneſſes of Chriſt's Agony and Paſſion, to prepare them for which, they are here made Witneſſes of his Transfiguration. This Glorious Viſion upon Mount *Tabor*, fitted them to abide the Terrour of Mount *Calvary*. *Obſ.* (3.) The Glorious Attendants upon our Saviour at his Transfiguration; they were Two, thoſe Two Men, thoſe Two Men *Moſes* and *Elias*. This being but a Glimpſe of Heavens Glory, and not a full Manifeſtation of it, only Two of the Glorified Saints attend it, and theſe Two Attendants are not Two Angels, but Two Men; becauſe Men were more nearly concerned than Angels in what was done; But why *Moſes* and *Elias*, rather than any other Men? (1.) Becauſe *Moſes* was the giver of the Law, and *Elias* the chief of the Prophets: Now both theſe attending upon Chriſt did ſhew the Conſent of the Law and the Prophets with Chriſt, and their accompliſhments and fulfilling in him. (2.) Becauſe theſe Two Men were the moſt Laborious Servants of Chriſt; both adventured their Lives in God's Cauſe, and therefore were highly honoured by him; for thoſe that honour him he will honour. *Obſ.* (4.) The Carriage and Behaviour of the Diſciples upon this great occaſion, (1.) They ſupplicate *Jeſus*; they do not pray to *Moſes* or *Elias*, but to Chriſt, *Maſter, it is good being here*: O what a raviſhing Comfort and Satisfaction is the Communion and Fellowſhip of the Saints; but the Preſence of Chriſt amongſt them, renders their Joys Tranſporting. (2.) They profer their Service to further the Continuance of what they did enjoy; *Let us make three Tabernacles*; Saints will ſtick at no coſt or pains for the enjoyment of Chriſt's Preſence and his Peoples Company. *Learn hence*, That a Glimpſe of Heavens Glory, is ſufficient to raiſe a Soul into Extaſy, and to make it out of Love with worldly Company. (2.) That we are apt to deſire more of Heaven upon Earth than God will allow us; we would have the Heavenly Glory come down to us, but are not willing by Death to go up to that. *Obſ.* (5.) How a Cloud was put before the Diſciples Eyes, when the Divine Glory was manifeſted to them, partly to allay the Luſter and Reſplendency of that Glory, which they were ſwallowed up with; the Glory of Heaven is inſupportable in this imperfect State, we cannot bear it unvailed; and partly did this Cloud come to hinder their looking and prying farther into this Glory: We muſt be content to behold God thro' a Cloud darkly here, e're long we ſhall ſee him Face to Face. *Obſ.* (6.) The Teſtimony given out of the Cloud by God the Father, concerning Jeſus Chriſt his Son; *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* Where Note, (1.) The Dignity of his Perſon, he *is my Son*, for Nature Co-eſſential, and for duration Co-eternal with his Father. (2). The endearedneſs of his Relation, *He is my beloved Son*, becauſe of his Conformity to me, and Compliance with me; Likeneſs is the cauſe of Love, and an Union and Harmony of Wills cauſes a mutual endearing of Affections. (3.) The Authority of his Doctrine, *Hear ye him*; not *Moſes* and *Elias* who were Servants, but Chriſt my Son, whom I have Authorized and Appointed to be the great Prophet and Teacher of my Church; therefore Adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Law-giver. The obedient Ear honours Chriſt more than either the gazing Eye, the adoring Knee, or the applauding Tongue.

37 And it came to paſs, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him, 38 And behold, a man of the company cryed out, ſaying, Maſter, I beſeech thee look upon my ſon, for he is mine only child. 39 And lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly cryeth out, and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him. 40 And I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out, and they could not. 41 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you, and ſuffer you? Bring thy ſon hither. 42 And as he was yet a coming the devil threw him down, and tare him: and Jeſus rebuked the unclean ſpirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſon brought to Chriſt for help and healing, one Bodily poſſeſt by Satan, who Rent and Tore him, but rather to Torment than Diſpatch him: Oh how does Satan delight to do hurt to the Bodies, as well as the Souls of Mankind! Lord! abate his Power, ſince his Malice will not be abated. *Obſ.* (2.) The Perſon who repreſented his ſad Condition to our Saviour; his Compaſſionate Father, who kneeled down, and cryed out. Need will make a Perſon both Humble and Eloquent; every one has a Tongue to ſpeak for himſelf, happy he that keeps a Tongue for others. *Obſ.* (3.) The Phyſitians which this Diſtreſſed Perſon is brought unto, firſt *to the Diſciples*, and then to Jeſus: We never apply our ſelves importunately to the God of Power, till we deſpair of the Creatures help. But what hindred the Diſciples that they could not caſt this Evil Spirit out? Why, it was their Unbelief; *Oh faithleſs Generation. Learn thence,* That the great Obſtacle and Obſtruction of all Bleſſings both Spiritual and Temporal coming to us, is our wretched Infidelity and Unbelief. *Obſ.* (4.) The Sovereign Power and Abſolute Authority which Chriſt had when on Earth over the Devil and his Angels; *Jeſus rebuked him, caſt him out, and charged him to return no more into him.* This was a Proof and Demonſtration of the Godhead of our Saviour, that in his own Name, that is, by his own power and Authority, he could and did caſt the Devils out.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God: But while they wondred every one at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 44 Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that ſaying.

Obſervable it is, how frequently our Saviour fore-warned his Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings; and as the time of his Sufferings drew nearer, he did more frequently warn them of his Death. But all was little enough to arm them againſt the Scandal of the Croſs; and to Reconcile them to the thoughts of his Suffering Condition; how an ordinary Prophet ſhould be delivered into the Hands of Men, they could eaſily underſtand, but how the *Meſſias* ſhould be ſo treated they could not apprehend; for the Diſciples had taken up the common Opinion, That the *Meſſias* was to be a Temporal Prince, and ſhould Conquer and Reign here upon Earth, and how to Reconcile this with being killed, they could no ways apprehend; and they were afraid to be too particular in their Enquiries about it. Now from Chriſt's ſo frequent warning his Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings, we may gather, That we can never hear; either too often or too much, of the Doctrine of the Croſs, nor be too frequently inſtructed in our Duty to prepare for a Suffering State; as Chriſt went from his Croſs to the Crown, from a State of Abaſement to a State of Exaltation, ſo muſt all his Diſciples and Followers expect likewiſe.

46 Then there aroſe a reaſoning among them, which of them ſhould be greateſt. 47 And Jeſus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and ſet him by him, 48 And ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall receive this Child in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth him that ſent me: for he that is leaſt among you all, the ſame ſhall be great.

It may juſtly ſeem a wonder, that when our Bleſſed Saviour Diſcourſed ſo frequently with his Diſciples about his Sufferings, that they ſhould at the ſame time be diſputing amongſt themſelves about Precedency and Preheminency, which of them ſhould be the greateſt, the firſt in Place, and the higheſt in Dignity and Honour: But from this Inſtance, we may *Learn,* That the Holieſt and Beſt of Men are too prone to Ambition, ready to catch at the Bait of Honour, to affect a Precedency before, and Superiority over others: Here the Apoſtles themſelves were touch'd with the Itch of Ambition; to cure this, our Saviour ſets before them a little Child, as the proper Emblem of Humility; ſhewing that they ought to be as free from Pride and Ambition as a young Child, which affects nothing of Precedency. Such as are of higheſt Eminency in the Church, ought to be ſingularly adorn'd with the Grace of Humility, looking upon themſelves as lying under the greateſt Obligation to be moſt Eminently Uſeful and Serviceable to the Church's good.

49 And John anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name: and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not with us. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not againſt us, is for us.

Obſerve here, (1.) St. *John*'s Relation of a matter of Fact to our Saviour, namely, his Forbidding one to caſt out Devils in Chriſts Name, that did not follow Chriſt as they did; for tho' only the Diſciples which followed Chriſt had a Commiſſion to work Miracles, yet were there others, no Enemies to Chriſt, who in imitation of the Diſciples, did attempt to do the like; and God was pleaſed for the Honour of his Son, in whoſe Name they caſt out Devils, to give them ſometimes Succeſs. *Obſ.* (2.) The Actions of the Diſciples towards this Perſon; we forbad him, *becauſe he followed not with us*; where is *Obſervable* their Raſhneſs in Forbidding him of their own Heads, before they had conſulted Chriſt about it, and their Envy and Emulation, in that they were grieved and diſcontented that good was done, becauſe they did not do it; It is as hard a matter to look upon the Gifts of others without Envy, as it is to look upon our own without Pride. *Obſerve* (3.) Our Saviour's Reply, *Forbid him not.* Becauſe our Saviour knew, that this Action of caſting out Devils in his Name would ſomeways redound to his Glory, altho' he undertook the matter without Direction from Chriſt: We ought not to cenſure and condemn thoſe, which do that which is good in it ſelf, tho' they fail in the manner of their doing of it.

51 And it came to paſs, when the time was come, that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go to Jeruſalem.

The time now drew on, wherein our Saviour was to be Received up into Heaven; and accordingly he ſets his Face to go to *Jeruſalem*, that he might there Suffer, and from thence Aſcend. Now here we have *Obſervable* (1.) that altho' *Jeruſalem* was the Neſt of his Enemies, the Stage upon which his

Bloody Sufferings were to be Acted, the fatal place of his Death, yet nothing terrified with Danger, he ſets his Face for *Jeruſalem*, that is, come what will, he will go with an invincible Courage and Reſolution. *Learn* thence, That altho' Chriſt had a perfect and exact Knowledge of all the Bitter Sufferings he was to undergo, for, and on behalf of all his Members, yet did it not in the leaſt diſhearten him in, or diſcourage him from, that great and Glorious Undertaking. *Obſerve* (2.) That tho' Chriſt was firſt to ſuffer, before he did Aſcend, and to be lifted up upon the Croſs, before received up into Heaven, yet is there no mention of his Death here but of his Aſcenſion only; as if all thoughts of Death were ſwallowed up in his Victory over Death; teaching us, by his Example, to overlook our Sufferings and Death, as not worthy to be named or mentioned with that Glory, which we are received into, after Death. The Evangeliſt does not ſay the time was come when he ſhould Suffer, but when he ſhould be received up.

52 And ſent meſſengers before his face: and they went, and entred into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, becauſe his face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem.

Our Saviour was now going from *Galilee* to *Jeruſalem*, and being to paſs thro' a Village of *Samaria*, he ſent Meſſengers before him to prepare Entertainment for him. The Son of God, who was Heir of all things, ſends to, and ſues for a Lodging in a *Samaritan* Cottage. O Bleſſed Saviour, how can we be abaſed enough for thee, who thus neglected thy ſelf for us! It was thy pleaſure to appear, not in the Figure of a Prince, but in the Form of a Servant, yet the People in the *Samaritan* Village would not receive him: Strange! to hear the Son of God Sue for a Lodging and be deny'd; but the Reaſon was, the difference of Religion which was between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*: The *Jews* Worſhipped at the Temple in *Jeruſalem*, the *Samaritans* at a Temple of their own, built upon Mount *Gerizim*. Upon the Building of this new Temple, there aroſe ſo great a Fewd between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, and in proceſs of time ſuch an implacable Hatred, that they would not ſhew common Civility to one another. A *Samaritan*'s Bread to a *Jew* was no better than Swines Fleſh; they would rather thirſt than drink a Draught of *Samaritan*-Water. Hence we *Learn*, That no Enmity is ſo deſperate, as that which ariſes from matters of Religion.

54 And when his diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and conſume them, even as Elias did?

Here Obſerve, (1.) The Crime which theſe Men were guilty of; no affront muſt be accounted little, no indignity light, that is offered to the Son of God. But theſe *Samaritans* did not Revile Chriſt, nor any of his Retinue, that we read of; they did not violently aſſault him, they did not follow him with Stones in their Hands, or Blaſphemies in their Mouths, but the wrong and injury was only Negative, *They received him not*: They denied him a Nights Lodging, and this not out of any diſlike of his Perſon, but from an antipathy againſt his Nation. *Obſ.* (2.) The Carriage of the Diſciples upon this occaſion; it was thus far commendable, that from the endeared Love which they bear to their Maſter, they did highly reſent the churliſh Denial of an act of Kindneſs towards him. A gracious Heart is Holily impatient at the ſight of any indignity offered to Chriſt: But their fault was, That they were too far Tranſported with Paſſion and Revenge, even to deſire the Death and Deſtruction of the uncivil *Samaritans*; *Wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and conſume them?* They do not ſay, Maſter, will it pleaſe thee, who art Lord of the Creatures, to Command Fire to come down? Nor did they ſay, if it be thy pleaſure, command us to call down Fire; but wilt thou that we command Fire? This ſavours too much of Pride, Cruelty and Revenge; ſo dangerous is a miſguided Zeal.

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them. And they went to another village.

Here we have our Saviour's Cenſure of the raſh and hot Motion of his Diſciples, which proceeded, Firſt, from ignorance of themſelves, *Ye know not what Spirits ye are of*; ye are not now under the rough and ſour Diſpenſations of the Law, but under the calm and gentle Inſtitution of the Goſpel, which deſigns univerſal Love, Peace and good Will to all Mankind. Hence *Learn* firſt, that a cruel and revengeful Spirit is directly contrary to the Deſign and Temper of Chriſtianity. Secondly, that no difference in Religion, no pretence of Zeal for God, can warrant and juſtifie ſuch a Spirit and Temper. Again, This raſhneſs in the Diſciples proceeded from their Ignorance of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, as well as of themſelves; *The Son of Man did not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them*; that is, the proper intent and deſign of my Coming, was to ſave and not deſtroy; tho' the accidental event of it may be otherwſe, thro' the malice and perverſeneſs of men. *Learn*, That it was the Deſign of Chriſt, and his Holy Religion, to diſcountenance all fierceneſs, rage and cruelty in Men, one towards another; and to inſpire them univerſally with a Spirit of Love and Unity. Chriſt is ſo far from allowing us to perſecute them that hate us, that he forbids us to hate them that perſecute us.

57 And it came to paſs that as they went in the way, a certain man ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 58 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Obſerve here, (1.) A Perſon reſolving to follow Chriſt, a good Reſolution if made deliberately and wiſely, not for ſiniſter Ends, or ſecular Advantages, which it is to be feared was the Caſe here by our Saviour's Anſwer, *For*, ſays he, *Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, My Condition in the World is very poor, I have no houſe of Reſidence that I call my own; the Birds of the Air have their fixed Neſts, and the Beaſts of the Earth have their Dens and Holes, but I have no fixed Habitation; therefore if you think to follow me for the ſake of Worldly Advantage, you will find your ſelf greatly diſappointed. *Learn* hence, That ſuch Men will find themſelves miſerably miſtaken, and greatly diſappointed, who expect to gain any thing by following of Chriſt, but their Souls Salvation. It was a common Opinion among the *Jews*, that the Diſciples of the Meſſiah ſhould get Wealth and Honour by following of Him. 'Tis like what this Perſon ſaid proceeded from this Opinion; accordingly Chriſt diſcourages him from ſuch expectation by laying before Him, his mean, poor and low condition, in which he was to be followed by his Diſciples, as if Chriſt had ſaid, if you expect Temporal Advantages by following of me, you will be much miſtaken. For I have nothing I can call my own.

59 And he ſaid unto another, Follow me: but he ſaid, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 60 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

We are not to ſuppoſe by this Prohibition, that Chriſt diſallowes or diſapproves of any civil Office from one Perſon to another, much leſs of a Child to a Parent, either Living or Dying; but he lets us know, (1.) That no Office of Love and Service to Man muſt be preferred before our Duty to God to whom we owe our firſt and chief Obedience. (2.) That lawful and decent Offices become ſinful, when they hinder greater Duties. (3.) That ſuch as are called by Chriſt to preach the Goſpel, muſt mind that alone, and leave inferiour Duties to inferiour Perſons; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Others will ſerve well enough to bury the Dead, but thou that art called to Miniſter unto God, muſt do that unto which thou art called; under the Law the Prieſt might not come near a dead Corpes, nor meddle with the Interment of their own Parents, unto which our Saviour here probably alludes.

61 And another alſo ſaid, Lord, I will follow thee: but let me firſt go bid them farewel which are at home at my houſe. 62 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Here we have another Perſon that promiſed to follow Chriſt, but deſireth leave firſt to ſettle affairs of his Family, and to take leave of his Friends: Our Saviour tells him, If he would be one of his Miniſters, he muſt be like a Plough-man, who looks forward and not backward, or he will never make his Furrows right; they will either be too deep or too narrow;

he muſt mind his Plough and nothing elſe. Thus muſt they that are called to the Work of the *Miniſtry*, mind it wholly, attend to that alone; their whole time, their whole ſtrength, muſt be devoted to it: The things of the World are things behind them, they muſt not look back upon them; nothing can juſtifie a *Miniſter* concerning himſelf with the incumbrances of Worldly Buſineſs, but only perfect Neceſſity, for the Support of himſelf and his Family. Again, Plowing work is hard work, a ſtrong and ſteady hand is required for it; he that Ploughs muſt keep on, and make no balks of the hardeſt Ground he meets with; verily no difficulties muſt diſcourage either *Miniſters* or People in the way of their Duty.

CHAP. X.

AFter theſe things, the Lord appointed other ſeventy alſo, and ſent them two and two before his face into every city, and place, whither he himſelf would come.

The Captain General of our Salvation, *Chriſt Jeſus*, having called, commiſſioned, and ſent forth his Twelve Apoſtles, as great Commanders, to ſubdue his Native Kingdom of *Iſrael* to himſelf, at the ſixth Chapter of this Goſpel: in this Chapter he ſendeth after them a Band of Seventy Auxiliary Forces to Aid and Aſſiſt them; *After theſe things the Lord Appointed other Seventy Diſciples, and ſent them two by two before his Face.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Perſon Commiſſioning and Sending them forth, Chriſt himſelf: Thence *Learn*, that none ought to take upon them the Office of Preaching, or other Miniſterial Functions in the Church, till thereunto called by *Chriſt* himſelf. The Twelve Apoſtes, and Seventy Diſciples, had an immediate Miſſion from *Chriſt* himſelf: All his Miniſters now are called mediately, and receive their Authority from *Chriſt* by the hands of the Governours of his *Church*. *Note* (2.) The manner of their ſending; two by two in a Company; partly to make their Meſſage of more Authority; partly to teſtifie their mutual conſent in the Doctrine they taught; and partly to comfort and encourage, to help and ſtrengthen, to aſſiſt and ſupport each other: In imitation of this Example, the Jeſuits ſend forth their Emiſſaries by pairs, *Jeſuitæ ſemper ſunt Bini*, &c. *Learn Hence*, that the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel do ſtand in great need of the mutual help and comfort, of the united aſſiſtance and encouragement of each other, in the weighty Duties of their Calling and Function. Our Saviour in the next Verſe compares his *Miniſters* to Harveſt Labourers, who are to help and aſſiſt one another, the ſtrong endeavouring to ſtrengthen the hands of the weak. But Lord! What Tears are ſufficient to bewail the want of Love and Unity, yea the prevalency of that Envy and Malignity which is found too often among the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel? ſo that inſtead of going forth two by two, happy is he that is alone in a place: Well might *Melancthon* bleſs God when he lay a dying, that he was going to a place where he ſhould be freed from the implacable hatred of Divines; this is, and ought to be for a Lamentation.

2 Therefore ſaid he unto them, The harveſt truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

Note here, (1.) That God's Church is an Harveſt Field; (2.) That the *Miniſters* of God are Labourers in his Harveſt under God the Lord of the Harveſt. (3.) That to God alone doth it belong to ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt, and none muſt thruſt themſelves in, till God ſends them forth, *Pray ye the Lord of the Harveſt that he ſend forth Labourers.* (4.) That the number of Faithful Labourers, is comparitively ſmall and few: The Scribes and Phariſees in the Jewiſh Harveſt-field are many; yet ſays Chriſt, *The Labourers are few.* (5.) That it is the Churches Duty to pray, and that earneſtly and inceſſantly to God the Lord of the Harveſt, to encreaſe the number of Faithful Labourers, and to ſend forth more Labourers into his Harveſt.

3 Go your ways: Behold, I ſend ye forth as lambs among Wolves. 4 Carry neither Purſe, nor ſcrip, nor ſhoes: and ſalute no man by the way.

Our Saviour (1.) Arms his Diſciples againſt the Difficulties, dangers, and diſcouragements, which they might meet with in the Courſe of their Miniſtry, by telling them, that he ſent them forth as Lambs among Wolves; thereby intimating, that the Enemies of the Goſpel have as great an Inclination from their malicious Nature, to devour and deſtroy the *Miniſters* of Chriſt, as Wolves have from their natural Temper, to devour Lambs; *Behold I ſend you forth as Lambs among Wolves.* (2.) Our Saviour directs them in this their firſt Expedition to Preach the Goſpel, to commit themſelves to the gracious care and good providence of God, both for Proviſion and Protection; *carry neither purſe nor ſcrip, nor ſtaff*, ſays St. *Matthew*; as if he had ſaid, Truſt God with the care of your Lives, rely upon his providence both for Protection and Proviſion, yet muſt we take notice, that this was only a temporary command, given to the Diſciples for this particular Journey, which they were quickly to Diſpatch; for in the general, Chriſt allows his *Miniſters*, as well as others, to exerciſe a prudent and provident care for themſelves and their Families. And as it is the *Miniſters* Duty to truſt God in the uſe of prudential Means for their Maintenance, ſo it is the Peoples Duty to take care for their *Miniſters* comfortable Subſiſtence. The *Workman is worthy of his meat*, ſays our Saviour; that is, of all neceſſary Supplies; he is worthy of a comfortable Subſiſtence, and where it may be had, of an honourable maintenance.

5 And into whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace be to this houſe. 6 And if the ſon of Peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it: if not, it ſhall turn to you again.

Here our Bleſſed Saviour directs his Diſciples how to manage themſelves in the executing of their Office, *Into whatſoever houſe ye enter*, firſt ſay, *peace be to this houſe*, they muſt wiſh Peace to the Sons of Peace, yea to the Enemics of Peace alſo; and as their Peace ſhall reſt upon the one, ſo ſhall it return from the other; *Peace be to this houſe*, is a fit Salutation for them to uſe, who were the Diſciples and Ambaſſadors of the Prince of Peace; and very agreeable to the Goſpel they were to Preach, which was a Goſpel of Peace; and it was a Prayer as well as a Salutation; the Diſciples were to ſpeak it, not from the Lip only, but from the Heart alſo. Peace is the Muſick, which both Angels and Men are delighted with, and the Chriſtian Religion is the greateſt promoter and Preſerver of it; that commands us to *pray for peace, to follow after peace, to part with our Coat and Cloak*; that is, with our civil Rights, *for peace, and if it be poſſible, to live peaceably with all men.* *Obſerve* (2.) As the injunction given by our Saviour to his Diſciples to deliver a meſſage of Peace, firſt ſay, *Peace be to this houſe*; ſo the Prediction of what ſhould befal them i the Delivery of this their Meſſage: Their Salutation, tho' it be Peace, yet will not find a welcome and entertainment with all Perſons, but only with the Sons of Peace, *If the Sons of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it.* *Obſerve* (3.) An Encouragement not to be afraid of delivering their Meſſage, tho' it wanted Succeſs; *If your peace reſt not, it ſhall return to you again.* *Learn*, (1.) That as there was at the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, ſo there is, and always will be, ſome that are Sons of Peace, and others that are Enemies unto Peace. (2.) That this Peace will reſt on none, but thoſe that are fit to receive it. (3.) That tho' it doth not reſt, yet it ſhall not be loſt, but return again to thoſe that publiſh it. *Miniſters* can but ſay, *Peace be to this Houſe*, they cannot make it reſt there; we can offer Terms of Peace to a loſt World, but cannot compel men to accept them; and if they finally refuſe them, *We ſhall be a ſweet Savour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved.*

7 And in the ſame houſe remain, eating and drinking ſuch things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from houſe to houſe. 8 And into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat ſuch things as are ſet before you. 9 And heal the ſick that are therein, and ſay unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, 11 Even the very duſt of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you: notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12 But I ſay unto

you, that it ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, then for that city.

Here our Saviour gives his Diſciples ſundry directions, how to manage themſelves in this Expedition for Preaching the Goſpel; he enjoyns them, 1. To obſerve the Rule and Decency in going from place to place; having entred an Houſe to continue there, not changing their Lodging and going from houſe to houſe, thereby avoiding all ſhew of Lightneſs and Inconſtancy, and teſtifying all gravity and ſtayedneſs in their Behaviour; this being a ſpecial means to win Authority to their Perſons and Miniſtry. 2. He gives them a power to work Miracles, for the confirming of the Doctrine which they Preach'd; *Heal the Sick that are therein.* This was neceſſary, partly to procure Reverence to their Perſons, being poor and unlearned Men; and partly to gain credit and Authority to their Doctrine; for the Doctrine of Faith in the Meſſias, as now come and exhibited in the Fleſh, being a ſtrange and new Doctrine to the *Jews*, the Truth and Certainty of it was to be extraordinarily ratified and confirmed by working Miracles; one ſort of which was healing of Diſeaſes in an extraordinary manner. *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſt encourages his Diſciples againſt the want of Succeſs; he bids them denounce the Judgments of God againſt ſuch contemners of their Doctrine, *by ſhaking of the duſt off their feet*, which Action was Emblematical, and ſignified, that God in like manner would ſhake off them, and eſteem them not beter then the vileſt Duſt. *Learn hence,* That thoſe which deſpiſe the Meſſage that the Miniſters of the Goſpel bring, ſhall hereafter find, the Duſt of their Feet, and the Aſhes of their Graves to give a judicial Teſtimony againſt them, in the Day of Chriſt: Where-ever the Word is Preach'd, it is for a Teſtimony, either a Teſtimony for, or againſt a People. For if the Duſt of a Miniſter's Feet bear Witneſs againſt a People, their Sermons much more. *Obſerve Laſtly,* The dreadful Judgment denounced by our Saviour againſt the Contemners of his Diſciples Doctrine; Verily it ſhall be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* in the Day of Judgment, than for that City. Where *Note,* 1. That there ſhall be a Day of Judgment. 2. That in the day of Judgment ſome Sinners ſhall fare worſe than others. 3. That of all Sinners, the Condition of ſuch ſhall be ſaddeſt at the day of Judgment, who living under the Goſpel, dye after all in their impenitency and infidelity; *It ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, then for that City.*

13 Wo unto thee, Corazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, ſitting in ſackcloth and aſhes. 14 But it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, then for you. 15 And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, ſhall be thruſt down to hell.

Theſe Cities in *Galilee, Corazin, Bethſaida,* and *Capernaum,* having been the places where Chriſt preached and wrought his Miracles, they have a Wo denounced here againſt them, for their contempt of Chriſt, and the offers of his Grace, *Wo unto thee Corazin,* &c. The higher a People riſe under the Means, the lower they fall, if they miſcarry. They that have been neareſt to Converſion, being not Converted, ſhall have the greateſt Condemnation, when they are judged: *Capernaum*'s Sentence will exceed *Sodom*'s for Severity, becauſe ſhe exceeded *Sodom* in the enjoyment of Means and Mercy. *Obſerve here,* 1. *Capernaum*'s Priviledge enjoyed, *She was lifted up to Heaven,* that is, enjoyed Priviledges above all other Places, namely, the Preſence, Preaching, and Miracles of our Saviour. *Obſerve* 2. *Capernaum*'s Doom denounced, *Thou ſhalt be thruſt down to Hell;* that is, thy condition ſhall be ſadder, than thoſe that never heard of a Saviour, even *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, thoſe rude and barbarous Nations out of the Pale of the Church, ſhall be in an eaſier ſtate and condition, than thoſe that have enjoyed Goſpel-Ordinances and Church-Priviledges, but not improved them. *Learn hence,* 1. That Goſpel Ordinances enjoyed are a mighty Honour and Advancement to the pooreſt Perſons and obſcureſt Places; *Thou Capernaum art exalted to Heaven.* 2. That Goſpel-Ordinances, and Church-Priviledges enjoyed, but not improved, provoke Almighty God to inflict the ſoreſt Judgments upon People; *Thou that art exalted to Heaven, ſhall be thruſt down to Hell.*

16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me: and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

Here our Saviour encourages his Miniſters to Faithfulneſs in their Office, by aſſuring them, that he ſhould reckon and eſteem all the kindneſs ſhewen to them, as done unto himſelf; *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me. Where Note,* That all the Offices of Love, and Reſpect of Kindneſs and Charity, which we ſhew to the Miniſters or Members of Chriſt for his ſake, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf. *Note farther,* That the Contempt of the Meſſage and Meſſengers of the Goſpel runs much higher than Men are aware of. They think it no great Matter to Slight or Neglect the Meſſengers of Chriſt; but verily, that Contempt flies in the Face and Authority of Chriſt himſelf, who gave them their Commiſſion; yea, in the very Face of God the Father, who gave Chriſt his Commiſſion: And accordingly they are called God's Mouth, *Jer.* 15. 19. Their Meſſage and their Miſſion being both from Him: Nay farther, this Sin ſtrikes at our own Souls, and we are injurious to them as well as unto Chriſt; *he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me*; yet certainly, no Age was ever deeper drencht in the Guilt of this Sin than the preſent Age is.

17 And the ſeventy returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy name. 18 And he ſaid unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Obſerve here, 1. The Seventy Diſciples return to give Chriſt an account of the Succeſs of their Expedition: they return as Victors with joy and triumph, ſhewing Chriſt the Trophies of their Conqueſt; *Lord, the Devils are ſubject unto us, thro' thy Name,* the Weapons of their Warfare were not carnal but Spiritual and Mighty through Chriſt; the Powers of Darkneſs cannot ſtand, but muſt fall before the Power of Chriſt; the Devils are no match for Chriſt, no not for the meaneſt of the Miniſters of Chriſt, who go forth in his Name, armed with his Authority and Power. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour's Reply to the Seventy Diſciples upon this occaſion. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven*; a Twofold Interpretation is given of which words. 1. Some look upon them as a ſecret Rebuke given by our Saviour to the Seventy, for that exceſs of joy, and mixture of vain-glory which was found with them, upon the account of thoſe extraordinary Gifts and Abilities of caſting out Devils, and healing Diſeaſes which were conferr'd upon them; *I beheld Satan,* ſays Chriſt, *falling like lightning from Heaven*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Take heed of being puft up with Pride, upon the account of thoſe Endowments which I have beſtowed upon you; Remember *Lucifer*, the Prince of Pride, how he fell from Heaven by his Arrogancy, and Labour you to aſcend thither by Humility: The words in this ſenſe afford this Inſtruction, That thoſe whom Chriſt has beſtowed the greateſt meaſure of Spiritual Graces, Miniſterial Gifts, and Temporal Bleſſings upon, ought to be very watchful againſt that hateful Sin of Pride, which has ruin'd and deſtroy'd ſo many Thouſands of Angels and Men. 2. Some underſtand this Fall of Satan, not Literally, but Figuratively and Myſtically, of his Ruin by the Power and Preaching of the Goſpel; as if Chriſt had ſaid, I know that this is no vain boaſt of yours, no vaunt nor brag of your Valour, that Devils are conquer'd by your Courage, for when I firſt ſent you forth to preach the Goſpel, and armed you with Divine Power, I eaſily foreſaw that the Devils Kingdom would ſhake about his Ears, and that his Power would be ruin'd by the power of the Goſpel, and that where-ever you Preached, Satan's Strength and Power ſhould vaniſh like a Flaſh of Lightning ſuddenly, and irrecoverably. *Learn hence,* That the powerful and efficacious Preaching of the Goſpel, is the ſpecial means ordained and appointed by Chriſt, for the Ruin and Subverſion of Satan's Kingdom in the World; as the Goſpel is the Power of God unto Salvation to them that Believe and Obey it: So it is the Power of God unto Deſtruction to Satan, and all that fight under his Banner againſt it.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you.

Our Lord finding that his Seventy Ambaſſadors had managed their former Commiſſion ſo well, he here enlargeth it, adding thereunto a promiſe of Divine Protection, *Behold, I give you power to tread on Serpents, and nothing ſhall hurt you*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Go forth again in this Armour of Power, with

with which I have girt you, and I warrant you Sword-free and Shot-free, nothing ſhall by any Means hurt you, neither Strength nor Stratagem ſhall overcome you; Neither the Power, the Preſence, nor Protection of God ſhall be wanting to any of Chriſt's Miniſters or Members, who go forth in his Strength againſt the Spiritual Enemies of their Salvation; As we have a Promiſe of Power in this Text to enable us to reſiſt the Devil, ſo we have a Promiſe of Succeſs elſewhere upon our reſiſting of him; *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will flee from you*, St. James 4. 7.

20 Notwithſtanding in this rejoyce not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoyce, becauſe your names are written in heaven.

In theſe words of our Saviour, there is ſomething Corrective, and ſomething Directive; the *corrective* part lies in the firſt words, wherein Chriſt checks the ſuſpected exceſſes of their joy for Victories gained over Evil Spirits; *In this rejoyce not*; that is, let not your Hearts too much overflow with joy upon this occaſion; the Negation is not abſolute, but comparative only; Chriſt doth not forbid, but only qualifie and moderate their joy: *That the Spirits are ſubject to you*, that is, the Devils. Where *Note* 1. That tho' the Evil Angels by their Fall have loſt their happy Condition, yet not their original Conſtitution; their Honour, but not their Nature, they are Spirits ſtill. 2. The Subjection of thoſe Evil Spirits to the Power of Chriſt is not a free and profeſſed, but an involuntary and impoſed Subjection; like that of a Slave to his Lord, whether he will or no. *Learn hence*, 1. That Evil Spirits are ſubject to the Power of Chriſt, not only to his Perſonal, but to his Miniſterial Power. 2. That it is matter of great joy to ſee Evil Spirits brought into Subjection by the Power of Chriſt; to ſee the Evil Spirit of Pride and Contention, of Envy and Malice, of Error and Falſhood, of Jealouſie and Self-love, of Animoſity and Diviſion, not only chained but changed; to ſee not only an unwilling Subjection, but a Subjection of the Will given to Chriſt, is matter of great Joy, and unſpeakable Rejoycing: The *Directive* part of our Saviour's Words, lies in the latter part of the Verſe; *But rather rejoyce that your Names are written in Heaven*: There are no literal Records in the Court of Heaven; no Pen or Ink, Paper or Parchment; but *to be written in Heaven*, is to have a Title to Eternal Life, and to be made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. *Learn* 1. That God has in Heaven a Book of Life; a Book written with the Golden Rays and Beams of his own Eternal Love. *Obſ.* 2. That there are Names written in this Book. 3. That Perſons may know that their Names are written in that Book, otherwiſe they could not rejoyce; for no Man can rejoyce in an unknown Good. 4. That it is greater matter of Joy and Rejoycing, to know that our Names are written in Heaven, than to have a Power to caſt out Devils here on Earth. A Man may have Power to caſt forth Devils out of others, and yet at the ſame time the Devil may have Power in and over himſelf; *Therefore in this rejoyce not, that the Devils are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoyce, that your Names are written in Heaven*: If you ſay, With what Spectacles ſhall we read that at ſuch a diſtance? Who will aſcend up into Heaven to ſee whether his Name be written there? Or who can ſend a Meſſenger thither to ſearch the Records? I Anſwer, Turn thine Eyes inward; if the Name of God be written in thy Heart, thy Name is certainly written in Heaven; if you in your daily Actions write out a Copy of God's Book (the bleſſed Bible) here below; aſſure your ſelves, the hand of God has written your Names in his Book above; that is, you ſhall certainly be ſaved.

21 In that hour Jeſus rejoyced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight. 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Here we find our Saviour glorifying his Father, and magnifying himſelf: 1. He glorifies his Father for the wiſe and free Diſpenſation of his Goſpel Grace to the meaneſt and moſt ignorant Perſons, whilſt the Great and Learned Men of the World undervalued and deſpiſed it; *I thank thee, Father, that thou haſt revealed theſe things to Babes. Learn hence*, 1. That till God reveals himſelf, his Nature and Will, no Man can know either what he is, or what he requires, *Thou haſt revealed.* 2. That the wiſe and knowing Men of the World have in all Ages deſpiſed the Myſteries of the Goſpel, and have therefore been judicially blinded by God; *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent.* When Men ſhut their Eyes againſt the cleareſt Light, and ſay, they will not ſee, God cloſes their Eyes, and ſays they ſhall not ſee. 3. That the moſt ignorant, if humble, and deſirous of ſpiritual Illumination, are in the readieſt diſpoſition to receive and embrace the Goſpel Revelation; *Thou haſt revealed them unto Babes.* 4. That this is not more pleaſing to Chriſt than it is the pleaſure of his Father; *even ſo Father, for it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour magnifies himſelf, 1. His Authority and Commiſſion; *All things are delivered unto me*; that is, all Power is committed to me as Mediator from God the Father. 2. His Office, to reveal his Father's Will to a loſt World; *No man knoweth the Father but the Son, or the Son but the Father*; That is, no Man knoweth their Eſſence and Nature, their Will and Pleaſure, their Counſel and Conſent, their mutual Compact and Agreement betwixt themſelves for ſaving a loſt World, but only themſelves, *and thoſe to whom they revealed it. Learn thence*, That all ſaving Knowledge of God is in, by, and thro' Chriſt; he as the great Prophet of his Church, reveals unto us the Mind and Will of God for our Salvation; *None knoweth, but he to whom the Son revealeth.*

23 And he turned him unto his diſciples, and ſaid privately, Bleſſed are the eyes which ſee the things that ye ſee. 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

From the very firſt giving out of the Promiſe of Chriſt to *Adam* after the Fall, *Gen.* 3. 15. There was in all good Men a longing Deſire and Expectation to ſee that Perſon who ſhould be ſo great a Bleſſing to Mankind; Prophets and Kings deſired to ſee the promiſed Meſſiah. Now ſays our Saviour to his Diſciples, *Bleſſed are you, for you have ſeen* with the Eyes of your Body, what others only ſaw with the Eyes of their Mind; with your Bodily Eye you have ſeen the Promiſed Meſſias coming in the Fleſh, and alſo the Miracles to confirm you that I am He, have been wrought before your Eyes, therefore Bleſſed are the Eyes of your Body, which have beheld me corporally; and bleſſed are the eyes of your Mind, which have beheld me Spiritually. A ſight of Chriſt by a Believing eye, much more by a glorified eye, is a bleſſed Sight. Bleſſed are thoſe eyes which ſee Chriſt in his Diſpenſations of Grace here, they ſhall certainly ſee him in his manifeſtations of Glory hereafter.

25 And behold, a certain lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He ſaid unto him, What is written in the law? how readeſt thou? 27 And he anſwering, ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 28 And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live.

Here we have a Lawyer, that is, an Interpreter and Expounder of the Law of *Moſes*, tempting our Saviour; that is, making tryal of him; whether he would deliver any Doctrine contrary to the Law of *Moſes*; he propounds therefore a queſtion; *What he ſhould do to inherit eternal life*? Where *Note* 1. He Believed the certainty of a future State. 2. He profeſſes his deſire of an Eternal Happineſs in that State. 3. He declares his Readineſs to do ſomething in order to the obtaining of that Happineſs. Hence *Learn*, That all Religion, both Natural and Revealed, teaches Men that good Works are neceſſary to Salvation; or that ſomething muſt be done by them, who deſire to enter into Life; *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life*? It is not talking well, and profeſſing well, but doing well, that entitles us to Heaven and Eternal Salvation, and this the very Light of Nature teaches. *Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour's Anſwer, *What is written in the Law? How readeſt thou*? Intimating to us, That the Word and Law of God, is the Rule and Meaſure of our Duty; our Guide to direct us in the way to Eternal Life: The Man Replies, That the Law of God requires, *That we love God with all our* *heart, ſoul, and ſtrength; and our Neighbour as our ſelves. Where Note,* 1. That the favour of all our Affections, and particularly the Supremacy of our Love is Required by God as his Right and Due. Love muſt paſs thro' and poſſeſs all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls. The Mind muſt meditate upon God, the will muſt chooſe and embrace him, the Affections muſt take complacency and delight in him; The meaſure of Loving God is to Love him without Meaſure? *Note* 2. That the beſt Evidence of our ſincere Love to God, is the unfeigned Love of our Neighbour; Love to Man, is both a Fruit and Teſtimony of our Love to God. For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he Love God whom he hath not ſeen? *Note* 3. That as it is every Mans Duty to Love himſelf, ſo is he to Love his Neighbour as himſelf; not as he does Love himſelf, but as he ought to Love himſelf; not with the ſame meaſure and degree of Love, but in the ſame manner and kind of Love that we Love our ſelves. Do we Love our ſelves freely and readily, ſincerely, and unfeignedly, tenderly and compaſſionately, conſtantly and perſeveringly? ſo ſhould we love our Neighbour alſo: Tho' we are not required to love our Neighbour as much as we love our ſelves, yet are we commanded to love him like as we love our ſelves. *Obſ. Laſtly,* Our Lord's Reply, *Thou haſt anſwered right, This do, and thou ſhalt live. Where Note,* That Chriſt intimates to him, that the Law conſidered in it ſelf could give life; but then a Perſon muſt keep it perfectly and exactly, without the leaſt Deficiency, which is impoſſible to Man in his Fallen State; for the Law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that, *Rom.* 8. 3. the Law becomes weak through the weakneſs of our Fleſh: Such as ſeek Salvation by the Works of the Law, muſt keep the Law perfectly and exactly; which being impoſſible in our fallen eſtate, Chriſt has obtained of his Father, that for his ſake our ſincere, tho' imperfect Obedience ſhall find Acceptance with God, and be available to our Salvation.

29 But he willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain prieſt that way; and when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other ſide. 32 And, likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and paſſed by on the other ſide. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion *on him*, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the hoſt; and ſaid unto him, Take care of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he ſaid, he that ſhewed mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

The Deſign of our Saviour in this Parable is to convince the Lawyer, who put that queſtion to him, *Who is my Neighbour? v.* 29. That every one is, and ought to be accounted our Neighbour, to whom God affords us an opportunity of doing good; contrary to the ſtrait Notion of the Phariſees, that by the Word Neighbour underſtood Friends and Kinsfolk, Brethren by Blood, Neighbours by Habitation, and Perſons of the ſame Religion. Our Saviour by this Parable taught him that even Strangers and profeſſed Enemies, every one that needeth our help and relief, is to be accounted our Neighbour; to convince him hereof, Chriſt propounds this parable of a Jew that fell among Thieves, who was neglected by his own Country-men, but relieved by a *Samaritan*, who tho' a profeſſed Enemy upon the ſcore of Religion, yet was ſo exceeding kind and charitable, that he became Phyſician, Surgeon, and Hoſt, and a real Neighbour to the unknown Traveller, Wounded by Thieves in his Journey to *Jericho*. From the whole *Learn* 1. That every Perſon in Miſery is the object of our Mercy, our Neighbour, and capable of our Charity. 2. That no difference in Religion, much leſs in ſome doubtful Opinions, will excuſe us from exerciſing Acts of Charity and Compaſſion towards ſuch as are really in Want, and need our Aſſiſtance; Our Holy and Merciful Religion makes all Perſons the Objects of our Compaſſion who are indigent and helpleſs; tho' they be Strangers and Foreigners, Heathens or Hereticks, Friends or Enemies; yea, be they good or bad, holy or wicked, as we *have opportunity we muſt do good unto all, and imitate the example of our merciful God, who is kind to the unthankful, and to the Evil.* 3. That real Charity is an active, operative thing; it conſiſts not in good Words given to the Diſtreſſed, nor in a compaſſionate beholding of them, nor in a pitiful mourning over them, but in poſitive Acts of kindneſs towards them. The *Samaritan* here is an example of a real and through Charity; he turns his Face towads the forlorn Man, his Feet haſten to him, his Hand pours in Wine and Oyl into his Wounds, after which he ſets him upon his own Beaſt, brings him to the Inn, ſtays with him all Night; and the next Day, becauſe his Recovery would be a Work of Time and Expence, he leaves him, but firſt leaves Money with the Hoſt, and a ſpecial charge to take care of him; with a punctual Promiſe, that whatever was expended more ſhould be repaid. Behold here an inſtance and pattern of a compleat Charity, managed with as much Diſcretion as Compaſſion; well might our Lord ſay to this Perſon, and in him to every one of us, *Go and do thou likewiſe.*

38 Now it came to paſs, as they went, that he entred into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her houſe.

Obſerve here, 1. The great Work and Buſineſs of our Saviour's Life, it was to go about Preaching the Goſpel. 2. The Nature of the place which Chriſt at this time preached in, it was a poor *Village, Bethany,* as ſome think. Chriſt did not only take care of populous Cities, and great Towns, but private Villages and obſcure places enjoyed alſo the bleſſing of his Miniſtry. Our Saviour's Example herein is inſtructive to his Miniſters, not to affect great Auditories, and to preach only in populous Cities, but to ſcatter the Seed of the Word in Country Villages, where are like precious Souls to be taken care of, and provided for; as Chriſt was ſent himſelf, ſo he ſends his Miniſters to preach the Goſpel to the poor. *Obſerve* 3. The party that entertained him in the Village, *Martha received him into her houſe*; *Martha* is named, becauſe ſhe was probably the Owner of the Houſe: Tho' Chriſt had no houſe of his own, yet he had as many as he pleaſed at his Command; for wherever he had an Heart, he was ſure to have an Houſe; *Martha received him into her houſe.*

39 And ſhe had a ſiſter called Mary, which alſo ſat at Jeſus feet, and heard his word.

Obſ. 1. Both theſe Siſters were Holy and Devout Women, both had an Honour and Reverence for Chriſt, and both are forward to entertain him; theſe were Siſters by Grace as well as by Nature; yea they both for a time attended upon Chriſt's Preaching. *Mary* (alſo) ſat at Jeſus Feet, implying, that *Martha* ſat there too, till Houſhold occaſions called her away: O how happy is that Family, where all Parties are agreed to receive and entertain the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſ.* 2. No ſooner is Chriſt entred into *Martha*'s Houſe, but he falls a Preaching; whilſt they provide Bodily Food for him, he prepares ſpiritual Bread for them; O that in our place and meaſure we might all imitate Chriſt in this: Can we come into any Houſe or Company, and find nothing to ſay or do for God? *Obſ.* 3. The Holy and Humble Deportment of *Mary* upon this occaſion, *ſhe ſat at Jeſus Feet, and heard his words.* When Chriſt was ſpeaking *Mary* was hearing, and little things could not take her off. Lord! how carefully ſhould we take the preſent opportunity for our Souls, to hear and learn of thee as *Mary* did: She was not ſure of another opportunity, therefore hears humbly, attentively, affectionately, as if it were her laſt hearing Seaſon.

40 But Martha was cumbred about much ſerving, and came to him, and ſaid, Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me.

Obſerve here, 1. *Martha*'s behaviour, *She was cumbred about much ſerving*; that is, much taken up with providing for the Entertainment of Chriſt and his Friends; all which conſidered in it ſelf was no miſcarriage, but a token of *Martha*'s endeared reſpect to her beſt Friend. A Perſon that ſincerely loves Chriſt, as *Martha* did, thinks it can never ſhew enough of reſpect unto him. *Martha* having ſuch a Gueſt to Honour her Houſe, puts forth her ſelf all ſhe can, yea, more than ſhe was able, to give him Entertainment, *She was cumbred about much ſerving.* *Obſ.* 2. *Martha's* complaint to Chriſt, concerning her Siſter's not joining with her in the Work that lay ſo hard upon her; *Lord, doſt thou not care that my Siſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me*; as if *Martha* had ſaid, Is it a fit thing that both thy ſelf, and all this Company, ſhould be unprovided for; or is it reaſonable, that the whole Burthen ſhould lye upon me, whilſt *Mary* ſits ſtill, and doth not touch the leaſt houſhold Buſineſs with one of her Fingers? Lord! What infirmity and weakneſs intermixes and mingles with the Vertues and Graces of the beſt of thy Servants, eſpecially when they give way to their diſtempered Paſſions? This good Woman at this time did not attend upon Chriſt's Preaching her ſelf, but interrupts him with a frivolous Complaint about her Siſter, *Bid her that ſhe help me.* But why did not *Martha* ſpeak to her Siſter her ſelf, and whiſper in her Ear, and acquaint her how ſhe wanted her help, but makes her moan to Chriſt? Anſwer, 'Tis like ſhe thought her Siſter was ſo tyed by the Ear with thoſe Adamantine Chains of Chriſt's heavenly Doctrine, that until Chriſt was ſilent ſhe had no Power to ſtir; doubtleſs ſhe believed that *Mary* would not move, unleſs Chriſt ſpake to her ſo to do. *Obſ.* 3. That all this while, *Mary* ſpeaks not one word for her ſelf; no doubt it troubled her, good Woman, to hear her Siſter complain of her to Chriſt, and to find her ſelf blam'd for her Piety, and implicitly condemn'd for laying hold upon ſuch a ſweet opportunity of hearing the Beloved of her Soul whoſe Lips dropt as the Honey-comb; however, ſhe ſpeaks not a word in her own Vindication, but leaves her Anſwer to her Saviour. *Learn thence,* That when we are complain'd of for well doing, it is our Duty, and may be our Prudence to Seal up our Lips in Silence, and to expect our Vindication from above; *Mary* ſays nothing, but Chriſt ſpeaks for her in the next Verſes.

41 And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto her, Martha, Martha, Thou art careful, and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful. And Mary hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from her.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, *Martha, Martha,* I well know thou doſt all this in Love to me, and it is no more than what is thy Duty in its proper Seaſon, but thou hadſt now an opportunity to hear my Word, which thou canſt not have every day; and it would have pleaſed me better, to whom it is Meat and Drink to feed Souls, if I had ſeen thee ſitting with thy dear Siſter at my Feet, and yielding an attentive Regard to my Holy Doctrine, than to find thee performing a neceſſary Civility to my Perſon. Thou haſt not made a bad Choice, but *Mary* has made a better; ſhe had laid all aſide to attend upon my Miniſtry, and the fruit of it will continue with her to all Eternity; *It is that good part which ſhall never be taken away from her.* *Note here* 1. The unexpectedneſs of our Saviour's Anſwer to *Martha,* how contrary it was to her expectation; ſhe thought that her Siſter ſhould have been ſent away with a check, and her ſelf with thanks, but ſhe is quite miſtaken; for all her good cheer that ſhe had provided for Chriſt, he ſpares not to tell her of her Fault, *Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things.* *Learn thence,* That no Obligations to any particular Perſon ſhould ſo enthral us, but that our Tongues ſhould be at Liberty to reprove the Faults of our beſt Friends wherever we find them. *Martha,* tho' a pious and good Woman, tho' a friendly and kind Woman, tho' a Woman greatly Beloved of Chriſt, yet is ſhe reproved by Chriſt. *Note* 2. The Reproof given to *Martha, Thou art troubled about many things*; where Chriſt condemns not her Hoſpitality, but her ſollicitude and ſuperfluity, her diſtraction and perplexity; O how prone are we to exceed in things Lawful and Neceſſary, and to go beyond our Bound in them: when we are ſatisfied in the matter, we are prone to exceed in the Meaſure. *Martha's* Entertainment of Chriſt was a noble Service, but ſhe was too anxious and ſollicitous about it; ſhe was *cumbred,* ſhe was *careful,* ſhe was *troubled.* *Note* 3. Our Saviour's Admonition, *But one thing is needful*; that is, there is one thing which ought firſt and principally to be regarded by us, and is of the greateſt Concernment to us; namely, the Buſineſs of Religion, and the Care of our Souls Salvation. *Learn thence,* That the care of Religion, and our Souls Salvation, is the One Thing Neceſſary, and that which every Man is concerned in the firſt place, and above all other things to regard and mind. *Note* 4. Our Saviour's juſtification of *Mary's* choice, *Mary hath choſen that good part, Non Tu malam, ſed illa meliorem.* Chriſt did not tell *Martha,* ſhe had choſen a bad part, but her Siſter had choſen the better. *Martha's* Entertainment of Chriſt was good, but *Mary's* Attendance upon Chriſt's Miniſtry was better, and more pleaſing unto Chriſt. Chriſt was better pleaſed to ſee *Mary* in the Chapel, than *Martha* in the Kitchin; tho' he doth not condemn the one, yet he extols the other; *Mary* hath choſen the good part. *Learn hence,* That Religion and the Service of God muſt be the matter of our Election and Choice; we muſt chooſe the good part, and it being once choſen by us, it ſhall never be taken away from us; *One thing is needful, and Mary hath choſen that good part, which ſhall never be taken away from her.*

CHAP. XI.

AND it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples.

The Learned Mr. *Mede* upon this place apprehends, that it was the cuſtom of the Jewiſh Doctors to deliver ſome certain Form of Prayer to their Diſciples to uſe, at leaſt that *John* Baptiſt had done ſo to his Diſciples: Thereupon our Saviour's Diſciples beſought him, that he alſo would give them in like manner ſome Form of his own compoſing, that they might pray with their Maſter's Spirit, as *John's* Diſciples did with his. Accordingly our Saviour gives them here a Form of his own, and commands them when they pray to uſe it. Indeed he had given them this Prayer about a Year and a half before, in his Sermon upon the Mount, *Matth.* 6. 9. *After this manner pray ye*; where it is probable, that the Diſciples look'd upon it only as a pattern of Prayer, and not as a Form; for had they thought that Chriſt had given them a Form of Prayer before, they had not asked him for one now; Therefore ſays Chriſt, *When ye pray, ſay*: Certainly this gives us to underſtand, that our Saviour intended and commended it for a ſet Form of Prayer unto his Church. *Learn hence,* That the Lord's Prayer is both a Pattern and Platform according to which all our Prayers ought to be framed; and alſo an exact Form of Prayer, which ought to be uſed by us in our Addreſſes to the Throne of Grace: *After this manner pray ye,* ſays St. *Matthew*; *When ye pray, ſay,* ſays St. *Luke.*

2 And he ſaid unto them, When ye pray, ſay,

Obſerve here, The favour which Chriſt does us in preſcribing a Form of Prayer to us; a great Favour, no doubt, tho' the World grows weary of it; we know not Alas! what to ask, but he himſelf teaches us, and frames our Supplication for us, that it may be accepted. Should a King's Son draw a Petition for a poor Subject, to be put up to his Father, what a ground of hope would there be, that whatever is deſired would be obtained? If any of us then think meanly of our Lord's Prayer; O how meanly may he think of us, and of our Prayers?

2. Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, as in heaven, ſo in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The Senſe and Signification of this beſt of Prayers is this,
“ O thou our Father in Jeſus Chriſt, who remaineſt in thy
“ Throne in Heaven, and art there perpetually praiſed, and
“ perfectly obey'd by Glorious Angels and Glorified Saints,
“ Grant that thy Name may be Glorified, thy Throne Ac-
“ knowledged, and thy Holy Will Obey'd here on Earth be-
“ low, by us thy Sons and Servants, as readily, as chearfully,
“ and ſincerely, and in ſome degree of Proportion to what is
“ done in Heaven above. And becauſe, by reaſon of the Frailty
“ of our Natures, we cannot ſubſiſt without the Comforts
“ and Supports of Life, we crave our daily Bread at thy
“ Bountiful hand; even ſuch a proportion of the good things
“ of this Life as thy Wiſdom ſhall ſee convenient for us.
“ And knowing that thy Holineſs and Juſtice doth oblige thee
“ to puniſh Sin, and Sinners, we plead with thee for the ſake
“ of thy Son's Satisfaction, to forgive us our daily Treſpaſſes;
“ for

“ for it is our deſire and endeavour, heartily to forgive thoſe “ that have offended us; and ſeeing this wicked World where- “ in we live is ſo full of Snares and Temptations of all ſorts, “ we pray, that by the Power of thy Grace, and the Concur- “ rence of our own careful endeavours, we may be kept from “ Satan's Temptations, from the World's Allurements, and “ from our own Evil Inclinations; and be preſerved unblame- “ able to thine Everlaſting Kingdom; and in Teſtimony of “ our Deſires and aſſurances to be heard, we ſay *Amen*, ſo be “ it, ſo let it be, even ſo O Lord let it be for ever. *Learn* (1.) That God is the Father of all his People; as a Father he knows all his Children, he loves them, and takes care of them: As his Children it is our Duty to Honour him, to Obey him, to imitate him, to caſt our care upon him, and to long for the Enjoyment of him. (2.) From the Word *Our*, *Learn*, that it is our Duty to pray for others, as well as for our ſelves; we cannot pray acceptably for our ſelves, if we pray only for our ſelves. (3.) That the Hallowing, Honouring and Sanctifying of God's Name, as it is the firſt thing we are to pray for, ſo it ought to be preferred before all other things whatſoever; we pray for it before we pray for our own Salvation; we ſay *Hallowed be thy Name*, before we ſay, *Forgive us our Debts*. (4.) *Learn*, That Sins are Debts, and Sinners indebted to Divine Juſtice. Sin, it is an infinite Debt, a multiplied Debt, an inexcuſable Debt, and if not diſcharged by our Surety, we muſt ly in Priſon to all Eternity, for Non-payment of this Debt. (5.) That God has made our Forgiveneſs of others the Condition of his Forgiving us: The word *As*, is not a Note of Equality but of Similitude; we cannot equal God in Forgiving, but we muſt imitate him. (6.) No ſooner is Sin pardoned, but Satan will be buſie with his Temptation, forgive us our Sins, and lead us not into Temptation. (7.) That it is a greater Mercy to be Delivered from the Evil of Temptation, than from Temptations to Evil. The Evil of Tenptation is the Evil of Sin, but Temptations to Evil is at moſt but the Evil of Puniſhment. *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*; Suffer us not to be led into Temptation, or if ſo, leave us not when we are Tempted.

5 And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his Journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him: 7 And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not: the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. 8 I ſay unto you, though he will not riſe, and give him, becauſe he is his friend: yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.

The deſign of our Bleſſed Saviour in theſe, and the following Verſes, is to excite and ſtir up his Diſciples to fervency, importunity, and conſtancy in the Duty of Prayer, and to this purpoſe he makes uſe of a double Argument, the one of a Friend and the other of a Father. (1.) He lays before them the Parable of a Friend, coming to his Friend at midnight, and by his importunity obtaining that of him which otherwiſe he muſt have gone without. From whence our Lord leaves us to infer, that if an impudent and bold Begger can obtain ſo much for Man, what cannot an humble, earneſt, and daily Petitioner obtain from God? What Friend ſo faithful and helpful to his deareſt Friend, as God is to us his Children? From the whole *Note*, (1.) That a Man muſt be brought into a ſtate of Friendſhip and Reconciliation with God, if he hopes his Prayers ſhall be accepted. (2.) That when any of the Friends of God are in Neceſſities and Streights, he allows them the liberty at all hours to call upon him, and pray unto him; at mid-night, as well as at mid-day, God's Ear is open to his Praying Friends. (3.) That Almighty God takes pleaſure in being urged in Prayer by the Holy importunity of his Friends; never is he better pleaſed, than when his People, with Holy *Jacob*, *Wreſtle with him, and will not let him go till he hath bleſſed them*. (4.) That ſuch holy and humble importunity ſhall not only obtain what we deſired, but more than we expected; only three Loaves were deſired here, but becauſe of importunity, he had as many as he needed; more is given in the Conceſſion, than was deſired in the Supplication. The Original word here rendred, *importunity*, ſignifies *impudence*, according to that ſaying among the *Jews*; The impudent Man overcomes the modeſt and the baſhful, how much more God, who is Goodneſs it ſelf?

9 And I ſay unto you, Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.

Our Saviour here goes on, to urge us to importunity and conſtancy in Prayer, he bids *ask, ſeek, and knock*, and aſſures us we ſhall be accepted, heard, and anſwered. Here *Note* 1. That Man is a poor indigent Creature, full of wants, but unable to ſupply them. 2. As Man is an indigent and inſufficient Creature, ſo God is an All-ſufficient Good, able to ſupply the Wants, and to relieve the Neceſſities of his Creatures. 3. That All-mighty God ſtands ready to ſupply all our Wants, not Temporal only, but Spiritual alſo, affording his Grace, and the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit to them that ask it. 4. If therefore we want the Grace of God, and the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, it is our own fault and not God's; it is either for want of ſeeking, or for want of earneſtneſs in asking; for our Saviour expreſly aſſures us, that God denies it to none; *but every one that asketh receiveth*.

11 If a ſon ſhall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if he ask a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? 12 Or if he ſhall ask an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion? 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?

The Second Parable which our Saviour makes uſe of, is that of a Father to his Children; Chriſt repreſents the care and kindneſs of God towards us by the affections which Earthly Parents bear to their natural Children, who tho' they be many times Evil themſelves, yet are not wont to deny their Children neceſſary good things, when they dutifully and decently beg them at their hands; *If ye being evil——how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit*; that is, the continual preſence and influence of his Holy Spirit, to all the purpoſes of Guidance and Direction, of Grace and Aſſiſtance, of Comfort and Support in our Chriſtian Courſe. *Learn hence*, That the preſence and aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to do what God requires, ſhall never be wanting to thoſe that deſire it, and endeavour after it. But we muſt always remember, That the Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, tho' it be offered and tendred to us, yet it is not forced upon us; for if we beg the Holy Spirit, and his aſſiſtance, but refuſe to make uſe of it; or if we cry to him for his help to mortify our Luſts, but do not put forth our own endeavours, we forfeit the Divine Aſſiſtance, and God will certainly withdraw his Holy Spirit from us.

14 And he was caſting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to paſs, when the devil was gone out, the dumb ſpake: and the people wondred. 15 But ſome of them ſaid, He caſteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. 16 And others tempting him, ſought of him a ſign from heaven. 17 But he knowing their thoughts, ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, is brought to deſolation: and a houſe divided againſt a houſe, falleth, 18 If ſatan alſo be divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall his kingdom ſtand? becauſe ye ſay, that I caſt out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your ſons caſt them out? therefore ſhall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God caſt out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

A Relation is here given of a famous Miracle wrought by our Saviour in caſting a Devil out of a poſſeſſed Man. It is called a dumb Devil, becauſe of the effect upon the poor poſſeſſed Perſon in reſtraining the uſe of his Tongue. *Learn here*, 1. That amongſt the many Calamities which Sin has rendred human Nature liable and obnoxious to, this is one, to be bodily poſſeſt by Satan. 2. That one Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Power, and a convictive Evidence of his being truly and really God, was his caſting out Devils by the Word of his Power. *Obſerve* 3. What a ſad and contrary effect this

Miracle had upon the wicked Phariſees through their own blindneſs, obſtinacy, and malice; inſtead of magnifying his Divine Power, they maliciouſly accuſe him for holding a correſpondency with the Devil, and acting by a Power derived from him; as if Satan ſhould lend our Saviour a power againſt himſelf, and that for the Deſtruction of his own Kingdom. Lord! how dangerous is a wilful oppoſition againſt the Truth: It provokes the Almighty to deliver Perſons up to the moſt unreaſonable Infidelity, and obſtinate Obduracy. *Obſ.* 4. Our Saviour knowing their Thoughts, makes a juſt Apology for himſelf, by ſhewing how improbable and unlikely, how unreaſonable and abſurd it is for one to imagine or ſuppoſe, that Satan ſhould caſt out himſelf, and any ways ſeek to oppoſe or deſtroy his own Kingdom; Now if I have received (ſays Chriſt) my power from Satan, for caſting out of Satan, then is the Devil like a Family divided within it ſelf, and divided like a Kingdom againſt it ſelf, which can never ſtand but muſt be brought to Deſtruction. *Obſerve Laſtly,* Our Saviour tells the Phariſees, that they might with as much reaſon attribute all other Miracles to the Power of the Devil, as thoſe wrought by himſelf; for there were certain *Jews* amongſt them that caſt out Devils in the Name of the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; now our Saviour asks them by what power theſe their Children caſt them out? they acknowlege, that what he did was by the Power of God, and there was no cauſe, but their malice why they ſhould not acknowledge, what he did was by the ſame Power. *If I by Beelzebub caſt out Devils, by whom do your ſons caſt them out? But if I with the Finger of God caſt them out, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you*; that is, the long expected Kingdom of the *Meſſias* is certainly come, and I having wrought theſe Miracles by my own Power, is a Demonſtrative proof that I am the promiſed *Meſſias.*

21 When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. 22 But when a ſtronger then he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his Spoils. 23 He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth. 24 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places ſeeking reſt: and finding none, he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth it ſwept and garniſhed. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked then himſelf, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe then the firſt.

Our Saviour having ſufficiently ſhewn, that he did not Work his Miracles by the Power of the Devil, he next informs the Phariſees from whence he had that Power, even from God himſelf; accordingly he compares Satan to a ſtrong Man armed with Weapons to defend his Houſe, and himſelf cloathed with Divine Power, he compares to one that is ſtronger than the ſtrong Man; ſo, that the Argument runs thus; the Devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and there is no Power but only God's, that is ſtronger than his; if then, ſays Chriſt, I were not aſſiſted with a Divine Power, I could never caſt out this ſtrong Man, who Reigns in the Bodies and Souls of Men, as in his Houſe; for it muſt be a ſtronger than the ſtrong Man, that ſhall bind Satan, and who is he but the God of ſtrength? *Learn thence,* That only Chriſt's Divine Power is ſuperior to Satan's ſtrength; he only can vanquiſh and over-rule him at his Pleaſure, and drive him out of that Poſſeſſion, which he holds either in the Bodies or Souls of Men: *The ſtrong man armed keeps the houſe, till a ſtronger than he comes upon him, and over-comes him; When the unclean Spirit goeth out of a Man, he walketh thro' dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none.* *Note here,* 1. That Satan is an unclean Spirit, he hath loſt his Original Purity, his Holy Nature in which he was Created, and is by Sin become univerſally ſinful and impure: no means being allowed him by God, for the purging of his filthy and impure Nature; yea, he is a perfect Enemy to Purity and Holineſs; maligning all that love it, and would promote it. 2. That Satan is a reſtleſs and unquiet Spirit, being caſt out of Heaven he can reſt no where; when he is either gone out of a Man by Policy, or caſt out by Power, he has no content or ſatisfaction, till he returns into a filthy Heart, where he delights to be, as the Swine in miry places. 3. That wicked and prophane ſinners have this unclean Spirit dwelling in them; their Hearts are Satan's Houſe and Habitation, and the Luſts of Pride and Unbelief, Malice and Revenge, Envy and Hypocriſie, theſe are the Garniſhings and Furniture of Satan's Houſe: Man's Heart was God's Houſe by Creation, 'tis now Satan's by Uſurpation and judiciary Tradition. 4. That Satan by the Preaching of the Goſpel, may ſeem to go out of Perſons, and they become ſober and civilized, yet may he return again to his old Habitation, and the latter end of that Man may be worſe than the beginning.

27 And it came to paſs as he ſpake theſe things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked. 28 But he ſaid, Yea, rather bleſſed, are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

Obſerve here, 1. How ready we are to admire Perſons for their external Privileges, and the favours of Divine Providence, and to pronounce ſuch Bleſſed; *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee.* 2. That Chriſt makes another judgment of Perſons, and pronounces them more bleſſed, that bare him in their hearts by Faith, than his own Mother, who bare him in her Womb by ſenſe. The Bleſſedneſs of being an Obedient Believer, is far greater than that of being the Mother of our Bleſſed Saviour. Bleſſed be God this great and gracious Priviledge is not deny'd unto us now: Altho' we cannot ſee Chriſt, yet love him we may; his bodily preſence cannot be enjoyed by us, but his Spiritual, Gracious Preſence is not denied us: Tho' Chriſt be not ours in Houſe, in Arms, by Affinity, by Conſanguinity, yet in Heart, in Faith, in Love, in Service, he is or may be ours; verily ſpiritual Regeneration, and an obediential doing of God's Will, bringeth Men into a more Honourable Relation to Chriſt, than natural Generation ever did; *Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to ſay, This is an evil generation: they ſeek a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it, but the ſign of Jonas the prophet. 30 For as Jonas was a ſign unto the Ninevites, ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be to this Generation. 31 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for ſhe came from the utmoſt parts of the earth, to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater then Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineve ſhall riſe up in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater then Jonas is here.

The Sign, which the Phariſees here deſired of our Saviour was a Miracle wrought by him: Now our Saviour, tho' he was very ready to work Miracles to encourage and confirm his Hearers Faith, yet not to ſatisfie the unbelieving Phariſees Curioſity: And accordingly he tells them, they ſhould have no other Sign than that of his Reſurrection, which *Jonas* was a Type of. Next he threatens them for their obſtinacy and Infidelity, which he aggravates from the Example of the Queen of the South, and the Men of *Nineveh.* *From thence Learn,* That the ſins of infidelity and impenitency are exceedingly heightned, and their guilt aggravated, from the Means afforded by God to bring Men to Faith and Obedience. The ſin of the Phariſees was infinitely greater in rejecting the Evidence of Chriſt's Miracles, than the ſin of the *Ninevites* would have been in refuſing to hearken to *Jonas* his Miniſtry; therefore the *Ninevites* ſhall condemn the Phariſees.

33 No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a ſecret place, neither under a buſhel; but on a candleſtick, that they which come in may ſee the light. 34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is ſingle, thy whole body alſo is full of light: but when thine eye is evil, thy body alſo is full of darkneſs. 35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs. 36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark,

the whole ſhall be full of light, as when the bright ſhining of a candle doth give thee light.

Our Saviour in theſe words does theſe two things, 1. He declares, that altho' his Miniſtry had no effect upon the proud and obſtinate Phariſees, yet he would not hide the light which he came into the World to bring, nor conceal that Heavenly Doctrine which his Father had committed to him to Communicate to the Children of Men; teaching us, That ſuch as are inlightned by God with the Knowledge of his Word and Will, ought not to conceal and hide this Knowledge within themſelves, but communicate it to others, and improve it for the good and benefit of others; *No man that lighteth a Candle, putteth it under a Buſhel.* 2. Our Saviour heat diſcovers the Reaſon why the Phariſees continued blind under ſo clear a light as that of his Miniſtry; namely, becauſe the Eye of their Underſtanding was darkned, not ſo much with Ignorance as with Prejudice, whereby they oppoſed Chriſt and his Holy Doctrine; for if the Mind be clearly enlightned by the Word and Spirit of God, that Light will diffuſe and ſpread it ſelf in the Soul, as the bright ſhining of a Candle doth in the Houſe, enlightning all the inward Faculties, and directing all the outward Actions, and communicating its Light alſo to the enlightning of others.

37 And as he ſpake, a certain Phariſee beſought him to dine with him: and he went in and ſat down to meat. 38 And when the Phariſee ſaw it, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner. 39 And the Lord ſaid unto him, Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo?

Obſerve here, 1. The free Converſation of our Bleſſed Saviour, how readily he complies with the Phariſees Invitation to dine with him; I do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any Table, that ever he refuſed to go; if a Phariſee, if a Publican invited him, he conſtantly went, not ſo much for the pleaſure of eating, as for the opportunity of Converſing and doing good; Chriſt feaſts us when we feed him: He ſays of himſelf, that he came eating and drinking, that is allowing himſelf a free tho' innocent Converſation with all ſorts of Perſons, that he Might gain ſome. *Obſ.* 2. The Exception which the Phariſee takes at our Saviour's not waſhing his hands before Dinner. This they made (but without any warrant for it) a Religious Act; abounding in external waſhings, but neglecting the inward Purgations of their Hearts and Conſciences from ſin and Uncleanneſs: Phariſaical Hypocriſy puts God off with outward cleanſing inſtead of inward Purity; regarding more the outward cleanneſs of the hand, than the inward Purity of the Heart. *Obſ.* 3. Our Bleſſed Saviour does not condemn any external Decency and cleanlineſs in Converſation; but his deſign is to ſhew the vanity of outward Purity without inward Sanctity, and to convince them of the Neceſſity of cleanſing the Heart, in order to the purifying and reforming the Life. The Phariſee waſht his hands clean, but left his Soul full of uncleanneſs, not conſidering, that he that made the Soul as well as the Body, requires, that both ſhould be kept pure, all the impiety of Mens Lives proceeding from the impurity of their Hearts and Natures.

41 But rather give alms of ſuch things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, the way to purifie your Meats, and Drinks, and Eſtates from all pollution cleaving to them, and to have them Sanctified Bleſſings to you, is, (in Conjunction with other Graces) by doing Works of Mercy, and by liberal Alms-giving according to your *Ability.* *Learn,* That Charity and Alms-giving according to our ability and opportunity, is a ſpecial means to ſanctifie our Eſtates to us, and to cauſe us holily and comfortably to enjoy whatever we do poſſeſs; *Give alms of ſuch things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, your temporal Enjoyments are unclean, that is, unlawful to be uſed by you, till you have ſanctified them by ſome Act of Charity, which will procure a Bleſſing upon your Subſtance.

42 But wo unto you Phariſees: for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and paſs over judgment, and the love of God: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Our Saviour here denounces a Wo againſt the Phariſees, for their ſtrict and ſcrupulous obſerving the leſſer things of the Law, as Tything Mint, and Rue, whilſt they were regardleſs of the principal and ſubſtantial Duties which they owed both to GOD and Man. *Learn hence,* That altho' ſome Duties are of greater moment and Importance than others, yet a good Man will omit none, but make Conſcience of all, both great and ſmall, in obedience to the Command of God: There is no Duty ſo little as to be neglected, no Command ſo ſmall, as to be diſobeyed; but yet there is a difference in Duties, and our firſt regard ought to be to the greater, then to the leſs. Chriſt doth not condemn them for Tything Mint, and Rue, but *for paſſing over judgment, and the love of God.*

43 Wo unto you Phariſees: for ye love the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets.

The next Wo denounced againſt the Phariſees is for their Ambition, Pride, and Popularity, affecting the uppermoſt Seats in the Synagogues, and Salutations in the Markets, where their fault was, not in taking, but in affecting theſe uppermoſt places: God is the God of Order; there may and ought to be a precedency amongſt Perſons; Honour is to be given to whom Honour is due, and that by God's Command. But Pride and Ambition are deteſtable Vices, eſpecially in ſuch as are Preachers, and ought to be patterns of Humility.

44 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them, are not aware of them.

Another Wo is here denounced againſt the Phariſees, for cheating and deceiving the People with an outward ſhow and appearance of Piety and Religion. They were like Graves and Sepulchres grown over with Graſs, which, though they held dead Mens Bones, yet the Putrefaction not outwardly appearing, Men walked unawares over them, and ſo were polluted by them; intimating, that the inward Rottenneſs and filthy Corruptions of the Phariſees not appearing unto Men, the People were eaſily deceived by outward ſhows of Phariſaical Sanctity, and ſo fell into a dangerous imitation of them. *Learn thence,* That the great deſign of Hypocrites, is to cheat the World with an empty ſhow of Piety; the Hypocrites Ambition is to be thought good, not to be ſo. *Learn* 2. That nothing is more fatally dangerous to the Souls of Men, and draws Perſons to an admiration and imitation of hypocritical Profeſſors, like their outward ſhows of Sanctity, and their extraordinary appearances of Devotion and Piety. This it was that gained the Phariſees ſuch a veneration and eſteem among the People, that it became a Proverb amongſt them, *If but two men went to Heaven, the one muſt be a Phariſee;* but their counterfeit Piety being double iniquity, they did receive for it double Damnation.

45 Then anſwered one of the lawyers, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, thus ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo. 46 And he ſaid, Wo unto you alſo ye lawyers: for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be born, and ye your ſelves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

The former Woes were denounced by our Saviour againſt the Phariſees, who had their Name from an Hebrew word, which ſignifies *to ſeparate,* becauſe they were Perſons ſeparated and ſet apart for ſtudying the Law of God, and teaching it to others. The next Wo is here denounced againſt the Lawyers, that is the Scribes of the Law, of which there were two ſorts, the Civil Scribe, and the Eccleſiaſtical Scribe; the Civil Scribe was a Publick Notary, or Regiſter of the Synagogue, employed in writing Bills of Divorce, and Sentences in the Phylacteries. The Eccleſiaſtical Scribe, was an expounder of the Scripture, an interpreter of the Law; Men of great Learning and Knowledge, whoſe Decrees and Interpretations the Phariſees ſtrictly obſerved; this Lawyer here inſolently calls our Saviour's Reproof a Reproach; however, our Saviour, who never feared the face, or regarded the perſon of any Man, gives them their Portion, and lets them know wherein they were faulty, as well as the Phariſees, and accordingly pronounces a Wo unto them alſo, for a threefold Crime; 1. For their laying heavy Burthens upon others Shoulders, which they would not touch with one of their

Fingers. Theſe Burthens in general were a rigid exaction of Obedience to the whole Ceremonial Law, and in particular the Burthen of Traditions, certain auſterities and ſeverities, which they impoſed upon the People, but would not undergo any part of them themſelves. In vain do we hope to oblige our Hearers to follow thoſe Rules of Life, which we refuſe or neglect to put in practiſe our ſelves.

47 Wo unto you: for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly ye bear witneſs that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres. 49 Therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God, I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and ſome of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute: 50 That the blood of all the prophets which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this Generation? 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the altar and the temple: Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be required of this generation.

The ſecond Crime which Chriſt reproves in theſe Men, is their grand Hypocriſy in pretending great honour to the Saints departed, building their Tombs, and garniſhing their Sepulchres, declaiming againſt their Fathers impiety, that had they lived in their days, they would not have been partakers with them in their ſins. Now their Hypocriſy appeared in three Particulars; 1. In that they continued in their own wickedneſs, and yet commended the Saints departed; they magnify the Saints, but multiply their ſins, and inſtead of imitating their Virtues, they content themſelves with garniſhing their Sepulchres. 2. In profeſſing great reſpect to the Dead Saints, and at the ſame time Perſecuting the Living: Palpable Hypocriſy! and yet as groſs as it is, it prevails to this day. The Church of *Rome*, who magnifies Marters, Canonizes Saints departed, have yet added to their number, by ſhedding of their Blood. 3. In taking falſe meaſures of their Love to the Saints departed, from their Building their Tombs, and garniſhing their Sepulchres; whereas the beſt Evidence of our Love to them, is the imitating their Vertues, and cheriſhing their Followers. 'Tis groſs Hypocriſy to pay reſpect to the Relicks of Saints, and Veneration to their Images, and at the ſame time to perſecute and hate their Followers. From the whole *Note*, 1. That the World has all along Loved dead Saints better than living ones, *Mortui non mordent*; the dead Saints Example, how bright ſoever, is not ſo ſcorching and troubleſome at a diſtance; and he himſelf ſtands no longer in other Mens Light; whereas the Living Saints Example is a cutting Reproof to Sin and Vice. *Note* 2. That there is a certain Civility in humane Nature, which leads Men to a juſt Commendation of the Dead, and to a due eſtimation of their Worth. The Phariſees here, tho' they perſecuted the Prophets whilſt alive, yet did they pretend to a mighty Veneration for their Piety and Vertue after they were dead, and thought no Honour too great to be done unto them. *Note* 3. That it is the greateſt Hypocriſy imaginable to pretend to love Goodneſs, and at the ſame time to hate and perſecute good Men. Theſe Phariſees and Lawyers pretended high to Piety and Religion, and at the ſame time killed the Prophets. *Note* 4. That the higheſt Honour we can pay to the Saints departed, is not by raiſing Monuments, and Building Tombs to their Memory, but by a careful imitation of their Piety and Vertue, following the Holineſs of their Lives and their Patience and Conſtancy at their Death. Laſtly *Learn*, That it is a Righteous thing with God to puniſh Children for the impiety of their Parents, when they walk in their ungodly Parents Footſteps; upon you ſhall come the Blood of all the Prophets, from the Blood of *Abel* to the Blood of *Zacharias*; yet this muſt be underſtood of Temporal Evils, not of Eternal Puniſhments; no Man for his Father's Sins ſhall lye down in Everlaſting Burnings; as our Fathers Faith will not let us into Heaven, ſo neither will their Impiety ſhut us into Hell: At the Day of Judgment every Man ſhall be ſeparately conſidered according to his own Deeds.

52 Wo unto you lawyers: for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entred not in your ſelves, and them that were entring in, ye hindred.

The laſt Wo pronounced by our Saviour againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, is for perverting the Holy Scriptures, and keeping the true ſence and knowledge of them from the People; This St. *Luke* here calls, *The taking away the Key of Knowledge from Men*; alluding to a cuſtom among the Jews in Admiſſion of their Doctors: Thoſe that had Authority given them to interpret the Law and the Prophets, were ſolemnly admitted into that Office by delivering to them a Key and a Table-Book; ſo that by the Key of Knowledge is meant the Interpretation and Underſtanding of the Scriptures; and by taking away that Key, is ſignified, 1. That they arrogated to themſelves the ſole Power of Underſtanding and Interpreting the Holy Scriptures. 2. That they kept the true knowledge of the Scriptures from the People, eſpecially the Prophecies which concern'd the Kingdom and coming of the *Meſſias*; and ſo they hindred Men from embracing our Saviour's Doctrine, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it. *Learn* Firſt, That the written Word is the Key whereby an entrance into Heaven is opened unto Men. 2. That the uſe of this Key, or the Knowledge of the Word of God, is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in order to Salvation. 3. That great is the Guilt, and inexcuſable the Fault, of thoſe who deny the People the uſe of this Key, and deprive them of the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which alone can make them wiſe unto Salvation. 4. That ſuch as do ſo, ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, endeavouring what in them lies, to hinder their Salvation; Men may miſcarry with their Knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh for lack of Knowledge.

53 And as he ſaid theſe things unto them, the Scribes and the Phariſees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things. 54 Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Bleſſed Saviour's Plain and Faithful dealing with theſe Men does Enrage, inſtead of Reform them; they are filled with Anger and Indignation. 2. Their Wrath ſets their Wits on Work to enſnare him. Lord! When any of thy Faithful Miniſters and Ambaſſadors meet with the like Uſage and Treatment from a wicked World; when any lie in wait to catch ſomething out of our Mouth, that therewith they may enſnare us, give us thy Prudence and thy Patience, that we may cut off occaſions from thoſe that ſeek occaſion againſt us, and diſappoint them of their purpoſe; or elſe furniſh us with ſuch meaſures of Meekneſs and Patience, as becomes Perſons of our Holy Character and Profeſſion; that we may Glory in Reproaches, in Perſecutions and Diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake; and that the Spirit of Glory and of God may reſt upon us.

CHAP. XII.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inſomuch that they trod upon one another, he began to ſay unto his diſciples firſt of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy. 2 For there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be known. 3 Therefore whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light: and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe tops.

In this Chapter our Bleſſed Saviour furniſhes his Diſciples with many Inſtructions for the worthy diſcharge of their Function in preaching the Goſpel; particularly he recommends unto them two gracious Qualifications, namely, uprightneſs and ſincerity, *v.* 1, 2, 3. Secondly, Courage and Magnanimity, *v.* 4, 5. 1. He recommends unto them the Grace and Vertue of Sincerity, *Beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy. Learn thence*, That Hypocriſy is a dangerous Leaven, which Miniſters and People are chiefly and eſpecially to beware of, and to preſerve themſelves from. Hypocriſy is a Vice in Vizor, the Face is Vice, the Vizor is Vertue, God is pretended, ſelf intended; Hypocriſy is reſembled to Leaven; partly for its ſowerneſs, partly for its diffuſiveneſs. Leaven is a piece of ſower Dow, that diffuſes it ſelf into the whole Maſs or Lump of Bread with which it is mixed, Thus Hypocriſy ſpreads over all the Man, all his Duties, Parts and Performances are Leavened with it. Again, Leaven is of a ſwelling, as well as of a ſpreading Nature; it puffs up the Dough, and ſo doth Hypocriſy the Heart. The Phariſees were a ſour and proud ſort of People; they were all for Preheminence, chief Places, chief Seats, chief Titles, to be called *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*; in a word, as Leaven is hardly diſcerned from good Dough at firſt ſight, ſo is Hypocriſy hardly diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from Sincerity. The Phariſees outwardly appeared righteous unto Men, but within were full of Hypocriſy and Iniquity. *Obſerve* next, The Argument which Chriſt uſes to diſſwade Men from Hypocriſy; *There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed*; as if he had ſaid, The Day is coming, when a rotten and corrupt Heart ſhall no longer paſs under the Vizor and diſguiſe of a demure Look. In the Day of Judgment Hypocritical Sinners ſhall walk naked; GOD, Angels and Men, ſhall ſee their Shame. *Learn hence*, That God will certainly, e're long, waſh off all the Varniſh and Paints which the Hypocrite has put upon the Face of his Profeſſion, and lay him open to the Terror of himſelf, and the Aſtoniſhment of the World.

4 And I ſay unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, I have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.

The Second Duty which our Saviour preſſes upon his Diſciples, is that of Holy Courage and Reſolution: As if Chriſt had ſaid, The Preaching of the Goſpel will ſtir up many Enemies againſt you, which will malign and oppoſe you, vex and perſecute you; but I ſay unto you, fear them not, who can only kill the Body, but fear him, who if you fail in your Duty, can caſt both Body and Soul into Hell. Here *Note* 1. An unwarrantable Fear condemned, and that is the ſinful, ſervile, ſlaviſh Fear of Man; *Fear not them that can kill the Body*. 2. An holy, awful, and prudential Fear of the Omnipotent God commended; *Fear him that is able to kill both Body and Soul*. 3. The Perſons whom this Duty of Fear is recommended to, and bound upon; Diſciples, Miniſters, and Ambaſſadors, all the Friends of Chriſt. They not only may, but ought to Fear him; not only for his Greatneſs and Goodneſs, but upon the account of his Punitive Juſtice, as being able to caſt both Soul and Body into Hell. Such a Fear is not only Lawful, but Laudable; not only Commendable, but Commanded, and not miſbecoming the Friends of Chriſt. The Miniſters of God may uſe Arguments from fear of Judgments, both to diſſwade from Sin, and to perſwade to Duty. It is not unſuitable to the beſt of Saints to keep in Heaven's Way for fear of Hell; 'tis good to bid a Friend fear, when that fear tendeth to his good.

6 Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbred. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many ſparrows.

Obſerve here, 1. The Doctrine which our Saviour Preaches to his Diſciples, and that is, the Doctrine of the Divine Providence, which concerns it ſelf for the meaneſt Creatures. Even the Birds of the Air, and the Hairs of our Heads, do fall within the Compaſs of God's protecting Care. *Obſerve* 2. The uſe which our Saviour makes of this Doctrine, namely, to fortify his Diſciples' Spirits againſt all Diſtruſtful Fears, and Diſtracting Cares. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Conſideration of the Divine Care, and Gracious Providence of God over us and ours, ought to Antidote our Spirits againſt all diſtruſtful Fears whatſoever. If an Hair from the Head falls not to the Ground without a Providence, much leſs ſhall the Head it ſelf: If the very Excrements of the Body (ſuch are the Hair) be taken Care of by God, ſurely the more Noble Parts of the Body, but eſpecially the Nobleſt Part of our ſelves, our Souls, ſhall fall under his peculiar Regard.

8 Alſo I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the Son of man alſo confeſs before the angels of God. 9 But he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the angels of God.

Note here, 1. That not to confeſs Chriſt, is in his account to deny him, and to be aſhamed of him. 2. That whoſoever ſhall deny or be aſhamed of Chriſt, either in his Perſon, in his Goſpel, or in his Members, for any Fear or Favour of Man, ſhall with ſhame be diſowned, and eternally rejected by him at the dreadful Judgment of the Great Day. Chriſt may be denied three ways; Doctrinally, by an erroneous and heretical Judgment; Verbally, by oral Expreſſions; Vitally, by a wicked and unholy Life; but wo to that Soul, that denies Chriſt any of theſe ways.

10 And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man it ſhall be forgiven him: but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven.

Altho' never Man Preached or Lived as Chriſt did, yet there were thoſe that ſpake againſt him; the Perſon of Jeſus was contemned and reproached, for the meanneſs of his Birth, for the poverty of his Condition, for the freedom of his Converſation; but this Sin did not exclude the hope of Pardon; *Whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him*; all the Reproaches caſt upon Chriſt, as Man, were pardonable; *But whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him*; that is, whoever affirms that Divine Power by which I do all my Miracles to be the Power of the Devil, ſuch Blaſphemy will be unpardonable, becauſe it is to reſiſt the laſt Remedy, and to oppoſe the beſt Means for Mens Conviction: For what could be done more to Convince Men, that Chriſt was the True and Promiſed Meſſias, than to work ſo many Miracles before their Eyes to that purpoſe. Now theſe Miracles, tho' evidently wrought by the Power of God, the Phariſees aſcribed to the Power of the Devil, which our Saviour calls Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and a Sin unpardonable.

11 And when they bring you unto the ſynagogues, and unto magiſtrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye ſhall anſwer, or what ye ſhall ſay: 12 For the holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you in the ſame hour what ye ought to ſay.

Here our Saviour acquaints his Apoſtles, that for Preaching his Doctrine, and profeſſing his Religion, they ſhould be brought before all ſorts of Magiſtrates, and into all kinds of Courts; but adviſes them when they ſhould be ſo brought, not to be anxiouſly thoughtful, or ſolicitouſly careful what they ſhould ſay; for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt what they ſhould ſpeak in that Hour. Thence *Note*, That tho' the Truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the Defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a Tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his Holy Spirit, and furniſh them with ſuch Arguments to defend the Truth, as all their Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay; *In that Hour the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you what ye ought to ſay*.

13 And one of the company ſaid unto him, Maſter, ſpeak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he ſaid unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?

Whilſt our Saviour was thus Inſtructing his Diſciples and the reſt of his Auditors in things appertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven; one of the Company being more intent as it ſeems, upon his Temporal than his Eternal Concerns, deſired him to ſpeak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him. Chriſt tells him, he would neither be Judge nor Arbitrator in any Civil Affairs, or Secular Concerns. This Work, as if Chriſt had ſaid, belongs to the Civil Magiſtrate, to divide Inheritances, and decide Controverſies betwixt Man and Man, but my Work is of another Nature, namely, to Preach the Goſpel to a loſt World, and to direct Men how to ſecure an Inheritance in Heaven, not to divide Inheritances here on Earth; Teaching us, That Matters of Civil Juſtice do not belong to thoſe whom Chriſt ſends forth to Preach the Goſpel; that Work alone is ſufficient for them: The proper Work of a Miniſter is Work enough; one Branch of which is to manage a perſwading Task betwixt Neighbour and Neighbour, to prevent Differences, and to compoſe them: But as Chriſt's Commiſſioners, and Miniſters of the Goſpel, they have no Authority to intermeddle in Civil Judgments; *Who made me a Judge over you*? ſaid our Great Maſter; that is, a Judge of Civil Affairs.

15 And he ſaid unto them, take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs: for a mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.

Our Saviour upon the Occaſion given him in the foregoing Verſes, admoniſhes all his Diſciples and Followers to take heed and beware of the Sin of Covetouſneſs; aſſuring them, that neither the Comfort nor Continuance of Man's Life doth conſiſt in an Abundance; for tho' ſomething of this World's Goods is neceſſary to the Comfort and Happineſs of Life, yet Abundance is not neceſſary. Here *Obſerve* 1. The manner of our Lord's Caution; he doubles it; not ſaying, *Take heed* alone, or *beware* only, but *Take heed and beware* both; this argues, that there is a ſtrong Inclination in our Natures to this Sin; the great Danger we are in of falling into it, and of what fatal Conſequence it is to them, in whom this Sin Reigns. *Obſerve* 2. The Matter of the Caution, or the Sin which our Saviour warns his Hearers againſt, and that is Covetouſneſs; *Take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs*; where under the Name and Notion of Covetouſneſs, our Saviour doth not condemn a provident Care for the Things of this Life, not a regular Induſtry and Diligence for obtaining of them, nor every degree of Love and Affection to them; but by Covetouſneſs is to be an underſtood an eager and inſatiable deſire after the things of this Life, or uſing unjuſt ways and means to get or increaſe an Eſtate; ſeeking the Things of this Life with the neglect of Things infinitely better, and placing their chief Happineſs in Riches. *Obſerve* 3. The Reaſon of this Caution, *Becauſe a Man's Life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.* Human Life is ſuſtained by a little, therefore abundance is not neceſſary either to the Support or Comport of it: 'Tis not a great Eſtate and vaſt Poſſeſſions that makes a Man Happy in this World, but a Mind ſuited to our Condition, whatever it be.

16 And he ſpake a parable unto them, ſaying, The
ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.
17 And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall
I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my
fruits? 18 And he ſaid, This will I do: I will pull
down my barns, and build greater; and there will I
beſtow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will
ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up
for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be
merry. 20 But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this
night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe
ſhall thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided? 21
So is he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is
not rich towards God.

The Deſign and Scope of our Saviour in this Parable is to ſhew Men the vileneſs and vanity of the Sin of Covetouſneſs, or an eager and unſatiable deſire after the Things of this World. When Men heap up Riches, and lay up Treaſures in this Life, taking no care to be Rich towards God in Faith and Good-works; our Saviour illuſtrates this by the Parable of a Rich Man, whom God had bleſſed with great Plenty, yet his deſire of more Wealth was never ſatisfied, but he is projecting how he may lay up Goods in ſtore for many Years. Where *Note* 1. That the Parable doth not intimate any indirect and unjuſt ways of Gain which this Man uſed to increaſe his Eſtate, but condemns his inſatiable Deſire and Thirſt after more. So that hence we may *Learn*, That an eager and inordinate Deſire after the Things of this World, tho' it be free from Injuſtice, and doing Wrong to others, is one ſpecies or kind of the Sin of Covetouſneſs. *Obſerve* 2. How this Rich Man looked no farther than himſelf, not looking upon himſelf as God's Steward, but his own Carver, he cries out, *What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to lay my Fruits?* Not conſidering that the Houſes of the Poor ſhould have been his Granaries for the Abundance of his Increaſe. Charity to the Neceſſitous is the beſt way of beſtowing our Abundance. God's extraordinary Bounty is to be laid out for the Relief of others Neceſſities, not for the gratifying of our own Luxurious Deſires. *Obſ.* 3. The Brand of Infamy which the Wiſe God fixes upon this Covetous Rich Man, *Thou Fool*, ſays God; *Learn thence*, That it is an Act and Inſtance of the moſt egregious Folly imaginable, for Perſons to ſpend their Time and Strength in getting and laying up Treaſure upon Earth; in the mean time neglecting to be rich towards God in Faith and Good works, *Thou Fool.* *Obſerve* 4. The doleful Tidings, and threatning News brought unto him, *This Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* *Learn hence*, 1. That all a Man's Wealth is not able to preſerve his Life, much leſs to ſave his Soul; and if Wealth cannot ſave a Man's Life, why ſhould Men endanger their Lives, nay, hazard their Souls to get or increaſe Wealth? *Learn* 2. That God takes away Mens Lives many times when they leaſt ſuſpect it: *This Night*, ſays God; many Years, ſays he; God will not have us think of Reſt in a place of Diſquiet, nor of Certainty in a Condition of Inconſtancy; we are Dependant Creatures, and our time is in God's Hand; *This Night ſhall thy Soul be taken away from thee.* *Learn* 3. That the Souls of ungodly Men are taken from them by force and compulſion, *Thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*; good Men have the ſame Reluctancies of Nature which others have, yet they ſweetly reſign their Souls into the Hands of God in a dying Hour; whereas a wicked Man, tho' he ſometimes Dies by his own Hand, yet never Dies with the conſent of his own Will; he chuſes rather to eat Duſt (with the Serpent than to return to Duſt. *Obſerve* 5. The Expoſtulatory Queſtion, *Whoſe then ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?* Intimating, 1. That they ſhould not be his: A Man's Wealth laſts no longer than his Life, neither has he any longer the Comfort of it; lay up Gold, and it periſhes with thee; but treaſure up Grace, and it ſhall accompany thee. *Whoſe ſhall theſe things be?* not thine undoubtedly. 2. As theſe things ſhall not be thine, when thou art gone, ſo thou knoweſt not whoſe they ſhall be after thou art gone; whether they ſhall fall into the Hand of a Child or a Stranger, of a Wiſe Man or a Fool; the Wealthieſt Man cannot be certain who ſhall be his Heir, and whoſe his Goods ſhall be. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Application which our Saviour makes of this Parable to his Diſciples, *So is every one that layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not Rich towards God.* *Learn hence*, That ſuch as are not rich in Grace, rich in Good works, ſhall find no Benefit by, and take no Comfort in all their worldly Riches in the time of their greateſt Need, at the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment. *Learn farther*, How Brutiſh and unworthy of a Man it was, for this Perſon to Chear up his Soul with the hopes of worldly Proviſions, to bid his Soul Eat, Drink and be Merry: Alas! The Soul can no more Eat, Drink and be Merry with Carnal Things, than the Body can with Spiritual and Immaterial Things; it cannot Feed upon Bread that periſheth: But bring it to a Reconciled God in Chriſt, to the Covenant of Grace, and ſweet Promiſes of the Goſpel; ſet before it the Joys and Comforts of the Spirit; and if it be a Sanctified and Renewed Soul, it can make a Rich Feaſt upon theſe. Spiritual Things are proper Food for Spiritual Souls; deſervedly then is this Perſon branded with the Name of Fool, for ſaying, *Soul, Thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years, Eat, Drink and be Merry.*

22 And he ſaid unto his diſciples, therefore I ſay
unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye
ſhall eat; neither for the body, what ye ſhall put on.
23 The life is more then meat, and the body is more
then raiment. 24 Conſider the ravens: for they neither
ſow nor reap; which neither have ſtore houſe nor
barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye
better then the fowls? 25 And which of you with
taking thought can add to his ſtature one cubit? 26 If
ye then be not able to do that thing which is leaſt, why
take ye thought for the reſt? 27 Conſider the lilies
how they grow: They toil not, they ſpin not: and yet
I ſay unto you, that Solomon in all his glory, was not
arayed like one of theſe. 28 If God then ſo clothe
the graſs, which is to day in the field, and to morrow
is caſt into the oven: how much more will he clothe
you, O ye of little faith? 29 And ſeek not what ye
ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of
doubtful mind. 30 For all theſe things do the nations
of the world ſeek after: and your Father knoweth
that ye have need of theſe things.

There is a Twofold Senſe and Interpretation given of theſe Verſes, 1. Some take them as ſpoken only to the Apoſtles, directing them abſolutely to caſt off all Care for the Things of this Life, that ſo they might attend upon Chriſt's Perſon, and wholly give up themſelves to that Work to which he had called them: And therefore St. *Luke* here takes notice, that after he had cautioned his Hearers in general againſt Covetouſneſs, he applies himſelf particularly to his Diſciples, and tells them, that he would have them ſo far from this Sin of Covetouſneſs, that they ſhould not uſe that ordinary Care, and common Induſtry about the Things of this Life, which is not only Lawful but Neceſſary for Men in all ordinary Caſes, *verſe* 22. *And he ſaid to his Diſciples, therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat or drink*. But if we underſtand the Words in this Senſe, we muſt look upon it only as a Temporary Command given to the Apoſtles for that time only; like that in St. *Matthew* 10. 9. *Provide neither Gold, nor Silver, nor Braſs in your Purſes, neither Coat nor Scrip*; which no Man ever took for a general Law, to all Chriſtians, but a particular Precept to the Apoſtles at that time. (2.) Others underſtand theſe Injunctions of our Saviour, to be conſiſtent with a prudent and provident Care for the Things of this Life, not forbiding a regular Induſtry and Diligence for the obtaining of them, but condemning only anxious, vexatious, tormenting Care, and an over ſolicitous Diligence for the Things of this Life, ; and taking our Saviour's Words for a general and ſtanding Rule to all Chriſtians, they only forbid diſtruſtful Thoughtfulneſs, diſtracting Cares, which drives a Man's Mind this way and that way: (like Meteors or Clouds in the Air as the Word ſignifies) now againſt this vexatious Care, and ſolicitous Thoughtfulneſs, our Saviour propounds many weighty Arguments or Conſiderations; *Four* eſpecially. He tells us, ſuch Cares are needleſs, fruitleſs, heatheniſh and bruitiſh, (1.) 'Tis needleſs, *Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things*, and will certainly provide for you; and what need you take Care, and God too? caſt your Care upon him, (2.) 'Tis fruitleſs, *Which of you by taking Care can add one Cubit to his ſtature?* We may ſooner by our carking Care add a Furlong to our Grief, than a Cubit to our Comfort. All our own Care without God's Help, will neither Feed us when we are Hungry, nor Nouriſh us when we are Fed. (3.) 'Tis Heatheniſh, *After all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*, Matth. 6. 32. The Ends and Objects of a Chriſtians Thoughts ought to be higher and more ſublime than that of Heathens. *Laſtly*, 'Tis Brutiſh, nay, worſe than Brutiſh. The Birds of the Air, the Beaſts of the Field, the Ravens of the Valley, are all fed and ſuſtained by God, without any Care of their own, much more ſhall his Children. Has God a Breakfaſt ready for every little Bird that comes chirping out of its Neſt, and for every Beaſt of the Field, that comes leaping out of its Den, and will he not much more provide for you? Surely that God that feeds the Ravens when they cry, will not ſtarve his Children when they pray.

31 But rather ſeek ye the kingdom of God, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, Let your firſt and chief Care be to promote the Kingdom of Grace in this World, and to ſecure the Kingdom of Glory in the next, and then fear not the want of theſe outward Comforts; they ſhall be added in meaſure, tho' not in exceſs, to ſatisfie, tho' not to ſatiate, for Health tho' not for Surfeit. (1.) That Chriſtians ought not to be ſo ſolicitous about the Neceſſaries and Conveniences of this Life, as about the Happineſs of the next, *Rather ſeek ye the Kingdom of God*. (2.) That Heaven or the Kingdom of God, muſt be ſought in the firſt place; that is, with our principal Care and chief Endeavours. (3.) That Heaven being once ſecured by us, all Earthly Things ſhall be ſuperadded to us, as God ſees needful and convenient for us. But few Men like our Saviour's Method; they would ſeek the Things of this World in the firſt place, and get Heaven at laſt; they would be content to ſeek the World, and to have Heaven thrown in without their ſeeking; but this will not be granted; if we make Religion and the Salvation of our Souls, our firſt and chief Care, *all other things ſhall be added to us*, ſo far as the Wiſdom of God ſees them fit and convenient for us.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your fathers good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.

That is, Fear not the want of any of theſe outward Comforts, and be not over-ſolicitous for them; for your Father which has provided a Kingdom for you hereafter, will not ſuffer you to want ſuch Things as are needful for you here. *Learn*, (1.) That the Diſciples of Chriſt are very ſubject to diſquieting and perplexing Fears, but muſt by no means cheriſh, but oppoſe them; a fear of preſent Wants, a fear of future Sufferings; a fear of Death approaching, a fear that they ſhall not find acceptance with God, a fear leſt they ſhould fall foully or finally from God; the fear of theſe Evils doth ofttimes diſturb them, and diſcompoſe them. *Learn* (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt is the great Shepherd of his Church; the Love and Care, the Compaſſion and Tenderneſs, the Prudence and Providence, the Guidance and Vigilance of a good Shepherd are found with him. (3.) As Chriſt is the Church's Shepherd, ſo the Church is Chriſt's Flock, tho' a little Flock, in oppoſition to the huge Herds and Droves of the Men of the World. (4.) That God the Father has a Kingdom in ſtore for his little Flock, his Church and Children. (5.) That the Good-will and gracious Pleaſure of God, is the Original, Spring, and Formal Cauſe from whence all Divine Favours do proceed and flow; *It is your Father's good pleaſure to give you a Kingdom*.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide your ſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.

The next Duty, which our Saviour Exhorts his Diſciples to, is the Duty of Alms-giving; that they ſhould be ſo far from diſtruſting God's Proviſion for themſelves, that they ſhould be always forward to a ready Diſtribution towards others; yea, in Caſes of Neceſſity, to be willing to Sell their Goods to relieve others; yet this Precept is not to be taken as if it concerned all Perſons, at all times, and in all places; but reſpects only Caſes of extreme Neceſſity, or if it concerns all, it is only as to the readineſs and preparation of the Mind; that when Neceſſity calls for it, we be found willing to part with any thing we have for the Relief of Chriſt in his Members. *Obſerve* alſo, The Argument uſed to excite to this Duty of Alms-giving; hereby we lay up our Treaſure in a ſafe Hand, even in God's, who will reward it openly. The Bellies of the Poor are Bags that wax not old; what is lodged there is laid up ſecurely out of the reach of danger: we imitate the wiſe Merchant in Tranſmitting our Eſtates into another World, by Bills of Exchange, where we are ſure to receive our own with Uſury.

35 Let your loyns be girded about, and *your* lights burning; 36 And ye your ſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately

The next Duty Chriſt Exhorts his Diſciples to, is, that of Watchfulneſs with reference to his Second Coming. *Let your Loins be girded, and your Lights burning*; the Words may be underſtood two ways, ſpoken either in a Martial Phraſe, as to Soldiers, or in a Domeſtick, as to Servants; if as to Soldiers, then let your Loyns be girded, and your Lights burning, is as much as that we ſhould be always ready for a March, having our Armour on, and our Match light, ready to give Fire at the firſt Alarm of Temptation. If the Words are ſpoken as to Servants, then our Maſter bids us carefully expect his Second Coming, like a Lord's returning from a Wedding-Supper, (which uſed to be Celebrated in the Night) that they ſhould not put off their Cloaths, nor put out their Lights, but ſtand ready to open, tho' he comes at Midnight. When Chriſt comes, that Soul only ſhall have his Bleſſing, whom he finds Watching.

37 Bleſſed *are* thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching: verily, I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them. 38 And if he ſhall come in the ſecond watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* ſo, bleſſed are thoſe ſervants. 39 And this know, that if the good man of the houſe had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken through. 40 Be ye therefore ready alſo: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Here our Saviour makes uſe of ſeveral Arguments to enforce the Duty of Watchfulneſs upon his Diſciples; the firſt is drawn from the tranſcendent Reward which Chriſt will beſtow upon his Watchful Servants. *He will gird himſelf, make them ſit down to Meat, and will come forth and ſerve them*; a very high metaphorical Expreſſion; as if a Maſter ſhould be ſo tranſported with the Diligence and Faithfulneſs of his Servant, as to vouchſafe not only to let him ſit down to Meat in his preſence, but to take the Napkin upon his Arm, and wait upon him himſelf at the Table. Lord! how poor and how inconſiderable is that Service, which the beſt of us do for thee, and yet thou ſpeakeſt of it, as if thou wert beholding to us for it. Thou doſt not only adminiſter to us a Supper, but thou miniſtreſt and waiteſt upon us at Supper; *He will gird himſelf, and ſerve them.* The Second Argument to excite to Watchfulneſs, is drawn from the Benefit which we ſhall receive by Watching in this Life; that let the Lord come when he will, whether in the Second or Third Watch, they ſhall be found ready and in a bleſſed Condition, who are found diligent in his Service, and waiting for his Appearance. *Note here,* (1.) The Son of Man will certainly come at one Hour or other; (2.) At what Hour the Son of Man will come, cannot certainly be known. (3.) That there is no Hour wherein we can promiſe our ſelves, that the Son of Man will not come. (4.) Very joyful will the Coming of the Son of Man be, if we be found upon our Watch, and ready for his Coming, *Be ye therefore ready alſo, for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour when ye think not.*

41 Then Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42 And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom *his* lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give *them their* portion of meat in due ſeaſon? 43 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. 44 Of a truth I ſay unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

Theſe words may be applied theſe two ways, Firſt, To all the Faithful Servants of God in general; and then the *Note* is this, That for a Chriſtian to ſpend and end his Days in the Service of Chriſt, and doing his Will, gives good aſſurance of a Happy and Bleſſed Condition, *Bleſſed is that Servant.* Secondly, Theſe Words may be applied to the Miniſters of the Goſpel in ſpecial, and then *Obſerve* (1.) The Character and Duty of a Goſpel-Miniſter, he is the Steward of Chriſt's Houſhold, to give them their Meat in due Seaſon: (2.) A double Qualification, requiſite in ſuch Stewards; namely, Prudence and Faithfulneſs. Who then is that Faithful and Wiſe Steward? *Obſerve* (3.) The Reward inſured to ſuch Stewards, with whom are found theſe Qualifications; *Bleſſed is that Servant. Learn hence,* (1.) That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are in a Spiritual ſenſe Stewards of Chriſt's Houſhold. (2.) That Faithfulneſs and Prudence are the indiſpenſable Qualifications of Chriſt's Stewards. (3.) That where theſe Qualifications are found, Chriſt will graciouſly and abundantly Reward them. Our Faithfulneſs muſt reſpect God, our Selves, and our Flock; and includes integrity of Heart, purity of Intention, induſtry of Endeavour, and impartiality in all our Adminiſtrations. Our Prudence muſt appear in the choice of ſuitable Subjects, in the choice of fit Language, in exciting our own Affections in order to the moving of our Peoples. Miniſterial Prudence alſo muſt teach us, by the ſtrictneſs and gravity of our Deportment, to maintain our Authority, and keep up our eſteem in the Conſciences of our People; it will alſo aſſiſt us to bear Reproach, and direct us to give Reproof: He that is Silent cannot be Innocent; Reprove we muſt, or we cannot be Faithful; but prudently, or we cannot be Succeſsful.

45 But and if that ſervant ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and ſhall begin to beat the men ſervants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: 46 The lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that ſervant which knew his lords will, and prepared not *himſelf*, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many *ſtripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few *ſtripes*. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.

Our Lord in theſe Verſes deſcribes a negligent and unfaithful Steward of his Houſhold, and then declares that dreadful Sentence of Wrath which hangs over him. The unfaithful Steward, or negligent Miniſter of the Goſpel is deſcribed. (1.) By his Infidelity; he believeth not Chriſt's coming to Judgment, tho' he Preaches it to others; *he ſaith in his Heart, my Lord delayeth his Coming.* (2.) He is deſcribed by his Hatred, Envy, and Malignity againſt his Fellow-ſervants, that were more Faithful than himſelf, *He begins to ſmite them,* at leaſt with the Virulence of his Tongue, if not with the Violence of his Hand. (3.) He is farther deſcribed by his Aſſociating with the Wicked, and ſtrengthing their Hands by his Ill-example, *He eateth and drinketh with the Drunken*; that is, as their Aſſociate and Fellow-Companion. Thus the negligent Steward, and unfaithful Miniſter is deſcribed: Next his Sentence is declared, (1.) Chriſt will ſurprize him in his Sin and Security, *by coming in an Hour when he lookt not for him.* (2.) He will execute Temporal Vengeance upon him, *He will cut him in pieces,* as the *Jews* did their Sacrifices, dividing them into two parts. Hence ſome *Obſerve*, That God ſeldom ſuffers ſlothful, ſenſual Miniſters to live out half their Days. (3.) Chriſt will puniſh them with Eternal Deſtruction alſo, *Appoint them their Portion with Unbelievers: Teaching* us, That ſuch Miniſters as neglect the Service of God. and the Souls of their People, as they are ranked amongſt the worſt ſort of Sinners in this Life, ſo ſhall they be puniſhed with them in the ſevereſt manner in the next. When Satan deſtroys the Souls of Men, he ſhall anſwer for it as a Murderer only: not as an Officer that was intruſted with the Care of Souls. But if the Steward doth not provide, if the Shepherd doth not Feed, if the Watchman doth not Warn, they ſhall anſwer, not only for the Souls that have miſcarried, but for an Office neglected, for a Talent hidden, and for a Stewardſhip unfaithfully managed. Wo unto us, if at the Great Day we hear Diſtreſſed Souls roaring out their Complaints, and howling forth that doleful Accuſation againſt us, ſaying, Lord! Our Stewards have defrauded us, our Watchmen have betrayed us, our Guides have miſled us. v. 48—*For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more.* Here we *Learn,* (1.) That whatever we receive from God, is both a Gift and a Talent. (2. That every one has ſome Gift or Talent from God to be improved for God. (3.) That God's Gifts or Talents are not given to all in the ſame meaſure. (4.) That whether we receive little or much, all is in order to an Account. (5.) That anſwerable to our preſent Talents will be our future Accounts. The greater Opportunities a Man has of knowing his Duty, and the greater Abilities he has of doing good; if he do it not, the greater will be his Condemnation, becauſe the neglect of his Duty in this Caſe cannot be without a great deal of Wilfulneſs and Contempt, which is an heinous Aggravation. If thy Gifts be mean, the leſs thou haſt to Account for; if greater than others, God expects thou ſhouldſt do more Good than others, *For where much is given, much will be required.*

49 I am come to ſend fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50 But I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned, till it be accompliſhed! 51 Suppoſe ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather diviſion. 52 For from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe divided, three againſt two, and two againſt three. 53 The father ſhall be divided againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father: the mother againſt the daughter, and the daughter againſt the mother: the mother in law againſt her daughter in law, and the daughter in law againſt her mother in law.

Our Saviour in theſe Verſes declares what will be the accidental Event and Effect, but not the Natural Tendency of his Religion; ſo that we muſt diſtinguiſh between the intentional Aim of Chriſt's Coming, and the Accidental Event of it. Chriſt's intentional Aim, was to plant, propagate, and promote Peace in the World; but thro' the Luſts and Corruptions of Mens Natures, the Iſſue and Event of his Coming is War and Diviſion; not that theſe are the genuine and natural Fruits of the Goſpel, but occaſional and accidental only. *Hence Learn,* That the Preaching of the Goſpel, and ſetting up the Kingdom of Chriſt, tho' it be not the Genuine and

Natural Cauſe, yet it is the Accidental Occaſion of all that War and Tumult, of all that Diſſention and Diviſion, of all that Diſtraction and Confuſion, which the World abounds with; *I am come to ſend Fire on the Earth.* He is ſaid to ſend the Fire of Diſſenſion, becauſe he foreſaw this would be the certain Conſequences, tho' not the proper and natural Effect of the Preaching of the Goſpel. There was another Fire of Chriſt's ſending, the Holy Spirit; this was a Fire to warm not to burn; or if ſo, not Mens Perſons, but Corruptions; but that ſeems not to be intended in this place. *Obſerve farther*, The Metaphor by which Chriſt ſets forth his own Sufferings, he ſtyles them a Baptiſm; *I have a Baptiſm to be Baptized with.* There is a threefold Baptiſm ſpoken of; a Baptiſm with Water, a Baptiſm of the Spirit; both theſe Chriſt had been Baptized with, but the third, was the Baptiſm of Blood, he was ſent to be drencht and waſhed in his own Blood, in the Garden, and on the Croſs; and he was ſtraitned or pained with deſire like a Woman in Travel, till his Sufferings were Accompliſhed.

54 And he ſaid alſo to the people, When ye ſee a cloud riſe out of the weſt, ſtraightway ye ſay, There cometh a ſhowre; and ſo it is. 55 And when *ye ſee* the ſouth-wind blow, ye ſay, There will be heat; and it cometh to paſs. 56 Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the skie, and of the earth: but how is it, that ye do not diſcern this time? 57 Yea, and why even of your ſelves judge ye not what is right?

Our Saviour in theſe words does at once upbraid the ſtupid Ignorance of the *Jews* in general, and the obſtinate Infidelity of the Phariſees in particular, in that they could make a Judgment of the Weather by the ſight of the Sky, by the appearance of the Heavens, and the motion of the Winds, but could not diſcern this Time of the *Meſſias*, tho' they had ſo many miraculous Signs and Evidences of it, and for this he upbraids them with Hypocriſie; *Ye Hypocrites, ye can diſcern the Face of the Sky, but ye do not diſcern this Time*: *Learn thence*, That to pretend either more Ignorance, or greater Uncertainty in diſcerning the Signs of Goſpel-Times (the time of our gracious Viſitation) than the Signs of the Weather, is great Hypocriſy; *Ye Hypocrites, can ye not diſcern this Time? Obſerve farther*, That Chriſt does not here condemn the Study of Nature, or making Obſervation of the State of the Weather by the Face of the Sky: For Almighty God by Natural Signs, gives us warning of a Change in Natural Things, and in like manner by his Providential Diſpenſations, he gives us warning of a Change in Civil Things; *He that is wiſe will obſerve both*, and by their Obſervation will come *to underſtand the Pleaſure of the Lord.*

56 When thou goeſt with thine adverſary to the magiſtrate, *as thou art* in the way give diligence that thou mayeſt be delivered from him; leſt he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer caſt thee into priſon. 59 I tell thee, thou ſhalt not depart thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.

In theſe Words our Saviour adviſes Perſons to uſe the ſame Prudence in Divine Matters, which they uſe in worldly Affairs, and the ſame Endeavours to ſeek Reconciliation with God, which they put forth in order to their being reconciled unto Men; for in ſuch a Caſe, when they ſee an Action bringing againſt them, wherein they are ſure to be Caſt, their beſt way is preſently to ſeek to reconcile their Adverſary, and make their peace with him, that ſo they may eſcape the threatning Danger: In like manner ſhould they do here, lay hold upon the preſent Opportunity of Mercy now offered to them; becauſe it is a fearful thing to Dye without Reconciliation with God. *Note here* (1.) That GOD and Man were once Friends. (2.) That GOD and Man are now Adverſaries. (3.) That Man, and not GOD is averſe to Reconciliation and Agreement. (4.) That it is the Wiſdom, the Duty and Intereſt of fallen Man, ſpeedily to accept of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with GOD. (5.) That an Eternal Priſon will be their Portion, who Dye in their Enmity againſt GOD.

CHAP. XIII.

THere were preſent at that ſeaſon, ſome that told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſacrifices. 2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

There were two eminent Sects amongſt the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, namely, the *Herodians* and *Galileans*; the former ſtood ſtifly for having Tribute paid to the *Roman* Emperor, whoſe Subjects the *Jews* now were, but the *Galileans* (ſo called probably from *Judas* of *Galilee*, mention'd *Acts* 5. 37.) oppoſed this Tribute, and often raiſed Rebellion againſt the *Roman* Power. *Pilate* takes the opportunity when theſe *Galileans* were come up at the Paſſover, and Sacrificing in the Temple, to fall upon them with his Soldiers, and barbarouſly mingled their own Blood with the Blood of the Sacrifices which they offered; neither the Holineſs of the Place, (the Temple) nor the Sacredneſs of the Action, (Sacrificing) could divert *Pilate* from his barbarous Impiety. Our Saviour underſtanding, that ſome of his Hearers then preſent concluded theſe Perſons to be the greateſt Sinners, becauſe they were the greateſt Sufferers, he corrects their Error in this matter, and aſſures them, that the ſame or the like Judgments did hang over all other Sinners as well as theſe, if timely and ſincere Repentance prevented not. *Learn hence*, (1.) That a violent and ſudden Death is no argument of God's Disfavour. (2.) That notwithſtanding Perſons are exceeding prone to paſs raſh Cenſures, and an uncharitable Judgment upon ſuch as dye ſuddenly, eſpecially if they dye violently. (3.) That none juſtly can conclude ſuch Perſons to have been the greateſt Sinners who have been in this World the moſt ſignal Sufferers. (4.) That the beſt uſe we can make of ſuch Inſtances and Examples of God's Severity is, to examine our own Lives, and by a ſpeedy Repentance to prevent our own Perdition, *I tell you nay*, &c.

4 Or thoſe eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and ſlew them, think ye that they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in Jeruſalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

Another Inſtance our Saviour gives of Perſons that fell by a ſudden Death, even eighteen that were ſlain by the fall of a Tower in *Jeruſalem*; he takes occaſion from thence to caution the *Jews*, that they do not rigidly cenſure the Sufferers, or conclude that thoſe have wrought the moſt Sin, who are brought to moſt Shame; O how ready are we to judge of Mens Eternal Condition by their preſent Viſitation; and to conclude them the greateſt Offendors, upon whom God inflicts the moſt viſible Puniſhments? Our Saviour forbids this, and adviſes every one to look at home, telling the whole body of the *Jews*, That if they did not Repent, they ſhould all likewiſe periſh, and that two ways, (1.) *Certitudine pœnæ*, by as certain a Puniſhment as theſe did; (2.) Ye ſhall likewiſe periſh, *Similitudine pœnæ*, by the ſame kind of Puniſhment; you ſhall periſh by the ruin of your whole City, as they did by the downfal of that Tower; if a timely and ſincere Repentance doth not intervene. *Learn hence*, That we muſt judge of Perſons by their Converſation towards God, not by God's Diſpenſations towards them; all things here falls alike to all, a ſudden Death, yea a violent Death, as it comes upon many Men, ſo it may come upon the beſt of Men, as well as others; think not ſays Chriſt, that thoſe eighteen were Sinners above all that dwelt in *Jeruſalem*, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things, *I tell you nay: but except ye Repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe Periſh*; Teaching us, that Repentance is the only way and means to prevent Puniſhment here, and Periſhing hereafter, *Except ye Repent, ye ſhall Periſh.*

6 He ſpake alſo this parable: a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then ſaid he to the dreſſer of his vineyard, Behold theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none: cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?

Our Bleſſed Saviour, that he might excite the *Jews* to the practice of the laſt-mentioned Duty of Repentance, ſets forth his Long-ſuffering with them, and Forbearance towards them by the Parable of the Fig-tree, whom the Maſter of the Vineyard had long expected Fruit from, but found none. Where *Note*, 1. The great Care that God takes to make poor ſinners Happy; he plants them in his Church, as in a Vineyard, that by the Cultivating Care of his Miniſters, and the fructifying Influences of his Spirit, they may be fruitful in good Works. *Note* 2. That God keeps an exact Account or Reckoning, what means and advantages every Place and People have enjoyed; *Theſe three years* have I come ſeeking fruit, alluding to the three years of his own Miniſtry amongſt them. God keeps a Memorial how many years the Goſpel has been amongſt a People, how many Miniſters they have had, and how long with them, what Pathetical Exhortations, what preſſing Admonitions, what cutting Reproofs; all are upon the file, and muſt be accounted for. *Learn* 3. That God expects ſuitable and proportionable Fruit from a People according to the time of their ſtanding in his Vineyard, and anſwerable to the Coſt and Culture, which his Miniſters have expended upon them, and the pains they have taken with them. *Note farther*, 4. That altho' God doth, and juſtly may expect Fruit from ſuch as are planted in his Vineyard, to wit, the Chriſtian Church, yet he expects it with much Patience and Forbearance, waiting from year to year, to ſeek if time will work amendment, *Theſe three years I have come, ſeeking fruit, and found none*, *Laſtly*, If after all the Coſt that God has beſtowed upon a People by his Miniſters and Ordinances, they continue unfruitful, there is nothing to be expected but exciſion and final deſtruction; *Cut it down, why cumbreth it the Ground*?

8 And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Lord, let it alone this year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it and dung *it*: 9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that you ſhall cut it down.

Obſ. here, 1. The Vine-dreſſers Petition and Requeſt, *Lord, let it alone this year alſo*. This points out unto us, the Office and Duty of the Miniſters of God who are Labourers in his Vineyard, to be Interceſſors with God, for ſparing a Barren and unfruitful People. Lord! ſpare them a little longer, *Let it alone this year alſo*; if they cannot abſolutely prevent Judgment coming upon an unfruitful People, yet they endeavour to reſpite it, and delay its coming all they can. *Obſ.* 2. The Condition upon which the Vine-dreſſers Petition is Grounded, *Till I ſhall dig about it, and dung it*; Phraſes which intimate to us the nature and quality of the Miniſterial Work and Service, ſignifying it to be a very difficult and laborious Service. Digging is a painful Work, and a ſpending Work, and ſuch is our Miniſterial Work, if followed as it ought to be. We deal in Myſteries, in the deep things of God, which are not received without much digging. *Obſ.* 3. A double ſuppoſition here made by the Vine-dreſſer; firſt of future Fruitfulneſs, *If it bear fruit, well*: Secondly, of future incorrigibleneſs; *if not, after that thou ſhalt cut it down.* 1. Here is a Suppoſition of future Fruitfulneſs, *If it bear fruit, well*; that is it will be well for the Maſter of the Vineyard; herein is he glorified, when his Fig-trees bear much Fruit; well, for the Dreſſer of the Vineyard; it rejoyces the Miniſters of God, to ſee their People bring forth Fruit unto God; well, for the Vineyard and the reſt of the Trees that are in it: But more eſpecially well, for the Tree it ſelf; thereby avoiding the puniſhment of Barrenneſs, and procuring the Reward of Fruitfulneſs; Thus, *If it bear fruit, well.* 2. Here is a ſuppoſition of future incorrigibleneſs, *After that thou ſhalt cut it down*; that is, after thou haſt ſpared it, and I have pruned it; after thy patience and my pains, after thou haſt forborn it, and I have manur'd it, digged and dung'd it, if after all this, it bear no fruit, then I have not a word more to ſay, *Thou ſhalt cut it down.* Thou mayeſt cut it down, no Body will go about to hinder thee. From hence *Learn*, That a Peoples's continued unfruitfulneſs under the means of Grace, doth in time take off the Prayers and Interceſſions of the Miniſters of God for them, and provokes God to bring his Judgments unavoidably and irrevocably upon them, *After that thou ſhalt cut it down.*

10 And he was teaching in one of the ſynagogues on the ſabbath. 11 And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe lift up *her ſelf*. 12 And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called *her* to him and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid *his* hands on her, and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath-day, and ſaid unto the people, there are ſix days in which men ought to work: in them thereſore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. 15 The Lord then anſwered him and ſaid, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the ſabbath, loſe his ox, or *his* aſs from the ſtall, and lead *him* away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom ſatan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the ſabbath-day? 17 And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed, and all the people rejoyced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Obſerve here, 1. The afflicted Perſon, a Woman which had a ſore Diſeaſe, inflicted upon her by the Devil for Eighteen Years, which almoſt bowed her together: There is nothing that the Devil more delights in, than in the Miſeries and Calamities of Mankind. Satan is not ſatisfied barely to infect the Mind, and poyſon the Souls of Men, but he delights to afflict and hurt the Body, where and when he can obtain leave. *Obſerve* 2. Chriſt's Compaſſion towards her, and his Miraculous healing of her, *Jeſus called her to him*, and with a word ſpeaking healed her. *Where Note*, That the inveterateneſs of the Diſeaſe, and the inſtantaniouſneſs of the Cure, made the Miracle evident. She, that had been bowed down eighteen years, in an inſtant is made ſtraight, and only by a word of Chriſt's Mouth: Such a miraculous Operation was an evident Teſtimony of his Divine Miſſion, that he was the Son of God. *Obſerve* 3. How the Heart of the poor Woman is affected with Chriſt's hand; ſhe Glorified God; that is, ſhe gave thanks to God, and attributed the Miracle to him. As the chief End of all God's extraordinary Works, either of Power or Mercy, is the exaltation of his own Glory; ſo the only way that we can ſet forth his Glory, is by celebrating his Praiſes, and expreſſing our own Thankfulneſs; *He that offereth me praiſe and thanks, glorifies me, Pſal.* 50. *ult.* *Obſerve* 4. The unreaſonable anger, and unjuſt indignation which was found with the Ruler of the Synagogue againſt our Holy Lord, for working this miraculous Cure on the Sabbath-day: There is no Perſon ſo Holy, no Action ſo Innocent, but may fall under unjuſt Cenſure, eſpecially where malice and ignorance are combined. What a ſevere reflection doth this Man make upon our Bleſſed Lord, for performing a work of Mercy on the Sabbath-day! *Obſerve* 5. Our Lord's Vindication of himſelf from Calumny and falſe Accuſation; 1. He charges his Accuſer with Hypocriſie, *Thou hypocrite, doth not each of you looſe his Ox or his Aſs from the ſtall on the Sabbath-day, and water him?* It is one Note of a Hypocrite to condemn that in another which he doth himſelf; the Jews, held it lawful to looſe and lead a Beaſt to watering on the Sabbath-day, which was a work of Servile Labour, and yet would condemn Chriſt for healing a poor Woman, only with a word ſpeaking. 2. Chriſt vindicates his own Action, by comparing it with theirs, which they judged lawful on the Sabbath-day: Was their looſing and watering the Beaſt a Work of Neceſſity? much more was his: Was theirs a Work of Mercy, his much more; their compaſſion was to a Bruit Beaſt, his to a Rational Creature, to a Woman, and that a Jewiſh Woman, a Daughter of *Abraham*: Nay farther, Chriſt's Act was an Act of far greater Neceſſity, and more ſpecial Mercy than theirs. The Beaſt might live a day without Water; the Beaſt might not be ſick, but this Woman was in ſore diſtreſs, and had been ſo for eighteen years; nay, ſhe was in the hands of the Enemy of Mankind, bound by Satan, Was it not then a greater Act of Mercy, and Compaſſion to looſe her, than to lead a Beaſt? *Obſerve* 6. What Effect our Lord's Vindication of himſelf had upon the Hearers of it; *His adverſaries were aſhamed, the people rejoyced*, v. 17. His Accuſers were aſhamed, and probably convinced, perhaps ſilenced; but we read not that they confeſt their Errour, or acknowledged their unjuſt Cenſure, or craved Chriſt's pardon: When Perſons judgments are under Conviction of an errour or miſtake, it is very hard to bring themſelves to confeſs and own their miſtake, becauſe all Men ſtand very much upon the Credit and Reputation of their Underſtandings, and look upon it as a Reproach to own themſelves miſtaken, tho' it is really otherwiſe: But tho' our Saviour's Adverſaries were only ly aſhamed, others Rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 Then ſaid he, Unto what is the kingdom of
God like? and whereunto ſhall I reſemble it? 19 It
is like a grain of muſtardſeed, which a man took and
caſt into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great
tree: and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches
of it. 20 And again he ſaid, whereunto ſhall I liken
the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a
woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till
the whole was leavened.

Our Saviour's Deſign in both theſe Parables, is to keep his Diſciples and Followers from being offended at the ſmall Beginnings of his Kingdom, and to fore-tell the future great Succeſs of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding the preſent ſmall appearance of the efficacy of it; to this purpoſe he compares the Kingdom of God, that is, the Goſpel-Church, *to a grain of Muſtard Seed*, which being one of the leaſt Seeds, yet in that Country grew into ſo large a Tree, that the Birds did Rooſt and Lodge in the Boughs of it. He alſo likens it to *Leaven*, which quickly diffuſes it ſelf through the whole Maſs and Lump, inſtantly turning a great heap of Meal into its own Nature. Chriſt ſhews hereby of what a ſpreading Nature the Doctrine of the Goſpel would be, notwithſtanding all the Malice and Oppoſition of wicked Men. *Learn* thence, That how ſmall Beginnings ſoever the Goſpel had in its firſt plantation, yet by the fructifying Bleſſing of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, it has had, and ſhall have a wonderful encreaſe.

22 And he went through the cities and villages,
teaching and journeying towards Jeruſalem. 23 Then
ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that be ſaved?
And he ſaid unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the
ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

Obſerve here 1. The unwearied pains and diligence of our Holy Lord in preaching and publiſhing the glad tidings of the Goſpel to loſt Sinners, *He went through cities and villages teaching*; not in great and populous Cities only, but in poor and obſcure Villages alſo; not preaching by his exemplary Life only, but by his Holy Doctrine likewiſe. Let ſuch preachers who look upon the work of Preaching as the leaſt part of their Buſineſs, conſider the indefatigable pains which our Lord took in that work; and how will his diligence ſhame our negligence? *Obſ.* 2. A curious queſtion put to our Saviour concerning the number of thoſe that ſhould be ſaved, whether they ſhould be few or many; *Lord, are there few that be ſaved?* Where *Note*, How curiouſly inquiſitive we naturally are after the Knowledge of things that do not concern us, how forward to pry into unrevealed Secrets, and to ſearch into God's hidden Counſel; it concerns us rather to underſtand what ſort of Perſons ſhall be ſaved, than how many ſhall be ſaved, and to make ſure that we be of that Sort. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour gives no direct Anſwer to the Curioſity of this Inquirer, but turns his Speech from him to the People; *Jeſus ſaid unto them, ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, &c. For the clearer Underſtanding of which Expreſſion we muſt know, that Chriſt alludes to the Feaſts and Marriage Suppers amongſt the *Jews*; they that were Invited did enter by a Gate, which was very Strait and Narrow, and as ſoon as the Invited were once Entred, the Gate was ſhut, and opened no more. Here Chriſt bids them ſtrive to Enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, before the Gate is ſhut againſt them, and their Entrance by Means of their coming too late be made Impoſſible to them, *Strive to enter*, &c. *for many will Seek*, &c. Where *Note* 1. The Metaphor which Chriſt is pleaſed to ſet forth Heaven and the Happineſs of a future State by; he compairs it to a *ſtrait gate*; to a *Gate*, to denote the poſſibility of entring; to a *ſtrait gate*, to denote the difficulty of Entrance; a gate ſuppoſes the entrance poſſible, but a ſtrait gate beſpeaks the Entrance difficult. 2. Here is a Duty urged and enforced upon all thoſe that expect the Happineſs of another Life, and deſire to enter in at this ſtrait gate, and that is a diligent and induſtrious ſtriving, *Strive to enter in at the Strait gate*. 3. We have a forcible argument and motive to excite and quicken to the practice of this Duty, drawn from the paucity, or ſmall number of thoſe that ſhall obtain Salvation in a dying hour; *Many will ſeek to enter in, but ſhall not be able.* *Learn hence* 1. That Heaven or the Happineſs of a future State is attainable. 2. That it is not attainable without Labour and difficulty. 3. That all thoſe difficulties may be happily overcome by a diligent and induſtrious ſtriving.

25 When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up,
and hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open
unto us; and he ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto you, I
know you not whence you are: 26 Then ſhall ye begin
to ſay, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence, and
thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. 27 But he ſhall ſay I
tell you, I know ye not whence you are; depart from
me all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, when ye ſhall ſee Abraham,
and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you your ſelves thruſt out. 29 And
they ſhall come from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and
from the north, and from the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down
in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, there are laſt
which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt which ſhall be laſt.

Our Saviour having exhorted all his Followers in the foregoing Verſes to make ſure of Heaven and Salvation to themſelves, whilſt the door of Hope and Salvation is open to them, by this Parable of a Maſter of a Family inviting Gueſts to his Table, and waiting for their coming, and at laſt ſhutting the door againſt them, becauſe they either deny'd or delay'd Coming, Chriſt hereby repreſented to the Jews, the great danger they were in if they neglected the preſent Seaſon of Grace and Salvation, which now they did enjoy; telling them farther, how little it would profit them at the day of Judgment, to alledge that they had eaten and drunk in his preſence, that they had heard him Preach in their Streets, if they did not forſake their ſins, and obey his Goſpel. Adding farther, that it would be an Heart-piercing ſorrow, a Soul-rending grief to them at the Great Day, to ſee not only the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and other *Jews*, but even the deſpiſed Gentiles from all Quarters and Nations, whom they thought accurſed, admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven, and themſelves eternally ſhut out; *For the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt*; that is, the Gentiles who were afar off ſhall receive the Goſpel, when you for rejecting it ſhall be caſt off. From the whole *Note* 1. That there is a determinate time when Souls muſt (if ever) accept of the offers of Grace and Salvation, which are made unto them; now is the door open and Perſons invited in. 2. That e're long Jeſus Chriſt, who now ſtands at every one of our doors waiting for our compliance with his Goſpel-Terms, will wait no longer upon us, nor ſtrive any farther by the motions of his Spirit with us, *when once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door*. 3. That doleful is the condition of ſuch miſerable Souls againſt whom the door is ſhut; the door of Repentance, the door of Hope, the door of Salvation; all ſhut, eternally ſhut; and that by him, who ſhutteth and none can open. 4. That all would be ſaved at laſt; all will cry for Mercy when it is too late, even ſuch as now ſinfully undervalue, and ſcornfully deſpiſe it; *Ye ſhall ſtand without, and knock at the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* *Note* 5. That it is no good plea for admittance into Heaven, becauſe we have been Church-members here on Earth; no outward privileges, tho' Chriſt has taught in our Streets; no external Acts of Communion, tho' we have eaten and drunk in his preſence, and at his holy Table, will juſtifie our hopes of entring into Heaven when we dye, if we be workers of iniquity whilſt we live; *Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy preſence; but he ſhall ſay, I know ye not, ye workers of iniquity.* *Note* 6. That as Hell will be a ſecond Heaven, to the Glorified, ſo Heaven will be a ſecond Hell to the Damn'd. Hell will be a ſecond Heaven to the Glorified, that is, it will add exceedingly to the Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven, to ſee and be ſenſible of that miſery which they eſcap'd, and the Damn'd indure; and on the other hand, Heaven will be a ſecond Hell to the Damn'd; that is, it will encreaſe their Torments and add to the vexation of their Spirits, to ſee ſome in Heaven whom they little expected to ſee there; ſome that never ſaw, nor heard, nor enjoyed what they have done; Strangers, yea Heathens taken in, when the Children of the Kingdom, that is, the Members of the viſible Church are ſhut out; *They ſhall come from the Eaſt, from the Weſt, from the North, and from the South, and ſit down in the Kingdom of God,* *but the children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt into utter darkneſs.*

31 The ſame day there came certain of the Phariſees, ſaying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. 32 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I caſt out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day, I ſhall be perfected. 33 Nevertheleſs I muſt walk to day and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem.

It may ſeem ſtrange, that the Phariſees, who had no kindneſs for our Saviour, ſhould come hereand acquaint him with a danger that he was in from *Herod*: *Get thee hence, for Herod will kill thee.* It is probable they had a deſign to drive him out of the Country, becauſe his Reputation was ſo great among the People, who were admirers of his Perſon, hearers of his Doctrine, and Witneſſes of his Miracles. But what intenſion ſoever they had in acquainting Chriſt with this danger, it is very evident, that our Saviour ſlighted it, by the Meſſage which he ſent to *Herod*; *Go and tell that Fox*; Where we muſt not ſuppoſe, that our Lord did fix his Name of *Fox* upon *Herod* as an opprobrious Title, thereby reflecting the leaſt diſhonour upon him as a King; but it was, as a Prophet, to let him know, that being about his Father's Work, he feared neither his Power nor his Policy, neither his Cruelty nor his Craft, and that nothing ſhould take him off from finiſhing the Work of Man's Redemption. *Learn hence*, That when God calls forth any of his Servants to any ſpecial Service for him, all the combined Power and Policy of the Prince of Darkneſs, and his Inſtruments ſhall never be able to hinder them, till they have finiſhed their Courſe, and done the Service which God deſigned; *I muſt work to day and to morrow, and the day following*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Let *Herod* know, that my time is not in his Hand, and as to this matter, I am not under his Command or Power; e're long my work will be finiſhed, and then I ſhall be perfected. *Obſerve here*, That to impoſe this ignominious but agreeable name on *Herod*, is not contrary to the Command, not to ſpeak evil of the Ruler of the People; it being the Office of a Prophet, not to ſpare Kings when they reprove their Offences: Accordingly Chriſt here uſes his Prophetick Call and Power, in giving this Tyrant a name ſo ſuitable to his Actions, Go and tell that *Fox*, from me, a Prophet ſent of God, and therefore Authorized ſo to Stile him: That I am haſting to *Jeruſalem* to lay down my Life there, not fearing to be killed by him in the way; for it cannot be, that a Prophet periſh out of *Jeruſalem*. Where the *Sanhedrin* ſit, who are to paſs Judgment upon me. Dr. *Whitby*.

34 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, which killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as an hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? 35 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate: And verily I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not ſee me, until the time come when ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Our Lord concludes this Chapter with a Compaſſionate Lamentation over *Jeruſalem*, the place where he was to ſuffer: His Ingemination, or doubling of the Word, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*, ſhews the vehemency of his affection towards them, and the ſincerity of his deſires for their Salvation. *Obſ.* 1. The Kindneſs and Campaſſion of Chriſt to the *Jews* in general, and *Jeruſalem* in particular, ſet forth by a lively Metaphor and Similitude, namely that of a Hen gathering her Chickens under her Wings: As the Hen doth tenderly cheriſh, and carefully hide and cover her young from the Eye of the Deſtroyer, ſo would Chriſt have ſhrouded and ſheltered this People from all thoſe Birds of Prey, and particularly from the *Roman* Eagle, by whoſe tallons they were at laſt deſtroyed. Again, as the Hen continueth her Call to her young ones from Morning to Night, and holds out her Wings for ſhelter to them all the day long, ſo did Chriſt wait for this Peoples Repentance and Converſion; for it was more than Forty Years after they had killed his Prophets, and murthered himſelf, before they met with a final Overthrow. *Obſerve*. 2. The amazing obſtinacy and wilfulneſs of this People, in rejecting the Grace and Favour, the kindneſs and condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *I would have gathered you, but ye would not*. *Obſerve* 3. The fatal iſſue of this obſtinacy, ***Behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate***; is left, that is, certainly and ſuddenly will be left deſolate (the preſent Tenſe being put for the *paulo poſt futurum*) which denotes both the certainty and proximity of this Peoples Ruine. *Learn* 1. That the ruine and deſtruction of Sinners is wholly chargable upon themſelves, that is, on their own wilfulneſs and impenitency, on their own obſtinacy and obduracy, *I would have gathered you*, ſays Chriſt, *but ye would not*. *Learn* 2. How deplorably and inexcuſably they will periſh, who periſh by their own wilfulneſs and obduracy under the Goſpel. 3. That there is no deſire like unto God's deſire of a Peoples Repentance, no longing like unto God's longing for a Peoples Salvation: *O Jeruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thee? when ſhall it once be?* Jerem. 13. 27.

CHAP. XIV.

AND it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe of one of the chief Phariſees to eat bread on the ſabbath day, that they watched him. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before him, which had the Dropſy. 3 And Jeſus anſwering, ſpake unto the lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath day? 4 And they held their peace. And he took him and healed him, and let him go: 5 And anſwered them, ſaying, Which of you ſhall have an aſs, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out on the ſabbath day? 6 And they could not anſwer him again to theſe things.

Several particulars are here worthy of our Obſervation and Imitation. *Note* 1. The freedom of our Lord's Converſation with Men; he delighted in humane Society, and was of a ſociable Temper; we do not find, that when ever he was invited to a Dinner, that he diſdain'd to go, not ſo much for the pleaſure of Eating, as for the opportunity of Converſing and doing good. *Note* 2. The Houſe he goes into, and is entertain'd in, one of the chief Phariſees, who were ſome of his chiefeſt Enemies; a great inſtance of our Lord's humanity, humility, and ſelf-denial, in that he refuſes not the Converſation of thoſe whom he knew did not affect him; teaching us to love our Enemies, and not to ſhun Converſing with them, that thereby we may gain an opportunity of being reconciled to them. *Note* 3. The day when our Saviour dined publickly at the Phariſee's Houſe, among the Lawyers and Phariſees, it was on the Sabbath-day. *Learn thence*, That it is not ſingly unlawful for us to entertain our Friends and Neighbours with a plentiful Meal on the Lord's day; It muſt be acknowledged, that Feaſting upon any day is one of thoſe Lawful things, which is difficultly managed without Sin, but more eſpecially upon that day, that it does not unfit us for the Duties of the Sabbath: However, our Lord's Example in going to a publick Dinner amongſt Lawyers and Phariſees, evidently ſhews the lawfulneſs of feaſting on that Day, provided we uſe the ſame moderation in eating and drinking, that he did, and improve the opportunity as a Seaſon for doing good, as he has taught us by his Example. *Note* 4. How contrary to all the Laws of Behaviour, the Decency of Converſation, and the Rules of Hoſpitality, the Phariſees watched him, making their Table a Snare to catch him, hoping they might hear ſomething from him, or ſee ſomething in him, for which they might accuſe him; *He entred into the houſe of the Phariſee to eat Bread, and they watched him.* *Note* 5. Our Saviour choſe the Sabbath-day as the fitteſt Seaſon to work his miraculous Cures in; in the Phariſees Houſe he heals a Man, that had the Dropſy, on the Sabbath-day. Chriſt would not forbear doing good, nor omit any opportunity of helping and healing the diſtreſſed, tho' he knew his Enemies the Phariſees would carp and cavil at it, calumniate and reproach him for it; it being the conſtant guiſe of Hypocrites, to prefer Ceremonial and Ritual Obſervations, before Neceſſary and Moral Duties. *Note* 6. How our Saviour defends the Lawfulneſs of his Act in Healing the diſeaſed Man, from their own Act in helping the Beaſt out of the Pit on the Sabbath-day; as if Chriſt had ſaid, Is it lawful for you on the Sabbath-day to help the Beaſt? and is it ſinful in me to heal a Man? *Note Laſtly*, How the Reaſon and Force of our Saviour's Argument ſilenced the Phariſees; convinced them no doubt, but we read nothing of their Converſion; the obſtinate and malicious are much harder to be wrought upon, than the Ignorant and Scandalous; it is eaſier to ſilence ſuch Men than to ſatisfy them, to ſtop their Mouths than to remove their Prejudices; for Obſtinacy will hold the Concluſion, tho' Reaſon cannot maintain the Premiſes; *They could not anſwer him again to theſe things.*

7 And he put forth a parable to thoſe which were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out the chief rooms; ſaying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, ſit not down in the higheſt room: leſt a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9 And he that bade thee and him, come and ſay to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with ſhame to take the loweſt room. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and ſit down in the loweſt room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may ſay unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then ſhalt thou have worſhip in the preſence of them that ſate at meat with thee. 11 For whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

It was obſerved before, that our Bleſſed Saviour Dined publickly on the Sabbath-day with ſeveral Phariſees and Lawyers; that which is here worthy of our Notice is this, How holy and ſuitable our Lord's Diſcourſe was to the Solemnity of that Day; may it be the matter of our Imitation; it is not unlawful for Friends to Dine together on the Lord's Day, provided their Diſcourſe be ſuitable to the Day, ſuch as our Lord's here; for obſerving how the Company then at the Table did affect Precedency and taking Place one of another; he that before their Eyes had cured a Man of a Bodily Dropſy, attempts to cure the Perſons that Dined with him of the Tympany of Pride. Where *Note*, That it is not the Taking, but the Affecting of the higheſt Places and uppermoſt Rooms, that our Saviour condemns: There may and ought to be a Precedency amongſt Perſons; it is according to the Will of God, *That honour be given to whom honour is due*; and that the more honourable Perſons ſhould ſit in the moſt honourable Places; for Grace gives a Man no exteriour Preference: It makes a Man glorious indeed, but it is glorious within. *Note farther*, The way and courſe, the method and means which our Saviour directs Perſons to, in order to their attaining Real Honour, both from GOD and Men, namely, by being little in our own Eyes, *and in lowlineſs of Mind, eſteeming others better than our ſelves*; as GOD will abaſe, and Men will deſpiſe the Proud and Haughty, ſo GOD will exalt, and Men will honour the humble Perſon; *Whoſoever exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.*

12 Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor thy rich neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.

Obſerve here, That this is not an abſolute denial of calling Brethren, and Kinsfolk, and Rich Neighbours; but Chriſt forbids the bidding of them alone, and requires that the Poor be refreſhed at, or from our Table: For when the Rich Feaſt one another, and let the Poor Faſt and Pine; this is very ſinful. Accordingly our Saviour obſerving how the Phariſee that bade him to Dinner invited only the Rich, over-looking and neglecting the Poor, he Exhorts him and the Company, that whenever they make Entertainments for the time to come, they ſhould not only invite their Rich Neighbours and Friends, who can and will invite them again; but remember the Poor. Here *Note*, 1. That Civil Courteſies, and Hoſpitable Entertainments of Kindred and Friends, for maintaining and preſerving Love and Concord, is not only Lawful, but an expedient and neceſſary Duty; *Uſe Hoſpitality to one another*, (ſays St. *Peter*) *without grudging.* 2. That tho' it be not unlawful to invite and feaſt the Rich, yet it is moſt acceptable to God, when we feed and refreſh the Poor; *When thou makeſt a Feaſt, call rather the Poor, and thou ſhalt be Bleſſed.* We muſt prefer the Duties of Chriſtian Charity before Acts of Common Civility; Bleſſed are thoſe Feaſt-makers, who make the Bowels of the Hungry to bleſs them. 3. That God oft-times Rewards our Liberality to the Poor very ſignally in this Life; but if it be deferr'd, we ſhall not fail to receive it at the Reſurrection of the Juſt; *The Poor cannot recompenſe thee, but thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt.*

15 And when one of them that ſate at meat with him, heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then ſaid he unto him, A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many. 17 And ſent his ſervants at ſupper-time to ſay to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one conſent began to make excuſe. The firſt ſaid unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it: I pray thee have me excuſed. 19 And another ſaid, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed. 20 And another ſaid, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that ſervant came and ſhewed his lord theſe things. Then the maſter of the houſe being angry, ſaid to his ſervant, Go out quickly into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the ſervant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the Lord ſaid unto the ſervant, Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled. 24 For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.

One of them that ſate at Meat with our Saviour in the Phariſee's Houſe, hearing Chriſt ſpeak of being Recompens'd at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, repeated that known Saying among the Rabbins, *Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*; that is, Who ſhall be partaker of the Joys of Heaven. Hereupon Chriſt utters the Parable of the Marriage-Supper, recorded here by St. *Luke* with ſmall variation from what was delivered by St. *Matthew*, chap. 22. The firſt intention of our Saviour in that Parable ſeems to be this, To ſet forth that gracious Offer of Mercy and Salvation which was made by the Preaching of the Goſpel unto the *Jews*, and to declare God's purpoſe of Receiving the Gentiles into the Fold of Chriſt, upon the *Jews* deſpiſing and rejecting that Ineſtimable Favour. But beſides this, it has an aſpect upon us Chriſtians, who have embraced the Doctrine of the Goſpel. Here *Note* 1. That the Goſpel for its freeneſs and fulneſs, for its varieties and delicacies, is like a Marriage-Supper; For 1. It does create the ſame Relation between Chriſt and Believers, that Marriage doth between Husband and Wife; 2. It entitles to the ſame Priviledges that a Conjugal Relation doth; to the ſame endearing Love and Tenderneſs, to the ſame Care and Protection, to the ſame Honour, and to the ſame Happineſs; 3. It obliges to the like Duties, namely, unſpotted Love and Fidelity, chearful Obedience to his Commands, Reverence to His Perſon, Submiſſion to his Authority. 4. It produces the ſame Effects; as the Effect of Marriage is increaſe of Children, ſo the Fruit of the Goſpel, is *bringing many Sons to God.* *Note* 2. That Goſpel-invitations are mightily diſ-eſteemed; they made light of the invitation, and offered frivolous Excuſes for their Refuſal of it. *Note* 3. That the preference which the World has in Mens eſteem, is a great Cauſe of the Goſpel Contempt; *One had purchaſed a piece of Ground*, another had *bought five Yoke of Oxen.* *Note* 4. The deplorable ſadneſs of their Condition, who refuſe upon any pretence whatever, to comply with the Goſpel-Tender of Reconciliation and Mercy, *The King was wroth*, pronounced them *unworthy of his Favour, and reſolved they ſhould not taſte of his Supper*, but ſends forth his Servants to invite others to the Supper. *Note* 5. The Notion under which the Gentiles are ſet forth unto us, ſuch as were in *Lanes*, *Streets*, and *High-ways*, that is, a rude, ruſtick, barbarous People, whom the *Jews* deſpiſed, yea, whom they held Accurſed, yet even theſe are called and accepted, whilſt the *Jews*, the firſt intended Gueſts are excluded by means of their own Contempt. *Note Laſtly*, The means uſed to bring in the Gentiles to the Goſpel-Supper; *Go and compel them to come in*; not by Violence, but Perſwaſion; by Argumentation, not Compulſion; the plain and perſwaſive, the powerful and efficacious Preaching of the Word, with the Motions and Influences of the Holy Spirit, are the Compulſions here intended; not external Force, not temporal Puniſhments, not outward Violence, *Non Religionis eſt cogere Religionem*, ſays *Tertullian*; No Man ought by Force and Violence to be compelled to the Profeſſion of the true Faith. *Obſerve* then, How vainly theſe Words are brought to prove, that Men may be compelled by the Secular Arm to embrace the Chriſtian Faith. This appears, 1. From the nature of a Banquet, to which none are compelled by Force, but by Perſwaſion only. 2. From the Scope of the Parable, which reſpects the calling of Gentiles, who believed by the great Power of God.

25 And there went great multitudes with him:
and he turned, and ſaid unto them, 26 If any man
come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and
wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and
his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. 27 And
whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and come after me,
cannot be my diſciple.

Our Saviour by theſe Expreſſions doth not condemn Natural Love and Affection, either to our Relations, or our own Lives, but only Regulates and directs it, ſhewing that our firſt and chief Love muſt be beſtowed upon himſelf; we may have, and ought to cheriſh tender and relenting Affections towards our near and dear Relations: But then the Conſideration of Chriſt's Truth and Religion muſt take place of theſe; yea, of Life it ſelf; and when they ſtand in Competition with theſe, we are to regard them no more, than if they were the Objects of our Hatred. *Learn hence*, 1. That no Man can be a ſincere Diſciple of Chriſt, who gives any Relation, or outward Enjoyment a preference to Chriſt in his Heart and Affections. Chriſt muſt be loved above all, or we love him not at all; leſs Love he accounts and calls Hatred. That which we can leave for Chriſt, we hate in compariſon of that Love, which we bear to Chriſt. It is both Impious and impoſſible to hate Father, and Mother, and our ſelves abſolutely: It muſt then be underſtood comparatively only; what we love leſs, we are comparatively ſaid to hate. *Learn* 2. That all the Diſciples of Chriſt muſt be ready and willing whenever called to it, to quit all their Temporal Intereſts and Enjoyments, even Life it ſelf, and ſubmit to any Temporal Inconveniences, even Death it ſelf, and all this willingly and chearfully, rather than diſown their Relation to Chriſt, and quit the Profeſſion of his Holy Religion; upon eaſier Terms than theſe, can none of us be the Diſciples of Jeſus.

28 For which of you intending to build a tower,
ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether
he have ſufficient to finiſh it? 29 Leſt haply after
he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finiſh
it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, 30 Saying,
This man began to build, and was not able to finiſh.
31 Or what king going to make war againſt another
king, ſitteth not down firſt, and conſulteth whether
he be able with ten thouſand, to meet him that
cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand? 32 Or
elſe, while the other is yet a great way off, he
ſendeth an ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of
peace. 33 So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you,
that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my
diſciple.

Our Bleſſed Saviour, by theſe two Parables, Adviſes all his Followers to ſit down and conſider, to weigh well, and caſt up before-hand what it is like to coſt them to go through with their Profeſſion of Religion: This he tells us, common Prudence will direct Men to do in other Caſes; particularly when they either go to Build or to Fight, as a Man, that intends to Build, will conſult whether he is able to defray the Charges, and a King that goes forth to War, will conſider what Strength he has to make Oppoſition; in like manner ſhould Perſons engage in Religion; not raſhly, but adviſedly, with Conſideration and Judgment; It is good to remember the Iſſues of Action before they Act; before we engage in the Spiritual Combate to conſider the difficulty of the Battle; What proud Leviathans we have to Conflict with, what mighty Giants to contend and ſtrive againſt, even the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. But then we muſt take great care that our Deliberation and Conſideration of Difficulties and Dangers may not deter us from, but work in us a ſteady Reſolution for the Combat, looking up to Chriſt for his Auxiliary Aid and Strength, to render us Victorious, who tho' of our ſelves we can do nothing, yet *may do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us*. *Learn from hence*, That ſuch as take up a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, without conſidering the Dangers and Difficulties, the Tryals and Troubles, the Afflictions and Temptations which may accompany it, will never hold out in the Spiritual Warfare, but either fall in it, or run from it.

34 Salt is good: but if the ſalt have loſt its
ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned? 35 It is neither
fit for the land, not yet for the dunghil; but men
caſt it out: He that hath ears to hear, let him
hear.

Our Saviour here compares his Diſciples to Salt, thereby denoting their Uſefulneſs, Salt being one of the moſt uſeful things in Nature; and pointing alſo out their Duty, which is to ſeaſon themſelves and others with Sound Doctrine. But Hypocritical Profeſſors are like unſavoury Salt; they are neither ſavoury in themſelves, nor ſerviceable to others: Our Saviour compares ſuch Chriſtians, who have no ſavour of Piety and Goodneſs upon their Spirits, to Salt, that having loſt its Goodneſs, is neither fit for the Land, nor yet for the Dunghil; that is, being of a brackiſh Nature, it is wholly unfit to manure the Ground, and will rather occaſion Barrenneſs than any Fruitfulneſs of Increaſe. *Learn hence*, That ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are and will be as the Salt of the Earth; that is, good and ſavoury in themſelves, and endeavouring by Exhortation and good Example to ſeaſon others: But Hypocritical Profeſſors and Apoſtatizing Chriſtians will be caſt out, and trampled upon as unſavoury Salt.

CHAP. XV.

This Chapter conſiſts of three Parables; the Deſign and Scope of them all is this; To repreſent the great Tenderneſs and Compaſſion of God Almighty, towards the vileſt and worſt of Sinners upon their Sincere Repentance, and how highly pleaſing it is to God when they do ſo; This is expreſſed by three Parables, (1.) Of a Man's ſeeking diligently a Sheep that he had loſt, and having found it, rejoyced greatly, and inviting his Neighbours to partake of his Joy. (2.) Of a Woman having loſt a piece of Silver, and ſeeking carefully till ſhe had found it, and then in like manner rejoycing with her Friends, for her good Succeſs. (3.) Of a Prodigal Son, who having ſpent his Time, and conſumed his Eſtate, in Riot and Exceſs, at length returns to his Father's Houſe, and is joyfully Received.

THen drew near unto him all the publicans and
ſinners for to hear him. 2 And the Phariſees and
ſcribes murmured, ſaying, This man receiveth ſinners,
and eateth with them.

The Publicans and Sinners, as they had done ſeveral times before, came to heat our Saviour's Inſtructions; he treated them very kindly, and Converſed familiarly with them; at this the Phariſees were diſpleaſed, and murmured, cenſuring our Saviour for too much Familiarity with thoſe Men, whom they look'd upon as Scandalous to Converſe with; not conſidering that he Convers'd with them as their Phyſician, not as their Companion, and therefore his proper Work and Employment lay among his Patients; and that he might give all poſſible Incouragement to the Repentance of the greateſt Sinners, he ſets forth at once the tender Care of God in Recovering ſuch loſt Sinners, and the inexpreſſible Joy that is found in Heaven at the welcome News of their Recovery; for thus it follows in the Parables.

3 And he ſpake this parable unto them, ſaying.
4 What man of you having an hundred ſheep, if he
loſe

loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his ſhoulders, rejoycing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoyce with me, for I have found my ſheep which was loſt. 7 I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more then over ninety and nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance.

In this Parable Chriſt compares Sinners to Sheep going aſtray, and God the Father to a tender and careful Shepherd, ſeeking his ſtray Sheep, wherein he ſecretly Taxes the Phariſees for their Uncharitableneſs in cenſuring him for Converſing with Publicans and Sinners, and for their Envy at the Recovery of ſuch Sinners by Repentance, aſſuring them, that they are far from the Temper of the Holy Angels, who Rejoyce more at the News of one Notorious Sinner's Converſion, than for many Righteous Perſons who went not aſtray; like as a Father is touched with a more ſenſible Joy, for the Recovery of one Son who was dangerouſly ſick, than for the Health of all the reſt who were in no ſuch Danger. From the whole, *Note* 1. That the Creatures Aberration may ſerve for our Inſtruction; the Sheeps ſtraying away from us, ſhould put us in mind of our wandring away from God. 2. That Chriſt the great Shepherd of his Church, with Vigilancy and Care, ſeeketh up, and findeth out his loſt Sheep, and will never give over his ſearch till he hath found them. 3. That the Recovery of one loſt Sinner by Repentance, is matter of exceeding Joy and Rejoycing to Chriſt the great Shepherd, and to all the Bleſſed Company of Heaven; *There is Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth*, or changeth the whole Courſe of his Life, *more than over ninety and nine juſt Perſons that need no ſuch Repentance.* The opening of a Sinners Heart to Chriſt makes Joy in Heaven, and occaſions Triumph in the City of our God above; as when a young Prince is Born, all the Kingdom Rejoyceth, and the Conduits run Wine; ſo when a Soul is Born to Chriſt under the Goſpel. O what a mighty Satisfaction is it to the Heart of Chriſt and to all the Angels and Saints, that another Soul is eſpouſed to him. O Sinner! Chriſt never Rejoyced over thee before, thou haſt grieved him and wounded him a Thouſand times, but he never Rejoyced in thee till now. And if there be ſuch Joy in Heaven at the Converſion of a Sinner, Lord, what Rejoycing muſt there be at the Glorification of Saints?

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one piece, doth not light a candle, and ſweep the houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find it? 9 And when ſhe hath found it, ſhe calleth her friends and her neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoyce with me, for I have found the piece which I had loſt. 10 Likewiſe I ſay unto you, There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth.

The Scope of this Parable is the ſame with the former; 1. To expreſs the Joy that is found with GOD and his Holy Angels, at the Recovery and Converſion of a notorious Sinner. 2. To juſtifie Chriſt in Converſing with ſuch Sinners in order to their Repentance and Converſion, from the malicious Reflections of the Phariſees made upon our Saviour for ſo doing; the ſenſe of the Words ſeems to be this, If you do all juſtify the diligence and care of a Woman, uſing all poſſible means to recover the loſs of a piece of Silver, that had *Cæſar*'s Image upon it, why (might our Saviour ſay) will you Phariſees Cenſure and Condemn me for ſeeking to recover and ſave loſt Sinners, that have the Image of an Holy God inſtampt upon them? *Learn hence*, 1. That the Converſion of a Sinner from a Courſe and State of Sin and Wickedneſs, is highly acceptable and pleaſing unto God. 2. That it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the Holy Angels in Heaven do conceive a new Joy at the notice and news of a Sinner's Repentance and Converſion unto God; how the Angels come by this Knowledge, whether by virtue of their Miniſtry here below, or whether God is pleaſed to reveal it to them above, as a thing extremely welcome and delightful to Good Spirits, 'tis neither material to enquire, nor poſſible to determine. But the Happineſs not being intenſively Infinite, it is certain, that they may be Happier than they are. *Note* 3. That God is not only willing to receive and embrace Repenting and Returning Sinners, but the News of their Repentance is entertain'd with ſo much Joy in Heaven, that if it be poſſible for the Bleſſed Inhabitants of that Place to have any thing added to their Happineſs, this will be a new Acceſſion to it: For tho' the Happineſs of God himſelf be intenſively Infinite, and can have nothing added to it; yet the Happineſs of Angels and Glorified Spirits being but finite, is capable of addition; and as their Knowledge and Love do increaſe, ſo their Felicity may be growing and improving to all Eternity; ſo that it is reaſonable enough to ſuppoſe, that there is really Joy among the Angels and Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, over every Sinner that Repenteth.

11 And he ſaid, A certain man had two ſons: 12 And the younger of them ſaid to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after, the younger ſon gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living. 14 And when he had ſpent all, there aroſe a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himſelf to a citizen of that country; and he ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the ſwine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himſelf, he ſaid, How many hired ſervants of my fathers have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger! 18 I will ariſe, and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy ſon: make me as one of thy hired ſervants. 20 And he aroſe, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him. 21 And the ſon ſaid unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon. 22 But the father ſaid to his ſervants, Bring forth the beſt robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on his feet. 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: 24 For this my ſon was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt and is found. And they began to be merry.

In the two former Parables of the loſt Sheep and loſt Groat, was repreſented to us the great Pains and Care which Chriſt takes for the Recovery of loſt Sinners. In this third Parable of the Prodigal Son, is ſhadowed forth unto us, with what great readineſs, joy and gladneſs our Heavenly Father receives Repenting and Returning Sinners. In the Face of this Prodigal, as in a Glaſs, we may behold, Firſt, A riotous Sinner's Averſion from God. Secondly, A penitent Sinner's Converſion to God. Thirdly, A pardoned Sinner's Acceptance and Entertainment with God. From the whole *Learn* 1. What is the Nature of Sin, and the Practice of Sinners; Sin is a departing from God, and every Sinner doth voluntarily, and of his own accord depart from him: *He took his Journey into a far Country. Learn* 2. The great Extravagancy which Sinners run into when they forſake God, and give up themſelves to the Conduct of their Luſts and vile Affections; he waſted all his Subſtance *with Riotous Living*; that is, ſpent his Time, and conſumed his Treaſure *in Riot and Exceſs. Obſerve* 3. That Sin will certainly bring Men into Streights, but Streights do not always bring Men off from Sin; *He began to be in Want*, yet thinks not of returning to his Father's Houſe. 4. That Sinners will try all Ways, and go through the greateſt Hardſhips and Difficulties before they will leave their Sins and return Home to their Heavenly Father; *He joined himſelf to a Citizen of that Country, and went into the Fields to feed Swine:* He chooſes rather to Feed at the Hogs Trough, than to Feaſt in his Father's Houſe. *Obſerve* 5. At laſt the happy Fruits of a Sanctified Affliction; they put the Prodigal upon ſerious Conſideration, *He came to himſelf*: upon wiſe Conſultation, *I periſh for Hunger*, and upon a fixed Reſolution, *I will ariſe, and go to my Father*; ſerious Conſideration, and ſolid Reſolution, are great ſteps to a ſound Converſion and thorough Reformation. *Obſerve* 6. The affectionate Tenderneſs and Compaſſion of the Father towards the returning Prodigal; tho' he had deſerved to be ſharply reproved, ſeverely corrected, and finally rejected and ſhut out of Doors; yet the Father's Compaſſion is above his Anger; not a word of his Miſcarriages drops from his Father's Mouth, but as ſoon as ever the Son looks back, Mercy looks out, and the Father expreſſes, 1. His ſpeedy readineſs to receive his Son, *He ran unto him*; the Son did only ariſe and go, but the Father made haſte and ran; Mercy has not only a quick Eye to ſpy out a Penitent, but a ſwift Foot, it runs to embrace a Penitent. 2. Wonderful Tenderneſs, *He fell upon his Neck*; it had been much to have looked upon him with the Eye, more to have taken him by the Hand, but moſt of all to fall upon his Neck. Divine Mercy will not only meet a Penitent, but embrace him alſo. 3. Strong Affectionateneſs, *He kiſſed him*, giving him thereby a pledge and aſſurance of perfect Friendſhip and Reconciliation with him. *Learn hence*, That God is not only ready to give Demonſtrations of his Mercy to penitent Sinners, but alſo to give the Seals and Tokens of his ſpecial Reconciled Favour to them; they ſhall now have the Kiſſes of his Lips, who formerly deſerved the Blows of his Hand; *The Father ran unto him, fell on his Neck and kiſſed him. Obſerve Laſtly*, The great Joy that appeared in the whole Houſe, as well as in the Father's Heart, upon this great Occaſion, the Prodigal Son's returning, *They all began to be merry*, there was Muſick and Dancing. *Learn hence*, That ſincere Converſion brings the Soul into a joyful, into a very joyful State and Condition. The Joy that Converſion brings is an holy and ſpiritual Joy, a ſolid and ſubſtantial Joy, a wonderful and tranſcendent Joy, an increaſing and never-fading Joy; our Joy on Earth is an earneſt of the Joys of Heaven, where there will be Rejoycing in the Preſence of our Heavenly Father, and his Holy Angels to all Eternity; *Becauſe we were dead, but are now alive again; we were loſt, but are found.*

25 Now his elder ſon was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the houſe, he heard muſick and dancing. 26 And he called one of the ſervants, and asked what theſe things meant. 27 And he ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, becauſe he hath received him ſafe and ſound. 28 And he was angry and would not go in: therefore came his father out and entreated him. 29 And he anſwering ſaid to his father, Lo, theſe many years do I ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gaveſt me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as ſoon as this thy ſon was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou haſt killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he ſaid unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found.

By the murmuring of the Elder Son at the Prodigal's Returning to, and Reception with his Father; ſome think the *Jews* in general are to be underſtood, whoſe Peeviſhneſs to the Gentiles, and their Repinings at the Offer of Salvation, made unto them by the Goſpel, is very evident from many places of Scripture: Others underſtand it of the Scribes and Phariſees in particular, who preſuming on their own Righteouſneſs, as if they had never tranſgreſſed God's Commandments at any time, murmured at our Saviour for Converſing with Sinners, tho' it were in order to the bringing of them to Repentance; which inſtead of being frowardly diſcontented at, they ought to have rejoyced in. *Learn hence*, There is ſuch an Envious Spirit in Men, yea, even in the beſt of Men, as inclineth them to repine at ſuch Diſpenſations of Divine Grace and Favour, as others receive and they want. 2. That to indulge ſuch a Spirit and Temper in our ſelves, argues great Sin and great Folly; great Sin, in being diſſatisfied with God's Diſpenſations; and affronting his Wiſdom and Juſtice; and great Folly, in making another's Good our Grief, as if we had leſs, becauſe another has more; *The elder Son was angry, and would not go in*; it follows, *therefore came the Father out and intreated him.* This ſhews the Meekneſs of God in dealing with us under our Frowardneſs; and the high Satisfaction he takes in a Sinner's Converſion and returning to his Duty. *Laſtly*, This points out unto us our Duty to imitate God, and be Followers of him as dear Children. Doth he Rejoyce at a Sinner's Return to his Duty? ſo ſhould we. 'Tis the Devil's Temper to regret and envy the Good and Happineſs of others; he gnaſhes his Teeth, when the Prey he thought himſelf ſure of, is ſnatched out of his Jaws. But to God and all his Holy Angels, nothing is ſo agreeable as the Repentance and Converſion of a Sinner from the Error of his ways, and the Saving of a Soul from Death; this is looked upon as a Reſurrection from the Dead, and a ground of the greateſt Joy and Rejoycing; *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found. Whence Note*, That Regeneration is the Term from which all true Pleaſure Commences. We never live a merry Day till we begin to live unto God; when the Prodigal Son returned to his Father, then, and not till then, they began to be merry.

CHAP. XVI.

AND he ſaid alſo unto his diſciples, There was a certain rich man which had a ſteward; and the ſame was accuſed unto him that he had waſted his goods. 2 And he called him, and ſaid unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy ſtewardſhip, for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward. 3 Then the ſteward ſaid within himſelf, What ſhall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the ſtewardſhip: I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed. 4 I am reſolved what to do, that when I am put out of the ſtewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes. 5 So he called every one of his lords debters unto him, and ſaid unto the firſt, How much oweſt thou unto my lord? 6 And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of oyl. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and ſit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then ſaid he to another, And how much oweſt thou? And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of wheat. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourſcore.

Our Lord begins this Chapter with the Parable of a Rich Man's Steward, who being called upon by his Maſter to give up his Accounts, in order to his being diſcharged from his Office, caſt about with himſelf what Courſe he had beſt take to provide for his Subſiſtence, when he ſhould be turned out of his Employment; at laſt, he reſolves upon this Courſe: That he will go to his Lord's Debtors, and take a favourable Account of them, writing down Fifty for an Hundred, that by this means he might oblige them to be kind to him in his Neceſſity; this is the ſum of the Parable: Now the Scope and Deſign of it is this, To exhort all Men that are entruſted by God here, with Eſtates, Honours, and Authority, to make uſe of all theſe unto Spiritual Ends, the Glory of God, and the Benefit of others; for we are not Proprietors and Owners, but Stewards only of the manifold Gifts of God, and muſt be accountable unto him for all at laſt; but in the mean time to Uſe, Imploy and Improve our Lord's Goods to the beſt Advantage for our ſelves, whilſt we are intruſted with them; this is the Scope of the Parable: Now the Obſervations from it are theſe, 1. That all Perſons, even the higheſt and greateſt of Perſons are but Stewards of the good things of God. 2. That our Stewardſhip muſt and ſhall have an End; we ſhall not be always, nay, we ſhall not be long Stewards. 3. That when we are put out of our Stewardſhip, we muſt give an Account of our Carriage therein, and the greater our Truſt was, the heavier will our Reckoning be. 4. That therefore it will be our higheſt Prudence, whilſt we are intruſted with our Maſter's Goods, ſo to uſe and improve them, as may make moſt for our Comfort and Advantage, when we give up our Account.

8 And the lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, becauſe he had done wiſely: for the children of this world are in their generations wiſer than the children of light.

Wiſely, that is Diſcreetly, according to the Wiſdom of the Men of this World, whoſe Concern is only for the good things of this Life. Chriſt commends him not abſolutely as a fit Example to be followed in waſting his Maſter's Goods, but comparatively, as being worthy to be ſo far imitated by the Children of Light, as to take the ſame Care to ſecure Heaven as others do to get the World. Chriſt commends him no farther than we do a Perſon, when we ſay, ſuch a one is a ſhrewd Man for the World; In a word, The Steward is here commended, not for his Diſhoneſty, but for his Policy, ſhrewdneſs, and Sagacity, having done cunningly for himſelf, tho' knaviſhly for his Maſter; from whence our Saviour draws this Concluſion, *That the Children of this World are in their Generation wiſer than the Children of Light. Hence Note*, That the generality of Men are not ſo Wiſe and Provident for the Soul, and the Concernments of another World, as worldly Men are for the Intereſts and Concerns of this Life. It is ſeldom ſeen, that good Men are ſo wiſe for the Concerns of their Souls, as worldly Men are for their worldly Intereſts.

9 And I ſay unto you, Make unto your ſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.

Here our Saviour makes Application of the foregoing Parable to his Diſciples. Where *Note*, 1. The Title given by our Saviour to Wealth and Riches, he calls it *Mammon*, and *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*; Mammon was the Name given by the Heathens to the God of Riches; the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, is Riches unrighteouſly gotten. 2. The Advice given by our Saviour, to the Men of Wealth, *Make to your ſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*, that is, Make God your Friend by a Charitable Diſtribution, that he may bleſs you; make the Poor your Friends, that they may unitedly engage their Prayers for you; make your own Conſciences your Friends, that they may not reproach and ſhame you, ſting and torment you. 3. *Obſerve*, The Argument uſed to excite the Rich to this Improvement of their Wealth, *That when ye fail they may receive you into Everlaſting Habitations*; *when ye fail*, that is, When ye Dye, and your Riches fail you, and can ſtand you in no farther ſtead, *they may receive you*; What they? Some underſtand it of the Holy Trinity, others of the Bleſſed Angels, whoſe Office it is to Convoy the Charitable and Good Man's Soul to Heaven, its Eternal Habitation. Some underſtand it of Riches themſelves, *They may receive you*, that is, Your Eſtates, laid out for God in Works of Piety and Charity, may enter before you into Heaven, and open the Gates of Eternal Life for you, not in the way of Merit, but in a way of Means. *Laſtly, they may receive you*; Some underſtand it of the Poor themſelves, whoſe Bowels our Charity hath refreſh'd, that they will welcome us to Heaven, and receive us with joyful Acclamations into the Eternal Manſions, which are prepared for the Merciful. Others ſay, the Words, *They may receive you*, are impersonally put; for that, you may be received into Heaven when you Dye. This is to imitate the wiſe Merchant in ſending over our Money into another Country by Bills of Exchange.

10 He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much: and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true riches? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another mans, who ſhall give you that which is your own?

Our Bleſſed Saviour having declared to his Followers in the fore-going Verſes, the great Advantages they ſhall reap by a Charitable Diſtribution of Temporal good things, he acquaints them in theſe Verſes with the great Detriment and Diſadvantage that will redound to them if they do otherwiſe. 1. If they be not Faithful in right employing Temporal Riches, they muſt not expect, that God will entruſt them with Spiritual and Heavenly, which are the true Riches: God will deal with his Servants, as we deal with ours, never truſt them with much, whom we find unfaithful in a little. 2. If they be not Faithful in the Improvement of theſe outward things, which God intruſts them with but for a time, and muſt ſhortly leave them to others; how can they expect, that God ſhould give them thoſe Spiritual good things, which ſhall never be taken away from them to whom they are given. Where *Note*, 1. That the Riches we have are called not our own, but another Man's, *If ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's*; Becauſe God hath not made us Proprietors, but diſpenſers; not Owners, but Stewards of theſe things; we have them for others, and muſt leave them to others; we are only Truſtees for the Poor; if much be put into our Hands, it is to diſpence to others, according to our Maſter's Order; let us be Faithful then in that which is another Man's, that is, with what God puts into our Hand for the Benefit of others. 2. *Note*, That tho' our Gifts are not our own, yet Grace or Spiritual Goods are our own; others may have all the Benefit of our Gifts, but we ſhall have the Benefit and Comfort of our own Grace; this Treaſure we cannot leave to others, and it ſhall never be taken away from our ſelves. *Note*, 3. That God is Juſt, and will be eternally juſtified in denying his Special Grace to thoſe, who do not make uſe of his Common Gifts: Would Men be Faithful in Improving a little, GOD would intruſt them with more; did they not abuſe the Truſt of his Common Gifts, he would not deny them the Treaſure of his Saving Grace, called here *The true Riches*.

13 No ſervant can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

Obſerve here, A Two-fold Maſter ſpoken of, GOD and the World: GOD is our Maſter by Creation, Preſervation, and Redemption; he has appointed us our Work, and ſecured us our Wages; the World is become our Maſter, by Intruſion, Uſurpation, and a general Eſtimation; too many eſteeming it as their chief Good, and delighting in it as their chief Joy. *Obſerve*, 2. That no Man can ſerve theſe two Maſters, who are of contrary Intereſt, and Iſſue out contrary Commands; when two Maſters are ſubordinate, and their Commands ſubſervient each to other, the difficulty of ſerving both is not great; but where Commands intefere, and Intereſts claſh, it is impoſſible; no Man can ſerve GOD and the World, but he may ſerve God with the World; We may be ſerved of Riches, and yet ſerve God, but we cannot ſerve Riches but we muſt diſſerve God; we cannot ſerve God and the World both, and ſeek them as our chief Good, and ultimate End, becauſe no Man can divide his Heart betwixt GOD and the World. *Learn hence*, That to Love the World as our chief Good, to ſeek it as our higheſt Intereſt, and to ſerve it as our chief Commander, cannot ſtand with the Love and Service which we bear and owe to God our Maker. The World's Slaves, whilſt ſuch, can be none of God's Free-men.

14 And the Phariſees alſo who were covetous, heard theſe things: and they derided him.

The Phariſees were notoriouſly addicted to the Sin of Covetouſneſs, accounting no Men happy but them that were Rich; and becauſe the Promiſes made to the *Jews* were generally (tho' not only) of Temporal Bleſſings, they look'd upon Poverty as a Curſe, and eſteemed the Poor accurſed, *John* 7. 49. Theſe Phariſees, hearing their Covetouſneſs reproved, and the Doctrine of Charity and Alms Preached and enforced by our Saviour, they derided him in the ſhamefulleſt manner, with the higheſt degree of Contempt and Scorn, wringing the Noſe, and making Mouths at him, as the Original Word ſeems to import. *Learn hence*, 1. That Sinners grow very angry and impatient under the Miniſtry of the Word, when they hear their darling Sin, their beloved Luſt ſtruck at, and ſharply reproved. 2. That Covetous Men, who make Wealth their Idol, when they hear the Doctrine of an Holy Contempt of the World Preached, and the great Duty of Alms-giving Urged and Inforced, they make it the matter of their Contempt and Deriſion; *The Phariſees heard and derided him.*

15 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtifie your ſelves before men: but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men, is abomination in the ſight of God.

Here our Saviour ſharply reproves the Phariſees for their horrible Pride, their Self-juſtification, and vain Affectation of the Opinion and Eſteem of others; as if Chriſt had ſaid, You bear up your ſelves, and take a pride in this, that Men know no Ill by you, that no Man can ſay, Black is your Eye, but God can ſee that Black is in your Heart. You think, that becauſe you glory in your own excellencies, that God glories in you too; but who is highly eſteemed by you, is abominated by God. *Learn*, That no Man ought to think himſelf approved of God, barely becauſe he is approved by himſelf;

for all who juſtify themſelves upon the goodneſs of their Works, are not good.

16 The law and the prophets were until John: ſince that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man preſſeth into it. 17 And it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, then one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.

Our Saviour in theſe Words gives the Phariſees to underſtand, that their Contempt of his Perſon and Doctrine was the more inexcuſable, becauſe they lived in and under the cleareſt Light of the Goſpel. The Preaching of the Law and the Prophets continued but till *John the Baptiſt* came amongſt you; ſince which time the Goſpel has been clearly Preached, both by him, and my ſelf unto you; and it has pleaſed God to give my Doctrine great Acceptation in the World. Tho' you Phariſees reject it; yet every one, that is, very many paſs into it; ſo that the Doctrine which you mock, the Holy Doctrine of the Goſpel, others will embrace. Yet leſt whilſt Chriſt ſpake thus highly of the Goſpel, the Phariſees ſhould reproach him as a Deſtroyer of the Law, he ſhews that the Obligation of the Moral Law was of eternal Force, and that Heaven and Earth ſhould ſooner paſs, than the Obligation of that Law ceaſe; which yet the Phariſees moſt ſhamefully violated, particularly the Seventh Commandment, which they brake by permitting and practiſing Divorces, upon unjuſtifiable Grounds. *Learn hence*, That the Moral Law, in all the Branches of it, which is ſummarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, is an eternal Rule of Life and Manners, which is to ſtand in Force as long as the World ſtands, and the Frame of Heaven and Earth endures.

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day. 20 And there was a certain begger named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of ſores. 21 And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich mans table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his ſores.

Our Saviour, in this Parabolical Hiſtory of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, Inſtructs us concerning the right uſe of Riches, which is to capacitate us to do good to others, declaring, That in the Life to come, the pious poor Man ſhall be eternally Happy, whilſt the unmerciful rich Man ſhall be intollerably Miſerable. *Here Obſ.* 1. The different State and Condition of good and bad Men in the other World from what they are in this; here the Wicked proſper, grow Rich and Great, and the Good and Vertuous are in Calamity, ſuffer Poverty and Diſtreſs, which has ſtaggered many Men, yea, the beſt of Men in the belief of a Divine Providence. *Obſ.* 2. That our Saviour did not Cenſure the Rich Man for being Rich, but for being Senſual; not for wearing coſtly Apparel, and keeping a plentiful Table, (which, if managed according to Mens Qualities and Eſtates, is a commendable Vertue) but his Senſuality and Luxury, and forgetting to Feed the Hungery with the Superfluities of his Table; theſe are the things for which he is Cenſured. From whence we may *Learn*, that Pride and Luxury, Intemperance and Senſuality, are ſuch Abuſes of worldly Riches, as worldly Men are very prone and incident to. Rich Men too often make their Back and their Belly their God; Sacrificing and Devoting all they have, to the Service of thoſe Idols. *Obſ.* 3. That a poor and mean Condition is the Lot of many good Men, nay, perhaps of the moſt in this World. 4. That a Man may be poor and miſerable in this World, and yet be very dear to God; the Grace of Sanctification is ſometimes beſtowed moſt eminently, where the Gifts of Providence have been diſpenſed more ſparingly: Conſequently from the preſent State of Men in this World, we can make no judgment of their future Condition in the World to come.

22 And it came to paſs that the begger died, and was carried by the angels into Abrahams boſom: the rich man alſo died and was buried. 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Saviour repreſents all Men, both Good and Bad, paſſing immediately out of this Life into a State of Happineſs or Miſery; *Lazarus died, and was carried by Angels into Abraham's Boſom. Thence Note*, 1. That the Souls of Men ſurvive in Senſibility and Activity, after the diſſolution of their Bodies, and do not ſleep with the Body till the Day of the Reſurrection. 2. That all holy Souls, and amongſt the reſt the Godly Poor, are inſtantly, after Death, conveyed by Angels to their place of Reſt and Bleſſedneſs. *The Rich Man alſo died*; this is added to let us know, that Riches for all Mens Confidence in them, will not deliver from Death; the Rich Man might be Surfeited by faring deliciouſly every Day, whilſt *Lazarus* was Famiſhed. *And was Buried*; Here is no mention of *Lazarus*'s Burial, probably he had none, but flung out of the way into ſome Hole or Pit; or if he had a Burial, a very mean one, which is paſt over in ſilence: All the advantage which a Rich Man has by a great Eſtate after he is Dead, is only to have a pompous Funeral, which yet ſignifies nothing to him, becauſe he is not ſenſible of it: *And in Hell lifts up his Eyes*, &c. He feels at once his own Miſery, and ſenſibly perceives *Lazarus*'s Happineſs. *Thence Note*, That the Souls of wicked Men, whilſt their Bodies lye in the Grave, are in a State of greateſt Miſery, which is aggravated by the ſenſe they have at the ſame time of the Saints Happineſs. For probably the Bleſſed ſhall ſee the Torments of the Damned, and the Damned ſhall probably ſee the Glory of the Bleſſed.

24 And he cryed, and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Obſerve here, 1. The Place where the Rich Man ſuffers, it is in Hell; the Souls of wicked Men, when they leave their Bodies, do certainly go into a place of Torment, which it not only beyond Expreſſion, but our Apprehenſion alſo, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, thoſe* dreadful *things which God hath prepared for them that* hate *him*. *Obſ.* 2. The Sin for which he ſuffers, it is the Sin of Unmercifulneſs. *Thence Learn*, That Uncharitableneſs and unmercifulneſs to the Poor, is a very great Sin, and ſuch a Sin as alone, and without any other Guilt, is ſufficient to Ruin a Man for ever; there is found in this Sin, great Impiety towards God, and great Inhumanity towards our own Nature. *Obſ.* 3. The Nature and Quality of his Sufferings, they are exquiſitely Painful, and void of the leaſt degrees of Comfort; not a Drop of Water is granted to cool an inflamed Tongue. *Learn thence*, That the leaſt Refreſhments are impatiently deſired by Damned Souls in Hell, but righteouſly denied and with-held from them; a Drop of Water was deſired, but not granted. No Cup of Water, no Bowls of Wine in Hell; there is but one full Cup in Hell, and that is the Cup of God's Wrath, without any mixture of Mercy or Pity. That Throat will be for ever parched with Thirſt then, which is drenched and drowned with Exceſs now: The Songs of the Drunkard here will be turned into Howling and Lamentations there.

25 But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Obſerve, 1. The Title given to the Rich Man by Father *Abraham*, *Son*: He doth not revile him, tho' a very bad Man; if we revile the Good, we are unjuſt, they deſerve it not; if we revile the Bad, we are unwiſe, we ſhall get nothing by it; a wiſe Man knows not what it is to give bad Language. *Obſ.* 2. The Admonition given, *Remember, that thou in thy Life-time receiveſt thy good things*; thy good things in which thou placedſt all thy Happineſs; thy good things, which thou lookedſt upon thy ſelf as the Proprietor, and not as the Diſpenſer of; Now remember what thou hadſt, and what thou abuſedſt. *Learn hence*, That the outward Bleſſings which are afforded to wicked Men on Earth, will be ſadly remembred in Hell; *Son, remember, that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good things*. 2. That no Man ought to meaſure his Happineſs hereafter by his Temporal Felicity here; we may receive our good things here, and yet be tormented hereafter. 3. That no Man ought to be exceſſively troubled if he meets with Hardſhip here, becauſe thoſe for whom God deſigns Good things hereafter, may have their evil things here; *Son, thou hadſt thy good things, and alſo Lazarus evil things*. 4. The word (*Remember*) implies that Human Souls in their State of Separation, do exerciſe Memory, Thought and Reflection on the paſt Occurrences and Actions of their Lives, and conſequently, that they do not Sleep or fall into a ſtate of inſenſibility and inactivity at Death till the Reſurrection.

26 And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that would come from thence.

The meaning is, That there neither is, nor can be any Commerce or Intercourſe betwixt Glorified Saints and Damned Sinners; but the Sate of Souls at Death is unalterably fixed and ſtated. *Learn*, that the miſerable Condition of Damned Souls in the next World, and the bleſſed Condition of Glorified Souls is uncheangeably and unalterably ſuch; the Power of God is irreſiſtable, and the Will of God is invariable, the Oath of God is immutable; *I have ſworn that they ſhall not enter into my Reſt.*

27 Then he ſaid, I pray thee therefore father, that thou wouldeſt ſend him to my fathers houſe: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may teſtifie unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment.

Here the Rich Man is repreſented as retaining even in Hell ſome tenderneſs for his Relations on Earth; yet others think, that the kindneſs intended, was rather to himſelf than to his Relations; fearing that their ſinning by his Example ſhould be an aggravation of his own Torments. *Note thence*, That the preſence of ſinful Relations and Companions in Hell, may be ſuppoſed to make a conſiderable Addition to the Miſeries of the Damned; the ſight of thoſe whom they have ſinned with, is a freſh revival of their own Guilt; all the Circumſtances of their paſt and profligate lives are upon this occaſion continually in their remembrance. *Note farther*, This miſerable Wretch is convinced that he could not get out of Hell, therefore deſires, that no Friend of his might come in. He knew well enough, that if they were once there, they would come out no more. Indeed, God will at the Great Day ſend forth his Writ to the Grave, to bring out the Bodies of the Wicked that are ſhut up there, and will ſend out his Writ to Hell, to bring forth the Spirits that are ſhut in there, but it is in order to this, that both Soul and Body together may receive an Eternal Sentence for an everlaſting Impriſonment with the Devil, and his Angels, and there will be no more opening for ever.

29 Abraham ſaith unto him, They have Moſes and the prophets; let them hear them.

That is, they have the Inſpired Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, which ſufficiently declare the Mind and Will of God to Mankind, and therefore it is unreaſonable to expect any farther Revelation. *Learn thence*, That a ſtanding Revelation of God is Evidence ſufficient for Divine Things; it is a more certain way of Conveyance, and more ſecure from Impoſture: Secondly, That there is ſufficient Evidence that *Moſes* and the Prophets, or the Writings of the Holy Scriptures are of Divine Authority, and therefore to be read and heard, to be believed and aſſented to; *They have Moſes*, &c.

30 And he ſaid, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they would repent.

As if he had ſaid, They have always had *Moſes* and the Prophets in their Hands, but yet their Hearts remain impenitent; but if a ſpecial Meſſenger be ſent to them from the Dead, this will not fail to awaken them, and bring them to Repentance. *Learn hence*, How prone we are to diſlike God's Method and Means, which he has appointed for Reclaiming us from our Sins, and imagine ſome Methods of our own would be more Succeſsful. The Scriptures Read, the Word Preached, the Sacraments Adminiſtred; theſe are the ordinary Means, which the Wiſdom of God has appointed for Mens Conviction; and if we think a Meſſenger from the Dead would be a more conducible Means, the next Verſe will confute us, and thoroughly ſatisfy us, that whom the Scriptures Convinces not, probably nothing will; for thus it follows.

31 And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the dead.

A very awakening Text this is, which ſpeaks dreadfully to Perſons ſitting all their Days under the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and yet find not their Underſtandings enlightned, their Judgments convinced, their Wills ſubdued, and their Lives reformed by it. Were it poſſible for ſuch Perſons to ſee one come from the Dead, yea from the Damned, with the Flames of Hell about his Ears, wringing his Hands, and gnaſhing his Teeth, bewailing his Miſery, and beſeeching them to take warning by his Example, and in time to acquaint themſelves with God, and be at peace; all this would have no farther Effect upon them, than to move their Paſſion a little for the preſent, whilſt the dreadful ſound is in their Ears; the Ordinances of God, and not his Providences, are the inſtituted and appointed Means for Mens Converſion and Salvation. *Note then*, 1. That no Viſions or Apparitions, no new Revelations concerning Eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, are to be expected from the other World, in order to Mens Converſion and Salvation. *Note* 2. That the Word of God diſpenſed to us, and the ordinary Means of Grace enjoyed by us, are more conducible and effectual Means to perſwade Men to repentance, than if one ſhould ariſe from the Dead and Preach unto us. A Meſſenger from the Dead cannot bring with him either a more neceſſary Doctrine, or a more certain and infallible Doctrine, nor bring with him better Arguments for our Conviction, than what the Scriptures do propound to our Conſideration; nor can we expect a greater Co-operation of the Holy Spirit, or a greater Concurrence of Divine Power to render a Meſſage from the Dead more effectual, than doth ordinarily attend the Miniſtry of the Word. Henceforward then, let us not wonder, if when a Drunkard drops down dead upon the Spot, the Companions ſay one to another, Drink on: If Sinners Daily tumble one another into the Grave, without conſidering the Operation of God's Hand; this to thoſe that conſider this Text will not ſeem ſtrange; *For if they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be Converted*, tho' hundreds of Sinners before their Eyes drop down dead; nay, *If they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded though one ariſe from the Dead.*

CHAP. XVII.

THen ſaid he unto the diſciples, It is impoſſible but that offences will come: but wo unto him through whom they come. 2 It were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, then that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones.

Two things are here *Obſervable*, 1. The Neceſſity of Scandalous Offences, *It muſt needs be that Offences come*, if we conſider Mens Corruption, Satan's Malice, God's Permiſſion and juſt Judgment. *Obſerve* 2. The Miſery and Miſchief which comes by theſe Scandals; *Wo unto the World becauſe of Offences*; Wo to ſuch as give the Scandal, this is *væ indignantis*, the Wo of one denouncing; and Wo to ſuch as ſtumble at Offences given, this is *væ dolentis*, the Wo of one Lamenting. From the whole *Note*, 1. That Scandals or Offenſive Actions in the Church of Chriſt will certainly happen, and frequently fall out amongſt thoſe that profeſs Religion and the Name of Chriſt; *It is impoſſible but that Offences will come.* Secondly, That ſcandalous and offenſive Actions from ſuch as profeſs Religion and the Name of Chriſt, are Baneful and Fatal Stumbling-blocks to wicked and worldly Men. Thirdly, That the Offences which wicked Men take at the Falls of the Profeſſors of Religion, to the hardening of themſelves in their wicked and ſinful Practices, is matter of juſt and great Lamentation; *Wo unto the World becauſe of Offences, Math.* 18. 7.

3 Take heed to your ſelves: If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he repent forgive him. 4 And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him.

The Doctrine of Forgiving an offending Brother, is preſt upon us with many forcible Arguments in the New Teſtament, which ſpeaks it to be a Duty of indiſpenſable Neceſſity. This place is to be underſtood of private Offences, and perſonal Wrongs and Injuries done by one Man to another; which we muſt firſt reprove, and then remit; and altho' it be ſaid, *If he repent, forgive him*; that is not to be underſtood, as if we needed not pardon our Brother if he neglected to repent and aſk Forgiveneſs; but whether he acknowledges his Offence or no to us, our Hearts muſt ſtand ready to forgive the Wrong done to us, and to pray for Forgiveneſs on his behalf at the Hands of God; laying aſide all thoughts and deſires of Revenge in our own Cauſe; and ſtanding ready to do any Office of Love and Service for our offending Brother. *Learn hence*, 1. That to fall often into the ſame Offence againſt our Brother, is a great aggravation of our Offence; *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a Day*: that is, very often. 2. That as the multiplication of Offences is a great aggravation of Offences, ſo the multiplying of Forgiveneſs is a great demonſtration of a Godlike Temper in us: he that multiplies Sin, doth like Satan ſin abundantly; and he that multiplies Pardon doth like God, pardon abundantly.

5 And the apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our faith.

Obſerve here, 1. The Supplicants, *the Apoſtles*; 2. The Perſon Supplicated, *the Lord*, 3. The Supplication it ſelf, *Increaſe our Faith*; 4. The occaſion of this Supplication, *our Saviour urging the Duty of forgiving Injuries. Learn* 1. That as all Graces in general, ſo the Grace of Faith in particular is weak and imperfect in the beſt of Saints. 2. That the moſt eminent Saints, (Apoſtles not excepted) are very ſenſible of the imperfection of their Faith, and very importunate with God daily for the increaſe of it, *Lord, Increaſe our Faith*. 3. That Faith ſtrengthned enables the Soul to the moſt difficult Duties of Obedience, and particularly helps to the practice of that hard Duty of Forgiving Injuries: When our Saviour had preach'd the Doctrine and Duty of Forgiveneſs, the Apoſtles inſtantly pray, *Lord, Increaſe our Faith*.

6 And the Lord ſaid, If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay to this ſycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you.

Here our Saviour tells his Diſciples, that if they have the ſmalleſt degrees of true Faith, lively, Operative Faith, it will enable them to perform this difficult Duty of Forgiving Injuries, and all other Duties, with as much facility and eaſe as a miraculous Faith would enable them to remove Mountains, and tranſplant Trees. *Learn*, That there is nothing which may tend to the Glory of God, or to our own Good and Comfort, but may be obtained of God by a firm exerciſe of Faith in him; *All things are poſſible to him that believeth.*

7 But which of you having a ſervant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and ſit down to meat? 8 And will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thy ſelf, and ſerve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou ſhalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that ſervant, becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

The Deſign and Scope of this Parable is to ſhew, that Almighty God neither is nor can be a Debtor to any of his Creatures, for the beſt Service which they are able to perform unto him; and, that they are ſo far from meriting a Reward of Juſtice, that they do not deſerve a return of Thanks; three Arguments our Saviour makes uſe of, to evidence and prove this; 1. In reſpect of God, who is our abſolute Lord and Maſter; and the Argument lies thus, If earthly Maſters do not owe ſo much as Thanks to their Servants for doing that which is commanded them, how much leſs can God owe the Reward of Eternal Life to his Servants, when they are never able to do all that is commanded them, in a perfect and ſinleſs manner? 2. In reſpect to our ſelves, who are his Bondſervants, his Ranſomed Slaves, and conſequently we are not our own Men, but his who hath redeemed us; and accordingly do we owe him all that Service, yea more than all that we are able to perform unto him; and therefore whatever Reward is either promiſed or given, it is wholly to be aſcribed to the Maſter's Bounty, and not to the Servant's Merit. 3. To merit any thing by our Good-works is impoſſible, in regard of the Works themſelves, becauſe all that we can do, altho' we do all that is commanded us, is but our Duty. The Argument runs thus; To bounden Duty belongs no Reward of Juſtice; but all the Service we do perform, yea more than we can perform to God, is bounden Duty; therefore there is due unto us no Reward of Juſtice, but of free Mercy: From the whole, *Note*, 1. That we are wholly the Lord's, both by a right of Creation, and Redemption alſo. 2. That as his we are, ſo him we ought to ſerve, by doing all thoſe things which he hath commanded us. 3. That when we have done all, we are to look for our Reward, not of Debt, but of Grace. 4. That were our Service and Obedience abſolutely perfect, yet it could not merit any thing at the Hand of Juſtice; *When you have done all, ſay*, &c.

11 And it came to paſs, as he went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entred into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which ſtood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and ſaid, Jeſus, Maſter, have mercy on us.

Obſerve here, 1. Tho' the *Samaritans* were bitter Enemies to the *Jews*, and had been guilty of great Incivility towards our Saviour, yet our Saviour in his Journey to *Jeruſalem* balks them not, but beſtows the favour of a Miracle upon them. Civil Courteſy and Reſpect may and ought to be paid to thoſe that are the profeſſed Enemies of us, and our Holy Religion. *Obſerve* 2. Tho' the Leper by the Law of God was to be ſeparated from all other Society, (God thereby ſignifying to his People, that the Society of thoſe, that are Spiritually Contagious, ought to be avoided) yet the Law of God did not reſtrain them from Converſing with one another; accordingly theſe Ten Lepers get together, and are Company for themſelves. Fellowſhip is that we all Naturally affect, tho' even in Leproſy; Lepers will flock together; Where ſhall we find one Spiritual Leper alone? Drunkards, and Prophane Perſons, will be ſure to Conſort with one another: Why ſhould not God's Children delight in an Holy Communion, when the Wicked joyn Hand in Hand? *Obſerve* 3. Tho' *Jews* and *Samaritans* could not abide one another, yet here in Leproſy they Accord; here was one *Samaritan* Leper with the Jewiſh. Common Sufferings had made them Friends, whom Religion had disjoyned: O what Vertue is there in Affliction, to unite the moſt alienated and eſtranged Hearts! *Obſ*. 4. Theſe Lepers apply themſelves to Chriſt the great Phyſitian; they cry unto him for Mercy, with reſpect to their Afflictions; they joyntly cry, they all lifted up their Voice with fervent Importunity, *Teaching* us our Duty, to joyn our Spiritual Forces together, and ſet upon God by Troops: O Holy and Happy Violence that is thus offered to Heaven; How can we want Bleſſings when ſo many Cords draw them down upon our Heads?

14 And when he ſaw them, he ſaid unto them, Go ſhew your ſelves unto the prieſts. And it came to paſs, that as they went, they were cleanſed.

Obſerve here, 1. The preventing Grace and Mercy of Chriſt, their Diſeaſe is Cured e're it can be complained of; *Go, ſhew your ſelves unto the Prieſts*, ſays Chriſt, and in their going they were Cleanſed; they were healed before they could come at the Prieſt; that as the Power that healed them was wholly Chriſts, ſo might the Praiſe be alſo. *Obſerve* 2. A twofold Reaſon why Chriſt commanded them to go to the Prieſt. 1. In compliance to the Ceremonial Law, which required the Leper to be brought to them, to judge whether healed, or not; and if ſo, to receive the Offering preſcribed, in token of Thankfulneſs. 2. For the Tryal of their Obedience: Had they ſtood upon Terms with Chriſt, and ſaid, Alas! to what purpoſe is it to ſhew our ſelves to the Prieſts? what good can their Eyes do us? we ſhould be glad to ſee our ſelves Cured; but why ſhould we go to them to ſee our ſelves loathed? Had they thus expoſtulated, they had not been healed; what Command ſoever we receive from Chriſt, we muſt rather conſider the Authority of the Commander, than the weight of the thing Commanded; for God delights to try our Obedience by ſmall Precepts; happy for theſe Lepers, that in Obedience to Chriſt went to the Prieſt, for *as they went, they were healed*.

15. And one of them, when he ſaw that he was

healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

Obſerve here, 1. All were Healed, but one was Thankful; the Cure is wrought upon the Bodies of all, Thankfulneſs is found but in the Heart of one; the Will makes the difference in Men, but he makes the difference in Wills, who at firſt made the Will. All theſe Lepers were Cured, all ſaw themſelves Cured, their ſenſe was alike, their Hearts were not alike. *Obſ.* 2. The Perſon that made this return of Thankfulneſs to Chriſt, *he was a Samaritan*; that is, none of the Jewiſh Nation, but one that was a Stranger to the Common-Wealth of *Iſrael*; neither Place nor Parentage can block up the way, or ſtop up the Current of God's free Mercy, which reaches the unworthy, and the ill-deſerving. *Obſerve* 3. How ſingly he returns his Thanks; he gets away from his Fellows to make his Acknowledgment; there are Caſes wherein Singularity is not only Lawful, but Laudable; inſtead of Subjecting our ſelves to others Examples, it is ſometimes our Duty to reſolve to ſet an Example to others; for it is much better to go the right way alone, than to err with Company. *Obſerve* 4. How ſpeedily he returns his Thanks; no ſooner doth he ſee his Cure, but he haſts to acknowledge it; a noble Pattern of Thankfulneſs. What ſpeed of Retribution is here? late Payments of our Thankfulneſs ſavour of Ingratitude; it were happy for us Chriſtians, did we learn our Duty of this *Samaritan*.

17 And Jeſus anſwered ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed? but where are the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, ſave this ſtranger. 19 And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

In the face of theſe ten Lepers, we may, as in a Glaſs, behold the Face and Complexion of all Mankind: How few are there, O Lord! ſcarce more than One in Ten, who after ſignal Mercies, return ſuitable Thanks. Men howl to God upon their Beds, but run away from God as ſoon as they are raiſed up by him. *Obſerve farther*, What an exact Account Chriſt keeps of his own diſpenſed Favours; *Were there not ten cleanſed*? He forgets our Sins, but Records his own Mercies; It is one of his Glorious Titles, a God forgiving and Forgetting Iniquity, but his Mercies are over all his Works, and deſerve everlaſting Remembrance. God keeps a Regiſter of his Mercies towards us. O ſhall we not record the favours received from him, at once declare his Bounty towards us, and our thankfulneſs towards him? *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Thankful Leper was a *Samaritan*, but the Nine that were unthankful were *Iſraelites*. *Learn thence*, That the more we are bound to God, the more ſhameful is our ingratitude towards him; where God may juſtly expect the greateſt returns of Praiſe and Service, he ſometimes receiveth leaſt. God has more Rent and better paid him from a ſmoaky Cottage, than he has from ſome ſtately Palaces.

20 And when he was demanded of the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould come; he anſwered them, and ſaid, The kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation. 21 Neither ſhall they ſay, Lo here, or lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

The generality of the Jews, and particularly the Phariſees, expected that the promiſed Meſſias ſhould be a Temporal Prince, and deliver them from the *Roman* Yoke, under which they groaned. Accordingly the Phariſees here demanded of our Saviour *when the Kingdom of God*, of which he had ſo often ſpoken, *ſhould come*? Chriſt anſwers them, *That his kingdom cometh not with obſervation*, that is, without Pomp and Splendour, which Men may obſerve and gaze upon; but he tells them, the Kingdom of God was now among them, by the Miniſtry of *John* Baptiſt and himſelf; and was already ſet up in the Hearts of his People, by the ſecret Operations of his Holy Spirit. *Learn here*, That the falſe Notion which the Jews had of the Meſſiah and his Kingdom, That he himſelf was to be a Temporal Prince, and his Kingdom, a ſecular Kingdom, to be ſet up with a great deal of Noiſe, Pomp and Splendour, did hinder the generality of them from Believing in him. *Secondly*, That the Kingdom which Chriſt deſigned to ſet up in the World, was altogether Spiritual, not obvious to Humane Senſes, but managed in the Hearts of his People by the Scepter of his Spirit; *My Kingdom cometh not with obſervation, but is within you.*

22 And he ſaid unto the diſciples, The days will come when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee it. 23 And they ſhall ſay to you, See here, or ſee there: go not after them, nor follow them. 24 For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, ſhineth unto the other part under heaven: ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be in his day. 25 But firſt muſt he ſuffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

In the remaining part of this Chapter, our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples with what Days of Tribulation and Diſtreſs were coming on the Jewiſh Nation in general, and on *Jeruſalem* in particular. Days of Suffering, (as if our Saviour had ſaid) are not far off when you will wiſh for my Bodily preſence again among you, to ſupport and comfort you; and when many Seducers will riſe up, pretending to be Deliverers, *but go not you after them*; for after this Generation have Rejected and Crucified me, my coming (ſays Chriſt) to execute Vengeance upon my Enemies and Murderers at *Jeruſalem* by the *Roman* Soldiers, will be ſudden, and like the Lightning, that ſhines in an inſtant from one part of the Heavens to the other. From this Coming of Chriſt to judge *Jeruſalem*, which was an Emblem of the ſignal Judgment, we may gather this Inſtruction, that the Coming and Appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the judging of wicked and impenitent Sinners, it will be a very certain, ſudden, and unexpected appearance.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, ſo ſhall it be alſo in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entred into the ark: and the floud came and deſtroyed them all. 28 Likewiſe alſo as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded: 29 But the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all: 30 Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In theſe Verſes our Saviour declares that *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, and the World's final Deſolation at the great Day, would be like the Deſtruction of the Old World in the Days of *Noah*, and like the Deſtruction of *Sodom* in the Days of *Lot*, and that both in regard of unexpectedneſs, and in regard of Senſuality and Security; as they before the Flood were eating and drinking, Marrying and given in Marriage; that is, wholly given up to Senſuality and Debauchery; and did not know, that is, did not conſider the Flood's coming, till it ſwept them away; thus was it before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and thus will it be before the end of the World. Hence we *Learn*, That as the Old World periſhed by Infidelity, Security and Senſuality, ſo will the ſame Sins be prevailing before the Deſtruction of this preſent World, *As it was in the days of Noah, ſo ſhall it be in the days of the Son of Man.*

31 In that day, he which ſhall be upon the houſetop, and his ſtuff in the houſe, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewiſe not return back. 32 Remember Lots wife.

Here our Saviour adviſes them, that when they ſhall ſee the Judgments of God breaking out upon *Jeruſalem*, that they make all poſſible ſpeed to get out of it, as *Lot* and his Family did out of *Sodom*; and to take heed of imitating *Lot*'s Wife, who looking back became a Pillar of Salt, *Gen.* 19. Where *Obſerve*, 1. Her Offence, ſhe looked back. 2. The puniſhment of her Offence, *She became a pillar of Salt*; her Offence in looking behind her was manifeſt Diſobedience to the Divine Command, which ſaid, *Look not behind thee*; and proceeded either from Careleſneſs, or from Covetouſneſs, or from Curioſity, or from Compaſſion to thoſe that ſhe left behind her, and was undoubtedly the effect of great Infidelity, ſhe not believing the Truth of what the Angel had declared, as touching the Certainty and Suddenneſs of *Sodom*'s Deſtruction. The Puniſhment of her Offence was Exemplary, *She became a Pillar of Salt*; that is, a perpetual Monument of Divine Severity for her Infidelity and Diſobedience. Where *Note* 1. The ſuddenneſs of her Puniſhment; the Juſtice of God ſurprizes her in the very Act of Sin, with a preſent Revenge. 2. The ſeeming diſproportion betwixt the Puniſhment and the Offence; her Offence was a forbidden Look. From whence Carnal Reaſon might plead, was it not ſufficient for her to loſe her Eyes, but muſt ſhe loſe her Life? But the Eaſineſs and Reaſonableſs of the Command aggravated her Diſobedience; and tho' her Puniſhment may ſeem ſevere, it was not unjuſt. Now ſays our Saviour, *Remember Lot's Wife*; that is, let her Example caution all of you againſt Unbelief, Diſobedience, Worldly Mindedneſs, Contempt of God's Threatnings, and Lingrings after the forbidden Society of lewd and wicked Perſons.

33 Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life, ſhall preſerve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there ſhall be two in one bed; the one ſhall be taken, and the other ſhall be left. 35 Two women ſhall be grinding together; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two men ſhall be in the field; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.

In this Hour, when Judgment is come upon *Jeruſalem*, Chriſt declares, that whoſoever ſhall take any unchriſtian Courſe to preſerve his Life, by denying him and his Holy Religion, he ſhall loſe Eternal Life; but he that for Chriſt's ſake ſhall loſe his Natural Life, inſtead of a Mortal, ſhall enjoy an Immortal Life in Bliſs and Glory. *Here we Learn*, 1. That the Love of Temporal Life is a great Temptation to tempt Men to deny Chriſt and his Holy Religion, in a Day of Tryal. 2. That the ſureſt way to attain Eternal Life, is chearfully to lay down our Temporal Life, when the Glory of Chriſt, and the Honour of Religion requires it of us. Chriſt farther adds, That in this Terrible Night of *Jeruſalem*'s Calamity, when Deſtruction comes upon her, the Providence of God will remarkably diſtinguiſh between one Perſon and another: True Believers, and conſtant Profeſſors ſhall be delivered, and none elſe; ſuch ſhall eſcape the Danger, others ſhall fall by it.

37 And they anſwered and ſaid unto him, Where, Lord? And he ſaid unto them, Whereſoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

The Diſciples hearing our Saviour ſpeak of ſuch Tremendous Calamities, inquire where theſe Judgments ſhould fall: he anſwers them figuratively, and by a Proverbial Speech, *That where the Carcaſs is, there will the Eagles be gathered together*: ſignifying, that *Jeruſalem*, and the obdurate Nation of the *Jews*, was the Carcaſs which the *Roman* Armies, whoſe Enſign was the Eagle, would quickly find out and feed upon; and that *Judea* in general, and *Jeruſalem* in particular, would be the Theatre and Stage of thoſe Tragical Calamities. *Learn thence*, That the appointed Meſſengers of God's Wrath, and the Inſtruments of his Vengeance, will ſuddenly gather together, certainly find out, and ſeverely puniſh an impenitent People devoted to Deſtruction, *Where the Carcaſs is*, (That is, the Body of the Jewiſh Nation) *there will the Eagles* (that is, the *Roman* Soldiers) *be gathered together*.

CHAP. XVIII.

AND he ſpake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. 3 And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of mine adverſary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me. 6 And the Lord ſaid, Hear what the unjuſt judge ſaith. 7 And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Nevertheleſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?

There is no Duty in Chriſtianity, the practice of which our Saviour preſſes upon us more frequently than this Duty of Prayer. To encourage his Diſciples (and us in them) to fervency, importunity, and perſeverance in this Duty, he propounds here the Parable of an unjuſt Judge, who was overcome by an importunate Widow, to do her Juſtice contrary to his own Inclinations; from whence our Saviour argues, that if Importunity will prevail with a ſinful Man, to grant Petitions offered to him; how much more prevalent will ſuch Importunity be with the infinitely good God, to relieve the Neceſſities of ſuch as devoutly implore his help? And the force of the Argument lies thus; the Judge in the Parable was an inferiour and ſubordinate Judge, was an unrighteous and unjuſt Judge, was a mercileſs and hard-hearted Judge, and yet upon her importunity, he avenged her; how much more will the Sovereign and Supreme Judge, the Holy and Righteous Judge, the Merciful and Compaſſionate Judge of all the Earth, hear and help his Praying People, and be the juſt Avenger of thoſe that fear him? From the whole, *Note* 1. That Prayer, or a Liberty of making our Requeſts known to God, is an ineſtimable Favour and Priviledge. He that conſiders the Nature of GOD, and the Nature of Man, cannot queſtion it; God is a Being of infinite Fulneſs and Perfection; a Self-ſufficient, and an All-ſufficient Good; and Man an indigent, helpleſs dependent Creature; full of Wants, and obnoxious to Dangers. 2. That Prayer is not only an ineſtimable Priviledge, but an indiſpenſable Duty. So ſollicitous is God for our Welfare and Happineſs, that he makes our Priviledge our Duty, by the Authority of his Command; ſo that we are at once ungrateful to God, and unjuſt to our ſelves, in the moſt exalted Degree, if we do not pray unto him, and ſpread our Wants before him. 3. That this Duty of Prayer is not an Occaſional, but a conſtant Duty; *Men ought always to pray*, that is, 1. At all ſeaſonable times and fit opportunities; we are ſaid to do a thing continually, when we do it Seaſonably; now the Seaſons for Prayer are Morning and Evening. As the Morning and Evening Sacrifice was conſtant among the Jews, and the Fire was always upon the Altar, and never went out; ſo he that prays Morning and Evening may be ſaid to be *inſtant in prayer*, and *to pray without ceaſing*. 2. Always to pray, is an endeavour always to keep the Heart in a praying Frame, and to be very frequent in offering up pious Ejaculations, and ſhort mental Prayers to God, as occaſion ſhall offer; when in the Field, in the Shop, in the Bed, when ſleep departs, in the Journey when alone, this may be done advantageouſly without loſs of Time, and acceptably without danger of Hypocriſy, which too often mingles it ſelf with our more ſet Prayers. *Obſ.* 4. We muſt not only pray conſtantly, but pray fervently, yea importunately, if we would pray ſucceſsfully; we muſt cry to God, as the Widow to the Judge. Vehemency and importunity are both helps and ornaments to Prayer; they both Fortify and Beautify our Prayers; they pierce the Heavens, and offer an Holy Violence to God; *Oratio vincit invincibilem & ligat Omnipotentem, hæc vis Deo grata eſt*, ſays *Tertullian*, God delights in ſuch Importunity.

8—*Nevertheleſs, when the Son of Man cometh, ſhall he find faith on earth?* If by the Son of Man's Coming, we underſtand Chriſt's coming to Judgment againſt *Jeruſalem*, then the ſenſe is this; That when he comes to takes vengeance on the obſtinate Jews, and to deſtroy their City, he will find but little Faith, and patient waiting for help from God in the Land of *Judea*, and conſequently little Importuning him with inceſſant Cries and Supplications, as this poor Widow did the unjuſt Judge. 2. If by the Son of Man's coming, we underſtand Chriſt's coming to Judge the World at the Laſt Day, then the ſenſe is, when he Cometh he will find but few Faithful ones, comparatively ſpeaking; he will find but few ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians, in whom the genuine effects and Fruits are found. *Learn*, That when Chriſt ſhall come to Judgment, he will find comparatively very few whoſe Hearts have not fainted, and very many, who thro' the power that Temptation has upon the Frailty of Humane Nature, are fallen away; *When the Son of Man cometh, will he find Faith on the Earth?* Verily but little Faith, and few faithful ones.

9 And he ſpake this parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Phariſee, and the other a publicane. 11 The Phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf, God I thank thee, that I am not as other

men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publicane. 12 I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs. 13 And the publicane ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

The Deſign and Scope of our Saviour in this Parable is to reprove and condemn the Phariſees, and in them all other Self-Juſticiaries, who having an high Opinion of, and truſting in their own Righteouſneſs, deſpiſed others as vile Perſons, whoſe Religion is not accompanied with Oſtentation, and who pretend not to ſuch extraordinary Degrees of Sanctity as themſelves. And the Parable further ſhews, That an Humble, Self-Condemned Sinner, who tho' he has been wicked, is now ſenſible of it, and with Shame and Sorrow confeſſes it before God, is more acceptable than he that vaunts of his Vertue, and reſts in the outward Duties of Religion; his pride and exaltation of himſelf ſhall abaſe him, while the others humility ſhall exalt him. This is the general Scope of the Parable; the particular Obſervations from it are theſe. 1. The *Phariſee* and the *Publican* both pray, they both pray together in the place of Prayer, the Holy Temple, and they both Pray, *Apud ſe*, with and within themſelves: Where the Duty and Action is the ſame, there may be vaſt difference in the purpoſe and intention; doth an humble Saint pray? ſo may an haughty Hypocrite; *Two men went into the Temple to pray, the one a Phariſee, the other a Publican. Obſerve* 2. *The Phariſee's* Prayer, *He ſtood and prayed with himſelf, God I thank,* &c. *Where Note,* His Geſture, *he ſtood and prayed*; ſtanding and kneeling are praying Geſtures, but ſitting is a rude Indecency, except in Caſes of Neceſſity; *In Prayer,* ſays pious Biſhop *Hall, I will either ſtand as a Servant to my Maſter, or kneel as a Subject to my Prince. Note farther,* It is ſaid, *he prayed,* but here is not one Petition, but Thankſgiving; *God I thank thee,* &c. *Whence Learn,* That Thankſgiving is a part of Prayer; *Hannah*'s Prayer, as it is called 1 *Sam.* 2. is a Canticle or Song of Praiſe; we then Pray beſt when we praiſe God moſt. *Again,* See the Phariſee's Pride in this his Prayer; This proud Begger ſhews not his Wounds but his Worth, not his Rags but his Robes, not his Miſery but his Bravery; he brings God Almighty in a Reckoning of his Services; *I faſt twice a Week, I give Alms of all that I poſſeſs,* and thanks God more that others were bad, than that himſelf was good; had the *Phariſee* with an humble Mind thanked God for his reſtraining Grace, that tho' he were not ſo good as he ſhould be, that yet he was not ſo vile and bad as ſome others, this had been no fault; but when he comes before God with a proud and ſcornful Mind, inwardly pleaſed, that others were ſo bad, and ſo much worſe than himſelf; giving Thanks rather for others badneſs, than his own Goodneſs; This is a Wickedneſs incident to none but Deviliſh Diſpoſitions. *Learn hence,* That whatſoever ſhews of Goodneſs an Hypocrite may make, yet he is inwardly glad of, and takes a ſecret delight in others Badneſs; *God I thank thee, that I am not as this Publican;* which was a kind of Triumph, and proud inſultation over the poor Publican; he would ſeem to thank God that he was not ſo bad as the Publican, when indeed he was glad, that the Publican was not ſo good as himſelf. *Obſ.* 3. The Publican's Behaviour, in an humble ſight and ſenſe of his own ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs. *He ſtood afar off,* probably in the Court of the Gentiles, where all ſorts of Sinners might come; acknowledging thereby, that he was unworthy to come near the Holy Majeſty of God; not preſuming *to lift up his eyes to Heaven,* That place of perfect Holineſs and Purity; but like a true ſelf-condemned Penitent, ſmote upon his Breaſt, and in bitter Remorſe of Soul ſaid, *God be merciful to me a Sinner. Hence Learn,* That a truly humble temper of mind, well becomes us in all our Approaches and Addreſſes to God, and is more acceptable to him than all pompous Performances whatſoever. For *Obſerve Laſtly,* The Publican being thus condemned of himſelf departs Juſtified by God; *He went down to his houſe juſtified, rather than the Phariſee*; the *Phariſee* juſtified himſelf, but the Publican was juſtified by God. *Thence Learn,* That a penitent Sinner, who is indeed poor in Spirit, is far more eſteemed of God, than he that makes long Prayers, Faſts often, Tythes all his Subſtance, and prides himſelf in all this. Without Humility all is vain Glory and Hypocriſy; and the ſeeming moſt Sanctified Perſon that has it not, is like a painted Sepulchre, Beautiful without, but full of rottenneſs within.

15 And they brought unto him alſo infants, that he would touch them: but when his diſciples ſaw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſolemn Action performed; Children, Infants, ſucking Children, as the word ſignifies, are brought to Chriſt, that he might bleſs them; the Parents looking upon Chriſt as a Prophet, as a great and extraordinary Prophet, perſwaded themſelves, that by his Prayers, and laying his Hands on their Children, they ſhould be preſerved from Bodily Diſeaſes, and from Satan's Power, and that he would confer upon them all needful Bleſſings. *Learn* 1. That Infants are capable of Benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That it is the beſt Office that Parents can Perform unto their Children, to bring them unto Chriſt, that they may be made partakers of that Benefit. 3. That if Infants are capable of Benefit by Chriſt, if capable of his Bleſſing on Earth, and Preſence in Heaven, if they be Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and Heirs of his Kingdom of Glory, then may they be Baptized; for they that are within the Covenant, *Act.* 2. 39. have a Right to the Priviledges of the Covenant, and to Baptiſm the Seal of the Covenant: And if Chriſt denies not Infants the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the greater; what Reaſon have his Miniſters to deny them the Benefit of Baptiſm, which is the leſs? *Learn* 4. That Chriſt will have all his Diſciples and Followers to reſemble little Children in ſuch Properties wherein they may be patterns to them, *viz.* in Humility and Innocency, in freedom from Malice and Revenge, in Docibility and Teachableneſs, in Cleaving to, and Depending upon their Parents, and in Contentedneſs with their Condition; *Whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.*

18 And a certain ruler asked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?

We have here a conſiderable Perſon, a Ruler, coming to Chriſt, with an important queſtion in his Mouth, *What muſt I do to inherit Eternal Life?* Where *Note,* 1. He believes the certainty of a future State. 2. He profeſſes a deſire of an Eternal Happineſs in that State. 3. He declares his readineſs and willingneſs to do ſome good thing in order to the obtaining that Happineſs. *Hence Learn,* 1. That the Light of Nature, or Natural Religion, teaches Men, that good Works are neceſſary to Salvation; or that ſome good thing muſt be done by them, who at Death expect Eternal Life; it is not Talking well, and Profeſſing well, but Living well, that Entitles us to Heaven, and Eternal Life.

19 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none is good ſave one, that is, God.

Our Saviour here reproves this Perſon for calling him *Good,* when he did not own him to be God; ſaying, *There is none good,* that is, Eſſentially and Originally Good, abſolutely and immutably Good, *but God* only; nor any derivatively Good, but he that receives his Goodneſs from God alſo.

20 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Honour thy father and thy mother.

Note here, That the Duties directed to by our Saviour are the Duties of the Second Table, nothing being a better Evidence of our unfeigned Love to God, than a ſincere Performance of our Duty to our Neighbour; Love to Man is a Fruit and Teſtimony of our Love to God. *Learn thence,* That ſuch as are defective in the Duties of the Second Table, Charity and Juſtice towards Man, do make but a Counterfeit ſhew of Religion, tho' they pretend to the higheſt Degrees of Holineſs and Love towards God.

21 And he ſaid, All theſe have I kept from my youth up.

This Aſſertion might be very true, according to the *Phariſee*'s ſenſe and interpretation of the Law, which Condemned only the groſs outward Act, not the inward Luſts and Motions of the Heart. An external Obedience to the Letter of the Law this Man might poſſibly have performed; this made him think well of himſelf, and conclude the goodneſs of his own Condition. *Learn hence*, How prone Men are to think the beſt of themſelves, and to have too high an Opinion of their own Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs before God; this is very natural, but dangerous and fatal.

22 Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: ſell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Here Obſerve, 1. Our Lord's Admonition, *Yet lackeſt thou one thing*, which was true Self-denial, in renouncing the Sin of Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Love of Worldly Wealth: We ought in the midſt of our abundance, to maintain a readineſs of Diſpoſition, to part with all for God's ſake, that is dear unto us in this World. *Obſerve* 2. Our Lord's Injunction, *Sell all that thou haſt, and give to the poor.* This was not a Common, but a ſpecial Precept, given particularly to this Rich Man for Tryal; like that given to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22. and to convince him of his corrupt Confidence in Riches; yet is the Precept thus far of general uſe to us all, to teach us ſo to contemn Worldly Poſſeſſions, as to be willing to part with them all at God's Pleaſure, and when they prejudice our Salvation.

23 And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich.

Here Note, The Effect which our Saviours Admonition had upon this Perſon, *He was ſorrowful.* *Learn thence*, That Carnal Men are exceeding ſorrowful when they cannot win Heaven in their own way. 2. That ſuch as are wedded to the World, will renounce Chriſt rather than the World, when the World and Chriſt ſtand in Competition, *he went away ſorrowful*, (St. *Mark* 10. 22.) *for he was very rich.*

24 And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is eaſier for a camel to go through a needles eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard it, ſaid, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And he ſaid, The things which are unpoſſible with men, are poſſible with God.

Our Holy Lord takes occaſion from the rich Man's Departure from him, to Diſcourſe concerning the danger of Riches, and the difficulties that attend Rich Men in their way to Heaven. From whence we may collect and gather, 1. That Rich Men do certainly meet with more Difficulties in their way to Heaven than other Men; 'tis difficult to withdraw their Affections from Riches, to place their ſupreme Love upon God in the midſt of their Riches, and to depend entirely upon God in a rich Condition; *For the rich man's wealth is his ſtrong Tower.* 2. That yet the fault lies not in Riches, but in rich Men, who by placing their Truſt, and repoſing their Confidence in Riches, do render their Salvation difficult, if not impoſſible. 3. Our Saviour's proverbial Speech, *of a Camels going through the eye of a Needle*, implies thus much, That it is not only a great Difficulty, but an utter impoſſibility, for ſuch as abound in Worldly Wealth, and place their Confidence therein, to be Saved, without an extraordinary Grace and Aſſiſtance from God. 'Tis hard for God to make a Rich Man Happy, becauſe he thinks himſelf Happy without God. 4. That as difficult and impoſſible as this may ſeem to Men, yet nothing is impoſſible with GOD; he can change the Heart of the Rich, by the rich and powerful Influences of his Holy Spirit, *That which is impoſſible with Men, is poſſible with* God.

28 Then Peter ſaid, Lo, we have left all and followed thee.

It was well done, and wiſely done of *Peter*, to leave all and follow Chriſt; it was the beſt Bargain he ever made in all his Life. But *Obſerve*, how he magnifies that little he had left for Chriſt, and uſhers it in with a Note of Admiration, *Lo! we have left all and followed thee.* *Learn hence*, That tho' it be very little that we ſuffer for Chriſt, and have to forſake upon his Account, yet we are prone to magnify and admire it, as if it were ſome great matter. Lord, ſays *Peter*, *We have left all*; What all, Man, hadſt thou to leave? a few ragged Nets, and a tatter'd Fiſherboat; a great all indeed, next to nothing at all, ſcarce worth mentioning, and yet how is it magnified? *Behold, we have left all, and followed thee.*

29 And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of Gods ſake, 30 Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

Obſerve here, The Lenity and Kindneſs of our Lord's Gracious Anſwer, he tells his Diſciples, That they who had left all and followed him, ſhould be no loſers by him; that in this World they ſhould receive many fold, St. *Mark* 10. 30. ſays, *an hundred fold*; but how ſo? *Non formaliter, ſed eminenter; non in ſpecie, ſed in valore, not in Kind, but in Equivalency*; not an hundred Brethren, and Siſters, and Poſſeſſions, in Kind, but he ſhall enjoy all that in God, which all Creatures would be to him, if they were multiplied an hundred times. O the Sanctifying Gifts and Saving Graces, the ſupporting Comforts and raviſhing Conſolations of the Holy Spirit, are a ſufficient Compenſation for any thing, for all, yea for more than all, that we can part with for the ſake of Chriſt.

31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed. 32 For he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on; 33 And they ſhall ſcourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 34 And they underſtood none of theſe things: and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.

We find our Bleſſed Saviour very frequently acquainting his Diſciples with his approaching Sufferings, to prevent the Offence, that they might take at them, when the Providence of God brought them on; his Deſign was to arm them with expectation of his Sufferings, and to quicken them to Preparation for their own; yet is it here ſaid, *That the Diſciples underſtood none of theſe Sayings*; Why ſo? were not the Words eaſy enough to be underſtood? Yes, but they could not reconcile them to the Notion of the Meſſiah, which they had drank in; they concluded he ſhould be a Temporal Prince, and ſubdue their Temporal Enemies, but could not conceive how he that ſhould redeem *Iſrael*, ſhould Dye, and be thus barbarouſly uſed; we had great need to conſider well what Notions we have concerning the things of God, before we entertain them; for falſe Notions once taken up, are not without great Difficulty laid down.

35 And it came to paſs, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man ſat by the way-ſide begging, 36 And hearing the multitude paſs by, he asked what it meant. 37 And they told him, that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by. 38 And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 39 And they which went before, rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried ſo much the more, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 40 And Jeſus ſtood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: And when he was come near, he asked him, 41 Saying, What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee? And he ſaid, Lord, that I may receive my ſight. 42 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Receive thy ſight: thy faith hath ſaved thee. 43 And immediately he received his ſight, and followed him, glorifying God: And all the people when they ſaw it, gave praiſe unto God.

This Chapter concludes with the Recital of a famous Miracle, wronght by our Saviour upon a Blind Man, whom St. *Mark* calls *Bartimeus.* Where we have *Obſervable*, 1. The Blind Man's Faith in Acknowledging Chriſt to be the Meſſiah; for ſo much the Title of *Son of David* did import. 2. *Obſerve* his Fervency as well as his Faith; he cryed to Chriſt for the Mercy of Healing, *Have mercy on me thou Son of David*: A true ſenſe of Want, either Bodily or Spiritual, will cauſe a Soul to cry to Chriſt with earneſtneſs and importunity. *Obſ.* 3. The great Compaſſion and Condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards this blind Man; *he ſtood ſtill, he called him and enlightned his Eyes.* 4. Before Chriſt would reſtore the blind Man to ſight, he muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of ſight, and cry unto him for it. Chriſt knows all his Creatures Wants, but takes no notice of them, till they make them known to him by Prayer. *Obſ.* 5. How much Chriſt magnifies Faith; what he attributes to it, and how he rewards the leaſt Exerciſe of it, *Jeſus ſaid, thy Faith hath ſaved thee*, Chriſt himſelf was the efficient Cauſe of the blind mans Healing; but he exerted his Divine Power upon the Exerciſe of the blind Man's Faith; and accordingly ſays, Thy Faith hath ſaved thee. 6. *Note*, In what way and manner the blind Man doth expreſs his Thankfulneſs to Chriſt for his recovered Sight, *he followed him, glorifying God*: Mercy received from Chriſt is then well Improved, when it engages us to follow Chriſt; this ſhould be the Effect of all Salvations wrought for us. He praiſeth God beſt, that ſerveth him moſt. The life of Thankfulneſs conſiſts in the Thankfulneſs of the Life.

CHAP. XIX.

AND Jeſus entred and paſſed through Jericho. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

This Hiſtory, which relates the Calling and Converſion of *Zaccheus* the Publican, is uſhered in with a Note of Wonder, *Behold there was a man named Zaccheus*; It is both great and good News to hear of a Soul Converted unto God; eſpecially ſuch a remarkable Sinner as *Zaccheus* was; For 1. he was by Profeſſion a Publican; a Calling, that carried Extortion it its Face, and bad defiance to his Converſion; yet behold from the Toll Booth is *Zaccheus* called to be a Diſciple, and *Matthew* an Apoſtle; ſuch is the Freeneſs of Divine Grace, that it often calls the greateſt ſinners, and Triumphs in their powerful Converſion. 2. He was a Chief Publican, and probably one of the chief of Sinners, yet behold him among the chief of Saints. Lord! What Penitent need deſpair of thy Mercy, when he ſee a Publican, nay the chief of Publicans gone to Heaven? 3. It is added as a farther Circumſtance, *That he was rich*; his Trade was not a greater obſtacle to his Converſion than his Wealth; not that there is any malignity in Riches conſidered in themſelves, but they become a ſnare through the Corruption of our Natures. *Zaccheus* had not been ſo famous a Convert, if he had not been Rich; if more Difficulty, yet was there more Glory in the Converſion of rich *Zaccheus*. To all theſe might be added a fourth Circumſtance, namely, that *Zaccheus* was Converted in his old Age, after a long Habit of ſin contracted. Such inſtances, tho' few, has God left upon Record in Scripture, *Abraham* and *Manaſſes* in the Old Teſtament, *Zaccheus* and *Paul* in the New.

3 And he ſought to ſee Jeſus who he was, and could not for the preſs, becauſe he was little of ſtature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycomore-tree to ſee him; for he was to paſs that way.

Zaccheus deſired to ſee Jeſus; this was a ſight that few rich Men deſired to ſee; the ſight of *Caeſars* Face upon their Coyn is more pleaſing to them, then to ſee the face of Chriſt in his Ordinances; yet it was not Faith but Fancy and Curioſity that made *Zaccheus* climb the Sycomore to ſee Jeſus; but the Curioſity of the Eye gave occaſion for the belief of the Heart; he that deſires to ſee Jeſus is in the way to enjoy him. 'Tis good to be near the place where Chriſt is, whatever Principle bring us thither.

5 And when Jeſus came to the place, he looked up, and ſaw him, and ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down; for to day I muſt abide at thy houſe. *6* And he made haſte, and came down, and received him joyfully.

What an inſtance is here of Chriſt's preventing Grace and Mercy; *Zaccheus* climbs up into the Sycomore to ſee Jeſus, Jeſus firſt ſees him; little did *Zaccheus* think, that Jeſus ſhould caſt up his Eyes to him; Chriſt's Looks are Converting Looks; there went a Divine Power along with them, to change the Heart of him whom he look'd upon; he that could heal a Diſeaſe by the Hem of his Garment, could change an Heart with the glance of his Eye. *Obſerve farther*, Chriſt doth not only Note, but Name *Zaccheus*; *He bids him come down, for he muſt abide at his houſe*; What a ſweet Familiarity was here. Tho' the diſtance be Infinitely great betwixt our Saviour and our ſelves, yet he treats us, not with a Majeſtick Statelineſs, but with a gracious Affability. *Some Note*, That *Zaccheus* was the firſt Man we read of to whoſe Houſe Chriſt invited himſelf. *Obſerve Laſtly*, With what ſpeed *Zaccheus* haſtens down, and with what Alacrity he entertains our Saviour; Curioſity carried him up, but Love brings him down, and he entertains Chriſt joyfully; but alas! it was but for a few hours. Lord! How great is the Happineſs of that Man, that Receives and Entertains thee, not for a Day or a Year, or for Millions of Years, but for everlaſting Ages? O let us welcome thee into our Hearts by Faith, whilſt we are here on Earth, and then thou wilt make us welcome with thy ſelf Everlaſtingly in thy Kingdom.

7 And when they ſaw it, they all murmured, ſaying, That he was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner.

That is, the Phariſees who were here, were highly diſcontented, that Chriſt went to a Publican's Houſe, whom they look'd upon as the worſt of Men; their Eye was evil, becauſe Chriſt's was good: Whither ſhould the Phyſician go, but to the Sick, the whole need him not. However, the envious Phariſees cenſure and condemn him for it. Lord, who can hope to eſcape the Aſperſions of cenſorious Tongues, whilſt ſpotleſs Innocence, and perfect Holineſs, falls under the Laſh of them: It is ſufficient for the Servant to be as his Maſter.

8 And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him four-fold.

Two things are here Obſervable, the greatneſs of his Charity, and the juſtneſs of his Reſtitution. As to his Charity *Obſ.* 1. The freeneſs of it; not *I lend*, but *I give*: 2. The readineſs of it, not I will, but *I do give*. 3. The juſtneſs and honeſty of it, *my goods*, not my Spoyls; what is my own, and not rent from others by Rapine or Extortion. 4. The largeneſs and extenſiveneſs of his Charity, *half of my Goods*, not an inconſiderable pittance. 5. The fitneſs of his Charity, *to the Poor*; not to the Rich, not to his rich Heirs, but to his poor Neighbours. Again, as his Charity was large, ſo his Reſtitution was juſt; as he gave half to the Poor, ſo he *Reſtored four-fold to the wronged*; What an evidence was here of a true Penitent! Confeſſion and Satisfaction are both found with him. Whenever Repentance is ſincere and ſaving, there is not only an hatred of former Sins, but a vigorous exerciſe of Graces contrary to thoſe Sins.

9 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, forſomuch as he alſo is the ſon of Abraham.

That, which *Zaccheus* gave to the Poor, was nothing to what Chriſt gave to him: It was but droſs he gave to them, it was Salvation Chriſt gave to him; Where is the Man that can ſay God is in his Debt for Acts of Charity and Mercy? Where is he that will not own God the beſt and quickeſt Paymaſter? *This day is Salvation come to this houſe*; 'tis thine in Title, and e're long it ſhall be thine in Poſſeſſion: *Foraſmuch as he alſo is the Son of Abraham*; that is, either a natural Son of *Abraham*, a Jew, or a Spiritual Son a Believer; the Heir of *Abraham*'s Faith, which was alſo imputed to him for Righteouſneſs: O happy *Zaccheus*! thou haſt climbed up from thy Sycomore to the Heaven, and by thy Charity and Juſtice haſt purchaſed to thy ſelf a Kingdom that fadeth not away.

10 For the Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.

Obſerve here, 1. A deſcription of Man's deplorable State and undone Condition, he is *Loſt*. 2. The Care of Chriſt to ſeek and Recover Man out of that loſt State; *The Son of Man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt.* *Learn*, 1. That Man's Condition is a loſt Condition, and every unregenerate Man is a loſt Man; he has loſt his God, his Soul, his Happineſs, his Excellency, his Liberty, his Ability. 2. That the great Errand that Chriſt came into the World upon, it was to ſeek and to ſave loſt Sinners; this he does by his Blood, by his Word, by his Spirit, and by his Rod.

11 And as they heard theſe things, he added and ſpake a parable, becauſe he was nigh to Jeruſalem, and becauſe they thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear. 12 He ſaid therefore, A certain noble man went into a far country, to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15 And it came to paſs, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded theſe ſervants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the firſt, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he ſaid unto him, Well, thou good ſervant: becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he ſaid likewiſe to him, Be thou alſo over five cities. 20 And another came ſaying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, becauſe thou art an auſtere man: thou takeſt up that thou layedſt not down, and reapeſt that thou didſt not ſow. 22 And he ſaith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked ſervant; Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not ſow. 23 Wherefore gaveſt not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with uſury? 24 And he ſaid unto them that ſtood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they ſaid unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I ſay unto you, That unto every own which hath, ſhall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath ſhall be take away from him. 27 But thoſe mine enemies which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.

For the better underſtanding of this Parable, we muſt 1. Conſider the occaſion of it; 2. The Deſign and Scope of it; 3. The Leſſons of Inſtruction, which our Saviour intended us by it. As to the former; the occaſion of our Saviour's uttering this Parable, ſeems to be this, he was now going up to *Jeruſalem* to dye; ſome of the Company were of Opinion, that he would immediately enter upon his Kingdom, and Act as a Temporal Prince, delivering them from the *Romans*, and deſtroying his and their Enemies; he lets them underſtand the quite contrary, that he muſt die, and riſe again, and aſcend into Heaven, and then return again and receive the Kingdom; and that he was now taking his laſt Journey to *Jeruſalem*, in order to that End. The Deſign, 2. and Scope of the Parable, together with the Interpretation of it is thus, *The Noble-man* here mentioned, is our Saviour himſelf, who in his State of great Humiliation was but like a Noble-man; *His going into a far Country,* ſignifieth his return from Earth to Heaven; *his coming back again,* ſignifieth his Coming to Judgment; *his calling his Servants, and delivering them their Talents,* intimates to us, the various Gifts, which he beſtows upon the Sons of Men, all which are to be employed in his Service, and improved in his Glory; *his calling his Servants to an Account,* plainly ſignifies, that when Chriſt comes to Judgment, he will have an account of every Individual Perſon, how they have uſed the Gifts, and improved the Talents entruſted with them; and that they may expect to be impartially Rewarded according to their Works for God will appear a Righteous God, and will Condemn Sinners out of their Mouths, and a moſt certain and final Ruin will be their Portion; whilſt thoſe that were Faithful in his Service ſhall be crowned with his Reward. Now from the whole we may *Learn* theſe Leſſons of Inſtruction. 1. That our Lord's State of Humiliation and great Abaſement on Earth, being paſt and over, a glorious State of Exaltation he is now arrived at in Heaven. God has exalted him with great Triumph to his Kingdom in Heaven. 2. That Cloathed with infinite Majeſty and Power, and attended with an innumerable Hoſt of Glorified Angels and Saints, this exalted Saviour will come to judge Angels and Men. 3. That in the mean time Chriſt variouſly diſpenſes to his Servants particular Talents, to be employed and improved for his own Glory and his Churches Good. 4. That there will moſt certainly be a Reckoning-day, or a time when our Lord will take an Account of Mens improving thoſe Gifts and Graces, which were given them as ſo many Talents to be improved by them. 5. That there will be degrees of Happineſs and Miſery in the other World, according to Mens Degrees of Faithfulneſs or Negligence in this. 6. That it is abominably Falſe and Impious to charge God, as being rigid and ſevere with Men, and requiring Impoſſibilities at their Hands, *For out of their own Mouths will God condemn them. Laſtly,* That the Condition of God's Faithful Servants will be unſpeakably Happy, and that of the Unprofitable Servant intolerably Miſerable, both in this World, and in the next; the Righteous ſhall enter into the Joy of their Lord, and be confirmed therein, with an utter impoſſibility of loſing that Happineſs. The Wicked, who would not ſubmit to Chriſt's Authority, ſhall not be able to reſiſt his Power. They that would not ſuffer Chriſt to Reign over them, they ſhall at the laſt Day be brought forth and ſlain before him, *Theſe mine Enemies, that would not, that I,* &c.

28 And when he had thus ſpoken, he went before, aſcending up to Jeruſalem. 29 And it came to paſs when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he ſent two of his diſciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over againſt you; in the which at your entring ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man ſat, looſe him, and bring him hither. 31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye looſe him? thus ſhall ye ſay unto him, Becauſe the Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were ſent, went their way, and found even as he ſaid unto them. 33 And as they were looſing the colt, the owners thereof ſaid unto them, Why looſe ye the colt? 34 And they ſaid, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jeſus: and they caſt their garments upon the colt, and they ſet Jeſus thereon. 36 And as he went, they ſpread their cloths in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the deſcent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the diſciples began to rejoyce, and praiſe God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had ſeen, 38 Saying, Bleſſed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt. 39 And ſome of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter, rebuke thy Diſciples. 40 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.

Our Lord, (as is Noted before) was now upon his laſt Journey to *Jeruſalem*, where he was to ſhed his Blood, and lay down his Life, for the Redemption and Salvation of a loſt World; and it is Obſervable, what a double Demonſtration he gives of his great Willingneſs and Forwardneſs to go up to *Jeruſalem*, there to die. 1. Both St. *Luke* here, and St. *Marke*, chap. 10. 32. tells us, That *he went before* the Company, leading the way, when he went to ſuffer: Lord! With what Alacrity and holy Chearfulneſs didſt thou manage the great Work of man's Redemption. None ever went ſo willingly to a Crown, as thou to thy Croſs. 2. Our Saviour, who all his Life Travelled like a poor man on Foot, now he goes up to *Jeruſalem* to die for us, he will Ride, to ſhew his great Forwardneſs to lay down his Life for us; but what was the Beaſt he rode upon, an Aſs's Colt, to Fulfil that Prophecy, *Zach.* 9. 9. *Tell ye the Daughter of Sion, behold your King cometh, riding upon an Aſs*; yea, it was a Colt upon which never Man rode before; to let us ſee, how the moſt unruly and untamed Creatures become obedient and obſequious to Chriſt, and render themſelves ſerviceable to him at his Pleaſure. It was alſo a borrowed Aſs, whereby our Saviour's Right to all the Creatures was manifeſted; and accordingly he bids his Diſciples to tell the Owner, *That the Lord had need of him*; not your Lord, or our Lord, but the Lord, that is, he that is Lord of the whole Earth, *whoſe are the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills. Here Note*, What a clear and full Demonſtration Chriſt gave of his Divine Nature; of his Omniſciency in fore-ſeeing and fore-telling the Event; of his Omnipotency in inclining the Heart, and over-ruling the will of the Owner to let the Colt go; and of his Sovereignty, that as he was Lord of the Creatures, he could command and call for their Service when ever he needed them. The Colt being brought, and our Saviour ſet thereon; *Obſerve next*, The Actions of the Multitude in Acknowledging Chriſt to be their King; they ſpread their Cloths in the way, caſting their Garments on the Ground, for him to ride upon, according to the Cuſtom of Princes when they ride in State; yea the Multitude do not only Diſrobe their Backs, but expend their Breath in joyful Acclamations, and loud Hoſannah's, wiſhing all manner of Proſperity to their Meek but Mighty Prince. In this Princely, yet poor and deſpicable Pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous City of *Jeruſalem*. O how far was our Holy Lord from affecting Worldly greatneſs and grandeur; he deſpiſed that Glory, which Worldly Hearts fondly admire; yet becauſe he was a King, he would be proclaim'd ſuch; and have his Kingdom Confeſt, Applauded and Bleſt; but that it might appear, that his Kingdom was not of this World, he abandons all Worldly Magnificence. O Glorious, yet Homely Pomp! O Meek and Mighty Prince! *Obſerve Laſtly*, The peeviſh Envy of the wicked Phariſees, who were then in Company; they grudge our Saviour his poor Honour, they Envy him this ſmall Triumph of coming into the City upon an an Aſſes Colt, attended by a company of poor People, ſtrewing the way with Boughs of Trees, with Hoſannah's and joyful Acclamations in their Mouths: Theſe poor Peoples Mouths they would have ſtopped; *Maſter, Rebuke thy Diſciples*; they did not like the Muſick: Chriſt tells them, that they Labour in vain to ſuppreſs the Teſtimony given him by his Diſciples, for *if they ſhould be ſilent*, *the ſtones would cry out*, yea cry out ſhame of them for neglecting their Duty; as if Chriſt had ſaid, the Speechleſs Stones will ſpeak, and give witneſs to me if Men will not. *Learn hence*, They that are owned of God, ſhall not want ownings and witneſſings from Man at one time or other, in one way or other; tho' the Envy and Malice of Men do never ſo much gainſay and oppoſe it.

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

No ſooner did our Saviour come within the ſight and view of the City of *Jeruſalem*, but he burſt out into Tears, at the conſideration of their Obſtinacy, and wilful rejecting of the Offers of Grace and Salvation made unto them; and alſo he wept to conſider the dreadful Judgments that hung over their Heads for thoſe Sins, even the utter Ruin and Deſtruction of their City and Temple. *Learn hence*, 1. That good Men ever have been, and are Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions, ſorrowing not only for their own Suffering, but others Calamities. 2. That Chriſt ſhed Tears as well as Blood for the loſt World, *Chriſt wept over Jeruſalem*, as well as bled for her. 3. That Chriſt was infinitely more concerned for the Salvation of poor Sinners, than for his own Death and Suffering: not the ſight of his own Croſs, but *Jeruſalem*'s Calamities made him weep.

42 Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

By *the things belonging to their peace*, we are to underſtand the preſence of Chriſt amongſt them, the Preaching of the Goſpel to them; *She did not know*, that is, ſhe did not conſider, ſhe did not prize and improve the Privileges as ſhe ought, but ſtopped her Ear againſt the Words of Chriſt; and cloſed her Eyes againſt the miraculous Works of Chriſt, till at laſt they were hidden from her Eyes. *Learn hence*, 1. That the time of a Peoples enjoying the Light and Liberty of the Goſpel, it is a limited day, it is a ſhort day, *If thou hadſt known in this thy day*. 2. That it is the ſad and uſual Lot of the Goſpel not to be embraced, and entertained by a People, to whom it is in Mercy ſent, till it be too late, and the time of their Viſitation be paſt and over, *O that thou hadſt known, but now* thou ſhalt never know, *now they are hid from thine Eyes*. But how hid? Was there no more preaching in *Jeruſalem*? no publick Miniſtry after that Day? Yes, behold the Patience and Mercy of Chriſt in waiting upon this People. After this, Chriſt ſent the whole College of Apoſtles, and they Preached there the things belonging to their Temporal and Eternal Peace; but they wanted Hearts to conſider, and their Ruin was unavoidable.

43 For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine
enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs
thee round and keep thee in on every ſide, 44 And
ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children
within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone
upon another: becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of
thy viſitation.

Here we have a Prophetical Prediction of the total and final Deſtruction of the City of *Jeruſalem* by the *Roman* Armies, who begirt the City round, burnt the Temple, ſtarved the People, and brought ſuch Ruine and Deſtruction upon the place, as no Hiſtory could ever parallel; the reaſon is aſſigned, *becauſe they knew not the time of their Viſitation*; That is, the time when God viſited them with his Goſpel, firſt by the Miniſtry of *John*, then by the Preaching of Chriſt himſelf, and afterwards by his Diſciples and Apoſtles. *Hence Learn*, 1. That when God gives his Goſpel to a People, he gives that People a merciful and a gracious Viſitation. 2. That for a People not to know, but neglect the time of their gracious Viſitation, it is a God-provoking, and a Wrath-procuring Sin: *Becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of their Viſitation, therefore the time ſhall come, that thine enemy ſhall lay thee even with the Ground, and not leave one ſtone upon another*; which Hiſtory tells us was literally fulfilled, when *Turnus Rufus* with his Plough, ploughed up the very Foundation Stones upon which the Temple ſtood. Lord! how has ſin laid the Foundation of Ruine in the moſt Flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms!

45 And he went into the temple, and began to caſt
out them that ſold therein, and them that bought.
46 Saying unto them, It is written, My houſe is the
houſe of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.
47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief
prieſts and the ſcribes, and the chief of the people
ſought to deſtroy him. 48 And could not find what
they might do: for all the people were very attentive
to hear him.

No ſooner was our Bleſſed Saviour entred *Jeruſalem*, but his firſt walk was to the Temple, and his firſt Work was to Purge and Reform it from abuſes, not to ruin and deſtroy it, becauſe it had been abuſed. But what was the Prophanation of the Temple, that ſo offended our Saviour? *Anſwer*, In the Court of the Gentiles, the outward Court of the Temple, there was a publick Mart or Market kept, where were ſold Oxen, Sheep and Doves for Sacrifice, which otherwiſe the People muſt have brought up along with them from their Houſe; as a pretended eaſe therefore to the People, the Prieſts ordered theſe things to be ſold hard by the Altar; but our bleſſed Saviour being juſtly offended at this Prophanation of his Father's Houſe, caſt the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. Teaching us, that there is a ſpecial Reverence due to God's Houſe, both for the owners ſake, and the Service ſake; nothing but Holineſs can become the place where God is worſhipped in the Beauty of Holineſs; the Reaſon is added, *My houſe is the houſe of Prayer*, where by Prayer is to be underſtood, the whole Worſhip and Service of God, of which Prayer is an enminent and principal part. That, which gives Denomination to an Houſe, is moſt certainly the chief work to be done in that Houſe; now God's Houſe being called *An Houſe of Prayer*, implies, that Prayer is a chief and principal Work to be performed in this Houſe; yet take we heed, that we ſet not the Ordinances of God at variance one with another; we muſt not Idolize one Ordinance, and vilify another, but reverence them all, and pay an awful reſpect to all divine Inſtitutions. Our Bleſſed Saviour here in his Houſe of Prayer Preach'd daily to the People, as well as Prayed with them; and all the People were as attentive to hear his Sermons, as he was conſtant at their Prayers. Prayer Sanctifies the Word, and the Word fits us for Prayer. If we would Glorifie God, and edifie our ſelves, we muſt put Honour upon all the Ordinances of God, and diligently attend them upon all Occaſions.

CHAP. XX.

AND it came to paſs, that on one of thoſe days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the goſpel, the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came upon him, with the elders, 2 And ſpake unto him, ſaying, Tell us, By what authority doeſt thou theſe things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo ask you one thing; and anſwer me; 4 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or from men? 5 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay, Why then believe ye him not? 6 But, and if we ſay, Of men; all the people will ſtone us: for they be perſwaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they anſwered, that they could not tell whence it was. 8 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

The Phariſees having often quarrelled at our Saviour's Doctrine before, they call in queſtion his Miſſion and Authority now: Although they might eaſily have underſtood his Divine Miſſion by his Divine Miracles, for Almighty God never impowered any to work Miracles, that were not ſent by him. Our Bleſſed Saviour underſtanding their Deſign, gives them no direct Anſwer, but Replies to their Queſtion, by asking them another; *The Baptiſm of John, was it from Heaven, or of men?* that is, was it of Divine Inſtitution or of Humane Invention? plainly implying, that the calling of them who call themſelves the Miniſters of God, ought to be from God; *No man ought to take that honour upon him, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, Heb.* 5. 8. The Phariſees Reply, that they could not tell whence *John* had his Miſſion and Authority; which was a manifeſt Untruth; they knew it, but durſt not own it. By refuſing to tell the Truth, they fall into a Lye againſt the Truth; thus one Sin enſnares and draws Men on the Commiſſion of more: Such as will not ſpeak exact the Truth, according to their Knowledge, they fall into the ſin of Lying againſt their Knowledge, and their Conſcience; our Saviour anſwers them, *Neither tell I you by what Authority I do theſe things*; he did not ſay, I cannot, or I will not tell you, but I do not, I need not tell you; becauſe the Miracles which I work before you, are a ſufficient Demonſtration of my Divine Commiſſion, that I am ſent of God amongſt you; becauſe God never ſet the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Lye, nor impowered any Impoſtor to work real Miracles.

9 Then began he to ſpeak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the ſeaſon, he ſent a ſervant to the husbandmen, that they ſhould give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and ſent him away empty. 11 And again he ſent another ſervant; and they beat him alſo, and entreat him ſhamefully, and ſent him away empty. 12 And again he ſent the third; and they wounded him alſo, and caſt him out. 13 Then ſaid the Lord of the vineyard, What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved ſon: it may be they will reverence him when they ſee him. 14 But when the husbandmen ſaw him, they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, This is the heir: come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they caſt him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore ſhall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He ſhall come and deſtroy theſe husbandmen, and ſhall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they ſaid, God forbid. 17 And he beheld them, and ſaid, What is this then that is written, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner? 18 Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone, ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19 And the chief prieſts and the ſcribes the ſame hour ſought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had ſpoken this parable againſt them.

In the Parable before us, the Jewiſh Church is compared to a Vineyard, God the Father to an *Houſe-holder*, his *planting, pruning* and *fencing his Vineyard*, denotes his Care to furniſh his Church with all needful Helps, and Means, to make it Fruitful; his *Letting it out* to Husbandmen, ſignifies the committing the care of his Church to the Prieſts and Levites, the publick Paſtors and Governours of the Church; his *Servants* are the Prophets and Apoſtles whom he ſent from time to time to admoniſh them to bring forth anſwerable Fruits to the Coſt which God had expended on them; *his Son*, is Jeſus Chriſt, whom the Rulers of the Jewiſh Church ſlew and Murdered. So that the Deſign and Scope of the Parable is to diſcover to the Jews, particularly to the Phariſees, their obſtinate impenitency under all the means of Grace, their bloody Cruelty towards the Prophets of God, their tremendous Guilt in Crucifying the Son of God; for all which God would unchurch them finally, Ruin their Nation, and ſet up a Church among the Gentiles, that ſhould bring forth better Fruit than the Jewiſh Church ever did. From the whole, *Note*, 1. That the Church is God's Vineyard; a Vineyard is a place incloſed, a place well planted, well fruited, and exceeding dear and precious to the Planter, and the Owner of it. 2. That as dear as God's Vineyard is unto him, in caſe of Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, it is in great danger of being deſtroy'd, and laid waiſt by him. 3. That the only way and courſe to engage God's Care over his Vineyard, and to prevent its being given to other Husbandmen, it is to give him the Fruits of it; it is but a Vineyard that God lets out; it is no Inheritance; no People ever had ſo many Promiſes of God's Favour as the Jews; nor ever enjoyed ſo many Privileges whilſt they continued in his Favour, as they did; but for rejecting Chriſt, and his Holy Doctrine, they are a deſpiſed, ſcattered People throughout the World. *See the Note on* Mat. 21. 39, 44.

20 And they watched him, and ſent forth ſpies, which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governour. 21 And they asked him, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheth rightly, neither accepteſt thou the perſon of any, but teacheſt the way of God truly. 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Ceſar, or no? 23 But he perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, why tempt ye me? 24 Shew me a peny: whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered and ſaid, Ceſars. 25 And he ſaid unto them, Render therefore unto Ceſar things which be Ceſars, and unto God the things which be Gods. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their peace.

Both St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* tells us, that theſe Spies, ſent forth to enſnare our Saviour about paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, were the *Phariſees* and *Herodians*; the former were againſt paying Tribute, looking upon the *Roman* Emperor as an Uſurper, the latter were for it: Theſe two oppoſite Parties concluded, that let our Saviour anſwer how he would, they ſhould entrap him; if to pleaſe the Phariſees he denied paying Tribute, then he is accuſed of Sedition; if to gratify the *Herodians*, he voted for paying Tribute, then he is pronounced an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and expoſed to a popular Odium. But *Obſerve* with what Wiſdom and Caution our Lord Anſwers them: He calls for the *Roman* Penny, and asks them whoſe Superſcription it bare, they anſwer *Cæſar's*; then ſays he, *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*; as if he had ſaid, Your admitting the *Roman* Coyn amongſt you, is an Evidence that you are under Subjection to the *Roman* Emperor; becauſe the Coyning and impoſing of Money is an Act of Sovereign Authority; therefore you having owned *Cæſar's* Authority over you, by accepting of his Coyn amongſt you, give unto him his juſt Dues, and *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*. *Learn hence*, 1. That our Saviour was no Enemy to Magiſtracy and Civil Government; there was no truer Pay-maſter of the King's Dues, than he that was King of Kings; he preach'd it, and he practiſed it, *Matth.* 17. 27. 2. Where a Kingdom is in Subjection to a Temporal Prince; whether by Deſcent, Election or Conqueſt, he derives the Title; The Subjects ought from a principle of Conſcience, to pay Tribute to him. 3. That as Chriſt is no Enemy to the Civil Rights of Princes, and his Religion exempts none from paying their Civil Dues, ſo Princes ſhould be as careful not to rob him of his Divine Honour, as he is not to wrong them of their Civil Rights. As Chriſt requires all his Followers *to render to Cæſar, the things that are Cæſar's*; ſo Princes ſhould oblige all their Subjects, *To render unto God, the things that are God's*.

27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees
(which deny that there is any reſurrection) and they
asked him, 28 Saying, Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us,
If any mans brother die, having a wife, and he die
without children, that his brother ſhould take his wife,
and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 29 There were
therefore ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife,
and died without children. 30 And the ſecond took
her to wife, and he died childleſs. 31 And the third
took her; and in like manner the ſeven alſo. And
they left no children, and died. 32 Laſt of all the
woman died alſo. 33 Therefore in the reſurrection,
whoſe wife of them is ſhe? for ſeven had her to wife.
34 And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them, the children
of this world marry, and are given in marriage:
35 But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain
that world, and the reſurrection from the dead,
neither marry, nor are given in marriage. 36 Neither
can they die any more; for they are equal unto the
angels, and are the children of God, being the children
of the reſurrection. 37 Now that the dead are
raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth
the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of
Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 For he is not a God
of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto
him.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having put the *Phariſees* and *Herodians* to ſilence in the foregoing Verſes, here the Sadducees encounter him. This Sect denied the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body, and as an Objection againſt both, they propound a Caſe to our Saviour, of a Woman that had Seven Husbands; they demanded whoſe Wife of the Seven this Woman ſhall be at the Reſurrection? as if they had ſaid, if there be a Reſurrection of Bodies at the great Day, ſurely there will be a Reſurrection of Relations too, and the other World will be like this, in which Men will Marry as they do here; and it ſo, *whoſe wife of the ſeven ſhall this Woman be?* They all having an equal claim to her? Now our Saviour for reſolving of this queſtion, firſt ſhews the different State of Men in this and in the other World; *The Children of this World*, ſays Chriſt, *Marry and are given in Marriage*, but in the Reſurrection they do neither; as if our Lord had ſaid, After Men have lived a while in this World, they Dye, and therefore Marriage is neceſſary to maintain a Succeſſion of Mankind; but in the other World, Men ſhall become Immortal, and live for ever; and then the Reaſon of Marriage will wholly ceaſe; for when Men can Dye no more, there will be no need of any new Supplies of Mankind. *Secondly*, Our Saviour having got clear of the Sadducees Objection by taking away the Ground and Foundation of it, he produces an Argument for the proof of the Soul's Immortality, and the Bodies Reſurrection, thus. Thoſe to whom Almighty God pronounces himſelf a God, are alive, but God pronounces himſelf a God to *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, many hundred Years after their Bodies were dead, therefore their Souls are yet alive, otherwiſe God could not be their God, *For he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*: From the whole *Note* 1. That there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no error ſo monſtrous, that having had a Mother, will Die for lack of a Nurſe; the Beaſtly Opinion of the Mortality of the Soul, and of the Annihilation of the Body finds Sadducees, to profeſs and propagate it. *Learn* 2. The certainty of another Life after this, in which Men ſhall be eternally Happy, or Intolerably Miſerable, according as they behave themſelves here: Tho' ſome Men live like Beaſts, they ſhall not Dye like them, neither ſhall their laſt End be like theirs. *Note*, 3. The Glorified Saints in the Morning of the Reſurrection, ſhall be like unto the Glorious Angels; not like them in Eſſence and Nature, but like them in their Properties and Qualities, namely, in Holineſs and Purity, in Immortality and Incorruptibility; and alſo like them in their way and manner of Living. They ſhall no more ſtand in need of Meat or Drink, than the Angels do; but ſhall live the ſame Heavenly and Immortal Lives that the Angels live. *Note* 4. That all thoſe, that are in Coveriant with God, whoſe God the Lord is, their Souls do immediately paſs into Glory, and their Bodies at the Reſurrection, ſhall be ſharers in the ſame Happineſs with the Souls: If God be juſt the Soul muſt Live, and the Body muſt Riſe; for Good Men muſt be Rewarded, and Wicked Men Puniſhed; God will moſt certainly, one time or other, plentifully Reward the Righteous, and Puniſh the Evil doers; but this being not always done in this Life, the Juſtice of God requires it to be done in the next.

39 Then certain of the ſcribes anſwering, ſaid,
Maſter, thou haſt well ſaid. 40 And after that, they
durſt not ask him any queſtion at all. 41 And he
ſaid unto them, How ſay they that Chriſt is Davids
ſon? 42 And David himſelf ſaith in the book of
pſalms, The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on
my right hand, 43 Till I make thine enemies thy
footſtool. 44 David therefore calleth him Lord,
how is he then his ſon?

The Deſign of our Bleſſed Saviour in propounding this Queſtion to the Phariſees, how Chriſt could be *David's* Son, when *David* by Inſpiration called him Lord, it was Twofold: 1. To confute the Peoples Erroneous Opinion, touching the Perſon of the Meſſias, who they thought ſhould be a meer Man, of the Stock and Lineage of *David* only, and not the Son of God. 2. To ſtrengthen the Faith of his Diſciples touching his Godhead, againſt the time that they ſhould ſee him Suffer and Riſe again: The place Chriſt alludes to, is *Pſal.* 110. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand*; *The Lord*, That is, God the Father, *ſaid to my Lord*, that is, to God the Son, who was to be Incarnate, whom *David* calleth his Lord, both as God, and as Mediator, his Lord by a Right of Creation and Redemption alſo: Now the queſtion our Saviour puts to the Phariſees is this, how Chriſt could be both *David's* Lord, and *David's* Son? No Son being Lord to his own Father; therefore if Chriſt were *David's* Sovereign, he muſt be more than Man, more than *David's* Son. As Man, ſo he was *David's* Son; as God-Man, ſo he was *David's* Lord. *Note hence*, 1. That altho' Chriſt was truly and really Man, yet was he more then a meer Man; he was Lord unto, and the Salvation of his own Forefathers. *Note* 2. That the only way to reconcile the Scriptures, which ſpeak concerning Chriſt, is to believe and acknowledge him to be both God and Man in one Perſon: The Meſſiah as Man, was to come forth out of *David's* Loyns, but as God-Man was *David's* Lord, his Sovereign and Saviour; as Man he was *David's* Lord, as God-Man he was Lord to his own Father.

45 Then in the audience of all the people, he ſaid
unto his diſciples, 46 Beware of the ſcribes, which
deſire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the
markets, and the higheſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and
the chief rooms at feaſts; 47 Which devour widows
houſes, and for a ſhew make long prayers: the ſame
ſhall receive greater damnation.

Obſerve here, What it is that our Saviour condemns; not Civil Salutations in the Market-place, not the chief Seats in the Synagogue, not the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, but their fond affecting of theſe things, and their ambitious aſpiring after them; it was not their Taking, but their loving the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, which our Saviour condemns. God is the God of Order; there may and ought to be a Precedency among Perſons; God commands us to give Honour to whom Honour is due, but Pride and Ambition are deteſtable and hateful Vices eſpecially in ſuch as are Preachers, and ought to be Patterns of Humility. *Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour condemns the Phariſees for their groſs Hypocriſie, in colouring over their abominable Covetouſneſs with a ſpecious pretence of Religion, making long Prayers in the Temple and Synagogues for Widows, and thereupon perſwading them to give Bountifully to *Corban*, that is, the Common Treaſury for the Temple; ſome part of which was employed for their Maintenance. *Whence we learn*, That it is no new thing for Deſigning Hypocrites, to cover the fouleſt Tranſgreſſions with the Cloak of Religion; thus the Phariſees made their Prayers a cloak and cover for their Covetouſneſs.

CHAP. XXI.

AND he looked up, and ſaw the rich men caſting their gifts into the treaſury. 2 And he ſaw alſo a certain poor widow, caſting in thither two mites. 3 And he ſaid, Of a truth I ſay unto you, that this poor widow hath caſt in more than they all. 4 For all theſe have of their abundance caſt in unto the offerings of God: but ſhe of her penury hath caſt in all the living that ſhe had.

At the door of the Temple, thro' which all the People paſſed in and out, who came up three times a Year at the Solemn Feaſts, to worſhip Almighty God in his own Houſe, there was a Cheſt ſet, *(like the poor Mans Box in ſome of our Churches)* into which all Perſons caſt in their Free-Will Offerings and Oblations, which were employed either for the uſe of the Poor, or for the Service of the Temple; and what was thus given our Saviour calls an Offering to God, *ver.* 4. *Theſe of their abundance have caſt in unto the Offering of God. Thence Learn*, That what we rightly give to the Relief of the Poor, or for the Service, and towards the Support of God's publick Worſhip, is Conſecrated to God, and as ſuch is accepted of him, and ought to be eſteemed by us. *Obſerve* 2. With what Pleaſure and Satisfaction our Saviour ſets himſelf to view thoſe Offerings, *he beheld the rich men caſting their Gifts into the Treaſury. Thence Note*, That our Saviour ſees with Pleaſure, and beholds with Delight whatever we have Hearts to give unto him; whether for the Relief of his Members, or for the Support of his Service. O Bleſſed Saviour, while now thou ſitteſt at thy Father's Right Hand in Glory, thou ſeeſt every hand that is ſtretched forth to the relief of thy poor Members here on Earth, ver. 2. *But a certain poor widow caſt in two mites.* Several Circumſtances relating both to the Perſon and the Action are here *Obſervable*, as 1. The Perſon that offered was a Widow; the Married Woman is under the careful Proviſion of her Husband, if ſhe ſpends, he earns; but the Widow has no hands but her own to work for her. 2. She was *a poor Widow*; poverty added to the Sorrow of her Widow-hood, ſhe had no rich Joynture to live upon; it is ſome alleviation of the Sorrow that attends Widow-hood; when the Hand is left full, tho' the Bed be left empty; this Widow was needy and deſolate, but yet gives; ſome in her Circumſtances would have look'd upon themſelves as having Right to receive what was given by others, rather than to give any thing themſelves. 3. *Obſerve* her Bounty and Munificence in giving; *her two Mites* are proclaimed by Chriſt to be more *then all the rich Mens* Talents; more in reſpect of the Mind and Affection of the Giver, more with reſpect to the proportion of the Gift; a Mite to her being more than Pounds to others, Pounds were little to them, two Mites were all to her, ſhe leaves her ſelf nothing; ſo that the poor Woman gave not only more than any of them all, but more than they all. Chriſt's Eye look'd at once into the bottom of her Purſe, and into the bottom of her Heart, and judged of the Offering, rather by the Mind of the Giver, than by the value of the Gift. From this inſtance we *Learn*, 1. That the Poorer, yea, the pooreſt ſort of People, are not exempted from good Works; but even they muſt and ought to exerciſe Charity according to their Ability. This poor Widow, that had not a Pound, nay not a Penny, preſents God with a Farthing. 2. That in all Works of pious Charity which we perform, God looks at the Heart, the Will, and the Affection of the Giver, more than at the largeneſs and liberality of the Gift; it is not ſaid, the Lord loveth a Liberal Giver, but a chearful Giver; *He accepteth the Gift according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not*; O our God the pooreſt of us thy Servants have our two Mites alſo, a Soul and a Body, perſwade and enable us to offer them both unto thee; tho' they are thine own already, yet thou wilt graciouſly accept them, and O how happy ſhall we be in thy acceptation.

5 And as ſome ſpake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly ſtones, and gifts, he ſaid, 6 As for theſe things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being now ready to depart from the Temple, never more after this entring into it, and his Diſciples ſhewing him with Wonder and Admiration, the magnificent Structures and Buildings thereof, apprehending, that in regard of its invincible Strength it could not be deſtroyed; not conſidering, that Sin will undermine and blow up the moſt magnificent and famous Structures; For Sin brings Cities and Kingdoms, as well as particular Perſons to their End. *Not one ſtone*, ſays Chriſt, *ſhall be left upon another*; which threatning was exactly fulfilled after Chriſt's Death, when *Titus* the Roman Emperor deſtroyed the City, burnt the Temple, and *Turnus Rufus* the General of his Army, ploughed up the very Foundation on which the Temple ſtood; Thus was the Threatning of God fulfilled, *Jerem.* 26. 18. *Zion ſhall be ploughed as a Field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become an heap. Learn hence*, 1. That Sin has laid the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms; *Jeruſalem*, the Glory of the World, is here by Sin threatned to be made Deſolation. 2. That the Threatnings of God are to be feared, and ſhall be fulfilled, whatever appearing Improbabilities there may be to the contrary. 'Tis neither the Temples Strength nor Beauty, that can oppoſe or withſtand God's Power.

7 And they asked him, ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſign will there be when theſe things ſhall come to paſs?

A double Queſtion is here propounded to our Saviour; namely, when the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* ſhould be? and what would be the ſigns of it? From whence *Learn*, What an itching Curioſity there is in the beſt of Men, to know Futurities, and to underſtand things that ſhall come to paſs hereafter; and when that hereafter is come to paſs. O how happy were it, if we were as forward to obey the Declarations of God's Revealed Will, as we are to pry into the hidden Counſels of his ſecret Will. *Tell us*, ſay the Diſciples, *when ſhall theſe things be.*

8 And he ſaid, Take heed that ye be not deceived, for many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye ſhall hear of wars, and commotions, be not terrified: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs, but the end is not by and by. 10 Then ſaid he unto them, Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers places, and famines, and peſtilences, and fearful ſights, and great ſigns ſhall there be from heaven.

Obſerve here, Chriſt does not gratifie his Diſciples Curioſity, but acquaints them with their preſent Duty; namely, to watch againſt Deceivers and Seducers, who ſhould have the Impudence to affirm themſelves to be Chriſts, *ſaying, I am Chriſt.* Some Chriſt perſonal or the Meſſias, others Chriſt Doctrinal, affirming their erroneous Opinions to be Chriſt's Mind and Doctrine; *Take heed that ye be not deceived, for many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying, I am Chriſt. Obſerve farther*, The Signs which our Saviour gives of *Jeruſalem*'s approaching Deſtruction, namely, the many Broyls and Commotions, the Civil Diſorders and Diſſentions, that ſhould be found amongſt the *Jews* immediately before; *You ſhall hear of Wars and Commotions*, and ſee fearful Sights, and great Signs from Heaven. *Joſephus* declares, that there appeared in the Air, Chariots and Horſemen Skirmiſhing, and that a Blazing Star in faſhion of a Sword, hung over the City for a Year together. *Hence Learn*, That War, Peſtilence, and Famine, are Judgments and Calamities inflicted by God upon a ſinful People for their Contempt of Chriſt and Goſpel-Grace. *Ye ſhall hear of War, Famine and Peſtilence.*

12 But before all theſe, they ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you, delivering you up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before kings and rulers for my names ſake. 13 And it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to mediate before what ye ſhall anſwer. 15 For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay, nor reſiſt. 16 And ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinſfolks, and friends; and ſome of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death. 17 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my names ſake. 18 But there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh. 19 In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.

Our Saviour here goes on in giving farther Signs of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction; He declares, 1. The ſharp Perſecution that ſhould fall upon the Apoſtles themſelves, *They ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you. Learn thence*, That the keeneſt and ſharpeſt edge of Perſecution, is uſually turned upon the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the Miniſters of God. 2. He acquaints them, that for Preaching his Holy Doctrine, they ſhould be brought before Kings and Rulers; but adviſes them not to be anxiouſly thoughtful, or exceedingly ſollicitous what they ſhould ſay, for it ſhould be ſuggeſted to them by the Holy Ghoſt, what they ſhould ſay in that hour. *Learn thence*, That tho' the Truth of Chriſt may be oppoſed, yet the Defenders of it ſhall never be aſhamed; for rather than they ſhall want a Tongue to plead for it, God himſelf will prompt them by his Holy Spirit, and ſuggeſt ſuch Arguments to them, as all their Enemies ſhall not be able to gainſay; *I will give you a mouth and wiſdom. Obſerve* 3. How he deſcribes the bitter Enmity of the World againſt the Preachers of his Goſpel, to be ſuch as would overcome and extinguiſh even the Natural Affection of neareſt Relations, *ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents and brethren.* Grace teaches us to lay down our Lives for the Brethren; but Corruption in General, and Enmity to the Goſpel in Particular, will put Brother upon taking away the life of Brother, and cauſe Parents to hate and perſecute their own Bowels. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Our Saviour's Admonition, *In your patience poſſeſs your Souls.* There are three Degrees of Chriſtian Patience, the firſt conſiſts in a ſilent Submiſſion to God's Will; the Second in a thankful Acceptation of God's Fatherly Rod; the third in ſerious chearfulneſs under ſorrowful Diſpenſations, Rejoycing in Tribulation, and counting it all Joy when we fall into divers Temptations; by this Patience we poſſeſs our Souls; as Faith gives us the Poſſeſſion of Chriſt, ſo Patience gives us the poſſeſſion of our ſelves; an impatient Man is not in his own Hand; for what Title ſoever we have to our own Souls, we have no poſſeſſion of them without Patience, *In your Patience poſſeſs your Souls.*

20 And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judea, flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midſt of it, depart out; and let not them that are in the countries, enter thereinto. 22 For theſe be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations: and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, and in the ſtars; and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea and the waves roring; 26 Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 27 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

The ſenſe is this: As ſoon as ye ſhall ſee the *Roman* Army appear before the City of *Jeruſalem*, (called by St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark, the abomination of Deſolation*, that is, the Army which is ſuch an abomination to you, and the occaſion of ſuch Deſolation wherever it goes) then let every one that values his own Safety, fly as far and as faſt he can, as *Lot* fled from the Flames of *Sodom*; and be glad, if by flight he can ſave his Life, tho' he loſes all beſides. *Learn thence*, That when Almighty God is pouring forth his Fury upon a ſinful People, it is both lawful and a neceſſary Duty, by flight to endeavour to ſhelter our ſelves from the approaching Calamity and Deſolation; *When ye ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with Armies, flee to the Mountains. Obſerve farther*, The dreadful Relation that our Saviour here gives of thoſe Deſolating Calamities which were coming upon *Jeruſalem*, partly from the *Roman* Army without, and partly from the Seditions and Factions of the Zealots within, who committed ſuch outrages and ſlaughters, that there were no leſs than an Hundred thouſand Jews Slain, and Ninety ſeven thouſand taken Priſoners. They that bought our Saviour for Thirty Pence, were now themſelves ſold Thirty for a Penny. Now did the Temple it ſelf become a Sacrifice, a whole Burnt-offering, and was conſumed to Aſhes. *Obſerve Laſtly*, What Encouragement Chriſt gives to all his Faithful Diſciples and Followers; he bids them look up, and lift up their Heads when theſe Calamities came upon others; look up with Confidence and Joy, for your Redemption, Salvation and Deliverance then approacheth. God had a Remnant which he deſigned ſhould ſurvive that Deſtruction, to be an Holy Seed; theſe are called upon to look up with chearfulneſs and joy, when the hearts of others were failing them for fear. And thus ſhall it be at the General Day of Judgment (to which *Jeruſalem*'s Viſitation was a Type) Lord! how will the Glory and Terror of that Day dazzle the Eyes, and terrifie the Hearts of all the Enemies of Chriſt; but delight the Eyes, and rejoyce the Hearts of all that love and fear him, that ſerve and obey him! Then may the Friends of Chriſt *look up, and lift up their heads, for their full Redemption draweth nigh.*

29 And he ſpake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now ſhoot forth, ye ſee and know of your own ſelves, that ſummer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but my words ſhall not paſs away.

In theſe words our Saviour declares the certainty of his Coming to viſit *Jeruſalem* for all her barbarous and bloody Cruelty towards himſelf, his Prophets and Apoſtles; he is pleaſed to ſet forth this by the Similitude of the Fig-tree, whoſe beginning to Bud declares the Summer at hand; thus our Saviour tells them, that when they ſhould ſee the Forementioned Signs, they might conclude the Deſtruction of their City and Temple to be nigh at hand; and accordingly ſome of that Generation then Living, did ſee theſe Predictions fulfilled. *Learn*, That God is no leſs punctual in the Execution of his Threatnings upon Incorrigible Sinners, than he is faithful in the performance of his Promiſes towards his own People: The Truth and Veracity of God is as much concerned to execute his Threatnings, as it is to fulfill his Promiſes.

34 And take heed to your ſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man.

Here our Lord cautions his Diſciples againſt ſuch a Diſtemper and Indiſpoſition of Mind, as may render them unfit and unready for his Coming and Appearance, and to take heed of two dangerous Sins, namely, Voluptuouſneſs and Earthly-mindedneſs, which above any other Sins will indiſpoſe us for the Duty of Watchfulneſs. There is a threefold Reaſon why our Saviour forewarns us of theſe Sins, with Reference to the Day of Judgment, 1. Becauſe they are *peccata præcurrentia*, certain prognoſticks of the Day of Judgment approaching; as it was in the days of *Noah*, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of Man be. 2. Becauſe they are *peccata Accelerantia*, they do not only foretell, but haſten the Coming of Chriſt. To ſee the World drowned in voluptuouſneſs and earthly-mindedneſs, in ſecurity and ſenſuality, is not only a Sign to foretell, but a Sin that haſtens Judgment, and pulls down Vengeance upon a wicked World. 3. Chriſt bids us beware of theſe Sins with reference to the Day of Judgment, becauſe theſe Sins they are *deriſoria judicii*, they beget Men a prophane Spirit of Scoffing and Deriding at the Notices of Chriſt's appearing to Judgment, 2 Pet. 3. 3. *In the laſt days there ſhall come Scoffers, walking after their own Luſts, and ſaying, where is the promiſe of his coming.* Our Saviour having thus warn'd them of theſe Sins, he next exhorts them to Watchfulneſs, *Watch ye therefore, for as a ſnare that day will come upon you*; that is, very ſuddenly, and very unexpectedly: A ſnare has a threefold Property, to catch ſuddenly, to hold ſurely, to deſtroy certainly. Our Lord's coming to *Jeruſalem* was very unexpected, and his coming to us by Death and Judgment will ſteal upon us if we be not watchful. *Watch* we then, for our Lord will come; at what hour he will come cannot certainly be known; there is no time in which we can promiſe or aſſure our ſelves, that our Lord will not come; the time of our whole Life is little enough to prepare for his Coming. Our Preparation for, will be no acceleration or haſtning of our Lord's Coming. And O, how dreadful will his coming be, if we be found off our Watch, and altogether unready for his Appearance? Appear we muſt in Judgment, but ſhall not be able to ſtand in the Judgment; ſee Chriſt we ſhall as a Judge, but not behold him as a Redeemer.

37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Our Lord had exhorted his Diſciples in the foregoing Verſes to Diligence and Prayer; here he ſets an Example of both before them. Buſying himſelf in God's Service all the Day, and at Night ſpending much time in Prayer; in the Day-time he was in the Temple Preaching, in the Evening he was on the Mount of Olives Praying. Lord! What an Example of indefatigable Zeal and Diligence haſt thou ſet before thy Miniſters and Members. O that when our Maſter comes we may be found Working, our People Watching, and both they and we waiting for the joyful Coming of our Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

CHAP. XXII.

NOW the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the paſſover. 2 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

This Chapter gives a ſad and ſorrowful Relation of the Chief Prieſts Conſpiracy againſt the Life of our Bleſſed Saviour, in which we have Three Particulars *Obſervable*; 1. The Perſons making this Conſpiracy, *The chief Prieſts, Scribes and Elders*, that is, the whole Jewiſh Sanhedrin, or General Council; they all lay their malicious Heads together, to contrive the Deſtruction of the Holy and Innocent Jeſus. *Thence Learn*, That General Councils have erred, and may err Fundamentally, both in matters of Doctrine and Practice; ſo did this General Council at *Jeruſalem*, conſiſting of Chief Prieſts, Doctors and Elders, with the High Prieſt their Preſident: They did not believe Jeſus to be the Meſſias, after all the Miracles wrought before their Eyes, but ignominiouſly put him to Death. *Obſerve* 2. The manner of this Conſpiracy againſt the Life of our Bleſſed Saviour, it was Clandeſtine, Secret, and Subtile, *They conſulted how they might take him by craft, and put him to Death.* *Learn thence*, That Satan makes uſe of the ſubtilty of crafty Men, and abuſeth their Parts as well as their Power, for his own Purpoſes and Deſigns: The Devil never ſends a Fool of his Errand. *Obſerve* 3. The Circumſtance of Time, when this Conſpiracy was managed, *at the Feaſt of the Paſſover*. It was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* to Execute Malefactors at their Solemn Feaſts, at which time all the *Jews* came up to *Jeruſalem* to Sacrifice, and then they put Malefactors to Death, that all *Iſrael* might ſee and fear, and not do ſo wickedly. Accordingly the Feaſt of the Paſſover was waited for by the *Jews*, as a fit opportunity to put our Saviour to Death. The only Objection was, that it might occaſion a Tumult and Uproar amongſt the People, there being ſuch a mighty Concourſe at that time in *Jeruſalem*; But *Judas* making them a proffer, they readily comply with the Motion, and reſolve to take the firſt Opportunity to put our Saviour to Death.

3 Then entred Satan into Judas ſirnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief prieſts and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promiſed, and ſought opportunity to betray him unto them in the abſence of the multitude.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon betraying our Bleſſed Saviour, *Judas*; *Judas* a Profeſſor, *Judas* a Preacher, *Judas* an Apoſtle, and one of the Twelve, whom Chriſt had choſen out of the World to be his deareſt Friend, one of his Family and Houſhold; ſhall we wonder to find Friends unfriendly or unfaithful to us, when our Saviour had a Traitor in his own Family! 2. *Obſerve*, The heinous Nature of *Judas* his Sin, he *betrayed Jeſus*; Jeſus his Maker, Jeſus his Maſter. It is no ſtrange or uncommon thing, for the vileſt of ſins, and moſt horrid impieties, to be acted by ſuch Perſons as make the moſt Eminent Profeſſion of Holineſs and Religion. *Obſerve* 3. What was the occaſion that led *Judas* to the Commiſſion of this Sin? It was his inordinate Love of Money. I do not find, that *Judas* had any particular Malice, Spite, or Ill-will againſt our Saviour, but a baſe and unworthy Spirit of Covetouſneſs poſſeſt him, and this made him ſell his Maſter. Covetouſneſs is the Root-ſin; an eager and inſatiable Thirſt after the World, is the Parent of the moſt monſtrous and unnatural Sins; for which Reaſon our Saviour doubles his Caution, *Luke* 12. 15. *Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*; it ſhews us both the great danger of the Sin, and the great care, that we ought to take to preſerve our ſelves from it.

7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the paſſover muſt be killed. 8 And he ſent Peter and John, ſaying, Go and prepare us the paſſover, that we may eat. 9 And they ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10 And he ſaid unto them, Behold, when ye are entred into the city, there ſhall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the houſe where he entreth in. 11 And ye ſhall ſay unto the good man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith unto thee, Where is the gueſt chamber where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 12 And he ſhall ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed: there make ready. 13 And they went and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

The time for the Clebration of the Paſſover being now at hand, Chriſt ſends two of his Diſciples, *Peter* and *John*, to *Jeruſalem*, to prepare what was needful in order thereunto; and here we have *Obſervable*, 1. An eminent Proof and Evidence of Chriſt's Divinity in Foretelling his Diſciples all the particular Occurrences and Circumſtances, which they ſhould meet with in the City, *as a Man bearing a pitcher of Water*, &c. *Obſerve* 2. How readily the Heart of the Houſholder was diſpoſed to receive our Saviour and his Diſciples, and to accommodate them with all things needful upon this occaſion. Our Bleſſed Saviour had not a Lamb of his own, and peradventure no Money wherewith to purchaſe one; yet he finds a more agreeable Accommodation in this poor Man's Houſe, than if he had dwelt in *Ahab*'s Ivory Palace, and had the Proviſions of *Solomon*'s Table. When Chriſt has a Paſſover to Celebrate, he will diſpoſe the Hearts of his Children and Servants to a free Reception of himſelf. The Room that Chriſt will enter into, it muſt be a large Room, an upper

Room, a Room furniſhed and prepared; *a large Room* is the Emblem of an enlarged Heart, enlarged with Love, with Joy, and Thankfulneſs; *an upper Room*, is an Heart exalted, not puft up with Pride, but lifted up by Heavenly Meditations; and a *Room furniſhed*, is a Soul adorned with all the Graces of the Holy Spirit; into ſuch an Heart doth Chriſt enter, and there delights to dwell; *Here is my reſt for ever*, ſays Chriſt, *here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*

14 And when the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve Apoſtles with him. 15 And he ſaid unto them, With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer. 16 For I ſay unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide it among your ſelves. 18 For I ſay unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God ſhall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewiſe alſo the cup after ſupper, ſaying, This cup is the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you. 21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed. 23 And they began to enquire among themſelves, which of them it was that ſhould do this thing.

Obſerve here, 1. What ardency of Deſire, and vehemency of Affection, our holy Lord expreſſes to Celebrate the Paſſover with his Diſciples, and to Adminiſter the Sacramental Supper to them before he left them; *with deſire have I deſired to eat with you before I ſuffer. Thence Learn*, That it is very Neceſſary, when Sufferings do appear, eſpecially when Death does approach, to have immediate Recourſe to the Table of the Lord, which affords both an Antidote againſt Fear, and is a Reſtorative to our Faith. Chriſt, the Night before he Suffered, Communicated with his Diſciples. *Obſ.* 2. The unexampled Boldneſs of the impudent Traitor *Judas*, tho' he had ſold his Maſter, he preſumes to ſit down at the Table with him, and with the other Diſciples; had the preſence of *Judas* polluted this Ordinance to any but himſelf, doubtleſs our Saviour would not have ſuffered him to approach unto it. It *Teaches* us, That altho' nothing be more ordinary than for unholy Perſons to preſs into the Holy Ordinances of God, which they have no Right (whilſt ſuch) to approach unto, yet their peſence pollutes the Ordinances only to themſelves. Holy Perſons are not polluted by their Sins, therefore ought not to be diſcouraged from coming, by their preſence. *Obſ.* 3. Chriſt did not Name *Judas*, and ſay, O thou perfidious Traitor! but, *behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the Table.* Doubtleſs Chriſt did not name him, becauſe he would not provoke him; he did not name him, becauſe he would not drive him to deſpair, but draw him to Repentance. But, Lord thou knoweſt us, when thou nameſt us not: O how ſad is it for any of thy Family, who pretend Friendſhip with thee, to conſpire againſt thee! and after they have eat of thy Bread, to lift up the heel againſt thee! *Obſ.* 4. That tho' *Judas* was not named, yet he ſaw himſelf pointed at by our Saviour; *Behold the hand that betrayeth me is on the Table*; and *Judas* his Heart told him, whoſe hand that was; yea, tho' *Judas* heard that dreadful Sentence denounced againſt him, *Wo to the Man by whom the Son of Man is Betrayed*; yet is he no more Blank'd than Innocency it ſelf: This Shameleſs Man had the Impudence to ſay to our Bleſſed Saviour, *Maſter, is it I?* Tho' St. *Luke* ſays it not, the other Evangeliſts tell us, that Chriſt anſwered him, *Thou ſayeſt it.* Did not *Judas*, (think we) bluſh extreamly, hang down his Guilty Head, at ſo galling an Intimation? Nothing leſs, we read not of any thing like it. Lord! How does obſtinacy in Sinning Steel the Brow, and render it uncapable of all relenting Impreſſions? Immediately after the Celebration of the Paſſover, followed the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper; where we have *Obſervable:* The Author, the Time, the Elements, and the Miniſterial Actions: 1. *Obſ.* The Author of this New Sacrament, *Jeſus took Bread. Learn thence*, That to inſtitute a Sacrament is the ſole Prerogative of Jeſus Chriſt; the Church has no power to make new Sacraments; it is only her Duty to Celebrate thoſe, which our Saviour has made. 2. The Time of the Inſtitution, the Night before the Paſſion, *the Night in which he was Betrayed, he took Bread.* 3. The Sacramental Elements, *Bread and Wine*; Bread repreſenting the Body, and Wine the Blood of our Redeemer: Bread being an abſolutely neceſſary Food, a common and obvious Food, a ſtrengthning and refreſhing Food; and Wine being the moſt excellent drink, the moſt pleaſant and delightful, the moſt Cordial and Reſtorative; for theſe Reaſons, amongſt others, did Chriſt Conſecrate, and ſet theſe Creatures apart for thoſe Holy Purpoſes, for which he deſigned them. 4. The Miniſterial Actions, Breaking of the Bread, and Bleſſing of the Cup; *Jeſus took Bread*, that is, ſeparated it, and ſet it apart, from common Uſe, for holy Purpoſes; *He bleſſed it*, that is, he prayed for a Bleſſing upon it, and *Brake it*, thereby ſhadowing forth his Body broken upon the Croſs; and *he gave it* to his Diſciples, ſaying, This broken Bread ſignifies my Body, which is ſuddenly to be broken upon the Croſs, for the Redemption and Salvation of a Loſt World; *Do you likewiſe this in remembrance of my Death.* As to the Cup, Chriſt having ſet it apart by Prayer and Thankſgiving, he commands his Diſciples to Drink all of it; *For*, ſays he, *this Cup is the new Teſtament in my Blood*; that is, The Wine in this Cup doth repreſent the ſhedding of my Blood, by which the New Covenant betwixt GOD and Man, is ratified and confirmed. *Drink ye all of this*, ſays our Saviour; whence we gather, That every Communicant has as undoubtedly a Right to the Cup, as he has in the Bread in the Lord's Supper; therefore for the Church of *Rome* to deny the Cup to the Common People is Sacriledge, and directly contrary to Chriſt's Inſtitution.

24 And there was alſo a ſtrife among them, which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt. 25 And he ſaid unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and they that exerciſe authority upon them, are called benefactors. 26 But ye ſhall not be ſo: but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth ſerve. 27 For whether is greater, he that ſitteth at meat, or he that ſerveth? is not he that ſitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that ſerveth.

If theſe Words be not placed out of Order, by St. *Luke here*, it may ſeem very ſtrange, that the Apoſtles immediately after their Receiving the Sacrament, ſhould entertain their Minds with thoughts of Precedency and Superiority, and much ſtranger yet, that they ſhould Diſcourſe openly of ſuch a Subject as this, eſpecially conſidering what our Saviour had juſt before told them, that *he was betrayed into the hands of Sinners:* But whether at this time or not, it is moſt certain, at ſome time or other a ſtrife was found amongſt them, *which ſhould be the greateſt.* Now that our Saviour might effectually quench theſe unhappy Sparks of Ambition, which were kindled in his Apoſtles Minds, he tells them, that Supremacy and Dominion belongs to Secular Princes, not to Evangelical Paſtors, who ought to carry themſelves with Humility and Condeſcention, one towards another. Not that Chriſt directs to a parity and equality amongſt his Miniſters, or forbids the Preheminency of ſome over others; but the effecting of Superiority, and the love of Preheminency, is that, which our Saviour diſalloweth. *Learn*, 1. That ſo far ought the Miniſters of Chriſt to be from affecting a Domination and Superiority of Power over their Fellow Brethren, that in imitation of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, they ought to account themſelves Fellow Servants; *I am among you as one that ſerveth.* 2. That ſuch Miniſters as do Love and Affect Preheminency and Superiority are moſt unfit for it, and they deſerve it beſt, which ſeek it leaſt. 3. That the Dignity and Honour, which the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould chiefly and only affect, is in another World; and the way to be greateſt and higheſt there, is to be low and humble here; mean in our own Eyes, and little in our own eſteem; *Whoſoever is chief*, ſays Chriſt, *let him be your Servant.*

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

Obſerve here, What an Honourable Acknowledgment Chriſt makes of the Conſtancy of his Diſciples Love and Affection towards him; *Ye are they that have continued with me in my Temptations*; that is, in my Afflictions, Tryals, and Sufferings. It is an eaſie matter to abide with Chriſt in days of Peace, in times of Conſolation; but when we are under Afflictions, Temptations, and Troubles, then to abide and keep cloſe to Chriſt, this is the proof of Love and Friendſhip: And as Chriſt makes an honourable mention of their conſtancy towards him, ſo he preſently aſſures them of an honourable Reward; *I appoint unto you a kingdom. Learn hence*, That ſuch as are Sharers with Chriſt in his Sufferings, ſhall certainly Communicate with him in his Glory; *If we Suffer with him, we ſhall Reign with him*: And whereas our Saviour promiſes his Apoſtles, *To ſit upon Thrones with him, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael*; we may gather, That ſuch Miniſters as do moſt Service for Chriſt, and forſake moſt to follow him, and continue in Temptation and Tribulation with him, ſhall in his Kingdom partake of moſt honour and Dignity with him and from him; *You ſhall eat and drink in my Kingdom, and ſit on Thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Iſrael*; poſſibly the Apoſtles, and all the Zealous, Faithful, and Laborious Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be nearer his Throne in Heaven, than either Saints or Angels; nearer than the Angels, becauſe by Chriſt's aſſuming the Humane Nature, they are more nearly allyed to him; he is their Friend, but our Brother; and nearer than other Saints, as having done more eminent Service for Chriſt, and brought more Honour and Glory to him by a Laborious Diligence in their Place and Station, *Dan.* 12. 13. *They that turn many to Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine*, &c.

31 And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.

Here I ſhall give 1. The general ſenſe of the Words; 2. The particular Matters contained in them. 3. The ſpecial Obſervations from them. The Sence of the Words is this; As for you my Diſciples in general, and for thee *Peter* in particular, I muſt tell thee, that Satan hath accuſed you all before God; and deſires, that he may have the ſifting of you all by his winnowing Winds of Temptation and Perſecution, that he may ſhake your Faith, and weaken your Confidence: But I have prayed for you all, and particularly for thy ſelf, who art in greateſt danger of falling, becauſe ſo confident of thine own Strength and Standing, that thy Faith, tho' ſeverely ſhaken, may not utterly fail; and when by Repentance thou art recovered from thy Fall, be careful to confirm and ſtrengthen others, that they fall not in like manner. The particular matters contained in theſe words are three; a Chriſtian's Danger, a Chriſtian's Safety, and a Chriſtian's Duty: 1. A Chriſtian's Danger, *Satan hath deſired to ſift you. Where Obſerve*, 1. The Perſon particularly warned of the Danger, *Simon,;Simon*; the doubling of the Word doubtleſs carries a ſpecial intimation with it; it denotes the greatneſs and nearneſs of *Peter*'s Danger, his own ſecurity and inſenſibleneſs of that danger, and the great affection of Chriſt his Monitor to give him warning of his Danger. *Obſ.* 2. The warning it ſelf, and that is of a Deviliſh Conſpiracy againſt himſelf, and all the Apoſtles; *Satan hath deſired to have you*; to have you for his own, if it might be; to have you, as Believers, rather than other Men; to have you, as eminent Believers, rather than other Chriſtians; and to have you, as Apoſtles and Miniſters, rather than other eminent Believers. And as Satan has deſired to have you, ſo *to ſift you too, to winnow you as Wheat*; not to fetch out the Chaff, but to make thee Chaff. *Here Note*, That Satan has his Winnowing Winds of Temptation, and his Tempeſtuous Winds of Perſecution, for the ſifting of God's Children. *Note further*, That it is the Wheat, the good Corn, that Satan Winnows; not Chaff, not Droſs; Sinners, that are all Chaff, and nothing but Droſs, Satan will not be at the pains to ſift and winnow them: But what is this Sifting? Anſwer; in ſifting two-things are performed, 1. The agitation, ſhaking, and toſſing of the Corn from ſide to ſide. 2. The Separation of the Corn from the Chaff and duſt; Satan intends the former, GOD effects the latter; *Cribratione non perditur, ſed purgatur frumentum*; *The Corn is improved, not impaired by Winnowing.* The Saints of God ſhall be no looſers in the end by Satan's Temptations, how many and ſtrong ſoever they may be in the way. *Obſ.* 2. The Chriſtian's ſafety; *But I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not. Where note*, 1. The Care, that Chriſt had of *Peter*, and in him of all Believers; *I have prayed for thee*; for thee as a Believing Chriſtian, and for thee as a Tempted Chriſtian: And it is not ſaid, I will Pray for thee, but I have Prayed for thee. Chriſt Prayed for *Peter*, before *Peter* underſtood, that he had need of Chriſt's Prayer; Chriſt Prayed for *Peter*, as ſoon as ever Satan deſired to ſift *Peter*: Our Interceſſor is full as nimble and ſpeedy in his ſuit for us, as Satan is in his Accuſations againſt us; he has deſired, but I have Prayed; he is a potent Aſſailant, but thou haſt a powerful Aſſiſtant. *Obſ.* 2. The Subject Matter Prayed for, *That thy Faith fail not*; not that thy Faith be not aſſaulted, not that thy Faith be not ſhaken, but, that thy Faith may not fail by an abſolute and total deficiency. The third particular is the Chriſtians Duty; *When thou art Converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren: When Converted*; that is, when Recovered from thy Fall, when reſtored upon thy Repentance to the Divine Favour. This Converſion is not from a State of Sin; *Peter* was ſo Converted before, but it was from an Act of Sin, into which he ſhould Lapſe and Relapſe; *Strengthen thy Brethren*, that is, eſtabliſh others in the Faith, from which thou art ſhamefully fallen thy ſelf: Now the Leſſons of Inſtruction from the whole, are theſe; 1. That Temptations are like ſiftings; God ſifts to purge away our Duſt and Droſs; Satan ſifts, not to get out the Chaff, but to bolt out the Flower; his Temptations are Levelled againſt our Faith. 2. That Satan has a continual Deſire to be Sifting and Winnowing God's Flower. Satan's own Children are all Bran, all Chaff; theſe he ſifts not: God's Children have Flower mix'd with Bran, good Wheat mix'd with Chaff; theſe he deſires to Sift, Winnow, and Fan; not to ſeparate the Bran and Droſs, but to deſtroy the Flower. *Learn* 3. That the interceſſion of Chriſt gives Security, Satisfaction, and Encouragement to all Believers; that tho' their Faith may by Temptations be ſhaken and aſſaulted, yet, that it ſhall never be finally vanquiſh'd and overcome; *I have prayed that thy Faith fail not.* 4. That lapſed Chriſtians, when Recovered and Reſtored, ought to endeavour to Reſtore and Recover, to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh others; *When thou art Converted ſtrengthen thy Brethren.*

33 And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee [illegible]th into priſon, and to death. 34 And he ſaid, I tell thee Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day, before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me.

St. *Peter*'s Reſolution to accompany Chriſt, both to Priſon, and to Death, was Holy and Good; but his too confident Opinion of his own Strength and Ability ſo to do, without a Divine Aid and Aſſiſtance, was his failing and infirmity; Self-confidence is a Sin too incident to the holieſt and beſt of Men. Little did *Peter* think, What a Feather he ſhould be in the Wind of Temptation, if once God left him to himſelf, and to Satan's Aſſaults. *Learn farther*, How hard a matter it is for a Chriſtian to excel in Gifts, and not to be over-confident and conceited. To ſee a Man eminent in Gifts, and yet exemplary in Humility, is a rare ſight; if we ſtand in the Evil Day, 'tis an humble fear of Falling that muſt enable us to ſtand.

35 And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing? And they ſaid, Nothing. 36 Then ſaid he unto them, But now he that hath a purſe, let him take it, and likewiſe his ſcrip; and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment and buy one. 37 For I ſay unto you, that this that is written, muſt yet be accompliſhed in me, and he was reckoned among the tranſgreſſors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they ſaid, Lord, behold, here are two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.

As if our Lord had ſaid, Hitherto I have been with you, and you have had my ſpecial Protection, and careful Proviſion, tho' you went without Purſe, Scrip or Sword: But the time is now at hand when I muſt leave you; when your Friends will be few, and your Enemies many; therefore make ſuch Preparation for your ſelves; as Prudence ſhall direct: Indeed my Sufferings will be firſt; I muſt be numbred with the Tranſgreſſors, and all things that are written of me muſt be accompliſhed, and will ſuddenly be fulfilled; and after me you will next come upon the Stage, therefore prepare and provide for it. *Learn*, That Chriſt having fore-warned his Members, but eſpecially his Miniſters, of the Dangers, Diſtreſſes and Difficulties, that they are to conflict and encounter with; it is their Duty, by Faith and Patience, with Courage and Chriſtian Reſolution, to be well armed and prepared againſt them.

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his diſciples alſo followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he ſaid, unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a ſtones caſt, and kneeled down and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthning him. 44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly: and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his diſciples, he found them ſleeping for ſorrow, 46 And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.

Our Bleſſed Saviour being now come to the Mount of *Olives*, and having entred with his Diſciples into the Garden near it, whither he uſed to retire and Pray: In this place he falls into a bitter and bloody Agony, in which he prayed with wonderful Fervour and Importunity; his Sufferings were now coming on a great pace, and he meets them upon his Knees, and would be found in a Praying poſture. *Learn thence*, That Prayer is the beſt Preparative for, as well as the moſt powerful Support under the heavieſt Sufferings that can befal us. As to this Prayer of our Saviour, in his Agony, many particulars are very *Obſervable*, As 1. The time when he Prayed thus extraordinarily; it was the Evening before he Suffered, juſt before *Judas*, with his Black-Guard, came to apprehend him; and when he did come, he found him in a praying Poſture; our Lord Teaching us by his Example, That when Eminent Dangers are before us, eſpecially when Death is apprehended by us, it is our Duty to be very much in Prayer to God, and very fervent in our Wreſtlings with him. *Obſerve*, 2. The Subject Matter of our Lord's Prayer, *That, if poſſible, the Cup might paſs from him*; That is, he might eſcape that dreadful Wrath, at which he was ſo ſore amazed. But what! Did Chriſt now begin to repent of his Undertaking for Sinners? Did he ſhrink and give back when it came to the Pinch? No, nothing like this; but as he had Two Natures, being GOD and Man, ſo he had two diſtinct Wills; as Man he feared and ſhunned Death; as God-man he willingly ſubmitted to it. The Divine Nature, and the Humane Spirit of Chriſt did now aſſault each other with diſagreeing Intereſts. Again, This Prayer was not abſolute, but Conditional; Father, if it may be, if thou wilt, if it pleaſe thee, let the Cup paſs, if not, I will drink it. The Cup of Sufferings we ſee is a very bitter and diſtaſteful Cup, a Cup which Humane Nature abhors; yet doth God ofttimes put this Bitter Cup of Affliction into the hands of thoſe whom he does ſincerely Love; and when he doth do ſo, it is their Duty to drink it with Silence and Submiſſion, as here their Lord did before them. *Obſerve*, 3. The manner of our Lord's Prayer in this his Agony; and here we may Remark. 1. It was a Solitary Prayer; he went by himſelf alone, out of the hearing of his Diſciples. The Company of our beſt and deareſt Friends is not always Seaſonable; there are Times and Seaſons, when a Chriſtian would not be willing, that the moſt intimate Friend he has in the World ſhould be with him, to hear what paſſes in Secret betwixt him and his God. *Again*, 2. It was an humble Prayer, that appears by the Poſtures in which he caſt himſelf, ſometimes kneeling, ſometimes lying proſtrate upon his Face; he lyes in the very Duſt, and lower he could not lye, and his Heart was as low as his Body. 3. It was a vehement, fervent, and importunate Prayer; Such was the Fervour of his Spirit, that he Prayed himſelf into an Agony: O let us bluſh to think, how unlike our Praying-frame of Spirit is to Chriſt's. Lord! What Coldneſs, Deadneſs, Drouſineſs, Formality, and Lazineſs, is found in our Prayers? how often do our Lips move when our Hearts ſtand ſtill? *Obſerve*, 4. The Poſture, which the Diſciples were found in, when our Lord was Praying in his Agony, they were faſt aſleep. Good God! Could they poſſibly ſleep at ſuch a time at this? When Chriſt's Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, could their Eyes be thus heavy? *Learn thence*, That the very beſt of Chriſt's Diſciples may be, and oft-times are, over-taken with great Infirmities, when the moſt important Duties are performing; *Then cometh he to his Diſciples, and finds them Sleeping*. *Obſerve*, 5. The Mild, Meek, and Gentle Rebuke, which he gives his Diſciples for their Sleeping; he ſaid unto them, *Why ſleep ye? could you not Watch with me one hour?* What, not watch when your Maſter was in ſuch Danger? Could you not Watch with me, when I am going to lay down my Life for you? What, not one Hour, and that the parting Hour too: *Learn hence*, That the holieſt and beſt Reſolved Chriſtians, who have willing Spirits for Chriſt and his Service, yet in regard of the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, and frailty of Humane Nature, it is their Duty to Watch and Pray, and thereby Guard themſelves againſt Temptations, *Riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into*, &c.

47 And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus, to kiſs him. 48 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the ſon of Man with a kiſs? 49 When they which were about him, ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the ſword? 50 And one of them ſmote the ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his right ear. 51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52 Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief prieſts, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.

It was the Lot and Portion of our Bleſſed Redeemer here, we find, to be betrayed into the hands of his Mortal Enemies, by the Treachery of a falſe and diſſembling Friend: And in this ſad Relation before us we have *Obſervable*, The Traitor, the Treaſon, the Manner how, and the Time when this Treaſonable Deſign was Executed. *Obſerve*, 1. The Traitor *Judas*; all the Evangeliſts carefully Deſcribe him, by his Name *Judas*, *Judas Iſcariot*, leſt he ſhould be miſtaken for *Jude*, the Brother of *James*; and by his Office, one of the Twelve. Lord! How ought the greateſt Profeſſors to look well to themſelves, and to the Grounds and Principles of their Profeſſion: For a Profeſſion begun in Hypocriſie will certainly end in Apoſtacy. *Obſerve*, 2. The occaſion of the Treaſon, Covetouſneſs, or the inordinate Love of Worldly Wealth; and accordingly the Devil lays a Temptation before him, exactly ſuited to his Temper and Inclination, and it inſtantly over-came him. *Learn hence*, That Perſons are never in ſuch eminent danger of falling into Sin, as when they meet with Temptations exactly ſuited to their Maſter Luſts. O pray we, That God would keep us from Temptation ſuited to our predominant Luſt and Corruption. *Obſerve*, 3. The Treaſon of *Judas*, *He led on* an armed Multitude to the place where Chriſt was, gave them a ſignal to diſcover him by, and bids them *lay hands upon him, and hold him faſt*; Which Treaſon of *Judas* was attended with theſe black and helliſh Aggravations. He had been a Witneſs of our Saviour's Miracles, and Hearer of our Lord's Doctrine; What he did was not by Sollicitation; the Chief Prieſts did not ſend to him, but *he went to them*. Lord! How dangerous is it, to allow our ſelves in any Secret Sin; none can ſay, how far that one Sin may in time lead us: ſhould any one have told *Judas*, that his Covetouſneſs would at laſt make him deny his Maſter, and ſell his Saviour, he would have ſaid with *Hazael*, *Is thy Servant a Dog, that I ſhould do this thing?* *Obſerve*, 4. The Endeavours uſed by the Diſciples for their Maſter's Reſcue, *One of them* (St. *Matthew* ſays it was *Peter*) *drew a Sword, and cut off the Ear of Malchus*; But why not the Ear of *Judas* rather? Becauſe, though *Judas* was moſt Faulty, yet *Malchus* might be moſt forward to Arreſt and carry off our Saviour. O how does a pious Breaſt boyl with Indignation at the ſight of any open Affront offered to its Saviour: Yet, though St. *Peter*'s Heart was ſincere, his hand was too raſh; good Intentions are no warrant for irregular Actions; and accordingly Chriſt, who accepted the Affection, reproved the Action: To reſiſt Authority, even in Chriſt's own Defence, is raſh Zeal, and diſcountenanced by the Goſpel. *Peter* did well to ask his Maſter, *If he ſhould ſmite with the Sword*; but he ought to have ſtayed his hand till Chriſt had given him his Anſwer. However, *Peter's* Sin occaſioned a Miracle from our Saviour; Chriſt heals that Ear miraculouſly, which *Peter* cut off unwarrantably; yet the ſight of this Miracle Converted none. O how inſufficient are all outward means for Converſion, without the Spirit's inward Operation!

54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high prieſts houſe, and Peter followed afar off. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and were ſet down together, Peter ſat down among them. 56 But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him, and ſaid, This man was alſo with him. 57 And he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not. 59 And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth this fellow alſo was with him; for he is a Galilean. 60 And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately while he yet ſpake, the cock crew. 61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembred the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

This Paragraph of the Chapter gives us an account of the Fall and Riſing of *Peter*; of his Sin in denying his Maſter, and of his Recovery by Repentance; both muſt be conſidered diſtinctly. Firſt, touching his Sin and Fall; there are Four Particulars *Obſervable* relating thereunto; namely, the Sin it ſelf, the Occaſion of that Sin, the Re-iteration and Repetition of it, and the aggravating Circumſtances attending it. *Obſerve*, 1. The Sin it ſelf, the denial of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord and Maſter, *I know not the Man*; and this back'd with an Oath, he Sware, that he knew him not, Lord! How may the ſlaviſh fear of Suffering drive the holieſt and beſt of Men to commit the fouleſt and the worſt of Sins. *Obſerve*, 2. The Occaſions leading to this Sin, and they were theſe, Firſt, his *Following of Chriſt afar off*: To follow Chriſt was the Effect of *Peter*'s Faith, but to follow him afar off at this time, was the Fruit of Fear, and the Effect of Frailty. Wo unto us when Temptation comes, if we be far from Chriſt's gracious Preſence and Aſſiſtance. 2. His being in bad Company, among Chriſt's Enemies: Would we eſcape Temptations to Sin, we muſt then decline ſuch Company as would allure and draw us into Sin. *Peter* had better have been a-cold by himſelf alone, than warming himſelf at a Fire, which was Compaſſed in with the Blaſphemies of the Multitude; where his Conſcience, though not ſeared, was yet made hard. 3. Another grand occaſion of *Peter*'s Falling, was a preſumptuous Confidence of his own Strength and Standing; *Though all Men forſake thee, yet will not I.* O Lord! to preſume upon our ſelves, is the ready way to provoke thee to leave us to our ſelves; if ever we ſtand in the day of Tryal, 'tis the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. We ſoon Fall, if we believe it impoſſible to Fall. *Obſ.* 3. The Re-iteration and Repetition of this Sin, he denied Chriſt again and again; he denies him firſt with a Lye, then with an Oath, and next with a Curſe. Lord! How dangerous is it, not to reſiſt the firſt Beginnings of Sin? If we yield to one Temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more and ſtronger; *Peter* proceeded from a Denial to a Lye; from a Lye to an Oath; from an Oath to an Imprecation and Curſe. It is our Wiſdom vigorouſly to reſiſt Sin at the Beginning; for then have we moſt Power, and Sin has leaſt. *Obſerve*, 4 The heinous and aggravating Circumſtances of St. *Peter's* Sin; and they are theſe, 1. The Character of his Perſon, a Diſciple, an Apoſtle, a chief Apoſtle, a ſpecial Favourite, who, with *James* and *John*, had the ſpecial Honour to be with Chriſt at his Transfiguration; yet he denies Chriſt. 2. The Perſon whom he denies, *his Maſter*, his Saviour and Redeemer, he, that in great Humility had waſhed *Peter*'s Feet, had eat the Paſſover with *Peter*, had given but juſt before the Holy Sacrament to *Peter*, yet is this kind and condeſcending Saviour denied by *Peter*. 3. Conſider the Perſons before whom he denied Chriſt, the Chief Prieſt's Servants. O how ſurprizing, and yet very pleaſing was it to them, to ſee one Diſciple betray and Sell his Maſter, and another diſown and deny him. 4. Conſider the Time when he denied him; it was but a few Hours after he had received the Holy Sacrament from Chriſt's own hands: How unreaſonable then is their Objection againſt coming to the Lord's Table, That ſome, who go to it, diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it: Such Examples ought not to diſcourage us from Coming to the Ordinance, but ſhould excite and encreaſe our Watchfulneſs after we have been there; that our After-deportment may be ſuitable to the Solemnity of a Sacramental Table. *Obſerve*, 5. What a ſmall Temptation he lay under, thus ſhamefully to deny his Lord and Maſter; a Damſel only at firſt ſpake to him. Had a Band of Armed Souldiers appeared to him, and apprehended him: Had he been bound and led away to the Judgment-Hall, and there Threatned with the Sentence of an ignominious Death, ſome excuſe might have been made better for him: But to diſown his Relation to Chriſt upon a word ſpoken by a ſorry Maid, that kept the door; the ſmalneſs of the Temptation was an high Aggravation of the Crime. Ah *Peter*, How little didſt thou Anſwer thy Name at this time? Thou art not now a Rock but a Reed, a Piller blown down by a Woman's Breath. O frail Humanity, whoſe Strength is Weakneſs and Infirmity. *Note here*, That in moſt of the Saints Falls Recorded in Scripture, the firſt inticers to Sin, or the accidental occaſions of it, were Women; Witneſs, (beſides the firſt Fall, that of *Adam*'s where the Woman was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion) the Fall of *Lot*, *Samſon*, *David*, *Solomon*, and *Peter*; theſe are ſad inſtances of the Truth of what I ſpeak. A weak Creature may be a ſtrong Tempter; nothing is too impotent or uſeleſs for the Devil's Service; it was a great Aggravation of *Peter*'s Sin, that the voice of a poor Maid that kept the door, ſhould be of more Force to over-come him, than his Faith in Jeſus to ſuſtain him. But what ſhall we ſay! ſmall things are ſufficient to caſt us down, if God doth not hold us up; we ſink under any Burthen, if God ſuſtains us not; and yield to the leaſt Temptation, if he leaves us to our ſelves; a Damſel ſhall then make a Diſciple ſhrink; and a Door-keeper ſhall be able to drive an Apoſtle before her. This is the Account, in ſhort, of St. *Peter*'s Fall, conſidered in it ſelf, and with the Circumſtances relating to it. Now follows his Recovery and Riſing again by Repentance; and here we have *Obſervable*, the Suddenneſs of his Repentance, the Means of his Repentance, and the Manner of his Repentance. *Obſerve*, 1. The Suddenneſs of St. *Peter*'s Repentance; as his Sin was ſad, ſo was his Repentance ſpeedy: Sins committed by Surprize, and through the prevalency of a Temptation, that ſuddenly Aſſaults us, are much ſooner Repented of, than where the ſin is preſumptuous and deliberate; *David*'s Murther and Adultery were Deliberate Acts of Sin, in which he lay almoſt Twelve Months, without any ſolemn Repentance for them. St. *Peter*'s Denyal was haſty and ſudden, under a violent pang and paſſion of Fear, and he takes the warning of the Cock's Crowing, to go forth ſpeedily and weep for his Tranſgreſſion. *Obſerve*, 2. The Means of his Repentance, which was Two-fold; the leſs principal Means, *was the crowing of the Cock*; the more principal Means were *Chriſts looking upon Peter*, and *Peter*'s *Remembring the words of Chriſt.* 1. The leſs principal Means of St. *Peter*'s Riſing and Recovery by Repentance, was *the crowing of the Cock*; as the voice of the Maid occaſioned him to Sin, ſo the voice of the Cock occaſioned him to Reflect, That God, who always can work without Means, can ever when he pleaſe, work by weak and contemptible Means, and open the Mouth of a Bird or a Beaſt for the Converſion of a Man. But why doth our Lord make uſe of the Crowing of the Cock, as a Means of bringing St. *Peter* to Repentance? There is ever ſome Myſtery in Chriſt's Inſtitutions and Inſtruments; The Cock was a Preacher to call St. *Peter* to his Duty, there being ſomething of Emblem between a Cock and a Preacher; the Preacher ought to have the Wings of the Cock, to rouſe himſelf from Drowſineſs and Security, and to awaken others to a ſenſe of their Duty: He muſt have the Watchfulneſs of the Cock, to be ever ready to diſcover, and fore-warn Danger; He muſt have the voice of the Cock to cry aloud, to tell *Iſrael* of their Sin, to terrifie the Roaring Lion of Hell and make him Tremble, as they ſay the natural Lion does; in a word, he muſt obſerve the

Hours of the Cock, to Crow at all Seaſons; to Preach the Word in Seaſon and out of Seaſon. Again 2. The more principal Means of St. *Peter*'s Recovery were, *Chriſt's looking upon Peter, and Peter's remembring the Words of Chriſt.* 1. *Chriſt's looking upon Peter*; our Saviour looked upon *Peter*, before either *Peter* look'd upon our Saviour or upon himſelf. O wonderful Act of Love and Grace towards this fallen Diſciple. Chriſt was now upon his Tryal of his Life (a time when our Thoughts would have been wholly taken up about our ſelves) but even then did Chriſt find leiſure to think upon *Peter*, to remember his diſconſolate Diſciple, to turn himſelf about, and give him a pitiful but piercing Look, even a Look that melted and diſſolved him into Tears. We never begin to lament our Sins, till we are firſt lamented by our Saviour; *Jeſus looked upon Peter*, that was the firſt more principle Means of his Repentance. But 2. The other Means was, *Peter remembring the Words of the Lord, before the Cock Crow, thou ſhalt deny me.* Now this Remembrance was an Applicative and Feeling Remembrance; he remembred the Prediction of Chriſt, and apply'd it ſenſibly to himſelf; Teaching us, That the Efficacy of Chriſt's Word, in order to ſound Repentance, depends not upon the Hiſtorical Remembrance of it, but upon the cloſe Application thereof to every Man's Conſcience. *Obſerve* 3. The manner of St. *Peter*'s Repentance, it was Secret, it was Sincere, it was Laſting and Abiding. 1. It was Secret; *He went out and wept, Verè dolet qui ſine Teſte dolet*; He ſought a place of Retirement where he might mourn in ſecret: Solitarineſs is moſt agreeable to an afflicted Spirit; yet muſt I add, That as St. *Peter*'s Sorrow, ſo probably his Shame might cauſe him to go forth and weep. Chriſt look'd upon him, and how aſhamed muſt he be to look upon Chriſt, ſeeing he had ſo lately deny'd, that he had ever ſeen him? 2. St. *Peter*'s Repentance was Sincere; *He wept bitterly*; His Grief was extraordinary, and his Tears abundant; There is always a Weeping that muſt follow Sin; Sin muſt coſt the Soul Sorrow, either here or in Hell; we muſt now either Mourn a while, or lament for ever. Doubtleſs, *Peter*'s Tears there were joyned with hearty Confeſſion of Sin to God, and ſmart Reflections upon himſelf, after this manner; Lord! What have I done? I a Diſciple, I an Apoſtle, I that did ſo lately Acknowledge my Maſter to be Chriſt the Lord; I that ſpoke with ſo much Aſſurance, *Though all Men deny thee, yet will not I*; I that promiſed to lay down my Life for his ſake, yet have I denied him, yet have I, with Oaths and Imprecations, Diſowned him, and this at the voice of a Damſel, not at the ſight of a drawn Sword, preſented at my Breaſt. Lord! What weakneſs? what wickedneſs? what unfaithfulneſs have I been guilty of? O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep all my Days for the Fault of this one Night. Thus may we ſuppoſe our lapſed Apoſtle to have bemoaned himſelf: And happy was it for him, that he did ſo, for Bleſſed are the Tears of a Converted Revolter, and happy is the Miſery of a Mourning Offender. *Obſ.* 3. St. *Peter*'s Repentance was not only Secret and Sincere, but Laſting and Abiding; He retained a very quick Senſe, and lively Remembrance of this Sin upon his Mind all his Life after. *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* Reports, That ever after when St. *Peter* heard the Crowing of the Cock, he fell upon his Knees, and wept: Others ſay, That he was wont to riſe at Mid-night, and ſpend the time in Prayer and Humiliation, between Cock-crowing and Day-light: And the Papiſts, who delight to turn every thing into Folly and Superſtition, firſt began that Practice of ſetting up what we call Weather-Cocks upon Towers and Steeples, to put People in mind of St. *Peter*'s Fall and Repentance by that Signal. *Laſtly*, St. *Peter*'s Repentance was attended with an extraordinary Zeal and Forwardneſs for the Service of Chriſt, to the end of his Days. He had a burning Love towards the Holy Jeſus ever after, which is now improved into a Seraphick Flame; *Lord, thou knowſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee*, ſays he himſelf, *John* 21. 17. And as an Evidence of it, he Fed Chriſt's Sheep; for in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, we read of his extraordinary Diligence to Spread the Goſpel, and his Travels in order thereunto, are computed by ſome to be Nine hundred and fifty Miles. To End all, Have any of us fallen with *Peter*, though not with a Formal Abjuration, yet by a Practical Denying of him, let us go forth and Weep with him, let us be more Vigilant and watchful over our ſelves for the time to come, let us expreſs more fervent Love and Zeal for Chriſt, more Diligence in his Service, more Concernedneſs for his Honour and Glory: This would be an happy Improvement of this Example; God grant it may have that Bleſſed Effect.

63 And the men that held Jeſus, mocked and ſmote him. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they ſtroke him on the face, and asked him, ſaying, Propheſie, who is it that ſmote thee. 65 And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him.

Obſerve here, The vile Affronts, the horrid Abuſes, the Injuries and Indignities, which were put upon the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, in the Day of his Sufferings; the rude Officers and Servants ſpit in his Face, blindfold his Eyes, ſmite him with their Hands, and in Contempt and Scorn, bid him *Prophecy, who it was that ſmote him.* Verily, There is no degree of Contempt, no mark of Shame, no kind of Suffering, which we ought to decline for Chriſt's ſake, who hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting upon our Account.

66 And as ſoon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes came together, and led him into their council, 67 Saying, Art thou the Chriſt? tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe. 68 And if I alſo ask you, you will not anſwer me, nor let me go. 69 Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God. 70 Then ſaid they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, Ye ſay that I am. 71 And they ſaid, What need we any further witneſs? for we our ſelves have heard of his own mouth.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt was Judged and Tryed before a Court, that had no Authority to Judge or Try him, *ver.* 66. *They led him into their Council.* This was their great Sanhedrin or Eccleſiaſtical Court, which according to its firſt Conſtitution, was to conſiſt of Seventy Grave, Honourable, and Learned Men; who were to Judge impartially for God, according to *Numb.* 11. 16. But this, alas! conſiſted of a Malicious pack of Scribes and Phariſees, Men full of Malice and Revenge, and over theſe *Caiphas* now preſided; an Head fit for ſuch a Body: But tho' there was at our Saviour's Tryal a Face of a Court amongſt them, yet their Power was much abridg'd by the *Romans*, ſo that they could not Hear nor Determine, neither Judge nor Condemn in Capital Matters. *Obſerve next*, The Indictment of Blaſphemy is brought in againſt him; *What need we any farther Witneſs? we have heard his Blaſphemy.* Abominable Wickedneſs! It is not in the Power of the greateſt and unſpotted Innocency, to protect from Slander and falſe Accuſation. *Obſerve farther*, The great Meekneſs of our Saviour under all theſe ill Suggeſtions, and falſe Accuſations, as a Lamb before the Shearer, ſo is he Dumb, and opened not his Mouth. *Learn thence*, That to bear the Revilings, Contradictions, and falſe Accuſations of Men, with a Silent and Submiſſive Spirit, is an Excellent and Chriſt-like Temper. Though a Tryal for his Innocent Life was now managed moſt Maliciouſly and Illegally againſt him; yet *When he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not.* O may the ſame meek and humble Mind be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who inſtead of Reviling his Accuſers, Prayed for his Murtherers, and Offered up his Blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it. Lord Jeſus help us to ſet thy Inſtructive Example continually before us, and to be Daily Correcting and Reforming of our Lives by that Bleſſed Pattern. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIII.

AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and led him unto Pilate. 2 And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Ceſar, ſaying, that he himſelf is Chriſt a king. 3 And Pilate asked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwered him and ſaid, Thou ſayeſt it. 4 Then ſaid Pilate to the chief prieſts and to the people, I find no fault in this man. 5 And they were the more fierce, ſaying, He ſtirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. 7 And as ſoon as he knew that he belonged unto Herods juriſdiction, he ſent him to Herod, who himſelf was alſo at Jeruſalem at that time. 8 And when Herod ſaw Jeſus, he was exceeding glad: for he was deſirous to ſee him of a long ſeaſon, becauſe he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him. 9 Then he queſtioned with him in many words; but he anſwered him nothing. 10 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſtood and vehemently accuſed him. 11 And Herod with his men of war ſet him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and ſent him again to Pilate. 12 And the ſame day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themſelves.

In this Chapter we have a Relation of the Blackeſt and Saddeſt Tragedy that ever was Acted upon the Stage of the World, namely, The Barbarous and Bloody Murther of the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, by the *Jews* his own Country-men; the Beſt of Kings put to Death by his own Subjects. And the firſt ſtep towards it is his Arraignment before *Pilate* and *Herod*; they Poſt him from one to another; *Pilate* ſends him to *Herod*, and *Herod* having made ſufficient Sport with him, Remands him to *Pilate*: Neither of them find any Fault in him worthy of Death, yet neither of them would Releaſe him. Here *Obſerve*, That our Saviour being before *Pilate*, Anſwers him Readily and Cautiouſly, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* ſays Pilate, *Thou ſayeſt it*, ſays our Saviour. *Art thou the Chriſt the Son of the Bleſſed?* He reply'd, *I am*. Hence ſays the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. *That Jeſus Chriſt before* Pontius Pilate *witneſſed a good Confeſſion. Teaching us*, That though we may, and ſometimes ought to hold our Peace when our Reputation is concerned; yet we muſt never be Silent when the Honour of God and his Truth may be effectually promoted by a Free and Full Confeſſion; yet it is farther *Obſervable*, That our Saviour being before *Herod* would neither Anſwer him to any Queſtion, nor Work any Miracle before him. This was an Inſtance and Evidence of our Lord's great Humility, in refuſing to Work Miracles before *Herod*, who deſired it only to gratify his Curioſity. Thus do vile Men abuſe the Holy Power of God, deſiring to ſee it exerted for Admiration and Paſtime; not to be Convinced or Converted by it, but only to pleaſe their fooliſh Fancy. And as Admirable was the Patience, as the Humility of Chriſt, and his preſent Silence, who neither at *Herod*'s Requeſt, nor at the *Jews* Importunity and falſe Accuſations, could be moved to Anſwer any thing. *Obſerve farther*, That though *Herod* had Murthered Chriſt's Fore-runner *John the Baptiſt*, and our Saviour's own Life was in danger by *Herod* heretofore, yet now he has him in his Hands, he lets him go; only he firſt abuſes him, and mocks him, and arrays him in a gorgeous Robe, like a Mock-King. Thus were all the Marks of Scorn imaginable put upon our Dear Redeemer; yet all this Jeering and ſportful Shame did our Lord undergo, to ſhew what was due unto us for our Sins; and alſo to give us an Example to bear all the Shame and Reproach imaginable for his ſake; *Who for the Joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the Shame*, Heb. 12. 2. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The wicked Accuſation brought in againſt our Bleſſed Redeemer; *We found* (ſay they) *this Fellow perverting the Nation, forbidding to give Tribute to Cæſar*. O Helliſh Untruth! how directly contrary to the whole Courſe and Tenour of Chriſt's Life was this Accuſation! By his Doctrine he preached up Subjection to Governours and Government, ſaying, *Render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*: And by his Practice he confirmed his own Doctrine; working a Miracle to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*. Satan could help them, to draw up an Indictment as black as *Hell*, againſt the Innocent Jeſus, but all the Powers of Hell and Darkneſs could not prove a Tittle of it.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief prieſts, and the rulers, and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching thoſe things whereof ye accuſe him; 15 No, nor yet Herod: for I ſent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and releaſe him. 17 For of neceſſity he muſt releaſe one unto them at the feaſt. 18 And they cryed out all at once, ſaying, Away with this man, and releaſe unto us Barabbas: 19 (Who for a certain ſedition made in the city, and for murder was caſt in priſon.) 20 Pilate therefore willing to releaſe Jeſus, ſpake again to them. 21 But they cryed, ſaying, Crucifie him, crucifie him. 22 And he ſaid unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him: I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let him go. 23 And they were inſtant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief prieſts prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave ſentence that it ſhould be as they required. 25 And he releaſed unto them, him that for ſedition and murder was caſt into priſon, whom they had deſired; but he delivered Jeſus to their will.

Obſerve here, 1. How unwilling, how very unwilling *Pilate* was to be the Inſtrument of our Saviour's Death: One while he Expoſtulates with the Chief Prieſts, ſaying, *What Evil hath he done?* Nay, St. *Luke* here declares, that *Pilate* came forth three ſeveral times, profeſſing that he found no Fault in him. Where *Note*, How much more Juſtice and Equity Chriſt met with from *Pilate* an Heathen, than from the Chief Prieſts and People of the *Jews*, profeſſing the true Religion? O how deſperate is the Hatred that grows upon the Root of Religion. *Learn hence*, That Hypocrites within the Church may be guilty of ſuch Tremendous Acts of Wickedneſs, as the Conſciences of Infidels and Pagans without the Church may Boggle at, and proteſt againſt. *Pilate* a Pagan Abſolves Chriſt, whilſt the Hypocritical *Jews*, that heard his Doctrine, and ſaw his Miracles do Condemn him. *Obſerve* 2. How *Pilate* at laſt ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the Importunity of the *Jews*, and delivers the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, contrary to his Judgment and Conſcience, to the Will of his Murtherers. It is a vain Apology for Sin, when Perſons pretend, That they are not committed with their own Conſent; but at the Inſtigation and Importunity of others: For ſuch is the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, that none can make a Perſon Wicked without his own Conſent: It was no Extenuation of *Pilate*'s Sin, no Alleviation of his Puniſhment, that to pleaſe the People he delivered up our Saviour, contrary to the Directions of his own Conſcience, to be Crucified. *Obſerve* 3. The Perſon whoſe Life the wicked *Jews* preferred before the Life of the Holy Jeſus, *Barabbas*: *We will, that thou releaſe Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus*: Mark theſe Hypocritical High Prieſts, who pretended ſuch a Zeal for God and Religion, they prefer the Life of a Perſon guilty of the higheſt Immoralities and Debaucheries, even Murder and Sedition, before the Beſt Man that ever lived in the World. But whence ſprang the Malice and Hatred of the High Prieſts, and People of the *Jews* againſt our Saviour? Why plainly, from hence, Chriſt Interpreted the Law of God more ſtrictly than their Luſts could bear; and he lived a more Holy, Uſeful, and Excellent Life than they could endure. Now nothing enrages the Men of the World more againſt the Profeſſors, but eſpecially the Preachers of the Goſpel, than Holineſs of the Doctrine, and Strictneſs of Life and Converſation. Such as Preach, and Live well, let them expect ſuch Enmity and Oppoſition, ſuch Malice and Perſecution, ſuch Sufferings and Tryals as will ſhock an ordinary Patience and Conſtancy of Mind. Our Maſter met with it, let his Zealous Miniſters prepare for it.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the

country, and on him they laid the croſs, that he might bear it after Jeſus.

The Sentence of Death being paſt by *Pilate*, who can with dry Eyes, behold the ſad Pomp of our Saviour's Execution: Forth comes the Bleſſed Jeſus out of *Pilate*'s Gate, bearing that Croſs, which ſoon after was to bear him. With his Croſs on his Shoulder, he Marches towards *Golgotha*; and when, they ſee he can go no faſter, they compel *Simon* of *Cyrenia*, not out of Compaſſion, but Indignation, to bear his Croſs; This *Cyrenian* being a Gentile who bare Chriſt's Croſs, ſome think, thereby was ſignified, that the Gentiles ſhould have a part in Chriſt, as well as the Jews, and be Sharers with them in the Benefits of the Croſs.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for your ſelves, and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming, in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck. 30 Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

There were Four ſorts of Perſons, which Attended our Saviour at his Crucifixion; the Executioners that Tormented him, the *Jews* that Mocked him, the Spectators and Lookers on that Mark'd him, and Sympathizing Friends which Lamented him; Theſe laſt Chriſt thus beſpoke, *Weep not for me, but for your ſelves*; that is, Weep rather upon your own Account, than mine: Reſerve your Sorrows for the Calamities coming upon your ſelves and your Children. It is very probable, That the Tears and Lamentations of many of theſe Mourners, were but the Fruits of tender Nature, not the Effects of Faith, and flowing from a Principle of Grace. *Learn thence*, That melting Affections and Sorrows, even from the Senſe of Chriſt's Sufferings, are no infallible Marks of Grace. The Hiſtory of Chriſt's Sufferings is very Tragical and Pathetical, and may melt Ingenuous Nature, where there is no Renewed Principle of Grace. Theſe Motions of the Affections may rather be a Fit and Mood, than the very Frame and Temper of the Soul. There are Times and Seaſons, when the rougheſt and moſt obdurate Hearts may be penſive and tender; but that is not its Temper and Frame, but only a Fit, a Pang, a tranſient Paſſion. There is no inferring or concluding then, a work of Grace upon the Heart, ſimply and barely from the movings or meltings of the Affections. Nature will have its good Moods, but Grace is Steady; *Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me*, ſays Chriſt.

32 There were alſo two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. 33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Here we ſee the Infamous Company, that our Holy Lord Suffered with; *Two Thieves*: It had been a ſufficient Diſparagement to our Bleſſed Saviour, to be Sorted with the beſt of Men; but to be numbred with the Scum of Mankind, is ſuch an Indignity as Confounds our Thoughts: This was deſigned by the *Jews* to Diſhonour and Diſgrace our Saviour the more; and to perſwade the World, that he was the greateſt of Offenders: But God over-ruled this, for fulfilling an Antient Prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, *Iſa.* 53. *ult. And he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors.*

34 Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and caſt lots.

Chriſt had often Preach'd the Doctrine of Forgiving Enemies, and Praying for them; he Practiſes it here himſelf in a moſt Exemplary manner. Where *Note* 1. The Mercy deſired and prayed for; and that is, *Forgiveneſs*. 2. The Perſon deſiring that Mercy, Chriſt, the Dying Jeſus. 3. The Perſons for whom it is deſired, his Bloody Murtherers; *Father, Forgive them.* 4. The Argument uſed, or Motive urged to procure the Mercy; *Forgive them, for they know not what they do. Learn hence*, 1. That Ignorance is the uſual Cauſe of Enmity againſt Chriſt. 2. That there is Forgiveneſs with God for ſuch as Oppoſe, yea, Perſecute Chriſt out of Ignorance. That to Forgive Enemies, and to beg Forgiveneſs for them, is an Evidence of a Chriſt-like Frame of Spirit; *Father, Forgive them*: Not that the Goſpel requires of us an Inſenſibility of Wrongs and Injuries; *That* allows us a Senſe of offered Evils, tho' it forbids us to Revenge them; yet the more tender our Reſentments are, the more excellent our Forgiveneſs is: So that a Forgiving Spirit doth not exclude Senſe of Injuries; but the Senſe of Injuries graces the Forgiveneſs of them; neither doth the Goſpel require us under the Notion of Forgiving Injuries to deliver up our Rights and Properties to the Luſts of every one that will Invade them, but meekly to receive Evil, and readily to return Good.

35 And the people ſtood beholding: and the rulers alſo with them derided him, ſaying, He ſaved others; let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt, the choſen of God. 36 And the ſoldiers alſo mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar. 37 And ſaying, If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thy ſelf. 38 And a ſuperſcription alſo was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Obſerve here, 1. A mighty Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs; namely, The mocking Deriſion which he met with in his Dying Moments. As he endured the Pain, ſo he deſpiſed the Shame: Cruel Mockings was our Lord Tryed with, both from the Common People, and from the Chief Prieſts; yet the Common People's Reviling him, and wagging their Heads at him, was not ſo much to be taken notice of, as the Chief Prieſts, who were Men of Age and Gravity, and the Miniſters of Religion; for them Barbarouſly to Mock him in his Miſery, and which was worſe, Atheiſtically to Jeer and Scoff at his Faith and Affiance in God, ſaying, *He truſted in God, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he will have him.* This was ſuch an Indignation as confounds our Thoughts. But from hence we *Learn*, 1. That Perſecutors are generally Atheiſtical Scoffers; the Chief Prieſts and Elders, who Perſecuted Chriſt, do Blaſpheme God; they mock at his Power, and deride his Providence, which was as wicked as to deny his Being. 2. We *Learn* from this Example, That ſuch as Miniſter to God in Holy Things, by way of Office, if they be not the beſt, they are generally the worſt of Men; no ſuch bitter Enemies to the Power of Godlineſs, as ſuch Preachers, who were never experimentally acquainted with the Efficacy and Power of it, upon their own Hearts and Lives. *Obſerve*, 2. The Inſcription wrote by *Pilate* over our Suffering Saviour, *This is Jeſus, the King of the Jews.* It was the Cuſtom of the *Romans*, when they Crucified a Malefactor, to publiſh the Cauſe of his Death, in Capital Letters placed over the Head of the Perſon. Now it is *Obſervable*, How wonderfully the Wiſdom of God over-ruled the Heart and Pen of *Pilate*, to draw his Title, which was truly Honourable, and fix it to his Croſs. *Pilate* is Chriſt's Herald, and Proclaims him *King of the Jews. Learn hence*, That the Kingſhip and Regal Dignity of Chriſt was proclaimed by an Enemy, and that in a time of his greateſt Sufferings and Reproaches. *Pilate* without his Knowledge did our Saviour an eminent piece of Service; Verily he did that for Chriſt, which none of his own Diſciples durſt do; not that he did it deſignedly, and with any Intent to put Honour upon Chriſt, but from the ſpecial over-ruling Providence of God: No thanks to *Pilate* for all this: Becauſe the higheſt Services performed for Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall never be Accepted nor Rewarded by him.

39 And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thy ſelf and us. 40 But the other anſwering,

rebuked him, ſaying, Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation? 41 And we indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiſs. 42 And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.

Here we have a farther Aggravation of our Lord's Sufferings upon the Croſs, from the Company he Suffered with, the two Thieves, who Reviled him with the reſt. St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* ſay, They both Reviled him; St. *Luke* ſays, One of them Reviled; poſſibly both of them might do it at firſt, and one of them Repent; which if ſo, increaſes the wonder of the Penitent Thief's Converſion: From the Impenitent Thief's Reviling of Chriſt; when he was at the very point of Death, and even in the Suburbs of Hell, we *Learn*, That neither Shame nor Pain will change the Mind of a Reſolute Sinner; but even then, when he is in the Suburbs of Hell will he Blaſpheme. From the Penitent Thief's Confeſſing of Chriſt, and Praying to him; *Lord, Remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*; *We Learn*, Both the Efficacy and Freeneſs of Divine Grace. 1. The Efficacious Power of it: O how Powerful muſt that Grace be, which wrought ſuch a Change in an inſtant, which ſupplied that Heart in a Moment, which had been hardning in Sin for ſo many Years. 2. The Freeneſs of it; which takes hold of his Heart, when he was at the heighth of Sin, and was not only void of Grace, but ſeemed paſt Grace. O the powerful Efficacy, and adorable Freeneſs of the Heart-changing Grace of God in this vile Perſon, it diſpoſed him to his own Sin, to confeſs the juſtneſs of his Puniſhment, to juſtify Chriſt's Innocency, to Reprove his Fellow Companion, to pray to a Crucified Chriſt, and to intercede with him, not for preſent Deliverance from Death, but for a place in Chriſt's Kingdom. Where we *Learn*, 1. That true Converſion is never too late for obtaining Mercy and Salvation. 2. That true Converſion, how late ſoever, will have its Fruits: The forementioned Fruits of Faith and Repentance, were found with this penitent Thief; yet muſt not this extraordinary Caſe be drawn into Example: This Extraordinary and Miraculous Grace of God is not to be expected ordinarily: We have no warrant to expect an overpowering degree of God's Grace, to turn our Hearts in an inſtant at the Hour of Death, when we have lived in Forgetfulneſs of God, and in a Supine Neglect of our Soul's Concern, all the Days of our Life: for it is evident, as to this Caſe of the Penitent Thief's Converſion at the laſt Hour, 1. It is an Example without a Promiſe. 2. It is but a ſingle Example. 3. It is an Example Recorded but by one Evangeliſt: The Spirit of God foreſeeing what an ill uſe ſome would make of this Inſtance, leaves one Example upon Record, that none might Deſpair; and but one, that none might Preſume. 4. This Thief probably had never any Knowledge of Chriſt before. 5. This Thief Improved his Time at laſt as never any did before or after; for he believed Chriſt to be the Saviour of the World when one Diſciple had Betrayed, another Denyed him, and all had forſaken him; he Owned him to be the Son of God, the Lord of Life, when he was Suffering the Pains of Death, and ſeemingly deſerted by his Father: He proclaims him Lord of Paradiſe, and Diſpoſer of the Kingdom of Heaven, when the *Jews* had Condemned him, and the *Gentiles* Crucified him as the vileſt of Impoſtors. He feared God, owned the Juſtice of his Puniſhment, was ſollicitous not for the Preſervation of his Body, but for the Salvation of his Soul: Yea, not of his own only, but of his Brother's, that Suffered with him; ſo, that he Glorified Chriſt more at the Moment of his Death, than ſome do in the whole Courſe of their Life. 6. This was a Miracle with the Glory whereof Chriſt would Honour the Ignominy of his Croſs: So that we have no more ground to expect ſuch another Converſion, than we have to expect a ſecond Crucifixion. This Converted Perſon was the Firſt-fruits of the Blood of the Croſs. From whence we *Learn*, That God can, and ſometimes doth, though very ſeldom, prepare Men for Glory, immediately before their Diſſolution by Death. His Grace is his own, he may diſpenſe it how, and when, where, and to whom he pleaſes; yet is this no more warrant to neglect the Ordinary, becauſe God doth ſometimes manifeſt his Grace in an Extraordinary way. True, in this Converſion we have a Pattern of what Free-Grace can do; but it is a Pattern without a Promiſe; where we have not a Promiſe to encourage our Hope; our Hope, is nothing but Preſumption.

43 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

Theſe Words are our Saviour's Gracious Anſwer to the Penitent Thief's humble Prayer, *Lord, Remember me in thy Kingdom*, ſays the Thief; *To Day ſhalt thou be with me in my Kingdom*, ſays our Saviour: Where *Note* 1. The Immortality of the Souls of Men is without all doubt: Our Deſires after, and Hopes for Immortality, do prove our Souls Immortal, and capable of that State. The Souls of Men Dye not with their Bodies, but remain in a State of Senſibility. 2. That there is a Future and Eternal State into which Souls paſs at Death. Death is our paſſage out of the ſwift River of Time, into the Boundleſs and Bottomleſs Ocean of Eternity. 3. That the Souls of all the Righteous at Death, are immediately received into a State of Happineſs and Glory; *This Day ſhalt thou be with me*; not after thy Reſurrection, but immediately after thy Diſſolution: That Man's Soul is aſleep, or worſe, that Dreams of the Soul's Sleeping till the Reſurrection: For why ſhould the Believers Happineſs be deferred, when they are immediately capable of Injoying it? Why ſhould their Salvation ſlumber, when the Wicked's Damnation ſlumbreth not? How do ſuch Delays conſiſt with Chriſt's ardent Deſires, and his Peoples vehement Longing to be together?

44 And it was about the ſixth hour, and there was a darkneſs over all the earth, until the ninth hour. 45 And the ſun was darkned, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midſt. 46 And when Jeſus had cryed with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit, and having ſaid thus, he gave up the ghoſt. 47 Now when the centurion ſaw what was done, he glorified God, ſaying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48 And all the people that came together to that ſight, beholding the things which were done, ſmote their breaſts, and returned. 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, ſtood afar off, beholding theſe things.

Obſerve here, 1. What Prodigies in Nature happened and fell out at the Crucifixion of our Saviour; The Sun was Darkned at the Setting of the Sun of Righteouſneſs: And the Veil of the Temple was Rent; ſignifying, that God was now about to forſake his Temple; that the Ceremonial Law was now Aboliſhing, and the Partition-Wall betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, being now pulling down, all may have Acceſs to God through the Blood of a Mediator. *Obſerve* 2. The Prayer of our Saviour before his Death, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*: They are Words full of Faith and Comfort, fit to be the laſt Breathings of every Gracious Soul in this World. *Learn hence*, That Dying Believers are both Warranted and Encouraged by Chriſt's Example, Believingly to Commend their precious Souls into the Hands of God, as a Gracious Father; *Father, into thy Hands*. *Obſerve* 3. What Influence our Saviour's Death had upon the Centurion, *He glorified God, ſaying, Verily this was a Righteous Man*. Here *Note*, That Chriſt had a Teſtimony of his Innocency and Righteouſneſs given unto him from all ſorts of Perſons whatſoever: *Pilate* and *Herod* pronounced him *Innocent*; *Pilate*'s Wife proclaimed him *a Righteous Perſon*; *Judas*, the Traytor, declared *it was Innocent Blood*; the Thief on the Croſs affirmed, he had *done nothing amiſs*; and the Centurion owned him *to be a Righteous Man*; yea, *the Son of God*, *Mark* 15. 39. Only the Phariſees and Chief Prieſts, which were Teachers of others, not Ignorance, but Obſtinacy and Malice Blinded and Hardned them to their Ruin and Deſtruction; inſtead of owning and receiving him for their Saviour, they Ignominiouſly put him to Death as the vileſt Impoſtor.

50 And behold, there was a man named Joſeph, a counſellor, and he was a good man, and a juſt: 51 (The ſame had not conſented to the counſel and deed of them) he was of Arimathea, a city of

the Jews (who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God.) 52 This man went unto Pilare, and begged the body of Jeſus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linnen, and laid it in a ſepulchre that was hewn in ſtone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew on. 55 And the women alſo which came with him from Galliee, followed after, and beheld the ſepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared ſpices and oyntments; and reſted the ſabbath day, according to the commandment.

The Circumſtances of our Lord's Funeral and Honourable Interment are here Recorded by our Evangeliſt; ſuch a Funeral as never was, ſince Graves were firſt digg'd. Where *Obſerve*, 1. Our Lord's Body muſt be Begg'd before it could be Bury'd; The dead Bodies of Malefactors being in the Power, and at the Diſpoſal of the Judge, that Condemns them, *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſon that begg'd this Body, and beſtowed a Decent and Honourable Burial upon it; *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, a worthy, though a cloſe Diſciple. Grace doth not always make a publick and open Shew where it is: But as there is much ſecret Treaſure in the Bowels of the Earth, though unſeen; ſo is there much Grace in the Hearts of ſome Saints, which the World takes little notice of. *Obſerve*, 3. The Mourners that followed our Saviour's Hearſe to the Grave; The Women that came out of *Galilee*, a poor Train of Mourners: The Apoſtles, who ſhould have been moſt officious to bear his Holy Body to the Ground, were ſometime ſince all ſcattered, afraid to own their Maſter, either Dying, or Dead. Funeral Pomp had been no way ſuitable, either to the End or Manner of our Lord's Death, and accordingly here is nothing like it. *Obſerve*, 4. The Grave or Sepulchre in which our Lord lay; it was in a Sepulchre *hewn out of a Rock*. That ſo his Enemies might have no occaſion to ſay, That his Diſciples ſtole him away by ſecret Holes, and unſeen Paſſages Under-ground: It was in a New Sepulchre, *Wherein never Man was laid before*, leſt his Adverſaries ſhould ſay, It was another that was Riſen, who was Bury'd there before him: And he was Bury'd in a Garden. As by the Sin of the firſt *Adam*, we were driven out of the Garden of Pleaſure, the Earthly Paradice, ſo by the Sufferings of the Second *Adam*, who lay Bury'd in a Garden, we may hope for Entrance into the Heavenly Paradice. *Obſerve*, 5. The manner of our Lord's Funeral, it was Haſty, Open, and Decent. Haſty, becauſe of the Preparation for the Sabbath. Open, that all Perſons might be Spectators, and none might ſay, He was Buried before he was Dead. Decent, being wrapt in fine Linnen, and perfumed with Spices. *Obſerve*, 6. The Reaſons why our Lord was thus Bury'd, ſeeing he was to Riſe again in as ſhort a Time as other Men lye by the Walls; Doubtleſs it was to declare the Certainty of his Death, to fulfil the Types and Propheſies which went before of him: *As Jonas being three Days and three Nights in the Whales Belly*; He was alſo Bury'd to compleat his Humiliation; This was the loweſt ſtep to which he could Deſcend in his abaſed State. In a Word, Chriſt went into the Grave, that he might Conquer Death in its own Territories and Dominions. *Obſerve*, 7. Of what Uſe our Lord's Buryal is to his Followers; it ſhews us the amazing Depths of his Humiliation, from what, and to what his Love brought him, euen from the Boſom of his Father to the Boſom of the Grave. It may Comfort us againſt the Fears of Death, and the Terrors of the Grave: The Grave could not long keep Chriſt, it ſhall not always keep Chriſtians: It was a loathſom Priſon before, it is a perfumed Bed now: He whoſe Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his Feet into the Grave. Awake and Sing, thou that dwelleſt in the Duſt, for the Enmity of the Grave is ſlain by Chriſt.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Laſt Chapter of St. Luke's *Goſpel, contains the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and gives us an Account of what he did upon Earth, between the time of his Glorious Reſurrection, and Triumphant Aſcenſion.*

NOW upon the firſt day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the ſepulchre, bringing the ſpices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the ſtone rolled away from the ſepulchre. 3 And they entred in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus. 4 And it came to paſs, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men ſtood by them in ſhining garments. 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them, why ſeek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is riſen: remember how he ſpake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. 7 Saying, The Son of man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be crucified, and the third day riſe again. 8 And they remembred his words, 9 And returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things unto the eleven, and to all the reſt. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told theſe things unto the apoſtles. 11 And their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12 Then aroſe Peter, and ran unto the ſepulchre, and ſtooping down he beheld the linnen clothes laid by themſelves, and departed, wondring in himſelf at that which was come to paſs.

The Lord of Life, who was put to Death upon the *Friday*, was Bury'd in the Evening of the ſame Day: and his Holy Body reſted in the ſilent Grave all the next day, being the Jewiſh Sabbath, and ſome part of the Morning following. Thus Roſe he again the Third Day, according to the Scriptures, neither ſooner nor later; not ſooner, leſt the truth of his Death ſhould have been queſtioned, that he did not Dye at all; nor later, leſt the Faith of his Diſciples ſhould have failed: Accordingly, when the Sabbath was paſt, *Mary Magdalene*, getting the other Women together, ſhe and they ſet out very early in the Morning, to Viſit the Sepulchre, and about Sun-riſing they get to it, intending with their Spices and Odours farther to Embalm their Lord's Body. *Obſerve there*, 1. That although the Hearts of theſe Holy Women did burn with an ardent Zeal and Affection to their Crucified Lord; yet the Commanded Duties of the Sabbath are not omitted by them; they keep cloſe, and ſpend that Holy Day in a Mixture of Grief and Hope. A good Pattern of Sabbath-Sanctification, and worthy of our Imitation. *Obſerve*, 2. Theſe Holy Women go, but not empty-handed: She, that had beſtowed a coſtly Alabaſter upon Chriſt, whilſt Alive, prepares no leſs precious Odours for him now Dead; thereby paying their laſt Homage to our Saviour's Corpſe. But what need of Odours to perfume a Precious Body, which could not ſee Corruption? True, his Holy Body did not want them, but the Love and Affection of his Friends could not with-hold them. *Obſerve*, 3. How great a Tribute of Reſpect and Honour is due and payable to the Memory of theſe Holy Women, for their great Magnanimity and Courage: They followed Chriſt when his Cowardly Diſciples left him; they accompanied him to his Croſs, they attended his Herſe to the Grave, when his Diſciples did not, durſt not appear; and now very early in the Morning they Viſit his Sepulchre, fearing neither the Darkneſs of the Night, nor the Preſence of the Wachmer, tho' a Band of Rude Soldiers. *Learn hence*, That Courage and Reſolution is the ſpecial Gift of God; if he gives it to the feebler Sex, even to timorous and fearful Women, it ſhall not be in the power of Armed Men to make them afraid. But to a cloſe Conſideration of the ſeveral Circumſtances relating to the Reſurrection of our Holy Lord. *Note*, 1. With what Pomp and Triumph our Holy Lord Ariſes; Two Men, that is, Two Angels in the ſhape of Men, *v.* 4. *are ſent from Heaven to roll away the Stone.* But could not Chriſt have Riſen then without the Angels help? Yes doubtleſs; he that Raiſed himſelf, could eaſily have Rolled away the Stone himſelf; But God thinks fit to ſend an Officer from Heaven, to open the Priſon-door of the Grave; and by ſetting our Surety at Liberty, proclaims our Debt to the Divine Juſtice fully ſatisfied. Beſides, it was fit, that the Angels, who had been Witneſſes of our Saviour's Paſſion, ſhould alſo be Witneſſes of his Reſurrection. *Note*, 2. Our Lord's Reſurrection declared, *He is Riſen, he is not here.* Almighty God never intended, that the Darling of his Soul ſhould be left in an obſcure Sepulchre; *He is not here*, ſaid the Angels, where you laid him, where you left him; Death has loſt its Prey, and the Grave has loſt its Priſoner. *Note*, 3. It is not ſaid, *He is not here*, for he is Raiſed; but *He is riſen*, ver. 6. The Original Word imports, the Active Power of Chriſt, or the Self-quickning Principle by which Chriſt Raiſed himſelf from the Dead, *Acts* 1. 3. *He ſhewed himſelf alive after his Paſſion. Hence Learn*, That it was the Divine Nature, or God-Head of Chriſt, which raiſed the Humane Nature from Death to Life; others were raiſed from the Grave by Chriſt's Power, but he Raiſed himſelf by his own Power. *Note*, 4. The Perſons to whom our Lord's Reſurrection was firſt declared and made known; to Women, to the two *Maries*: But why to Women? and why to theſe Women? To Women firſt, becauſe God ſometimes makes choice of weak Means for producing great Effects; knowing that the weakneſs of the Inſtrument redounds to the greater Honour of the Agent. In the whole Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, God intermixes Divine Power with Humane Weakneſs: Thus the Conception of Chriſt was by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, but his Mother a poor Woman, a Carpenters Spouſe: So the Crucifixion of Chriſt was in ſuch Meanneſs and outward Baſeneſs, being Crucified between two Thieves; but the Powers of Heaven and Earth trembling, the Rocks Rending, the Graves opening, ſhewed a mixture of Divine Power. Thus here, God ſelects Women to declare, that he will Honour what Inſtruments he pleaſes, for the Accompliſhment of his own Purpoſes. But why to theſe Women, the two *Maries*, is the firſt Diſcovery made of our Lord's Reſurrection? Poſſibly it was a Reward for their Magnanimity and Maſculine Courage. Theſe Women cleave to Chriſt, when the Apoſtles forſook him: They Aſſiſted at his Croſs, they Attended at his Funeral, they Waited at his Sepulchre: Theſe Women had more Courage than the Apoſtles, therefore God makes them Apoſtles to the Apoſtles. This was a Tacit Rebuke, a ſecret Check given to the Apoſtles, that they ſhould be thus out-done by Women: Theſe Holy Women went before the Apoſtles in the laſt Services, that were done for Chriſt, and therefore the Apoſtles here come after them in their Rewards and Comforts. *Note*, 5. The quick Meſſage which theſe Holy Women carry to the diſconſolate Diſciples, of the Joyful News of our Saviour's Reſurrection; They returned from the Sepulchre, and told all theſe things to the Eleven, *ver.* 9. And the other Evangeliſts ſay, That they were ſent and bidden to go to the Apoſtles with the Notices of the Reſurrection: *Go tell the Diſciples*, ſays the Angel, *Matth.* 28. 7. *Go tell my Brethren*, ſays Chriſt, *ver.* 10. A moſt endearing expreſſion; Chriſt might have ſaid, Go tell my Apoſtate Apoſtles, my Cowardly Diſciples, that left me in my Danger, and durſt not own me in the High Prieſt's Hall, that durſt not come within the ſhadow of my Croſs, nor within ſight of my Sepulchre: But not one word of all this by upbraiding them for their late ſhameful Cowardiſe, but all words of Divine Indulgence, and of endearing Kindneſs. *Go tell my Brethren*: Where *Mark*, That Chriſt calls them Brethren after his Reſurrection and Exaltation, thereby ſhewing, that the change of his Condition had wrought no change in his Affection towards his poor Diſciples: But thoſe, that were his Brethren before, in the time of his Humiliation and Abaſement, are ſo ſtill, after his Exaltation and Advancement; *Go tell my Brethren.* One thing more muſt be noted with reference to our Lord's Reſurrection, and that is, Why he did not firſt chooſe to appear to the Virgin *Mary*, his Diſconſolate Mother, whoſe Soul was pierced with a quick and lively Sight and Senſe of her Son's Sufferings! but to *Mary Magdalene*, who had been a grievous Sinner? Doubtleſs this was for the Comfort of all true Penitents, and adminiſters great Conſolation to them; As the Angels in Heaven Rejoyce, much more doth Chriſt Joy in the Recovery of one Repenting Sinner, than in multitudes of Holy and Juſt Perſons (ſuch was the Bleſſed Virgin) who need no Repentance: For the ſame Reaſon did our Saviour particularly name *Peter, Go tell my Diſciples, and Peter*; he being for his Denial of Chriſt ſwallowed up with Sorrow, and ſtanding in moſt need of Conſolation; therefore ſpeak particularly to *Peter*: As if Chriſt had ſaid, be ſure that his ſad Heart be Comforted with this Joyful News, that I am Riſen; and let him know, that I am Friends with him, notwithſtanding his late Cowardiſe.

13 And behold, two of them went that ſame day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem about threeſcore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all theſe things which had happened. 15 And it came to paſs, that while they communed together, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden, that they ſhould not know him. 17 And he ſaid unto them; What manner of communications are theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are ſad? 18 And the one of them, whoſe name was Cleopas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are come to paſs there in theſe days? 19 And he ſaid unto them, What things? And they ſaid unto him, Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people: 20 And how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this, to day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. 22 Yea, and certain women alſo of our Company made us aſtoniſhed, which were early at the ſepulchre: 23 And when they found not his body, they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, which ſaid that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the ſepulchre, and found it even ſo as the women had ſaid; but him they ſaw not.

Here we have *Obſervable*, 1. The Journey, which Two of the Diſciples took to *Emmaus*, a Village not far from *Jeruſalem*: The occaſion of their Journey is not told us, but the Scripture acquaints us with their Diſcourſe in their Journey, and as they were walking by the way: It was Holy and Uſeful, Pious and Profitable Diſcourſe, that they entertained one another with as they walk'd; They Diſcours'd of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection; a good Pattern for our Imitation, when Providentially caſt into ſuch Company as will bear it; *That our Lips drop as the Honey-comb*, and *our Tongue be as choice Silver*. *Obſerve*, 2. How our Holy Lord preſently made one in the Company; when they were Diſcourſing ſeriouſly about the Matters of Religion, he overtook them, and joyned himſelf to them: The way to have Chriſt's Preſence and Company with us, is to be Diſcourſing of Chriſt and the things of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. Tho' Chriſt came to them, it was *Incognito*; he was not known to them, for their Eyes were holden by the Power of God, their Sight was reſtrained, that they could not diſcern who he was, but took him for another Perſon, though his Body had the ſame Dimenſions that he had before. Whence we *Learn*, The Influence which God has upon all our Powers and Faculties, upon all our Members and Senſes, and how much we depend upon God for the Uſe and Exerciſe of our Faculties and Members; *Their Eyes were holden, that they could not ſee him. Obſerve*, 4. That the Notion of the Meſſias being a Temporal Saviour, was ſo deeply rooted in the Minds of the Diſciples, that it remained here with them, even after he was Riſen from the Dead: They here Own and Acknowledge him, *To be a Prophet, mighty in Deed and in Word*, but they queſtion whether he were the Meſſias the Redeemer of *Iſrael*; They could not Reconcile the Ignominy of his Death with the Grandure of his

Office; nor conceive how the Infamy of a Croſs was conſiſtent with the Glory of a King; *We truſted, that it had been he which ſhould have Redeemed Iſrael*: As if he had ſaid, We were full of Hopes, that this had been the Meſſias ſo long expected by us; but this being the Third Day ſince he Dyed, we fear we ſhall find our ſelves miſtaken.

25 Then he ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of Heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! 26 Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moſes, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures, the things concerning himſelf. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they conſtrained him, ſaying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to paſs, as he ſat at meat with them, he took bread, and bleſſed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vaniſhed out of their ſight. 32 And they ſaid one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures?

Obſerve, 1. Our Saviour Reproves, and then Inſtructs them; he Reproves them for being Ignorant of the Senſe of Scripture: They thought the Death of the Meſſias a ſufficient ground to queſtion the Truth of his Office, when it was an Argument to Confirm and Eſtabliſh it: *O Fools, ought not Chriſt to ſuffer?* As if he had ſaid, Do you not find, that the Perſon deſcribed by the Prophets in the Old Teſtament to be the Meſſias, was to wade to his Glory through a Sea of Blood? Why then do you think your ſelves deceived in the Perſon that Suffered Three Days ago, when his Death doth ſo well agree with the Predictions of the Prophets, who foretold, that the Meſſias ſhould be cut off, but not for himſelf, and be ſmitten for the Iniquities of his People? Here we may *Obſerve*, The great Wiſdom and Grace of God, who makes ſometimes the Diffidence of his People, an occaſion of farther clearing up the choiceſt Truths unto them: Never did theſe Diſciples hear ſo Excellent an Expoſition of *Moſes* and the Prophets concerning the Meſſiah, as now, when their ſinful Diſtruſt had ſo far prevailed over them. 2. *Obſerve*, The Doctrines which Chriſt Inſtructs his Diſciples in, namely, In the Neceſſity of his Death and Paſſion, and of his Glory and Exaltation; *Ought not Chriſt to Suffer, and to enter into his Glory*. *Learn*, 1. That with Reſpect to God's Decree, and with Relation to Man's Guilt, the Death of Chriſt was Neceſſary and Indiſpenſable. 2. That his Reſurrection and Exaltation was as Neceſſary as his Paſſion. 3. That there was a Meritorious Connexion between Chriſt's Sufferings and his Glory; his Exaltation was Merited by his Paſſion; *He was to drink of the Brook in the way, and then he ſhould lift up his Head*. *Obſerve*, 4. Chriſt did not only put light into theſe his Apoſtles Heads, but Heat alſo into their Hearts, which burned all the while he Communed with them; *Did not our Hearts burn within us, while he opened to us the Scriptures?* Oh what an Efficacious Power is there in the Word of Chriſt, when ſet home upon the Hearts of Men by the Spirit of Chriſt!

33 And they roſe up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. 34 Saying, The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. 36 And as they thus ſpake, Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my ſelf: handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as you ſee me have. 40 And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondred, he ſaid unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and of an hony comb, 43 And he took it, and did eat before them, 44 And he ſaid unto them, Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and in the prophets, and in the pſalms concerning me.

Obſerve, 1. That theſe Two Diſciples at *Emmaus*, being fully ſatisfied in the Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, by his Appearing to them in Breaking of Bread, they aroſe preſently, and went from *Emmaus* to *Jeruſalem*: It muſt needs be late at Night, being after Supper, and Seven Miles diſtance: Yet conſidering the Sorrow that the Diſciples were under, theſe Two leave all their private Affairs, and haſten to Comfort them with the glad Tidings of our Lord's Reſurrection. *Teaching us*, That all Secular Affairs, all private and particular Buſineſs muſt give place to the Glory of God, and the Comfort and Salvation of Souls. *Obſerve*, 2. The great Endeavours which our Saviour uſed to Confirm his Diſciples Faith in the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, *He comes and ſtands in the midſt of them*, and ſays, *Peace be unto you*; Next, *He ſhews them his pierced Hands, Side and Feet*, with the Scars and Marks, which he yet retained, that they might ſee it was their Crucified Maſter: After all this, *He eats before them a piece of broiled Fiſh, and Honey-comb*; Not that he needed it, his Body being now become Immortal; but to aſſure them, that it was his own Perſon, and that he had ſtill the ſame Body: Yet ſo ſlack and backward were they to Believe that Chriſt was Riſen, that all the Predictions of the Scripture, all the Aſſurances they had from our Saviour's Mouth, and the ſeveral Appearings of Chriſt unto them, were little enough to Eſtabliſh and Confirm their Faith in the Reſurrection of our Saviour. *Obſerve*, 3. The higheſt and fulleſt Evidence which our Saviour offers to Evince and Prove the Certainty of his Reſurrection; namely, by Appealing to their Senſes, *Handle me, and ſee*; Chriſt admits the Teſtimony of our Senſes, to aſſure it to be his Real Body. And if the Church of *Rome* will not allow us to believe our Senſes, we ſhall loſe the beſt External Evidence we can have to prove the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; namely the Miracles of Chriſt; or how can I know that thoſe Miracles were True, but by the Judgment of my Senſes? Now as our Senſes tell us, that Chriſt's Miracles were True, ſo they aſſure us, that the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is Falſe.

45 Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, 46 And ſaid unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem. 48 And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.

It is one thing to Open the Scriptures themſelves, or to Explain them: And another to Open their Underſtandings to perceive them; Chriſt did the latter. Whence *Note*, *That the opening of the Mind and Heart* effectually to receive the Truths of God, is the peculiar Prerogative and Office of Jeſus Chriſt; *Then opened he their Underſtandings*; namely, by the Illuminations of his Holy Spirit. One of the greateſt Miſeries under which lapſed Nature labours, is Spiritual Blindneſs; Chriſt has the only Eye-ſalve which can Heal and Cure it, *Revel.* 3. 18. And there is no worſe Cloud to obſcure the Light of the Spirit, than a proud Conceit of our own Knowledge. *Obſerve*, 2. The Special Charge given by our Saviour to his Apoſtles, to

Preach Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin; to Preach it in Chriſt's Name, to Preach it *to all Nations, beginning firſt at Jeruſalem.* Where *Note*, The aſtoniſhing Mercy of Jeſus Chriſt; Although *Jeruſalem* was the Place where he loſt his Life, the City that Barbarouſly Butcher'd and Inhumanely Murthered him, yet there he will have the Doctrine of Repentance Preached; nay, firſt Preached; there the Goſpel-Combination muſt firſt begin, *That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin be Preached, beginning at Jeruſalem.* Lord! How unwilling art thou, that any ſhould periſh, when thou not only Prayedſt for thy Murtherers, and Offeredſt up thy Blood to God in the behalf of them that ſhed it, but requiredſt thy Ambaſſadors to make *Jeruſalem* the firſt Tender of Remiſſion, upon Condition of Repentance, *That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin, ſhould be Preached among all Nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.*

49 And behold, I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jeruſalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. 50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany: And he lift up his hands, and bleſſed them. 51 And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worſhipped him, and returned to Jeruſalem with great Joy: 53 And were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God. Amen.

Our Saviour being now about to leave his Diſciples, Comforts them with the Promiſe of his Holy Spirit, which ſhould ſupply the want of his Bodily Preſence; and bids them tarry at *Jeruſalem* till they ſhould at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt be made Partakers of this Invaluable Bleſſing. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Lord having Bleſſed his Diſciples, he takes his Leave of them, and goes up into Heaven. As he Raiſed himſelf out of his Grave, ſo did he Aſcend into Heaven by his own Power, there to appear in the Preſence of God for us, and as our Fore-runner, to give us an Aſſurance, that in due time we ſhall Aſcend after him, *Whither our Fore-runner is for us entred.* Heb. 6. 20. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Act of Homage and Adoration, which the Apoſtles perform to the Lord Jeſus; how they Worſhipped him, that is, as God, the Eternal Son of God, being ſo declared by the Reſurrection from the Dead, and by his Aſcenſion into Heaven before their Eyes, from whence he will certainly come at the End of the World, to Judge both the Quick and the Dead. For which Solemn Hour God Almighty prepare all Mankind, by a Renewed Frame of Heart, and a Religious Courſe of Life, and then, *Come Lord Jeſus to Judgment, come quickly.* Amen.

The End of St. Luke's Goſpel.

THE

The HOLY GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
Saint JOHN.

The Fourth and Laſt of the Holy Goſpel's, *falls now under Conſideration: Namely, That which was written by the Evangeliſt St.* John; *concerning which we have Obſervable, the* Writer, *the* Occaſion, *the* Deſign *and* Scope *of this Sublime Book.* Obſerve 1. *The Writer of it, St.* John, *the beloved Diſciple, that lay in the Boſom of Chriſt; he that lay in Chriſt's Boſom, reveals the Secrets of Chriſt's Heart.* John *ſaith St.* Auſtin, *drew out of the Boſom of Chriſt, the very Heart of Chriſt, and made it known to a loſt World.* Obſerve 2. *The Occaſion of St.* John's *writing this* Goſpel, *and that was the Hereſie of* Ebion *and* Cerinthus, *which denied the* Divinity *of Jeſus Chriſt. When God ſuffers Hereticks to vent their blaſphemous Opinions, he takes Occaſion from thence to make a clearer Diſcovery of Divine Truth. We had perhaps wanted St.* John's *Goſpel, if* Ebion *and* Cerinthus *had not broached their Hereſie againſt Chriſt's Divinity.* Obſerve 3. *The Deſign and Scope of this* Goſpel, *which is to deſcribe the Perſon of* Chriſt *in his two Natures,* Divine *and* Humane, *as the Object of our* Faith: *This he doth in a Sublime and Lofty manner; upon which Account he was compared by the Ancients to the Eagle that ſoars aloft, and maketh her Neſt on high; and was alſo called* John *the* Divine. Obſerve Laſtly, *The Difference between this and the other* Goſpel's. *The other Evangeliſts inſiſt chiefly upon the* Humanity of Chriſt, *and prove him to be truly* Man, *the Son of the Virgin* Mary; *This Evangeliſt proves him to be* GOD *as well as* Man; God *from Eternity, and* Man *in the fulneſs of* Time. *The other three Writers Relate what Chriſt* did: *St.* John *Reports what Chriſt* ſaid: *They Recount his* Miracles, *he Records his* Sermons *and* Prayers. *In ſhort, the profound Myſteries of our Holy Religion are here unfolded by the beloved Diſciple; and particularly, the* Divinity *and* Incarnation *of our Bleſſed Saviour.*

CHAP. I.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The ſame was in the beginning with God.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon ſpoken of, Jeſus Chriſt, under the Name of the Word, *In the beginning was the Word.* Becauſe God ſpeaks to us by him, and makes known his Will to us by Chriſt, as we make known our Minds to one another by our Words. *Again*, As our Words are the Conception and Image of our Minds; ſo Chriſt is the expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon, and was begotten of the Father, even as our Words are begotten of our Minds: For theſe Reaſons he is ſo often ſtyled *the Word. Obſerve* 2. What the Evangeliſt here aſſerts concerning the *Word*, Chriſt Jeſus, even three Particulars; namely, his External *Exiſtence*, his Perſonal *Co-exiſtence*, and his Divine *Eſſence.* 1. His Eternal Exiſtence: *In the beginning was the Word*; in the beginning when all Things received their Being, then the Word was and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all Eternity. Not in the beginning of the Goſpel-State, but in the beginning of the Creation, as appears from the following Words, *All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made.* Which plainly ſhews, that the Evangeliſt is here ſpeaking of the Creation, Riſe or Beginning of all Things Created. *Learn thence*, That Jeſus Chriſt not only Antecedent to his Incarnation, but even before all Time, and the Beginning of all Things, had an actual Being and Subſiſtence. 2. His Perſonal Co-exiſtence with the Father, *the Word was with God*; that is, Eternally and Inſeparably with him, in the ſame Eſſence and Nature, being in the Father, as well as with him, ſo that the Father was never without him, *Prov.* 8. 22. *I was by him as one brought up with him.* I was by his Sides, ſays the *Chaldee* Interpreter. *Learn hence*, That the Son is a Perſon diſtinct from the Father; but of the ſame Eſſence and Nature with the Father; he is God of God, very God of very God; being of one Subſtance with the Father, by whom all things were made. *The Word was with God.* 3. His Divine Eſſence, *The Word was God.* Here St. *John* declares the Divinity, as he did before the Eternity of our Bleſſed Saviour. He was with God, and exiſted in him; therefore he muſt be God, and a Perſon diſtinct from the Father. The Word was God, ſay the *Socinians*, that is, a God by Office, not by Nature, as being God's Ambaſſador: But the Word God is uſed eleven times in this Chapter in its proper Senſe; and it is not reaſonable to conceive, that it ſhould be here uſed in an improper Senſe, in which this Word in the ſingular number is never uſed throughout the New Teſtament, Dr. *Whitby*. *Learn hence*, That the Eternity, the Perſonality and the Divinity of Chriſt are of neceſſity to be believed, if we will worſhip him aright. Chriſt tells us, *Joh.* 5. 23. That *we muſt worſhip the Son, even as we worſhip the Father.* Now unleſs we acknowledge the Eternity and Divinity of Chriſt, the Second Perſon, as well as of God the Father, the Firſt Perſon, we Honour neither the Father nor the Son. There is this difference between Natural Things and Supernatural. Natural Things are firſt underſtood, and then believed; but Super-natural Myſteries, muſt be firſt believed, and then will be better underſtood. If we will firſt ſet Reaſon on work, and believe no more than we can comprehend, this will hinder Faith: But if after we have aſſented to Goſpel Myſteries, we ſet Reaſon on work, this will help Faith.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Obſerve here, The Argument which St. *John* uſes to prove Chriſt to be God; It is taken from the Work of Creation. He that made all Things, is truly and really God; but Chriſt made all Things, and nothing was made without him, therefore is Chriſt truly and really God. *Here Obſerve* 1. An Affirmation of as large and vaſt an Extent as the whole World. *All Things* were made by him; not this or that particular Being, but *All* Created Beings received their Exiſtence and Being from Chriſt. *Obſerve* 2. That to prevent the leaſt Imagination of any Thing's having another Author than Chriſt, here is the moſt poſitive and particular Negation that can be. That without Him was not any Thing made, that was made: not without him as an Inſtrument, but without him as an Agent, Chriſt being a Co-worker with the Father and the Spirit in the Work of Creation. He was the Author of the Creation, not an Inſtrument in Creating. *Learn hence,* That Chriſt as God, being the Creator and Maker of all Things himſelf, is excluded from being a Creature, or any thing that was made.

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.

Here we have a farther Proof of Chriſt's Divinity, and an Evidence that he had a Being as God, before his Incarnation; foraſmuch as all Life is center'd in him, communicated by him, and derived from him. In him was Life *Formaliter & Cauſaliter.* Life was formally in Chriſt, as the Subject of it; and alſo cauſally in him as the Fountain of it. *Learn* 1. That Chriſt is the Author and Diſpenſer of all Life unto his Creatures. He is Original Life in the Order of Nature, becauſe by him Man was Created, *Gen.* 1. 26. He is Spiritual Life in the Order of Grace, *John* 14. 6. *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.* He is Eternal Life in the Order of Glory, 1 *John* 5. 20. *This is the True God and Eternal Life. Learn* 2. That all Creatures receiving Light and Life from Chriſt, not as an Inſtrument, but as the Fountain from whence it floweth, and in which it is preſerved, is an evident Proof of his Divinity, and an Argument that he is truly and really God. *In him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men.*

6 There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was John: 7 The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that light, but was ſent to bear witneſs of that light. 9 That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Here the Evangeliſt proceeds in declaring Chriſt to be really God, becauſe he was that Original, that Eſſential Light, which had no beginning, ſuffers no Decay, but is ſo Diffuſive as in ſome kind, and in ſome meaſure or other, to Inlighten every Man that cometh into the World. Some of the Jews had a Conceit, that *John the Baptiſt* was the Promiſed *Meſſias,* as appears by *Luke* 3. 15. *The People were in Expectation, and all Men muſed in their Hearts of* John, *whether he were the Chriſt or not.* Here therefore to undeceive the Jews, the Evangeliſt adds, That *John* was not *That Light*; *John* was a great Light, a burning and a ſhining Light, but not ſuch a Light as the *Meſſias* was to be. *John* was a Light Inſtrumentally, Chriſt Efficiently: *John* was a Light Inlightned, Chriſt was a Light Inlightning: *John*'s Light was by Derivation and Participation, Chriſt's was Eſſential and Original: *John*'s Light was as the Light of a Candle in a private Houſe, in and among the Jews only; but Chriſt's Light was as the Light of the Sun, ſpreading over the Face of the whole Earth. *This is the true Light that lightens every Man that cometh into the World*; that is, He Inlightens all Mankind with the Light of Reaſon, and is the Author of all Spiritual Illumination in them that receive it. Chriſt is called a *Light* in regard of his Office, which was to manifeſt and declare that Salvation to his Church which lay hid before in the Purpoſe of God; and he is called the *True Light,* not ſo much in oppoſition to all Falſe Lights, but as oppoſed to the Types and Shadows of the Moſaical Diſpenſation. *Learn* 1. That every Man and Woman that comes into the World is Inlightened by Chriſt in ſome kind and meaſure, or other. All are Inlightened with the Light of Reaſon and a Natural Conſcience: Some with the Light of Grace and Supernatural Illumination. *Learn,* 2. That Chriſt being the Eſſential, Original and Eternal Light; Inlightning and Inlivening the whole Creation, is an evident and undeniable Demonſtration that he is truly and really God.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

He was in the World, that is, He that was God from Eternity, made himſelf viſible to the World in the fulneſs of Time. The Evangeliſt repeats it again, *That the World was made by him,* to ſhew his Omnipotency and Divinity; and then adds, That *the World knew him not,* as an Evidence of the World's Blindneſs and Ingratitude. *Learn hence,* That notwithſtanding the Eternal Son of God appeared in the World, and the World was made and created by him; yet the generality of the World, did not know him; that is, did not not Own and Acknowledge him, did not Receive and Obey him. They neither knew him as Creator, nor accepted him as Mediator: Yea, *He came to his own*; that is, His own Kindred and Country, the Church and People of the *Jews*; but the generality of them gave him cold Entertainment. It was the Sin of the Jewiſh Nation, that though they were Chriſt's own peculiar People; his own by Choice, his own by Purchaſe, his own by Covenant, by Kindred, yet the generality of them did Reject him, and would not Own him for the True and Promiſed *Meſſias. Learn hence,* That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt met with manifeſt and ſhameful Rejection even at the Hands of thoſe that were neareſt to him by Fleſh and Nature, *John* 11. 5. *Neither did his Brethren Believe on him.*

21 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe in his name;

That is, Although multitudes Rejected him, yet ſome Received and Owned him for the True *Meſſias*; and thoſe that did ſo, he advanced to the high Dignity of Adoption and Sonſhip, giving them Power, that is, Right or Privilege to become the Sons of God. *Here Note,* 1. The Nature of Juſtifying Faith declared; *As many as receive him.* Now this Receiving of Chriſt implies theſe three Things, 1. The Aſſent of the Underſtanding to that Divine Teſtimony, which the Scripture gives of Chriſt. 2. The Conſent of the Will to ſubmit to this Jeſus as Lord and King. 3. The Affiance and Truſt of the Heart in Chriſt alone for Salvation; for Faith is not a bare Credence, but a Divine Affiance, and ſuch an Affiance in Chriſt, and Reliance upon him, as is the Parent and Principal of Obedience to him. *Note* 2. That it is the high and honourable Privilege of all ſuch as receive Chriſt by Faith, to become the Sons of God by Adoption. This is a precious Privilege, a free Privilege, an honourable Privilege, an abiding Privilege, and calls for all poſſible Returns of Gratitude and Thankfulneſs, of Love and Service, of Duty and Obedience, of Submiſſion and Self-Reſignation.

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Becauſe the bragging *Jews* did much boaſt of their Natural Birth and Deſcent from *Abraham,* as being his Blood and Off-ſpring. Therefore it is here Aſſerted, That Men become not the Children of God by Natural Propagation. but by Spiritual Regeneration. *They are not born of Blood.* Grace runs not in a Blood, Piety is not Hereditary. Religious Parents propagate Corruption, not Regeneration. Were the Conveyances of Grace Natural, good Parents would not be ſo ill ſuited with Children as ſometimes they are. No Perſon then whatſoever, has the gracious Privilege of Adoption by the firſt Birth. *They are not born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man*; that is, No Man by the utmoſt Improvement of Nature can raiſe himſelf up to this Privilege of Adoption, and be the Author and Efficient Cauſe of his own Regeneration. *Learn hence,* That Man in all his Capacities is too weak to produce the Work of Regeneration in himſelf. They, ſays Dr. *Hammond,* who by the influence of the higheſt Rational Principles, live moſt exactly according to the Rule of Rational Nature, that is, Of Unregenerate Morality, are the Perſons here deſcribed. *Learn,* 2. That God alone is the Prime Efficient Cauſe of Regeneration. He works upon the Underſtanding by Illumination, and upon the Will by Sanctification; *Which were Born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.*

14 And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

The Evangeliſt having aſſerted the Divinity of Chriſt in the foregoing Verſes, comes now to ſpeak of his Humanity and Manifeſtation in our Nature, *The Word was made Fleſh*: Where *Note*, 1. Our Saviour's Incarnation for us. 2. His Life and Converſation here among us. *He dwelt*, or tabernacled for a Seaſon with us. In the Incarnation or Aſſumption of our Nature. *Obſerve* 1. The Perſon Aſſuming, *The Word*; that is, the Second Perſon ſubſiſting in the glorious God-Head. *Obſ.* 2. The Nature Aſſumed, *Fleſh*: that is, the Humane Nature, conſiſting of Soul and Body. But why is it not ſaid, *The Word was made Man*? but, *The Word was made Fleſh*? Anſw. To denote and ſet forth the wonderful Abaſement and Condeſcention of Chriſt, there being more of Vileneſs, and Weakneſs and Oppoſition to Spirit, in the Word *Fleſh*, than in the Word *Man*: Chriſt's taking Fleſh, implies, that he did not only take upon him the Human Nature, but all the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of that Nature alſo, (ſinful Infirmities and perſonal Infirmities excepted) he had nothing to do with our ſinful Fleſh: Tho' Chriſt loved Souls with an infinite and inſuperable Love, yet he would not Sin to ſave a Soul. And he took no perſonal Infirmities upon him, but ſuch as are common to the whole Nature, as Hunger, Thirſt, Wearineſs, *&c.* *Obſ.* 3. The Aſſumption it ſelf, *He was made Fleſh*; that is, he aſſumed the Humane Nature into an Union with his God-head, and ſo became a True and Real Man by that Aſſumption. *Learn hence*, That Jeſus Chriſt did really aſſume the true and perfect Nature of Man, into a perſonal Union with his Divine Nature, and ſtill Remains True God, and True Man in one Perſon for ever. Oh bleſſed Union! O thrice happy Conjunction! As Man, Chriſt has an experimental Senſe of our Infirmities and Wants. As God, he can ſupport and ſupply them All. *Note farther*, 2. As our Saviour's Incarnation for us, ſo his Life and Converſation among us. *He dwelt*, or Tabernacled amongſt us. The Tabernacle was a Type of Chriſt's Human Nature. 1. As the out-ſide of the Tabernacle was mean, made of ordinary Materials, but it's inſide glorious, ſo was the Son of God. 2. God's ſpecial Preſence was in the Tabernacle; There he dwelt, for he had a delight therein. In like manner dwelt all the fulneſs of the God-head bodily in Chriſt; and the glory of his Divinity ſhined forth to the Eye and view of his Diſciples; for *they beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Begotten of the Father*, that is, whilſt Chriſt appeared as a Man amongſt us, he gave great and glorious Teſtimonies of his Being the Son of God. *Learn hence*, That in the Day of our Saviour's Incarnation, the Divinity of his Perſon did ſhine forth through the Vail of his Fleſh, and was ſeen by all them that had a Spiritual Eye to behold it, and a mind diſpoſed to conſider it. *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father.*

15 John bare witneſs of him, and cried, ſaying, This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. 16 And of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. 18 No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Here we have *John* Baptiſt's firſt Teſtimony concerning Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah: And it conſiſts of four Parts, 1. *John* prefers Chriſt before himſelf, as being ſurpaſſingly above himſelf. *He that cometh after me is preferred before me*, that is, in the Dignity of his Perſon, and in the Eminency of his Office, as being the eternal God. Now *amongſt them that were born of Women, there was not a greater than John the Baptiſt*: If Chriſt then was greater than *John*, it was in regard of his being God. He is therefore *preferred before him, becauſe he was before him*, as being God from all Eternity. *Learn hence*, That the Dignity and Eternity of Chriſt's Perſon as God, ſets him up above all his Miniſters, yea, above all Creatures, how excellent ſoever. *He that cometh after me* in Time, *is preferred before me* in Dignity, *for he was before me*, even from all Eternity. 2. *John* prefers Chriſt before all Believers in Point of Fulneſs and Sufficiency of Divine Grace: *Of his fulneſs do they receive.* They have their Fillings, Chriſt has his Fulneſs; theirs is the Fulneſs of a Veſſel, his is the Fulneſs of a Fountain; their Fulneſs is Derivative, his Fulneſs is Original, yet alſo Miniſterial, on purpoſe in him to give out to us, that we may *receive Grace for Grace*; that is, Grace anſwerable for Kind and Quality, tho' not for Meaſure and Degree. As a Child in Generation receives from its Parents Member for Member, or as the Paper in the Printing preſs receives Letter for Letter, and the Wax under the Seal receives print for print: So in the Work of Regeneration whatever Grace is in Chriſt, there is the like for kind inſtampt upon the Chriſtians Soul. All the Members of Chriſt being made plentiful Partakers of his Spiritual Endowments. *Learn hence*, That all fulneſs of Grace, by way of Supply for Believers is treaſured up in Chriſt, and communicated by him as their Wants and Neceſſities do require: His Fulneſs is inexhauſtible, it can never be drawn low, much leſs drawn dry. *Of his Fulneſs do we receive Grace for Grace*; that is, Grace freely, Grace plentifully. God grant that none of us may receive the Grace of Chriſt in vain. 3. *John* prefers Chriſt before *Moſes*, whom the *Jews* doted ſo much upon. *The Law was given by Moſes*, not as the Author, but as the Diſpenſer of it. *Moſes* was God's Miniſter, by whom the Law which reveals Wrath, was given to the *Jews*; but *Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*. *Grace* in Oppoſition to the Condemnatory Curſe and Sentence of the Law; and *Truth* in Oppoſition to the Types, Shadows and Ceremonies of the Legal Adminiſtration. *Learn hence*, That all Grace for Remiſſion of Sin, and for Performance of Duty, is given from Chriſt the Fountain of Grace; *Grace came by Jeſus Chriſt*. The Grace of Pardon and Reconciliation, the Grace of Holineſs and Sanctification, the Grace of Love and Adoption, even all that Grace that fits us for Service here and Glory hereafter, Chriſt is both the Diſpenſer and the Author of it. *Grace came by Jeſus Chriſt*. Again, 4. *John* the Baptiſt here, (*ver.* 18.) doth not only prefer Chriſt before himſelf, before *Moſes*, before all Believers, but even before all Perſons whatſoever in Point of Knowing and Revealing the Mind of God. *No Man hath ſeen God at any time*; that is, no meer Man hath ever ſeen God in his Eſſence, whilſt he was in this Mortal State. Here God's Inviſibility is aſſerted; next Chriſt's Intimacy with the Father is declared. *The only begotten Son, that is in the Boſom of the Father.* This Expreſſion implies three Things. 1. Unity of Natures; the Boſom is the Child's Place, who is part of our ſelves and of the ſame Nature with our ſelves. 2. Dearneſs of Affection. None lye in the Boſom, but the Perſon that is very dear to us. A Boſom Friend is the deareſt of Friends. 3. It implies Communication of Secrets. Chriſt's lying in his Father's Boſom intimates his being Conſcious to all his Father's Secrets, to know all his Counſels, and to underſtand his whole Will and Pleaſure. Now as Chriſt's lying in the Father's Boſom implies Unity of Nature, it *teacheth* us to give the ſame Worſhip to Chriſt, which we give to God the Father, becauſe he is of the ſame Nature with the Father: As it implies Dearneſs of Affection betwixt the Father and the Son, it teaches us to place our chief Love upon Chriſt the Son, becauſe God the Father doth ſo: He, who is the Son of God's Love ſhould be the Object of our Love; as God hath a Boſom for Chriſt, ſo ſhould we have alſo; the nobleſt Object challenges the higheſt Affection. Again, as Chriſt's lying in the Father's Boſom implies the Knowledge of his Mind and Will, it *teaches* us to apply our ſelves to Chriſt, to his Word and Spirit for Illumination. Whither ſhould we go for Inſtruction, but to this great Prophet, for Direction, but to this wonderful Counſellor? We can never be made wiſe unto Salvation, if Chriſt, the Wiſdom of the Father doth not make us ſo.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem, to aſk him, Who art thou? 20 And he confeſſed and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. 21 And they aſked him, What then? Art thou Elias?

And he ſaith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he anſwered, No. 22 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an anſwer to them that ſent us: what ſayeſt thou of thy ſelf? 23 He ſaid, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtraight the way of the Lord, as ſaid the prophet Iſaias. 24 And they which were ſent, were of the Phariſees. 25 And they asked him, and ſaid unto him, Why baptizeſt thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John anſwered them, ſaying, I baptize with water: but there ſtandeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe. 28 Theſe things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

In theſe Verſes we have a Second Teſtimony, which *John* the Baptiſt gave of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *The Jews ſent Prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem, ſaying, Who art thou?* That is, the Sanhedrim, or great Council at *Jeruſalem*, to whom it belonged to judge who were True Prophets, ſent Meſſengers to the Baptiſt to know whether he was the Meſſias or not. *John* refuſes to take this Honour to himſelf, but tells them plainly, He was his Harbinger and Forerunner, and that the Meſſias himſelf was juſt at hand. From hence *Note*, How very cautious and exceeding careful this Meſſenger of Chriſt was, and all the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to be, that they do not aſſume or arrogate to themſelves any part of that Honour which is due to Chriſt, but ſet the Crown of Praiſe upon Chriſt's own Head, acknowledging him to be All in All, 1 Cor. 3. 5. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos? but Miniſters by whom ye believed. Obſerve farther*, In this Teſtimony of *John* the Baptiſt, theſe two Things; 1. A Negative Declaration, who he was not, *I am not*, ſays he, *the Meſſiah*, whom you look for, *nor Elias, nor that Prophet*, you expect; not *Elias*, that is in your Senſe, not *Elias* the *Tiſhbite*, not *Elias* for identity of Perſon, but *Elias* for Similitude of Gifts, Office and Calling. *John* came though not in the Perſon, yet in the Power and Spirit of *Elias.* He farther denies that he was *That Prophet*; that Prophet which *Moſes* ſpake of, *Deut.* 18. 15. nor any of the Old Prophets riſen from the Dead, nay, ſtrictly ſpeaking he was not any Prophet at all, *but more than a Prophet*: The Old Teſtament Prophets propheſied of Chriſt to come, but *John* pointed at, ſhewed and declared a Chriſt already come; and in this ſenſe he was no meer Prophet, but more than a Prophet. 2. We have here the Baptiſt's poſitive Affirmation, who he was, namely, Chriſt's Herald in the Wilderneſs, his Uſher, his Fore-runner, to prepare the People for the receiving of the Meſſias, and to make them ready for the Entertaining of the Goſpel, by preaching the Doctrine of Repentance to them. From hence *Learn*, That the preaching of the Doctrine of Repentance is indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to the preparing of the Hearts of Sinners for the receiving of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Great and Exemplary Humility of the Holy Baptiſt, the mean and lowly Opinion he had of himſelf. Although *John* was the greateſt among them, that were born of a Woman, and ſo much eſteemed by the *Jews*, and had the honour to go before Chriſt in the Exerciſe of his Office and Miniſtry, yet he judges himſelf unworthy to carry Chriſt's Shooes after him. *He that cometh after me is preferred before me, whoſe Shooes I am not worthy to unlooſe. Learn hence*, That the more eminent Gifts the Miniſters of the Goſpel have, and the more ready Men are to honour and eſteem them, the more will they abaſe themſelves, if they be truly Gracious, and account themſelves highly honoured in doing the meaneſt Offices of Love and Service for Jeſus Chriſt. Thus doth the Holy Baptiſt here. *His Shooes Latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe.*

29 The next day John ſeeth Jeſus coming unto him, and ſaith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I ſaid, After me cometh a man, which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

This is *John* the Baptiſt's third Teſtimony concerning Chriſt; in which he points out Chriſt as the True Sacrifice for Expiation of Sin. *Behold the Lamb of God*; the Lamb of God's appointing to be an Expiatory Sacrifice; the Lamb of God's Election; the Lamb of God's Affection; the Lamb of God's Acceptation; the Lamb of God's Exaltation; who by the Sacrifice of his Death, *has taken away the Sin of the World.* The Sin, not the Sins in the plural Number, to denote Original Sin, as ſome think; or as others, to ſhew that Chriſt hath univerſally taken upon himſelf the whole Burthen of our Sin and Guilt. And there ſeems to be a ſecret Antitheſis in the Word, *World.* In the Levitical Sacrifices only the Sins of the *Jews* were laid upon the Sacrificed Beaſt; but this Lamb takes away the Sin both of *Jew* and *Gentile. The Lord hath cauſed to meet on him the Iniquity of us all.* And the Word, *Taketh Away*, being of the preſent Tenſe, denotes a continued Act, and it intimates to us thus much, *viz.* That it is the daily Office of Chriſt, to take away our Sin by preſenting to the Father the Memorials of his Death. Chriſt takes away from all Believers the Guilt and Puniſhment of their Sins, the Filth and Pollution of them: the Power and Dominion that is in them; and as St. *John* called upon the *Jews*, to behold this Lamb of God, with an Eye of Obſervation: ſo is it our Duty to behold him now with an Eye of Admiration, with an Eye of Gratulation, but eſpecially with an Eye of Faith and Dependence, improving the Fruit of his Death to our own Conſolation and Salvation, *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ſaved, &c.*

31 And I knew him not: but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, ſaying, I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending, and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the holy Ghoſt. 34 And I ſaw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

Obſerve here, 1. That *John* the Baptiſt, tho' a near Kinſman of Chriſt's according to the Fleſh; yet the Providence of God ſo ordered it, that for thirty Years together they did not know one another, nor converſe with each other, nor probably ever ſaw the Faces of each other, to be ſure he did not know him to be the Meſſiah. This no doubt was over-ruled by the Wiſdom of God, to prevent all ſuſpicion, as if *John* and Chriſt had compacted together to give one another Credit, that the World might ſuſpect nothing of the Truth of *John*'s Teſtimony concerning Chriſt, or have the leaſt Jealouſie that what he ſaid of Chriſt, was from any Byaſs of Mind to his Perſon; therefore he repeats it a ſecond time, *v.* 31. *v.* 33. *I knew him not.* Hence we may *Learn*, That a Corporal ſight of Chriſt, and an outward Perſonal Acquaintance with him, is not ſimply needful and abſolutely neceſſary for enabling a Miniſter to ſet him forth, and repreſent him ſavingly to the World. *Obſ.* 2. The Means declared, by which *John* came to know Chriſt to be the true Meſſiah; it was by a Sign from Heaven, namely, the Holy Ghoſt deſcending like a Dove upon our Saviour. *He that ſent me to Baptize with Water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining, the ſame is he. Learn hence*, 1. That Chriſt taking upon him our Nature, did ſo cover his Glory with the Veil of our Fleſh and common Infirmities, that he could not be known by bodily ſight from another Man. Till *John* had a Divine Revelation, and an evident Sign from Heaven, that Chriſt was the Son of God, *he knew him not. Learn* 2. That Chriſt in his Solemn entry upon his Office as Mediator, was ſealed unto the Work by the deſcending of the Holy Ghoſt upon him; he was ſealed by the Holy Ghoſt's deſcending and the Father's teſtifying, that this was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed. Now it was, that God gave not the Spirit to Chriſt by Meaſure for the effectual Adminiſtration of his Mediatorial Office; now *it pleaſed the Father that in Chriſt ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* He was filled extenſively with all kinds of Grace, and filled intenſively with all degrees of Grace, in the Day of his Inauguration, when the Holy Spirit deſcended upon him.

35 Again, the next day after, John ſtood, and two of his diſciples: 36 And looking upon Jeſus as he walked, he ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God.

It is evident that *John*'s Diſciples were never very willing to acknowledge Jeſus for the *Meſſias*, becauſe they thought he did ſhadow and cloud their Maſter. See therefore the Sincerity of the holy Baptiſt; he takes every opportunity to draw off the Eyes of his own Diſciples from himſelf, and to fix them upon Chriſt; he ſaith to two of his Diſciples, *Behold the Lamb of God*: As if he had ſaid, Turn your Eyes from me to Chriſt, take leſs notice of me his Miniſter; but behold your and my Lord and Maſter, *Behold the Lamb of God. Learn hence*, That the great Deſign of Chriſt's Faithful Miniſters is to ſet People upon admiring of Chriſt, and not magnifying themſelves. Oh, 'tis their great Ambition and Deſire, that ſuch as love and reſpect them, and honour their Miniſtry, may be led by them to Chriſt; to behold and admire him, to accept of him, and to ſubmit unto him: *John ſaid to his Diſciples, Behold the Lamb of God.*

37 And the two diſciples heard him ſpeak, and they followed Jeſus. 38 Then Jeſus turned, and ſaw them following, and ſaith unto them, What ſeek ye? They ſaid unto him, Rabbi (which is to ſay, being interpreted, Maſter) where dwelleſt thou? 39 He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee. They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John ſpeak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peters brother. 41 He firſt findeth his own brother Simon, and ſaith unto him, We have found the Meſſias, which is, being interpreted, the Chriſt. 42 And he brought him to Jeſus. And when Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art Simon the ſon of Jona: thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a ſtone. 43 The day following, Jeſus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and ſaith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethſaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

This latter part of the Chapter acquaints us with the calling of five Diſciples; not to the Apoſtleſhip, for that was afterwards; nor yet ſimply by Converſion, for ſome of them were *John*'s Diſciples already, and believed in the *Meſſiah* to come; but they are here called to own and acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt to be the True and Promiſed *Meſſiah*. The Diſciples here called, were *Andrew* and *Peter*, and *Philip*, mean and obſcure Perſons, poor Fiſher-men, not any of the learned Rabbies and Doctors among the *Jews*. Hereby Chriſt ſhewed at once the *Freeneſs* of his Grace, in paſſing by the knowing Men of the Age; the *Greatneſs* of his Power, who by ſuch weak Inſtruments could effect ſuch mighty Things; and the Glory of his Wiſdom, in chuſing ſuch Inſtruments as ſhould not carry away the Glory of the Work from him; but cauſe the intire Honour and Glory of all their great Succeſſes to redound to Chriſt. As Chriſt can do, ſo he chuſes to do great things by weak means, knowing that the weakneſs of the Inſtrument redounds to the greater Honour of the Agent; For theſe Perſons called now to be Diſciples, were afterwards ſent forth by Chriſt as his Apoſtles, to Convert the World to Chriſtianity. *Obſerve farther*, The Order according to which the Diſciples were called; firſt *Andrew*, then *Peter*; which may make the Church of *Rome* aſhamed of the weakneſs of their Argument for *Peter*'s Supremacy, that he was firſt called; whereas *Andrew* was before him, and *Peter* was brought to Jeſus by him. *Andrew findeth his own Brother Simon, and brought him to Jeſus.* Such as have gotten any knowledge of Chriſt themſelves, and are let into Acquaintance with him, will be very diligent to invite, and induſtrious to bring in others to him. *Peter* being brought to Chriſt, our Saviour names him *Cephas*, which ſignifies a *Stone*, a *Rock*; to intimate to him his Duty, to be firm and ſteady in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, full of Courage and Conſtancy. *Thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a ſtone.*

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and ſaith unto him, We have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph. 46 And Nathanael ſaid unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaith unto him, Come and ſee. 47 Jeſus ſaw Nathanael coming to him, and ſaith of him, Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

The laſt Perſon mention'd in this Chapter, who was called to own and embrace Chriſt for a Meſſiah, is *Nathanael*: Who this *Nathanael* was, doth not certainly appear; but, it is evident, he was a ſincere, good Man, tho' prejudic'd for the preſent againſt Chriſt, becauſe of the Place of his ſuppoſed Birth and Reſidence, *Nazareth*: *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* That is, can any worthy or excellent Perſon, much leſs the promiſed and long expected Meſſias, come out of ſuch an obſcure Place as *Nazareth* is? Whereas Almighty God, when ever he pleaſes, can raiſe worthy Perſons out of contemptible Places. *Obſerve farther*, how mercifully and meekly Chriſt paſſes over the Miſtakes and Failings, the Prepoſſeſſions and Prejudices of *Nathanael*; but takes notice of and publickly proclaims his Sincerity: *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no Guile.* That is, no Guile imputed, no Guile concealed, no prevailing Guile: It being only true of Chriſt, in a ſtrict and abſolute Senſe, that there was no Guile found in his Lips; but in a qualified Senſe it is true of *Nathanael*, and every upright Man, they are true *Iſraelites*, like their Father *Jacob*, plain Men; Men of great Sincerity and uprightneſs of Heart, both in the ſight of God and Man. And whereas our Saviour ſpeaks of him with a ſort of Admiration: *Behold an Iſraelite, in whom is no Guile. We Learn*, That a Perſon of great ſincerity and uprightneſs of Heart towards God and Man, a true *Nathanael*, an *Iſraelite* indeed, is a rare and worthy ſight. *Behold an Iſraelite indeed. Learn*, 2. That ſuch indeed as are *Nathanaels*, need not commend themſelves, Chriſt will be ſure to do it for them. *Nathanael* conceals his own worth, Chriſt publiſhes and proclaims it, and calls upon others to take notice of it, *Behold*, &c.

48 Nathanael ſaith unto him, Whence knoweſt thou me? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee. 49 Nathanael anſwered and ſaith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the ſon of God, thou art the King of Iſrael. 50 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things then theſe.

Obſerve here, How *Nathanael* wondreth that Chriſt ſhould know him, having (as he thought) never ſeen him. Chriſt gives him to underſtand, that by his All-ſeeing Eye he had ſeen him, when he was not ſeen by him: *When thou wert under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee.* Chriſt's All-ſeeing Eye is an infallible Proof of his Deity and God-head. Chriſt ſeeth us wherever we are, and whatever we do, tho' we ſee not him: He ſeeth the ſincerity of our Hearts, and will own it, and bear witneſs to it, if we are upright in his ſight. *Obſerve farther*, How Chriſt's Omnipreſence and Omniſcience Convinces *Nathanael* that he was more than Man, even the *Meſſias*, God and Man in two diſtinct Natures and one Perſon. *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God. Philip* called Chriſt the Son of *Joſeph*. *Nathanael* calls him, the Son of God. Such as believe Chriſt's Omniſciency, will never call in queſtion his Divinity. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How Chriſt encourages the Faith of his new Diſciple, *Nathanael*, by promiſing him, that he ſhould enjoy farther helps and means for the Confirmation of his Faith, than ever yet he had. All that Chriſt ſaid to him, was only this, That *he ſaw him under the Fig-tree before Philip called him*, How ready art thou O Lord! to encourage the beginnings of Faith in the Hearts of thy People, and to furniſh them with farther means of Knowledge, when they wiſely improve what they have received. Never wilt thou be wanting, either in Means or Mercy to us, if we be not wanting to thee and our ſelves.

51 And he ſaith unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of man.

The Heavens were open to Chriſt, and the Angels attending upon him, firſt at his Baptiſm, *Matth.* 3. *ult.* then at his

Aſcenſion, *Acts* 1. 9. Whether Chriſt alludes to the one or the other, or to both, I ſhall not poſitively ſay; but gather this *Note*, That the Miniſtry and Attendance of the Holy Angels upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the time of his Humiliation, was very remarkable: An Angel foretells his Conception to the Virgin, *Luke* 1. 31, An Angel publiſhes his Birth to the Shepherds, *Luke* 2. 14. In his Temptations in the Wilderneſs, the Angels came and miniſtred unto him, *Matth.* 4. 11. In his Agony in the Garden, an Angel is ſent to Comfort him, *Luke* 22. 42. At his Reſurrection, an Angel rolls away the Stone, and proclaims him Riſen, to the Women that ſought for him, *Matth.* 28. 6. At his Aſcenſion, the Angels attended upon him, and bear him Company to Heaven. And at the Day of Judgment, he ſhall be Revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. Now, thus officious are the Holy Angels to our Bleſſed Saviour, and thus ſubſervient to him upon all Occaſions. 1. In point of Affection and ſingular Love to Chriſt. 2. In point of Duty and ſpecial Obligation to Chriſt. There is no ſuch chearful and delightful Service, as the Service of Love. Such is the Angels Service to Chriſt for the Service he has done them, he being an Head of Confirmation to them: For, that they are eſtabliſhed in that holy and glorious State in which they were at firſt Created, is owing to the ſpecial Grace of the Redeemer. *Glorify him then all ye Angels, and praiſe him all his Hoſt.*

CHAP. II.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jeſus was there. 2 And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples, to the marriage.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with the firſt Miracle which our Saviour wrought, in turning water into Wine; the Occaſion of it was, his being invided to a Marriage-Feaſt. *Here Note* 1. That whenever our Saviour was invited to a publick Entertainment, he never refuſed the Invitation, but conſtantly went; not ſo much for the Pleaſure of Eating, as for the Opportunity of Converſing and doing good; which was Meat and Drink unto him. *Note*, 2. What Honour Chriſt puts upon the Ordinance of Marriage; he honours it with his Preſence and firſt Miracle. Some think it was St. *John* that was now the Bridegroom; others that it was ſome near Relation of the Virgin Mother's: But whoever it might be, doubtleſs Chriſt's Deſign was rather to put Honour upon the Ordinance than upon the Perſon. How Bold is the Church of *Rome* in ſpitting upon the Face of this Ordinance, by dedenying its Lawfulneſs to the Miniſters of Religion? when the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 4. affirms, That *Marriage is Honourable among all.* Neither the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the Apoſtles of the New (St. *Peter* himſelf not excepted) did abhor the Marriage-Bed, or judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker. *Note*, 3. That it is an ancient and laudable Inſtitution, that the Rites of Marriage ſhould not want a ſolemn Celebration. Feaſting and Friends upon ſuch an Occaſion is both lawful and commendable, provided the Rules of Sobriety and Charity, Modeſty and Decency be obſerved, and no ſinful Liberty aſſumed. But it muſt be ſaid, That Feaſting in general, and Marriage-Feaſts in particular, are ſome of thoſe Lawful Things which are difficultly managed without Sin. *Note*, 4. That our Saviour working a Miracle when he was at the Marriage-Feaſt, ſhould teach us by his Example, that in our chearful and free times, when we indulge a little more than ordinary to Mirth amongſt our Friends, we ſhould ſtill be mindful of God's Honour and Glory, and lay hold upon an Occaſion of doing all the Good we can. *Note Laſtly*, As Chriſt was Perſonally invited to, and Bodily preſent at this Marriage-Feaſt when here on Earth; ſo he will not refuſe now in Heaven to be Spiritually preſent at his peoples Marriage; They want his Preſence with them upon that great Occaſion, they deſire and ſeek it; he is acquainted with it, and invited to it, whoever is neglected: And where Chriſt is made acquainted with the Match, he will certainly make one at the Marriage. Happy is that Wedding, where Chriſt and his Friends (as here) are the invited, expected and enjoyed Gueſts.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother ſaith unto the ſervants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do it.

This want of Wine was probably ſo diſpoſed by the Providence of God, to give our Saviour on Opportunity to manifeſt his Divine Power in working a Miracle to ſupply it. *Obſerve here*, 1. How the Virgin inquires into the Family's Wants, and then makes them known to Chriſt. *Learn hence*, That it is an Argument of Piety, and an Evidence of Chriſtian Love, to inquire into the Wants, and to recommend the Neceſſities of others to Chriſt's Care and Conſideration; whoſe Bounty and Munificence can readily and abundantly ſupply them. Thus far the Virgin's Action was good, ſhe laid open the Caſe to Chriſt; *They have no Wine*: But Chriſt who diſcern'd the Thoughts of *Mary*'s Heart, finds her guilty of Preſumption, ſhe thought by her Motherly Authority ſhe might have expected, if not commanded a Miracle from him: Whereas Chriſt was ſubject to her, as Man, during his private Life; but now being entred upon his Office as a Mediator, as God-Man, he gives her to underſtand ſhe had no Power over him, nor any Motherly Authority in the Buſineſs of his Publick Office; therefore he ſays to her, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* He that charges his Angels with Folly, will not be Taught when and how to Act, by poor crawling Duſt and Aſhes. *Obſerve therefore*, 2. Chriſt calls the Virgin, *Woman*, not *Mother*, but this not out of any Contempt, but to prevent her being thought more than a Woman, above or beyond a Woman, having brought forth the Son of God: *Woman*, ſays Chriſt, not *Goddeſs*, as the Papiſts would make her, and proclaim her free from Sin, even from Venial Sin; but Chriſt's reproving of her, ſhews that ſhe was not faultleſs. *Obſ.* 3. Chriſt would not bear with the Virgins Commanding on Earth, will he then endure her Interceſſion in Heaven? Muſt ſhe not meddle with Matters pertaining to his Office here below, and will it be endured by Chriſt, or endeavoured by her to interpoſe in the Work of Mediation above? No, no; were it poſſible for her ſo far to forget her ſelf in Heaven, ſhe would not receive the Anſwer from Chriſt which ſhe had on Earth, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* or thou with me in my Mediatorial Office? But, inſtead of this, ſhe returns a Anſwer from Heaven to her Idolatrous Petitioners here on Earth, What have I do do with you? get you to my Son, go you to Chriſt, he that was the Mediator of Redemption; he, and only he, continues the Mediator of Interceſſion. Oh, how Fooliſh as well as Impious is it to think, that ſhe who had not ſo much Power as to direct the working of one Miracle on Earth, ſhould have now lodg'd in her Hands all the Power of Heaven.

6 And there were ſet there ſix water pots of ſtone, after the manner of purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governour of the feaſt. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feaſt had taſted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the ſervants which drew the water knew) the governour of the feaſt called the bridegroom. 10 And ſaith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe: but thou haſt kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Gallilee, and manifeſted forth his glory; and his diſciples believed on him.

In this Miracle of our Saviour's turning Water into Wine, *Obſ.* 1. The reality of the Miracle, and the ſincerity of Chriſt in the working of it: To evidence that there was no deceit in the Miracle, not Wine-casks, but Water-pots are called for; Wine-veſſels in which ſome Lees were remaining, might have given both a Vinous colour and taſte to the Water; but Stone-pots could contribute nothing of this nature; and being open Pots, there was no ſtealing Wine into them without Obſervation. *Again*, Our Saviour's employing of the Servants, and not his Diſciples, takes off any ſuſpicion of Colluſion; and his ſending it to the Ruler or Governour of the Feaſt, was an Evidence that the Miracle would bear examination. Our Saviour's Miracles were real and beneficial; they were obvious to Senſe, not lying Wonders, not fictitious Miracles, which the Juglers in the Church of *Rome* Cheat the People with:

The greateſt Miracle which they boaſt of, *Tranſubſtantiation*, is ſo far from being obvious to Senſe, that it contradicts the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, and is the greateſt affront to Human Nature that ever World was acquainted with. *Obſ.* 2. Tho' Chriſt wrought a real Miracle, yet he would not work more of Miracle than needed; he would not create Wine out of nothing, but turned Water into Wine. Thus he multiplied the Bread, changed the Water, reſtored withered Limbs, raiſed dead Bodies, ſtill working upon that which was, and not creating that which was not: Chriſt never wrought a Miracle but when needful, and then wrought no more of Miracle than he needed. *Obſ.* 3. The Liberality and Bounty of Chriſt in the Miracle here wrought; *ſix Water-pots are filled* with Wine; enough, ſay ſome Writers, for an Hundred and fifty Men; had he turned but one of thoſe large Veſſels into Wine, it had been a ſufficient Proof of his Power; but to fill ſo many, was an Inſtance both of his Power and Mercy. The Lord of the Family furniſhes his Houſhold not barely for Neceſſity, but for Delight, giving richly all Things to enjoy. And as the Bounty of Chriſt appeared in the Quantity, ſo in the Excellency of the Wine. *Thou haſt kept the beſt Wine till now*, ſays the Governour of the Feaſt: It was fit that Chriſt's miraculous Wine ſhould be more perfect than the Natural. But Oh, Bleſſed Saviour! how delicate and delicious ſhall that Wine be, which we ſhall drink ere long with thee in thy Father's Kingdom! Let thy Holy Spirit fill the Veſſel of my Heart with Water, (with Godly Sorrow and Contrition) and thou wilt turn it into Wine. For, *bleſſed are they that mourn, they ſhall be comforted. Obſ.* 4. The double Effect of this Miracle; Chriſt hereby *manifeſted forth his Glory, and his Diſciples believed in him.* 1. *He manifeſted forth his Glory*; that is, The Glory of his God-head, as doing this by his own Power. Here ſhined forth his Omnipotence, his Bounty and Liberality, every thing that might beſpeak him both the Great and Good God. The ſecond Effect of this Miracle was, That *the Diſciples believed on him.* The great End of Miracles is the Confirmation of Faith; God never ſets the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Lye: All the Miracles then that Chriſt and his Apoſtles did were as ſo many Seals, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel is true. *If you believe not me*, ſays Chriſt, *believe the Works which I do, for they bear Witneſs of me*, John 5. 36.

12 After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his diſciples, and they continued there not many days. 13 And the Jews paſſover was at hand, and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem, 14 And found in the temple thoſe that ſold oxen, and ſheep, and doves, and the changers of money, ſitting: 15 And when he had made a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the ſheep, and the oxen: and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And ſaid unto them that ſold doves, Take theſe things hence; make not my Fathers houſe an houſe of merchandiſe.

Obſ. here, 1. How obedient in all Things Chriſt was to the Ceremonial Law. He was not Naturally Subject to the Law, but to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, he kept the Paſſover yearly, according to the Command of God, *Exod.* 23. 17. that *all the Males ſhould appear before him* in the Temple at *Jeruſalem.* Hence it is probably concluded, that Chriſt came up to the Paſſover continually during his private Life; and being now come up to *Jeruſalem* to this firſt Paſſover after his Baptiſm, and ſolemn Entrance upon his Office, his firſt Walk was to the Temple, and his firſt Work was to purge and reform it from Abuſes, and not to ruin and deſtroy it, becauſe it had been abuſed. Now the Abuſe and Prophanation of the Temple at that time, was this; In the outward Court of the *Gentiles*, there was a publick Mart or Market, where were ſold Oxen, Sheep and Doves for Sacrifice; which otherwiſe the People with great Labour and Trouble muſt have brought up along with them for Sacrifice. Therefore as a pretended Eaſe to the People, the Prieſts ordered theſe things to be ſold hard by the Altar; the Intention was commendable, but the Action not juſtifiable. No pretence of good Ends can juſtify that which is forbidden of God: A good End can never juſtify an irregular Action. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour's fervent Zeal in purging and reforming his Father's Houſe. The ſight of Sin in any Perſons, but eſpecially in and among Profeſſors, ought to kindle in our Hearts (as it did here in Chriſt's Breaſt) a burning Zeal and Indignation againſt it. Yet was not Chriſt's Zeal ſo warm as to devote the Temple to Deſtruction, becauſe of its Abuſe and Prophanation. Places Dedicated to the Worſhip and Service of God, if Idolatrouſly abuſed, muſt not be pulled down, but purged, not ruined, but reformed. There is a ſpecial Reverence due to the Houſe of God, both for the Owner's ſake and the Service ſake. Nothing but Holineſs becomes that Place where God is worſhipped in the Beauty of Holineſs. Chriſt by purging the Court of the Gentiles from Merchandiſe not unlawful in it ſelf, but neceſſary for the Sacrifices which were offered in the Temple, tho' not neceſſary to be bought there, did plainly inſinuate, That a diſtinction is to be made betwixt Places Sacred and Prophane; and that what may be done as well elſewhere, ought not to be done in the Houſe of God, the Place appointed immediately for his Worſhip. *Obſ.* 3. The greatneſs of this Miracle, in the weakneſs of the Means which Chriſt made uſe of to effect and work it: He drove the Buyers and Sellers before him out of the Temple; but how, and with what? St. *Hierom* in *Matth.* 21. ſays, That certain fiery Rays or Beams darting from Chriſt's Eyes, drove out theſe Merchants from this place. I dare not avouch this, but am ſatisfy'd that Chriſt drove them out, unarmed with any Weapons that might carry Dread and Terror with them, at moſt but with a Whip of ſmall Cords: which, probably, might be ſcattered by the Drovers that came thither to ſell their Cattle. Behold then the weakneſs of the Means on the one ſide, and conſider the greatneſs of the Oppoſition on the other: Here was a Confluence of People to oppoſe Chriſt, this being the moſt ſolemn Mart of the Paſſover, and here were Merchant-men whoſe Hearts were ſet upon Gain (the World's God) to oppoſe him. But neither the weakneſs of the Means, nor the greatneſs of the Oppoſition did diſmay him, or cauſe our Saviour to deſiſt from the Attempt of reforming what was amiſs in the Houſe of God. *Learn we hence*, That it matters not how weak the Means of the Church-Reformation is, nor how ſtrong the oppoſite Power is; if we ingage Chriſt in the Undertaking, the Work ſhall certainly be accompliſhed. Oh, how great was the Work, and how weak and unlikely were the Means here! A parcel of ſturdy Fellows, whoſe Hearts were ſet upon their Wealth, Chriſt no ſooner ſpeaks to them, and ſhakes his Whip at them, but like a Company of fearful Hares they run before him. Chriſt in purging of his Church will make every thing yield and give way to his Power. Let it comfort the Church under all unlikelihood of Reformation. Who art thou, O great Mountain? before our Spiritual *Zerubbabel* thou ſhalt become a Plain. I ſhall cloſe my Obſervations upon this Miracle of Chriſt's whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, which both St. *Origen* and St. *Jerom* do make the greateſt Miracle that ever Chriſt wrought, all Circumſtances conſidered. I ſhall cloſe it with this Reflection, *viz.* Was there ſuch Power and Terror in Chriſt's Countenance and Speech here in the Temple in the Days of his Fleſh? Oh, how terrible then will his Face and his Appearance be to the Wicked and Impenitent World at the Great Day! Lord! how fearful will his Iron Scourge then be! How terrifying that Voice, Depart, depart from me; depart Accurſed, depart into Fire; depart into everlaſting Fire, into a Fire prepared for the Puniſhment of Apoſtate Spirits, the Devil and his Angels. God grant we may wiſely conſider it, and timely flee from the Wrath to come.

17 And his diſciples remembred that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.

The Diſciples upon this Occaſion called to remembrance the words of *David*, *Pſal.* 69. 9. *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up*, which was verified in Chriſt as well as in *David.* Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Grace deſcribed, *Zeal*, which is the Ardour of the Affections, carrying forth a Man to the utmoſt for God's Glory and his Church's good. Zeal is not ſo much one Affection as the intenſe degree of all the Affections. *Obſerve*, 2. The Object about which our Saviour's Zeal was converſant, *God's Houſe*; that is, All things relating to the Worſhip of God, Temple, Tabernacle, Ark, *&c.* which were the Pledges of God's Preſence. *Obſ.* 3. The Effect of this, it *hath eaten me up.* Like Fire that eats up and devours that whereon it lights. What was ſaid of St. *Peter*, That he was a Man made up all of Fire; and of St. *Paul*, in reſpect of his Sufferings, That he was a Spark of Fire burning in the midſt of the Sea, may much more truly be ſaid of Chriſt, when he was engaged in the Work of Church-Reformation. *Learn*, That as Chriſt was, ſo Chriſtians ought to be, very zealous for the Glory of God, the Honour of his Houſe, and the Purity of his Worſhip. *The Zeal of thine Houſe*; that is, for the Honour of thine Houſe *hath eaten me up*, &c.

18 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doſt theſe things? 19 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. 20 Then ſaid the Jews, Fourty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he ſpake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was riſen from the dead, his diſciples remembred that he had ſaid this unto them: and they believed the ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid.

Obſerve here, 1. How exceedingly offended the *Jews* were at the Reformation which our Saviour had made in the Houſe of God: They were awed indeed with the Majeſty of this great Work, and durſt not openly oppoſe, but ſecretly malign it. *Thence Note*, That redreſs of Abuſes in God's Worſhip, eſpecially if it croſſes our Eaſe, and controuls our Profit (as this did) is uſually diſtaſted. *Obſerve*, 2. How theſe *Jews* diſcover their old inveterate Diſeaſe of Infidelity; they require a Sign, and call for a Miracle to juſtify Chriſt's Commiſſion. Why! had they not a Miracle before their Eyes? Was not the work of purging the Temple a wonderful Miracle? Yet they demanded another Miracle to make this good. *Learn thence*, That obſtinate Infidelity will not be ſatisfy'd with the moſt ſufficient Means for Satisfaction, but ſtill object, and oppoſe againſt the cleareſt, the fulleſt, and moſt convincing Evidence. *What ſign ſheweſt thou us?* ſay the *Jews*, when they had ſo many Signs and Wonders daily before their Eyes. *Obſerve*, 3. The *Jews* demanding a Sign, our Saviour grants them one; he remits them to his Death and Reſurrection, to prove that he was the True Meſſiah. *Deſtroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raiſe it up.* That is, I know you will deſtroy this Temple of my Body by putting me to Death, but I will raiſe my ſelf again from the Grave the third Day. Chriſt did not command them to deſtroy his Body, but only foretold that they would do it. *Non eſt verbum Præcepti, ſed Prædictionis.* The Words are not imperative, but only predictive and permiſſive. Chriſt did not bid them deſtroy his Body, but foretells what they would do. Ye will deſtroy this Temple, but after three Days I will raiſe it up. *Where Note*, That Chriſt aſſerts his own Power in Raiſing his own Body from the Dead. True! the Father is often ſaid to Raiſe him, and it is neceſſary that it be ſo ſaid, that it might appear that Divine Juſtice was fully ſatisfied for our Sins, in that he was by him delivered from that Death which he underwent for us. But yet it is often aſſerted, That Chriſt Raiſed himſelf, and that he was Quickned by the Spirit, which was as well the Spirit of the Son, as of the Father, dwelling Eſſentially in him. Now from Chriſt's foretelling his Paſſion and Reſurrection, *Learn thence*, That all our Saviour's Sufferings were foreknown unto him, were foretold by him; he would not prevent them, but willingly permitted them, and cheerfully underwent them, *Deſtroy this Temple. Note here*, 1. The State and Dignity of Chriſt's Holy Body. 'Tis a Temple. *He ſpake of the Temple of his Body.* The Saints Bodies are Temples by ſpecial Sanctification: Chriſt's Body was a Temple by Subſtantial Inhabitation. The Divinity of Chriſt dwelt in his Humanity, Perſonally, and Immediately. God dwells in Saints by Regal Authority, he dwelt in Chriſt's Humanity by Perſonal Reſidence. *Note*, 2. The Violence and Indignity offered to this Holy Temple at our Saviour's Death; it was pulled down and *deſtroyed*. Death diſſolved the Union betwixt our Saviour's Soul and Body; but there was a cloſer Union which no Violence of Death could diſſolve, namely, the Union of his Godhead with his Manhood; This was incapable either of Diſſolution or Deſtruction. *Note*, 3. The reparing, reſtoring and raiſing up of this Temple out of the Ruins of it by our Saviour's Reſurrection. *In three days I will raiſe it up. Obſerve*, A full proof of our Saviours's Divinity. To raiſe a dead Man exceeds the Power of Nature, but for a dead Man to raiſe himſelf, requires the Power of God. We read of Dead Men raiſed by others, but none but Chriſt ever raiſed himſelf. The *Jews* could not ſay, he raiſed others from the Grave, himſelf he could not raiſe. *Inference*, 1. Was Chriſt's Body a Temple? ſo ſhould ours be too; Temples for the Holy God to dwell in. Temples by ſpecial Appropriation. Temples by ſolemn Conſecration. Temples by actual Imployment. *If any Man defiles this Temple of God, him will God deſtroy.* 2. Was the Temple of Chriſt's Body pulled down by Death and deſtroyed? ſo muſt alſo the Temple of our Bodies ere long. The Temple of his Body was pulled down for our Sin, the Temple of our Bodies ruined by our own Sin. Sin brought Mortality into our Natures, and the Wages of our Sin is Death. 3. Was the Temple of Chriſt's Body repaired in the Morning of the Reſurrection? ſo ſhall the Temple of our Bodies alſo, if we be the Members of Chriſt by a vital Union. *Thy Dead Men*, Oh Bleſſed Redeemer! *ſhall live; together with thy dead Body ſhall they ariſe. Awake then and ſing, ye that dwell in the Duſt, for the Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth ſhall caſt out the Dead*, Iſa. 26. 19.

23 Now when he was in Jeruſalem at the paſſover, in the feaſt-day, many believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men.

Obſerve here, What influence the ſight of our Saviour's Miracles had upon many of the common People, *They believed in his Name, when they ſaw the Miracles which he did*; that is, they were convinced by the Works which our Saviour wrought, that he came from God, and that what he ſaid and did was really true, and no Impoſture. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all Men.* Our Saviour did not, and would not truſt them who yet believed on his Name. *Thence Note*, That a naked Aſſent to the Hiſtory of the Goſpel is not ſufficient to intitle us to Saving-Faith. We may Aſſent to the Truth of all that we find there, and yet be far from the Kingdom of God. Saving-Faith implies more than the Aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Truths of the Goſpel. We cannot believe or disbelieve what we pleaſe, but muſt needs Aſſent to what is evident to our Underſtanding; ſo that it is poſſible for a Man to Aſſent to the Truth of Chriſtianity, and yet remain in a ſtate of Damnation; if he doth not embrace it as Good, as well as Aſſent to it as True; if our Faith be not the Parent and Principal of Obedience, if our Belief doth not influence our Practice, though we paſs for Believers amongſt Men, we are no better than Unbelievers in the Account of Chriſt. If we believe Jeſus to be the true Meſſias, and do not receive him in all his Offices; if we commit our ſelves to his Saving-Mercy, but do not commit our ſelves to his Ruling-Power; if we deſire him for our Saviour, but diſown him for our Sovereign; if we expect Salvation by him, and do not yield Subjection to him, we put a cheat upon our ſelves, for he only believes as he ſhould, that lives as he does believe.

25 And needed not that any ſhould teſtifie of man: for he knew what was in man.

St. *John's* Deſign in the writing of this Goſpel, being to Aſſert the Divinity of Chriſt, he ſcatters Evidences of it in almoſt every Chapter. Here he declares his Omniſciency. He knew what was in Man, that is, Being God bleſſed for ever; he had an exact Knowledge of the Hearts of Men, not by any Revelation of Mens Hearts from God; but by immediate Intuition from himſelf, he knows all Men, and all that is in Men. See here an ample Teſtimony of the Divinity of Chriſt, his knowledge of the Secrets of the Hearts of all Men, which is declared to be the undoubted Property of God alone. 1 *Kings* 8. 39. *Thou only knoweſt the Hearts of all the Children of Men.*

CHAP. III.

THere was a man of the Phariſees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him.

The former part of this Chapter acqaints us with that famous Conference which our Bleſſed Saviour had with *Nicodemus*. This Man was by Sect a *Phariſee*; which ſignifies a Perſon ſeparated and ſet apart for the Study of the Law of God, and to teach it unto others; and by Calling or Profeſſion, *a Ruler of the Jews*, that is, probably one of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim: A chief Perſon in their Eccleſiaſtical Court and Council. Conſider we *Nicodemus* firſt a *Phariſee*, which ſort of Men were filled with inveterate Prejudice and Enmity againſt Chriſt, yet from hence we may gather, That ſuch is the Efficacy of Divine Grace, that it ſometimes Convinces and Converts alſo thoſe that are the greateſt Enemies to Chriſt, and fierceſt Oppoſers of him. No ſuch bitter Enemies to Chriſt as the *Phariſees*; yet behold, *Nicodemus* a *Phariſee* coming to him, Convinced and Converted by him. Conſider him Secondly, As a Ruler of the *Jews*, as a Perſon of Place and Power, making a Figure in the World. Though they were generally the Poor which followed Chriſt, yet ſome of the Great and Rich Men of the World, as *Nicodemus* a Maſter of *Iſrael*, and *Joſeph of Arimathea*, an Honourable Counſellor, are called to Chriſt and received by him, leſt if he had admitted illiterate and ſimple Men only, the World might have thought that they were deceived through their Simplicity. *Obſerve farther*, The time when *Nicodemus* came to Chriſt, it was *by Night*, partly out of Shame, leſt the World ſhould think that ſuch a knowing Man as he was wanted Inſtruction; and partly out of Fear, he had ſomething to loſe, and therefore durſt not own Chriſt publickly. However, our dear Lord upbraids him not with his Timorouſneſs, but graciouſly condeſcends to Inſtruct him in the Fundamental Principle of Chriſtianity, the great Doctrine of Regeneration. Such is the Tenderneſs of our Compaſſionate Saviour, that he will not extinguiſh the leaſt Spark of Holy Fire, nor quench the ſmoaking Flax.

3 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.

Chriſt here acquaints *Nicodemus*, and in him all Perſons, that there muſt be a Change from Nature to Grace, before there can be a Change from Grace to Glory; for tho' he was a *Jew*, a Doctor, and one that had good Thoughts of Chriſt, looking upon him as an extraordinary Perſon, one that had received Power from God to Work Miracles, yet Chriſt aſſures him, that nothing ſhort of the Regenerating Change would bring him to Heaven. 'Tis not enough that we be new-dreſs'd, but we muſt be new-made, that is, thoroughly and univerſally Changed, the Underſtanding by Illumination, the Will by Renovation, the Affections by Sanctification; the Life by Reformation, or we can never come at Heaven. We muſt be like God, or can we never live with him: If we be not like him in the Temper of our Minds on Earth, we can never be happy in the Injoyment of him in Heaven; for Heaven which is a place of the greateſt Holineſs, would be a place of the greateſt Uneaſineſs to an unregenerate and an unholy Perſon; the Contagion is univerſal, deep, and inward, therefore ſuch muſt the Change be.

4 Nicodemus ſaith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the ſecond time into his mothers womb, and be born.

Two Things are Obſervable in this Queſtion of *Nicodemus*, *How can a Man be born when he is old?* 1. His Ignorance and Weakneſs in propounding of ſuch a Queſtion. So true is that of the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* What a groſs Conception had this Learned Man of the Notion of Regeneration? How ignorant is Nature of the Workings of Grace? Men of Name and Note, of great Parts and Profound Learning, are very often much at a Loſs in Spiritual Matters. Yet, 2. In this Queſtion of his, there is diſcovered a great deal of Plainneſs and Simplicity: He did not come as uſually the Phariſees did, with an enſnaring Queſtion in his Mouth, but with a Mind fairly diſpoſed for Information and Conviction; with a pious Deſire to be Inſtructed. Whatever Ignorance we labour under, it is ſafeſt and beſt to diſcover it to our Spiritual Guide, that we may attain the Mercy of a Saving-knowledge; but how many had rather carry their Ignorance to Hell with them, than diſcover it to their Miniſter?

5 Jeſus anſwered, Verily verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus not rightly underſtanding Chriſt's meaning in the former Verſe, our Saviour is pleaſed to explain himſelf in this, and tells him, That the Birth he ſpake of, was not Natural, but Spiritual, wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, whoſe Working is like Water, cleanſing and purifying the Soul from all ſinful Defilement. *Learn hence*, That the Regenerating Change is wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, which purifies it from its Natural Defilement, and renews it after the Divine Likeneſs and Image. We never underſtand Divine Truths aright, till Chriſt opens our Underſtandings; till then, they will be deny'd, nay, perhaps derided even by thoſe that are profoundly Learned.

6 That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the ſpirit, is ſpirit.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, As Men generate Men, and Nature begets Nature, ſo the Holy Spirit produceth Holy Inclinations, Qualifications and Diſpoſitions. *Learn hence*, That as Original Corruption is conveyed by Natural Generation, ſo Saving Regeneration is the Effect and Product of the Holy Spirit's Operation.

7 Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus making an Exception againſt our Saviour's Notion of Regeneration, from the Abſurdity and Impoſſibility of it (as he thought) our Saviour therefore proceeds to clear the Matter by a Similitude taken from the Wind, which at once declares the Author, and deſcribes the Manner of Spiritual Regeneration: The Author of it is the Holy Spirit of God, compared to the Wind; Firſt, For the Quality of its Motion, *It blows when and where it liſteth.* Secondly, From the Senſibleneſs of its Effects, *Thou heareſt the ſound thereof.* Thirdly, From the Intricacy or Myſteriouſneſs of its Proceedings, *Thou knoweſt not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.* As the Natural Wind is not under the Power of Man, either to ſend it out, or to reſtrain it: It bloweth where it liſteth for all us, though not where it liſteth in regard of God. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is as Wind in the Freeneſs of its Motion, and in the variableneſs of its Motion alſo. *Learn hence*, That the Way and Work of the Holy Spirit of God in the Soul's Regeneration, is oft-times very ſecret, and uſually exceeding Various. Various as to the Time: Some are wrought upon in Youth, others in Old Age. Various in his Methods of Working. Some are wrought upon by the Corroſives of the Law, others by the Lenitives of the Goſpel. Various in the manner of his Working, and in the Means by which he Works: Upon ſome by a powerful Ordinance, upon others by an awakening Providence. But though there be ſuch Variety in the Method of the Spirit's Working, yet is the Work in all ſtill the ſame. There is no variety in the Work wrought. The Effect produced by the Holy Spirit in the Work of Regeneration is alike and the ſame in all; namely, Likeneſs to God; A Conformity in our Natures to the Holy Nature of God; and Conformity in our Lives to the Will of God. Again, It is a very ſecret Work, and therefore compared to the Wind. We hear the Wind blow, we feel it blow, we obſerve its mighty Force, and admire its ſtrange Effects; but we cannot deſcribe its Nature, nor declare its Original. Thus the Holy Spirit in a ſecret and hidden manner Quickens and Influences our Souls; the Effects of its Operations we ſenſibly diſcern, but how and after what manner he doth it, we know no more than how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child. Therefore is it called an hidden Life, *Colſ.* 3. 3. It is not only totally hidden from Carnal Men, but in part hidden and unknown to Spiritual Men, tho' they themſelves are the Subjects of it.

9 Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe things be? 10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things? 11 Verily verily I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we do know, and teſtifie that we have ſeen;

and ye receive not our witneſs. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

Obſerve here, 1. How *Nicodemus* conſulting only with Carnal Reaſon, perſiſts in his Apprehenſion concerning the Abſurdity and Impoſſibility of our Saviour's Notion of Regeneration, or being born of the Spirit. *Nicodemus ſaid, How can theſe things be?* *Learn hence*, That the great Cauſe of Men's Ignorance in the Matters of Salvation, and the Myſteries of Religion, is conſulting their own Natural Reaſon, without ſubmitting their Underſtandings to the Authority of Divine Revelation. Till they can give a Reaſon for every thing they believe, they cry out with *Nicodemus*, *How can theſe things be*? Whereas though we cannot give a Reaſon of all Goſpel Myſteries which we believe, we can give a good Reaſon why we believe them, namely, Becauſe God hath revealed them. No Man can be a Chriſtian who refuſes to ſubmit his Underſtanding to the Authority of Divine Revelation. *Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour reproves *Nicodemus* for, and upbraids him with his Ignorance, *ver.* 10. and his Infidelity, *ver.* 12. 1. His Ignorance is reproved. *Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Ignorance in any as to the Fundamentals of Religion, is ſhameful, though but a common Learner, much more in a Teacher and Maſter, and he a Teacher and Maſter in *Iſrael*; now art thou one of them, and yet knoweſt not theſe things: *Learn hence*, 1. That a Man may be very knowing himſelf and take upon him to Teach and Inſtruct others, and yet be very ignorant of the Nature, and much unacquainted with the Work of Regeneration upon his own Soul: A Man may be ſharp-ſighted, as the Eagles in the Myſteries of Art and Nature, and yet blind as a Mole in the things of God. 2. That Ignorance in the Fundamentals of Religion eſpecially, is very culpable and ſhameful in any that enjoy the Means of Knowledge, but eſpecially in thoſe that undertake to Inſtruct and Teach others. *Art thou a Teacher, thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things*? Next our Saviour upbraids him for his Infidelity, *v.* 12. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not.* This Infidelity received its Aggravation from the Facility and Perſpicuity of our Saviour's Doctrine. I have told you Earthly Things, that is, I have ſet forth Spiritual Things by Earthly Similitudes, not in a Style ſuitable to the Sublimity of their own Nature. Let the Miniſters of Chriſt Learn from their Maſter's Example, in all their Diſcourſes to accommodate themſelves and deſcend as low as may be to the Capacities of their People. *I have told you Earthly Things.* 2. That even Spiritual Things when they are ſhadowed forth by Earthly Similitudes, and brought down in the plaineſt manner to the Capacities of our People, yet are they very ſlow to underſtand them, and very backward to believe them. *I have told you of Earthly Things, and ye believe them not.*

13 And no man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Here our Saviour declares to *Nicodemus*, that none ever Aſcended up into Heaven to fetch down from thence the Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, and to Reveal the Way of Life and Salvation to Mankind by a Mediator, but only Chriſt himſelf, who though he took upon him the Humane Nature and was then Man upon Earth, yet was he at the ſame time in his Divine Nature actually in Heaven as God. This Text evidently proves two diſtinct Natures in Chriſt; namely, a Divine Nature as he was God, and an Humane Nature as Man. In his Humane Nature, he was then upon Earth, when he ſpake theſe Words; in his Divine Nature he was at that inſtant in Heaven. *Here Obſerve*, That the Son of God hath taken the Humane Nature into ſo cloſe and intimate an Union with his God-head, that what is proper to either Nature is aſcribed unto the Perſon of our Saviour. The ſame Perſon who was on Earth as the Son of Man, was then in Heaven as God, and yet but one Perſon ſtill. Lord! What Love haſt thou ſhewn to our Humane Nature, that under that Name thou aſcribeſt to thy ſelf what is proper to thy God-head. *The Son of Man which is in Heaven.* The *Socinians* produce this Text, to prove that Chriſt after his Baptiſm was taken up into Heaven, there to be made acquainted with the Will of God, to fit him for the Execution of his Prophetical Office here on Earth, and that for this Reaſon was ſaid to be *in the beginning with God*, as *Moſes* before him was taken up into the Mount, and Taught by God. But 1. We have not the leaſt word of any ſuch thing in Scripture, tho' we have a particular Account of our Saviour's Birth, Circumciſion, Baptiſm, Doctrine, Miracles, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, yea of ſmall things compared with this, as his Flight into *Egypt*, ſitting on a Pinacle of the Temple; yet not a word of this Aſſumption into Heaven. 2. There was no need of it, becauſe Almighty God could Reveal himſelf to Chriſt as well as to other Prophets, out of Heaven as well as in it. Beſides, Chriſt was fitted for his Prophetick Office, by the Unction of the Spirit he received here on Earth; and therefore this Aſcent was altogether needneſs.

14 And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.

Chriſt having Inſtructed *Nicodemus* in the Doctrine of Regeneration in the former Verſes, here Inſtructs him in the Death of the Meſſiah, and in the Neceſſity of Faith in his Death. *The Son of Man muſt be lifted up*; that is, upon his Croſs, and Dye; *that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh.* *Obſerve here*, 1. An Old Teſtament Type which our Saviour refers to, and that is the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, the Hiſtory of which is Recorded, *Num.* 21. 7, 8. *Obſ.* 2. The Anti-type, or the Subſtance of what that Type did ſhadow forth, the Brazen Serpent's lifting up upon the Pole, prefiguring Chriſt's Exaltation or lifting up upon his Croſs. *So muſt the Son of Man be lifted up.* *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is of the ſame Uſe and Office to a Sin-ſtung Soul, which the Brazen Serpent was of old to a Serpent-ſtung *Iſraelite*. *Here Obſerve*, Firſt, Wherein the Brazen Serpent and Chriſt do agree. And Secondly, Wherein they differ. They agree thus, In the *Occaſion* of their *Inſtitution*; they were both Appointed for Cure and Healing. Were they Serpent-ſtung? we are Sin-ſtung; Devil-bitten: Was the Sting of the Fiery Serpent inflaming? Was it ſpreading? Was it killing? So is Sin, which is the Venom and Poyſon of the Old Serpent. They agree in this, that they both muſt be *lifted up* before Cure could be obtained; the Brazen Serpent upon the Pole; Chriſt upon the Croſs: They both muſt be *lookt unto* before Cure could be obtained. The looking up of the *Iſraelite* was as neceſſary unto Healing as the lifting up of the Serpent. Faith is as neceſſary to Salvation, as the Death of Chriſt. The one rendred God Reconcilable unto Sinners, the other renders him actually Reconciled. Again, Did the Brazen Serpent Heal *All* that lookt upon it, and lookt up unto it, though all had not Eyes alike, ſome with a weak, others with a ſtronger Eye? In like manner doth Chriſt Juſtify and Save *All*, that with a ſincere Faith, though weak, do rely upon him for Salvation; *Whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh.* Further, The Brazen Serpent was effectual for *Iſrael*'s Cure after many Stingings: If after they were Healed they were Stung afreſh, and did look up to it, they were Healed by it. Thus the Merit of Chriſt's Death is not only Effectual for our Cure and Healing at our firſt Converſion, but after involuntary Relapſes and Backſlidings, if by Faith we have recourſe to the Blood of Chriſt, we ſhall find it Efficacious for our farther Benefit and future Healing. In a word, as the Brazen Serpent had the *Likeneſs* of a Serpent, the *Form*, the *Figure*, the *Name*, the *Colour* of a Serpent, but nothing of the Venom and Poyſon of the Serpent in it: Thus Chriſt did take upon him our Natures; but Sin, the Venom and Poyſon of our Natures, he had nothing to do with; though Chriſt loved Souls with an Invincible and Inſuperable Love, yet he would not Sin to ſave a Soul. This was the Similitude and Reſemblance between Chriſt and the Brazen Serpent. The Diſparity or Diſ-ſimilitude follows. The Brazen Serpent had no Power in it ſelf, or of it ſelf to Heal and Cure, but Chriſt has a Power inherent in himſelf for the Cure and Healing of all that do believe in him. Again, The Brazen Serpent cured only one particular Nation and People, *Jews* only; Chriſt is for the Healing of all Nations, and his Salvation is to the end of the Earth. Farther, The Brazen Serpent cured only one particular Diſeaſe, namely, the ſtingings of the fiery Serpents; had a Perſon been ſick of the Plague or Leproſy, he might have dy'd for all the Brazen Serpent: But Chriſt pardons all the Iniquities and heals all the Diſeaſes of the People, *Pſal.* 103. 3. Yet again, though the Brazen Serpent healed all that lookt up unto it, yet it gave an Eye to none to look up unto it: Whereas Chriſt doth not only heal thoſe that look up to him, but beſtows the Eye of Faith upon them to enable them to look unto him that they may be Saved. In a Word, the Brazen Serpent did not always retain its healing Vertue, but in time loſt it, and was it ſelf deſtroyed, 2 *Kings* 18. 4. But now the healing Vertue and Efficacy of Chriſt's Blood is Eternal. All Believers have and ſhall experience the Healing Power of our Redeemer's Death to the end of the World. *Laſtly,* The *Iſraelites* that were cured by looking up to the Brazen Serpent, dyed afterwards; ſome Diſtemper or other ſoon carried them to their Graves; but the Soul of the Believer that is healed by Chriſt, ſhall never Dye more; *Whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh, but have Eternal Life.*

16 For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.

Here Obſerve, 1. The Original Source and Fountain of Man's Salvation, and that is God's Free and Undeſerved, his Great and Wonderful Love. *God ſo loved the World;* he doth not ſay how much, but leaves it to our moſt ſolemn raiſed Thoughts; it is rather to be conceived, than declared; and admired rather than conceived. *God ſo loved the World. Hence Note,* That the Original Spring and firſt Cauſe of our Salvation is the free Favour and meer Love of God. A Love worthy of the God from whom it proceeds, even Love inexpreſſible and inconceivable. *Obſerve* 2. The greatneſs of the Gift by which God evidenced and demonſtrated the Greatneſs of his Love to a loſt World. *He gave his only begotten Son,* that is, he delivered him out from his own Boſom and everlaſting Embraces. Now this will appear a ſtupendious Expreſſion of God's Love, if we conſider that God gave *Him* who was not only the greateſt, but the deareſt Perſon to him in the World, even *his own Son.* That he gave him for Sinners; That he gave him for a World of Sinners; That he gave him up to become a Man for Sinners; That he gave him up to become a miſerable Man for Sinners; That he gave him up to be a Sacrifice for the Sin of Sinners. *Obſerve* 3. The gracious End for which God gave this great Gift of his Love to loſt Sinners. *That whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have Eternal Life.* Where *Note,* 1. The gentle and merciful Condition upon which Salvation depends, *Whoever believeth on Chriſt ſhall not periſh.* 2. The Infinite Goodneſs of God in propoſing ſuch a vaſt Reward unto us, upon our performing of this Condition; *He ſhall have everlaſting Life. Learn hence,* That Faith is the way which God hath appointed, and the Condition which God has required in order to our obtaining Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt. This Faith conſiſts in the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, That Jeſus is the Saviour of the World; In the Conſent of the Will to accept of Jeſus freely and voluntarily, deliberately, adviſedly and reſolvedly for our Saviour; in accepting the Merit of his Blood, and ſubmitting to the Authority of his Laws, it being in vain to expect Salvation by Chriſt, if we do not yield Subjection to him. He that thus *Believes in Chriſt,* that ſubmits himſelf to his Ruling Power, as well as commits himſelf to his Saving Mercy; *ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

17 For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved. 18 He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Obſerve here, That the Salvation of Sinners was the intentional End, and the Condemnation of them only the accidental Event of Chriſt's coming into the World. The Deſign of Chriſt's firſt coming into the World was to Save it. The End of his ſecond coming will be to Judge the Unbelieving Part of it. *Obſerve* Secondly, That Unbelief is the formal Cauſe of the Sinner's Damnation; it is that Sin which doth bind all other Sins upon the Sinner, and conſigns him over to Damnation; it is that Sin which doth not only procure Damnation, but no Damnation like it; which is intimated in the next Verſe.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather then light, becauſe their deeds were evil.

Obſerve here, 1. The Worth and Dignity of a choice and invaluable Priviledge declared, *Light is come into the World.* A Perſonal Light, *Chriſt;* a Doctrinal Light, *the Goſpel. Obſerve* 2. The Unworthineſs, Abuſe and great Indignity which the World through Infidelity, offers to this Benefit, they Reject it, and *love Darkneſs rather than Light. Obſerve* 3. The dreadful Sentence of Wrath which the Rejection of this Benefit, and the Abuſe of Chriſt, brings upon the Impenitent and Unbelieving World. It terminates in their full and final Condemnation. *This is the Condemnation,* that is, 'Tis a Juſt and Righteous Condemnation; 'tis an Inevitable and Unavoidable Condemnation; 'tis an Heightened and Aggravated; 'tis an Accelerated and Haſtened; an Irrevocable and Eternal Condemnation. *Learn hence,* That the greater and clearer the Light is under which the Ungenerate and Impenitent do live in this World; ſo much the heavier will their Condemnation and Miſery be in the World to come; if they wilfully and finally Reject it.

20 For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.

In theſe Words our Saviour acquaints us with the different Nature of Sin and Holineſs. It is the Nature of Sin, and the Property of Sinners to hate the Light, becauſe it diſcovers the Evil and Sinfulneſs of their Ways unto them, and Condemns them for them; as the *Ethiopians* are ſaid to curſe the Sun for its bright and hot ſhining; whereas holy and gracious Perſons, that walk uprightly, do love the Light; that is, They delight to have their Thoughts, Words and Actions, tryed by the Light of the Word, becauſe *they are wrought in God;* that is, performed as in the ſight of God, according to the Direction of the Word of God, and with a ſingle Eye and ſincere Aim at the Glory of God. *Learn hence,* 1. That the Word of God, or the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, it has all the Properties of a Great and True Light. It is of a pure and purifying Nature, it is manifeſtative, and of a diſcovering Nature. It has a piercing Power and penetrating Vertue, it enters the darkeſt Receſſes of the Soul, and detects the Errors of Mens Judgments, as well as diſcovers the Enormities of their Lives. *Learn* 2. That nothing is ſo hateful to, and hated by a Wicked Man, as the diſcovering and reproving Light of the Word of God; for at the ſame time that it diſcovers the Sin, it condemns the Sinner. *Learn* 3. That a truly gracious Perſon who acteth agreeable to the Will of God, is not afraid to examine his Actions by the Word of God; but deſires and delights that what he doth may be made manifeſt both to God and Man. *He that doeth Truth cometh to the Light,* and rejoyceth *that his Deeds may be made manifeſt,* becauſe *they are wrought in God.*

22 After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 And John alſo was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there: and they came and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet caſt into priſon.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having now finiſhed his Excellent Sermon, preached to *Nicodemus* at *Jeruſalem,* he departs thence with his Diſciples into the Country of *Judea* to make Proſelytes by the Ordinance of Baptiſm. Where *Note,* 1. Our Lord's unwearied Diligence in doing his Father's Work and Will. He goes from Place to Place, from City to Country, Preaching with, and Baptizing by his Diſciples, for *Jeſus himſelf Baptized not, but his Diſciples,* John 4. 2. *Note* 2. That the Enjoyment of Chriſt's bodily Preſence did not take away the Uſe of his own Ordinances. None are above Ordinances, till they come to Heaven. The Ordinance of Baptiſm is here Adminiſtred by the Diſciples, even in the Preſence of Chriſt himſelf. This is called, *the Baptiſm of Repentance,* of which Children as well as others were capable Subjects, becauſe Baptiſm doth not require Childrens Repentance at preſent, but engages them to Repentance for time to come: As Children that were Circumciſed were obliged to obſerve the whole Law, but could not perform it till they came to underſtand it. *Note* 3. How *John* did go on with his Work of Baptizing, tho' Chriſt and his Diſciples did eclipſe and obſcure him, though the People now flockt after Chriſt, *All Men vame unto him*, v. 26. yet *John* kept to his Duty. 'Tis the Duty of God's Miniſters to continue their Diligence and go on with their Work when God raiſes up others about them of greater Parts and better Succeſs. Oh, the admirable Humility of that Miniſter, who can ſay with *John the Baptiſt*, *Let another increaſe, tho' I decreaſe.*

25 Then there aroſe a queſtion between ſome of
Johns diſciples and the Jews, about purifying.
26 And they came unto John, and ſaid unto him,
Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom
thou bareſt witneſs, behold the ſame baptizeth, and
all men come to him.

Obſerve here, What a Spirit of Envy there was in *John*'s Diſciples againſt Chriſt, upon the account of the multitude of his Followers. *He that was with thee beyond Jordan, baptizeth, and all Men come unto him.* Where *Note*, 1. How meanly *John*'s Diſciples think and ſpeak of our Saviour, compared with *John* their Maſter. They do not ſo much as allow him a Name, or give him any Title, but *He that was with thee beyond Jordan, the ſame Baptizeth. Obſerve* 2. How they intimate, as if Chriſt had received all his Credit and Reputation from their Maſter *John*: *He to whom thou beareſt witneſs, Baptizeth*; as if they had ſaid, This Man whom the People flock after, neglecting thee and thy Diſciples, is much inferior to thee, for he came to thee, thou didſt not go to him; thou Baptizeſt him, he did not Baptize thee; thou gaveſt Teſtimony to him, he did not give Teſtimony to thee. Whence we *Obſerve*, What a bitter Spirit of Envy and Emulation there has always been amongſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel, even from the very firſt Plantation of the Goſpel, which cauſes them to look upon the exalted Parts and Gifts of others, as a diminution and debaſing of their own; but why ſhould the proſpering of the Work of God in one Miniſter's Hand, be matter of Repining unto others? ſhall not God Honour what Inſtruments he pleaſeth? and will he not Reward all his Faithful Labourers, according to their Sincerity, not according to their Succeſs?

27 John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive
nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
28 Ye your ſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I
am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him.
29 He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom:
but the friend of the bridegroom, which ſtandeth
and heareth him, rejoyceth greatly, becauſe of the
bridegrooms voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.
30 He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.
31 He that cometh from above, is above all:
he that is of the earth, is earthly, and ſpeaketh of
the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above
all.

Obſerve here, How holily and wiſely *John the Baptiſt* corrects the Envy and Jealouſy of his own Diſciples, and endeavours to root out all Prejudice out of their Minds againſt Chriſt; in order to which he ſhews them a five-fold Difference betwixt Chriſt and himſelf. 1. He tells them Chriſt was the Maſter, *John* but his Miniſter; and that he had told them ſo from the beginning; *Ye your ſelves bear me witneſs that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt: but ſent before him.* The Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt think it Honour enough to be Servants to him, and would not have their Followers attribute the leaſt part of that Honour and Glory to him, which is due to Jeſus Chriſt. 2. *John* acquaints his Diſciples that Chriſt was the Bridegroom of his Church, to whom the Chriſtian Church was to be ſolemnly Eſpouſed and Married; and that he had Honour enough in being one of the Bridegroom's Friends and Servants; and accordingly, inſtead of envying, he rejoyced at the Succeſs which the Bridegroom had, and took great pleaſure in it. *Learn* 1. That the Relation betwixt Chriſt and his Church, is a Conjugal Relation, a Relation of Marriage; yet ſet forth under the Name of Bride and Bridegroom, rather than under the Notion of a compleat Marriage, becauſe it is but begun here, and to be conſummate in Heaven; and alſo to ſhew that Chriſt's and his Peoples Affections are as warm and freſh, as ſtrong and vehement each towards other, as the Affections of eſpouſed or newly married Perſons are to one another, *Iſa.* 62. 5. *As the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoyce over thee. Learn* 2. It is Honour ſufficient to the Miniſters of Chriſt, that they as Friends of the Bridegroom are Imployed by him to farther the Marriage-Relation betwixt him and his Spouſe. Their Office is to woe for Chriſt, to commend his Perſon, and to invite all Perſons to accept of him for their Head and Husband, 2 *Cor.* 11. 1. *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt. Learn* 3. That there is no greater Joy to the Miniſters of Chriſt, than to ſee themſelves honoured by him, as his Inſtruments in preparing a People for Chriſt, and happily uniting them unto him. Oh! how little do our People know, and leſs conſider, how much of the Comfort of their poor Miniſters Lives lye at their Mercy: We live as we ſee them ſtand faſt in the Lord: We dye as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their Sins. This was the ſecond Difference which *John* acquaints his Diſciples was found betwixt Chriſt and himſelf. The third follows, *v.* 30. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.* He muſt increaſe; that is, in Honour and Dignity, in Eſteem and Reputation, in Diſcovery and Manifeſtation. He ſhall ſhine forth as the Riſing Sun, and I muſt diſappear like the Morning-Star. Not that *John*'s Light was diminiſhed, but by a greater Light obſcured only: As all the Stars diſappear at the appearance of the Sun. Yet obſerve what matter of Joy it was to *John* to ſee himſelf out-ſhined by Chriſt: Let him increaſe, though I decreaſe. That Miniſter has true Light in himſelf, that can rejoyce when he is out-ſhined by others: Who is content to be abaſed and obſcured, if he may but ſee Chriſt Dignified and Exalted in the Lives of his People, whoever the Perſon is, whom God honours as his Inſtrument in that Service. The fourth Difference wherein Chriſt excels *John* and all his Miniſters, is in the Divine Original of his Perſon, *v.* 31. *He that cometh from above, is above all*, ſays *John*. Now Chriſt is from above, his Original is from Heaven; I am from the Earth, (though I had my Commiſſion from Heaven) and accordingly my Words and Actions are Earthly. My Maſter therefore infinitely ſurpaſſeth and excels me in the Dignity of his Perſon, and in the Sublimity of his Knowledge. From the whole, *Note*, How much it is the Deſire and Endeavour of every Goſpel-Miniſter to magnify Jeſus Chriſt, to diſplay his glorious Excellencies and Perfections before the People, that they may Reverence his Perſon, Revere his Authority, and Reſpect his Laws. This was the Care of the Holy Baptiſt here, and it will be the Endeavour of every Faithful Miniſter of Chriſt that ſucceeds *John* to the End of the World.

32 And what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth;
and no man receiveth his teſtimony: 33 He
that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal,
that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath ſent
ſpeaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the
ſpirit by meaſure unto him.

Obſerve, 1. Another great Difference which *John* the Baptiſt teacheth his Diſciples to put betwixt his Teſtimony and Chriſt: To the intent that he might remove the Prejudice which was upon the Diſciples Mind againſt the Meſſiah, he ſhews them that his own Teſtimony (which they ſo much admired) was by Revelation only; Chriſt's by immediate Intuition. *John* teſtified only what he had received; but Chriſt what he had ſeen; lying in the Boſom of the Father. *What he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth. Learn hence*, That it is Chriſt's (the Great Prophet of his Church) peculiar Prerogative, to have the Knowledge of Divine Truths immediately from the Father, by ſpecial Communication; and that all others receive their Knowledge from him by gracious Illumination only. *Obſerve* 2. How ſadly and ſorrowfully the Holy Baptiſt reſents it, that Chriſt's Teſtimony was no better received and entertained by the World. *He teſtifieth, but no Man receiveth his Teſtimony. John's* Diſciples murmured, *that all Men* *came unto Chriſt*, v. 26. but *John* mourns that there came no more, and complains, That none, that is, very few *received his Teſtimony.* *Thence Learn*, That it ought and will be matter of great Regret and Sorrow to all the Friends of Jeſus Chriſt, but eſpecially to his Faithful Miniſters and Servants, that his Doctrine is ſo ill received and entertained in the World. It greatly affects and grievouſly afflicts them, that when they *Teſtify of Chriſt, no Man*, that is, comparatively, very few Men, *receive their Teſtimony.* *Obſerve*, 3. The Eulogy and high Commendation given of all true Believers, *They receive Chriſt's Teſtimony*, and thereby *ſet to their Seal that God is True*; that is, Hath ſubſcribed to, and ratified the Truth of God, that God in all his Promiſes of the Meſſiah, under the *Old Teſtament*, is Faithful and True. *Learn hence*, The great Honour that God puts upon the Faith of Believers: As Unbelief defames God and makes him a Lyer, ſo Faith gives Teſtimony to the Truth of God, and ſetteth its Seal that God is True; *He that receiveth his Teſtimony, hath ſet to his Seal that God is True.* *Obſerve*, 4. The Illuſtrious Character which the holy Baptiſt gives of Chriſt his Maſter; He is the Perſon *whom God hath ſent*, and unto whom *God giveth not his Spirit by meaſure.* *He whom God hath ſent*, that is Immediately and Extraordinarily from Heaven; not as the Prophets and Apoſtles were ſent, but in a way peculiar to himſelf: Having Authority for Speaking, not only from God, but as being God himſelf. And accordingly it is added, that *God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*; that is, The Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit were poured forth upon Chriſt in a meaſure far above and beyond all finite Creatures: There being a double Difference betwixt Chriſt's fulneſs of the Spirit, and all other Perſons whatſoever. 1. In the Meaſure of it: God did not give out, the Spirit to Chriſt ſparingly, and with limitation, as he did to the former Prophets and *John* the Baptiſt, in proportion to what their Offices required, but he was Anointed more plentifully and abundantly with the Holy Spirit above and beyond his Fellows. 2. In the manner of its Working. The holy Prophets that were filled with the Spirit (according to their Meaſures) yet could not do or declare all Things, nor act upon all Occaſions, but ſometimes the Spirit reſtrained them, and ſometimes departed from them. But Chriſt had no limits put upon the Vigor of his Spirit, but his own Will; therefore could Work what and when he pleaſed. *Learn from hence*, That Chriſt had an abundant Fitneſs from God for the Diſcharge of his Office, and an abundant Fulneſs for his People. God did not meaſure to him a certain Quantity and Proportion of the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit, but poured it forth upon him without meaſure.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

The Father loveth the Son from Eternity, as he was his Son by Eternal Generation; and he loved him as Mediator by ſpecial Conſtitution; he loves him as the brightneſs of his own Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, with an Eſſential, Natural, and Neceſſary Love. And he loves him as Mediator, for undertaking our Cauſe and interpoſing for our Peace. *Learn hence*, That God the Father had a ſpecial Love and Affection to Chriſt, not only in regard of his Eternal Sonſhip, but with reſpect to his Office of Mediatorſhip: *The Father loveth the Son.* It follows, *He hath given all things into his Hand*; that is, He hath intruſted him with all things neceſſary to our Salvation. Lord! what a Priviledge is this, that our Happineſs is in Chriſt's Hand, not in our own, without his. Oh, wonderful Goodneſs, to put our Concerns into ſure Hands, which were loſt by the weak Hands of *Adam*.

36 He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Learn, 1. That though all Power be given to Chriſt, to diſpence Grace here and Glory hereafter, yet none muſt expect to enjoy it but upon Condition of Believing in him, and of Obeying him: for the Original Word ſignifies both. No Faith is acceptable to Chriſt, nor available to our Salvation, but that which is the Parent and Principle of Obedience. *Learn*, 2. That final Unbelief renders a Man infallibly an Object of the Eternal Wrath of God; *He that believeth not the Son, the Wrath of God abideth on him.* The Unbeliever now lies under the Sentence of God's Wrath, hereafter he ſhall lie under the full and final Execution of it. Lord how ſad is it to be here in a State of Condemnation! But how intollerable will it be in Hell to continue Eternally under the Power of Condemnation? To lie for ever under in that myſterious Fire of Hell, whoſe ſtrange property is always to Torture, but never to Kill; or always to Kill, but never to Conſume. For after millions of Years are expired, ſtill 'tis a Wrath to come; and tho' the Unbeliever has felt and endured never ſo much, yet ſtill *the Wrath of God abideth on him.* Every Word carries Dread and Terror with it. The *Wrath*, not the Anger, and the Wrath of *God*, not of Man, at whoſe Rebukes the Devils Tremble. And this Wrath of God, not flaſhes out like Lightning, but *abides*, dwells and ſticks faſt *upon him*, that is, on his Perſon, the whole Man Soul and Body.

CHAP. IV.

WHen therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized mo diſciples then John, 2 (Though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but his diſciples) He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

The former part of this Chapter acquaints us with our Saviour's removal from *Judea* into *Galilee*: The occaſion of it was this: Chriſt hearing that *John* was caſt into Priſon, and underſtanding how the *Phariſees* were inraged at the increaſing of the Number of his Diſciples; to decline their Fury, and to prevent Danger to himſelf, he leaves *Judea* and departs into *Galilee*, for his own Preſervation. *Hence Learn*, That when the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt do meet with eminent Succeſs in their Maſter's Service, they muſt expect to meet with a mighty ſhock of Malice and Envy from Satan and his wicked Inſtruments. Chriſt himſelf experienced it; let his Miniſters expect it and prepare for it. 2. That it is neither unlawful nor unbecoming for the Miniſters of Chriſt to flee when Perſecution threatens them: Their Lord and Maſter having fled before them: And commanded alſo, *When they Perſecute in one City, to flee into another.*

4 And he muſt needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his ſon Joſeph. 6 Now Jacobs well was there. Jeſus therefore being wearied with his Journey, ſat thus on the well: and it was about the ſixth hour.

Here Obſerve, 1. How wonderfully the Wiſdom of God over-rules the Malice of Men for his own Glory, and the Good of others. The Malice of the *Phariſees* in *Judea*, drives Chriſt into *Galilee*, and in his Paſſage through *Samaria*, the Firſt Fruits of the *Gentiles* are Called; and, particularly the Woman of *Samaria*. *Obſerve*, 2. How in every Step of Chriſt's way he was doing good to the Souls of Men. In his Paſſage through *Samaria* into *Galilee*, a poor Woman is brought to know him to be the True Meſſias. *Obſerve*, 3. Our Holy Lord in his Journeying from Place to Place, did travel uſually on Foot; and the weakneſs of his Body upon travelling, ſhews him to be truly and really Man, *and in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted.* Our Bleſſed Lord did not only take upon him our Nature, but the Infirmities of our Nature alſo.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jeſus ſaith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 For his diſciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat. 9 Then ſaith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou being a Jew, askeſt drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Obſerve here, 1. How all our Motions and Actions are under the Direction and Government of God, and how Divine Providence doth ſometimes diſpoſe of ſmall Matters to become Occaſions of great Good. This poor Woman's coming to the Well to draw Water, became the means of her Converſion. *Obſerve*, 2. Chriſt ſpeaks to, and ſeeks after this poor Woman, before ſhe takes any Notice of him; God is found of thoſe that ſeek him not, and makes himſelf manifeſt to them that inquire not after him. *Jeſus ſaid unto her, Give me to Drink. Obſerve,* 3. The great Poverty of our Lord's outward Condition, he wanted a draught of Water for his Refreſhment, and a meals Meat now at Dinner-time to refreſh his wearied Nature. Oh! what Contempt did Chriſt caſt upon the World when he was here in it? He would not honour it ſo far as to keep any Part of it in his own Hand. Yet *Obſerve,* 4. That though Chriſt had neither Houſe nor Land, nor Money of his own, yet he lived not by Begging, or upon meer Alms. *The Diſciples were gone into the City to buy,* not to *beg Meat.* For there was a Bag which required a Bearer, *John* 12. 6. And our Saviour's Friends and Followers ſupplied him with Money for his neceſſary Occaſions. *His Diſciples were gone to buy Bread. Obſerve Laſtly,* How bitter is the Enmity which differences in Religion and diverſity of Opinions do occaſion? They do not only alienate Affections, but even violate the Bonds of Civil Society and common Converſation. *The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans,* would neither eat nor drink with them.

10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldſt have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The *Samaritan* Woman had refuſed Chriſt a draught of Water in the former Verſe, he offers her the Water of Life in this Verſe. Oh, how kindly doth Chriſt deal with thoſe that dealt unkindly with him? *If thou kneweſt the Gift of God,* &c. *Here Obſerve,* 1. The Mercy which Chriſt had for, and was ſo deſirous to beſtow upon this poor Woman; It was the Gift of God; that is, Himſelf, his Holy Spirit, in the Sanctifying Gifts, and Saving Graces of it. All which are compared to Water in regard of their Effects and Operations, which are to purify the Unclean, and to ſatisfy the Thirſty. *Obſerve,* 2. The way and courſe which this Woman and every loſt Sinner ought to take, in order to the obtaining of this ineſtimable Gift; and that is, by asking of it. *Thou wouldſt have asked, and he would have given thee living Water. Learn hence,* That Chriſt himſelf, his Holy Spirit, with all the Sanctifying Graces of it, muſt be earneſtly ſought of God; and ſuch as do unfeignedly ſeek them, ſhall certainly obtain them. *Obſerve,* 3. The true Cauſe and Reaſon aſſigned, why Sinners ask not for, and ſeek not after Jeſus Chriſt, and the Graces of the Holy Spirit; and that is Ignorance of the worth and want of them. *If thou kneweſt the Gift of God, thou wouldſt have asked. Learn hence,* That it is Ignorance of the worth of Chriſt, and Inſenſibleneſs of the want of him, that makes Perſons ſo indifferent in their Deſires after him, and ſo remiſs in their Endeavours for the obtaining of him. Oh Sinner! didſt thou but know who and what Chriſt is, that is offered to you, did you but ſee his Beauty, Fulneſs, and Suitableneſs, and were you but ſenſible of the Worth and Want of him; all the World could not keep you from him: You would break through all Difficulties and Dangers, through all Sufferings and Reproaches, to come unto the Enjoyment of Him.

11 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater then our father Jacob, which gave us this well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Whoſoever drinketh of this water ſhall thirſt again: 14 But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt: but the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

Obſerve here, 1. How Ignorant Perſons are of Spiritual Things, till Enlightned by the Holy Spirit of God. This poor Woman's Queſtion, *Whence haſt thou that living Water?* looks much like that of *Nicodemus, John* 3. 9. *How can theſe things be?* A Natural Perſon cannot perceive the Mind of Chriſt when ſpeaking to them about Spiritual Things. Spiritual Objects muſt have a Spiritual Eye to diſcern and behold them, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The Natural Man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit. Obſerve,* 2. With what great Humility and Condeſcention our Holy Lord treats this poor Woman, pitying her Ignorance, and pardoning her Infidelity: He tells her, That the Water of that Well which ſhe was about to draw, could not give an abiding Satisfaction; but the Thirſt quenched for the preſent, would certainly return again: But he that ſhould drink of the Water which he had to give, that is, Be made partaker of the Graces of his Spirit, ſhall find ſuch refreſhing Satisfaction therefrom, that all inordinate Deſires after earthly things will be quenched and extinguiſhed, and will be like a Well of Water ſpringing up till they come to Eternal Glory. *Learn hence,* 1. That as the Body of Man is ſubject to natural, ſo is the Soul of Man ſubject to a ſpiritual kind of Thirſt. 2. That no Creature Comfort, or Earthly Enjoyment can quench this Thirſt, which the Soul of Man is ſubject unto. 3. That the Spirit of Grace (which our Saviour here calls *the Water of Life*) is able fully and perfectly to quench this Thirſt of the Soul: And where it is once ſavingly received, ſhall never be totally or finally loſt. *It ſhall be in him a Well of Water ſpringing up into Everlaſting Life,* that is, The Graces of the Spirit ſhall be in Believers as permanent Habits, as Fixed Principles that ſhall not decay. Hence St. *Peter* calls it Incorruptible Seed which liveth and abideth for ever, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23.

15 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, give me this water that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Go, call thy husband and come hither. 17 The woman anſwered and ſaid, I have no husband. Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no husband: 18 For thou haſt had five husbands, and he whom thou now haſt is not thy husband: in that ſaidſt thou truly.

Theſe Words ſet forth unto us, 1. What manner of Perſon this Woman was, whoſe Converſion Chriſt ſought ſo induſtriouſly after. 2. The Means he uſed in order to that End. *Obſerve,* 1. What manner of Perſon this Woman was; beſides, that ſhe was an Idolater, as being a *Samaritan,* ſhe was alſo an Adultereſs, and lived now in the Sin of Uncleanneſs with one that was not her Husband, after ſhe had had five Husbands before. Whence we *Learn,* That the Ice of Old-age will not quench the Fire of Luſt, *Concupiſcentia non ſeneſcit;* ſuch is the Pollution of our Nature, that Luſt will be inſatiable if Grace doth not reſtrain it. This Woman, after five Marriages, yet lives in the Sin of Uncleanneſs. *Obſerve,* 2. The Way and Manner our Lord takes, the Method and Means our Lord uſes in order to her Converſion. 1. He deals very tenderly and gently with her; he uſes no roughneſs or tartneſs of Speech with her; he doth not call her Whore, nor upbraid her for her Impudent Lewdneſs, in living with a Man that was none of her Husband, but only gives her to underſtand that he knew the Sin ſhe lived in; yet this he did likewiſe with all imaginable privacy, whilſt his Diſciples were away, and no body by but they two only. *Hence Learn,* 1. That private Sins are not to be reproved publickly. 2. That in reproving Sin, all ſharpneſs and bitterneſs of Expreſſion muſt be avoided: The Pill of Reproof muſt be wrapt up in Sugar; for if they to whom it is given taſte the bitterneſs of Gall and Paſſion mixt with it, they will certainly ſpit it out before, it may be upon our Faces. Our Lord's Practice here Inſtructs us, That Sin is to be ſo reproved, as that the Credit and Eſtimation of the Sinner may be preſerved as much as may be. *Note,* 2. That as Chriſt dealt with this Woman tenderly, and gently, ſo he diſcovers her Sin to her particularly, and ſets her ſecret Sin before the Face of her Conſcience diſtinctly. If ever the Miniſtry of the Word works upon the Minds of Men to their Converſion, it muſt be by a particular and cloſe Application of the Word to every Man's Conſcience. Generals will not affect. *Note,* 3. What the particular Sin is which Chriſt charges home upon the Conſcience of this Woman; it is the Sin of Uncleanneſs, that the Man ſhe kept with, was not her Husband. *Learn thence,* That amongſt all Sins, the Sin of Uncleanneſs will lie heavieſt upon the Conſcience, and wound the Soul moſt deeply, when the Spirit of God, once effectually diſcovers it, and charges it home upon the Conſcience. For there is no Sin ſo directly oppoſite to Sanctifycation and Holineſs as this Sin: No Sin that quenches the Holy Spirit of God like this.

19 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worſhipped

in this mountain; and ye ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.

In theſe Verſes the Evangeliſt declares a threefold Effect and Fruit of the Grace of Converſion that appeared in this Woman. 1. She neither deny'd, nor excuſed, nor extenuated this Sin which Chriſt had charged her with; but tacitly owns, and implicitly confeſſes it. 2. She doth not only own and confeſs what ſhe was charged with, but ſhe doth profeſs Reverence to our Saviour's Perſon, and pays Honour to him as an extraordinary Prophet, *Sir, I perceive that thou art a Prophet.* 3. She deſireth Inſtruction and Reſolution from him concerning the Worſhip and Service of the True God, how ſhe might ſeek him, and where ſhe might ſerve him moſt acceptably; whether at *Jeruſalem*, or upon Mount *Gerizim*: *Our Fathers worſhipped in this Mountain; but ye ſay, Jeruſalem is the place where Men ought to worſhip. Where Obſerve,* How ready and forward Perſons of a falſe Religion are to aſcribe too much to Antiquity, and to the Example and Cuſtom of their Fore-fathers. Whereas it is not the continuance of a thouſand or two thouſand Years that can make any thing truly ancient in Religion, except it has been from the beginning: Nothing is truly Ancient in Matters of Religion, but that which can derive its Original from him that is truly called the *Ancient of Days.*

21 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem worſhip the Father. 22 Ye worſhip ye know not what: we know what we worſhip: for ſalvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.

Here we have our Saviour's Anſwer to the foregoing Queſtion, which conſiſts of two parts; 1. Concerning the Place of Worſhip. 2. Concerning the Worſhip it ſelf. As to the Place of Worſhip, our Saviour tells her, That though the *Jews* had heretofore by Warrant of God's Word regularly Worſhipped at *Jeruſalem*, and the *Samaritans* ſuperſtitiouſly Worſhipped at Mount *Gerizim*, yet the Hour was coming, namely, at his Death, when all difference of Places for God's Worſhip ſhould be taken away, and therefore ſhe need not trouble her ſelf about the Place of God's Worſhip, to know whether of the two Places were holier, and the better to ſerve God in; for e're long the Service of God ſhould not be confined more to one Place than another. *Hence Learn,* That ſince the Death of Chriſt, the Religious Difference of Places is taken away, and the Worſhip of God not confined to any one particular Place or Nation. 2. Our Bleſſed Saviour reſolves her concerning the Worſhip it ſelf, namely, That the Ceremonial Worſhip, which the *Jews* and *Samaritans* uſed, ſhould ſhortly be aboliſhed, and inſtead thereof a more Spiritual Form of Worſhip ſhould be eſtabliſhed, more ſuitable to the Spiritual Nature of the Great and Holy God, and containing in it the Truth and Subſtance of all that which the Jewiſh Ceremonies prefigured and ſhadowed forth. *Learn hence,* That the true Worſhip of God under the Goſpel doth not conſiſt in the external Pomp of any outward Ceremonies, but is Spiritual and Subſtantial: No Worſhip is acceptable to him, that is the Father of Spirits, but that which is truly Spiritual.

24 God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.

God is a Spirit; that is, He hath no Body nor bodily Parts: He is not a bare Spiritual Subſtance, but a Pure and Perfect Spirit, and therefore his Worſhippers *muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth*: Where Spirit is oppoſed to the Legal Ceremonies, and Truth to the Jewiſh Rites, not to Hypocritical Services; for the old Patriarchs did Worſhip God in *Spirit* and in *Truth*. As Truth is taken for *Sincerity*, they ſerved him with a ſincere Conſcience, and with a ſingle Heart. But our Saviour's Buſineſs is to ſhew, That a Worſhip without Legal Rites and Jewiſh Ceremonies, is proper to the Times of the Goſpel. In the Words, *Obſerve*, 1. The Nature of God declared. *God is a Spirit.* 2. The Duty of Man inferred; therefore *they that Worſhip him, muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* From the whole *Note*, 1. That God is a pure *Spiritual Being*. When bodily Parts, Hands and Eyes, &c. are aſcribed to him, it is only in Condeſcention to our weakneſs, and to ſignifie thoſe Acts in God which ſuch Members do perform in us. *Note*, 2. That the Worſhip due from the Creature to God is Spiritual Worſhip, and ought to be Spiritually performed, that is, We muſt Worſhip him from Spiritual Principles, ſincere Love, and filial Reverence, for Spiritual Ends, that we may pleaſe him and promote his Glory; and after a Spiritual manner, with the whole Heart, Soul and Mind, and with a fervency of Spirit. We muſt have awful Apprehenſions of him ſuitable to the Nature of his Being: But above all, muſt endeavour to reſemble him. Then is God beſt Worſhipped by us when we are moſt like to him. *The Jewiſh Ceremonial Worſhip* was aboliſhed to promote the Spirituality of Divine Worſhip, yet muſt not this be ſo underſtood, as if God rejected bodily Worſhip, becauſe he requires Spiritual under the Goſpel; for Jeſus Chriſt the moſt Spiritual Worſhipper, worſhipped God with his Body. Beſides, God has appointed ſome Parts of Worſhip, which cannot be performed without the Body, as Sacraments. In a Word, God has created the Body as well as the Soul, Chriſt hath redeemed the Body as well as the Soul, and he will glorify the Body as well as the Soul, therefore it is our Duty to Worſhip and Glorify God, with our Bodies and with our Spirits which are his.

25 The woman ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh which is called Chtiſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jeſus ſaith unto her, I that ſpeak unto thee am he.

Obſerve here, 1. What a general expectation there was in the Minds of all Perſons (at the time of our Saviour's Appearing) of one whom the *Jews* called the *Meſſiah. I know that Meſſiah cometh.* This Woman, though a *Samaritan*, yet knew that the Meſſiah ſhould come, and that he was now expected. *Obſerve*, 2. What the Work and Office of the Meſſias was apprehended and believed to be, namely, to Reveal the whole Mind and Will of God to a loſt World. *When the Meſſias is come, he will tell us all things. Learn hence,* That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed and true Meſſias, being called and appointed by God to be the great Prophet of his Church, hath fully and perfectly revealed all things, needful to be known for our Salvation, *John* 15. 15. *All things that I have heard of the Father, I have made known unto you. Obſerve Laſtly,* How freely and fully Chriſt reveals himſelf to this poor Woman; he tells her plainly, that he was the Meſſias. When the *Jews* asked him, *John* 10. 24. *If thou be the Chriſt tell us plainly*, Chriſt did not in plain Terms tell them who he was. Nay, when *John Baptiſt* ſent two of his Diſciples to ask him whether he were *He that ſhould come*, he gave them no direct Anſwer: Yet behold, he makes himſelf plainly known to this poor Woman, he diſcerning her Humility and great Simplicity, that ſhe was willing to be Inſtructed by him, and did not come to him as the *Jews* and *Phariſees* did, captiouſly with a deſign to entangle and enſnare him. *Hence Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt delights to Reveal himſelf and make known his Mind and Will to ſuch as with an humble Mind, and an honeſt ſimplicity of Heart do deſire to know him, and underſtand their Duty to him.

27 And upon this came his diſciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man ſaid, What ſeekeſt thou? or, Why talkeſt thou with her? 28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and ſaith to the men, 29 Come, ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Providence of God ſo ordered and diſpoſed of things, that the Diſciples did not return to Chriſt, till he had finiſhed his Diſcourſe with this poor Woman. An humbled Sinner may meet with ſuch Satisfaction and ſweet Refreſhment in Chriſt's Company, that the preſence even of Diſciples themſelves (the beſt and holieſt of Saints) may be lookt upon as injurious to it, and an interruption of it. This poor Woman had ſo ſweet a time with Chriſt, that an end being put to the Conference by the coming of the Diſciples, might be matter of Grief and Reſentment to her: Yet the Providence of God ſo ordered, that the Diſciples did not come to break off the Conference till Chriſt had made himſelf known as the Meſſias to this poor Woman. *Obſ.* 2. The Carriage and Behaviour of the Diſciples upon their return to Chriſt, finding him Preaching a Sermon to a ſingle Woman, they marvelled, but yet were ſilent. *Learn*, 1. That the Humility and Condeſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in treating poor penitent and humbled Sinners is a matter of wonder and admiration, even to Diſciples themſelves. Oh, bleſſed Saviour! there was more Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion, more Love and Compaſſion, more Meekneſs and Humility in thy ſelf alone, than in all thy Diſciples and Followers put together. *Yet Obſ.* 2. Tho' they marvelled, they were ſilent, *No Man ſaid, Why talkeſt thou with her? Thence Note*, That ſuch Reverence is due to Chriſt in all his Diſpenſations and Actions, that when we can ſee no reaſon for what he doth, it is not for us to inquire, much leſs to quarrel. But we muſt awfully admire what we cannot comprehend. *Obſerve*, 3. The Behaviour of this Woman after the Conference was over, ſhe leaves her Water-pot, and makes haſt to invite and call her Neighbours to Chriſt, whoſe Grace and Kindneſs ſhe had experienced. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as truly know Chriſt, have taſted Sweetneſs in him, and derived Comfort and Satisfaction from him, will be forward to invite, and induſtrious to draw others to a ſaving Acquaintance with him. *Come* with me, *and ſee a Man that told me all that ever I did, is not this the Chriſt? Learn farther*, From the Woman's leaving her Water-pot behind her and haſtening to the City, That when once a Soul has taſted the Sweetneſs and Excellency that is in Jeſus Chriſt, thoſe things that were highly eſteemed before, will be little regarded then. The poor Woman came to draw Water, and thought much and ſpake much of the Water of that Well which was before her; but meeting with Jeſus Chriſt, and taſting of his Grace, ſhe forgets both Water and Water-pot, and away ſhe goes to fetch in all her Acquaintance to Chriſt.

31 In the mean while his diſciples prayed him, ſaying, Maſter, eat. 32 But he ſaid unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33 Therefore ſaid the diſciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? 34 Jeſus ſaith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work.

Obſerve here, The fit and ſeaſonable Motion which our Saviour's Diſciples make to him? *Maſter eat*, *Learn from thence*, That tho' a Perſon's chief Care ſhould be for his own Soul, and for improving all Opportunities for doing good to the Souls of others, yet the Bodies of Men muſt not be neglected, but ſupported by Meat and Drink; eſpecially theirs whoſe Health and Strength may be of greater Uſe and Service to God and his Church. The Body is the Servant of the Soul, the Inſtrument whereby it worketh; and therefore to neglect the Body is to diſable and unfit the Soul for Service, to hinder the Functions and Operations of it. The Sixth Commandment which forbids us to kill, requires us to uſe all Means for the preſervation of Life both in our ſelves and others. *Obſerve next*, Our Saviour's Anſwer to the Diſciples Motion; *Maſter, eat*, ſays they: *I have Meat to eat that ye know not of*, ſays he, *for my Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me.* Not that our Saviour did not want Meat at this time, for he was both hungry and thirſty, as appears by his asking Water of the Woman to drink, and by his ſending his Diſciples into the City to buy Meat; But our Lord was more intent upon doing his Father's Work, than upon ſatisfying his own Hunger. Chriſt hungred more after an Opportunity of doing good to the Souls of Men, than he did after Meat and Drink to ſatisfie his Hunger. Lord! Let us thy Miniſters learn of Thee to prefer the Spiritual Welfare of our People, before any Temporal Advantages whatſoever.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harveſt? Behold, I ſay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harveſt. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoyce together. 37 And therein is that ſaying true, One ſoweth and another reapeth. 38 I ſent you to reap that whereon you beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entred into their labours.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having in the former Verſes given a moſt plain and evident Demonſtration of his fervent deſire to bring Souls home unto God, doth in theſe Verſes labour to ſtir up and kindle the like Affections in his Diſciples, and this he doth by three very effectual Arguments. The firſt Argument is drawn from the Ripeneſs of the People, and their willingneſs to hear, and their Readineſs to be reaped and gathered by the Goſpel, (whereof there was a preſent Inſtance in the *Samaritans*, who were now coming forth in multitudes to Chriſt) which Oportunity was therefore to be improved, *Lift up your Eyes and look on the Fields, for they are white already for Harveſt. Learn hence*, That as a People is ſometimes Ripe for the Miniſtry of the Word, as Corn is ripe and ready for the Reaper's Hand, ſo it is the Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt to lay hold upon ſuch Opportunities with as much deſire and delight as the Harveſt-man doth upon a Reaping Seaſon. The ſecond Argument to ſtir up the Diſciples diligence in Preaching the Goſpel, is drawn from the great Reward they ſhould receive for this their Work. *He that Reapeth receiveth Wages.* The Harveſt-man's Wages is double to what other Labourers receive. The Miniſters of God ſhall receive good Wages at his Hand, how ill ſoever they are requited and rewarded by an unkind World. And as a farther Encouragement, it follows, *He that Soweth and he that Reapeth ſhall rejoyce together*; that is, The Prophets who took much Pains in Sowing the Seed of the Goſpel, and particularly *John the Baptiſt*, and you my Apoſtles which ſucceed them and Reap the Fruit of what they did Sow, ſhall have the ſame Reward in Glory and rejoyce together. *Learn hence*, That not only the Succeſsful but the Faithful Labourer in God's Harveſt, ſhall be rewarded: Not only thoſe which ſee the Fruit of their Miniſtry in the Converſion of Sinners, but ſuch as are Faithful Seeds-men. Though the Seed does not come up till we are in our Graves, nay though it rots under the Clods, and does not come up at all, yet ſhall the Faithful Seeds-man be rewarded according to his Labour, not according to his Succeſs. The third Argument to quicken the Diſciples Diligence, is drawn from the Eaſineſs and Facility of that Labour which God required of them; *Others have laboured and ye are entred into their Labours*; that is, The Prophets and *John the Baptiſt* have prepared the Ground and ſown the Seed, and made ready a People for the Lord, and now you enter into their Labours, performing and gathering them into a Goſpel-Church; yet this muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively: Not as if the Prophets reaped nothing, Converted none; but that their Fruit was ſmall in compariſon of the Succeſs which the Apoſtles found. Nor is it to be underſtood as if the Apoſtles took no Pains at all, but that the Prophets greater Pains rendred the Apoſtles Labours Succeſsful, who took leſs Pains. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Wiſdom of God ſees it fit that all his Servants in the Work of the Miniſtry do not meet with the ſame Difficulties, nor enjoy the ſame Succeſs. Some are laborious Sowers, others are joyful Reapers; ſome labour all their Days with little viſible Succeſs, others bring in many to Chriſt, perhaps by a ſingle Sermon; ſome labour even with wearineſs, and Reap little, others enter into their Labours and Reap much.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the ſaying of the woman, which teſtified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they beſought him, that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many mo believed, becauſe of his own word: 42 And ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying: for we have heard him our ſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.

Here an Account is given of the Converſion of more of the *Samaritans* of the City of *Sychar*. Some believed on him, upon the full Report which the Woman had made, That *he had told her all that ever ſhe did*: But others were brought to believe by *his own Word.* Now from the Woman's being an Inſtrument to bring her Acquaintance to Chriſt by her own Experience of what ſhe had heard from him; *Learn*, 1. That very weak *Inſtruments*, when they Imploy themſelves for Chriſt, deſiring to extol his Praiſe, and ſet forth his Glory, are ſometimes richly bleſſed with great Succeſs; *Many of the Samaritans believed for the Saying of this poor Woman. Learn*, 2. That when a Perſon can ſay but little of Chriſt, yet if it be ſpoken from Experience and ſenſible feeling, it will be more Succeſsful and Perſwaſive, than much more that is ſpoken from Notional Knowledge. Such was this Woman's Teſtimony concerning Chriſt; *Come ſee a Man that told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Chriſt?* She ſpake what ſhe found, yea, what ſhe felt within her ſelf, and ſpeaking her own Experience, *many believed on him for her ſaying.* But farther, Theſe *Samaritans* believed Chriſt to be a Prophet upon the Teſtimony of this Woman; But they believed him afterwards to be the Meſſias or the Saviour of the World, upon the Credit and Authority of his own Word, *v.* 41. *And many more believed, becauſe of his own Word. Thence Learn,* That although Inſtruments ſpeaking may be a means to draw Perſons to give ſome Aſſent to Truth, yet it is Chriſt himſelf that muſt work a full Perſwaſion, and his own Word is the ſureſt Foundation for Faith to build and depend upon: *Now we believe not becauſe of thy ſaying, for we have heard him our ſelves.*

43 Now after two days he departed thence, and
went into Galilee: 44 For Jeſus himſelf teſtified,
that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.
45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans
received him, having ſeen all the things that he
did at Jeruſalem at the feaſt: for they alſo went
unto the feaſt.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having ſpent two Days with the *Samaritans*, as an Introduction to the calling of the *Gentiles*, he goes forward towards *Galilee*, the Place which he was pleaſed to make choice of, for the Exerciſe of the greateſt part of his Miniſtry. Coming into *Galilee* he paſſeth by the City of *Nazareth*, where he had had his Education, knowing what little Reſpect he was like to find there; A Prophet ordinarily having little Honour in his own Country: Therefore ſhunning *Nazareth*, he goeth to *Cana*, where he had done his firſt Miracle. *Learn hence*, 1. That there is a real Tribute of Honour due unto every Prophet and Miniſter of God, which ought to be teſtified by Reverence to their Perſons, by a due Eſtimation of the Dignity of their Calling, by Obedience to their Doctrine, and by an honourable Maintenance. A Prophet ſhould have Honour; and Honour includes all theſe. 2. It is very uſual and ordinary for the Prophets of God to meet with leaſt Reſpect where they are moſt known; their neareſt Neighbours, their neareſt Relations, their neareſt Acquaintance are oft-times fartheſt off from giving them that Honour that is due unto them. *Learn* 3. That the true Prophets and Meſſengers of God ſhall be ſure to find ſome that will entertain their Perſons, and embrace their Miniſtry, though they be diſeſteemed and rejected by others. Though our Saviour had no Honour at *Nazareth*, yet he found Entertainment amongſt the reſt of the *Galileans*.

46 So Jeſus came again into Cana of Galilee,
where he made the water wine. And there was a
certain noble man, whoſe ſon was ſick at Capernaum.
47 When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea
into Galilee, he went unto him, and beſought him
that he would come down and heal his ſon: for he
was at the point of death. 48 Then ſaid Jeſus
unto him, Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, ye will
not believe. 49 The noble man ſaith unto him, Sir,
come down ere my child die. 50 Jeſus ſaith unto
him, Go thy way; thy ſon liveth. And the man
believed the word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him,
and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going
down, his ſervants met him, and told him, ſaying,
Thy ſon liveth. 52 Then enquired he of them the
hour when he began to amend: and they ſaid unto him,
Yeſterday at the ſeventh hour the fever left him.
53 So the father knew that it was at the ſame hour,
in the which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy ſon liveth;
and himſelf believed, and his whole houſe. 54 This
is again the ſecond miracle that Jeſus did, when he
was come out of Judea into Galilee.

In this laſt Paragraph of the Chapter we find our Bleſſed Saviour performing a ſecond Miracle in *Cana* of *Galilee*, curing a Noble Man's Son that was ſick of a Fever: This Noble Man apprehended Chriſt to be a Prophet, and believed that if he were bodily preſent with his Son, he might poſſibly cure him; but he did not believe him to be the Meſſias, who was true God, and every where preſent: Therefore to give him an infallible Proof that he was ſo, he tells him his Son was cured by the Word of his Mouth, even at that diſtance. By which Miracle he cured not only the Child of his Fever, but the Father of his Unbelief. From the whole we *Note*, 1. The Perſon that here applies himſelf to Chriſt; *A Noble Man.* We do not find Chriſt oft attended with Nobility. *Have any of the Rulers believed on him?* Yes, here is one: The Sovereign Grace of God is free, and he has his Numbers among all Orders, Ranks and Degrees of Men. And tho' not many noble are called, yet ſome are. *Note* 2. The Calamity which befel this Noble Perſon, *his Son was ſick*, yea, dying. Earthly Greatneſs is no Defence againſt Afflictions; great Men are in Trouble as other Men; neither the Wealth and Riches of this Noble Man, nor his Power and Authority, nor his Honour in his Country, nor his Favour with his Prince, could keep off God's Hand either from himſelf or from his Son: But the Father feels as much by Sympathy as the Child by Senſe. *Note* 3. The Cauſe and ſpecial Occaſion which brought this Noble Man to Chriſt: It was in general, an Affliction; and in particular, the ſickneſs of his Child. *Learn thence*, That great is the Fruit and Profit of Afflictions to the Children of Men. Many with this Noble Man, never come to Chriſt till they be driven by the Croſs; and particularly, God ſanctifies the Sickneſs and Death of near and dear Relations, (Children in ſpecial) to bring Perſons nearer to himſelf. *Note* 4. This Noble Man was neither faithleſs nor faithful; had he been quite faithleſs, he had not taken ſuch Pains to come to Chriſt; had he been faithful, he had not limited the Son of God, by ſaying, *Come down and heal my Son ere he die. Come down*, as if Chriſt could not have cured him abſent; *ere my Son die*, as if the ſame Power required to heal him being Sick, could not raiſe him being Dead. Lord, *heal my Son*, had been a proper ſuit to him, who was the great Phyſician: But, *Come down and heal him*, was to teach Chriſt how to work. He who doth whatſoever he will, muſt do it how he will, and when he will. It is for us to crave and receive, not to preſcribe and appoint. *Note* 5. The Meekneſs and great condeſcending Goodneſs of Jeſus Chriſt; notwithſtanding the Infirmity of this poor Man, our Lord ſays, *Go thy way, thy Son liveth.* Worthineſs in the Creature is not the Motive that rules Chriſt. Should we meaſure our Hopes by our worthineſs, there were no Bleſſing to be hoped for; but if we meaſure them by Chriſt's Bounty and Compaſſion, there is no Bleſſing to be deſpaired of. *Note* 6. How Chriſt not only anſwers the Deſires, but exceeds the Expectations of this diſtreſſed Perſon: His Requeſt was only, *Come and heal my Son.* Chriſt's Anſwer was, *Go thy way, thy Son liveth.* Our heavenly Father, when he doth not give us what we aſk, gives us better than we aſked. We aſk what we think beſt, but God gives what he knows beſt. Chriſt here gave a greater Demonſtration of his Omnipotency than was craved. *Note Laſtly*, With one Word doth Chriſt heal two Patients; the Son of his Fever, the Father of his Unbelief. It was a low degree of Faith that brought the Father to Chriſt; it was an higher degree that ſent him back to his Son; but higheſt of all, when finding his Son healed, he himſelf believed and his whole Houſe. *Learn hence*, That a weak Faith may be true, but a true Faith is always growing and increaſing; *It is like the Path of the Juſt, that ſhineth more and more until the perfect Day.*

CHAP. V.

AFter this there was a feaſt of the Jews, and Jeſus
went up to Jeruſalem. 2 Now there is at Jeruſalem
by the ſheep-market a pool, which is called in
the Hebrew tongue, Betheſda, having five porches.
3 In theſe lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of
blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the
water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain ſeaſon
into the pool, and troubled the water: whoſoever then
firſt after the troubling of the water ſtepped in, was
made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had.

This Chapter begins with a Deſcription of the famous Pool of *Betheſda*, whoſe Waters were Medicinal to cure the firſt comer thereinto, whatſoever Diſeaſe he had. Some think this was effected in a natural way, and that the Entrails of the Sacrificed Beaſts being waſhed in this Pool, an healing Vertue was communicated for curing the Palſie and ſuch cold Diſeaſes: As Perſons that have lame and withered Hands are at this Day directed to put them into the Belly of a Beaſt newly opened. But others look upon the healing Vertue of this Pool to be ſupernatural and miraculous, becauſe it cured all Diſeaſes, how old, great and deſperate ſoever, and this in a moment, or very quickly; and but one at a time; and that one, the firſt that ſtepp'd in only, after an Angel had deſcended and troubled the Waters: All which ſhew that the healing Vertue came not from the goodneſs of the Waters, but that it was a ſupernatural Work. Some think that the Miracle of this Pool was granted to the *Jews*, partly to ſtrengthen them in the true worſhip of God, and to confirm them in their religious Courſe of Sacrificing, againſt the Scoffs of the *Romans*, who were now their Lords; ſuch a Virtue being given to that Water wherein their Sacrifices were wont to be waſhed. *Learn hence*, That means of God's appointment, how improbable and unlikely ſoever, muſt not be deſpiſed, but awfully admired, and thankfully uſed, although the way and manner of their working be not underſtood or comprehended by us.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jeſus ſaw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that caſe, he ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man anſwered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another ſtepeth down before me. 8 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Riſe, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the ſame day was the ſabbath. 10 The Jews therefore ſaid unto him that was cured, It is the ſabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11 He anſwered them, He that made me whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which ſaid unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? 13 And he that was healed, wiſt not who it was: for Jeſus had conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in that place.

It was very commendable that the rich Men did not engroſs this Pool, and the benefit of it to themſelves, but ſuffered poor People to come to it. In this College of Cripples a poor Man that had been lame thirty eight Years was found, who wanting Strength to help himſelf, wanting Money to hire others, and others wanting Mercy to help him; Chriſt takes pity on him, and becauſe he could not go to Health, Health is graciouſly brought to him, and that by the Hand of the great Phyſician, Chriſt Jeſus. *Obſerve here*, 1. That not only are Mens Bodies ſubject to innumerable Infirmities and Diſeaſes, but it pleaſes God for wiſe Ends to continue ſome of his Servants labouring under bodily Weakneſs for many Years together, yea, even all the Days of their Life. Here is a poor Man for eight and thirty Years together under the Diſcipline of God's Rod by Bodily Weakneſs. *Obſerve* 2. That it is the Duty of the afflicted to wait upon God in a diligent uſe of all Means which God has appointed for their help and healing: As to truſt to Means, is to neglect God; ſo to neglect the Means, is to tempt God. This poor Man, no doubt, had made uſe of the Means before, yet waits at the Pool now. *Obſerve* 3. Tho' Chriſt well knew the Caſe of this afflicted Perſon, and wanted no Information, yet he asks him, If he were willing to be made whole? to make him ſenſible of his Miſery, to quicken his Deſires after healing, and to raiſe his Expectations of Help from him. Tho' Chriſt knows our Wants, yet he takes no notice of them, till we make them known to him by Prayer. *Obſerve* 4. The time when Chriſt wrought this Miracle of healing upon the impotent Man; it was on *the Sabbath-day*, and as an Evidence of the certainty of the Cure, Chriſt bids him *take up his bed and walk*. Our Saviour's Miracles were real and beneficial, they were obvious to Senſe, and would bear the Examination of all Perſons. The Miracles which the Church of *Rome* boaſt of will not bear the Examination of our Senſes: Their great Miracle, Tranſubſtantiation, is ſo far from being obvious to Senſe, that it contradicts the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, and is the greateſt Affront to humane Nature that ever the World was acquainted with. And our Saviour's working this and many other Miracles on the Sabbath-day, was for the Teſtification of the Miracles to all Perſons that would take notice of them. *Obſ.* 5. How unjuſtly the *Jews* tax the Cripple that was healed with the breach of the Sabbath, for taking up his Bed and walking on the Sabbath-day; whereas the Law only forbad carrying Burthens on the Sabbath day for profit, in way of Trade: but this Man's carrying his Bed, was a Teſtimony of God's Goodneſs and Mercy towards him, and of his Gratitude and Thankfulneſs towards God. Hypocritical and ſuperſtitious Perſons oft-times pretend much Zeal for obſerving the Letter of the Law, little reſpecting the Moral Senſe and Signification of it. Beſides, our Saviour had a mind to let the *Jews* know that he was Lord of the Sabbath, that he had a power over it, and could diſpenſe with it as he thought good. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The great Modeſty and Humility of our bleſſed Saviour, how hateful all Oſtentation and Vain-glory was unto him; for having wrought this famous Miracle before the People at a Publick Time, the Feaſt of the Paſſover, to ſhun all Applauſe from the Multitude, he conveys himſelf privately away from them: *Jeſus conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in that place.* Our Saviour's Buſineſs was to do much Good, and make but little Noiſe: He ſought not his own Glory.

14 Afterwards Jeſus findeth him in the temple, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.

Theſe words are our Saviour's ſeaſonable Advice and Counſel to the poor impotent Cripple, whom he had miraculouſly reſtored to Health and Soundneſs. *Where Obſ.* 1. The Perſon admoniſhing, *Jeſus*; he that had been his Phyſician before, is his Monitor and Teacher now: *Behold, thou art whole; ſin no more.* Oh, how much is it the Duty, but how ſeldom the Practice of thoſe whom God makes Inſtruments for recovering bodily Health, to put their Patients in mind of their Obligations to Thankfulneſs and new Obedience? Thus did our Saviour here. The Recovered Man's Phyſician gave him Inſtruction, his Healer became his Monitor. *Sin no more.* *Obſ.* 2. The Perſon admoniſhed, the recovered Cripple: *Thou art made whole.* But, what was he? Not a Diſciple, not a Believer: *For he that was healed, wiſt not who Jeſus was*, v. 13. he knew not Chriſt therefore believed not on him, and yet was healed by him. *Thence Learn*, That there are many outward Mercies and common Bleſſings which Chriſt beſtows upon thoſe that have no ſpiritual Knowledge of him, or ſaving Acquaintance with him. *The Man that was healed, whiſt not who he was that had healed him.* *Obſ.* 3. The Place where Chriſt meets this his recovered Patient; not at the Tavern, but in the Temple, returning Thanks to God for his recovered Health: When God ſends forth his Word and healeth us, it is our Duty to make our firſt Viſit to God's Houſe, and to pay our Vows in the great Congregation, and ſound forth the Praiſes of our great and gracious Deliverer. *Obſ.* 4. The Circumſtance of time, when Chriſt found him in the Temple, ſoon after his recovery. *Afterwards Jeſus findeth him in the Temple.* We muſt not be clamorous and importunate to receive Mercies, and dumb and tongue-tied in returning Thanks; but make haſte, and not delay the time to pay our Acknowledgments to him that healeth us. *Obſ.* 5. The Admonition it ſelf; *Behold, thou art made whole, ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee*; where our Saviour admoniſhes him of the greatneſs of the Mercy; *Behold, thou art made whole*; and ſubjoyns a cautionary Direction, *Sin no more.* Where it is neceſſarily implyed, that Sin is always the deſerving, and oft-times the procuring Cauſe of a Perſon's Afflictions and Calamities; and the beſt and ſureſt way to prevent the Return of Judgments and Calamities to a Perſon, is for a Perſon to return no more to Sin; *Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come upon thee*; where it is farther implied, that Almighty God has ſorer Plagues and ſeverer Judgments in ſtore for thoſe Sinners who go on obſtinately in a Courſe of Sin and Rebellion againſt God, notwithſtanding all the ſignal Rebukes of his avenging Anger. From the whole *Note*, That when the Lord doth graciouſly heal a Perſon or a People, it is a Mercy to be much obſerved and thankfully acknowledged.

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jeſus which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day.

After the Man underſtood who his Healer and Benefactor was, he went and told the Jewiſh Magiſtrates, it was Chriſt that had healed him. This he did, not with any evil Deſign no doubt, to inform againſt him and ſtir up the *Jews* to perſecute him, but deſirous to publiſh what Chriſt had done, to his Honour, and to direct others to make uſe of him. *Learn thence*, That it is the Duty of all thoſe that have experienced the Power and Pity of Chriſt themſelves, to proclaim and publiſh it to others, to the intent that all that need him may experience Help and Healing from him. This ſeems to be the poor Man's Deſign: But behold the Blindneſs, Obſtinacy and Malice of the *Jews*, who perſecuted Chriſt and ſought to kill him for doing good, and healing a Cripple that had been Thirty eight Years ſo: *Therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him.* Yet obſerve, the Cloak and pretence they have for their malicious Perſecution of our Saviour, namely, the ſuppoſed Violation of the Sabbath-day; *They ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the Sabbath-day. Learn hence*, That great Cruelty againſt Chriſt and his Members, has always been and ſtill is, masked and diſguiſed with a fair Pretence of Zeal for God and his Commands. The *Phariſees* mortally hated our Saviour, therefore to cover their Malice, they traduce him as a Prophaner of the Sabbath, and ſeek to take away his Life.

17 But Jeſus anſwered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

From this Verſe to the end of the Chapter, we have our Saviour's Apology, for his working the foregoing Cure on the impotent Man on the Sabbath-Day. And the chief Argument he inſiſts upon, is drawn from his Unity and Equality in Nature and Operation with his Father; *As the Father worketh*, ſays he, *ſo I work.* Here he ſpeaks of himſelf not as a Servant, or Inſtrument in his Father's Hand, but as the Fellow-worker with the Father, both in the Works of Creation, and in the Works of Providence and Preſervation alſo. *Learn hence*, 1. That although Almighty God has long ſince ceaſed from the Works of Creation, yet not from the Work of Preſervation. *My Father worketh hitherto*; not by creating new kinds of Creatures, but by upholding and preſerving what he has already Created. *Learn* 2. That Chriſt the Son of God, is joyned with and undivided from the Father in Working. As the Father created all things by him (not as a Man, and as an Inſtrument in the Father's Hand, for then he was not ſuch) but as his Fellow-worker, being equal in Nature and Power with the Father; in like manner as the Father preſerveth, ſuſtaineth, governeth and upholdeth all things, ſo doth Chriſt; the Father's Actions and his, being the ſame. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

18 Therefore the Jews ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he not only had broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo, that God was his Father, making himſelf equal with God. 19 Then anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid unto them, Verily verily I ſay unto you, The ſon can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do: for what things ſoever he doeth, theſe alſo doeth the Son likewiſe.

Obſerve here, The *Jews* inſtead of being ſatisfied, were the more enraged, not only becauſe he had violated the Sabbath, (as they pretended) by healing the Cripple on the Sabbath-day, but becauſe Chriſt had aſſerted, that God was his Father in a peculiar manner, and made himſelf equal with God. Our Saviour therefore goes on to aſſert his Equality and Conjunction with the Father in his Operations and Workings, which doth at once juſtify his Work on the Sabbath-day, and prove him to be truly and really God. Now our Holy Lord to prove himſelf equal with God the Father, produces firſt many Arguments to *v.* 31. and then alledges the Teſtimony of many Witneſſes, to the end of the Chapter. Our Saviour's firſt Argument to prove himſelf equal with the Father in Eſſence and Nature is this, That the Father and he are equal in Operation, in Will and Conſent for Working; that the Son doth all that the Father doth, and the Father doth nothing without the Son, *v.* 19. *The Son can do nothing of himſelf*; that is, as Man, as the Meſſias; and as Mediator, he could do nothing of himſelf. His perfect Obedience to, and Compliance with the Will of his Father that ſent him, would not ſuffer him to do any thing without him: But, as God, he could do all things of himſelf. *Learn hence*, That it is an undeniable Proof that the Father and Son are in one Nature, Eſſence and Being, in that they are inſeparable and undivided in Operation and Working; *What things ſoever the Father doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe; and the Son doth nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do:* Therefore Father and Son being equal in Operation and Working, are equal in Nature and Being; and conſequently both eſſentially, truly and really God. Therefore the *Arians* of old, and the *Socinians* at this Day are wide when they produce this Text, *The Son can do nothing of himſelf*, to prove that Chriſt is not equal with God the Father. They forget to neglect or diſtinguiſh betwixt his Divine Nature, which could do all things, and his Mediatorial Office, which could not do, but what the Father that ſent him, had appointed him to do.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doeth: and he will ſhew him greater works then theſe, that ye may marvel.

The ſecond Argument which our Saviour produces to prove his Unity in Nature and Equality in Operation with the Father, is drawn from that ſpecial Love which the Father beareth to the Son, which inclines him to communicate all things to him by a Divine and Ineffable Communication. *Learn hence*, 1. That God the Father loveth Jeſus Chriſt his Son, with an Eſſential, Natural and Neceſſary Love, as being the Subſtantial Image of himſelf, and the Splendor and Brightneſs of his Glory. *The Father loveth the Son*; that is, with an Eſſential, Eternal and Ineffable Love. 2. That the Father's Love to Chriſt was Communicative; the Father communicated his Eſſence and Nature, his Wiſdom and Power for Operation to the Son: *The Father ſheweth the Son all things that himſelf doth*, namely, by a Divine, Inconceivable and Unſpeakable Communication.

21 For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickneth them: even ſo the Son quickneth whom he will.

A third Argument proving Chriſt to be God, and equal with the Father is here produced, namely, his raiſing of the Dead: He is joyntly with the Father in that Work, and equal with him: *As the Father quickneth whom he pleaſeth, ſo doth the Son quicken whom he will*; that is, not as the Father's Inſtrument, but as a principal Agent, by the ſame Authority and with the like abſolute Freedom of Will which the Father uſes, being a Sovereign and Independent Being as the Father is; *As the Father raiſeth the dead and quickneth them, ſo the Son quickneth whom he will.* This is more than ever was ſaid of any Prophet or Apoſtle, that he did ſuch Works at his Will. *Learn hence*, 1. That quickning and raiſing of the Dead is an Act of Omnipotency and proper to God only; *The Father raiſeth the dead and quickneth them.* 2. That Chriſt's Power to raiſe the Dead as well as his Father, is a Proof of his Equality with his Father, and an Evidence of his being truly and really God; *the Son quickneth whom he will.*

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him.

A fourth Inſtance of Chriſt's God-head, and proof of his Equality with the Father, That it is his Work to Judge the World; *The Father*, ſays Chriſt, *judges no Man*; that is, no Man without me, but all Men by me, to this intent, *That all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; that is, honour him with the ſame Faith, Love, Fear, Worſhip that is due and payable to God the Father. *Hence Learn*, 1. That Chriſt as God hath the abſolute Power of Life and Death, of Abſolution and Condemnation, which he executes in Conjunction with his Father. 2. That Chriſt having this Power of judging the World with the Father, doth ſhew that the ſame Glory is due to him, which is due unto the Father. *All Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* 3. That ſuch as pretend to honour Chriſt, but deny him to be God, equal with the Father, they withdraw the higheſt honour from him; and ſuch as withdraw the honour from the Son, deny it to the Father, who will not be honoured but in and through honouring of the Son. This Text ſpeaks dread and terror to the *Socinians*, who pretend to Honour Chriſt, but not with the ſame Honour with which they pretend to honour the Father: in God's Account they honour him not at all; *For he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.* True! they pray to Chriſt, and give him Divine worſhip, tho' they believe him to be but a Creature, but what is this but Idolatry, to worſhip that which by Nature is not God, and to do that to a Creature which God requires to be given to himſelf, having ſaid, My Glory will I not give to another, *Iſa.* 48. 2. Divine Honour can only be due to a Divine Perſon. That is, to him that is God bleſſed for evermore.

24 Verily verily I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life. 25 Verily verily I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himſelf; ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo becauſe he is the Son of man.

Here we have a fifth Evidence of Chriſt's God-head and Equality with the Father, namely, that he is the Author of Spiritual and Eternal Life to all that believe on him. He that was a Fountain of Life equal with the Father, and communicated to him from the Father, is God: But Chriſt hath this, *v.* 26. *For as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo he has given to the Son to have Life in himſelf.* Again, He that hath Authority to execute Judgment upon Angels and Men, is God; but Chriſt hath ſuch Authority, *v.* 27. *He hath given him Authority to execute Judgment.* Farther, He that with his Voice quickneth and maketh alive them that hear it, is God, but Chriſt doth this, *v.* 25. *The Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God and live.* The *Dead*, that is, 1. The Spiritually Dead; ſuch as are Dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins: Theſe hearing the Voice of Chriſt in the Miniſtry of the Word, ſhall live a Life of Grace on Earth, and a Life of Glory in Heaven. 2. Such as are Corporally Dead alſo; theſe are likewiſe quickned and raiſed by Chriſt as God. *Learn hence*, 1. That God the Father hath communicated to Chriſt his Son, a Power to quicken and enliven ſuch as are Spiritually and Corporally Dead. 2. That the Father's communicating this Power to the Son, argues no inequality or inferiority in the Son, but he hath the ſame Life infinitely, independently and equally with the Father, *as the Father hath it, ſo hath the Son*; the Father hath it in himſelf, and ſo hath the Son alſo; therefore the Son as well as the Father is eſſentially and truly God. 3. Others by the Dead, underſtand thoſe whom Chriſt raiſed from the Dead, when he himſelf aroſe. When many of the Bodies of the Saints aroſe with him, St. *Matth.* 27. it being ſaid, the Hour now is, &c. Dr. *Whitby.*

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, 29 And ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

Our Saviour finding the *Jews* amazed and aſtoniſhed at his declaring his Sovereign and Supreme Authority and Power to quicken and raiſe whom he pleaſed from the Dead, doth in theſe Verſes aſſure them, that there ſhould be a general Reſurrection and an univerſal Day of Judgment, both of the Righteous and the Wicked; and a future Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments in another Life, according to Men's Actions here in this Life. *All that are in the Graves ſhall hear my Voice, and ſhall come forth. Here Obſerve*, 1. The Certainty and Univerſality of the Reſurrection of the Dead declared; *The Hour is coming in which all that are in the Graves ſhall come forth. Obſerve* 2. The powerful and efficacious Means by which this great and ſudden Change ſhall be effected and accompliſhed in the Morning of the Reſurrection; namely, the Omnipotent Voice of Chriſt; *All that are in the Graves ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth.* 3. Here are the different ends of the Reſurrection declared according to the Difference of Perſons which ſhall then be raiſed, Good and Bad; *Thoſe that have done good, to the Reſurrection of Life, and thoſe that have done evil, to the Reſurrection of Damnation. Learn* 1. That there ſhall certainly be a Reſurrection of the Body. 2. That all in the Graves ſhall be Raiſed, though not all alike; the Wicked ſhall be raiſed by the Power of Chriſt, as their Judge; the Righteous ſhall be raiſed by Virtue of their Union with Chriſt, as their Head. 3. According as Men live in this World and go out of it, ſo will they be found at the Reſurrection, without any Change of their State; there will then be only two ſorts of Perſons, Good and Bad. All that have done good, how ſmall ſoever the Degree of their Goodneſs hath been, ſhall be rewarded: And all that have done Evil, ſhall be everlaſtingly puniſhed; for all Perſons ſhall be Eternally Happy, or intollerably miſerable in the other World, according as they manage their Deportment and Behaviour in this Life; *They that have done Good ſhall go*, &c.

30 I can of mine own ſelf do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is juſt; becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath ſent me.

Here Chriſt declares to the *Jews*, and in them to all Mankind, that they might aſſure themſelves his Judgment would be exactly Righteous, becauſe he had no private Will or Power of his own, contrary to, or different from his Father. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt being the ſame in Eſſence and Nature, in Power and Operation with the Father, had no private Will or Intereſt of his own, but acted all things as God, in Co-ordination with the Father; and as Man in Subordination to him; *I can of mine own ſelf do nothing*; that is, neither as God, not as Mediator; not as God, for God the Father and Chriſt being one equal in Power, what one Perſon did, the other doth; not as Mediator, for ſo Chriſt finiſhed the Work which his Father gave him to do; the Will of the Father and the Will of Chriſt being both one. As Chriſt was ſent by his Father's Order, ſo he was altogether guided by his Father's Will, wherewith his own Will exactly concurred.

31 If I bear witneſs of my ſelf, my witneſs is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witneſs of me, and I know that the witneſs which he witneſſeth of me, is true.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having produced theſe five foregoing Arguments to prove his Unity in Eſſence, and his Equality in Power with the Father, comes now to the end of the Chapter, to produce ſeveral Teſtimonies for the Proof of it; and the firſt of them is the Teſtimony of God his Father; *There is another that beareth witneſs of me, whoſe witneſs is True.* Now the Father had lately at Chriſt's Baptiſm by a Voice from Heaven declared him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed: which Illuſtrious Teſtimony given to Chriſt, they had not regarded. *Learn hence*, That as Chriſt came into the World in obedience to his Father, and to bear witneſs to him; ſo did the Father Honour him, and bear witneſs of him; and his Teſtimony concerning his Son is undoubtedly True, and to be depended and reſted upon; for we make the Father a Lyar, if we do not depend upon the Record which he has given of his Son.

33 Ye ſent unto John, and he bare witneſs unto the truth. 34 But I receive not teſtimony from man: but theſe things I ſay that ye might be ſaved.

The ſecond Teſtimony to prove Chriſt to be the Meſſias was that of *John* the Baptiſt. We read, *John* 1. 19. how the *Jews* ſent to enquire of him whether he were the Chriſt or not; and he denied it, and pointed at Jeſus, ſaying, *Behold, the Lamb of God*; yet would not the *Jews* abide by this Teſtimony of *John* concerning the Meſſias. Nevertheleſs, ſays Chriſt, *I receive not Teſtimony from John*; that is, *John* by his Teſtimony addeth nothing to me; I was what I was, and I am what I am, before *John* teſtified of me, and ſince. *Learn hence*, That the Divinity of Chriſt's Perſon, and the Verity of his Doctrine, needs no Man's Teſtimony for the Confirmation of it, being ſufficiently confirmed by Chriſt's own Authority, and his Father's Teſtimony: *I receive not Teſtimony from Man*; that is, I need it not, I deſire it not upon my own Account, but upon yours only, that upon the Credit of *John's* Teſtimony ye might believe on me, and be ſaved by me: *Theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved.*

35 He was a burning and a ſhining light: and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoyce in his light.

Obſerve here, John's Character and the peoples Carriage. 1. *John*'s Character; he was a *Light*, *a burning and a ſhining Light*: He had in him a light of Knowledge, to enlighten, direct and comfort others; and this his Knowledge was accompanied with Zeal; he was a *burning Light* in his Doctrine, and a *ſhining* Lamp in his Converſation: he had the Light of Knowledge in his Head, the warmth of Zeal in his Heart, and the Influence of both in his Life. *Learn hence*, 1. That thoſe whom God calls to the Office and Work of the Miniſtry, he furniſhes with Abilities and Endowments ſuitable to their great Employments, he endues them with a Light of Knowledge, which is animated with the Heat and Warmth of Zeal. 2. That Miniſterial Gifts and Abilities are not beſtowed alike upon all, but diſpenſed variouſly. All are Lights according to their Meaſure, but all are not equally burning and ſhining Lights for Proportion and Degree. 3. That the brighteſt burning and cleareſt ſhining Lights in the Church of Chriſt, have but their time in this World; they are ſubject as well as other Men to the common condition of Mortality, and the Lamp of their Lives burns out the faſter by lightning others to Heaven. *John* was a burning and a ſhining Light, but now is put out and gone. *Obſ.* 2. As *John*'s Character, ſo the Peoples Carriage; *ye were willing for a Seaſon to rejoyce in his Light.* Here is a three-fold Gradation; they *rejoyced*; they *rejoyced in his Light*; and they *rejoyced for a Seaſon.* 1. They *rejoyced.* The Word ſignifies, they leaped for joy, and danced about him as Children do about a Bonfire, when he firſt began his Miniſtry amongſt them. Oh, how warm are the Affections of a People, when a pious and zealous Miniſter comes firſt among them! 2. They *rejoyce in his Light*, not in his Heat: Or they rejoyced in *John*'s Light, not in Chriſt's: For when they found, that *John* bare Record to Chriſt, they ſoon grew cold in their Affections towards *John.* 3. They *rejoyced* only *for a Seaſon*; for an hour, as the word ſignifies. For a ſhort time *John*'s Miniſtry was acceptable. *Learn hence*, 1. That it has been an old Practice amongſt Profeſſors, not to like their Paſtors long, tho' they have been never ſuch burning and ſhining Lights: *John* was not changed, but his Hearers were changed; he did burn and ſhine in the Candleſtick of the Church with equal Zeal and Luſtre to the laſt, but they had changed their Thoughts of him, and loſt their Eſteem for him. *Learn*, 2. That as nothing in general is ſo mutable as the Mind of Man, ſo nothing in particular is ſo variable as the Affections and Opinions of People towards their Miniſters. The Lamp of *John*'s Miniſtry was always alike, burning and ſhining, his Oil did not waſte: but his Hearers Zeal waſted, and their Affections cooled: Thoſe whoſe Gifts are not at all abated, may yet find a great abatement in the acceptation of their Gifts; Therefore let no Man live upon the Breath of Men, leaſt of all let Miniſters live upon the popular Air, or the Speech of the People. Oh, let us live upon the Credit which we have with God, and rejoyce chiefly in his Eſteem. If our Performances find acceptance with God, we are ſafe and happy, tho' they fall under Contempt with Men.

36 But I have greater witneſs then that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.

The third Teſtimony produced by Chriſt, to evidence and prove himſelf to be the promiſed Meſſias and Saviour of the World, is that of his Miracles; which, by an Omnipotent Power, as God, he was enabled to work. Chriſts Miracles were ſpeaking Teſtimonies of this Unity with the Father, and of the Divinity of his Perſon. Not ſo the Miracles of his Apoſtles; for he wrought his Miracles in his own Name, and by his own Power and Authority; but the Apoſtles expreſly declared the contrary, *Acts* 3. 12, 16. *Why look ye ſo ſtedfaſtly on us, as if we by our power had made this Man whole? His name, through faith in his name, hath made this Man ſtrong. Learn hence*, That the Teſtimony of Chriſt's own works, his Miracles wrought in his own Name, and by his own Authority and Power, is a clearer Confirmation of his Godhead, Office and Doctrine, than the beſt of Mens Teſtimonies; yea, than *John Baptiſt's* own Teſtimony, *That he ſaw the Spirit deſcending on him.*

37 And the Father himſelf which hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape; 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not.

Here our bleſſed Saviour produces again the Teſtimony of his Father, that he was the true and promiſed Meſſias: This was given him both at his Baptiſm and his Transfiguration; when God the Father owned Chriſt to be his Son, by an audible Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Which Teſtimony the *Jews* now ought the more to have regarded, becauſe tho' their Forefathers had heard the Voice of God at certain times, *Exod*, 20. and *Deut*. 4. yet they in their times had never heard his Voice. *Learn hence*, That the Fathers immediate Teſtimony of Chriſt from Heaven, is greater than all Teſtimonies given to him here on Earth; greater than *John*'s, greater than his Miracles. The preſence of the glorious Trinity, when that Teſtimony was given, *Matth.* 3. *laſt*, made that Witneſs moſt awful and ſolemn.

39 Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me.

The next Teſtimony which Chriſt appeals to, is the Teſtimony of the Scriptures: That is, the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, which Chriſt bids the *Jews* diligently ſearch, and they ſhall find that they abundantly teſtify of him, and that all the Propheſies and Types were fulfilled on him. The word (*ſearch*) ſignifying to ſearch as Men do for a golden Mine in the Bowels of the Earth; which they muſt dig deep for, before they can come at. It intimates 1. That there is an ineſtimable Treaſure lying hid in the holy Scriptures, which we ſhall never fathom by a ſlight ſuperficial ſearch. 2. That this ineſtimable Treaſure may be found out by the painful Searcher, and it is the Duty of all the Members of the viſible Church to read and ſearch the Scriptures, which point out the way to eternal life.

40 And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.

Here our Saviour upbraids the *Jews* for their Obſtinate Infidelity; that notwithſtanding God the Father by a Voice from Heaven, and *John the Baptiſt* by his Teſtimony on Earth; notwithſtanding all the Miracles which they had ſeen wrought by Chriſt himſelf, and notwithſtanding the Scriptures, which they pretended ſo highly to eſteem of, did prove him to be the Meſſias, and the Author of eternal life, which they profeſt to ſeek; yet ſuch was their obſtinacy, that they would not come unto him, nor believe in him. *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life. Here Obſ.* 1. A choice and invaluable Mercy which Chriſt ſtands ready to beſtow upon poor Sinners, and that is Life both Spiritual and eternal. A Life of Grace, in order to a Life of Glory. *Obſ.* 2. The gracious Condition upon which this invaluable Bleſſing may be had, and that is upon coming to Chriſt, believing on him, and receiving of him. 3. Here is the true Reaſon declared why Sinners do miſs of Life and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, when he has ſo dearly purchaſed for them, and does ſo freely tender it unto them, and that lies in their own wilfulneſs and obſtinacy: *Ye will not come unto me. Learn hence*, That the true Reaſon why ſo many Sinners miſs of Salvation and eternal Life, after all that Chriſt has done and ſuffered for them, is their own obſtinacy and unwillingneſs to come to him that they may have Life. Man by Nature has not only an Inability, but a fixed enmity in his Will againſt Jeſus Chriſt.

41 I receive not honour from men. 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43 I am come in my Fathers name, and ye receive me not: if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

Here Obſerve, 1. How little our Saviour ſought the Approbation and vain-glorious Eſtimation of Men. *I receive not honour from Men.* The ſame ſhould all his Diſciples and Followers do; reſt ſatisfied in the ſecret Teſtimony and ſilent Applauſe of their own Conſciences, without pumping for popular Applauſe. *Obſ.* 2. The dreadful ſin which Chriſt charged upon the *Jews*, as the cauſe why they rejected him. *I know, that you have not the love of God in you.* Oh deplorable State and Caſe, to be void of all true Love to God! Love being the Spring of all Action, and the Root of all true Obedience; he that loves God, will not only ſweat at his Work, but bleed at his Work too, if his Work cannot be carried on without bleeding: But where Love to God is wanting, and no care to pleaſe God is found, his Authority is deſpiſed, his Son rejected: As the *Jews* here would not come to Chriſt that they might have Life, becauſe they had not the Love of God in them.

Obſ. 3. The high Affront which the *Jews* offered to the Son God in preferring any Seducers and Impoſtors before him, who came in their own Names; whilſt he was rejected, who came in the Name of his Father. *Learn hence,* That altho' Chriſt was the great Ambaſſador of his Father, not a Servant, but a Son, and had his Miſſion, his Approbation, and his Teſtimony from Heaven, yet ſo far did the Perverſeneſs and Prejudices of the *Jews* prevail that he was rejected, whilſt Impoſtors and Deceivers, falſe Chriſts, and Anti-Chriſts, without any Evidence and Authority from God (becauſe promiſing them a temporal Kingdom) were embraced and entertained, *I come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: But if another (a Seducer) ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, you are incredulous to none but me? every Deceiver, every Cheit that has but Wit or Wickedneſs enough to tell you the Lord has ſent him, is believed by you: But tho' I come in my Father's Name, ſhewing a Commiſſion Signed and Sealed by him, and doing thoſe Works that none but a God can do, yet ye receive me not. Oh unreaſonable Infidelity!

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Here Chriſt tells the *Jews,* that it is impoſſible they ſhould believe aright in him, becauſe they were ſo in love with the Praiſe of Men, that they would own him for the Meſſias, who would promiſe them a temporal Kingdom, and in the mean time reject himſelf who came authorized with the Teſtimony and Approbation of God, you will receive Honour one of another, but reject the Honour that cometh from God only. *Learn,* That ſuch as ambitiouſly hunt after Vain-glory and Reſpect from Men, do evidence themſelves to be regardleſs of God's Approbation and Acceptation.

45 Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father: there is one that accuſeth you, even Moſes, in whom ye truſt. 46 For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how ſhall ye believe my words?

Think not that I will accuſe you; that is, that *I only* will accuſe you *to the Father; there is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes; that is, the Writings of *Moſes,* which you pretend to depend upon and to truſt to: *For, had you believed his Writings,* that is, the Prophecies and Types contained in his Writings, *you would have* been led by them to *believe in me;* for they all pointed at me, and received their Accompliſhment in me: But, if *Moſes* cannot be heard by you, I muſt expect no Authority with you. *Learn,* 1. That the whole Scope of *Moſes* Ceremonial Law was to point out and prefigure Jeſus Chriſt; Chriſt was the Sum of the Law, as well as the Subſtance of the Goſpel; he was *Abraham*'s promiſed Seed, *Moſes* his great Prophet, *Jacob*'s, *Shilo*'s, *Eſay*'s, *Emanuel*'s, *Daniel*'s Holy one, *Zachary*'s Branch, and *Malachi*'s Angel. 2. That ſuch as believed the ancient Propheſies before Chriſt came, did ſee their Accompliſhment in him when he was come.

CHAP. VI.

AFter theſe things Jeſus went over the ſea of Galilee, which is the ſea of Tiberias.

Obſerve here, How buſie and induſtrious our holy Lord was about his Father's Work, both on the Sea and on the Land, both by Night and by Day, *His Meat was to do the Will of him that ſent him, and to finiſh his Work.* Some have enquired into the Reaſons why Chriſt travelled by Sea as well as by Land; and they ſeem to be theſe. 1. To ſhew what his intent was in making the Sea, namely, to be ſailed upon, as the Land was made to be walked upon 2. That Chriſt might take occaſion to manifeſt his Deity in working Miracles upon the Sea, as well as upon the Land. 3. Might it not be to comfort and encourage Sea-faring men that dwell much upon the Waters, in the midſt of their Diſtreſſes, to truſt in and pray unto ſuch a Saviour as had himſelf an experimental Knowledge of the Danger of the Seas? Some have farther obſerved, That after our Saviour's Reſurrection, we never find him ſailing upon the Seas more; for ſuch a turbulent Condition which neceſſarily attends Sea Voyages, was utterly inconſiſtent with the ſtability and perpetuity of Chriſt's ſtate, when he was riſen from the Dead; the firm Land better agreeing with his fix'd Eſtate, than the fluctuating Water.

2 And a great multitude followed him, becauſe they ſaw his miracles which he did on them that were diſeaſed.

Obſerve here, What an exact Knowledge Chriſt had, not only of all his Followers, but of the Motives and Principles which did induce them to follow him; it was not the Excellency of his Perſon, nor the heavenlineſs of his Doctrine that drew the multitude at this time after him, but the Novelty of his Miracles; *they ſaw the Miracles which he did:* It is better to feel one Miracle wrought upon the Heart, in changing and renewing that, than to ſee a thouſand outward Miracles wrought before our Eyes.

3 And Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there he ſat with his diſciples. 4 And the paſſover, a feaſt of the Jews, was nigh. 5 When Jeſus then lift up his eyes, and ſaw a great company come unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we buy bread, that theſe may eat? 6 (And this he ſaid to prove him: for he himſelf knew what he would do.) 7 Philip anſwered him, Two hundred peny-worth of bread is not ſufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8 One of his diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peters brother, ſaith unto him, 9 There is a lad here which hath five barley-loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes, but what are they among ſo many? 10 And Jeſus ſaid, Make the men ſit down. Now there was much graſs in the place. So the men ſat down, in number about five thouſand. 11 And Jeſus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he diſtributed to the diſciples, and the diſciples to them that were ſet down; and likewiſe of the fiſhes as much as they would. 12 When they were filled, he ſaid unto his diſciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be loſt. 13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten. 14 Then thoſe men, when they had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a truth that prophet that ſhould come into the world.

This Miracle of our Saviour's feeding five thouſand Perſons with five Barley Loaves and two ſmall Fiſhes, is recorded by all the four Evangeliſts; and ſeveral particulars therein are very remarkable. *Obſ.* 1. What a poor and ſlender Proviſion the Lord of the whole Earth has for his Family, for himſelf, for his Diſciples and the Multitude; nothing more than five Barley Loaves and two Fiſhes: Teaching us that theſe Bodies of ours muſt be fed, not pampered. Our Belly muſt not be our Maſter, much leſs our God; and as the Quality of the Victuals was plain, ſo was the Quantity ſmall; only five Loaves and two Fiſhes. Well might the Diſciples ſay, *What are they among ſo many?* The Eye of Senſe and Reaſon ſees an utter Impoſſibility of thoſe Effects which Faith can eaſily apprehend, and a Divine Power more eaſily produce. When Men judge by Senſe and Reaſon, and do not look to Chriſt's Power, if Extremities come they are ſoon at their Wits end, and know not what to do. *Obſ.* 2. How the great Maſter of this miraculous Feaſt doth marſhal his Gueſts; he commands them to ſit down. None of the People reply, Sit down? But to what? Here's the Mouths, but where's the Meat? we may ſoon be ſet, but when ſhall we be ſerved? not a word like this; but they obey and expect. Lord! how eaſie is it, to truſt thy Providence and rely upon thy Power, when there is Corn in the Barn, Bread in the Cup-board, Money in the Purſe; but when our Stores are empty, when our Stock runs low, when we have nothing in Hand, then to depend upon an Inviſible Bounty is a noble Act of Faith indeed. *Obſ.* 3. The Actions performed by our Bleſſed Saviour. 1. *He bleſt* the Loaves: Teaching us, by his Example never to uſe or receive the good Creatures of God without Prayer and Praiſe, not to ſit down to our Food as a Beaſt to his Fodder. 2. Chriſt broke the Loaves; he could have multiplied them whole, why then doth he rather chooſe to do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us, that we may rather expect his Bleſſing in the Diſtribution of his Bounty, than in the Reſervation of it. Scattering is the way to encreaſing, and Liberality the way to Riches. Again, 3. *He gave to his Diſciples, that they might diſtribute to the Multitude*; he did not do it with his own Hands, but by theirs; doubtleſs it was to gain Reputation to his Diſciples from the People: The ſame Courſe doth Chriſt take in Spiritual Diſtributions. He that could feed the Souls of his People immediately by the Hand of his Spirit, chooſes rather by the Hand of his Miniſters to divide the Bread of Life among them. *Obſerve*, 4. The Reality and greatneſs of the Miracle; *They did all eat, and were filled*; they did eat, not a Crumb or a Bit, but to ſatiety and fulneſs. All that were hungry did eat, and all that did eat were ſatisfied; and yet twelve Baskets of Fragments remain. More is left than was at firſt ſet on. 'Tis hard to ſay which was the greateſt Miracle, the miraculous Eating, or miraculous Leaving. If we conſider what they eat, we may wonder that they left any thing; if what they left, that they eat any thing. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Theſe *Fragments*, tho' of Barley Loaves and Fiſh Bones *muſt not be loſt*, but *gathered up*; We muſt exerciſe Frugality in the Enjoyment of the greateſt Plenty. Lord! how tremendous will their Accounts be, who having large and plentiful Eſtates do conſume them upon their Luſts; how will they wiſh they had been born to Poverty and Neceſſity, when they appear to make up their Accounts before God:

15 When Jeſus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone.

Here we have *Obſervable*, the wonderful Effect of the foregoing Miracle; the People ſeeing ſo many thouſands fed with five Loaves, were ſo tranſported, that they concluded, that Jeſus was certainly the promiſed Meſſias. Now the Notion they had of the Meſſias was this. That he ſhould be a Temporal Prince that ſhould ſubdue all Nations under his Feet, and particularly free the *Jews* from the Slavery of the Roman Yoke which was now upon their Necks; forgetting what our Saviour had often told them, that his Kingdom was not of this World, but within Men; and that his Buſineſs was to free Men from Soul-Slavery, not from civil Subjection: However, upon this Miſtake, the Jews here in a furious Zeal deſigned to take Chriſt by force, and make him their King; but our Saviour (who came not into the World to diſturb the Order of Civil Government) underſtanding their Intentions, withdraws himſelf into a Mountain to avoid giving the leaſt occaſion for any ſuch Jealouſie or Suſpicion. *Hence Learn*, That altho' Jeſus Chriſt be the great King of his Church, and doth exerciſe a Spiritual Kingdom in it, yet he came not into the World to be a temporal King; nor was his Kingdom of this World; or ever deſigned to be prejudicial to the Thrones of Princes, and Civil Government of Men. Therefore doth Chriſt withdraw himſelf and refuſe all this Offer, as no ways agreeable to him, or conſiſtent with his Deſign.

16 And when even was now come, his diſciples went down unto the ſea, 17 And entred into a ſhip, and went over the ſea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jeſus was not come to them: 18 And the ſea aroſe, by reaſon of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty, or thirty furlongs, they ſee Jeſus walking on the ſea, and drawing nigh unto the ſhip: and they were afraid. 20 But he ſaith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ſhip: and immediately the ſhip was at the land whither they went.

Obſerve here, 1. The great danger the Diſciples were in, and the Difficulties they encounter with, after they had enjoyed the ſweet Privileges of Chriſt's gracious Preſence with them. They were toſſed upon a tempeſtuous Sea. *Learn thence*, That it is not unuſual after ſweet Refreſhments and Manifeſtations from Chriſt unto his People, to meet with a ſtormy and ſharp exerciſe of Faith and Patience; ſuch was the Lot of the Diſciples here; a conſtant Gale of Sweetneſs and uninterrupted Courſe of Proſperity and Happineſs as it is not to be expected here, ſo neither can it be enjoyed here without great peril and danger. *Obſ.* 2. What haſte our Saviour makes towards his Diſciples when they were toſſed upon a tempeſtuous Sea; *Jeſus drew nigh to the Ship*. Nothing can ſeparate between, nor keep Chriſt from his Children and People in a ſuffering Hour. He that waded through a Sea of *Wrath* to ſave his People, will walk upon a Sea of *Water* to ſuccour and relieve them in an Hour of Tribulation. *Obſ.* 3. The Diſciples not diſcerning Chriſt, nor knowing him to be their Saviour, were afraid of him. Chriſt may be coming to ſave his People, and they not able at preſent to diſcern and apprehend him: but their Fears may be higheſt when their Deliverer and Deliverance is nearer. *Obſerve*, 4. How ſpeedily Chriſt relieves them and their Fears, by telling them who he was; *It is I, be not afraid*. It is a ſufficient ſupport in all our Afflictions to be aſſured of Chriſt's gracious Preſence with us. Say but Oh Saviour! *It is I*: and then let Evils do their worſt, that one word, *It is I*, is ſufficient to allay all ſtormes, and to calm a thouſand Tempeſts. *Obſerve Laſtly*, With what Joy and Gladneſs the Diſciples received and entertained Chriſt in this Hour of their Diſtreſs; *They willingly received him into the Ship*. Tho' the Company of Chriſt is always ſweet and welcome to his Diſciples and Friends, yet never is it ſo very agreeable and deſirable to them as in the Hour of Tryal and Temptation. Then they willingly receive him, and joyfully welcome and entertain him.

22 The day following, when the people which ſtood on the other ſide of the ſea, ſaw that there was none other boat there, ſave that one whereinto his diſciples were entred, and that Jeſus went not with his diſciples into the boat, but that his diſciples were gone away alone: 23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.) 24 When the people therefore ſaw that Jeſus was not there, neither his Diſciples, they alſo took ſhipping, and came to Capernaum, ſeeking for Jeſus. 25 And when they had found him on the other ſide of the ſea, they ſaid unto him, Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither? 26 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you: for him hath God the Father ſealed.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having wrought the foregoing Miracle, feeding five thouſand with five Loaves, the People followed him in Troops from Place to Place. Chriſt who knew their Hearts tells them plainly what was their end: They followed him indeed, but not for any Spiritual Excellencies they ſaw in him, or Soul Advantages they expected from him, but for Bread; only to have their Bellies fed with the Loaves, not their Souls ſatisfied with the Bread of Life. Oh how ſeldom is Chriſt ſought for his own ſake; *viz. Jeſus quæritur propter Jeſum. Aug.* How natural is it for Men to ſeek Chriſt only for Siniſter ends and By-reſpects? but to ſeek him only for outward Advantages, is the baſeſt of By-ends, and that which the Soul of Chriſt exceedingly abhors. *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth*. This Prohibition muſt not be underſtood abſolutely but comparatively; not as if Chriſt intended to take them off from their lawful Labours and the Buſineſs of their Calling; but his meaning is, Labour not in the firſt and chief Place for earthly Things which are all periſhing, but for Bread for your Souls to live eternally by; even for the Food of my Heavenly Doctrine which will make them that feed upon it Immortal, and this the Son of Man ſtands ready to give unto you; *for him hath God the Father ſealed*; that is, by a Special Commiſſion and Authority hath impowered him to diſpence all Spiritual Bleſſings to them that want and crave them. *Learn hence*, 1. That all the things of this Life are periſhing and fading. The beſt of outward Comforts and Enjoyments are Meat that periſheth. 2. That it is the greateſt of Follies to labour intenſely and inordinately for, and to ſet our ſelves with all our might and ſtrength to purſue and follow after periſhing things. 3. That Jeſus Chriſt, his Holy Doctrine, his heavenly Grace, his Food which neither periſheth nor diminiſheth, how many ſoever partake of it; but makes all that partake thereof, to be partakers of Eternal Life therewith. 4. That Jeſus Chriſt is Authorized, ſealed and commiſſioned by his Father to give eternal Life to ſuch as induſtriouſly labour after him, and will not be ſatisfied without him: *Him hath God the Father ſealed*: That is, Jeſus Chriſt was ſealed to the Office of the Mediator by God the Father: Chriſt was ſealed at his Baptiſm; ſealed by his Doctrine; ſealed by his Miracles; ſealed by his Reſurrection; ſealed by his Unction or Supereiment and Unparallel'd Sanctification. Lord! where will the Rejecters of Chriſt then appear at the great Day, who have deſpiſed the Authority of him, whom the Father commiſſioned to give eternal Life, to whomſoever he pleaſeth.

28 Then ſaith they unto him, What ſhall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.

Here the *Jews* who were ſtrict Obſervers of the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes*, and reſted thereupon for Salvation, inquire of our Saviour what they ſhould do that they might pleaſe God. Chriſt directs them to the great Duty of believing on himſelf, to own and acknowledge him to be the True Meſſiah, and as ſuch to rely upon him alone for Salvation; *This is the work of God, that ye believe*, &c. *Learn hence*, That for a penitent, humbled Sinner to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it is a work highly pleaſing and acceptable unto God. Chriſt calls Faith *the work of God*, upon a threefold Account; it is the Work of his Efficiency and Operation; 'tis the Work of his commanding; and 'tis the Work of his Approbation, and Acceptation; a work that God is highly pleaſed with, and greatly delighted in: *This is the work of God*.

30 They ſaid therefore unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that we may ſee, and believe thee? what doſt thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Here the *Jews* tell our Saviour, that before they will believe in him, they muſt ſee ſome Sign from him to confirm his Doctrine, and prove him to be the Meſſias: They acknowledge Chriſt had wrought a great Miracle in feeding five thouſand Perſons with five Barley Loaves; but *Moſes* fed their Fathers in the Wilderneſs, who were no leſs than ſix hundred thouſand Perſons, with excellent Manna from Heaven, and this for forty years together; from whence they would ſeem to conclude, that they had more reaſon to believe *Moſes* than Chriſt, not conſidering that *Moſes* was but an Inſtrument to obtain by Prayer the Manna at the Hands of God; but Chriſt was an Agent, and that by a creating Power inherent in himſelf, he multiplied the five Loaves to the feeding of five thouſand. *Note here*, 1. From the *Jews* requiring a Sign before they would believe, That he who publiſhes a new Doctrine to the World ought to confirm his Miſſion by ſome Miraculous Operation. 2. That God honoured *Moſes* his Meſſenger, very much, and Chriſt his Miniſter much more, in that both of them wrought great and ſpecial Miracles for the Confirmation of their Miſſion. 3. That the *Jews* not believing Chriſt to be the true Meſſias, upon ſo many Atteſtations and after his Divine Miſſion was confirmed by ſuch Miraculous Operations, rendered their Infidelity inexcuſable, and their Obſtinacy invincible.

32 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven: but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Upon the *Jews* mentioning Manna to our Bleſſed Saviour, he takes occaſion to make a Compariſon betwixt himſelf, the Bread of Life, and Manna the Bread of *Moſes*, and that in three Particulars. 1. It was not *Moſes* that gave the Iſraelites that Manna; it was God at the Prayer of *Moſes*; but it was God that now offered them the Bread of Life, were they willing to accept it. 2. The Manna was not given from Heaven, that is from the Cœleſtial Heaven, but only from the Air and Clouds, which frequently in Scripture is called *Heaven*: But Chriſt the Bread of Life was given and ſent by the Father from the higheſt Heaven, even the Heaven of Glory. 3. Manna was not true Spiritual Food, effectively and of it ſelf, but bodily Food only; but Chriſt is real and Spiritual Bread, which gives Life to loſt and dead Men, which Manna did not, could not do. And whereas Manna was peculiar to *Iſrael* only, Chriſt gives Life to all ſorts of Perſons, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*: *The Bread of God giveth Life unto the World*. *Learn hence*, That as Chriſt is the Truth and Subſtance of all the Types in the Old Teſtament, ſo particularly the Manna was an illuſtrious Type of Chriſt. In many things they agree, and in ſome they differ. They agree in their Original, Manna came down from above, ſo did Chriſt: Manna was freely given, ſo is Jeſus Chriſt the free Gift of God: Manna was not fit to be eaten as it lay in the Field, but muſt be ground in a Mill, or beaten in a Morter and baked in an Oven before it was fit for Food: Chriſt was ground by Sufferings, bruiſed on the Croſs, ſcorched in the fiery Oven of his Father's Wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour for us. Again, as the Manna was gathered by the Iſraelites daily and equally; it was rained down about their Tents, and every Man had his Omer: Thus is Chriſt in the Miniſtry of the Word daily offered to a loſt World, and all that believe in him ſhall ſhare alike in the benefit of the Juſtification, Sanctification and Glorification from him: but now the Manna and Chriſt differ in this; and the Truth excels the Type thus. There is a quickning inlivening Vertue, a Life-giving, and a Life-upholding Power in Chriſt the Bread of Life, which was never found in Manna the Bread of *Iſrael*: And whereas Manna only fed the Body of an Iſraelite, and this only for a little time in the Wilderneſs; Chriſt nouriſhes the Soul; the Souls of all believers, be they *Jew* or *Gentile*, Bond or Free, and and this not for time, but for Eternity; *the Bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World*.

34 Then ſaid they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt. 36 But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not.

Obſerve here, 1: How the carnal *Jews* hearing the Bread which Chriſt had commended ſo highly, and conceiving of it carnally, deſire they may partake of it conſtantly; *Lord ever more give us this Bread*. The Commendation of Spiritual Things may move the Affections, and quicken the Deſires of Natural Perſons; but if their Deſires be not Spiritual and Serious, Diligent and Laborious, Conſtant and Abiding, they are no Evidence of the Truth of Grace. *Obſ.* 2. Chriſt diſcovers another excellent Effect of this Bread of Life, which he had been recommending; that ſuch as feed of it *ſhall never hunger more*; that is, inordinately; after the periſhing Satisfaction of this World; but ſhall find an All-ſufficient Fulneſs in him, and compleat Refreſhment from him, for the preſerving and perpetuating of their Spiritual Life; *He that cometh unto me ſhall never hunger*, &c. *Obſ.* 3. How juſtly Chriſt upbraids the *Jews* for their obſtinate Infidelity; *Ye have ſeen me*, ſays our Saviour, *yet ye believe not*. Ye have ſeen me in the Fleſh; you have heard my Doctrine; you have ſeen my Miracles, I have done amongſt you, thoſe Works which never any Man did, to convince you that I am the Meſſiah; yet you will not own me to be ſuch, nor believe on me: Oh the Strength of Infidelity and Unbelief! The Devil has as great an Advantage upon Men by making them ſtrong in Unbelief, as God hath by making his People ſtrong in Faith.

37 All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having lamented the obſtinate Infidelity of the *Jews* in the foregoing verſe, who though they had ſeen him, would not believe on him, he doth in this Verſe comfort himſelf with the aſſured Expectation, that there would be a number which ſhould certainly and infallibly come unto him; *All that the Father hath given me ſhall come unto me*, &c. *Here Obſerve*, 1. An Account of the Perſons

ſons that ſhall come to Chriſt: *All that the Father hath given him.* There is a double Gift of us to Chriſt. 1. In God's Eternal Purpoſe and Counſel. 2. In our effectual Vocation and Calling, when our Hearts are by the Holy Spirit of God, perſwaded and enabled to accept of Chriſt as he is freely tendred to us in the Goſpel. *Obſerve* 2. The gracious Entertainment which Chriſt gives to thoſe that come unto him: *He will in no wiſe caſt them out*; where the Poſitive is included in the Negative; *I will not caſt them out*; that is, I will kindly receive and graciouſly entertain them. *Learn hence,* 1. That both God the Father, and Chriſt his Son are unfeignedly willing, and cordially deſirous of the Salvation of loſt Sinners. The fœderal Tranſaction which was betwixt the Father and the Son from everlaſting about the Salvation of loſt Sinners, evidently declares this. *Learn hence,* 1. That both God the Father, and Chriſt his Son are unfeignedly willing, and cordially deſirous of the Salvation of loſt Sinners, evidently declare this. *Learn* 2. That the Merciful and Compaſſionate Jeſus will in no wiſe caſt out or reject, but kindly entertain and receive every penitent Sinner that doth believingly apply unto him for Pardon of Sin and Eternal Life; *I will in no wiſe caſt out*; that is, I will not caſt them out of my Pity and Compaſſion; out of my Love and Affection; out of my Prayer and Interceſſion; out of my Care and Protection; I will not caſt them out of my Covenant; I will never caſt them out of my Kingdom; for my Nature inclines me, my Promiſe binds me, and my Office as Mediator engages me to the contrary.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine
own will, but the will of him that ſent me. 39 And
this is the Fathers will which hath ſent me, that of
all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but
ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. 40 And this
is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which
ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

In theſe Words our Saviour gives us the Confirmation of the foregoing Promiſe, That he will in no wiſe caſt out thoſe that come unto him, by aſſuring us that it was the great end for which he came into the World. His Father ſent him to do his Will, and not his own; that is, not to do his own Will without his Father's, but to do his own Will and his Father's. For Chriſt as God had a co-ordinate Will with his Father, and as Man, a Will ſubordinate to the Will of his Father. Now it was the Will of both Father and Son, that ſuch as believe in him ſhould be preſerved from periſhing, and be raiſed up by Chriſt at the laſt Day. *Hence Learn,* 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſtands not only inclin'd by his own Mercy and Goodneſs to ſave Repenting and Believing Sinners; but doth alſo ſtand obliged thereunto by virtue of a Truſt committed to him from the Father. Therefore Chriſt mentions the Will of him that ſent him, as a Reaſon of his Fidelity in this matter. *Learn* 2. That the Father's Will and good Pleaſure is the Original Source, the Fountain and firſt Spring, from whence the Salvation of Believers doth proceed and flow. *It is the Father's Will that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting Life.* *Learn* 3. That ſuch as are given to Chriſt by the Father, and put as his Truſt into his keeping, he looks upon them as his Charge; and ſtands engaged for the Preſervation of them. *This is my Father's Will, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing.* Yet has the Father ſo committed the Care of Believers to his Son, as that he keeps them ſtill in his own Hand. *John* 10. 28, 29. *My Father which gave them to me is greater than all, and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* *Learn* 4. From thoſe Words, *I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day*; That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is Truly, Eſſentially and Really God. That Perſon who can by his own Almighty Power raiſe the Dead, muſt certainly be God: But this Chriſt had. He raiſed others from the Dead, and his own Dead Body from the Grave alſo, by his own Power. And therefore Chriſt ſays, *I am the Reſurrection, and the Life*; *and I will raiſe him up at the Laſt Day.* Doubtleſs, he that ſpake theſe Words, and made thoſe Promiſes, knew his own Power to perform them; and that Power muſt be Omnipotent, and that Act of Omnipotence, doth prove him to be God. 'Tis true, the Diſciples raiſed the Dead, who were yet no God's; but with this difference, they raiſed the Dead by Chriſt's Power; but Chriſt raiſed others and himſelf alſo by his own Power.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he
ſaid, I am the bread which came down from heaven.
42 And they ſaid, Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph,
whoſe father and mother we know? how is it then
that he ſaith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jeſus
therefore anſwered and ſaid unto them, Murmur not
among your ſelves.

Altho' Chriſt had in the foregoing Verſes, plainly aſſerted himſelf to be the true Bread that came down from Heaven, for the benefit of the World; yet the *Jews* underſtanding his Words carnally, are offended with him, and murmur at him, for pretending to come down from Heaven, when they know him to be the Son of *Joſeph* and *Mary.* They underſtood nothing of his Divine Nature, nor of his miraculous Conception by the overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore were highly offended at him. *Thence Learn,* That Ignorance of Chriſt's Divine Nature was the Ground and Occaſion of that Contempt which was caſt upon his Perſon. *Obſerve farther,* The Proof which Chriſt gave of his Divine Nature, in his knowing the Hearts and Thoughts of theſe murmuring *Jews. Jeſus ſaid, Murmur not among your ſelves.* Chriſt knows and obſerves the moſt ſecret murmurings and repinings that are found in the Breaſts of the Children of Men; and this his Knowledge is an Evidence and Proof of his Divinity, that he is truly and really God.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.

In which words we have ſomething neceſſarily implied, and ſomething poſitively expreſs'd. The miſery of Man in his Natural and Unſanctified State is here implied; he is far diſtant from Chriſt, and unable of himſelf to come unto him. By Nature we are Strangers, yea, Enemies unto God. Enemies to the Holineſs of his Nature, and to the Righteouſneſs of his Laws: And as the State of Unregeneracy is a State of Enmity; ſo conſequently muſt it be a State of Impotency; *without me,* (therefore ſays Chriſt) *ye can do nothing,* Joh. 15. 5. That is, without intereſt in me, and influences of Grace derived from me. Again, The Truths we have expreſt are theſe. 1. That all thoſe who come unto Chriſt are drawn unto him. 2. That the drawing of Sinful Souls unto Jeſus Chriſt, is the ſpecial and peculiar Work of God: This drawing is a powerful Act, but not a Compulſory Act: God doth not draw any againſt their Wills to Chriſt; but he inclines the Will of Sinners to come unto him. He draws by effectual Perſwaſion, and not by violent Compulſion. 3. That all thoſe who are drawn to Chriſt here, ſhall be raiſed up Glorioully by him hereafter. *I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.* Such as are brought to Chriſt by the Father, Chriſt ſhall never abandon them, till he has raiſed them up at the laſt day, and preſented them Blameleſs and Compleat before his Father; where they ſhall ever be with the Lord.

45 It is written in the prophets. And they ſhall
be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath
heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto
me. 46 Not that any man hath ſeen the Father,
ſave he which is of God, he hath ſeen the Father.
47 Verily verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on
me hath everlaſting life.

In theſe Words our Bleſſed Saviour confirms his former Aſſertion, concerning his Father's drawing from the Propheſies of the Old Teſtament; which ſpeaking of the days of the Meſſias, foretold that Perſons ſhould be taught of God to embrace the Meſſias; whence Chriſt inferreth, that every one who is thus taught ſhall come unto him, and believe in him. *Learn hence,* 1. That the Teachings of God are abſolutely neceſſary to every Man that cometh unto Chriſt in the way of Faith. 2. That ſuch ſhall not miſcarry in the way of Faith, who are under the ſpecial Teaching and Inſtructions of God; *They ſhall all be taught of God,* and he teacheth to profit, and that not only Authoritatively, but efficaciouſly and effectually. Thoſe whom God undertakes to teach, receive from him both an Ear to hear, and an Heart to underſtand. They ſhall be all taught of God, and they that are taught, have heard and learned of the Father.

48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did
eat manna in the wilderneſs, and are dead. 50 This

is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.

In theſe Verſes, our Bleſſed Saviour reſumes his former Doctrine, namely, That he is the Object of Saving Faith, and the Bread of Life which he compares with the Manna, the Bread of *Iſrael. Your Fathers did eat Manna in the Wilderneſs*, which Manna was an Illuſtrious Type of Chriſt. Thus both came down from Heaven; both were freely given of God, without any Merit or Deſert of Men, both in a miraculous manner, both at firſt unknown what they were and whence they came. Both equally belonging to all, both ſufficient for all, Poor and Rich. The Manna white in colour, ſo clear our Lord's Innocence. Pleaſant like Honey, ſo ſweet are his Benefits; Beaten and Broken before eaten. Chriſt on his Croſs Bleeding and Dying; given only in the Wilderneſs, and ceaſing as ſoon as they came into the Land of Promiſe; as Sacraments ſhall vaniſh, when we enjoy the Subſtance in Heaven. But tho' Manna was thus excellent, the eaters of it were dead; but ſuch as feed upon Chriſt, the Bread of Life, ſhall live eternally in Bliſs and Glory. *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any Man eat of this Bread he ſhall live for ever.* Here we *Learn*, 1. What a miſerable Creature Man Naturally is, in a pining and ſtarved Condition, under the want of Soul-food. 2. That Jeſus Chriſt is the Food of Souls, which quickens them that are Dead, and is unto the needy Soul all that it can need; ſuch Spiritual Food, as will prove a Remedy and Preſervative againſt Death, both Spiritual and Eternal. *I am the living Bread.*

52 The Jews therefore ſtrove amongſt themſelves, ſaying, How can this man give us his fleſh to eat? 53 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 55 For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread, ſhall live for ever. 59 Theſe things ſaid he in the ſynagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Obſerve here, How the *Jews* underſtanding Chriſt after a Carnal manner, were offended at what he ſaid; for they thought it was Inhuman to eat Man's Fleſh, and could not underſtand how the Body of Chriſt could in ſuch a Senſe be Food to all the World. Hence *Note*, That Carnal Perſons put a Carnal Senſe upon Chriſt's Spiritual Words, and ſo occaſion their own ſtumbling. But yet notwithſtanding the *Jews* ſtumbled at our Saviour's Expreſſion, he doth not alter his Words, but preſſeth more and more the neceſſity of feeding upon him by Faith, in order to Eternal Life. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you. Learn from hence*, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the true Spiritual Food of all Believers. 2. That thoſe, and only thoſe who do by Faith feed upon him, ſhall obtain a Life of Grace and Glory from him; if we do not by Faith feed upon him, we can have no Evidence for a Life of Grace, nor Title to a Life of Glory. This place ſome Papiſts produce to countenance the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, and a Bodily eating and drinking of Chriſt's Fleſh and Blood in the Sacrament. But it is evident, that Chriſt treats not of the Sacrament in this Chapter, for the Sacrament was not now Inſtituted; therefore it is not a Sacramental, but a Spiritual Feeding upon Chriſt by Faith that is here meant. For this eating gives Life to the Eater; all that eat are Saved, and all that do not eat are Damned; but this is not true of a Sacramental eating; beſides, this eating that Chriſt ſpeaks of, he makes abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; but ſome are Saved that never Fed upon Chriſt in the Sacrament, as *John the Baptiſt*, and the Thief on the Croſs. *Laſtly*, If it be underſtood of a Sacramental Eating and Drinking, wo be to the Church of *Rome*, for denying the Cup to the Laity; becauſe drinking of Chriſt's Blood, is here made as neceſſary, as Eating of his Fleſh, in order to Eternal Life. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you. Obſerve farther*, The cloſe and intimate Union which is betwixt Chriſt himſelf, and thoſe that Feed upon him. *He that eateth me, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* As Meat is turned into the Eater's Subſtance, ſo Believers and Chriſt become one, and by Feeding on him, that is, by believing in him, there followeth a mutual Inhabitation. Chriſt dwelling in them and they in him; this is true of a Spiritual Feeding upon Chriſt, but not of a Sacramental Eating. Nay, Chriſt carries it higher ſtill, and tells us, That as there is a real Union between the Father and Him, and as the Father lives who ſent him, having an Eternal Fountain of Life in himſelf, and the Son lives by the Father, having the ſame Life communicated to him with his Eſſence from the Father; in like manner (ſays Chriſt) he that eateth me, the ſame ſhall live by me. All which is certainly true of our Spiritual Feeding upon Chriſt by Faith; but cannot be applied to a Corporal Feeding upon him in the Sacrament, as the Papiſts would have it.

60 Many therefore of his diſciples, when they had heard this, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it? 61 When Jeſus knew in himſelf, that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?

The foregoing Doctrine of our Saviour concerning eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, ſounded ſo very harſhly, that not only the common Multitude, but ſome of them that had been his Diſciples, that is, who had given up their Names to follow him, could not tell how to bear them. Our Saviour reproves their unjuſt ſtumbling at what he had ſaid. That he was the Bread which came down from Heaven; and tells them that his Aſcenſion into Heaven ſhould prove the Truth of his Deſcent from Heaven. Hence we *Learn*, That Chriſt's Ariſing from the Grave, and Aſcending into Heaven by his own Power, is an evident Proof of his Godhead, and that he really came down from Heaven, in reſpect of his Divine Nature, which condeſcended to be cloathed with our Fleſh. *What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?*

63 It is the ſpirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.

To Convince the *Jews*, that our Saviour did not mean a Carnal and Fleſhly eating of his Body; he tells them, that ſuch an eating would profit nothing; but it is a Spiritual eating of him by Faith, that bringeth that quickening Life of which he had ſpoken. *It is the Spirit* of Divine Nature that *quickeneth*, *the Fleſh* or Human Nature, alone ſeparated from his Godhead, *profiteth nothing*, and can give no Life. *Learn thence*, That it is the Godhead of Chriſt united to the Human Nature, which adds all Vertue, Efficacy and Merit, to the Obedience and Sufferings of the Human Nature. It is *the Spirit* or Divine Nature of Chriſt that quickneth, *the Fleſh* or Human Nature alone *profiteth nothing*; and therefore the Carnal eating of my Fleſh would do no good.

64 But there are ſome of you that believe not. For Jeſus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him. 65 And he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his diſciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having thus cleared his Doctrine, that he was the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven, and that he is not to be Carnally, but Spiritually fed upon: He plainly tells the *Jews*, That the true Cauſe of their ſtumbling at his Doctrine, was their Ignorance and Unbelief; *there are ſome of you that believe not*: Upon which plain dealing

ing of our Bleſſed Saviour's, many unſound Profeſſors did wholly forſake him, and accompanied no longer with him. *Learn hence,* That Multitudes who have long profeſſed Chriſt, and his Holy Religion, may draw back and fall from their Profeſſion, and finally revolt from him. 2. That it is an Evil Heart of unbelief, which cauſes Men to depart from Chriſt, and to make Shipwrack of their Profeſſion.

67 Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye alſo go away? 68 Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe, and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God. 70 Jeſus anſwered them, have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot the ſon of Simon: for he it was that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

Our Saviour finding many of his nominal Diſciples forſaking him, and departing from him, *Asks* his Apoſtles, (the Twelve) whether they would alſo go away? intimating that their departure would go nearer to him, than the departure of all the reſt. The nearer they are from whom we receive Unkindneſſes, the nearer do thoſe Unkindneſſes go to our Hearts. *Will you of the Twelve alſo go away? Peter*, as the Mouth, and in the name of the reſt, Anſwers, That they knew none beſides to whom they could go, and expect that Happineſs which they did from him. They that go from Chriſt can never hope to mend themſelves, let them go whither they will; therefore 'tis as irrational, as it is ſinful to depart from Chriſt; *who hath the Words*, that is, the Promiſe of *Eternal Life. Obſerve Laſtly*, St. *Peter* having made this Profeſſion for himſelf and the reſt of the Twelve, that they would not depart from Jeſus, whom they believed to be the true Meſſias, the Son of God; Chriſt intimates to *Peter*, that his Charity was ſomething too large in promiſing ſo much for them all; for there was one Traytor among them, whoſe Heart was as open to Chriſt as his Face was to them; he meant it of *Judas Iſcariot*, of whoſe perfidiouſneſs he gave them warning at this Time. *Learn hence*, That the better any Man is in himſelf, the more Charitable is the opinion which he has of others. Charity inclines to believe others good, till they diſcover themſelves to be bad. *Learn* 2. That Chriſt doth approve of our Charitable Judgment of others ſincerity according to what we hope and believe, tho' we happen to be miſtaken, and our Judgment is not according to Truth; Chriſt knew *Judas* to be an Hypocrite at this time, but doth not reprove *Peter* for having a better Opinion of him, than he deſerved. 'Tis far better to err on the Charitable, then on the Cenſorious Hand; 'tis leſs offenſive to Chriſt, and leſs Injurious to our ſelves.

CHAP. VII.

AFter theſe things Jeſus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.

Our Bleſſed Saviour knowing that the Rage of the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees in *Judea*, and at *Jeruſalem* was grown to that height, that they were reſolved to kill him; to avoid their fury he reſolves to continue in *Galilee*, and would not come into *Judea* at preſent, nor go up to *Jeruſalem* into the mouth of his Enemies; his Hour not being yet come. *Learn hence*, That ſo long as it was neceſſary for Chriſt to ſave and preſerve himſelf from Danger; he was pleaſed to uſe the ordinary means for his own preſervation. *Namely*, Retirement and withdrawing himſelf; Chriſt as God could have rid himſelf out of the Hands of his Enemies, by a miraculous preſervation; but he uſes the ordinary means when they would ſerve the turn, and as he would not decline danger when his hour was come, ſo would he not run before it was come, but uſed all prudential means and methods for his own ſafety and preſervation. *He would not come into Judea, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.*

2 Now the Jews feaſt of tabernacles was at hand.

There were three great Feaſts which the *Jews* Celebrated every Year. *Namely*, The Feaſt of the *Paſſover, the Feaſt* of *Penticoſt*, and the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*: This laſt was obſerved in the Month of *September*, after they had gathered in the Fruits of the Earth: whence it was alſo called the Feaſt of Ingathering: At this Feaſt they went out of their Houſes and dwelt in Booths Seven Days, in Remembrance of their living in Tents or Booths in the Wilderneſs, for Forty Years together, before they came to *Canaan*: Now the Inſtitution of this Feaſt being to call to the *Iſraelites* Remembrance their former Condition in the Wilderneſs; Teaches us, how prone and ready we are to forget our Troubles, and the Mercies wherewith our Troubles have been ſweetned; when once they are paſt and over. The *Jews* when ſettled in *Canaan*, going out of their Houſes Yearly and Dwelling in Booths, did thereby teſtifie, that preſent Mercies had not made them forget former Tryals and Troubles.

3 His brethren therefore ſaid unto him, Depart hence and go into Judea, that thy diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doſt. 4 For there is no man that doth any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly: If thou do theſe things ſhew thy ſelf to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Obſerve here, 1. The advice which Chriſt's Brethren, that is, his Kindred, gave him to render himſelf more famous and publickly known to the World: they adviſe him not to tarry any longer in *Galilee*, an obſcure place, but go into the more Noble and Populous Country of *Judea*, and work Miracles there. But what high preſumption was this, in Creatures to preſcribe to Chriſt and direct him whither to go, and what to do. *Obſ.* 2. The Reaſon they offer for their Advice; for no Man that ſeeketh to be known openly will do any thing in ſecret, that is, if thou wilt be thought to be the Meſſias by thy working Miracles, do them not in a Corner; but go up to *Jeruſalem* with us, at this next Feaſt, that the great Men may take notice of them. Such as hunt after Reputation themſelves, and are Ambitious of Vain-glory, and Commendation from Men; they meaſure others, even the moſt Holy and Religious by their own Inclinations and Diſpoſitions; and wonder that others do not follow their Meaſures, for gaining Reputation and Reſpect. Thus did our Lord's Brethren here, but the Wonder ceaſes if we conſult the following Words, *Neither did his Brethren believe in him.* It is no new thing for the Holieſt Servant of God to meet with great Trials from their graceleſs Friends. Chriſt met with this before us; his Kindred according to the Fleſh, not believing in him were a ſore Trial and Temptation to him. Some Martyrs have confeſt that the hardeſt works they have met withal, have been to withſtand the Temptations, the Tears and Entreaties of their deareſt and neareſt Relations.

6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth becauſe I teſtifie of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feaſt: I go not up yet unto this feaſt, for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had ſaid theſe words unto them, he abode ſtill in Galilee.

Here we have Chriſt's Anſwer and Refuſal returned to his Brethren's deſire; he tells them they might go up to the Feaſt at *Jeruſalem* when they pleaſed, and as publickly; but it was not fit for him to appear ſo publickly, becauſe the Doctrine which he taught was ſo odious to the *Phariſees*, and the prevailing Power at *Jeruſalem*; he therefore reſolves to go up privately, that he might not ſtir up the Jealouſie of the *Sankedrim*: but for them that were out of danger of the Worlds hatred; for being the Children of it, the World would love its own; but him it hated, becauſe he reproved its Sins; Where we may *Remark*, That tho' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was moſt freely willing and ready to lay down his Life for Sinners, when the Time was come that God the Father call'd for it; yet he would not expoſe his Life to hazard and danger unſeaſonably. Teaching us by his Example, as not to decline Sufferings when God calls us to them; ſo not to tempt God by running into them, when we may inoffenſively avoid them. *Your time is always ready, mine is not yet come.*

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret. 11 Then the Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he? 12 And there was

much murmuring among the people concerning him: for ſome ſaid, He is a good man: others ſaid, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13 Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Bleſſed Saviour, who came to fulfil the Law, goes up to *Jeruſalem* at the *Jewiſh* Feaſts, according to the Command of God. *Exod.* 23. *Three times a year ſhall all the males appear before me.* Chriſt being made under the Law, ſheweth a punctual Obedience to the Law, and fulfilled it in his own Perſon. *Obſerve* 2. The different Opinion which the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* do expreſs, concerning our Saviour; ſome allowing him the Charitable Character of being a good Man: others traducing him as being a Deceiver of the People. Our Dear Lord we ſee, when here on Earth, paſſed through Evil Report, and Good Report. Is it any wonder to find the Friends of Chriſt branded with Infamy and Reproach; when Chriſt himſelf paſſes under the Infamous Character of a Deceiver of the People? Some allowed him *to be a good Man*, but *others ſaid, Nay; he deceiveth the People.*

14 Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple, and taught.' 15 And the Jews marvelled, ſaying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf. 18 He that ſpeaketh of himſelf ſeeketh his own glory: but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him.

Obſerve here, 1. Tho' Chriſt went up to *Jeruſalem* privately, leſt he ſhould ſtir up the Jealouſie of the *Phariſees* againſt himſelf unſeaſonably; yet he went into the Temple and Taught publickly; his Example teaches us thus much. That altho' the Servants of Chriſt may for a Time, and in ſome Caſes withdraw themſelves from apprehended Danger; yet when God calls them to appear openly, they muſt do it couragiouſly, without ſhrinking; tho' the Danger be ſtill impending. Jeſus went up to *Jeruſalem*, entered the Temple and Taught. *Obſerve* 2. So admirable was our Holy Lord's Doctrine, that the *Jews* marvelled how he ſhould come to the Knowledge of ſuch Divine Myſteries, conſidering the meanneſs of his Education. They were ſtruck with Admiration, but they wanted Faith: Whereas the leaſt Degree of ſaving Faith, is beyond all Admiration without it. *Obſerve* 3. Our Lord vindicates his Doctrine; telling the *Jews*, that the Doctrine he delivered was not his own. That is, not of his own inventing and deviſing; it was no contrivance of his, nor was it Taught him by Men; but received immediately from the Father, whoſe Ambaſſador and great Prophet he was. Again, when Chriſt ſays, *My Doctrine is not mine*; that is, not only mine, but my Father's and mine. For as he was God equal with the Father, ſo he naturally knew all his Counſels; and as Man, had knowledge thereof, by Communication from his Godhead. *Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of the Goſpel is a Doctrine wholly from God; he contrived it, and ſent his own Son into the World to Publiſh and Reveal it. Chriſt was ſent, and his Doctrine was not his own, but his that ſent him. *Obſerve* 4. A double Rule given by our Saviour, whereby the *Jews* might know, whether the Doctrine he Preached, were the Doctrine of God. Firſt, If a Man walks uprightly, and doth the Will of God in the beſt manner according to his Knowledge; *If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of my Doctrine whether it be of God.* There is no ſuch way to find out Truth, as by doing the Will of God. The ſecond Rule, by which they might know that his Doctrine was from God, was this, becauſe he ſought his Father's Glory, and not his own, in the delivery of it. *He that ſeeketh his Glory that ſent him, the ſame is True. Hence Learn*, That the Nature and Scope of that Doctrine which Chriſt delivered, eminently tending not to promote his own private Glory, but the glorifying of his Father, is an undoubted Proof and Evidence, that his Doctrine was of God.

19 Did not Moſes give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people anſwered and ſaid: thou haſt a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion, (Not becauſe it is of Moſes, but of the fathers) and ye on the ſabbath-day circumciſe a man. 23 If a man on the ſabbath day receive circumciſion, that the law of Moſes ſhould not be broken; are ye angry at me, becauſe I have made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day?

Obſerve here, 1. That our Lord having vindicated his Doctrine in the former Verſes, comes now to vindicate his practice in healing the impotent Man on the Sabbath-day, for which the *Jews* ſought his Life, as a violation of the fourth Commandment given by *Moſes*. Our Saviour tells them, That notwithſtanding their pretended Zeal for the Law of *Moſes*; they more notoriouſly broke the ſixth Commandment, by going about to kill him, an Innocent Perſon, he had broke the fourth Commandment, by making a Man whole on the Sabbath-day. *Hence Learn*, That it is damnable Hypocriſie, when Men pretend great Zeal againſt the Sins of others, and do allow and tolerate worſe in themſelves. This is for their practice, to give their profeſſion the Lye; the *Jews* condemn our Saviour for a ſuppoſed Breach of the fourth Commandment; whilſt they are guilty themſelves of a real Breach of the ſixth Commandment. *Obſ.* 2. The Ignomy and Reproach which the *Jews* fix upon our Bleſſed Saviour, in the heighth of their Rage and Fury againſt him. *Thou haſt a Devil*; The King of Saints in Heaven, as well as the whole Hoſt of Saints on Earth, hath been frequently ſmitten and deeply wounded with Reproach. Chriſt was Reproached for our ſake, and when we are Reproached for his ſake, he takes our Reproach as his own. *Moſes*, his Reproach was the Reproach of Chriſt, *Heb.* 11. 26. And he eſteemed it a Treaſure, which did more inrich him with its worth, than preſs him with its weight. *Eſteeming the Reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures of Egypt. Obſ.* 3. The wonderful meekneſs of Chriſt, in paſſing over this Reproach and Calumny, without one word of Reply. Guilt is commonly clamorous and impatient, but Innocence is ſilent and regardleſs of miſreports. Our Saviour is not at the pains of a word to vindicate himſelf from their impotent Cenſure, but goes on with his Diſcourſe, and juſtifies his own Action, in healing a Man on the Sabbath-day from the *Jews* own practice, in Circumciſing their Children on that Day, if it hapned to be the Eighth Day: And the Argument runs thus. If Circumciſion may be adminiſtred to a Child on the Sabbath-day, which is a ſervile kind of Work and Bodily Exerciſe, without blame or cenſure; why muſt I fall under Cenſure, for healing a Man on the Sabbath-day, thoroughly and perfectly, only by a word ſpeaking? *Hence Learn*, That the Law of doing good, and Relieving the miſerable at all Times, is a more ancient and excellent Law, than either that of the Sabbath Reſt, or of Circumciſion upon the Eighth Day. A Ritual Law muſt and ought to give place to the Law of Nature, which is written in every Man's Heart. As if our Lord had ſaid; If you may wound a Man by Circumciſion on the Sabbath-day, may not I heal one? If you may heal on that Day one Member of the Circumciſed, may not I make a Man whole every whit? If you be at pains to cure ſuch a one with your Hand, may not I without pains cure a Man with the word of my Mouth?

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

From the foregoing Argument, Chriſt draws an Inference or Concluſion, that there is no making a judgment according to the firſt appearance of Things; and that Suddenneſs or Raſhneſs, Prejudice or Partiality in judging, overthrows Righteous Judgment. This is the general Application of what Chriſt had ſaid before; and the particular Application of it as to himſelf, comes to this; *Judge not according to appearance, but judge Righteous Judgment*: As if Chriſt had ſaid, Lay aſide your prejudices againſt my Perſon, and compare theſe Caſes attentively, and impartially with one another; and then ſee whether you can juſtly condemn me as a Sabbath-breaker and acquit your ſelves. Such was the perfect In-no cency of our Saviour's Actions, that he could and did ſubmit them to the Reaſon and Judgment of his very Enemies.

25 Then ſaid ſome of them of Jeruſalem, is not this he whom they ſeek to kill? 26 But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing unto him: do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Chriſt? 27 Howbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Chriſt cometh no man knoweth whence he is. 28 Then cried Jeſus in the temple as he taught, ſaying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of my ſelf: but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath ſent me. 30 Then they ſought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, when Chriſt cometh will he do more miracles then theſe which this man hath done?

Our Bleſſed Saviour having vindicated both his Doctrine and Practice, and appeared Publickly in the Temple, and ſpeaking boldly there, the People of *Jeruſalem* knowing the hatred and enmity of the chief Prieſts and Rulers againſt him, do wonder that they did not apprehend him. *Learn*, Almighty God doth and can preſerve his own, in the faithful diſcharge of their Duty, in ſuch an admirable manner, that even their Enemies themſelves may wonder at it, and be Aſtoniſht with it. *Obſerve*, 2. The Argument which the *Jews* urged againſt our Saviour's being Chriſt, and the promiſed Meſſias, *Namely*, That they *knew whence he was*, whereas *when the Meſſiah cometh, no Man ſhall know whence he is*; now herein they aſſert a manifeſt untruth; for tho' Chriſt in reſpect of his Godhead was prefigured by *Melchiſedec*, who was without Father or Mother, without deſcent; (that is, without any that the Scripture mentions,) yet in reſpect of his humane Nature, the *Jews* might know whence he was; for the Scripture plainly pointed out the Tribe, the Family, the Lineage, and the place of his Birth. *Obſerve*, 3. That Chriſt being grieved at this impudent cavil, doth reply unto it with much Boldneſs and Zeal; he *cryed, ſaying, ye both know me, and whence I am; but the Father that ſent me ye know not.* That is, you know me as Man, where I was Born, and of what Family I am, but you know not my Divine Nature, nor the Father from whom I am by eternal Generation, and who hath ſent me into the World. *Obſerve*, 4. What cauſeleſs Rage appeared in theſe Men againſt Chriſt, for declaring the Truth unto them; they would have taken him by Violence, had not the Power and Providence of God reſtrained them for the preſent, becauſe his time to ſuffer was not yet come. *Hence Learn*, That Violence and Perſecution againſt the Faithful Diſpenſers of the Truths of God, have been the Lot and Portion of ſuch in all Ages and Generations. Chriſt experienced it; let his Miniſters expect it. *Obſerve*, 5. That altho' the Rulers at *Jeruſalem* were Angry and Enraged, yet the meaner and inferiour ſort of People believed on him, being convinced by the wonderful Miracles which he had wrought amongſt them, that he was the True and promiſed Meſſias. For ſay they, *whenever the Meſſias come, he cannot do greater and more Evident Miracles then this Man hath done. Learn hence*, That altho' the Grace of God be not enſured to, or entailed upon any ſort of People; yet ordinarily it is the meaner ſort of People with whom it prevails moſt. Many of the common People at *Jeruſalem* were Believing, when the Rulers there were Perſecuting: Men that live in Pleaſure and at Eaſe, ſee no need of dependance upon God; have little inclination or deſire to farther the Goſpel, and to encourage either the Diſpenſers or Profeſſors of it; nay it is well if they do not turn Perſecutors.

32 The Phariſees heard that the people murmured ſuch things concerning him: and the Phariſees and the chief prieſts ſent officers to take him. 33 then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that ſent me. 34 Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 35 Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he go that we ſhall not find him? will he go unto the diſperſed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of ſaying is this that he ſaid. Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

Obſerve here, 1. How enraged the *Phariſees* were, when they heard that ſo many of the common People were brought to believe in Chriſt, and to cleave unto Chriſt, inſomuch that they ſent publick Officers, Armed with Authority to apprehend our Bleſſed Saviour. *The Phariſees and chief Prieſts ſent Officers to take him. Learn thence*, That nothing more enrages the Enemies of Religion, and draws on Trouble on the Preachers and Profeſſors of it, than the ſucceſs which the Goſpel at any time meets with. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Saviour tells them, that as they deſired to be rid of him; ſo ere long they ſhould have their deſire; he would leave them, and go to his Father, and in his abſence they would wiſh for his bodily preſence again, but ſhould not have it. *Learn*, The Deſpiſers of Chriſt have little cauſe to be weary of him, and to ſeek to put him away by Violence and Perſecution; for their obſtinate contempt of him will cauſe him to depart from them, and finally to forſake them. *Obſerve*, 3. How the *Jews* not underſtanding our Saviour's Words aright, Reaſoned among themſelves, whither by leaving of them, he meant to go into ſome *Pagan* Country, and Teach the *Gentiles* the Myſteries of the *Jewiſh* Religion; which above all things they could not endure to hear. *Learn hence*, That it is the ordinary Sin of a a People, privileged with the means of Grace, not to be ſenſible of any hazard or danger of Chriſt's leaving and forſaking them: Till at laſt he forſakes them finally, and caſts them off to their inevitable and unutterable Condemnation. Thus did our Lord deal with the *Jews* here: *I go my way, and whither I go ye cannot come.*

37 In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, if any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.

The feaſt of Tabernacles, (which is the Feaſt here meant) laſted Eight Days; the firſt and laſt of which were to be kept Holy, with Religious Aſſemblies and Sacrifices; and it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, upon that ſolemn day, to offer up a Pot of Water unto God, which they drew out of the Fountain of *Siloam*; with Reference to this Cuſtom, Chriſt here cries with a loud Voice, inviting the People to fetch and draw from him as from a living Fountain, all the Sanctifying Gifts and Saving Graces of the Holy Spirit. *Learn hence*, That Jeſus Chriſt is the Original and Fountain of all Saving Grace, whom if we thirſt after, Repair to, and by Faith depend upon as Mediator, we ſhall certainly receive what influences of Grace ſoever we want and ſtand in need of.

38 He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.

Here again Chriſt alludes to a *Jewiſh* Cuſtom; the *Jews* were wont at Fountains to build great Veſſels of Stone, and in the midſt or Belly of them to have Pipes through which the Water paſſes. Now ſays Chriſt, Thus ſhall it be with every one that believeth on me; he ſhall be abundantly filled with the Spirit of God, in all the Sanctifying and Saving Graces of it. Chriſt and his Holy Spirit are a living Fountain, whoſe Waters never fail; they are not a Water-brook, but a Spring of Waters; we ſhall never miſs of the Waters of Life, if we ſeek unto and wait upon Chriſt for them. *For if we believe on him: out of our Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Waters*; ſufficient for our ſelves, and wherewith to refreſh others.

39 (But this ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.)

Theſe words are the Evangeliſt St. *John*'s Commentary upon the foregoing promiſe; he tells us, that Chriſt ſpoke this of the Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit, which did accompany the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. *For the Holy Ghoſt is not yet given*, that is, not ſo plentifully given, *becauſe that Jeſus was not yet Glorified. Learn hence*, That altho' the Spirit was in ſome meaſure given by God, from the beginning to good Men, yet the more plentiful effuſion of it was deferred, till the Aſcenſion and Glorification of Jeſus Chriſt.

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this ſaying, ſaid, Of a truth this is the prophet. 41 Others ſaid, This is the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh out of the ſeed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a diviſion among the people becauſe of him. 44 And ſome of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In theſe Verſes an Account is given of the various effects which our Lord's foregoing Sermon had upon his Hearers hearts: Some were ſo affected with it, that they believed him to be the great Prophet promiſed to *Iſrael*; *Deut.* 18. 18. Others apprehended him to be the Chriſt: Others contradict both, ſuppoſing him to be Born not at *Bethlehem*, but in *Galilee.* And upon this Diverſity of Opinions, there aroſe a Diviſion amongſt them: And ſome had a mind to have apprehended him, but by an over-ruling Providence they were reſtrained from the doing of it at preſent. *Learn hence*, That Diverſity of Opinions in matters of Religion, even concerning Chriſt himſelf, have been even from the beginning. Some accounted him a Prophet, others the Meſſiah, ſome thought him neither; but a grand Impoſtor and Deceiver. Our Dear Lord, when here on Earth, paſſed through evil Report and good Report; let his followers expect and prepare for the ſame. For Innocence it ſelf cannot protect from Slander and falſe Accuſation,

45 Then came the officers to the chief prieſts and Phariſees; and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers anſwered, Never man ſpake like this man. 47 Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees believed on him. 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are curſed.

Obſerve here, 1. How God reſtrained the rage and malice of Chriſt's Enemies, till his Hour was come; the Officers of the Chief Prieſts, who were ſent forth with a Commiſſion to apprehend him, return without him; but with this Honourable mention of him in their Mouths, *never Man ſpoke like this Man.* Such is the Power of Chriſt's Doctrine, that even thoſe that come unto it with Prejudice, and with a perſecuting purpoſe, may be ſurprized by it, and though not converted, yet bridled and reſtrained: the Preaching of the Goſpel doth ſometimes reſtrain the violence of the Hand; when it works no change in or upon the Heart. Thus it was with theſe poor Officers. *Obſerve*, 2. That the Phariſees being more inraged at the Reaſon which the Officers gave for neglecting their Office, than for the neglect it ſelf; upbraid them that they ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be ſo deceived, whereas none of the Grandees, or learned Rabbies had owned him; only an accurſed crew of Ignorant People followed him; and doted on him. *Here Note*, That when Chriſt came into the World, the great ones of the World not only refuſed to believe on him, but boaſted of their unbelief, as an Argument of their Wiſdom. *Have any of the Rulers believed on him*? Oh no, They were too wiſe to believe, Faith is left to Fools, and accounted Folly by thoſe Wiſe Men. Nay, farther, They count the common People curſed, who did believe on Chriſt. O prodigious ſtupidity! to account them accurſed, who receive Jeſus Chriſt the chiefeſt bleſſing: Great Men have not always the Wiſdom of a Man, but more ſeldom have they the Wiſdom of a real Chriſtian. Great in Honour and Wiſe in underſtanding are a ſweet couple, but ſeldom ſeen together.

50 Nicodemus ſaith unto them, (he that came to Jeſus by night, being one of them.) 51 Doth our law judge any Man before it hear him, and know what he doth? 52 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou alſo of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own houſe.

Here Obſerve, 1. How God ſtirs up *Nicodemus*, though he durſt not openly own Chriſt, yet to plead for him, that he might not be condemned before heard; this was a common Rule of Juſtice, and nothing but what might have been ſaid on behalf of the greateſt Malefactor; he could not well have ſaid leſs, but God ſo ordered it, that it was enough to divert the Storm from falling upon Chriſt at this Time. One word ſhall be ſufficient to blow over a Perſecution, when God will have it ſo. *Obſerve*, 2. They anſwer *Nicodemus* with a Taunt, a Mock, and a Scorn, that no Prophet ever did riſe out of *Galilee*, nor ever ſhould. Therefore Chriſt ariſing out of *Galilee*, as they thought, could be no Prophet. *Obſerve Laſtly*, That tho' they were more and more enraged, yet they ſcatter without concluding any thing againſt Chriſt, for that time every one went to his own home. There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel againſt the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

JEſus went unto the mount of Olives: 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he ſat down and taught them.

The foregoing Chapter gave us an Account of a moſt excellent Sermon, which our Saviour Preached in the Temple, at the Feaſt of Tabernacles. Now the Feaſt being ended, Jeſus did not tarry in the City all Night; but went out of it two Miles, as he frequently uſed to do to the Mount of *Olives*. And altho' it was ſo dangerous for him to be ſeen any more in *Jeruſalem*, yet early the next Morning he returns again to the City, enters the Temple, and falls upon his work of Preaching without fear, and with indefatigable diligence. Oh what a buſie uſeful Life was this of our Saviour's; he ſpent the Day in Preaching, in the Temple, the Night in privacy and Prayer on the Mount of *Olives*; and the next Morning he returns to his work of preaching again. Thus was he always holily and painfully imployed; to glorifie his Father, and to be uſeful and beneficial to Mankind, was his food by Day, and his reſt by Night. Lord, how little do we reſemble thee, if when thy Life was all Pains and Labour, ours be all Paſtime, Pleaſure, and Recreation.

3 And the Scribes and Phariſees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and when they had ſet her in the midſt. 4 They ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moſes in the law commanded us, that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned: and what ſayeſt thou? 6 This they ſaid, tempting him that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lift up himſelf and ſaid unto them, He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her. 8 And again he ſtooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt even unto the laſt: and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt. 10 When Jeſus had lift up himſelf, and ſaw none but the woman, he ſaid unto her, Woman, where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She ſaid, No man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and ſin no more.

Our Saviour early in the Morning entring upon the work of Preaching; *Obſerve*, 1. What a mixt Auditory he had, of *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and common People. All ſorts of perſons came to hear him, but not all with the ſame intentions; the common People came to learn, but the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* came to Cavil and Carp; the latter came to tempt and inſnare him, the former to be taught and inſtructed by him: It is not our bare attendance upon Ordinances, but the purity of our Aim, and the ſincerity of our Intentions, in waiting upon God in them, that is an Evidence of our Sincerity. *Obſerve*, 2. How the Hypocriſy of theſe Phariſees was gilded over with an appearance of Sanctity, as if they were great lovers of Chaſtity, and haters of Uncleanneſs; they bring to Chriſt a Woman taken in Adultery, to be Cenſur'd by him, one that had not known theſe Phariſees, would have concluded them very Holy and Honeſt, very Conſcionable, and Conſcientious Perſons; But Chriſt that ſaw into their Boſoms, ſoon found that all this was done only to tempt him. Thus a ſmooth Tongue, and a falſe Heart, often accompany one another; when we ſee too glittering Appearances, we have reaſon to ſuſpect the Inſide. *Obſerve*, 3. The Puniſhment which the Phariſees ſeek to have inflicted on this Adultereſs; it is Death, Let her be Stoned: Sometimes the Puniſhment of Adultery was Burning, ſometimes Stoning, always Death: Lord! How ought Chriſtians to bluſh, who have ſlight thoughts of the Sin of Adultery, which both *Jews* and *Pagans* held ever deadly? *Obſerve*, 4. Their enſnaring Queſtion, *Moſes commanded ſuch to be ſtoned; but what ſayeſt thou?* The Phariſees deſire no better advantage againſt Chriſt, than a Contradiction to *Moſes* their receiv'd Law-giver: It has been an old Stratagem to ſet *Moſe's* and Chriſt at variance, but they are faſt Friends; they are ſubordinate one to another, not oppoſite one againſt another. *Moſes* brings us to Chriſt, and Chriſt to Glory: Fain would theſe colloguing Adverſaries draw Chriſt to Contradict *Moſes*; that they might take advantage of that Contradiction to condemn Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 5. The Wiſdom and Caution of our Lord's Anſwer; He doth not excuſe her Crime; but bids her Accuſers look at home, and examine their own Conſciences, whether they were not guilty of the like, or as great a Sin: He doth not ſay, Let her be Stoned; this had been againſt the Courſe of his Mercy; he doth not ſay, Let her not be Stoned; this had been againſt the Law of *Moſes*; but he ſo anſwers, that both his Juſtice and his Mercy are entire; ſhe diſmiſs'd, and they aſhamed. It is a falſe Zeal that is Eagle-ey'd abroad, and blind at home: Such as are moſt wicked themſelves, are oft-times moſt ready, and skilful to ſpy out the Faults and Failings of others: We ſtand too near our ſelves to diſcern our own Miſcarriages. The Eye that ſees every thing, ſees not it ſelf. *Obſerve*, 6. Tho' Chriſt abhorred the Sin; yet he does not condemn the Sinner. *Hath no Man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee*, ſays Chriſt. This Chriſt ſaid, not to excuſe the Woman, or to connive at her Offence, but to ſhew that he declined the Office of a Civil Judge, which was to paſs Sentence on Criminals. He therefore doth not ſay, No Man ought to condemn thee, *but hath no Man condemned thee?* Chriſt doth not execute the Office of a Magiſtrate in Judging her to Death; but of a Miniſter, in calling her to Repentance, and Reformation: How ought every one of us to keep within the Bounds of our Calling, when our Saviour himſelf will not intrench upon the Office and Functions of others. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Our Saviour's cautionary Direction to this Adultreſs; *Go, and ſin no more.* Where *Note*, Chriſt doth not ſay, Go and commit Adultery no more; but *Go and ſin no more.* It is not a partial Repentance, or a turning away from this or that particular Sin, which will denominate us true Penitents, or intitle us to the pardoning Mercy of God, but a leaving of all Sin of what kind ſoever; Therefore ſays Chriſt, *Go, and ſin no more.*

12 Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life. 13 The Phariſees therefore ſaid unto him, Thou beareſt record of thy ſelf; thy record is not true. 14 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of my ſelf, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the fleſh, I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me. 17 It is alſo written in your law, that the teſtimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witneſs of my ſelf, and the Father that ſent me, beareth witneſs of me. 19 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jeſus anſwered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo. 20 Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having baffled the Deſign which the Phariſees had upon him; and ſhew'd a Spirit of Divine Wiſdom, in delivering himſelf from that Snare which they had laid for him, he returns to inſtruct the People in the Treaſury. And here *Note*, 1. He Inſtructs them in the Nature of his Office, which was to enlighten all Men with the Knowledge of Divine Truth; ſo that they ſhould not walk in darkneſs, either of Sin or Error, but be led to Eternal Life. *Learn hence*, That the great End and Errand of Chriſt's coming into the World, it was to give Light unto poor Souls that ſat in Darkneſs. *Obſerve*, 2. The Exception which the Phariſees made againſt our Saviour's Teſtimony of himſelf. *Thou beareſt Record of thy ſelf, thy Record is not true.* Indeed ſuch is the corrupt Nature of Man, which is prone to keep it ſelf, and hunt after Vain-glory, that it may render a Perſon's Teſtimony of himſelf ſuſpected; but Chriſt being True God that cannot Lye, and coming out of the Boſom of his Father, as his Ambaſſador; his Teſtimony of himſelf is above all exception, and ought to be credited without farther proof. *Obſerve*, 3. How Chriſt challenges his Enemies the Phariſees for judging carnally of him, and according to the meanneſs of his outward appearance; whereas *he judged no Man.* That is 1*ſt*. No Man as they judged, according to outward ſhew; or 2*dly*, *I judge no Man*, that is, at preſent. My proper Work is not to Condemn any, but to Teach all, and my preſent Office is that of a Prophet, not of a Judge. My coming now is to Inſtruct and Save the World, my next coming will be to Judge and Condemn it. *Obſerve*, 4. Chriſt declares that he is not alone in the Teſtimony given of himſelf; but that the Father did alſo Teſtify and bear Witneſs of him: and that according to their own Law, the Teſtimony of Two was always accounted and eſteemed valid. Now ſays Chriſt, If ſo much weight be to be laid upon the Teſtimony of Two Men, how much more forcible ſhould the Teſtimony of the Father, and of him whom the Father hath ſent ſatisfie you, that what I ſay of my ſelf is true? *Learn hence*, That the Father and the Son, tho' one in Eſſence and Operation; yet are diſtinct Perſons. *Secondly*, That theſe diſtinct Perſons did bear joynt Witneſs concerning Chriſt. God the Father teſtified of him by a Voice from Heaven; and Chriſt as God, bare Witneſs of himſelf as Man, and as Mediator. Surely out of the Mouth of two ſuch Witneſſes, the Truth of Chriſt's Divine Miſſion is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them. I go my way; and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins; whither I go, ye cannot come. 22 Then ſaid the Jews, will he kill himſelf? becauſe he ſaith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall dye in your ſins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall dye in your ſins.

Obſerve here, A dreadful Threatning denounced by Chriſt againſt the Obſtinate and Unbelieving *Jews*, *Ye ſhall dye in your Sins*; that is, in the Guilt of your Sins, under the Power, and undergoing the Puniſhment of your Sins: Lord! what a ſad Word is this, *Ye ſhall die in your Sins*; O better it is a thouſand times to dye in a Ditch; for they that dye in their Sins, ſhall riſe in their Sins, and ſtand before Chriſt in their Sins; ſuch as lie down in Sin in the Grave, ſhall have Sin lie down with them in Hell to all Eternity. The Sins of Believers go to the Grave before them; Sin dieth while they live: But the Sins of Unbelievers go to the Grave with them. While they live they are dead in Sin; and by Sin they fall into Death: from which there is no recovery unto Life. *Obſ.* 2. The grand Sin for which this great Puniſhment is threatned, and that is, the Sin of Unbelief. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall dye in your Sins*; Plainly intimating, that of all Sins, Infidelity or Unbelief is the grand damning Sin under the Goſpel. The Devil hath as great an advantage upon Men, by making them ſtrong in Unbelief, as God hath by making his People ſtrong in Faith. Unbelief renders Sinner's Caſe deſperate and incurable; it doth not only procure Damnation, but no Damnation like it.

25 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even the ſame that I ſaid unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to ſay, and to judge of you: but he that ſent me is true;

and I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him. 27 They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father. 28 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, when ye have lift up the Son of man, then ſhall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of my ſelf; but as my Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things.

The *Jews* hearing our Saviour denouncing ſuch a terrible Threatning againſt them, becauſe they Believed not on him, in the foregoing Verſes; Here they perverſely ask him who he was? Our Saviour replies that he was the ſame he was from the Beginning, even the very Chriſt, and that they were the very ſame they were alſo; the mortal Enemies and Oppoſers of the Truth. But that the time was haſtning when they ſhould be fully convinced who he was. *Namely*, When they had lifted him upon his Croſs, when he was riſen again and aſcended into Heaven, and brought that deſtruction upon them, which he had ſo often threatned. *Learn hence*, That the Sufferings of Chriſt were clear and convincing Demonſtrations both who he was and what he was: The darkning of the Sun, the quaking of the Earth, the rending of the Rocks, the opening of the Graves, were ſuch convincing Proofs of his Deity, that they could not but ſay, *Verily this was the Son of God.*

29 And he that ſent me, is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.

That is, he that ſent and commiſſioned me for the great work of Redemption, he is continually with me, both to aſſiſt and to accept me, I doing every thing that is agreeable to his Holy Will and Pleaſure. *Hence learn*, 1. That the work of Redemption, in the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, was a work well-pleaſing to God the Father, the work it ſelf was highly pleaſing to him; and Chriſts way of managing it was well-pleaſing alſo. 2. That the Reaſon why it was thus well-pleaſing to God, was, becauſe he acted in a conſtant conformity to his Father's Will, kept to his Father's Commiſſion, and executed his Father's Commands, *Doing always thoſe things that pleaſed him. Learn*, 3. That as the Father and Chriſt were inſeperable in reſpect of the Unity of the Divine Eſſence; So the Father was always with Chriſt as Mediator, both to ſupport and to uphold him, to accept and to reward him. The Father hath not left me alone, either in the doing of his Will, or in the ſuffering of his Pleaſure. *Learn*, 4. That thoſe who deſire the gracious and ſpecial preſence of God with them in all Conditions; particularly in times of Suffering and Trouble; they muſt make it their care and ſtudy to pleaſe God, and to obſerve his Will in all things; Then God will be with them in his guiding preſence, in his ſtrengthning Preſence, in his comforting, in his quickning, in his ſanctifying, ſimpathiſing and accepting preſence.

30 As he ſpake theſe words, many believed on him. 31 Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed; 32 And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.

Obſerve here, 1. The Bleſſed Fruit and Succeſs of our Saviour's foregoing Diſcourſe, concerning his Perſon and Office. *As he ſpake theſe words many believed on him.* Not by their own natural Power and Ability; but by Chriſts omnipotent and efficacious Grace; he that ſpake to the Ear, cauſed his word to reach the Heart; Chriſt himſelf that planted and watered gave alſo the Encreaſe. *Obſ.* 2. The Love and Care of Chriſt mentioned to theſe new Converts; he watereth immediately theſe Plants with wholſome Advice and Counſel. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed. Where Note*, It muſt be Chriſt's word, the true Doctrine of the Goſpel; and this abided and continued in, which will evidence our Diſcipleſhip. *Obſ.* 3. A ſpecial priviledge which ſhall follow upon abiding in the Doctrine of Chriſt; they ſhall increaſe in the Knowledge of it, and be made free by it. *Ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free. Where Note*, That Man is Naturally in Bondage and Captivity, by blindneſs of Mind, by hardneſs of Heart, by rebellion of Will. 2 That the means appointed by God for ſetting him at liberty from this Captivity and Bondage, is the Word of Chriſt, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel. *The Truth ſhall make you free.*

33 They anſwered him, We be Abrahams ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free? 34 Jeſus anſwered them, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin. 35 And the ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

Obſerve here, How theſe carnal *Jews* underſtand all that our Saviour ſaid, to be ſpoken in and after a Carnal manner; when he ſpake to them before, *of eating his Fleſh and drinking his Blood*; they underſtood it groſly of his natural Body. When he ſpeaks to them here of a Spiritual freedom from Sin, they underſtanding it of a Civil freedom from ſervile Bondage and Subjection. Alledging, *They were Abraham's Seed, and never in Bondage to any:* Which was a manifeſt untruth; having been in Bondage to their Anceſtors, to the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians*; and in their own perſons to the *Romans*. But this was not the Bondage that Chriſt meant, but a Spiritual Slavery and Thraldom under the Dominion of Sin, and Power of Satan. *For he that committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* That is, whoſoever doth habitually, wilfully, deliberately, and conſtantly allows and tollerates himſelf in a ſinful courſe, he is under the Servitude and Thraldom of Sin. Every Sinner is a Bondſlave, and to live in Sin is to live in Slavery. And this every Man doth till the Son makes him free: Then and not till then *is he free indeed. Learn hence*, That intereſt in Chriſt, and continuance in his Doctrine, ſets the Soul at liberty from all that Bondage whereunto it was ſubject in its natural and ſinful State. Oh happy exchange from being the Devils Slaves, to become Chriſt's Freemen; and alſo freed from the Rigorous Exactions and Terrible Maledictions of the Law.

37 I know that ye are Abrahams ſeed: but ye ſeek to kill me, becauſe my word hath no place in you. 38 I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father, and ye do that which ye have ſeen with your father. 39 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Abraham is our father. Jeſus ſaith unto them, If ye were Abrahams children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye ſeek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

The *Jews* boaſting again that they were *Abraham's* Seed, and bearing themſelves much upon it; our Saviour tells them he knew they were ſo, his natural Children according to the Fleſh; but not his genuine Children according to the Spirit: This he proves, becauſe they did not tread in *Abraham's* ſteps, and do his works; for if either the Temper of their Minds, or the Actions of their Lives were agreeable to *Abraham*, they would not ſeek as they did to deſtroy and kill him, only for bringing the Doctrine of Salvation to them; which he had heard and learned of the Father. *Hence Learn*, 1. How prone we are to glory in our outward Priviledges, and to rely upon them. Whereas theſe are Arguments of God's goodneſs towards us, but no evidences of our goodneſs towards him. 2. That it is very dangerous and unſafe, to pride our ſelves in, and depend upon any external Priviledges and Prerogatives whatſoever. As our being born within the Pale of the viſible Church, our deſcending from Pious Parents, and Holy Progenitors; for unleſs we be followers of their Faith, admirers of their Piety, and imitate their Example, we are none of their Children; but belong to another Father, as our Saviour tells the *Jews* in the next Verſes.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then ſaid they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If God were your Father ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of my ſelf, but he ſent me. 43 Why do ye not underſtand my ſpeech? even becauſe ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,

becauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for he is aliar and the father of it.

In the former Verſes the *Jews* made their Boaſt that they were the Children of *Abraham*; in theſe that they are the Children of God. *We have one father, even God.* This our Saviour diſproves, telling them, that if God were their Father, they would love him, as proceeding from him by Eternal Generation; and in his Office imployed by him as Mediator. Alſo if God were their Father, they would underſtand him ſpeaking from God; whereas now they were ſo tranſported with Malice, that they could not endure his Doctrine with Patience, tho' it came from God. All which were undeniable Proofs, that they were not the Children of God. *Hence Learn*, That none can juſtly pretend any Intereſt in God as his Children, but they that love Chriſt, as being the expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon, and do hear and receive his Doctrine, as coming from God: This the *Jews* did not do, therefore ſays Chriſt, They are not the Children of God. *Obſerve farther*, Having told them whoſe Children they are not; our Saviour tells them plainly whoſe Children they were. *Ye are of your Father the Devil.* This appears by their being acted by him, by their reſembling and imitating of him; their Inclinations, Diſpoſitions and Actions, being all to fulfil the Luſts of the Devil. Now, as his Servants we are, whom we obey; ſo his Children we are whom we reſemble. *Learn hence*, That Men's ſinful Practices will prove them to be Satan's Children, let their Profeſſion be what it will; if in the Temper of their Minds, and in the Actions of their Lives, there be a Conformity to Satan's Diſpoſition, and a ready Compliance with his Temptations, they are certainly his Children, what pretences ſoever they make of being the Children of God. None could pretend higher to the Relation of God's Children than theſe *Jews* did; yet ſays Chriſt, *Ye are the Children of the Devil, for his works ye do.* *Note hence*, That the Devil bears the Relation of a Father to all wicked Men: And this Father-hood doth not proceed from the Act of the Father, but of the Children for the Devil, doth not make wicked Men his Children by begetting them: but they make the Devil their Father, by imitating of him.

45 And becauſe I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the truth, Why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God, heareth Gods words: ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God. 48 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil? 49 Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me. 50 And I ſeek not mine own glory: there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.

Here Obſerve, 1. The free Reproof which Chriſt gave the *Jews*, for their obſtinate Unbelief. *Becauſe I tell you the Truth, ye believe me not.* 2. The Challenge which he gives the worſt of his Adverſaries, *Which of you convinceth me of Sin?* So perfectly pure, Innocent and Spotleſs, was the Doctrine and Life of Chriſt; That altho' his Enemies loaded him with Slander and falſe Accuſation, yet none of them could juſtly convince him of; much leſs condemn him for the leaſt known Sin. *Obſerve* 3. The *Jews* being enraged at this free Reproof, fell a railing at his Perſon; charging him with being a *Samaritan*, poſſeſſed with an Evil Spirit. Our Saviour meekly replies, That he did not deal with the Devil; but was honouring his Father in what he did, and ſaid; And therefore his Father would take care of his honour, and judge between him and them. *Here Note*, That tho' Chriſt uſed ſome ſharpneſs in reproving the *Jews*, and Repreſenting them to themſelves; yet he anſwers with wonderful mildneſs and meekneſs, when he diſcovers his Reſentments of his own Reproaches: How cool was Chriſt in his own Cauſe, but hot enough in Gods!

51 Verily verily I ſay unto you, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death. 52 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou thy ſelf? 54 Jeſus anſwered, If I honour my ſelf, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye ſay, that he is your God. 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying.

Obſerve here, 1. The bleſſed Fruit and Effect of obſerving our Saviour's Doctrine; *He that keeps my ſaying, ſhall never ſee Death:* that is, ſhall be ſecured from Eternal Miſery, and enjoy Eternal Life. *Obſerve*, 2. How the *Jews* miſunderſtood our Saviour's words, *He that keeps my ſaying, ſhall never ſee Death*; as if he meant a freedom from temporal Death, and hereupon they looked upon him as beſide himſelf, to promiſe a Priviledge which neither *Abraham*, nor the Prophets did ever enjoy. Whereas it was not exemption from temporal Death; but freedom from eternal Deſtruction, which our Saviour promiſed to them that keep his ſayings. *Hence learn*, That the miſunderſtanding of Chriſt's Doctrine, and taking it in a carnal Senſe, has given occaſion for the many Cavils and Objections made againſt it. *Obſerve*, 3. How Chriſt clears himſelf of all Ambition in this matter, and ſhews that he did not make this Promiſe of delivering his followers from Death vain-glorioufly, but that God whom they called their Father, had honoured him with Power, to make good what ever he had promiſed to them that keep his ſaying. *Learn hence*, That as Chriſt intirely ſought his Father's Glory; ſo the Father conferred all Honour and Glory upon Chriſt as Mediatot; thereby teſtifying, how infinitely pleaſed he was with the Redemption of Mankind performed by him. *If I honour my ſelf my honour is nothing, it is my Father that honoureth me.*

56 Your father Abraham rejoyced to ſee my day: and he ſaw it, and was glad.

That is, *Abraham* having received a Promiſe, that the Meſſias ſhould come of his Seed, he exceedinlgy Rejoyced to ſee the day of my coming in the Fleſh, tho' afar off with the Eye of his Faith; and in a Figure, in his Sacrificed Son *Iſaac*; And this ſight of his Faith was ſo Tranſporting, that he leap'd for joy. *Learn hence*, That a ſtrong Faith giveth ſuch a clear ſight of Chriſt, (tho' at a diſtance,) as produceth an holy delight and rejoycing in him.

57 Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? 58 Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up ſtones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid himſelf, and went out of the temple, going through the midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by.

Obſerve here, 1. What a falſe and ridiculous conſtruction the *Jews* make of our Saviour's words, as if he had affirmed that he had ſeen *Abraham*, and *Abraham* him, with bodily Eyes; whereas Chriſt only aſſerted that *Abraham* had ſeen his Day; that is, he foreſaw by Faith the Day of his Incarnation and coming in the Fleſh. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Saviour's poſitive aſſerting of his Divinity, or that he had a Being as God from all Eternity; for ſays he, *Before Abraham was, I am.* *Where Note*, That Chriſt doth not ſay, Before *Abraham* was, I was; but *Before Abraham was, I am*; which is the proper name of God, whereby is ſignified the Eternal duration and permanency of his Being. The Adverſaries of Chriſt's Divinity, ſay, that before *Abraham* was, Chriſt was; that is, in God's Fore-knowledge or Decree; but this may be ſaid of any other Perſon as well as Chriſt, that he was in the Fore-knowledge of God before *Abraham* was Born. Whereas undoubtedly it was Chriſt's deſign in theſe words, to give himſelf ſome preference and advantage above *Abraham*, which this Interpretation doth not in the leaſt do. *Obſerve laſtly*, How the *Jews* looking upon Chriſt as a Blaſphemer, for making himſelf equal with God, and for aſſerting his Eternal Exiſtence; they make a furious attempt upon his Life, by taking up Stones to caſt at him, as the *Jews* uſed to deal with Blaſphemers; but our Saviour delivers himſelf miraculouſly from their fury, and eſcapes untouched.

Hence Learn, That when Arguments fail, the Enemies of truth betake themſelves to force and violence. *They took up ſtones to caſt at him.* 2. That as Chriſt diſappointed his own Perſecutors, ſo he can and will deliver his People in their greateſt extremity from the Perſecutors Rage and Fury. 2 Pet. 2. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation, and to reſerve the Unjuſt to the Day of Judgment to be puniſhed.*

CHAP. IX.

AND as Jeſus paſſed by, he ſaw a man which was blind from his birth.

The foregoing Chapter acquainted us with a famous Encounter, which the *Phariſees* had with our Bleſſed Saviour in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*: This being ended, as he paſſed from the Temple, he ſaw a Man lying, poſſibly by the High-way, who was born Blind: Him Chriſt pitches upon as an object fit to exerciſe his Divine Power, in the cure and healing of. They that are Blind by caſualty, may poſſibly be relieved by Art and Induſtry; but to cure one that is born Blind, nothing leſs is required than an Almighty Power. *Learn hence*, That Diſeaſes and Diſtempers, which are incurable by the ordinary courſe of Nature, are not inſuperable to Chriſt's Power, nor impoſſible for him to help, but a proper object for him to magnific his Power upon. Therefore is it here recorded, that this poor Man was Blind from his Birth; ſuch Blindneſs being accounted incurable by Natural means.

2 And his diſciples asked him, ſaying, Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Here Obſerve, Something implied or ſuppoſed. *Namely*, 1. That all Bodily Afflictions, and Calamities do come upon us for Sin. Whereas Afflictions, altho' they always fall upon a Sinner, yet they are not always ſent for Sin; but by way of Purgation and Prevention of Sin. 2. It is here ſuppoſed, that as ſome Afflictions come upon Men for perſonal Sins, ſo others come upon them for parental Sins, and that Children may, and oft-times do, very juſtly ſuffer for their Parents Sins. 3. It is here ſuppoſed, that there is no other Reaſon of a Perſon's Sufferings but only Sin: Whereas tho' Sin be much and often the cauſe of Suffering, yet we may wrong God and Man; yea and Sin too, to conclude, it is always the cauſe of Suffering. 4. It is implied here, That there is a tranſmigration of Souls, from one Body to another; the Diſciples ſuppoſed, that this Soul, when it was in another Body ſinned, and was now puniſhed by being put into a blind Body. This Pythagorean Error was crept in among the Phariſees, and the Diſciples here ſeem to be tainted and infected with it. This may teach us, how far the Holieſt and Wiſeſt of Men are from an Infallible Spirit, and that the beſt Men may be miſled by a common Error.

3 Jeſus anſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him.

Chriſt's Anſwer muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, as if he denied this Man and his Parents to be guilty of Sin, for both he and they had Sin enough, not only to deſerve Temporal Blindneſs, but Eternal Darkneſs. The meaning is, That in afflicting this Man, the Lord did not ſo much reſpect his or his Parent's Sin, as the manifeſtation of his own Glory, in this miraculous Cure. Chriſt doth not deny but that a Man's own Sin, and the Sin of his Parents may be the procuring cauſe of Blindneſs; but that neither the one nor the other was the cauſe in that Man's Caſe; but that the Power and Mercy of God might be ſeen in reſtoring this Man to his Sight, therefore was he Born Blind. *Whence Note*, 1. That tho' Sin be always the deſerving, yet it is not always the procuring cauſe of Affliction. 2. That we ſeldom think of, or hit upon any other cauſe of Affliction, but only Sin; tho' the deſign of God looks beyond the Sin of Man in Afflictions; yet Man ſeldom looks beyond that, or thinks of any other deſign of God in Afflicting, but only Puniſhing for Sin.

4 I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. 5 As long as *I* am in the world, *I* am the light of the world.

Here our Saviour tells his Diſciples, that he was ſent by God into the World, and had a great Work aſſigned him by God, during his abode in it: *Namely*, to Inſtruct, Reform, and Save Mankind; and what our Saviour ſays of himſelf, is applicable to every one of us, in a lower Senſe, we are ſent into the World to work out our own Salvation in the firſt place, and then to promote the Salvation of others as much as in us lies. *Note*, 1. That every one has a Work to do in the World, a great Work aſſigned him by God that ſent him into it. 2. That the time allotted for the finiſhing and diſpatching of this great Work it is a limited time, it is a ſhort time; our working Seaſon is a ſhort Seaſon; *While it is Day.* 3. That after the working Seaſon is paſt and expired, there will ſucceed a Night of Darkneſs, in which there muſt be a ceſſation from work. *The Night cometh.*

6 When he had thus ſpoken, he ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation Sent.) He went his way therefore, and waſhed, and came ſeeing.

Two things concurred towards the Cure of this Blind Man, *Namely*, An Act of Divine Power on Chriſt's part, and an act of Faith and Obedience on the Man's Part. 1. An Act of Divine Power on Chriſt's part, he tempers Clay and Spittle together, and anoints the Man's Eyes therewith, and behold he ſees. What an improbable remedy and means was this, to Humane Reaſon! Much fitter to put out a ſeeing Man's Eyes, then to cure a Blind Man's: Had Chriſt pulled out his Box, and apply'd ſome Medicinal Oyntment to his Eyes, then the Praiſe had been aſcribed to his Skill, not to his Power: But now it plainly appeared, that all the Vertue was in Chriſt, not in the means. Lord! What great things canſt thou do by weak and unlikely means; yea, by oppoſite and contrary means. But it is the praiſe of Omnipotency to work by improbabilities. From the Contemptibleneſs of the means or Inſtrument, always redounds the greater honour to the Agent. *Obſerve* 2. An Act of Faith and Obedience on the Man's part. *He went away, and waſhed his Eyes in the Pool of Siloam, and returned ſeeing. Where Note*, 1. How Chriſt delights to exerciſe and try the Faith of his People, by their Subjection and Obedience to difficult Commands. 2. That true Faith joyned with ſincere Obedience, never faileth the expectation of them that exerciſe it; eſpecially in obeying the moſt hard and difficult commands. Therefore the Evangeliſt addeth, that the Blind Man after waſhing *returned ſeeing.*

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had ſeen him that he was blind, ſaid, Is not this he that ſat and begged? 9 Some ſaid, This is he: others ſaid, He is like him: but he ſaid, *I* am he. 10 Therefore ſaid they unto him, How were thine eyes opened: 11 He anſwered and ſaid, A man that is called Jeſus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and ſaid unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and waſh: and *I* went and waſhed, and *I* received ſight. 12 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is he? He ſaid, *I* know not.

The Blind Man thus miraculouſly cured, returns with much Joy to his Neighbours and Acquaintance, who confer with him about this matter; they enquire whether he was the Perſon cured or not: who was the Perſon that cured him, and where that Perſon was? He aſſures them he was the very Perſon that was Blind, but now cured; and he that cured him was Jeſus, that the means uſed was Clay and Spittle, but where this Jeſus was, or what was become of him he knew not. *Learn thence*, 1. That the miraculous cures of God, work a ſenſible alteration in Men, not only in their own Apprehenſion, but in the Judgment of others. This Miracle ſhined forth among the Neighbours, who having ſeen and obſerved the Blind Man, admire his healing. *Learn* 2. How frankly the Blind Man acknowledges, and how freely he confeſſes that he was the Perſon whom Jeſus had healed. *I am he.* It is an unthankful ſilence to ſmother the works of God in an affected ſecrecy; to make God a loſer by his bounty towards us, is a ſhameful injuſtice. Oh God we are not worthy of thy common favours, much leſs of Spiritual Bleſſings, if we do not publiſh thy mercies on the

Houſe-Top, and praiſe thee for them in the great Congregation.

13 They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the ſabbath day when Jeſus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Phariſees alſo asked him how he had received his ſight. He ſaid unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I waſhed and do ſee. 16 Therefore ſaid ſome of the Phariſees, This man is not of God, becauſe he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others ſaid, How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles? And there was a diviſion among them.

Obſerve here, 1. How the *Jews* who ſhould have been full of ſilent wonder, and inclined to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, ſo omnipotent an Agent, are prejudiced againſt him, and bring the late Blind Man before the *Phariſees*, our Saviour's profeſſed Enemies. *Obſerve* 2. The time which our Saviour choſe for working this Cure, it was on the Sabbath; many if not moſt of Chriſt's famous Miracles were wrought upon the Sabbath-Day. Upon that Day he cured the withered Hand, *Matth.* 12. Upon that Day he cured the impotent Man, at the Pool of *Betheſda*, St. *John* 5. Upon that Day he cured the Blind Man here. Thus Chriſt did, probably for two Reaſons. 1. To confirm his Doctrine which he preach'd on that Day, by Miracles; therefore his preaching and working Miracles went together. 2. To Inſtruct the *Jews*, (had they been willing to receive Inſtruction) in the true Doctrine and proper Duties of their Sabbath; and to let them know, that Works of Neceſſity and Mercy, are very conſiſtent with the due Sanctification of the Sabbath. It is hard to find out any time wherein Charity is unſeaſonable; for as it is the beſt of Graces, ſo the works of it are fitteſt for the beſt of Days.

17 They ſay unto the blind man again, What ſayeſt thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He ſaid, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his ſight, until they called the parents of him that had received his ſight. 19 And they asked them, ſaying, Is this your ſon, who ye ſay was born blind? How then doth he now ſee? 20 His parents anſwered them and ſaid, We know that this is our ſon, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now ſeeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: He is of age, ask him, he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf. 22 Theſe words ſpake his parents, becauſe they feared the Jews: For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs that he was Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 23 Therefore ſaid his parents, He is of age, ask him.

Obſerve here, 1. How deſirous the Phariſees were to obſcure the Glory of this famous Miracle which Chriſt had wrought: In order to which, 1. They Re-examine the Man, to know what his Thoughts were of the Perſon who had done this for him: They judged him to be an Impoſtor and a great Sinner; the Man declares freely, That he believed him to be a Prophet. *Hence we Learn*, That there may be, and ſometimes is, more True knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt in one poor Man, than in a general Council of Learned Rabbies. This Blind Man ſaw Chriſt to be a Prophet, when the Jewiſh Sanhedrim ſaw nothing in him but Impoſture. *This Man is not of God*, ſays the Council; *Verily he is a Prophet*, ſays the Blind Man. 2. They next examine his Parents (being unwilling to believe the Man himſelf) whether he was their Son or not; if ſo, whether he were born Blind, and if born Blind, by what means he now ſees. Lord! what obſtinate and wilful Blindneſs was found in theſe Phariſees? How do they cloſe their Eyes and ſay, We will not ſee? What endeavours are here uſed to ſmother a Miracle, which undeniably proved Chriſt to be the expected Meſſias? They examine firſt the Man, then his Parents, then the Man again, hoping that being over-awed with fear, they would either deny or at leaſt conceal the Truth; but the more they ſtrove to darken and obſcure the Truth, the more conſpicuous and evident they made it. *Great is Truth and will prevail*, how many ſoever oppoſe it, and ſet themſelves againſt it. *Obſerve next*, The Wiſdom and Cautiouſneſs of his Parents Anſwer, they expreſly own, that the Blind Man was their Son: That he was born Blind, but for the way of his Cure they wave that, poſſibly becauſe they did not ſee the Cure wrought, and fearing the Sentence of Excommunication, a Decree being paſt among the Rulers, that *whoſo confeſſeth Chriſt, ſhould be put out of the Synagogue. Hence Learn*, 1. That Excommunication, or Separation from the Society of the People of God, is an Antient and Honourable Ordinance in the Church of God, and as ſuch to be revered and eſteemed. 2. That this Ordinance of God has been, and may be abuſed by wicked Men, and the edge of it turned againſt Chriſt himſelf and his ſincereſt Members. 3. That the fear of unjuſt Excommunication muſt not diſcourage Perſons from confeſſing the Truth, when called to it. The Parents of the Blind Man durſt not confeſs Chriſt, *for fear that they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.*

24 Then again called they the man that was blind and ſaid unto him, Give God the praiſe: we know that this man is a ſinner. 25 He anſwered and ſaid, Whether he be a ſinner or no, I know not, but one thing *I* know, that whereas *I* was blind, now *I* ſee. 26 Then ſaid they to him again, What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? 27 He anſwered them, *I* have told you already, and ye did not hear: Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye alſo be his diſciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and ſaid, Thou art his diſciple; but we are Moſes diſciples 29 We know that God ſpake unto Moſes: As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

Here we have an account of the Phariſees farther practiſing upon this Blind Man to rob Chriſt of the Glory of this Miracle; Firſt they inſinuate with him, and then they frown upon him. Firſt they inſinuate with him, ſaying, *Give God the Praiſe.* As if they had ſaid, Aſcribe the Cure to God, not to this Man, whom they conclude to be a Sinner, becauſe he (broke as they thought) the Sabbath. 'Tis no new thing to ſee Men pretend to aim at the Glory of God, when at the ſame time they are maliciouſly oppoſing Chriſt, and perſecuting his Members. Next they attempt to frown this poor Man into a Denial of the Miracle wrought upon him, or to perſwade the People that it was a Cheat; but it is wonderful to obſerve, how the Boldneſs and Confidence of the poor Man increaſed, God giving him that Wiſdom and Courage which all his Adverſaries were not able to reſiſt or gainſay. Therefore the Phariſees being angry at this Boldneſs of the Man, they revile him for being ſo ſilly, as to become a Diſciple to Chriſt, whoſe Office and Authority they knew not, whereas they were Diſciples of *Moſes*, whom they knew God ſpake unto. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as are led by Malice, and prepoſſeſt with Prejudice againſt Chriſt, will not only think baſely of his Perſon, but refuſe to ſee the cleareſt Evidences of his Authority and Commiſſion. *As for this Fellow*, ſay the Malicious Phariſees, *we know not whence he is*, or who gave him his Commiſſion.

30 The man anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not ſinners: But if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

In theſe Verſes the Blind Man proceeds to vindicate our Bleſſed Saviour, who had cured him of his Blindneſs, from the Exceptions of the Phariſees, and endeavours by ſolid Arguments to convince them, that his Cure (being born Blind) was truly Miraculous, and conſequently proved Chriſt to be of God. 1. The Man admires that Chriſt having wrought ſuch a Miracle upon him, they ſhould be ignorant of his Authority, *This is marvellous that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes.* He lays down a general Propoſition, that no Deceiver or Falſe Teacher is heard of God, or inabled by him to work ſuch Miracles as theſe, but only ſuch faithful Servants as do his Will, are thus extraordinarily Aſſiſted by him. *We know that God heareth not Sinners*; that is, ſuch as love and delight in Sin, ſuch as are in a State of Sin, and go on in a courſe of Sin; God will not hear ſuch, or anſwer the Prayers of ſuch. Indeed God ſometimes hears a Sinners Prayers in Wrath, and refuſes to hear a Saint's Prayers in Mercy: But he never denies a Saint's Prayer in *wrath*, or hears a Sinners Prayers in *mercy*. The Propoſition *laid down*, is an eternal Truth. *God heareth not Sinners*; that is, ſo long as they purpoſe to continue Sinners, and go on in a Courſe of Sin, and remain bold and preſumptuous Sinners. *Learn hence*, That none that live in a Courſe of Sin, can reaſonably expect that God ſhould hear them, and give in an Anſwer of Prayer to them. *God heareth not Sinners: But if any Man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth*; that is, If a Man feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, him the Lord accepteth, heareth, and anſwereth. *Learn thence*, 1. That ſuch as would be heard of God and accepted with him, muſt be devout Worſhippers of him. 2. That it is not enough to prove Men *Religious and accepted with God*, that they are devout Worſhippers of him, unleſs they walk in Obedience to him, and do his Will. *If any Man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth.* *Obſ.* 3. How the Blind Man goes on to prove, that Chriſt had a ſpecial Authority from God, and an extraordinary Preſence of God with him in what he did, becauſe he had done ſuch a Work as was never done by *Moſes*, or by any of the Prophets, or by any Perſon whatſoever ſince the Creation of the World. From whence he wiſely and well infers, that Chriſt was a Perſon authorized by and ſent of God. *Learn hence*, 1. That Chriſt having done that which was never done before, (*namely*, to give Sight to one that was born Blind) was an Evidence of his Omnipotency. 2. That this Act of Omnipotency proved him to be God. Whatever Miracles the Prophets wrought, they wrought them by Chriſt's Power, but Chriſt wrought this and all other Miracles by his own Power. *Obſerve laſtly*, How this Blind Man, tho' unlearned, Judges more rightly of Divine Things, than the whole learned Council of the Sanhedrim. *Whence we learn*, That we are not always to be led by the Authority of Councils, Popes, or Biſhops; and that it is not abſurd for Lay-men ſometimes to vary from their Opinions. Theſe Overſeers being ſometimes guilty of great Overſights. Dr. *Whitby*.

34 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? And they caſt him out. 35 Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out; and when he had found him, he ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He anſwered and ſaid, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſpecial Inſtance of Phariſaical Pride; they account this poor Man a vile Perſon, whom Heaven had mark'd by his Native Blindneſs for ſome extraordinary Wickedneſs. How prone are we to judge them the greateſt Sinners, whom we obſerve to be the greateſt Sufferers. *Obſ.* 2. From reviling they proceed to excommunicating; *They caſt him out*; that is, out of Communion with the *Jewiſh* Church. O happy Man, who having loſt a Synagogue, haſt found Heaven! Behold this Blind Man and admire him for a reſolute Confeſſor, ſtoutly defending the gracious Author of his Cure, againſt the Cavils of the Phariſees, and maintaining the Innocence and Honour of ſo bleſſed a Benefactor. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour's regard to this Blind Man, whom the Phariſees had ſet at naught and excommunicated: *He finds him out*, reveals himſelf more fully to him, and directs him to believe in him. *Where Obſerve*, That the Miracle which Chriſt had wrought upon the Blind Man did not Convert him, and work Faith in him; till Chriſt revealed himſelf unto him, and enabled him to diſcern the Truth of what he revealed. *Learn hence*, That Miracles confirm Faith, but Miracles alone cannot work Faith. The Blind Man had experienced a Miracle wrought upon him, yet remains an Unbeliever, till Chriſt ſaid, *I am he*. *Obſ.* 4. How readily the Man receives the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by Faith upon the forementioned Revelation of himſelf unto him: He inſtantly ſaid, *Lord, I believe*; and in Teſtimony thereof, *worſhips him*, that is, as God incarnate, as God manifeſted in the Fleſh. *Thence learn*, That true Knowledge of the Son of God, will beget Faith in him, and true Faith in him, will be productive of Homage and Adoration, of Obedience and Subjection to him. He that knows Chriſt aright, will believe, and he that believes will worſhip and obey: *He ſaid, Lord, I believe, and he worſhipped him.*

39 And Jeſus ſaid, for judgment I am come into this world: that they which ſee not, might ſee; and that they which ſee might be made blind.

In theſe words our Saviour declares not the Intentional deſign, but the accidental event of his coming into the World. *Namely*, 1. That thoſe who were blind might receive Sight. 2. That thoſe who preſume they ſee, and know more than others, for their deſpiſing the Goſpel, and ſhutting their Eyes againſt the Light of it, ſhould be left in darkneſs, and by the juſt Judgment of God be more and more Blinded. Thoſe who ſhut their Eyes wilfully againſt the cleareſt light, and ſay they will not ſee; it is juſt with God to cloſe their Eyes judicially, and ſay they ſhall not ſee.

40 And ſome of the Phariſees which were with him, heard theſe words, and ſaid unto him, Are we blind alſo? 41 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth.

Obſerve here, 1. How the *Phariſees* who watched all opportunities to inſnare our Saviour, look upon theſe laſt words as reflecting upon them; as if Chriſt did inſinuate, that they were Blind. *Are we Blind alſo?* They that ſhut their Eyes, and will not ſee the light which Chriſt offers to them, are the worſt of Blind ones. *Obſerve*, 2. Our Saviour's Reply to the *Phariſees* Queſtion, *If ye were Blind*; that is, ſimply ignorant of your Duty, and without the means of Knowledge and Inſtruction; *you ſhould have no ſin*; that is, comparatively to what you have, you now ſhould not have had ſo much ſin and guilt upon you as now you have, by ſhutting your Eyes againſt the Light. *But now you ſay we ſee*, that is, being puffed up with the Knowledge which you have, as if you were the only Men that ſaw, this proud conceit of yours renders your condition incurable, and *your ſin remaineth* unpardonable. *Learn hence*, 1. That it is a far greater ſin to contemn the known Laws of God, than to be ignorant of them; Pride is a greater hindrance of Knowledge than Ignorance, becauſe the proud Man thinks he wants no Knowledge. 2. That the moſt exalted Knowledge is inſufficient to Salvation, without a ſuitable and correſpondent practice. The *Phariſees* had the Key of Knowledge at their Girdle; yet our Saviour tells them of a double Damnation: Lord! How ſad is it ſo to know Chriſt in this World, as that he will be aſhamed to know us in another World.

CHAP. X.

VErily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that entreth not by the door into the ſheep-fold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entreth in by the door, is the ſhepherd of the ſheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the ſheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own ſheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him: for they know his voice: 5 And a ſtranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of ſtrangers. 6 This parable ſpake Jeſus unto them: but they underſtood not what things they were which he ſpake unto them.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having in the end of the foregoing Chapter, upbraided the *Phariſees* for their Blindneſs and Ignorance in the Myſteries of Religion, notwithſtanding the high conceit which they had of their own Knowledge: He proceeds in this Chapter farther to convince them, that they were Blind, Leaders of the Blind; tho', they thought and look'd upon themſelves, as the only Guides and Teachers of the People. And in order hereunto he propounds a Parable of the true and falſe Shepherd, which repreſents a good and bad Paſtor and Teacher; and gives us a fourfold mark and Character of a good Shepherd. *Obſ.* 1. The *Good Shepherd enters in by the Door*; that is, he has his Vocation and Miſſion from Chriſt; he comes into the Church Regularly, in a right and approved way and manner; not by any clandeſtine methods, or indirect means. *To him the Porter openeth*; that is, the Holy Spirit who openeth the Hearts of Men to receive Jeſus Chriſt and the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which the faithful Shepherds deliver in his Name, and by Authority received from him. *Learn hence*, That all faithful Paſtors have a lawful call to the work of the Miniſtry: They enter by the right door, and execute their Truſt in a right manner; but ſuch as without a Call from God, unwarrantably thruſt themſelves into the Miniſtry, they are no better, nor no other *than Thieves and Robbers* in God's Account. *Obſ.* 2. Another property of a good Shepherd is this, *That he calleth his ſheep by their names.* This importeth three things; 1. A ſpecial Love that he bears to them. 2. A ſpecial care that he has over them. 3. A particular Acquaintance with them, that he may know how to apply himſelf ſuitably to them; which tho' it be eminently verified in Chriſt, yet is it the Duty of every Faithful Paſtor, and under Shepherd in his meaſure to labour after. *Obſ.* 3. *The good Shepherd leads out his Sheep into good Paſtures*; that is, he feedeth them with ſound Doctrine; nouriſhes them with the word of Life. Whereas the hireling or falſe Shepherd, whatever he may do for his own ſake, he has no regard to Jeſus Chriſt; to the honour of his Perſon, to the Edification of his Church, or the Salvation of Souls; but his Deſign is to raiſe and inrich himſelf and ſo he may compaſs that, he cares not how many Souls periſh thro' his neglect. *Obſ.* 4. The laſt property of the good Shepherd here mentioned, is this, *that he goeth before his Sheep*, as the Shepherd doth before his Flock; *Namely*, by a holy Life, and unblamable Converſation: He treads out thoſe ſteps before the People which they take in their way towards Heaven. *And the Sheep follow him*, and are guided by him. *He leadeth out his Sheep, and goeth before them, and the Sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*

7 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again: Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, I am the door of the Sheep. 8 All that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers: but the ſheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Obſerve here, 1. The Character which Chriſt gives of himſelf, *I am the Door of the Sheep*; that is, the only way and means by which Sinners have acceſs to God, and can obtain Salvation; the only door by which Sinners are entred into the Kingdom of Grace, and admitted into the Kingdom of Glory. *Learn hence*, That there is no poſſible way of acceſs to God for fallen Man, but by Jeſus Chriſt. As there is no way of entring the Houſe but by the Door, and thoſe that ſo enter are ſafe; in like manner, ſuch as come unto God thro' Jeſus Chriſt, in the way of Faith and Holy Obedience, ſhall be put into a ſecure Condition, and at laſt obtain Eternal Salvation. *Obſ.* 2. The end and deſign of Chriſt in coming into the World, aſſerted and declared by himſelf; *I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* But had not his People Spiritual Life before he came into the World? Yes, he gave Life to his People before his coming, in a meaſure ſufficient to ſupply their Neceſſity; but ſince his coming, he gives it in ſuch a ſuperabounding meaſure, as may teſtifie his Divine Bounty; they ſhall not only barely live, but live *abundantly*; that is, their Spiritual Life ſhall abound thro' the upholding, ſtrengthning, quickning, and comforting preſence of my Holy Spirit; for having conveyed ſpiritual Life unto his People, in their Regeneration and Converſion, he will cauſe it to encreaſe more and more in their Sanctification, until it arrive at a compleat perfection in their Glorification. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Character which our Saviour gives of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* in general, and of thoſe falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets, which went before him in particular; he ſtiles them *Thieves and Robbers.* *All that ever came before me, were Thieves and Robbers.* *Obſerve*, He doth not ſay, All that were ſent before me, but *all that came before me*, were Thieves and Robbers. So that Chriſt doth not ſpeak this of the true Prophets, who were ſent by God before him; but of the falſe Chriſt's and falſe Prophets, that came of themſelves without any Commiſſion from God. The meaning is, all Perſons that came before me, pretending to be what I am, the true Meſſias; as did *Theudas* and *Judas* of *Gallilee*, &c. they were Thieves and Robbers; that is, they only ſought their own Advantage, while they deceived and ruined you. *Learn hence*, That whoever took upon them the Office and Perſon of the Meſſiah before Chriſt, or whoſoever have ſince uſurp'd a lawful calling in his Church, without his Commiſſion, they are in Chriſt's account no better than Murtherers, Thieves, and Robbers; and they ought to be ſo in the Peoples eſteem. *The Sheep did not hear them.*

11 I am the good ſhepherd: the good ſhepherd giveth his life for the ſheep. 12 But he that is an hireling and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep. 14 I am the good ſhepherd, and know my ſheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep.

In theſe Verſes our Saviour evidently proves himſelf to be the true Shepherd of his Church, by the Marks and Signs, by the Properties and Characters of a good Shepherd, which were eminently found with him. *Namely*, To know all his Flock; to take care of them, and to lay down his Life for them. 1. Jeſus Chriſt the great Shepherd of his Church hath an exact and diſtinct Knowledge of all his Flock; *I know my Sheep*, with a threefold Knowledge, with a Knowledge of Intelligence and Obſervation; he knows them ſo as to obſerve and take notice of them, with a Knowledge of Approbation and Acceptation; he knows them ſo as to approve and own them; and with a Knowledge of Care and Protection; he knows them ſo as to defend and keep them. Thus Chriſt knows his Sheep, *and is alſo known of them*; That is, he is believed on, beloved, and obeyed by them. 2. *He lays down his Life for his Flock*: And for this, doth he eminently deſerve the Title of the good Shepherd. (As for his Power he is ſtiled the great Shepherd.) A good Shepherd indeed, who not only gives Life to his Sheep, but gives his own life by way of Ranſom, for his Sheep. This Example of Chriſt, the great and good Shepherd, in laying down his Life for his Sheep; teacheth all Subordinate and Inferiour Shepherds, to prefer the good of their Flock, even before their own Lives.

16 And other ſheep I have which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd.

Here Chriſt proves himſelf to be the true Shepherd of his Church, from another property of a good Shepherd, which is to take care for encreaſing and enlarging of his Fold, by bringing in the *Gentiles* to it; and by breaking down the Partition Wall, to make one Church both of *Jews* and *Gentiles.* Chriſt calls the *Gentiles* his *other Sheep*, by way of Anticipation; becauſe ſhortly they were to be ſo, and united together with the believing *Jews*, into one Sheepfold; and whereas he ſays, He *Muſt* bring theſe Sheep in, we are to underſtand it not of a Neceſſity of Coaction, but of a Neceſſity of Compact; it being a federal agreement, betwixt the Father and himſelf; that both *Jew* and *Gentile* ſhould be one Flock, incloſed in one Fold, and preſented to his Father as a glorious Church. *Learn hence*, How endearing our Obligations are to the Deareſt Jeſus, that he ſhould account us *Gentiles*, who were afar off, his *ſheep*, (we being ſo in reſpect of his Eternal purpoſe) and make it his Care and Eſteem it his Charge to call us home, and bring us into his Fold the Church, that we might be ſaved amongſt the Remnant of the true *Iſraelites.* *Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold, them alſo I muſt bring.*

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf:

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Here Note, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt certainly foreknew his own Death and Reſurrection. 2. That Chriſt was a Voluntier in Dying, *he layed down his Life*, none could have taken it from him. 'Tis true, his Death was a violent Death, but a voluntary Sacrifice; de died violently, but yet voluntarily: The hand of his Enemies could never hurt him without his own conſent. 3. That as Chriſt died voluntarily with reſpect to himſelf, ſo in a way of ſubjection to his Father's command. *This Commandment have I received from my Father.* 4. That this voluntary Submiſſion of Chriſt to die for us, was the ground of the Father's love to him. *Therefore doth my Father love me: becauſe I lay down my life.* Altho' the Father had many Reaſons to love the Son, yet none was ſtronger than this Obedience of his to Death, even the curſed Death of the Croſs, for the Redemption and Salvation of loſt Sinners; therefore did the Father love him with a more exceeding Love, becauſe he laid down his Life for his Sheep.

19 There was a diviſion therefore again among the Jews for theſe ſayings. 20 And many of them ſaid, He hath a Devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others ſaid, Theſe are not the words of him that hath a devil: Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Here the Evangeliſt ſhews what different effects this Sermon of our Saviour had upon the *Jews*, many of them do calumniate and ſlander him, as one poſſeſſed and mad, and therefore not to be heard and minded: Others of calmer thoughts ſaid, That the Doctrine he taught, and the late Miracle which he had wrought in curing the blind Man, were abundantly ſufficient to confute ſuch a groundleſs ſlander. *Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of Chriſt meeting with diverſity of Diſpoſitions, it is no wonder that it occaſions different effects, to the ſoftning of ſome, and hardning of others; even as the ſame Sun that melteth the Wax, hardneth the Clay; yet is not this to be imputed to the Doctrine of our Saviour, but to Mens Corruptions which oppoſe the Truth, and the maintainers of it. *There was a diviſion again amongſt them.*

22 And it was at Jeruſalem the feaſt of the dedication, and it was winter.

This Feaſt was not of Divine, but humane Inſtitution; it was appointed by *Judas Macchabeus*, and continued Eight Days is an Aniverſary Commemoration for the Repairing of the Temple. Now our Saviour was ſo far from Reproving the *Jews* for obſerving this Feaſt, which is of humane Inſtitution, that he graced the Solemnity with his own Preſence. *Hence obſerve*, That our Saviour held Communion with the *Jewiſh* Church, and did without ſcruple, conform himſelf to the obſervation of their Rites and Cuſtom, altho' they were not originally of Divine Inſtitution. *Learn*, 2. That ſuch a *Chriſtian* as doth peaceably comply with the practice of the Church, in whoſe Communion he lives, in the obſervation of thoſe indifferent Rites and Cuſtoms, which are uſed by her, acts moſt agreeably to our Saviour's Practiſe and Example. Who can with any ſhew of Reaſon cenſure *Chriſtians* for obſerving the Feaſt of the Nativity, who ſee Chriſt himſelf obſerving the Feaſt of Dedication? Certainly no Perſon of ſober Principles, ever queſtioned, but that Eccleſiaſtical Rulers and Civil Magiſtrates have a Power to appoint publick Days of Thankſgiving Yearly, for the Commemoration of Mercies, which ought never to be forgotten. From our Saviour's preſence at this Feaſt, *Grotius* well Notes. That Feſtival Days in memorial of publick Bleſſings, may piouſly be inſtituted by Perſons in Authority, without a Divine Command.

23 And Jeſus walked in the temple in Solomons porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly, 25 Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not: The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me. 26 But ye believe not becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you.

In theſe Verſes we have Recorded a new and freſh Debate betwixt our Saviour and the *Jews*, and therein we have obſervable. 1. The time of this Debate, *ver.* 22. It was *at the Feaſt of Dedication in the Winter*, our Saviour taking that opportunity to publiſh his Doctrine, when a concourſe of People were gathered together at that Solemnity. *Obſerve*, 2. The Place of this Debate, in *Solomon's Porch.* Although the Temple and Porch built by *Solomon*, was deſtroyed by the *Babylonians*; yet when the Temple was rebuilt, there was one like it which retained the Ancient name. *Obſerve*, 3. The Debate it ſelf, *If thou be the Chriſt tell us plainly.* Not that they affected the Knowledge of the Truth, but only deſigned to inſnare himſelf; for if he had affirmed himſelf to be the Meſſias, he had brought himſelf in danger of the *Roman* Governour; becauſe the *Jews* expected the Meſſias to be a Temporal Prince, that ſhould deliver them from the *Roman* Power. Now if Chriſt had declared himſelf ſuch a Meſſias as the *Jews* expected, it might have coſt him his Life. Therefore, his hour not being yet come, he anſwers with his uſual Prudence and warineſs to their inſnaring Queſtion. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's Enemies are full of ſubtil policies, and can turn themſelves into all ſhapes, that if poſſible they may intrap and inſnare him; and accordingly they pretend here great earneſtneſs of deſire to be ſatisfied, whether he was indeed the true and promiſed Meſſias; when in truth they had another deſign. *Obſ.* 4. The Wiſdom and Caution of our Saviour's Anſwer, he refers them to his Miracles. *The works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witneſs of me.* Our Saviour's miraculous works were ſufficient for the *Jews* to have grounded and bottomed their Faith upon, and to have confirm'd them in the belief, that he was the promiſed and expected Meſſias, had not Prejudice, Obſtinacy and Malice blinded their Eyes, that they could neither ſee nor conſider. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How Chriſt points out to theſe *Jews*, the true cauſe of their Infidelity; which was, not the obſcurity of his Doctrine, but their not being of his Sheep; that is, not as yet converted, they not having the properties of his Sheep, which he ſets down in the following Verſes. *Learn hence*, That Mens final unbelief under the means of Faith, is a clear Evidence of their being in a loſt and periſhing condition. Infidelity is the Sin that doth conſign a Man over to Damnation; and to ſuch as ſit under the Goſpel, doth not only procure Damnation, but no Damnation like it.

27 My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me,

Here obſerve, 1. That all ſincere and faithful *Chriſtians* are Chriſt's Sheep, and he is their great and good Shepherd. This Relation implies tender Affection, and powerful Protection, plentiful Proviſion. The tenderneſs of Chriſt's Affection towards his Sheep, appears by pitying their Infirmities, by having a fellow-feeling with them in their Sufferings, by ſuiting their Temptations to the Degrees of their Graces. His Care in providing for them appears, in affording to them the Holy Scriptures, the Miniſtry of the Word, the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and the Operation of his Holy Spirit, to make all efficacious and effectual to them. His Protection of them diſcovers it ſelf, by preparing them for Tryals, by ſupporting them under them, and by delivering them out of them, and by ſanctifying all to them, cauſing them to work together in Subſerviency to his own Glory, and his People's Good. *Obſ.* 2. That Chriſt's Sheep hear Chriſt's Voice, and anſwer the Call of their great Shepherd. They hear the Voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to them in the Scriptures, in the Miniſtry of the Word, in their own Conſciences, in Providences, and they hear Chriſt's Voice ſpeaking to them, in and by his Holy Spirit; and as they hear Chriſt's Voice, ſo do they anſwer his Call; now the right Anſwer to the Call of Chriſt in the Goſpel, is a preſent Anſwer, a willing Anſwer, and an abiding Anſwer. *Obſ.* 3. That all Chriſt's Sheep do follow him their Shepherd. They follow him, 1. In his Doctrine. And 2. in his Example, in his Contempt of the World, in his Freedom in reproving Sin, in the Holineſs and heavenly mindedneſs of his Converſation, in his Meekneſs and Patience, in Charity and Univerſal Goodneſs, and as he was a mighty Pattern of Prayer. *Obſ.* 4. That Chriſt the great and good Shepherd knows all his Sheep. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them.* He knows them ſo as to diſtinguiſh them, ſo as to obſerve and take Notice of them, ſo as to own and approve them, ſo as to take care of them, and provide for them. And as the Lord knoweth who are his, ſo he knoweth who are not his too: As he knows his Sheep, ſo he knows the Goats alſo, and their place will be at his Left-hand. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them.*

28 And I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand.

Obſerve here, 1. The Promiſe made by Chriſt unto his Sheep, namely the Promiſe of Eternal Life, and perſeverance in Grace till they come to the full Fruition of it in Glory. *I give unto them Eternal Life, and none ſhall pluck them out of my Father's Hand*. *Obſ.* 2. The Confirmation he gives of this from his own and his Father's Power, which is employed, engaged, and concerned for them, and for their Perſeverance and Preſervation, notwithſtanding all oppoſition to the contrary, *My Father which gave them me is greater than all: and no Man is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand*. *Learn*, 1, That Eternal Life is the Portion of Chriſt's Sheep. 2. That Eternal Life is the Gift of Chriſt. 3. That Eternal Life is now given to Chriſt's Sheep; they have it now in the Purchaſe, in the Promiſe, and in the Firſt-fruits. 4. That all Chriſt's Sheep are put by God the Father into Chriſt's Hand for Security; *My Father hath given them me*. 5. The Father doth ſo Intruſt Chriſt with his Sheep, as yet to take Care of them himſelf; they are in the Father's Hand, as well as in the Son's, and their being in the Hands of both, doth aſſure them of the certainty of their Perſeverance. *None ſhall pluck them out of my Hand; None ſhall be able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand*; implying, that there are many that would pluck them out of their Hands, Sin, Satan, the World, &c. But *they ſhall be kept by the Almighty Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation*; for who can be too ſtrong for Omnipotent Power?

30 I and my Father are one.

That is, One in Eſſence and Nature, one in Authority and Power, and not barely one in Will and Affection, one in Concord or Conſent. That this is the Genuine Signification of the Words, appears by a threefold Argument, 1. From the Original Words; It is not ſaid, I and my Father are (εἷς) one Perſon in the Maſculine Gender, but in the Neuter, (ἕν) I and my Father are one thing: Now if that thing be not the Divine Being, they cannot be one; for ſince the Father is confeſſed to be God, the Son cannot be one thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2. It appears from the Context; our Saviour in the preceding Verſes, aſcribed the Preſervation of his Sheep to the power of his Father; *None can pluck them out of my Father's Hand*; and he aſcribes it alſo to his own Power, *None ſhall pluck them out of my Hand*, plainly intimating, that his Sheep were equally ſafe in his own Hand, as well as in his Father's, for ſays he, *I and my Father are one*, that is, one in Power; and if they be one in Power, they muſt be one in Nature, unleſs we make an Almighty Creature, which is a Contradiction. 3. It appears evidently by what follows in the next Verſe, that the *Jews* underſtood our Saviour in this Senſe, why elſe did they take up Stones to ſtone him? *We ſtone thee*, ſay they, *for Blaſphemy, becauſe thou being a Man, makeſt thy ſelf God*. The *Jews* took up our Saviour's meaning aright, and were ſatisfied, that when he ſaid, *I and my Father are one*, he aſſerted himſelf, to be God, and deſerved to dye, and well he had deſerved it, if he had not been God. The Adverſaries of our Saviour's Divinity to elude the force of theſe Words which makes ſo much againſt them, interpret them thus, *I and my Father are one*; that is, ſay they, we are (βουλήσει) one in Will and Affection, one in Concord and Conſent: This is a Truth, but not the great Truth contained in theſe Words; for thus Believers are one with God, and one with one another; namely, by a Harmony of Wills and Deſires; ſo far as they are Regenerated, God's Will and theirs are Uniſons, they will and deſire the ſame thing, and are of one Heart and of one Mind. But God and Chriſt are one in a much higher Senſe than Chriſt and Believers are one, namely, one in Eſſence and Nature, one in Authority and Power, Chriſt being Conſubſtantial with God. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is for Nature Co-eſſential; for Dignity Co-equal; and for Duration, Co-eternal with the Father. 2. That although Chriſt be one in Eſſence with the Father, yet are they diſtinct Perſons one from another, *I and my Father, we are one*. 3. *Learn hence*, That the Son being one in Eſſence, one in Power, one in Conſent and Will with the Father, they are both equally concerned for the Perſeverance of the Saints, for preſerving them in Grace, and for bringing them to Glory. *None ſhall pluck them out of mine or my Father's Hand*; for *I and my Father are One*. If the Power be the ſame, the Eſſence muſt be the ſame.

31 Then the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him. 32 Jeſus anſwered them, Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of thoſe works do ye ſtone me? 33 The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou being a man, makeſt thy ſelf God.

Obſerve here, 1. How the *Jews* underſtood our Saviour affirming, That he and his Father are one; that is, one in Eſſence and Nature, and himſelf a Perſon equal with God. This they look'd upon as Blaſphemy in him, to arrogate to himſelf what is proper to God only. *Obſ.* 2. That the *Jews* look'd upon it as a piece of Juſtice in them to Stone Chriſt for this apprehended Blaſphemy. *Then the Jews took up Stones to ſtone him.* According to the Law of God, the Blaſphemer was to be ſtoned to Death, but then he was firſt to be Judicially Tryed and Judged; But ſuch was the furious and fiery Zeal of theſe *Jews*, that in a tumultuous manner they attempt to Stone him to Death. Lord! How far doth the Fury of Men in oppoſing Truth, out-ſtrip the true Zeal of thy Faithful Servants in defending Truth. *Obſ.* 3. With what Meekneſs our Lord receives this horrid Indignity of Stoning (for it is probable, that ſome Stones were caſt at him, he ſaying, *For which of theſe Works do ye ſtone me?*) He clears his own Innocence, and expoſtulates with them for rewarding him Evil for Good. *Many good Works have I ſhewed you from my Father*; that is, by my Father's Authority and Commiſſion; I have been ſight to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, a Tongue to the Dumb, and Hearing to the Deaf; Do any of theſe Works deſerve ſuch uſage as Stoning at your Hands? *Learn hence*, That ſuch was the perfect and ſpotleſs Innocency of Chriſt in all his Actions, that he durſt, and did appeal to the Conſciences of his moſt inveterate Adverſaries; *For which of theſe Works do ye ſtone me?*

34 Jeſus anſwered them, Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the ſcripture cannot be broken: 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?

Here our Saviour by a twofold Argument, vindicates himſelf from the Imputation of Blaſphemy, in aſſerting himſelf to be God. 1. Becauſe the Old Teſtament gave to Magiſtrates and Judges the Title of Gods, as *Pſal.* 82. 6. *I have ſaid, Ye are Gods.* Now Chriſt argues ſtrongly from the leſs to the greater, thus: If Judges and Magiſtrates may be called Gods, becauſe they are Commiſſioned by him, and derive their Authority from him; how much more is that Title due to me, who was Sanctify'd, Separated and Ordained for a Mediator, and Appointed to the Work of Redemption, before I came into the World, and conſequently was God from all Eternity? This Place the *Socinians* (thoſe profeſſed Adverſaries of our Saviour's Godhead) produce, to prove, That Chriſt was not God by Nature, but only in reſpect of his Sanctification and Miſſion. It is a certain Truth, That he that was Sanctified and ſent was the Son of God; but he was not therefore the Son of God, becauſe Sanctified and ſent. His Sanctification was not the Ground of his Sonſhip; but his Sonſhip was the cauſe of his Sanctification. Chriſt was not therefore God's Son, becauſe he was Sanctify'd and ſent, but he was therefore Sanctify'd and ſent, becauſe he was his Son. He was a Son before he was ſent, even from Eternity; otherwiſe, it muſt have been ſaid, That God ſent him to be his Son, and not that God ſent his Son. This ſuppoſes him before he was ſent to have been actually his Son, as certainly he was from before the Foundations of the World, *Prov.* 8. 23. *I was ſet up from Everlaſting, from the Beginning or ever the Earth was.*

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

Here we have a ſecond Argument, by which our Saviour proves, that it was no Blaſphemy to call himſelf God; But that he was God in very *deed*, *Namely* an Argument taken from his Works. *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe* *me not*: And the Argument runs thus, If (ſays Chriſt) I do thoſe miraculous Works which no Power leſs than a Divine Power can effect, then you ought by theſe Works to be led to believe and acknowledge, that I am truly and really God: But the Works which I do are the Effect and Product of an Omnipotent Power, therefore you ought to believe That I am one in Eſſence with the Father, there being a mutual Inexiſtence of one Perſon in the other, ſo that the Father is in me, and I in him; and thus I and the Father are one. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt never required of his Diſciples and Followers an Implicit Faith, or a blind Obedience, but as he ſubmitted his Doctrine to the Tryal of Reaſon, ſo he ſubmitted his Miracles to the Examination and Judgment of Senſe; therefore he ſays, *If I do not the Works of my Father*, that is, Divine Works, *believe me not* to be a Divine Perſon.

39 Therefore they ſought again to take him: but he eſcaped out of their hand: 40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized: and there he abode. 41 And many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, John did no miracle: but all things that John ſpake of this man, were true. 42 And many believed on him there.

Obſerve here, 1. The Violence and Fury of theſe unbelieving Jews againſt the Holy and Innocent Jeſus: *They ſought again to take him*. *Obſerve*, 2. The prudential Care of Chriſt for his own Preſervation; his time being not yet come, he withdraws from *Jeruſalem*, the Neſt of his Enemies, and goes beyond *Jordan*; when Chriſt was perſecuted in one City, he fled to another; he has ſanctified a State of Perſecution to his Miniſters and Members, by his own being in it. 'Tis no diſgrace for any of them to fly, when their Captain did it, and bids them do it, ſaying, *When they perſecute you in one City, flee unto another*. *Obſerve*, 3. The Succeſs of Chriſt's Miniſtry beyond *Jordan*; *Many reſorted to him, and believed on him*. This Place about *Jordan*, was the Place where *John* had exerciſed a great part of his Miniſtry, and now many Years after *John*'s Death, the Fruit of his Miniſtry appears, for *many believed on him there*; that is, about *Jordan* where *John* had preached and baptized. *Learn thence*, That the Labours of faithful Miniſters may ſeem to be loſt, and lye long like Seed under the Ground, and yet at laſt by ſome new Watering, may ſpring up, and the Fruit appear in abundance. Here *John*'s Miniſtry about *Jordan* hath freſh Fruit upon Chriſt's coming long after *John* was dead. *Obſerve*, 4. The Dignity of Chriſt above *John*; *John did no Miracle*; but Chriſt did all. The Wiſdom of God ſo ordered it, that tho' the Old Teſtament Prophets *Elija* and *Eliſha*, wrought many Miracles for the Confirmation of their Divine Miſſion, yet *John the Baptiſt* coming immediately before Chriſt as his Meſſenger and Forerunner, wrought none, for theſe three Reaſons probably. 1. That ſo the Glory of Chriſt in working Miracles, when he came upon the Stage of his Miniſtry, might be the more clear and evident. 2. That the Evidence of Chriſt's being the Meſſias, might be made the more clear by the Miracles which he wrought. 3. That the Minds of the People might not be divided and diſtracted between *John* and Chriſt, and that there might be no Pretence of Competition between them: *Therefore* John *did no Miracle; but all things that* John *ſpake of Chriſt were true.*

CHAP. XI.

NOw a certain man was ſick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her ſiſter Martha. 2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whoſe brother Lazarus was ſick.) 3 Therefore his ſiſters ſent unto him, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick. 4 When Jeſus heard that, he ſaid, This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

This Chapter relates unto us, the Miraculous Power of Chriſt in raiſing of dead *Lazarus*, which as it was one of his laſt, ſo was it one of the greateſt Miracles which he wrought; and yet we find none of the Evangeliſts making mention of it, but only St. *John*; the Reaſon ſuppoſed to be this, becauſe when the other Evangeliſts wrote their Hiſtory, *Lazarus* was then alive, (for *Epiphanius* ſays, he lived thirty Years after he was raiſed by Chriſt) and probably the mention of this Relation might have brought *Lazarus* into Danger and Trouble: but St. *John* wrote his Goſpel after *Lazarus*'s Death. This Miracle was a ſufficient demonſtration of Chriſt's Godhead; None but an Almighty Power could recal a Man four Days dead, from a ſettled Corruption to a State of Life. None but he that created *Lazarus* could thus make him new. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The Tender Sympathy of theſe two endeared Siſters with their afflicted Brother; they feel his Sorrows and acquaint their Saviour with his Sufferings. *Lord! Behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick*. They do not ſay, our Brother that loves thee is ſick, *but he whom thou loveſt is ſick*. Thereby pleading not the Merit of *Lazarus*, but the Mercy of Chriſt. For how can the Love of Chriſt which is Infinite and Eternal, have any cauſe but it ſelf. *Note*, The Perſon whom Chriſt loved is ſick and dies. *Learn thence*, That Strength of Grace and Dearneſs of Reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, cannot prevail either againſt Death or againſt Diſeaſes. *Lazarus* whom Chriſt loved is ſick. *Obſerve*, 2. The gracious Anſwer which Chriſt ſent to the Siſters Meſſage, *This Sickneſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God*, that is, this Sickneſs ſhall not bring upon him ſuch a Death as he ſhall remain under the Power of, to the General Reſurrection, but is only deſigned to give me an Opportunity of glorifying God, by exerting my miraculous Power in reſtoring him to Life. *Learn hence*, 1. That as God's own Glory is his ſupream Aim and End in all his Actions, ſo in particular it is deſigned by him in ſending Afflictions upon his People to glorifie his Power and Wiſdom, Mercy and Love, in and upon them. The Saints Sickneſſes are all for the Glory of God. 2. That God is glorified when his Son is glorified, as none do honour the Father who do not honour the Son; ſo the Father accounts himſelf glorified when the Glory of his Son is advanced. *This Sickneſs is for the Glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*

5 Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was. 7 Then after that, ſaith he to his diſciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8 His diſciples ſay unto him, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee; and goeſt thou thither again? 9 Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him.

Obſerve, 1. What an *happy*, becauſe an *Holy* and *Religious* Family was here, and much honoured by Chriſt: *Jeſus loved* Martha, Mary *and* Lazarus; wherever true Piety dwells, it draws the Eye and Heart of Chriſt towards it. Chriſt had frequently and familiarly lodged under their Roof, and he rewards them for their Entertainment, with his Love; *Jeſus loved* Martha *and her Siſter*: *Where Note*, That *Martha* is here named firſt, tho' elſewhere *Mary* had the Precedency, to ſhew no doubt, that they were both equally dear to Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 2. That altho' Chriſt loved *Lazarus*, yet he ſeems to neglect him, he delays going to him for ſome days: But could Chriſt abſent himſelf from one ſo long, whom he loved ſo well? we find he did: Let us take heed then that we do not miſ-interpret Chriſt's Delays. He ſeldom comes at our time, but never ſtays beyond his own. Our Saviour had a double End in ſtaying thus long, *Namely*, for greatning of the Miracle, and confirming of their Faith. Had Chriſt gone before *Lazarus* was dead, they might have attributed his Recovery rather to the ſtrength of Nature, than to Chriſt's miraculous Power; or had Chriſt raiſed *Lazarus* as ſoon as he was Dead, they might peradventure have thought it rather ſome Trance or Extaſie, than a Death and Diſſolution; therefore Chriſt ſtays ſo many days, that God might be the more glorified, and his own omnipotent Power the more magnified. *We Learn then*, That when Chriſt delays to help them whom he dearly loves, it is always for wiſe ends and holy purpoſes. *Obſ.* 3. How the Diſciples, tho' they were dearly affected ed to *Lazarus*, (for they had learned to love where their Maſter loved;) yet they diſcourage Chriſt from going to him into *Judea*, for fear of violence offered to him. *Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither again?* Here the Diſciples pleaded for their Maſter's ſafety, at the ſame time aiming at their own; they were to go with him into *Judea*, and they well knew that their Danger was inwrapped in his, therefore they ſeek to divert him from his intention. Oh how has the fear of Suffering made many of the Friends of Chriſt decline an Opportunity of glorifying God, and doing good to others: But cannot God give ſafety in the midſt of Danger, if he pleaſeth? let us not then chuſe our way according to our own apprehenſions, either of Danger or Safety; but as we ſee God going before us, if our call be clear, let us go on with Courage, whatever difficulties lye in our way. *Obſ.* 4. How our Saviour corrects theſe fears of his Diſciples, by acquainting them with his *call* from God, to undertake this Journey into *Judea*. *Are there not Twelve hours in the day? If a Man walk therein he ſtumbleth not: but in the Night he ſtumbleth.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, As he that walks in the Day is in no Danger of ſtumbling, but in the Night he is in Danger: So as long as I have a call from God, and my working time laſts, there is a Divine Providence, that will watch over me and ſecure me from all Danger; now my Day is not fully ſpent, and therefore it is not in the Power of mine Enemies to precipitate my Paſſion, or to bring the Night of Sufferings upon me before the appointed time; but ere long the Night will come on, the working time will be over, and then ſhall both I and you ſtumble upon Death; but while the Day laſteth we are ſafe. *Learn hence*, 1. Every Man has his Twelve Hours; that is, his working time aſſigned him by God in this World. 2. While theſe hours are ſpent, and whilſt his working time is unexpired, he ſhall not Stumble, he ſhall not Die, he ſhall not be diſabled from working, while God has any work for him to do; neither the Malice of Men, nor the rage of Devils ſhall take them off till their work be finiſhed. 3. Every Man has his Night as well as his Day, in which he muſt expect and prepare to ſtumble; that is, to fall by Death, for when God has done his Work by us and with us, he will withdraw his Protection from us, but not his care over us. We ſtumble upon Death, and fall into the Grave; but God receives us to himſelf, and at the end of our working Seaſon rewards us for our work.

11 Theſe things ſaid he: and after that, he ſaith unto them, Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of ſleep.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour coming near to *Bethany*, tells his Diſciples that *Lazarus* Sleepeth; that is, plainly he was Dead. This ſhewed his Omniſciency, and that he was truly God; for he had received no advice of his Death from any Perſon, but as God he knew that he was Deceaſed. *Obſerve* 2. The ſweet Title given both to Death and *Lazarus*. Death is called *a ſleep*, *Lazarus* is ſtiled *a friend*; yet Chriſt ſays not my friend, but our friend *Lazarus* ſleepeth; intimating, that gracious Familiarity and Mutual Friendſhip which was betwixt himſelf and all his Members. *Learn hence*, 1. That all true Believers are Chriſt's Friends. 2. That the Friends of Chriſt muſt Die as well as others. 3. That their Death is but a Sleep, *Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth.* It followeth, *But I go, that I may awake him out of ſleep.* *Obſerve*, Chriſt ſays not, we will go and awake him, but I will go and I will awake him. The Diſciples who were Companions in the way, muſt not be Partners in the Work; Witneſſes they may be, Actors they cannot be; none can awake *Lazarus* but the maker of *Lazarus*. Who can command the Soul to come down, and meet the Body, and who can command the Body to riſe up and meet the Soul, but that God that created both Soul and Body? Lord! It is our Comfort againſt the Dread and Terror of Death, that our Reſurrection depends upon thy Almighty Power. *I will go, that I may awake him out of ſleep.*

12 Then ſaid his diſciples, Lord, if he ſleep, he ſhall do well. 13 Howbeit Jeſus ſpake of his death: but they thought that he had ſpoken of taking of reſt in ſleep. 14 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your ſakes, that I was not there, (to the intent ye may believe) nevertheleſs, let us go unto him. 16 Then ſaid Thomas which is called Didymus, unto his fellow diſciples, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him.

Obſerve here, 1. How deſirous the Diſciples were that Chriſt ſhould not go to *Bethany* where *Lazarus* was, *Bethany* being within two Miles of *Jeruſalem*, where the ſeat of our Saviour's Enemies was. But our Lord knowing his Call to be clear, Reſolves to go, *Nevertheleſs* (ſays Chriſt) *let us go unto him.* Oh Love ſtronger than Death! the Grave cannot ſeparate betwixt Chriſt and his Friends; other Friends accompany us to the brink of the Grave, and there they leave us to Worms and Duſt, for Death hath both horror and noyſomneſs to attend it: But for thee, O Saviour, the Grave-ſtone, the Earth, the Coffin, are no Bounder's of thy dear Reſpects. Bleſſed be God, that neither Life nor Death can ſeparate from the Love of Chriſt; but even after Death and Burial he is graciouſly affected to thoſe he loves. Chriſt has a Gracious Regard to the Duſt of his Saints: Tho' his holy ones ſee Corruption, they ſhall not always lye under the power of Corruption; their dead Bodies are a part of the undoubted Members of Chriſt's Myſtical Body. Bleſſed be God, the time is coming when Chriſt will knock at the Door of his Childrens Graves, and call them up out of their Bed of Duſt, *and they ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God and live.* *Obſ.* 2. The Wiſe and Holy deſign of Chriſt in delaying to go to *Bethany*, till *Lazarus* was Dead; *Namely*; That he might at once raiſe *Lazarus* his Dead Body, and his Diſciples Faith, confirming them in the Belief, that he was the Son of God, and the true Meſſias. But could the Faith of the Apoſtles want confirmation, who had ſeen ſo many Miracles wrought by our Saviour, and had lived under his Miniſtry all the time of it? Yes, the Faith of the moſt eminent Saints, even of Apoſtles themſelves, wants Confirmation in this ſtate of weakneſs and imperfection, and is capable of Growth. *I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.* *Obſ.* 3. The great Paſſion which *Thomas* expreſſes upon the notice given by Chriſt of *Lazarus* his Death: *Plainly, Lazarus is Dead*, ſays Chriſt; *Let us go and die with him*, ſays *Thomas*. Oh what paſſionate and impatient expreſſions do ſometimes drop from our Mouths, on the occaſion of the Death of our dear Relations! We are ready to be ſo affected with the Death of our Friends, as to wiſh our ſelves out of the World, that we might be with them. But we muſt remember that it is God that appoints us our ſeveral Poſts, and particular Stations, which we muſt keep, till the Wiſdom of God ſees fit to remove us.

17 Then when Jeſus came, he found that he had lien in the grave four days already. 18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jeruſalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, aſſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him. But Mary ſat ſtill in the houſe. 21 Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now whatſoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Obſerve here, 1. The length of time which Chriſt deſignedly delayed before he would come to *Lazarus* his Grave; he was not above ſix Miles off *Bethany*, being within two Miles of *Jeruſalem*, and *Jeruſalem* within four Miles of *Bethabara* where Chriſt now was, and yet our Saviour comes not of four Days; doubtleſs, that the Miracle of *Lazarus*'s Reſurrection might be the more conſpicuous and remarkable. Chriſt could as eaſily have cured *Lazarus*'s being ſick, as have raiſed him being dead; and as eaſily have raiſed him the firſt day as the fourth day; but that he had not carried along with it ſuch a full conviction of Chriſt's Almighty Power. Therefore, that he might draw the eyes of their Faith more ſtedfaſtly to behold and admire his Almighty Power, our Saviour defers his coming till *Lazarus* had been dead four Days. *Obſerve*, 2. The civil uſage of mourning with thoſe that mourn for the Dead: Anciently they mourned Thirty Days, and ſometimes Forty for a dear Relation. *Numb.* 20. 29. During which time, Neighbours and Friends came to Viſit and Relieve them in their ſadneſs with ſuch conſolatory Arguments as they had. Chriſtian Religion doth not condemn natural Affection: Humane Paſſions are not ſinful, if not exceſſive; to be above the ſtroke of Paſſions, is a condition equal to Angels; to be in a ſtate of ſorrow without the ſenſe of Sorrow is a diſpoſition beneath the Beaſts; but duly to regulate our Sorrows, and ſet Boundaries to our Grief, is the Wiſdom, the Duty, the Intereſt, and the excellency of a Chriſtian. As to be above all Paſſions will be our Happineſs in Heaven, ſo to regulate and rectifie our Paſſions, is a great part of our Holineſs on Earth. *Obſerve* 3. Although *Martha* was a true Mourner for the Death of her Brother, yet ſhe doth not ſo far indulge to Grief, but upon the firſt notice of Chriſt's approach ſhe ariſes and goes forth to meet him, with a Mournful moan in her Mouth, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.* *Where Obſerve,* How Faith and Infirmity were mixt together, Faith appeared in that firm perſwaſion which ſhe had of Chriſt's Power, as if Death durſt not ſhew its Face in Chriſt's preſence, *hadſt thou been here my brother had not died.* But then her Infirmity appeared in limiting Chriſt both to time and place; to Place, *if thou hadſt been here:* As if Chriſt could not, (if it had pleaſed him) ſave his Life abſent as well as preſent; then to time, *now he ſtinketh*; as if ſhe had ſaid, you are come, but alas! too late; you have ſtayed too long, he is paſt Recovery, the Grave has ſwallowed him up; as if Death would not deliver up its Priſoner at the command of Chriſt; Oh the imperfect Compoſition of the beſt of Saints, what a mixture of Faith and Infirmity is found in the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians! This alſo farther appears in her next words, *ver.* 22. *I know, that whatſoever thou ſhalt ask of God he will give it thee*: She ſeems not to believe that Chriſt was able to raiſe him by his own immediate Power, but muſt obtain Power of God to do it, as the Prophets were wont to do, that raiſed the Dead. She thought Chriſt a Perſon highly in God's favour, but ſcarce believed him able to raiſe *Lazarus* by his own Power; had her Faith extended to a Belief that Chriſt was equal with the Father, and that the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him, ſhe would not have queſtioned his Power to raiſe him from the Grave; for though Chriſt as Mediator did apply himſelf by Prayer to God at the raiſing of dead *Lazarus, ver.* 41, 42. Yet as God he had a Power of himſelf to raiſe *Lazarus*, an Almighty Power communicated with his Eſſence from the Father, by an eternal and ineffable Generation.

23 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy brother ſhall riſe again. 24 Martha ſaith unto him, I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day. 25 Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the reſurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live. 26 And whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me, ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this?

Here Obſerve, 1. Chriſt's meek Anſwer to *Martha*'s paſſionate Diſcourſe, he takes no notice of the forementioned failings, but comforts her with a promiſe of her Brother's Reſurrection, *Thy Brother ſhall riſe again.* *Thence Learn,* That the Knowledge and Belief of the General Reſurrection is, and ought to be a ſufficient ſupport under the Loſs of our endeared Friends, who die in the Lord. *Obſerve* 2. That the Doctrine of the general Reſurrection was no new Doctrine. *Job* believed it, *ch.* 19. 26. *Daniel* publiſh'd it, *ch.* 12. 1. The *Phariſees* had a notion of it, but *Martha* here makes it an Article of her Faith. *I know he ſhall riſe again in the Reſurrection at the laſt Day.* *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſt particularly inſtructs *Martha* in the cauſe of the Reſurrection, acquainting her that he himſelf is the Author and efficient cauſe of it. *I am the Reſurrection and the Life.* That is, I am the Author and principal efficient cauſe of the Reſurrection; And this with reſpect to both Natures. 1. His Divine Nature is the efficient cauſe of the Reſurrection; he ſhall raiſe our Bodies out of the Duſt by the Power of his Godhead. 2. His Humane Nature is the exemplary cauſe or pattern of the Reſurrection: For which Reaſon Chriſt is called the *firſt born from the Dead.* For tho' ſome were raiſed before him: Yet was his Reſurrection the cauſe of their Reſurrection. Hence St. *Paul* argues from Chriſt's Reſurrection, the certainty of the Reſurrection of his Members; Chriſt and Believers are one Myſtical Body, therefore is not Chriſt perfectly Riſen till all his Members are riſen with him. Indeed Chriſt's Perſonal Reſurrection was perfect when he aroſe, and all Believers aroſe repreſentatively in him; Yet till all Believers ariſe perſonally, the Reſurrection of Chriſt has not received its utmoſt perfection; but there is ſomewhat behind of the Reſurrection of Chriſt. Moſt fitly then might our Saviour aſſert, *I am the Reſurrection and the Life.* *Obſerve* 4. That Chriſt not only aſſerts himſelf to be the Reſurrection, but alſo the Life. I am the Reſurrection *and the Life*; that is, I am the cauſe of Life Natural, Spiritual and Eternal, and *Whoſoever Liveth and Believeth in me ſhall never Die.* That is, Eternally: tho' his Body ſhall Die becauſe of Sin, yet his Spirit ſhall live becauſe of Righteouſneſs.

27 She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world. 28 And when ſhe had ſo ſaid, ſhe went her way, and called Mary her ſiſter ſecretly, ſaying, The Maſter is come, and calleth for thee. 29 Aſſoon as ſhe heard that, ſhe aroſe quickly, and came unto him. 30 Now Jeſus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the houſe, and comforted her, when they ſaw Mary that ſhe roſe up haſtily, and went out, followed her, ſaying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. 32 Then when Mary was come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his feet, ſaying unto him, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.

Obſerve here, 1. The full confeſſion which *Martha* makes of her Faith in Chriſt as God; *Thou art the Chriſt the Son of God which ſhould come into the World.* A confeſſion which comes neareſt to that of St. *Peter,* (*Matth.* 16. 16.) of any that we meet with in Scripture. Nay, it ſeems more full than *Peter's* Confeſſion; for thoſe additional words *which ſhould come into the World* are not in his Confeſſion; the Sum is, ſhe believed Chriſt to be the very Meſſias, who was Typified and Prefigured, Propheſied of, and promiſed to the Old Teſtament Saints, as the Perſon that in the fulneſs of Time ſhould come into the World for the Redemption and Salvation of it. *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God which ſhould come into the World.* *Thence Learn,* That Chriſt is never rightly believed in, nor regularly depended upon for Salvation, except he be owned, and acknowledged to be the Eternal Son of God. *Martha* was now fully perſwaded of Chriſt's Divine Nature, of which the beſt of the Diſciples till after our Saviour's Reſurrection, had but a faint and uncertain perſwaſion. *Obſerve* 2. How earneſt and intent our Saviour was to diſpatch the errand he came upon, *Namely,* to raiſe *Lazarus* from the Grave, and to comfort the two Mournful Siſters, he would not ſo much as enter the Houſe till he had effected his work; and therefore he goes ſtrait to the Grave, which probably was the place where *Mary* met him: Lord! it was thy Meat and Drink to do the Will of thy Father; it was thy Meat and Drink by Day, thy Reſt and Repoſe by Night: How unlike are we to thy ſelf, if we ſuffer either our Pleaſures or our Profits to divert us from our Duty. *Obſerve* 3. What haſte and ſpeed *Mary* makes to attend upon her Saviour; ſhe aroſe quickly and came unto him. *Mary*'s Love added Wings to her Motion. The *Jews* obſerving her haſty Motion, having a loving ſuſpicion that ſhe is gone to the Grave to weep there; but their Thoughts were too low, for whilſt they ſuppoſed that ſhe went to a dead Brother, ſhe was waiting upon a living Saviour. And ſhe that uſed to ſit at Jeſus Feet, now falls at his Feet, in an awful Veneration; the very geſture was ſupplicatory. And her humble proſtration was ſeconded with a doleful Lamentation; *Lord, If thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.* *Where Obſerve,* A mixture of Faith with humane Infirmity. Here was ſtrength of Faith in aſcribing ſo much Power to Chriſt, that his preſence could preſerve from Death, but here was infirmity in ſuppoſing the neceſſity of Chriſt's preſence for this purpoſe. Certainly he that did raiſe him from Death, being preſent, could have preſerved him from dying, being abſent, had he pleaſed. This was *Mary*'s moan, *Lord, hadſt thou been here,* our *Brother had not died*; full of Affection, but not free from frailty and infirmity. However, Chriſt takes no notice of her errors and infirmity; but all the reply we hear of, is a Compaſſionate Groan, which the following Verſes acquaint us with.

33 When Jeſus therefore ſaw her weeping, and the Jews alſo weeping which came with her, he groned in the ſpirit, and was troubled, 34 And ſaid, Where have ye laid him? They ſay unto him, Lord, come and ſee. 35 Jeſus wept. 36 Then ſaid the Jews, Behold, how he loved him. 37 And ſome of them ſaid, Could not this man, which opened

the eyes of the blind, have cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died?

Obſerve here, 1. The Condolency and tender Sympathy expreſſed by our Saviour, upon this occaſion. *He groaned in his Spirit, and was troubled.* Or as the Original has it, he troubled himſelf, intimating that our Saviour's Paſſions were pure and holy, not like ours, muddy and mixt with ſinful imperfection. The Commotions of his Affections were like the ſhaking of pure Water in a Cryſtal-glaſs which ſtill remain clear; and they aroſe and were calmed at his pleaſure; he was not overpowered by them, but had them at his command. *Learn hence*, That as Chriſt took upon him the Humane Nature, ſo he did aſſume alſo Humane Affections; thereby evidencing himſelf to be our Brother and near Kinſman, according to the Fleſh. *Learn* 2. That the Paſſions and Affections which our Saviour had and expreſt, were always Holy and Innocent; he was not without them, but he was above them: They did never violently and immoderately trouble him, but when he pleaſed he troubled himſelf. *Jeſus groaned in Spirit*, and troubled himſelf. *Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour manifeſts his Condolency and tender Sympathy with *Martha* and *Mary*, by his weeping, *Jeſus wept.* Partly from Compaſſion, and partly for Example; in Compaſſion, firſt to Humanity, to ſee how miſerably Sin had debaſed the Humane Nature, and rendred Man like unto the Brute Beaſts that periſh. Secondly, In Compaſſion to *Lazarus*, whom he was now about to bring back into a ſinful and troubleſome World. Thus St. *Jerom*, *Non flevit Chriſtus Lachrymas noſtras*, &c. Chriſt (ſays he) did not weep our Tears, he mourned over *Lazarus*, not becauſe Dead, but becauſe now to be brought again to Life. Again, Chriſt wept for our Example, to fetch Sighs and Tears from us, at the ſight of others Miſeries, and eſpecially at the Funerals of our godly Friends. *Learn hence*, That Mourning and Sorrow, and this expreſt by Tears and Weeping, is an Affection proper for thoſe that go to Funerals; provided it be decently kept within due bounds, and is not exceſſive. For immoderate Sorrow is hurtful to the living, and diſhonourable to the dead, neither is it an Argument of more Love, but an evidence of leſs Grace. *Note* 3. How the *Jews* obſerving Chriſt's Sorrow for, admire his Love to Dead *Lazarus*, *Behold! how he loved him.* Chriſt's Love to his People, is admirable and Soul-amazing, ſuch as ſee it may admire it, but can never fully comprehend it. *Note* 4. How ſome of the malicious *Jews* attempt to leſſen the Reputation of our Saviour, not willing to own him to be God, becauſe he did not keep *Lazarus* from Dying; as if Chriſt could not be the Son of God, becauſe he did not at all times, and in all Caſes exert and put forth his Divine Power. Whereas Chriſt acted freely, and not neceſſarily, governing his Actions by his own Wiſdom, as he ſaw moſt conducing to the Ends and Purpoſes of his own Glory.

38 Jeſus therefore again groaning in himſelf cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a ſtone lay upon it. 39 Jeſus ſaid, Take ye away the ſtone. Martha, the ſiſter of him that was dead, ſaith unto him, Lord, by this time he ſtinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the ſtone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jeſus lift up his eyes, and ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me. 42 And I knew that thou heareſt me always: but becauſe of the people which ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me. 43 And when he thus had ſpoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bonnd about with a napkin. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Looſe him and let him go.

In theſe Verſes we find our Lord addreſſing himſelf to the Miracle of raiſing *Lazarus* from the Grave. Firſt, He commands them to take away the Stone. But could not that Voice which raiſed the Dead, remove the Stone? Yes, no doubt; but it is always the Will of Chriſt that we put forth our utmoſt endeavours and do what we can, in order to our own Deliverance: To remove the Stone and untie the Napkins was in their Power; This therefore they muſt do, but to raiſe the Dead was out of their Power; this therefore Chriſt will do alone. Our Hands muſt do their utmoſt, before Chriſt will put forth his help. The Stone being thus removed, his Eyes begin; they are lift up to Heaven, his Father's Throne, from whence he expects to derive his Power. His Tongue ſeconds his Eye, and he prays unto his Father. Chriſt as God, wrought this Miracle by his own Power. Conſider him as Mediator, and ſo he looks up to his Father by Prayer, yet we hear of no Prayer, but a Thankſgiving only. Chriſt's Will was his Prayer; whatever Chriſt willed, God granted, Chriſt and his Father having one Eſſence, one Nature, and one Will. Neither was it fit for Chriſt to pray vocally and audibly, leſt the unbelieving *Jews* ſhould ſay, he did all by entreaty, nothing by Power. *Obſerve farther*, That as Chriſt when he ſpake to his Father, lifted up his Eyes, ſo when he ſpake to dead *Lazarus*, he lifted up his Voice, and cried aloud. This Chriſt did, that the ſtrength of the Voice might anſwer the ſtrength of the Affection: Since we vehemently utter what we earneſtly deſire; alſo that the greatneſs of the Voice might anſwer to the greatneſs of the Work, but eſpecially that the Hearers might be Witneſſes, that this mighty Work was performed, not by any magical Inchantments, which are commonly mumbled forth with a low Voice, but by an authoritative and divine Command. In a word, might not Chriſt utter a loud Voice at the raiſing of *Lazarus*, that it might be a repreſentation of the ſhrill and loud Voice of the laſt Trumpet at the general Reſurrection, which ſhall ſound into all Graves, and raiſe all Fleſh from their Bed of Duſt? *Obſerve next*, As the manner of our Lord's ſpeaking with a loud Voice, ſo the Words ſpoken by him: *Lazarus, Come forth.* *Mark*, Chriſt ſays not, *Lazarus* revive, but as if he ſuppoſed him already alive, he ſays, *Lazarus, Come forth*; to let us know that they are alive to him, who are dead to us. *Mark alſo*, what a commanding Word this was, *Come forth*: Not that it was in the power of theſe loud commanding Words to raiſe *Lazarus*, but in the quickning Power of Chriſt which attended theſe Words. Oh Bleſſed Saviour! It is thy Voice which we ſhall e're long hear ſounding into the bottom of the Grave, and raiſing us up from our Bed of Duſt. It is thy Voice that ſhall pierce the Rocks, divide the Mountains, and Eccho forth throughout the Univerſe, ſaying, *Ariſe ye Dead, and come to Judgment.* *Obſerve Laſtly*, How readily obedient *Lazarus* was to the Call and Command of Chriſt; *He that was dead came forth*; and if *Lazarus* did thus inſtantly ſtart up at the Voice of Chriſt in the Day of his Humiliation, how ſhall the Dead be rouzed up out of their Graves by that Voice which will ſhake the Powers of Heaven, and move the Foundations of the Earth, in the Day of his Glorification! *Queſtion*, But where was *Lazarus* his Soul all this while, that he was Dead? If in Heaven, was it not a wrong to him to come from thence? If not, doth it not prove that the Soul ſleeps as well as the Body? *Anſwer.* Souls go not to Heaven by Neceſſitation, as the Fire naturally and neceſſarily aſcends upward; But are diſpoſed of by God as the ſupream Governour, thoſe that have ſerved him, go to Heaven, and thoſe that have ſerved the Devil, to Hell, and thoſe that are not yet judged to either place, but are to live preſently again upon Earth, as *Lazarus* was, are reſerved by God accordingly; whether ſhut up in the Body as in a Swoon, or whether kept in the Cuſtody and Hands of an Angel not far from the Body, waiting his Pleaſure, either to reſtore it to the Body, or to return it to its proper place of Bliſs or Miſery. The Scripture has not told us whether, and it would be too great Curioſity to inquire, and greater preſumption to determine.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him. 46 But ſome of them went their ways to the Phariſees, and told them what things Jeſus had done. 47 Then gathered the chief prieſts and the Phariſees a council, and ſaid, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans ſhall come and take away both our place and nation.

Obſerve here, 1. The different Effects which this Miracle had upon thoſe *Jews* who were preſent at the raiſing of *Lazarus*. Some of them believed on Chriſt, but others perſiſting in their Unbelief, went to the Phariſees and informed againſt him. Notwithſtanding all the Evidence which our Saviour gave of his being the Meſſias, by the Miracles which he wrought; yet many rejected him, and refuſed to believe in him, to their unutterable and inevitable Condemnation. *Obſerve* 2. How greatly diſturbed the Phariſees were upon the account of our Saviour's Miracles. Knowing how proper an Argument they were to convince Men, they concluded, that if Chriſt were ſuffered to go on and work Miracles, he would draw all Men after him. *Learn thence*, That Jeſus proved himſelf to be the true Meſſias by the Miracles which he wrought, his Enemies themſelves being Judges. For we find here, the worſt of our Saviour's Enemies were afraid of his Miracles, that by them he would draw all Men after him. *If we let him alone, all Men would believe on him. Obſerve* 3. What was the ground of the Phariſees fear, if they let Chriſt go on to work Miracles, that he would have ſo many followers, as would alarm the *Romans*, and awaken their Jealouſie, and cauſe them to come upon them with an Army, to deprive them of the little liberty they indulged them, and take away their Place and Nation: *Their Place*; that is, their place of Worſhip, the Temple: *And their Nation*; that is, bring the whole Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation to utter Deſtruction. *Learn hence*, How all the Enemies and Oppoſers of Chriſt and his Kingdom, do endeavour to colour their Quarrel with ſome ſpecious pretences, that they may hide the odiouſneſs of their Practices from the Eye of the World, and may not be openly ſeen to fight againſt God. Thus the Phariſees here perſecute our Saviour, not as the Meſſias (tho' the Miracles he wrought, were a ſufficient Evidence that he was ſuch) but as one who would bring Ruine upon their Nation. *If we let him alone, the* Romans *will come and take away both our Place and Nation.*

49 And one of them named Caiphas, being the high-prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto them, Ye know nothing at all. 50 Nor conſider that it is expedient for us, that one man ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation periſh not. 51 And this ſpake he not of himſelf: but being high-prieſt that year, he propheſied, that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation. 52 And not for that nation only, but that alſo he ſhould gather together in one, the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.

The foregoing Verſes acquainted us with the apprehenſion which the chief Prieſts had of the Neceſſity of taking away the Life of our Bleſſed Saviour; *Leſt the* Romans *ſhould take away both their Place and Nation.* Now here in theſe Verſes/ *Caiphas* the High-prieſt delivers his Opinion for the preventing of this danger; he tells the reſt, that they ought not to boggle at the matter, but come to a poſitive and peremptory Reſolution to provide for the Publick Safety, Right or Wrong; and that it is great Folly to prefer one Man's Life, though never ſo innocent before a Nations Welfare; a moſt wicked and deviliſh Speech; as a Judge he regardeth not what was lawful, but as a wicked Politician he conſulted what was expedient; he declares, that one Man, though never ſo good and holy, though never ſo juſt and innocent, had better Die, than a whole Nation ſuffer: Whereas it is in any caſe unlawful to do evil that good may come. *Learn thence*, That altho' it be the Duty of all Perſons to pray for, and endeavour after the publick welfare of a Church and Nation, whereof they are Members, yet it is altogether unlawful to promote the greateſt National Good, by wicked and unlawful means. *Obſerve farther*, How God over-ruled the Tongue of *Caiphas*, beyond his own Intention, prophetically to foretel that great good, which by our Saviour's Death ſhould redound to the World, and that the Fruit and Benefit of his Death, ſhould not only extend to the *Jews*, but to the *Gentiles* alſo; and that he ſhould gather into one Body or Church, all that truly believe in him, tho' far and wide diſperſed upon the Face of the Earth. *Hence Learn*, 1. That the Spirit of Prophecy did ſometimes fall upon very bad Men; and God has been pleaſed to reveal ſome part of his Mind to the worſt of Men. Thus *Pharoah* and *Nebuchadnezzar* had in their Dreams, a Revelation from God, what things he intended to do. *Learn* 2. That it is conſiſtent with the Holineſs of God, ſometimes to make uſe of the Tongues of the worſt of Men to publiſh and declare his Will. *Caiphas* here, tho' a vile and wicked Man, was influenced by God, to propheſie and ſpeak an Oracle. Almighty God may, when he pleaſes, employ wicked Men this way, without any prejudice to his Holineſs. *This Caiaphas ſpake not of himſelf, but being High-Prieſt, he propheſied, that Jeſus ſhould die for that Nation.*

53 Then from that day forth they took counſel together for to put him to death. 54 Jeſus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence into a countrey near to the wilderneſs, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his diſciples. 55 And the Jews paſſover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the countrey up to Jeruſalem before the paſſover, to purifie themſelves. 56 Then ſought they for Jeſus, and ſpake among themſelves, as they ſtood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feaſt? 57 Now both the chief prieſts and the Phariſees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he ſhould ſhew it, that they might take him.

Obſerve here, 1. How baneful and deſtructive Evil Counſel is, eſpecially out of the Mouth of leading Men, and how ſoon embraced and followed. *Caiphas* no ſooner propounds the putting of Chriſt to Death, but from that Day forward they lie in wait to take him. The High-Prieſt had ſatisfied their Conſciences, and now they make all poſſible ſpeed to put their malicious Deſigns and Purpoſes in Execution. *Obſerve* 2. The prudential care and means which our Lord uſed for his own preſervation, to avoid their fury; he withdraws himſelf privately into a Place called *Ephraim*, and there continues with his Diſciples. *Learn*, As Chriſt himſelf fled, ſo is it lawful for his Servants to flee, when their Life is conſpired againſt by their bloody Enemies; and the Perſecution is Perſonal. *Obſerve* 3. When the time was come that he was to expoſe himſelf, when the time of the Paſſover drew near, in which, he being the true Paſcal Lamb, was to be Slain, to put an end to that Type, he withdraws no more, but ſurrenders himſelf to the Rage and Fury of his Enemies, and dies a ſhameful Death for ſhameleſs Sinners, as the next Chapter more at large informs us.

CHAP. XII.

THen Jeſus, ſix days before the paſſover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raiſed from the dead.

The latter end of the foregoing Chapter acquainted us with the prudential Care of Chriſt, in withdrawing from the Fury of his Enemies in and about *Jeruſalem*, who were conſulting his Deſtruction: his time not being fully come, he gets out of the way of his Perſecutors. But now the Paſſover being at hand, which was the time that this Lamb of God was to Die as a Sacrifice for the Sin of the World; our Lord comes forth firſt to *Bethany*, and then to *Jeruſalem*, not fearing the Teeth of his Enemies, but with a fixed Reſolution to encounter Death and Danger for the Salvation of his People. *His Example teacheth us*, That altho' we are bound by all lawful means and prudential methods, to preſerve our ſelves from the unjuſt Violence of our Perſecutors, yet when God's time for our Sufferings is come, and we evidently ſee that it is his Will that we ſuffer for his ſake, we ought to ſet our Faces very chearfully towards it, and reſign up our ſelves to the Wiſdom and Will of God. Thus did Chriſt here, *chap.* 11. 54. we find he withdrew from Suffering, his Hour not being then come; but now when the Paſſover was nigh at hand, which was the time when he was to Suffer, he ſets his Face towards *Jeruſalem*, and withdraws no more.

2 There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of ſpikenard, very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of

the oinment. 4 Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas
Iſcariot, Simons ſon, which ſhould betray him,
5 Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred
pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he ſaid, not that
he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and
had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then
ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying
hath ſhe kept this. 8 For the poor always ye
have with you; but me ye have not always.

In theſe Verſes, an account is given of our Saviour's entertainment at *Bethany*, after he had raiſed *Lazarus*. A Supper is made for him; at which *Martha* ſerved, and *Lazarus* ſat with him, but *Mary* anoints Chriſt with precious Ointments. *Where note*, 1. The Action which this Holy Woman performed, ſhe pours a Box of precious Ointment upon our Saviour's Head as he ſat at meat, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſtern Countries at their Feaſts. I do not find, that any of the Apoſtles were at thus much charge and coſt to put honour upon our Saviour, as this poor Woman was. *From whence learn*, 1. That where ſtrong love prevails in the Heart, nothing is adjudg'd too dear for Chriſt; neither will it ſuffer it ſelf to be out-ſhined by any Examples. The weakeſt Woman that ſtrongly loves her Saviour, will vye with the greateſt Apoſtle, and Piouſly ſtrive to expreſs the fervour of her Affection towards him. *Obſerve*, 2. How this Action was reſented and reflected upon by murmuring *Judas*, who valued this Ointment at Three hundred Pence, and grudg'd the beſtowing of it upon Chriſt. He accuſes this Holy Woman of needleſs prodigality. Lord! How doth a covetous heart think every thing too good for thee. He that ſees a pious Action performed, and ſeeks to leſſen or undervalue it, ſhews himſelf poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Envy. *Judas* his invidious Spirit makes him cenſure an Action which Chriſt highly approved. *Hence learn*, That men, who know not our Hearts, may through Ignorance or Prejudice, cenſure and condemn thoſe Actions which God doth commend, and will graciouſly reward. Happy was it for this poor Woman, that ſhe had a more Righteous Judge to paſs Sentence upon her Action than wicked *Judas*. *Obſerve*, 3. How readily our Holy Lord vindicates this poor Woman; ſhe ſays nothing for her ſelf, nor need ſhe, having ſuch an Advocate, who gives the Reaſon for her Action, *She did it for my Burial*. As Kings and great Perſons were wont in thoſe Eaſtern Countries, at their Funerals to be embalmed with Odours and ſweet Perfumes, ſo ſaith our Saviour, this Woman to declare her Faith in me, as her King and Lord, doth with this Box of Ointment, as it were beforehand, Embalm my Body for its Burial. True, Faith will put honour upon a crucified, as well as glorified Saviour. This Holy Woman accounts Chriſt worthy of all honour in his Death; believing it would be a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice unto God, and the Saviour of Life unto his people.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he
was there: and they came, not for Jeſus ſake only,
but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, whom he had
raiſed from the dead.

Obſerve here, It was not zeal but curioſity which brought theſe Perſons at this time to Chriſt; they had an itching deſire to ſee *Lazarus*, to enquire after the Truth of his Death; and poſſibly after the ſtate of the Dead, and the condition that ſeparated Souls are in after Death. Thus the Miracles of Chriſt drew many followers after his Perſon, who were never converted by his Doctrine. It was the Sin of many, when Chriſt was here upon Earth, that they flock'd after him, rather out of Curioſity, than out of Conſcience, and choſe rather to gaze upon his Works, than to fall in Love with the Worker. The Multitude here came to *Bethany*, *Not for Jeſus's ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo.*

10 But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might
put Lazarus alſo to death; 11 Becauſe that by reaſon
of him many of the Jews went away, and believed
on Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The unreaſonableneſs of that Rage and Madneſs, which was found in the Chief Prieſts againſt *Lazarus*; *They conſulted together how they might put Lazarus to Death.* But ſuppoſing that Chriſt had ſpoken Blaſphemy, in making himſelf equal with God, or ſuppoſing that he had broken the Sabbath, by curing the Man that was born Blind on that Day; yet what had *Lazarus* done, that he muſt be put to Death? *But from hence we learn*, That ſuch as have received ſpecial Mercy and Favour from Chriſt, or are made the Inſtruments of his Glory, muſt expect to be made the Mark and Butt of malicious Enemies. Chriſt had highly honoured *Lazarus* by raiſing him from the Grave; and here there is a Reſolution againſt his Life, whom Chriſt had thus highly honoured. *The chief Prieſts conſulted that they might put Lazarus to Death alſo.* *Obſerve*, 2. The cauſe why the Chief Prieſts conſulted that they might put *Lazarus* to Death; *Namely, Becauſe that by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jeſus.* That is, many of the *Jews* ſeeing the Miracle of Chriſt's raiſing *Lazarus* from the Grave, were drawn thereby to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and this ſo inraged the Chief Prieſts againſt *Lazarus*, that they ſought to put him to death. *Learn hence*, That nothing ſo much enrages the Enemies of Chriſt, as the enlargement of his Kingdom; and the ſight of the number of Believers daily encreaſing. This provokes the Devil's wrath, and his Servants rage.

12 On the next day much people that were come
to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming
to Jeruſalem, 13 Took branches of palm trees, and
went forth to meet him, and cried, Hoſanna, bleſſed
is the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the
Lord. 14 And Jeſus when he had found a young
aſs, ſat thereon; as it is written, 15 Fear not
daughter of Sion; behold, thy King cometh, ſitting
on an aſſes colt, 16 Theſe things underſtood not his
diſciples at the firſt: but when Jeſus was glorified,
then remembred they that theſe things were written
of him, and that they had done theſe things unto
him.

Here we have recorded the carriage of the Multitude towards our Saviour, when he came near the City of *Jeruſalem*: They take Palms in their Hands and go forth to meet him, and caſt their Garments on the Ground before him to ride upon; yea, they do not only diſrobe their Backs, but expend their Breath in joyful Acclamations, and loud *Hoſannahs*, wiſhing all manner of Proſperity to their meek but mighty King. In this Prince-like, yet poor and deſpicable Pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous City of *Jeruſalem*. Lord! How far wert thou from affecting worldly greatneſs and grandeur? Thou deſpiſeſt that Glory which our Hearts fondly admire: Yet becauſe Chriſt was a King, he would be proclaimed ſuch, and have his Kingdom confeſt, and applauded and bleſt; yet that it might appear that his Kingdom was not of this World, he abandons all worldly magnificence.

17 The people therefore that was with him when
he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raiſed him
from the dead, bare record. 18 For this cauſe the
people alſo met him, for that they heard that he had
done this miracle. 19 The Phariſees therefore ſaid
among themſelves, perceive ye how ye prevail nothing?
Behold, the world is gone after him. 20 And
there were certain Greeks among them, that came
up to worſhip at the feaſt: 21 The ſame came
therefore to Philip, which was of Bethſaida of Galilee,
and deſired him, ſaying, Sir, we would ſee Jeſus.
22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and
again, Andrew and Philip told Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Multitude at *Jeruſalem* came forth to meet Chriſt when he was making his publick Entry into the City, hearing the fame of his Miracles. *For this cauſe the People alſo met him, for that they had heard that he had done this Miracle.* *Obſerve*, 2. How amongſt others who came forth to meet our Saviour, certain *Greeks*, or *Gentile* Proſelytes, who came up to worſhip in the outward Court of the Temple, apply themſelves to *Philip*, that he would help them to a ſight of Jeſus. *Sir, we would ſee Jeſus.* It is probable that this deſire to ſee Chriſt in theſe Perſons, proceeded from Curioſity only. But if it did produce true Faith in them, we may thence infer, That a ſpiritual ſight of Chriſt by the diſcerning Eye of a Believer's Faith, it is the moſt glorious, and conſequently the moſt deſirable ſight in all the World; and ſo muſt needs be, for it is a Soul-Raviſhing, a Soul-Satisfying, a Soul-

Transforming, and a Soul-Saving ſight. This ſight of Chriſt by Faith, will conſtrain a Soul highly to admire, and greatly to commend him. It will incline a Soul to chuſe him, and cleave unto him, and will ſet a Soul a longing for the full fruition and final injoyment of him, Luke 2. 29. *Mine eyes have ſeen thy Salvation: Now let thy Servant depart. Obſerve laſtly*, how the envious Phariſees were galled, and cut to the Heart, to ſee ſuch a multitude both of *Jews* and *Greeks* crouding out of the City, to meet Jeſus in his triumphant entrance into the City. *The Phariſees ſaid, Behold the World is gone after him. Learn hence*, That in the Day of Chriſt's greateſt Solemnity and Triumph, there will not be wanting ſome perſons of ſuch cankered diſpoſition, that they will neither rejoyce themſelves, nor can they endure that others ſhould. This was the caſe of the wicked *Phariſees* here.

23 And Jeſus anſwered them ſaying, The hour is come that the Son of man ſhould be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life, ſhall loſe it, and he that hateth his life in this world, ſhall keep it unto life eternal.

Obſerve here, 1. How our bleſſed Saviour entertains his followers with a Diſcourſe concerning his approaching Death and Sufferings. *The hour is coming that the Son of Man ſhall be glorified. Obſerve*, 2. How he Arms his Diſciples againſt the ſcandal of the Croſs, by ſhewing them the great Benefit that would redound by his Death unto all Mankind; and this by a Similitude taken from Grain, *Except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it abideth alone*. That is, as Corn unſown, lodg'd in the Barn, or laid up in the Chamber, never multiplies nor encreaſes; but ſow it in the Field, and bury it in the Earth, and it multiplies and encreaſes, and brings forth a plentiful Crop; So if Chriſt had not died, he had remained what he was, the Eternal Son of God; but he had no Church in the World; Whereas his Death and Sufferings made him fructifie; That brought a plentiful encreaſe of exaltation to himſelf, and Salvation to his People. *Obſerve*, 3. How plainly our Saviour dealt with his followers: he did not deceive them with a vain hope and expectation of temporal happineſs, but tells them plainly, that all that will be his Diſciples muſt prepare for Sufferings, and not think their temporal Life too dear to lay down for him when he calls them to it, this being the ſureſt way to ſecure unto themſelves Life everlaſting. *He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it, but he that hateth his life in this World, ſhall keep it unto life Eternal. Learn hence*, That the ſureſt way to attain Eternal Life, is chearfully to lay down our temporal Life, when the Glory of Chriſt, and the Honour of Religion, requires it at our hand.

26 If any man ſerve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: if any man ſerve me, him will my Father honour.

That is, if any Man aſſumes the Title, and enters into the ſacred engagement of being Chriſt's Servant, let his Converſation correſpond with his Profeſſion, and let him be willing to follow me in the Thorny path of Affliction and Sufferings, from this Aſſurance, that all his grievous Sufferings ſhall end in Eternal Joys; *Where I am there ſhall my Servant be, and him will my Father honour. Learn hence*, 1. That all that will be Chriſt's Servants, muſt be his followers; they muſt obey his Doctrine, and imitate his Example. 2. That Chriſt's Servants muſt not expect better uſage at the hand of an unkind World, than he their Maſter met with before them. 3. That ſuch as ſerve Chriſt by following of him, ſhall at death ſee him as he is, and be with him where he is: *Where I am there ſhall alſo my Servant be*. 4. That God will crown the fidelity and conſtancy of Chriſt's Servants, with the higheſt Dignity and Honour; *If any Man ſerve me, him will my Father honour*.

27 Now is my ſoul troubled; and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorifie thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again:

Whilſt our Saviour was thus preaching of his own Death and Sufferings, a natural horror of his approaching Paſſion, (tho' ſuch as was without Sin) ſeizes upon him; his Father giving him a taſte of that wrath which he was to undergo upon the Croſs for our Sins. Hereupon he betakes himſelf to Prayer, *Father, ſave me from this Hour*; this was the harmleſs inclination of his Sinleſs nature which abhorred lying under wrath, and therefore prays againſt it: yet (as it were) recalling himſelf, he ſubmits to what his Office, as our ſurety required of him, and prays again unto his Father to diſpoſe of him as may moſt and beſt conduce to the purpoſes of his Glory, *Father, glorifie thy Name. Learn hence*, 1. That meer Trouble is no Sin; Chriſt's Soul was troubled, Chriſtianity doth not make Men Senſeleſs; Grace introduceth no Stoical Stupidity. 2. That fear of Death, eſpecially when accompanied with apprehenſions of the wrath of God, is moſt perplexing and Soul-amazing. *My Soul is troubled, and what ſhall I ſay?* 3. No extremity of Sufferings ought to diſcourage us from laying claim to that Relation which God ſtands in to us as a Father. Our Saviour in the midſt of his diſtreſs calls God Father, *Father, ſave me from this Hour*. 4. In the extremity of our Sufferings, we may be importunate, but muſt not be peremptory in our Prayers; as Chriſt in his Agony prayed more earneſtly, ſo may we in ours, but always ſubmiſſively. Father, *Save me from this Hour, but for this cauſe came I unto this Hour*. 5. That our exemption from Suffering may ſometimes be inconſiſtent with the Glory of God. *Father, ſave me from this Hour, Father, Glorifie thy Name. Obſerve laſtly*, The Father's Anſwer to the Son's Prayer: *There came a voice from Heaven, ſaying, I have glorified it, and will glorifie it again*. That is, as God the Father had been already glorified in his Son's Life, Doctrine and Miracles; ſo he would farther glorifie himſelf in his Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion; as alſo by the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and the preaching of the Goſpel for the Converſion of the Gentiles to the ends of the Earth. *Learn hence*, That the whole Work of Chriſt, from the loweſt degree of his Humiliation, to the higheſt degree of his Exaltation, was a glorifying of his Father; he glorified his Father by the Doctrine which he Taught, he glorified his Father by the Miracles which he wrought, by the unſpotted Innocency of his Life, and by his unparrallel'd Sufferings at his Death; by his Victorious Reſurrection from the Grave, and by his Triumphant Aſcenſion into Heaven.

29 The people therefore that ſtood by, and heard it, ſaid that it thundred: others ſaid, An angel ſpake to him. 30 Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, This voice came not becauſe of me, but for your ſakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 (This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.)

Obſerve here, 1. The way of God in ſpeaking to his People by a Voice in Thunder, for the greater declaration of his Glory and Majeſty. Thunderings and Lightnings uſually attended the Voice of God, even in Conſolations, and when he ſpake comfortably to his own Servants. Oh how dreadful and terrible then muſt the Voice of God be to his Enemies; when he ſhall come in flaming Fire, to render vengeance to them! If there was ſuch Dread and Terrors, ſuch Thunderings and Lightnings at the giving of the Law? Lord! What will there be another Day, when thou comeſt to puniſh the violation of that Law. *Obſ.* 2. The end why God the Father now ſpake with an audible Voice to Chriſt his Son; it was for his Conſolation, and the Peoples Confirmation. His Soul being troubled, he ſtood in need as Mediator, of comfort from his Father; and the People had here a farther and fuller Confirmation of his being the promiſed and true Meſſias; that ſo they might believe in him. *This Voice came not becauſe of me*; That is, not only or chiefly becauſe of me, but to confirm your Faith in the Belief of this great Truth, that I am the Son of God, by whom the Father hath glorified, and will further glorifie his Name. *Obſ.* 3. Our Saviour declares a double effect and fruit of his Death and Paſſion. 1. The Judgment of this World. *Now is the Judgment of this World, now ſhall the Prince of this World be caſt out*. That is, my Death will be the Devil's overthrow, will bring down Sin, and deliver the World from the Tyranny and Dominion of Sin and Satan. *Learn hence*, 1. That Satan is the Prince and Ruler of all thoſe who live in Sin; not a Prince by Legal Right, but by Tyrannical Uſurpation. 2. That this Uſurper Satan will not quit his poſſeſſion, unleſs he be caſt out. 3. That Chriſt by his Death has caſt out Satan, dethroned him and deprived him of his Tyrannical Uſurpation. *Now is the Prince of this World caſt out*, That is, I will ſhortly by my Death deliver the World from the ſlavery of Sin, and Dominion of Satan: and particularly from that Idolatry which the greateſt part of the World were then in ſlavery under. The ſecond effect and fruit of Chriſt's Death which is here declared, is his drawing all Men unto him, *When I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all Men unto me.* There is a twofold lifting up of Chriſt; the firſt Ignominious, and when he was hung upon the Croſs; the ſecond glorious in the Preaching of the Goſpel, by this he draws all Men unto him; that is, by the preaching of the Goſpel, he calls and invites all perſons to himſelf; he offers the Benefits of his Death to all, and gathered a Church to himſelf out of the Gentile, as well as the Jewiſh World. *Learn*, 1. That all perſons are naturally unwilling to come to Chriſt; they muſt be drawn. 2. That Chriſt meritoriouſly by his Death, and inſtrumentally by the preaching of the Goſpel, draws Sinners unto himſelf. 3. That it is not a few, or ſmall number, but a very great number, conſiſting both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Bond and Free, perſons of all Nations, Sexes, Ages and Conditions, whom Chriſt draweth: Not that all are effectually drawn to Chriſt, ſo as ſavingly to believe in him; but by the preaching of the Goſpel, they are called and invited to him; and the Benefits of his Death are offered to them. Thus Chriſt being lifted up upon his Croſs, and on the Pole of his Goſpel, draws all Men unto him; That is, doth what is ſufficient to prevail with all Men to believe on him, and to render thoſe that do not ſo, Everlaſtingly inexcuſable.

34 The people anſwered him, We have heard out of the law, that Chriſt abideth for ever: and how ſayeſt thou, The Son of Man muſt be lift up? who is the Son of man? 35 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while you have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for he that walketh in darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. Theſe things ſpake Jeſus and departed, and did hide himſelf from them.

Obſerve here, 1. The Objection which the *Jews* make againſt our Saviour's being the true Meſſias. Their Argument runs thus, It was foretold under the Law, that Chriſt or the Meſſias abideth for ever; but thou ſayeſt the Son of Man muſt be lift up and die. How then canſt thou be the promiſed Meſſias? The Anſwer is, in his ſtate of humiliation unto Death, he was lifted up; but in his ſtate of Exaltation he abideth for ever. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's lifting up by Death, and his abiding for ever, do very well conſiſt together; for both are true of him: The one in his ſtate of Humiliation, the other in his ſtate of Exaltation. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour returns no Anſwer to their cavailing Objection, nor doth he undertake to demonſtrate how his Sufferings and his abiding for ever are conſiſtent; but gives them intimations that he was the light of the World, and adviſes them whilſt they had the light with them, to priſe it highly, and improve it faithfully. *Yet a little while is the light with you, walk whilſt ye have the light; leſt darkneſs come upon you.* *Note here*, 1. A choice and ſingular priviledge injoyed; *the light is with you*; a perſonal light, Chriſt; a Doctrinal light, the Goſpel: Both theſe brought with them a light of Knowledge, anſwering our darkneſs of Ignorance; a light of Grace and Holineſs, anſwering our darkneſs of Sin, which we had brought upon our ſelves; and a light of Joy and Comfort, anſwering the darkneſs of Miſery and Horror, which we lay under by reaſon of our Guilt. *Note*, 2. The time of injoying this Priviledge limited; *yet a little while is the light with you.* The time of a Peoples injoying the light and liberty of the Goſpel, it is a limited time, it is a ſhort time. *Note*, 3. A Duty injoyned by Chriſt anſwerable to the Priviledge enjoyed by us; *Walk whilſt ye have the light.* An uniform and conſtant courſe of holy walking, according to the Rule of the Goſpel, is the indiſpenſable Duty and Obligation of all thoſe that enjoy the light and liberty of the Goſpel. *Namely*, To walk according to the precepts and commands of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the privileges and prerogatives of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the helps and ſupplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords; and anſwerable to the glorious hope and expectation, which the Goſpel raiſes us unto. *Note*, 4. A danger threatned to the neglecters of this Duty; *leſt darkneſs come upon you.* *Namely*, A darkneſs of Ignorance and judicial Blindneſs; a darkneſs of Error and Seduction, a darkneſs of Horror and Deſpair; and the fatal and final darkneſs of Death and Hell; for all contemners of Goſpel-light, there is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever; where Sin and Torment run parallel, their Torment makes them Sin, and their Sin feeds their Torment.

37 But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand with their heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 41 Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.

The place which our Evangeliſt alludes to, is *Iſai.* 6. v. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* From whence a clear Argument for Chriſt's Divinity may be thus drawn. He whom *Iſaiah* ſaw environ'd with Seraphims, and praiſed as moſt holy by them, was the true and eternal God; for ſuch Acclamations belong to none but the great Jehovah, God Bleſſed for ever more. But ſays St. *John*, it was the Glory of Chriſt that *Iſaiah* ſaw in this viſion, it was Chriſt whom he called, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hoſts; therefore Chriſt is undoubtedly God Bleſſed for evermore. For the Evangeliſt was not ſpeaking of the Father, but the Son, and cites theſe words out of *Iſaiah*; ſo that it was the Glory of the ſecond Perſon that *Iſaiah* ſaw and ſpake of, if the words of the Evangeliſt be of any Credit. Beſides, the Angels are too Holy to give Acclamations belonging to God, to any but him that is God.

Obſerve here, 1. The aſtoniſhing Infidelity and Unbelief of the *Jews*, who heard our Saviour's Doctrine, and were Eyewitneſſes of his Miracles; *Tho' he had done ſo many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* Let not the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt be diſcouraged, and over-much dejected, at their want of Succeſs in diſpenſing of the Goſpel, when they obſerve and conſider the ſmall ſucceſs of our Saviour's own Miniſtry in the Hearts and Lives of his Hearers: Yea, tho' his Miniſtry was accompanied with Miracles, and tho' his Miracles were many in number, mighty in nature, clear and obvious to Senſe, being wrought before their Eyes; yet his Miniſtry ſucceeded not, and his Miracles prevailed not: Lord! What little ſucceſs has the offer of Chriſt in the Goſpel met with, from the firſt Original tender to this Day. Obſtinate Infidelity, and curſed Hypocriſie, draw more Souls to Hell, than all the Devils in Hell. *Obſ.* 2. How the preſent Infidelity of theſe unbelieving *Jews*, was long before foretold, and propheſied of by the Prophet *Eſaias*, ch. 53. 1. *Lord, who hath believed our report?* that is, our Preaching. *Where Note*, That *Iſaiah's* Complaint of the ſmall ſucceſs of his Preaching, was a Propheſie and Prediction of the like ſucceſs that Chriſt and his Miniſters ſhould have under the Goſpel. *Learn hence*, That the Goſpel in all Ages has met with more that have rejected it by unbelief, than have ſavingly entertained it by Faith. *Iſaias* complained before Chriſt, and his Apoſtles and Miniſters in every Age ſince; that few have believed their Reports. *Obſ.* 3. That tho' the preſent unbelief of the obſtinate *Jews*, was long foretold by the Prophets of God; yet the Prophets Prediction was no cauſe of their unbelief, or that which laid them under an impoſſibility of believing; but the fault lay in their own obſtinate Wills, with reſpect to which, by the juſt judgment of God they were blinded and hardned, for their contempt of Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſias. When Men cloſe their Eyes wilfully, and ſay they will not ſee, it is juſt with God to cloſe their Eyes judicially, and ſay, they ſhall not ſee. *He hath blinded their Eyes and hardned their Hearts*, &c. *Learn hence*, That the Infidelity of the People is to be reſolved into the perverſeneſs of their own Wills, and the evil diſpoſition of their Hearts, not to any judicial Blindneſs or

Obduration wrought by God upon them, Antecedent to their own Sin God's Act of hardning was conſequential upon their Sinning.

42 Nevertheleſs among the chief rulers alſo, many believed on him; but becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs him, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 43 For they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.

Obſerve here, 1. That altho' the generality of the *Jews* were thus hardned under Chriſt's Miniſtry and Miracles; yet there were ſome, and thoſe of the chief Rank, even Rulers, that did believe on him: That is, they were under ſtrong and powerful convictions, that he was the true and expected Meſſias; Even in times and places where obſtinacy and infidelity moſt prevails, the Miniſtry of the Word ſhall not be altogether without its fruit; Chriſt here had ſome, and thoſe of the Rulers too, who believed on him, when others under the ſame word were hardned. *Nevertheleſs, among the chief Rulers alſo many believed on him. Obſerve*, 2. That tho' many of the Chief Rulers had a ſecret Belief, or an inward Perſwaſion that Chriſt was the promiſed and expected Meſſias; yet it was not ſufficient to make them openly own, confeſs and avow him to be ſuch, for fear of Excommunication from the *Phariſees, they did not confeſs him, leſt they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.* Slaviſh fear of Men, and ſuffering by them, has hindred many from believing on Chriſt, and kept more from an open owning and confeſſing of him. *Becauſe the Phariſees did not confeſs them. Obſerve*, 3. As the fear of Suffering on the one hand, ſo the love of Reputation on the other, kept them from owning and confeſſing Jeſus to be the Chriſt. *They loved the praiſe of Men more than the praiſe of God.* That is, they valued Honour and Applauſe from Men, more than God's honouring and approving them. There is no greater ſnare to draw perſons from their Duty, than inordinate Love and Affection to their own Credit and Reputation. Oh how often is the Applauſe and Commendation of Men preferred before the Teſtimony and Approbation of God! Here was their ſnare, *They loved the praiſe of Men more than the praiſe of God.*

44 Jeſus cried, and ſaid, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me. 45 And he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that, whoſoever believeth on me ſhould not abide in darkneſs. 47 And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day. 49 For I have not ſpoken of my ſelf; but the Father which ſent me, he gave me a commandment what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. 50 And I know that his commandment is life everlaſting: whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.

In theſe Verſes, we have our bleſſed Saviour's farewel Sermon to the *Jews*, concerning his Perſon, Office and Doctrine; as touching his Perſon, he acquaints them with his Divine Nature, his oneneſs and equality with the Father; and accordingly challenges not only the Aſſent, but alſo the Obedience and Adoration of their Faith. *Jeſus cried, ſaying, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me.* That is, He that believeth on me, doth not believe on a meer Man, but on him that is truly and really God, as well as Man: and therefore he being a true God, One in Eſſence, and equal in Power and Glory with the Father, their believing in him, was believing in God the Father that ſent him. *Obſerve*, 2. The Argument which our Saviour uſes to prove that Believers in Chriſt do believe in the Father. *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me.* That is, He that ſeeth me Spiritually, and by Faith, ſeeth my Father to be one with me in Eſſence, tho' not in Perſon; and he that ſeeth me in my miraculous works which I do, ſeeth him alſo that ſent me, by whom I do theſe mighty works. *Learn hence*, 1. That we do not ſee Chriſt aright by the Eye of our Faith, unleſs we ſee him and believe him to be truly and really God; one with, and equal to the Father; *he that ſeeth me, ſeeth me in him that ſent me. Learn*, 2. That the Father is not to be ſeen but in the Son; nor can Believers know what the Father is, but by ſeeing what the Son is, and what they ſee the Son to be, that the Father is in him. *For he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me. Obſerve*, 3. The dreadful Judgment which Chriſt denounces againſt all Unbelievers, and ſuch as reject him, by rejecting of his Goſpel; for tho' at Chriſt's firſt coming, his Errand was not to judge the World, but to ſave the World, that is, to offer the tenders of Salvation to loſt Sinners; yet at his ſecond coming he would judge them at the laſt Day; when the Word preached to them, and rejected by them, will give a judicial Teſtimony againſt them. *Learn hence*, 1. That Chriſt and his Doctrine are inſeparable; to receive his Doctrine, is to receive him; and to reject his Doctrine, is to reject him. 2. That ſuch rejecters of Chriſt and the Doctrine of the Goſpel, ſhall not eſcape the Judgment of Chriſt at the great Day. 3. That at the great Day, were there no other Witneſs againſt the rejecters of Chriſt and his Goſpel, but the Word preached; yet that alone will be ſufficient both for their Conviction and Condemnation. *The word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day.* The Word is now the Rule of living, and it ſhall be hereafter the Rule of judging; now it is the Rule by which we muſt live to Chriſt, then it ſhall be the Rule by which we ſhall be judged of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 4. The Argument and Reaſon which our Saviour produces, to prove that the Word of God, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel ſlighted and rejected, ſhould condemn Sinners, at the great Day. *Namely*, from the Divine Authority of his Doctrine; for albeit his Doctrine was his own, as he was true God, yet as Man, and as Mediator, it was not his own, but the Father's which ſent him; ſo that his Word and Doctrine being Divine, and the Father's as well as his, *(for he did not ſpeak of himſelf*; that is, of himſelf alone, and without the Father,) it is ſufficient to judge and condemn all the rejecters and deſpiſers of it. *Learn hence*, 1. That tho' the Doctrine of the Goſpel be Chriſt's own, as he is truly and really God; yet it was not his own as meer Man, excluſive of the Father, who is one God with him, and who gave him a Commiſſion and Inſtructions as Mediator, to Preach and Publiſh the glad tidings of the Goſpel; for, ſays he, *I have not ſpoken of my ſelf, but the Father which ſent me gave me a Commandment.* 2. That the Doctrine which Chriſt delivered by Command from the Father, doth point out the way to Eternal Life, and will bring loſt Sinners thereunto, if they ſincerely believe it and obey it. *I know that his Commandment is life everlaſting.* 3. That therefore Sinners who reject the Doctrine of Chriſt contained in the Goſpel, do highly Diſhonour, Offend, and Affront, both the Father and Son, and bring upon themſelves a juſt and righteous Judgment; and expoſe themſelves to unutterable and inevitable condemnation. *The word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt Day.*

CHAP. XIII.

NOW before the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus knew that his hour was come that he ſhould depart out of this world, unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And ſupper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simons ſon, to betray him.) 3 Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.

In this Chapter is Recorded the Hiſtory of our Saviour's waſhing his Diſciples Feet, an Action full of Humility and Condeſcenſion, and propounded to his followers Imitation. The Circumſtance of time is here noted, when this Act was done; *Namely*, At the Feaſt of the Paſſover, when the time of our Saviour's departure was at hand; and having conſtantly and immutably loved his own, he expreſſes the permanency of his Love towards them to the end, by this Action of his, in waſhing their Feet. *Here Note*, How Chriſt choſe the time of the *Jewiſh* Paſſover to ſuffer in, that he might prove himſelf to be the Subſtance of that Type; that he was the true Paſchal Lamb, who by the Sacrifice of his Death did attone Divine diſpleaſure, and taketh away the Sins of the World. *Obſerve* 2. The means which the Wiſdom of God permitted, to bring the Lord of Life to his Ignominious death. And that was the Treaſon and Perfidiouſneſs of one of his own Diſciples, *Judas Iſcariot. Where Obſerve* 1. The Perſon betraying, *Judas*; *Judas* a Profeſſor, and as a Preacher, *Judas* an Apoſtle, being one of the Twelve; whom Chriſt had choſen out of all the World to be his deareſt Friends. Can we wonder to find Friends unfriendly, or unfaithful towards us, when our Saviour had a Traitor in his own Houſe? *Obſerve* 2. The heinouſneſs of *Judas*'s Sin in betraying Chriſt, *He betrayed Chriſt* Jeſus a Man, Chriſt Jeſus his Maſter, Chriſt Jeſus his Maker; the firſt was Murther, the ſecond Treaſon. Lord! It is no ſtrange and uncommon thing, for the vileſt of Sins, and moſt horrid impieties to be acted by perſons making the moſt eminent profeſſion of thy Holy Religion. *Obſerve* 3. What hand the Devil had in the Sufferings of our Saviour: He put into *Judas*'s Heart to betray Chriſt; that is, he did ſuggeſt and inject ſuch thoughts into his Mind, which *Judas* inſtantly cloſed with. The Devil being a Spirit, has a quick acceſs to our Spirits, and can inſtil his Suggeſtions into them. As Chriſt did breath upon his Diſciples, and they received the Holy Ghoſt, and were filled with the Spirit; So Satan breaths filthy Suggeſtions into the Spirits of Men, and fills them with all manner of Wickedneſs, even with the Spirit of Hell it ſelf. *The Devil put it into Judas's Heart to betray him.*

4 He riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel and girded himſelf. 5 After that, he poureth water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Obſerve here, The admirable humility, and great ſelf-denial of our Lord and Maſter; he ariſes from Supper, whilſt his Diſciples ſate ſtill, and he that came in the form of a Servant, performs all the Offices of the meaneſt Servant to his Diſciples; he lays aſide his upper Garments, he girds himſelf with a Towel, pours Water into a Baſon, and begins to waſh and wipe their Feet, which lay out behind them, as they leaned at the Table; all which was a moſt ſervile imployment. *Learn hence*, That the wonderful humility of Jeſus Chriſt inclined him to do the meaneſt Offices of Service unto his People, even to become a Servant to them, in the day of his Humiliation; and tho' now glorified in Heaven, he retains the ſame Compaſſionate Heart towards them, as when here on Earth. Hereby inſtructing us, that it is our Duty, in whatever ſtation Providence ſhall place us in the World, to ſtoop to the loweſt Offices of Love and Service towards our Fellow-Brethren. Lord! Thou haſt left the moſt amazing inſtance of Self-denial for our Encouragement and Example. *Queſt.* But how far doth this Example bind us? *Anſw.* It does not oblige to the individual Act, but to follow the Reaſon of the Example, that is, after Chriſt's Example we ought to be ready to perform the loweſt and meaneſt Offices of Love and Service to one another.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? 7 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, what I do thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. 8 Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. 9 Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head. 10 Jeſus ſaith to him, He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who ſhould betray him; therefore ſaid he, ye are not all clean.

Obſerve here, 1. How *Simon Peter* refuſes to admit of ſuch a condeſcending Act from Chriſt his Lord and Maſter, as the waſhing of his Feet. Lord! *Thou ſhalt never waſh my Feet*; It is a ſinful humility to refuſe the offered favours of Chriſt, becauſe we are unworthy to receive them. Tho' we are not worthy of Chriſt, and of his Love; yet Chriſt is worthy of us, and of our Faith. *Obſerve* 2. Our Saviour's reply to *Peter*'s refuſal. 1. He tells him that there was more in it than the bare act of waſhing did at firſt ſight import, and that he ſhould know hereafter what he did not underſtand now. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Learn hence*, 1. That the Servants of God themſelves are ofttimes much to ſeek, and cannot apprehend and underſtand at preſent, the actings and dealings of God with them; they underſtand not either the intent, or the event of God's diſpenſations. 2. That altho' God's dealings with his Children and People are for a while in the dark, and are not preſently made known; yet there will come a time for the clearing and evidencing of them, when they ſhall underſtand that all his diſpenſations were in mercy to them. The ſecond part of our Saviour's Reply to St. *Peter* follows, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me*, as if Chriſt had ſaid, *Peter*, This external act of mine in waſhing thy Feet, doth ſignifie ſomething farther, and imports my waſhing of thy Soul from the guilt and defilement of Sin, without which thou canſt neither have intereſt in me, nor Communion with me. *Learn hence*, 1. That ſo univerſal is the pollution of Sin, that every Soul ſtands in need of waſhing. 2. That Chriſt waſheth all that have a part and intereſt in him, both from the guilt and pollution of all their Sin. *Obſerve* 3. That St. *Peter* now underſtanding better what was meant by this outward waſhing, *Namely*, That it did ſignifie and repreſent the cleanſing of the Soul from the defilement of Sin, he is ſo far from refuſing that Chriſt ſhould waſh his Feet, that he offers Hands and Head, and all to be waſhed by him, *Lord, not my Feet only*, &c. *Learn hence*, That ſo throughly ſenſible are the Saints of the filthineſs and pollution of Sin, that they deſire nothing more than an inward, thorough and prevailing purification of their whole Man, by the Blood and Spirit of the Lord Jeſus. *Obſerve* 4. Our Saviour's Reply to St. *Peter*'s laſt Requeſt, *he that is waſhed needeth not, ſave to waſh his Feet*; plainly allluding to the Cuſtom of thoſe Countries, where going abroad barefoot, or with thin Sandals, covering only a ſmall part of their Feet, they had frequent occaſion to waſh their Feet, but no need to waſh their whole Bodies; In like manner, the Saints and Servants of God, who are already waſhed and cleanſed by the Blood of Chriſt from the guilt of their Sins, and have a real work of Revelation and Sanctification begún in them by the Spirit of Chriſt, they ought to be daily purging and purifying their Affections and Actions, and labouring daily after further meaſures and degrees of Sanctification. *Learn hence*, 1. That the holieſt, the wiſeſt and the beſt of Saints, whilſt here in a World of Sin and Temptation, do ſtand in need of a daily waſhing by Repentance; and according to their renewed and repeated acts of Sin. 2. That all juſtified Perſons are in God's account clean Perſons; *ye are clean, but not all*; that is, you are juſtified and pardoned, ſanctified and cleanſed, all of you excepting *Judas*, whoſe Heart was known to Chriſt, tho' his Hypocriſie was hid from the Diſciples.

12 So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Maſter, and Lord: and ye ſay well; for ſo I am. 14 If I then your Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. 16 Verily verily I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater then his lord, neither he that is ſent, greater then he that ſent him.

In theſe words, our Saviour declares to his Diſciples his intention and deſign, in waſhing of their Feet; *Namely*, to teach them by his Example the Duty of Humility; that as he had performed that act of abaſement towards them, ſo ſhould they be ready to perform all Offices of Love, and humble Condeſcenſion one towards another. *Behold, I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done unto you. Learn thence*, That Humility and Mutual Condeſcenſion amongſt the Members and Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, is a moſt neceſſary Grace and Duty, which the Son of God not only taught by his Doctrine, but recommended and inforced by his Example. *Obſerve farther*, The Argument which Chriſt makes uſe of to preſs the imitation of his Example upon them; and that is drawn from the Titles given to him by his Diſciples. *Ye call me Maſter, and Lord, and ſo I am.* Now Servants ought to imitate their Maſter, and Subjects to obey their Lord and King. Chriſt is a Maſter to teach and direct; a Lord to govern and protect. As he is a Maſter, we are to learn in his School; as he is a Lord, we are to ſerve in his Houſe: He muſt be ſubmitted to as a Prince, as well as rely'd upon as a Saviour. It is in vain to expect Salvation from him, if we do not yield Subjection to him. Another Argument which our Lord makes uſe of to preſs his Diſciples to imitate his Example, is drawn from his Dignity and Superiority over them: *The Servant is not greater than his Lord.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Tho' you my Diſciples are to have a very high and honourable ſtation in the Goſpel-Church, yet let not this ſwell you with Pride, but be ye mutually condeſcending to each other, remembring you are yet but Servants to my ſelf, and ought to be ſo to one another; *and the Servant is not greater than his Lord. Learn hence,* That whatever Dignity Chriſt confers upon his Servants and Officers, yet he is over them all, ſuperior to them, and above them. 2. That the conſideration of Chriſt's Dignity, and his Miniſters meanneſs, ought to keep their Minds humble and lowly, and far from affecting Superiority over their Brethren. *The Servant is not greater than his Lord, nor he that is ſent greater than he that ſent him.*

17 If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Our Lord here intimates unto us theſe two things. 1. The neceſſity of Knowledge, in order unto Practice. 2. The neceſſity of Practice, in order unto Happineſs. A Man may know the Will of God indeed, and not do it; but he can never do the Will of God (acceptably) and not know it. The Knowledge of God's Will and our Duty is neceſſary to the Practice of it. The Knowledge of our Duty, and the Practice of it, may be, and too often are ſeparated: but the Practice of Religion, and doing what we know to be our Duty, is the only way to true Happineſs. *Learn hence,* 1. That Chriſt doth not approve of a blind Obedience in his People; but requires that their Practice and Obedience be founded upon Underſtanding and Knowledge. 2. That the firſt care of thoſe that will be Chriſt's Diſciples and Followers muſt be this, with all ſeriouſneſs to apply themſelves to the Knowledge of their Maſter's Will. 3. That next to the Knowledge of our Duty, our firſt and chief Care muſt be to practice every thing that we underſtand and know to be our Duty. 4. That a right Knowledge and Practice of our Duty will certainly make us happy, *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

18 I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen: but that the ſcripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me.

If the chuſing ſpoken of here be underſtood of Eternal Election, a chuſing to Everlaſting Life, then it affords a ſtrong Argument to prove Chriſt to be God. Thus, he that is the Author of Eternal Election, is God; but Chriſt is ſuch, *I know whom I have choſen.* Conſider Chriſt as God, ſo we are choſen by him; conſider him as a Mediator, and ſo we are choſen in him; If the chuſing here be meant of chuſing to the Work of the Apoſtleſhip, then our Saviour tells his Diſciples, that it need not ſeem ſtrange to them, that he choſe one to be an Apoſtle, whom he knew would prove a Traytor; for hereby that Scripture-Prophecy, *Pſal.* 41. 9. would be fulfilled, *He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up the heel againſt me*; which tho' it was literally ſpoken of *Achitophel*'s Treachery againſt *David*, yet was it prophetically ſpoken of *Judas*'s Treaſon againſt Chriſt: and the expreſſion of *lifting up the heel*, is Metaphorical, taken from a fed Beaſt, that kicks againſt his Maſter. *Learn hence,* That Chriſt did, as his Followers do, daily ſuffer, not only from open Enemies, but from boſom and familiar Friends. Lord! how many are there in the World, who by Profeſſion lift up their Hand unto thee, who yet by Treaſon and Rebellion lift up their Heel againſt thee?

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am he.

Here another Argument occurs, to prove the Divinity of our Bleſſed Saviour, from his fore-knowledge of *Judas*'s Treaſon; the Perſon who, the Time when, and the Place where, were all known to Chriſt: *I tell you before it come to paſs.* The Argument lies thus; He that foreſaw the future Actions of Men, and infallibly fore-knew the future Events and Iſſues of things, is certainly God: But Chriſt did this, therefore he is really God. And he tells us here, that for this very Reaſon he foretold now the Treaſon of *Judas. Now I tell you before, that when it comes to paſs, ye may believe that I am he.* What *He* doth he mean? What *He* could foretel ſo many things to come, which did not depend upon neceſſary, but contingent Cauſes only? This *He* was not a meer Man ſurely, for he knows not what ſhall be on the morrow; but muſt be real God, becauſe he knew all things; not by Revelation, as the Prophets knew things to come, but by immediate Inſpection, and ſimple Intuition; ſo that we may ſay with *Peter, Lord, thou knoweſt all things: and becauſe thou knoweſt all things, thou art God.*

20 Verily verily I ſay unto you, He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.

Leſt his Apoſtles ſhould think that for the Treachery of one of them they ſhould all become odious and abominable to the whole World, our Saviour encourages them with this promiſe and aſſurance, that there ſhould be thoſe that would receive them, and he would take it as kindly as if they received himſelf: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me. Learn hence,* That it is a ſweet encouragement to the Miniſters of Chriſt unto the faithful diſcharge of their Duty, that Chriſt and the Father account that the reſpect paid to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, is paid to themſelves; and on the contrary, that all the contempt caſt upon them, reflects upon themſelves: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.*

21 When Jeſus had thus ſaid, he was troubled in ſpirit, and teſtified and ſaid, Verily verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me. 22 Then the diſciples looked one on another doubting of whom he ſpake.

Oh what an aſtoniſhing word! was this, *One ſhall betray me!* one of *my Diſciples* ſhall betray me! yea, *one of you*, my Diſciples and Apoſtles ſhall do it! Well might they look one upon another with ſorrow and amazement, to hear that their Maſter ſhould die; that he ſhould die by Treaſon, and that the Traitor ſhould be one of themſelves; yet do not they cenſure one another, but ſuſpect themſelves, ſaying, *Maſter is it I?* not, Maſter is it *Judas? Learn hence,* 1. That it is poſſible for ſecret Wickedneſs to lurk, yea, for the greateſt Villany to lodge in the hearts of Profeſſors, in whoſe Converſation appeareth nothing that may give a juſt ſuſpicion to others. *Learn* 2. That it is both the Duty and Property of the Diſciples of Chriſt, to have ſo much Candor and Brotherly Love, as not raſhly to cenſure and judge one another, but to hope the beſt of others, and to fear the worſt of themſelves.

23 Now there was leaning on Jeſus boſom, one of his diſciples whom Jeſus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he ſhould ask who it ſhould be of whom he ſpake. 25 He then lying on Jeſus breaſt, ſaith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jeſus anſwered, He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the ſop he gave it to Judas Iſcariot, the ſon of Simon. 27 And after the ſop, Satan entred into him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, That thou doeſt, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he ſpake this unto him. 29 For ſome of them thought, becauſe Judas had the bag, that Jeſus had ſaid unto him, Buy thoſe things that we have need of againſt the feaſt: or that he ſhould give ſomething to the poor. 30 He then having received the ſop, went immediately out: and it was night.

Obſerve here, 1. The Character given of *St. John* the beloved Diſciple; he leaned on Chriſt's boſom, that is, he had moſt intimate converſe with Chriſt, one whom Chriſt treated with greater freedom and familiarity than the reſt, and one that knew more of his Heart than moſt of his Diſciples. We commonly call a very near Friend a Boſom Friend. *Learn,* That altho' Chriſt had an endeared Love for all his Diſciples and Followers, yet there were degrees in Chriſt's own Love, and he had a familiarity with ſome Diſciples beyond others, whilſt he was here upon Earth, even as now in Heaven;

ven, tho' his Heart be towards all his Children here on Earth, yet he is pleaſed to let out more kind Manifeſtations of himſelf and more ſenſible Evidences of his Love towards ſome, than towards others: *John* was the Diſciple that lay in Jeſus's Boſom. *Obſerve* 2. The way which our Saviour took to diſcover *Judas* to the reſt of his Diſciples, not by naming of him, but by giving him a Sop; partly becauſe he would not give *Judas* any provocation by mentioning of his Name, and partly becauſe this ſign of eating the Sop was moſt agreeable to the Prophetical Prediction, *Pſal.* 41. 9. *Mine own familiar Friend who did eat of my Bread, hath lift up the Heel againſt me.* *Obſerve* 3. The time when *Judas* received the Sop, and the conſequent that followed upon his receiving of it; it was at that time when he had with an unbelieving Heart, and an unthankful Spirit been eating the Paſſover, which was a Type of Chriſt. Now *Satan enters into him*; that is, takes fuller poſſeſſion of him, and he gives himſelf up more freely and fully to the Devil's conduct and ſuggeſtion. Satan gets poſſeſſion of wicked Men gradually and by degrees, not all at once; the only way to be ſafe, is to reſiſt the beginnings of Sin, for when Satan once gets footing, it is hard to prevent a more full poſſeſſion. *Obſerve* 4. The Place where *Judas* now was, namely, at *Bethany*, ſome Miles from *Jeruſalem*, and it was now Night; yet ſo intent he was upon the Devil's Work, that away he trudges to *Jeruſalem*, and at that time of the Night repairs to the High-Prieſts, and ſells his Saviour into their Hands. Oh, what a warmth and zeal was here in the Devil's Cauſe! Men given over by God poſſeſt by Satan, are ſo reſtleſs and unwearied in Sin, that neither by Day nor by Night can they ceaſe from the contrivance and execution of it.

31 Therefore when he was gone out, Jeſus ſaid, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo glorifie him in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraitway glorifie him.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Bleſſed Lord calls his Death his Glory. *Now is the Son of Man glorified.* That is, now is the time at hand when I am to Dye, and ſhall by my Death finiſh the Work of Man's Redemption, and thereby eminently glorifie God. God the Father was eminently glorified in the Obedience and Sufferings of his dear and only Son. It is true, that the Sufferings of Chriſt were Ignominious in themſelves, yet were they the way to his own Glory, and his Father's alſo; for by them he redeemed a loſt World, trampled upon Satan; triumphed over Sin. And the Father was exceedingly glorified by the Son's giving Obedience to his Will, and ſo chearfully Suffering. *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me: and as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, ſo now I ſay unto you.

Obſerve here, An endearing Compellation, a ſweet Title given by Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Little Children*, intimating that tender Affection which he bears unto them, tho' now upon the point of departing from them. *Learn thence*, That whatever Chriſt's Dealings are, or may be with his People; in reſpect of his removing and withdrawing from them; yet he ſtill retains the Relation of a Father to them, and will in his abſence from them, exerciſe ſuch a Care over them, as Parents have of their young and tender Children; ſo much doth the Title of little Children imply and import. *Obſerve farther*, The plain intimation which our Saviour gives to his Diſciples of his Death being very nigh, (for it was the very next Day) he tells them, he was going to Heaven, *and whither he went, they could not come*; that is, not preſently; they ſhould follow him their forerunner, afterwards, but at preſent, he had a great deal of Work for them to do, tho' his own Work was done, and till they had finiſhed their Work, *whither he went, they could not come.* *Learn hence*, That tho' it be Reſt which the Saints may lawfully deſire, an everlaſting Reſt with Chriſt in Glory; yet muſt they not refuſe to Labour, whilſt their Lord will have it ſo. Till their Work be done, whither Chriſt is gone they cannot come; *Ye ſhall ſeek me, but whither I go*, at preſent, *ye cannot come.*

34 A new commandment I give unto you; That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.

Our Saviour having mentioned his departure from his Diſciples in the former Verſe: *I go away, and whither I go ye cannot come.* In this and the following Verſes, he gives them a ſtrict Charge that in his abſence they ſhould love one another. This he calls a *new Commandment*; not that it was new in regard of Inſtitution, but of Reſtitution; not new in regard of the Subſtance of it, for it was a Branch of the Law of Nature, and a known Precept of the *Jewiſh* Religion; but he calls it a new Commandment. 1. Becauſe purged from the old corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*, who had limited this Duty of Love, and confined it to their own Country-men; whereas Chriſt enlarges the Object, and obliges his Diſciples to love all Mankind, even their very Enemies. 2. Becauſe this Duty of Love was ſo greatly advanced and heightened by our Saviour, as to the Meaſure and Degrees of it, even to the laying down of our Lives one for another. 3. It is called a new Commandment, becauſe urged from a new Motive, and enforced by a new Example. *As I have loved you*, that ye alſo love one another; never was this Duty ſo effectually taught, ſo mightily encouraged, ſo much urged and inſiſted upon by any Teacher as our Saviour, and never was there ſuch an Example given of it as his own. 4. 'Tis a new Commandment, becauſe with the reſt it was never to wax old; but to be always freſh in the Memory and Practice of Chriſt's Diſciples to the End of the World.

35 By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.

To recommend the foregoing Duty of Loving one another with the greater advantage, our Saviour tells us here, That it will be the beſt Evidence of our Relation to him as ſincere Diſciples. *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples.* The Diſciples of *John* were known by the Auſterity of their Lives; the Diſciples of the Phariſees by their Habit and Separation from other Men. Chriſt will have his Diſciples known by their profound Affection to each other, which in the Primitive Times was ſo conſpicuous, that the very Heathens did cry out and ſay, See how the Chriſtians love one another! *Here Obſerve*, 1. Our Saviour doth not ſay, by this Men ſhall conjecture and gueſs that you belong to me, as being my Diſciples, but they ſhall certainly know it. 2. He doth not ſay, by this ſhall you know your ſelves to be my Diſciples, and one another to be ſo but by this, ſhall all others know it as well as your ſelves. 3. He doth not ſay, by this ſhall all Men know that you look like my Diſciples; but that you are indeed what you pretend to be, namely, By your loving one another. 4. Chriſt doth not ſay, by this ſhall the World know that you are my Diſciples. Namely, By your Aſſembling often together in my Houſe of Prayer, by your frequent Faſtings, by your Reading the Scriptures Daily, by your hearing Sermons Weekly, by your receiving Sacraments Monthly; all theſe put together, will be no ſufficient Evidence of your Diſcipleſhip, if you keep up a ſecret Grudge in your Hearts one againſt another. *But by this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* *Learn hence*, That one of the beſt Proofs and Evidences we can have of our Relation to Chriſt, as his ſincere Diſciples, is an hearty Love and Goodwill one towards another.

36 Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, whither goeſt thou? Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go thou canſt not follow me now: but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy ſake. 38 Jeſus anſwered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake? Verily verily I ſay unto thee, the cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denied me thrice.

Here we find *Peter* reflecting upon what our Saviour had ſaid juſt before, *v.* 33. *Whither I go ye cannot come*; he is inquiſitive to know of Chriſt whither he went. Our Lord tells him, that for the preſent he could not follow him, but ſhould hereafter; he was not as yet ſtrong enough to ſuffer for him, as he ſhould and did afterwards. St. *Peter* grieved at this, raſhly reſolves to follow him, tho' he ſhould die for his ſake. Chriſt adviſes him not to be over-confident of his own ſtrength and ſtanding; for he ſhould deny him thrice, within the time of Cock-crowing. *Obſerve here*, 1. How that fond Conceit which our Lord's Diſciple had of his Temporal Kingdom here in this World, did abide and continue with them to the very laſt; for when Chriſt ſpake of leaving them, by aſcending into Heaven, *Peter* underſtands him of a removal that was Earthly, from one place to another, whereas Chriſt intended it of a removal from Earth to Heaven. The Opinion that the Meſſiah was to be a Temporal Prince, and that his Kingdom ſhould be of this World, was ſo deeply rooted in the minds of the *Jews*, that they ſtumble at it fatally; and Chriſt's own Diſciples had ſo drunk in the Notion, that they wonder to hear Chriſt ſay, that he is going from them, and that whither he goes they cannot come. *Obſ.* 2. That Chriſt's Diſciples ſhall certainly follow their Maſter afterwards, and be for ever with the Lord; but they muſt wait their Lord's time, and finiſh their Lord's Work: they muſt patiently wait for their Change, and not peeviſhly wiſh for it; for tho' they do not follow Chriſt preſently to Heaven, they ſhall follow him afterwards. *Obſerve* 3. The greatneſs of St. *Peter*'s ſelf-confidence: *I will lay down my life for thy ſake.* Good Man! he reſolved honeſtly, but too too much in his own ſtrength. Little, oh little did he think what a Feather he ſhould be in the Wind of Temptation, if once God left him to the power and prevalency of his own Fears! The holieſt of Men knows not his own ſtrength, till Temptation brings him to the Tryal. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How deteſtable St. *Peter*'s Preſumption and Self-confidence was to Chriſt, and how fatal and pernicious to himſelf. *Wilt thou lay down thy Life for my ſake?* As if Chriſt had ſaid, *Peter*, thou ſayeſt more than thou canſt do; Thine own ſtrength will fail thee, and thy ſelf-confidence deceive thee; I know thy heart better than thou doſt thy ſelf; and I foreſee, that *before the Cock crows thou wilt deny me thrice.* *Thence Learn*, That none are ſo near falling, as thoſe that are moſt confident of their own ſtanding.

CHAP. XIV.

LEt not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. 2 In my Fathers houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo. 5 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Our Bleſſed Saviour in the foregoing Chapter, having acquainted his Diſciples with his approaching Death, by the Treachery of *Judas*, their Hearts were thereupon overwhelmed with Grief and Trouble. Accordingly in this Chapter, by ſundry Arguments he comforts his Diſciples againſt the perplexity of their Fears and Sorrows. *Obſerve* 1. How Chriſt addreſſes himſelf to his Diſciples in a very endearing and affectionate manner: *Let not your hearts be troubled.* *Whence Learn*, 1. That the beſt and holieſt of God's Children and Servants, whilſt here in an imperfect ſtate, are ſubject to deſponding and diſquieting and diſtruſtful fears. 2. That no work is more delightful to our Saviour, than to comfort the troubled and perplexed Spirits of his Servants. *Obſerve* 2. The Remedy which Chriſt preſcribes for the calming their preſent Fears, and for arming them againſt future Troubles; and that is Faith in the Father and himſelf: *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* *Here Learn*, 1. That God is the ſupreme Object of Faith; his unchangeable Love and Faithfulneſs, with his infinite Power in the accompliſhing of his Promiſes, is the Security of Believers. *Learn* 2. That Chriſt as Mediator between God and guilty Creatures, is the immediate Object of our Faith. *Learn* 3. That Chriſt being the true and proper Object of our Faith, is a proof of his being truly and really God. Chriſt doth here aſſert his own Deity in the Subſtance of the Command, in making himſelf an Object of Faith, in conjunction with God the Father: *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* *Obſerve next*, The Arguments of Conſolation which Chriſt propounds for the ſupport of his Diſciples under the Sorrow which they had conceived for his approaching Departure. 1. He tells them, that Heaven, whither he was now going, was his Father's Houſe, a place of Happineſs, not deſigned for himſelf alone, but for many more to enjoy a perpetual reſt and abode in, as in everlaſting Manſions: *In my Father's houſe are many manſions.* Heaven is God's Houſe, in which he will freely converſe with his Domeſticks, his Children and Servants, and they ſhall enjoy full Glory there, as in a quiet and capacious Habitation. A ſecond ground of Comfort is, That he aſſures them that he will come again and receive them to himſelf, that they may live together with him in the Heavenly Manſions. This Promiſe Chriſt makes good to his Saints, partly at the Day of their Death, and perfectly at the Day of Judgment; when he ſhall make one Errand for all, and take up all his Children to himſelf, and make them compleatly happy both in Soul and Body with himſelf. *Learn hence*, That tho' Chriſt has removed his bodily preſence from his Friends on Earth, yet his Love to them is not ceaſed, nor will he reſt ſatisfied till he and they meet again eternally to ſolace themſelves in each others Company: *I will come again and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, there you may be alſo.* A third Argument for Conſolation is, That notwithſtanding Chriſt was to leave them, yet they knew whither he went; *namely*, To Heaven, and which was the way thither: *Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* It contributes much to the Comfort of Believers, as to know God and Heaven, ſo to know the way that leads thither, that ſo they may be armed againſt all the difficulties of that way.

5 Thomas ſaith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the way? 6 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Obſerve here, 1. How *Thomas*, and probably divers other of the Apoſtles, notwithſtanding all that Chriſt had ſaid to the contrary, did ſtill dream of a Temporal Kingdom, and ſuppoſed him to ſpeak of ſome Earthly Palace which he was going to: and therefore he tells our Saviour he knew not whither he was going: But Chriſt meaning not a Temporal but Heavenly Kingdom, tells them, that if they intended to follow him, and be with him in Heaven, he himſelf was the only way thither. *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.* That is, I am the true and living Way to the Father: *And no man cometh to the Father but by me*; That is, No Man can have any acceſs to God by Prayer, or any other Act of Religious Worſhip here on Earth, or any acceſs to God in Heaven, but by me as Mediator. As if Chriſt had ſaid, I am the Author of the Way that leadeth unto Life; The Teacher of the Truth which directs to it, and the Giver of that Life which is to be obtained by walking in it: *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

7 If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo: and from henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him. 8 Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us. 9 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou then, Shew us the Father? 10 Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of my ſelf: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am the Father, and the Father in me: or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.

Obſerve here, 1. What a groſs Conception the Apoſtles had, and St. *Philip* in particular, of the Divine Nature and Being, as if God the Father could be ſeen with Mortal Eyes. *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.* It is not eaſie to determine what degrees of Ignorance may conſiſt with ſaving Grace; doubtleſs as the degrees of Revelation and means of Knowledge are more or leſs, ſo a perſon's Ignorance is more or leſs excuſable before God. *Obſerve* 2. How meekly our Bleſſed Saviour reproves their Ignorance: *Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip?* and then proceeds to inſtruct them in, and farther acquaint them with the Oneneſs of himſelf with his Father, and the perſonal Union of the Divine and Human Nature in himſelf. *Learn hence*, That the Father being inviſible in his Eſſence, to know or ſee him with mortal bodily Eyes, is impoſſible; but he was ſeen in his Son, who is the expreſs Image of the Father, being one in Eſſence with him, and one in Operation alſo: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father alſo.*

12 Verily verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, ſhall he do alſo,

and greater works then theſe ſhall he do, becauſe I go unto my Father.

Here Chriſt gives his Diſciples a promiſe of enduing them with power after his Departure to work Miracles, in ſome reſpect greater than what he wrought himſelf; not greater in regard of the manner, for he wrought by his own Power, and they wrought all in his Name, but greater in regard of the matter of them; particularly, their ſpeaking with ſtrange Tongues, their giving the Holy Ghoſt by laying on of hands, their healing Diſeaſes by the very ſhadow of their Bodies, but eſpecially by their wonderful converſion of the *Gentiles* from Idolatry to ſerve the living God. When St. *Peter* converted Three thouſand at one Sermon, then Chriſt made good this promiſe, the Diſciple at that time appeared to be above his Maſter; Chriſt all his time was angling for a few Fiſhes, and catch'd but an Hundred and Twenty. *Acts* 1. 15. Whilſt *Peter* comes with his Dragnet, and catcheth Three thouſand at one caſt; the reaſon might be, becauſe Chriſt was not properly to be the Builder, but the Foundation it ſelf. He ſubjoins the Reaſon of all this, *Becauſe I go unto my Father*; that is, to ſend down and pour forth upon you my Apoſtles, the Holy Ghoſt on the Day of Penticoſt; which was the great cauſe of the Apoſtles Miraculous Operations. *Hence learn*, That it pleaſed the Wiſdom of Chriſt to do greater things by the hand of his weak Servants here in the World, than he was pleaſed to do himſelf, who was God over all Bleſſed for ever more.

13 And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it.

In theſe words our Saviour produces another Argument to quiet his Diſciples Hearts, under their perplexity and trouble for the loſs of his Bodily preſence; he aſſures them, that whatever Comforts they enjoyed by his Preſence, they ſhall obtain by their Prayers. *Obſerve here*, 1. The Qualification requiſite in Prayer; we muſt pray *in Chriſt*'s *name*, that is, for the ſake of his Merits and Mediation; in Obedience to God's Command, and with an Eye at his Glory, and for things agreeable to his Will, and for things which his Wiſdom ſees good for us. To pray in Chriſt's Name, is more then to name Chriſt in Prayer. It implies three Things, (1.) To look up unto Chriſt, as having purchaſed for us this Priviledge that we may pray: For it is by the Blood of Chriſt that we draw near to God, and that a Throne of Grace is open for us. (2.) To pray in the Name of Chriſt, is to pray in the Strength of Chriſt, and by the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit of Chriſt. (3.) To pray in the Name of Chriſt, believing, that what we aſk on Earth Chriſt obtains in Heaven. To pray thus is no eaſie matter, yet unleſs we do pray thus, we do not pray at all. *Obſ.* 1. The Promiſe made to ſuch Prayers, *Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do*; he ſaith not, that will my Father do, but that will I do, to teſtifie his Divine Power and oneneſs with the Father. This evidently proves him to be God. *Obſ.* 3. The Reputation of the promiſe for the further Confirmation of it. *If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it.* The promiſe is doubled for the farther Confirmation of it; that ſo we might be free from all fears and doubts of being heard, when we put up our Prayers to God, in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, for things agreeable to his Will. *Learn hence*, That altho' the Children of God have ſometimes many Jealouſies and Fears ariſing in their Minds concerning the Anſwer of their Prayers, yet they are altogether groundleſs; for it is moſt certain their deſires ſhall be granted them, ſo far as the Wiſdom of God ſees fit and convenient for them; and for that reaſon our Saviour redoubles the Promiſe. *If ye will aſk any thing in my name, I will do it.*

15 If ye love me keep my commandments.

In theſe words our Saviour implicitly reproves his Diſciples for their fond way of expreſſing their Love to him, by doating upon his Bodily preſence, and ſorrowing immoderately for his abſence; and he expreſly warns them to evidence their Love to him, by their Obedience to his Commands. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments. Where Obſerve*, Chriſt requires an Obedient Love and loving Obedience. Love without Obedience is but diſſimulation; Obedience without Love is but drudgery and ſlavery. Such a Love as produces Obedience, it muſt be a Dutiful Love, a Love of Reverence and Honour to him as a Commander, and an operative and working Love, a labour of Love as the Apoſtle calls it, not waiters but workers are the beſt Servants in Chriſt's eſteem. And ſuch an Obedience as is the product of Love, it will be a willing, eaſie, and chearful Obedience, a pleaſing and an acceptable Obedience, a conſtant and abiding Obedience: All other Motives without Love are ſervile and baſe, and beget in us the drudgery of a Slave, but not the Duty of a Son; He that fears God only, is afraid of ſmarting, but he that loves God is afraid of offending. *Learn hence*, That the beſt and ſureſt evidence we can have of our Love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is an humble, chearful, univerſal and perſevering Obedience to his Commands; keep my Commandments, that is, endeavour it without reſerve; for tho' we cannot keep the Commandments, to a juſt ſatisfaction; yet we may perform them to a gracious acceptation. And the Word *My*, My Commandments, is a ſweetning and alleviating Word. *Moſes*'s Law, an unſupportable Load, but Chriſt's Law an eaſie Burthen. The Law from *Sinai* dreadful, the Law from *Sion* Gracious; it pardons weakneſs, and accepts ſincerity.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you.

Chriſt comforteth his Diſciples here, with a promiſe of the Miſſion of the Holy Spirit, to ſupply the want of his bodily preſence. *Where Obſerve*, The procurer of this Bleſſing. 1. And that is Chriſt, by his prevailing Prayer, and Powerful Interceſſion. *I will pray*; it runs in the future Tenſe; and ſo 'tis a promiſe of Chriſt's continual Interceſſion. As long as Chriſt is in Heaven, a Chriſtian ſhall not want a ſupply of Comfort and Conſolation here on Earth. *Obſ.* 2. The Author and Doner of the Bleſſing, and that is, God himſelf; *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give. The Father*, that is, my Father, your Father, and he that is the Father of Comfort and all Conſolation. *I will pray, and he will give.* 'Tis an expreſſion of great aſſurance. *Obſ.* 3. The Bleſſing it ſelf, the Holy Ghoſt, called here *Another Comforter. Where note*, 1. The Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt; he that will ſupply the Comforts of Chriſt's preſence, muſt be as Chriſt is, the God of all Comfort. *Note*, 2. The perſon of the Holy Ghoſt, he is a Divine Perſon, not a Divine quality or operation; then we might call him a Comfort, but not a Comforter. *Note*, 3. The Office and Imployment of the Holy Ghoſt. *He is a Comforter*; that is, an Advocate and Interceſſor to ſue for us, an Encourager, and one that Adminiſters Conſolation to us; and as he is an Holy Spirit, ſo are his Comforts Holy Comforts. *Obſ.* 4. The ſtability of this Bleſſing, *That he may abide with you for ever.* The beſt of our outward Comforts are ſudden flaſhes, not laſting flames; but the Conſolations of the Holy Spirit are ſtrong Conſolations; they are abounding Conſolations, and everlaſting Conſolations; eſpecially the Holy Spirit will be the Comforter of good Men in the Day of Affliction, in the Day of Temptation, and at the Hour of Death, when all other comforts flag and fail. *Obſerve laſtly*, The additional Title given to the Holy Ghoſt, he is called *the Spirit of Truth*; partly in oppoſition to Satan, who is called a Lying Spirit; partly becauſe he teacheth and revealeth the Truth, leadeth his People into all Truth, and ſealeth and confirmeth Truth to the Souls of Believers; he is the Spirit of Truth, both in his Eſſence and in his Operations. *Learn hence*, That as the Holy Spirit is true in his Eſſence and Nature, ſo he is true in his Office as a Comforter to good Men. All his Conſolations being real and ſolid, and free from impoſture and deluſion.

11 I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.

Here Obſerve, 1. The Condition which the Diſciples were in, upon the account of Chriſt's removal from them, and that was ſad and Comfortleſs; Fatherleſs, or Orphans, as the word ſignifies. *Hence Learn*, That Chriſt's Departure, or the loſs of his gracious Preſence, is very ſad and Comfortleſs to a Pious Soul; well might the Diſciples here lament and mourn, upon the occaſion of Chriſt's leaving of them, ſeeing thereby they ſhould be deprived of his Doctrine and Inſtructions, of his Advice and Counſel, and of the Benefit of his Holy and Inſtructive Example. *Obſ.* 2. The care of Chriſt for his Diſciples, in reference to this their ſad and diſconſolate Condition. *He would not leave them Comfortleſs. Where Note*, He doth not ſay, I will not ſuffer you to be comfortleſs, but I will not leave you ſo; that is, he will not deſert or diſown them in their Comfortleſs Condition; he will not leave them, either in point of affection, or in point of activity: he will not ceaſe to love them, nor ceaſe to beſtir himſelf for them. *Learn hence,* That Chriſt will not leave his Friends in a ſad and comfortleſs ſtate and condition, tho' for a time they may be brought into it. *I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come unto you.* Chriſt's coming here unto them, is to be underſtood of his coming to them by his Holy Spirit; in the Gifts of it, in the Graces of it, and in the Comforts of it; thus he did not long leave them comfortleſs, but at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* came again to them.

19 Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more: but ye ſee me: becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo. 20 At that day ye ſhall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Here our Saviour foretels his approaching Death, that within a little time the men of the world ſhould ſee him no more; for tho' he aroſe again, the World ſaw him no more after his Death; for we read of no appearances of him after his Reſurrection to any, but to his Diſciples only. Indeed the hour is coming when the World ſhall ſee him again; *namely,* at the Day of Judgment, when every eye ſhall behold him with Terror and Amazement. *Obſ. farther,* the Conſolation given to his Diſciples, *Ye ſhall ſee me: and becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Becauſe I am raiſed from the Grave, I will quicken your dead Bodies in the Grave, and ye ſhall live alſo: and as I live by my Aſcenſion into Heaven, ſo ſhall you my Diſciples live a Life of Grace here, and a Life of Glory with my ſelf hereafter. *Learn hence,* That a Believer's ſpiritual Life is derived from Chriſt, who by his Spirit communicates a quickning Virtue to all his Members: *becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.* See how Chriſt binds up their Life together with his own! as if he had ſaid, Whilſt there is vital Sap in me the Root, you that are Branches in me ſhall not whither and die. *Obſ. laſtly,* a farther Priviledge enſured to Believers after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and the Spirits Miſſion; they ſhould more perfectly underſtand the Eſſential Union betwixt Chriſt and the Father, and the Miſtical Union betwixt Chriſt and his Members. *At that day ye ſhall know that I am in my Father,* &c. The Knowledge which the Saints now have of the Miſterious and Myſtical Union, is but dark and imperfect; but in Heaven they ſhall underſtand theſe things clearly: Then and there the Eſſential Union of Chriſt and his Father, and the Miſtical Union between Chriſt and Believers will be more clearly underſtood, than we are capable to underſtand them in this our imperfect State.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.

Our Bleſſed Saviour in theſe words repeats what he had before injoyned at *ver.* 15. *namely,* to evidence the ſincerity of our Love to him by the univerſality of our Obedience to his Commands. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. Where Note,* 1. The Neceſſity of Knowledge in order unto Practice. 2. The Neceſſity of Practice in order unto Happineſs. We muſt firſt have Chriſt's Commandments, before we can keep them; we muſt have them in our Underſtandings and Judgments, in our Wills and Affections; not have them only in our Eyes to read, in our Ears to hear, or in our Mouths to talk of them; but to hide them in our Hearts, that we may not ſin againſt Chriſt in the wilful violation of them. Farther, we muſt *keep* as well as *have* theſe Commandments. This denotes an univerſal, diligent, and perſevering Obedience to them. *Hence learn,* That although many looſe Profeſſors pretend love to Chriſt, becauſe they hear, read, know, and can talk of his Commandments; yet in Chriſt's Account none do truly love him, but thoſe who make Conſcience of their Obedience to him. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. Obſ. next,* the gracious Promiſe of Chriſt to ſuch as thus expreſs their Love unto him. 1. *He ſhall be loved of my Father, and of my ſelf.* And ſhall he not be loved of the Holy Ghoſt too? Yes, no doubt. But why is not he named then? Becauſe the Son dwelleth in us by the Spirit, and ſheds his Love abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt. 2. *I will manifeſt my ſelf unto him;* that is, ſuch obedient Chriſtians ſhall not only enjoy the fruit and benefit of my Love, but they ſhall enjoy the ſenſe of my Love, and experience the ſenſible Manifeſtations and inward Diffuſions of my Love in their own Souls. *Learn hence,* That the only way to have Chriſt love us, and to let out his Love upon us, and to know that he loves us, is to look diligently to our obediential walking with him and before him. We may as rationally think to nouriſh our Bodies with Poyſon, as to enjoy the Manifeſtations of Chriſt's Love in a way of *Sin.*

22 Judas ſaith unto him, not Iſcariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto us, and not unto the world?

Some underſtand theſe words of a temporal Manifeſtation, and think that *Judas* the Brother of *James,* who ſpake them, ſtill expected that Chriſt ſhould be a Temporal Prince, and have ſuch a Kingdom as ſhould be conſpicuous to all the World; and therefore puts the queſtion, how he could poſſibly ſhew himſelf to his Diſciples, and the World not ſee him? Others underſtand it of a Spiritual Manifeſtation; as if he had ſaid, Lord! who or what are we thy Diſciples, that we ſhould enjoy more ſpecial Manifeſtations of thy Love to us, than to the reſt of the World? why ſhould we be dignified with ſuch diſtinguiſhing favours above others? *Learn thence* 1. That there is a real difference put by Chriſt betwixt his own Children and the World, in the matter of ſpecial Manifeſtations. 2. That there being no cauſe from the Creature why Chriſt ſhould make this difference, his diſcriminating Grace is matter of juſt and great Admiration. Well might the Apoſtle out of a deep Admiration ſay, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf to us, and not unto the World?*

23 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings: and the word which you hear, is not mine, but the Fathers which ſent me.

Obſerve here, How our Saviour ſtill goes on to direct and encourage his Diſciples to evidence ſincerity of their Love to his Perſon, by the univerſality of their Obedience to his Commands; and tells them how great their Advantages would be by ſo doing: for, firſt, *the Father will love them;* that is, manifeſt his Favour to them in farther Diſpenſations of Grace and Comfort. *Learn thence,* That all the Manifeſtations of Divine Love to the Souls of Believers, depend upon their cloſe walking with God in the Paths of Holineſs and ſtrict Obedience. Secondly, *We will make our abode with him.* He ſhall have Father and Son's Company. An Alluſion to a Parent that has many Children; he will be ſure to live with them that are moſt dutiful to him, and moſt obſervant of him: The expreſſion of *making their abode with us,* denotes that ſweet and intimate Fellowſhip which ſhall be betwixt God and us, and the perpetuity and conſtancy of it at all times; till we are taken up by him into Heaven, he will make his abode with us, by the indwelling preſence of his Holy Spirit, the Graces and Comforts whereof ſhall abide with us for ever.

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being yet preſent with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.

Here we have a repeated promiſe of the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, called *the Comforter,* and his ſpecial Office declared; *namely,* To teach, and to bring to remembrance what Chriſt had taught. *He ſhall teach you all things.* As the Spirit of God is the great Comforter, ſo he is the ſpecial Teacher of his Children; he teacheth condeſcendingly, ſtooping to the meaneſt capacities; he teacheth efficaciouſly, inclining the Heart to receive Inſtruction, as well as opening the Ear to hear it; he teacheth plainly and clearly, unerringly and infallibly; he is Truth it ſelf, and therefore his Teachings are moſt true. And as the Holy Spirit is the Saints Teacher, ſo is he alſo their Remembrancer: *He ſhall bring all things to your remembrance;* that is, all Truths needful to be known, and neceſſary to Salvation. *Here Note,* That the Holy Spirit teaches nothing but what Chriſt himſelf taught; the Spirit teaches in the Word, and by the Word, but never teaches any thing contrary to the Word. *He ſhall teach and bring to remembrance whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.*

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

As if our Lord had ſaid, Whatever outward Trouble the World gives you, be not afraid of it before it comes, nor trouble at it when it is come; for I will give you inward Peace in the midſt of all your outward Troubles. *Not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Where note,* That Chriſt's Peace is vaſtly different from that Peace which is given or enjoyed by the World; the World may wiſh Peace, yet never intend it; or they may wiſh it, yet not be able to give it: but Chriſt's Peace is real and effectual, ſolid and ſubſtantial; the World's Peace is only a freedom from outward Trouble, but Chriſt's Peace is a deliverance from inward Guilt; and tho' it doth not give us an exemption from outward Troubles, yet it gives us a ſanctified Uſe and Improvement of them, and aſſures us of a joyful joyful Iſſue and Deliverance out of them.

28 Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

That the Diſciples of Chriſt might neither be overſet with fears, nor overwhelm'd with grief, he tells them that they ought to entertain the news of his departure rather with joy and exultation, than with ſorrow and dejection. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I go to the Father.* True Love to Chriſt will make us rejoyce in his Advancement and Exaltation, altho' it be to our own diſadvantage. Thoſe words, *My Father is greater than I,* muſt be underſtood with reference to his Humane Nature, as Mediator; for ſo he was the Father's Servant, and the Father as God was greater than he as Man; again, the Father may be ſaid to be greater than Chriſt, in regard of his Paternity, as being the Fountain of the Deity; the Father is of himſelf, but the Son is begotten of the Father; but being of the ſame Subſtance with the Father, he is conſequently God, as the Father is God; for the inequality ariſes not from the Eſſence, but from the Order and Manner of Subſiſtence. Thus *the Father was greater than he.* Greater than he as to his Original, the Son being begotten by him; and greater is he that gives, than he that receives: but as to his Eſſence, they are both one God, and ſo equal. Three ways the Father was greater than Chriſt, 1. with reſpect to his Humane Nature. Who can doubt but a dependent Creature is inferiour to that Almighty Being that made him? 2. With reſpect to the eternal generation of his Divine Perſon, as he was begotten of the Father, who is therefore called the Fountain of the Deity. 3. With reſpect to his Office as Mediator, for thus he was the Father's Servant. O wonderful condeſcenſion! that the Eternal Word, who as ſuch was equal with the Father, ſhould in compaſſion to us accept a Station, and ſuſtain a Character, in which the Father was greater than he! Now, tho' under each of theſe Conſiderations God the Father is greater than the Son, yet none of them are inconſiſtent with the Son's being God by Nature.

29 And now I have told you before it come to paſs,
that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe. 30
Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the
prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.
31 But that the world may know that I love the
Father; and as the Father gave me commandment,
even ſo I do, Ariſe, let us go hence.

The time of our Saviour's Death now nearer and nearer approaching, he prepares the expectation of his Diſciples for it; becauſe Evils that ſurprize us ſuddenly do ſink our Spirits ſadly, whereas what we fear, for that we prepare. Accordingly our Lord arms his dear Diſciples againſt all diſquietude, and overwhelming Sorrow for his departure from them: *I have told you before, that when it comes to paſs ye might believe*; that is, be aſſured that I am not meer Man, but truly and really God, and depend upon me for Life and Salvation. *Obſ.* 2. How our Saviour points out the cauſe of his Sufferings; *namely,* Satan and his Inſtruments: *The Prince of this World cometh*; that is, by *Judas,* the Soldiers, and the High Prieſts: *but he has nothing in me*; that is, he will find no Sin or Corruption in me to ſide with his Temptations, or no Guilt upon me to give him any Advantage againſt me, for I ſhall die as a perfect innocent perſon. Chriſt, in ſuffering for our Sins, did not only conflict with the Wrath of God, but with the Rage of Men and Devils; yet all the Power and Policy, all the Malice and Cruelty of Satan cannot prevail againſt Chriſt, any further than he voluntarily yields and ſubmits himſelf unto it. *The Prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me. Obſ.* 3. That it was Chriſt's Love and Obedience to his Father that carried him forth ſo chearfully to the Work of Sufferings, ſupported him under it, and carried him thorough it. *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me Commadment, even ſo I do.* True Love to God will draw men to Obedience in the hardeſt Services and Sufferings; the grand Motive of Chriſt's Sufferings was love to his Father, Obedience to his Commands, and a regard to his Glory. Lord, let thy Love and Obedience to thy Father in all thy Sufferings, be the ſubject of our Admiration, and the matter of our Imitation alſo. As the Father gives us Commandment, ſo let us always do.

CHAP. XV.

I Am the true vine, and my Father is the husband-
man. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit,
he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit,
he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Obſerve here, how our bleſſed Saviour under the Metaphor of a Vine elegantly ſets forth himſelf in his Relation to his viſible Church, ſhewing under that Similitude what his Father meant to do with *Judas,* and with all unfruitful Branches like unto him, even take them away, cut them off, and throw them into the Fire; but ſuch as are fruitful he purges, by his Word and Spirit, by Ordinances and Providences, by Mercies and Afflictions, that they may be more aboundingly and abidingly fruitful. *Learn hence,* 1. That Jeſus Chriſt in his Offices for, and Relation to his People, doth moſt fitly reſemble a Vine. As the Vine is weak, mean and ſmall in outward appearance; not like the Cedar for height, or like the Oak for ſtrength: ſo was Chriſt in his ſtate of humiliation; there was no Beauty in him, *Iſa.* 53. As the Vine is a fruitful Plant, tho' it has little Pomp, yet it has much Plenty, and is only uſeful for Fruit-bearing, and brings forth both plenty and variety of ſweet Fruit to make glad the Heart of Man: thus the Fruits of Chriſt's Death, Reſurrection, Aſſenſion and Interceſſion, are many and great, delightful and ſweet. In a word, as the Fruit of the Vine is preſſed that it may be Drink unto Men, ſo Chriſt ſubmitted to be trod in the Winepreſs of God's Wrath, that thereby the ſweeteſt Fruit and Benefit might redound to his People. *Finally,* as the Vine is the Root from which all the Branches derive their nouriſhment and fruitfulneſs; in like manner is Chriſt the Stock, into which all his members are ingrafted; the Root in which they all ſubſiſt, and the Fountain from whence their ſpiritual Life and Fruitfulneſs doth proceed and flow. *Learn,* 2. That as Chriſt is the *Vine,* ſo his Father is the *Husbandman*; he ingrafts and implants all the Branches into this Vine; the Plants of Righteouſneſs are of his own planting; he takes notice what ſtore of Fruit every Branch doth bring forth; and it is his daily care to dreſs and dung, to purge and prune, to ſupport and ſhelter his Vineyard, that it may bring forth Fruit abundantly. *Learn,* 3. That there are two ſorts of Branches in this Vine, ſome fruitful, others unfruitful; ſome have the viſibility, but not the reality of Branches; ſome are Branches only by external Profeſſion, others are ſo by real implantation. *Learn,* 4. That the true Touchſtone whereby to diſcern one ſort of Branches from another, is not by the fair Leaves of Profeſſion, but by the ſubſtantial Proofs of an holy and righteous Converſation. *Learn,* 5. That in the moſt fruitful Branches, in the beſt and holieſt of Chriſtians, there remains much Corruption to be purged out, in order to future and farther Fruitfulneſs. *Learn,* 6. That the Husbandmans hand (God the Father's) manages the pruning Knife of Affliction, in order to his Peoples improvement in Grace and Holineſs; he had rather ſee his Vine bleed, than ſee it barren. *Laſtly,* That ſuch Branches as after all the Husbandman's care and coſt remain unfruitful, ſhall be finally cut off and caſt away, as was *Judas* here, who in this Diſcourſe of our Saviour ſeems particularly and eſpecially to be aimed at: He was a Branch in him that bare no Fruit, who was ſhortly after taken away, and went to his own place.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have
ſpoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As
the branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide
in the Vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth
in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much
fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Our Saviour having in the former Verſes diſtinguiſhed his Diſciples into two ſorts; ſome that were Members of his Body the Church, and Branches of him the true Vine, by outward ſhew and viſible profeſſion only; others that are ſpiritually ingrafted into him, and do bring forth much Fruit; now in this third Verſe, Chriſt tells his Diſciples which number they were of: Now (ſaith he) ye are clean, thro' the word which I have ſpoken unto you; that is, Now that *Judas* the Traitor, that Dead, Rotten, Fruitleſs Branch, is cut off and caſt out, ye are all clean thro' the cleanſing Power and Vertue of my Word and Doctrine. *Learn hence,* 1. That ſuch as are juſtified by the Blood, and ſanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, are in Chriſt's Account clean, notwithſtanding their many ſpots and manifold imperfections. *Now are ye clean.* 2. That as the Blood of Chriſt is the meritorious, and the Spirit of Chriſt the efficacious; ſo the word of Chriſt is the Inſtrumental cauſe of a Believers Purification and Cleanſing. *Now are ye clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you. Abide in me, and I will abide in you.* That is, Abide in me, and I will abide in you; Abide in me, not only by an outward and viſible Profeſſion, but by a real and fiducial Adherence; and I will abide in you, by the influences and operations of my Holy Spirit. The Union and Conjunction between Chriſt and his Members is mutual, they abide in him by Faith and dependance, and he abides in them by the indwelling preſence of his Grace and Spirit. Abide in me, and I will abide in you. *Obſerve farther,* The Reaſon which Chriſt gives, why they ſhould thus abide in him, becauſe without Union with him, without Intereſt in him, without influences of Grace derived from him; they could bring forth no fruit for him, nor do any thing that is truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to him. *As the Branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me, for without me ye can do nothing.* That is, as Branches ſever'd from the Vine cannot live nor bear Fruit, ſo neither can Chriſtians ſeparated from Chriſt, and without deriving virtue from him, do any thing ſpiritually good and well-pleaſing in the ſight of God. *Learn hence,* That not only unregenerate Men do labour under an impotency to that which is ſpiritually good, but even Diſciples themſelves, without daily dependance upon Chriſt, and without conſtant communications of Grace from him, can do nothing in a lively and acceptable way and manner unto him; without me *Ye* can do nothing; you that are Branches of me the true Vine. As Chriſtians without me, that is, without my Spirit abiding in you, and uniting you to me your Head, you can do nothing acceptable to me, or worthy of my Goſpel. Again, as Apoſtles, it may denote that without the Gifts and Powerful Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, they could do nothing to convert the World to Chriſtianity; in both reſpects might Chriſt truly ſay, without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned.

Here our Holy Lord diſcovers the ſad and deplorable Condition of ſuch Profeſſors, who pretending Relation to Chriſt, do yet bring forth no Fruit unto him; he calls them wither'd Branches fit only for the Fire. *Learn hence,* That ſuch as have had a long ſtanding in God's Vineyard, and contented themſelves with a withered Profeſſion, they are in great danger of having God's blaſting added to their Barrenneſs. All their parts and gifts and common Graces will wither, and their fair Bloſſoms of Profeſſion will drop off; and at the great Day the Angels will gather theſe fruitleſs Branches together, and caſt them into Hell-fire.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.

Obſerve here, 1. A glorious Priviledge declared. *Ask what ye will, it ſhall be done unto you.* Not that we are hereby warranted to ask what we pleaſe at God's Hand, but our Will muſt be limited by the Word and Will of God; we muſt pray in Faith, and in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, and with a ſingle Eye at the Glory of God. *Obſerve* 2. The Condition upon which this Priviledge is attainable. *If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you;* that is, Practically and Experimentally. If my Doctrine and Commands abide in your Hearts, and diſpoſe you to an Holy fruitfulneſs in your Lives, then ſhall all your juſt requeſts be granted. *Learn,* That ſuch as by Faith embrace the Promiſes, and by Obedience live up to the Precepts of the Goſpel, may in Prayer humbly ask of God what they will, with a due Submiſſion to the Wiſdom and Will of God.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.

Our Lord here exhorts his followers to an Holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works by a double Argument. One drawn from the Glory of God. *Herein is my Father glorified.* The other from their own Advantage; *ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples.* That is, hereby ye ſhall evidence and prove your ſelves to be my Diſciples. *Learn hence,* That a Chriſtian's abounding fruitfulneſs in good Works, will abundantly conduce to the Honour and Glory of God, and alſo to his own Peace and Comfort, by being the beſt evidence of his Diſcipleſhip.

9 As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

Lord! What a compariſon is here! As the Father hath loved me ſo have I loved you; he doth not ſay, as the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved him; but ſo have I loved you; nor doth he ſay, as God hath loved me, ſo have I loved you; but *As the Father,* it is, *verbum dilectionis,* a word importing dearneſs of Affection; nor doth he ſay, the Father hath loved me, and I love you; but *as* the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you; nor doth he ſay, as the Father hath loved me, ſo will I love you: but ſo *have* I loved you. This ſhews the priority of Chriſt's love, that he loved us firſt, and alſo denotes the invincible conſtancy of his love, and the indubitable certainty thereof. *I have loved you:* Follow me from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven again; and you will find that every ſtep I have taken hath been in love. *Learn* 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given full and ample Demonſtration of his great and wonderful love unto his Church and People. 2. That it is the Duty, and ought to be the ſingular care of every Chriſtian, to preſerve the ſweet ſenſe and inward diffuſions of Chriſt's love in their own Souls. *Continue ye in my love.*

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Fathers commandments, and abide in his love.

Chriſt had told his Diſciples in the foregoing Verſe, That he had *loved them, even as the Father had loved him.* That is, with an eternal love, with a real and operative love; with an immutable and conſtant love. In this Verſe he directs them how they may continue in the Senſe of his Love. *Namely,* By their conſtant Obedience to his Commands, as his Obedience to his Father's Commands had ſecur'd him a continuance in his Father's Love. *If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love.* That is, in the ſenſe of my Love, and under the ſweet apprehenſions of it. *Learn hence,* That as our Obedience to Chriſt is the beſt Evidence of our Love to him, ſo is it the beſt means to preſerve and keep us in the ſenſe and aſſurance of his Love to us.

11 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

In theſe words our Saviour declares the Ground and Reaſon, why he did ſo vehemently preſs and urge the Duty of being univerſally fruitful upon his Diſciples, and that was twofold. 1. *That his joy might remain in them;* That is, that the joy which he had in their Holineſs and Obedience might remain with him; Nothing is more deſired by Chriſt, than that he may have cauſe continually to rejoyce in the Faith and Fruitfulneſs of his People. 2. *That their joy in him might be full.* This latter ariſes from the former; our joy in Chriſt reſults from Chriſt's joy in us; his delight in us, cauſes us abundantly to delight in him. *Learn hence,* That nothing is more deſired by Chriſt, than that the joy of his People ſhould be a full, ſolid, conſtant, and uninterrupted joy. 2. That the only way and means in order thereunto, is by an Holy fruitfulneſs in good works. *All theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* The Obſervation of God's Commandments do give a Chriſtian here the fulleſt and moſt perfect joy.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as *I* have loved you.

Our Lord had often in this farewel Sermon of his to his dear Diſciples, preſſed upon them the Duty of loving one another, *ch.* 13. and 14. And yet here he enforces it again from his own Example. *As I* have loved you, *ſo* love you one another; that is, as truly and as ſincerely for the manner, tho' not to the ſame proportion and degree. *Learn hence*, That for the Diſciples of Chriſt to love one another upon ſuch grounds, and in ſuch a way as he loved them, is that which his heart greatly deſires and is very much ſet upon. 2. That Chriſt's love unto Believers is both an obligation unto mutual love, and alſo a pattern and example for it. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.*

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Here our Saviour gives his Diſciples an Evidence of the greatneſs of his Love unto them. *Namely*, In his readineſs to lay down his Life for them, which is the higheſt expreſſion of Love to our deareſt Friends, becauſe Life is the greateſt earthly Bleſſing. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's Love in laying down his Life for his People was a matchleſs Love; for whilſt they are Enemies to him, he had a friendly reſpect for them, and never ceaſed till he had brought them into a covenant of friendſhip with himſelf.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.

Here Chriſt invites his People to Obedience, by the honourable Title of Friends. *Ye are my Friends.* 1. Actively, you will declare and manifeſt your ſelves to be my Friends. 2. Paſſively, I will declare my ſelf to be your Friend. *Learn hence*, 1. How condeſcending is the Love of Chriſt, in calling his Servants by the name of Friends. 2. How glorious is the Believer's Relation to Chriſt, in being one of his Friends. 3. How grateful is Obedience to Chriſt, ſeeing it dignifies the Practiſers of it with the Title of his Friends. 4. Our Conformity to Chriſt conſiſts not ſo much in imitation of what he did, as in Obedience to what he preſcribed. Some Actions of Chriſt are unimitable, but all his Commands are obeyable. 5. That nothing ſhort of an humble, uniform, chearful and conſtant Obedience to the Commands of Chriſt, will evidence the Truth of our Relation to him, and the ſincerity of our friendſhip with him. *Then only are you my Friends, when you do whatever I command you.*

15 Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what the lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

By theſe words Chriſt declares the Reaſon why he was pleaſed to change his ſtile, and call his Diſciples Friends inſtead of Servants. *Namely*, Becauſe of his Communication of Secrets to them, which Servants are not admitted to the knowledge of. *Henceforth I call you not Servants*; that is, not meer Servants; not that they were to be exempted from Obedience; (for that is called for in the foregoing Verſe) but Chriſt treated them now with the kindneſs and familiarity of Friends; being about to leave them, he unboſoms himſelf unto them, ſaying, *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Not, as if Chriſt had communicated the infinite Treaſures of knowledge to them, which the Father had imparted to him; but he ſpeaks here as the Prophet of his Church, that as ſuch he had revealed all things needful for them to know in order to Salvation; all things belonging to their Caſe and State; as a Counſellor doth not impart all his knowledge to his Clients; but all that is neceſſary for his Client to underſtand and know, that he makes known unto him, relating to his own Caſe. *Learn hence*, 1. That all Chriſt's Diſciples are his Servants, and all his Servants are his Friends, in regard of intimate Communion and tender uſage. *Henceforth I call you not ſervants but friends.* And after his Reſurrection he called them Brethren, *John* 20. 17. The Dignity of Believers is a growing Dignity, the longer they follow Chriſt, the higher priviledges are indulged to them. *Learn* 2. That all the Father's counſel concerning our Salvation, and ſo far as it is needful and neceſſary for us to know, is faithfully revealed by Chriſt to his Church; he being conſtituted by God the Father to be the great Prophet and Inſtructer of it. *All things that I have heard of the Father, I have made known unto you.* That is, all things fit for them at preſent to know. *Namely*, Concerning his Paſſion, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, a future Judgment, and the Promiſe of Eternal Life.

16 Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that you ſhould go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit ſhould remain: that whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Here our Saviour gives another Inſtance and Evidence of his Love to his Diſciples; He tells them that his mercy and free goodneſs had prevented them in their election to Eternal Salvation, and in their vocation unto the Office of Apoſtleſhip. *Ye have not choſen me*, to be your Maſter and Lord, *but I have choſen you*, to be my Diſciples, Friends, and Servants. 2. He acquaints them with the end, deſign, and intention of his, in chuſing of them. *Namely, that they bring forth fruit*, and perſevere therein, even in all the Fruits of Holineſs and Obedience, which are to the praiſe and glory of God by Jeſus Chriſt. *I have ordained you that you ſhould bring forth fruit, and that your fruit ſhould remain.* 3. He directs them that in order to their being fruitful, they ſhould have acceſs to the Father through him, for whatever they wanted and ſtood in need of. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my Name he will give it you. Learn hence*, That all thoſe whom God hath choſen, and called to the Knowledge and Service of Jeſus Chriſt, do and will make it their chief care and endeavours to bring forth Fruit, and to perſevere therein to their Lives end. *I have choſen you, that you ſhould bring forth fruit, and that your fruit ſhould remain.*

17 Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another. 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater then the lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. 21 But all theſe things will they do unto you for my names ſake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me.

Obſerve here, 1. With what frequency and importunity our Lord inculcates and preſſes the Duty of mutual Love upon his Diſciples. *I command you to love one another.* It denotes the great Importance of the Duty, and the great averſeneſs and backwardneſs of our Hearts to the performance of it. And if we conſider the Diſciples as Apoſtles, and Miniſters of the Goſpel, it intimates to us the neceſſity of mutual Love amongſt the Diſpenſers of the Goſpel, as conducing exceedingly to the welfare and benefit of the Church of God, over which he hath ſet them. *Obſerve* 2. The Argument which our Saviour makes uſe of to preſs his Diſciples in general, and his Miniſters and Ambaſſadors in particular to love each other; and that is, becauſe the World would certainly hate them. *Learn hence*, That the World's hatred of the Members and Miniſters of Chriſt is, and ought to be eſteemed by them, a ſtrong Argument to excite and perſwade them to love one another; for this is ſubjoyned as an Argument to preſs mutual Love, that we are ſure to meet with the World's hatred. *Obſe v:* 3. The ſeveral Arguments by way of encouragement which Chriſt propounds to comfort his Members and Miniſters againſt the World's hatred. 1. Argument is taken from his own Lot and uſage, when here in the World, He met with the very ſame before them. *The World hated me before it hated you. Learn hence*, That Hatred and Perſecution from the World, need not ſeem hard to the Saints, if they conſider what a ſhock Chriſt before them had upon him; he is the prime Object of the World's Hatred, and they who ate his Members much, do hate him more, becauſe of their likeneſs to him, and reſemblance of him. A ſecond Argument of Comfort under the World's Hatred, is this: That it will evidence they are not of the World; but choſen out of the World, *v.* 19. *Becauſe ye are not of the World, but I have choſen you out of the World, therefore the World hates you. Hence learn*, 1. That the Children of God though in the World, yet they are not of the World; they have not the Spirit of the World in them, nor is the Converſation of the World led by them. 2. That the difference betwixt them that are of the World, and thoſe that are choſen out of the World, is of God's making. *I have choſen you out of the World.* 2. That ſuch Chriſtians as are ſeparated from the World in Judgment, Affection and Practice, muſt for that reaſon expect to be Hated and Perſecuted by the World. *Becauſe ye are not of the World, therefore the World hates you.* The Third Argument for Conſolation and Support, under the World's Hatred, is taken from our Relation to Chriſt, as Servants to a Maſter, *v.* 20. *Remember the Servant is not greater than his Lord*; As if Chriſt had ſaid, is it equal, That you ſhould expect better Treatment than my ſelf, either as to our Perſons or Miniſtry, or that you ſhould expect that the World ſhould better receive your Doctrine than it did mine before you? *Learn hence*, That neither the Members nor Miniſters of Chriſt can, nor ought to expect better Entertainment in, and from the World, than their Maſter found before them. *The Servant is not above his Maſter, nor greater than his Lord.* A Fourth Argument to ſupport them under the Burthen of the World's hatred, is taken from the goodneſs of the Cauſe for which they were to Suffer, *Namely*, for Chriſt's Name ſake, *v.* 21. *All theſe things will they do unto you for my name ſake. Hence learn*, 1. That it is the Duty of all, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt, to own the Name of Chriſt, to ſtand up in defence of his Name and Truth, his Glory and Honour; what oppoſition ſoever they meet with for the ſame. *Learn* 2. That the great quarrel of the World againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt, is for the Name of Chriſt; whatever may be pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel.

22 If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloke for their ſin.

Theſe Words are not to be underſtood abſolutely but comparatively; as if Chriſt had ſaid, had not I come amongſt them in my Incarnation, and Preached perſonally to them the Doctrine of Salvation, and confirmed that Doctrine by miraculous operations, they might have pleaded Ignorance in ſome meaſure, and *they had not had ſin*; that is, they had not had the Sin of Unbelief, and Goſpel-Contempt to Anſwer for; or had not had ſo great a meaſure of any kind of Sin to anſwer for, as now they have; but would have had more to ſay in excuſe, or for a cover for their Sin than now they can. *But now they have no Cloak for their Sin*; That is, they are totally inexcuſable, and have not the leaſt colour or pretence for their obſtinate unbelief. *Learn hence*, 1. That Sins of Ignorance are as it were no Sins compared with Sins committed againſt Light and Knowledge. 2. That Sins committed againſt Goſpel-Light, are of an heinous Nature, and Aggravated Guilt, as being committed againſt the very Remedy. 3. That the Goſpel where it is plainly preached doth take away all pretence and excuſe from Sinners. *Now they have no Cloak for their Sin.*

23 He that hateth me hateth my Father alſo. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin: but now have they both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to paſs, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in the law, They hated me without a cauſe.

Theſe words declare the heinous Nature of the *Phariſees* Sin, in hating and perſecuting Chriſt, who had done before their Eyes ſuch works as no Man beſides him, or before him ever did; he acting by his own Power. *Peter* healed the lame Man. *Acts* 3. but it was in the Name of Jeſus of *Nazareth*; But Chriſt healed the Sick and raiſed the Dead in his own Name, and by a ſpecial Word of Command; *I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*: Yet did the *Phariſees* hate him and his Father, according to the Prediction, *Pſalm* 35. 19. *They hated me without a cauſe.* Which being ſpoken of *David* in *Type*, received a more eminent Accompliſhment in Chriſt the Son of *David. Learn hence*, 1. That let Men pretend to never ſo much Holineſs or Reſpect to God, yet if they hate Chriſt, and deſpiſe his Goſpel, they are haters of God, who is one in Eſſence and Nature with his Son: *He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo. Learn* 2. That no Miracles wrought by mortal Men, were ever comparable with the Miracles wrought by Chriſt the Son of God; his did ſurpaſs them all, in number, kind, and manner of doing them; by his own Authority, in his own Name, and not as others, who obtained their Power by Prayer from God. *I have done amongſt them the works which none other Man did. Learn* 3. That Chriſt's having confirmed his Doctrine by ſuch unparallel'd Miracles as the World was never before acquainted with, doth aggravate the Sin of thoſe that are haters of his Perſon, Deſpiſers of his Doctrine, and Reproachers of his Miracles. It being juſt with God, when Men obſtinately ſhut their Eyes and will not ſee, judicially to cloſe their Eyes and ſay, They ſhall not ſee.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtifie of me. 27 And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.

Here our Holy Lord comforts himſelf, that tho' he had lain then under many Aſperſions and Scandals from the World, yet all theſe ſhould be done away by the coming of the Holy Spirit, who ſhould teſtifie of him, and make his Perſon and Doctrine to be acknowledged in the World; and that they themſelves ſhould bear witneſs of him, who had been with him from the beginning; that is, ſince he firſt began to exerciſe his Prophetick Office. *Obſerve here*, 1. That Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three diſtinct Perſons in the Godhead. 2. That the Holy Ghoſt proceedeth from the Father and the Son: Here the Son is ſaid to ſend him; and as to the Father, he is ſaid to proceed from him. If the Holy Ghoſt doth not proceed from the Son, why is he called *the Spirit of the Son*? Gal. 4. 6. Why is he ſaid here to be ſent by the Son? *The Comforter whom I will ſend unto you from the Father.* And if the Spirit doth not proceed from the Son, what perſonal Relation can we conceive betwixt the Son and the Spirit? *Obſerve* 3. That it is the high Dignity and Honour of the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt, that the Spirit beareth no Teſtimony unto Chriſt, but with and according to the Teſtimony given by them; for here it is conjoyned. *He ſhall teſtifie of me; and ye ſhall alſo bear witneſs, who have been with me from the beginning.*

CHAP. XVI.

THeſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended. 2 They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doeth God ſervice. 3 And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you.

In the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter our Bleſſed Saviour had acquainted his Diſciples with the hatred and hard uſage which they were like to meet with from the World; and here he intimates to them the Reaſon why he did ſo much inſiſt upon that Subject; *Namely*, not to ſadden their Hearts and grieve their Spirits before their Sufferings came, but *that they might not be offended, diſcouraged*, or *ſcandalized* at them when they came, but prepared for them and armed againſt them. *Hence Learn*, 1. That all Afflictions, but eſpecially Perſecutions, are ſo ſearching and trying, that the beſt of Chriſtians have need to be guarded againſt them, that they may not be offended at them. 2. That it was the great deſign of Chriſt to arm his Diſciples againſt the ſcandal of the Croſs, leſt ſtumbling at that which they expected not, they ſhould fall from the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended. Obſerve* 2. How our Saviour inſtances in two particular ſorts and kinds of Sufferings which his Diſciples were to expect in the World, and from the World, *Namely*, Excommunication and Martyrdom, *ver.* 2. *They ſhall put you out of their Synagogues*, that is, exclude them from all their Aſſemblies both Civil and Religious, and ſhall not only think it lawful, but a very acceptable Service to God, to put them to Death: *Whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service. Obſerve*, 3. How Chriſt diſcovers to his dear Diſciples, the Cauſe and Ground of the World's Hatred againſt them, and Enmity towards them; *Namely*, Their Ignorance of the Father and himſelf, *ver.* 3. *Theſe things will they do, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. From whence we may Learn*, That all the Perſecutions of the Saints, do ſpeak in Perſecutors an Ignorance both of God the Father and of Jeſus Chriſt his Son. All Perſecution ſprings from Ignorance as well as from Malice. And Men who continue ignorant of God and Chriſt, are in danger of turning Perſecutors, if they have a temptation to it. *Obſerve* 4. How our Lord again forewarns his Diſciples of their approaching Sufferings, to the intent that they might remember that he had foretold them of them, and would not fail to ſupport them under them. He had often told them in general of Perſecutions and Troubles which they muſt expect to meet with, but did not till now intimate the kinds and degrees of thoſe Sufferings, with reſpect to their Weakneſs; and becauſe, whilſt he was with them, he himſelf bare the brunt of all; the Worlds Rage falling upon him, letting them alone; But after his Aſcenſion, when the Malice of Satan and wicked Men could not reach him, then did the Storm fall upon them. *Hence learn*, 1. That Chriſt is ſo tender of his Diſciples Weakneſs, that he will not put them upon the hardſhip of Sufferings till they be trained up and prepared for them. 2. That it may encourage the Saints in and under their Sufferings, that Chriſt himſelf is the great Object of the Perſecutors Malice; and they only ſo, for his ſake; for could they reach him, they would not concern themſelves with them. *Learn* 3. That the Saints of God, after long Exemption and Freedom from Sufferings, muſt expect that Storms will ariſe, Clouds gather thick, and Trials come on apace; and their being under one Trial, will not hide or ſhelter them from another.

5 But now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goeſt thou? 6 But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, ſorrow hath filled your heart.

Obſerve here, How our Saviour again intimates to his Diſciples his ſpeedy departure from them, and reproves them for being ſo ſadded at it, and concerned for it; without conſidering the End and Deſign of it, and the Benefit and Advantage they were to receive by it. Here we ſee how the Diſciples Thoughts were wholly taken up about themſelves, what they ſhould do for want of Chriſt's bodily Preſence, without being inſtant with him, to know whither he was going, and what benefit he ſhould reap, and they might expect from his departure. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's Diſciples ought not ſo much to have lamented the loſs of his bodily Preſence, as to have rejoyced in his Glorious Exaltation, and in their own Advantages by his Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. *None of you ask me? Whither goeſt thou? But ſorrow hath filled your heart.*

7 Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.

In theſe Words our Saviour urges his Diſciples to ſubmit to his Departure, as that which would make way for his ſending the Comforter to them; which he aſſures them would be of more Advantage to them than his own ſtay and continuance amongſt them. *Thence Learn*, That the Preſence of the Holy Spirit with us, is a greater Comfort and Advantage to us, than the Preſence of Chriſt in the Fleſh amongſt us. Chriſt's bodily Preſence was comfortable, but the Spirit is more intimately a Comforter than Chriſt in his fleſhly Preſence: Becauſe the Spirit can comfort all Believers at once, in all Places; but Chriſt's bodily Preſence can comfort but few, and that in one Place only at once. Chriſt did converſe with his Diſciples outwardly, but the Spirit poſſeſs'd himſelf of their Hearts inwardly. Now for the Spirit to dwell in us, is more advantagious than to have Chriſt to dwell in the Fleſh amongſt us. The Benefit of Chriſt's Converſation was great, but the Advantage of the Spirit's Renovation and holy Inſpirations is much greater: The one encourages and excites us to be Holy, but the other quickens and enables us to be Holy. Therefore well might Chriſt ſay, *It is expedient*, or highly neceſſary and advantagious *for you, that I go away.* He ſubjoins a Reaſon; *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will ſend him to you. Whence we learn*, That Chriſt's Aſcenſion was indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in order to the Spirit's Miſſion; the Spirit could not have deſcended, if Chriſt had not firſt aſcended; the Spirit could not come, but by the Gift and Miſſion of the Mediator. Now the ſending of the Spirit being a part of Chriſt's Royalty, as Mediator, it was not convenient that the Spirit ſhould be ſent, till Chriſt was Crowned, and ſate down on his Throne in his Kingdom; then the Spirit was to make Application to us, of the Redemption purchaſed for us.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment: 9 Of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me; 10 Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more; 11 Of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged.

In thoſe and the following Verſes our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples with the Advantages that will redound by the coming of the Comforter. *Firſt*, The Advantage to the World. *Secondly*, To the Apoſtles. And, *Thirdly*, To himſelf. To the World, 1. *He ſhall convince them of Sin, Righteouſneſs and Judgment. Of Sin*; that is, of their Sinful State and Nature; of the large extent of Sin; and particularly, of the Sin of Unbelief. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Spirit of God is the Author of Conviction of Sin, and that all Convictions of Sin do either mediately or immediately flow from him. 2. That Unbelief is a Sin of the greateſt malignity againſt Chriſt, and of greateſt danger to a Chriſtian's Soul. *He ſhall convince the World of Sin, becauſe they believe not on me.* Secondly, *Of Righteouſneſs*; that is, of the inſufficiency of all humane Righteouſneſs, and of the neceſſity of the Righteouſneſs of a Mediator; by which alone we are to expect acceptance with God; or of a compleat and perfect Righteouſneſs in me, imputable to Sinners for their perfect Juſtification; and that it is ſo, appears, *becauſe I go to the Father, and ye ſee me no more.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, hereby you may be ſatisfied that by my active and paſſive Obedience I have fully ſatisfied my Father's Juſtice for you, and you ſhall never be charged or condemned, becauſe when I go to Heaven, I ſhall abide there in Glory with my Father, and never be ſent back-again, ye ſhall ſee me no more, as it muſt be, if any thing had been omitted by me. *Note farther*, That none are convinced of Righteouſneſs, who are not firſt convinced of Sin. None will come to Chriſt by Faith, till Convictions of Sin have awakened and diſtreſſed them. Thirdly, *Of Judgment*; that is, the Spirit ſhall convince the World, that Jeſus is both Lord and Chriſt, that he had a Power to judge Satan the Prince of the World, and that he did by his Death put down the Kingdom of Darkneſs. *Learn hence*, 1. That Satan is a Prince who by unjuſt Uſurpation, and the Sinners voluntary Conſent, has exerciſed a Tyrannical Power over the World. 2. That Chriſt by his Death, did judge, condemn and overcome this mighty Prince; and hath made his Conqueſt evident to the Conſciences of Men, by the Convictions of his Holy Spirit. *The Spirit ſhall convince of Judgment*; that is, *that Satan the Prince of this World is judged.*

12 I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.

The ſecond Benefit which our Saviour declares was to be expected by the coming of the Holy Spirit, relates to the Apoſtles themſelves. *He ſhall guide you into all Truth*; that is, into all Truth neceſſary for you to know in order to Salvation. This is a principal Text which the Papiſts bring for their Doctrine of *Infallibility*, but groundleſly: For this Promiſe was made to all the Apoſtles as well as *Peter*; nay, not only to the Apoſtles, but to all the Succeſſors; yea, not to the Apoſtles only and their Succeſſors, but to all Believers alſo; for they are led by the Spirit of God, and that into all Truth too; not abſolutely, but into all neceſſary Truth: And ſo far as a private Chriſtian follows the Conduct and Guidance of the Divine Spirit, he is more infallible than either Pope or Council, who follow the Dictates and Direction of their own Spirits only.

13 For he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf; but whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak: and he will ſhew you things to come.

That is, he ſhall not teach you a private Doctrine, or that which is contrary to what ye have learned of me; but whatſoever he ſhall hear of me, and receive from me; that ſhall he ſpeak; *and he will ſhew you things to come.* This affords an Argument to prove the Holy Spirit to be God: He that can ſhew us things to come, he that clearly foreſeeth and infallibly foretelleth what ſhall be, before it is, is certainly God. But this the Holy Spirit doth; *he will ſhew you things to come.* Men and Devils may gueſs at things to come, but none can ſhew things to come, but he that is truly and really God; therefore the Spirit is ſo.

14 He ſhall glorifie me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine: and ſhall ſhew it unto you.

Here Chriſt ſhews the Advantage which would redound to himſelf by the coming of the Comforter ; he declares that the Spirit ſhould glorifie him by his Teſtimony, Gifts and Miracles, and ſhall in all things accord with him, and thereby evidence that he hath his Miſſion from him : *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* And *all things that the Father hath are mine. Hence Learn*, That although the Union in Eſſence amongſt the Perſons in the Trinity is the ſame, yet the Order of their Subſiſtence and Operation is diſtinct ; the Son being from the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt from the Father, and the Son. *For all things that the Father hath, are mine : and the Spirit ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. Obſerve farther*, That theſe Words afford a ſtrong Argument to prove that Divinity of Chriſt. *All things which the Father hath are mine.* Where Chriſt challenges to himſelf the incommunicable Attributes of God, and conſequently that Eſſence which is inſeparable from them. Doth the Father know the Secrets of all Hearts ? ſo doth Chriſt. *Rev. 2. 23. All the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts.* Is the Father Eternal? ſo is Chriſt. *Prov. 8. 23. I was ſet up from Everlaſting*, &c.

16 A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me : and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father. 17 Then ſaid ſome of his diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me : and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me : and, Becauſe I go to the Father? 18 They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little while? we cannot tell what he ſaith. 19 Now Jeſus knew what they were deſirous to ask him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye enquire among your ſelves of that *I* ſaid, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me : and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me? 20 Verily verily *I* ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoyce : and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when ſhe is in travail, hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come : but aſſoon as ſhe is delivered of the child, ſhe remembreth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have ſorrow : but *I* will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you.

In theſe Words our Holy Lord proceeds to comfort his Diſciples with a Promiſe, That however he was now to be removed from them, yet they ſhould ſhortly ſee him again ; *namely*, after his Reſurrection ; it being impoſſible that he ſhould be held by Death, but muſt ariſe and go to his Father. His Diſciples not underſtanding what he meant, but labouring under the Prejudices of their National Errors, concerning the Temporal Kingdom of the Meſſias, knew not what to make of thoſe Words. *A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me.* Our Saviour therefore explains himſelf to his Diſciples, telling them, that they ſhall have a time of ſad ſorrow and grief of heart, during the time of his ſuffering and abſence from them, but their ſadneſs ſhall ſoon be turned into joy, when they ſhall ſee him alive again after his Reſurrection. This he illuſtrates by the Similitude of a travailing Woman, who ſoon forgets her ſorrow after ſhe has brought forth a Child. Thus will their Hearts revive upon the ſight of him riſen from the Grave ; and no Man ſhall be able to take their Joy away from them, becauſe he ſhall die no more, but go to Heaven, and there live for ever, to make interceſſion for them. *Learn hence*, 1. From the Apoſtles not underſtanding Chriſt's Words concerning his Departure, tho' ſo often inculcated upon them. *A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father. Hence Note*, How unreaſonable it is to arrogate to Man's underſtanding a Power to comprehend Spiritual Myſteries, yea, to underſtand the plaineſt Truths, till Chriſt enlightens the Underſtanding ; let the Doctrine be delivered never ſo plainly, and repeated never ſo frequently, yet will Men continue ignorant without Divine Illumination. How often had this plain Doctrine of Chriſt's departure to the Father, been preached to the Diſciples by Chriſt's own Mouth ? yet ſtill they ſay, *What is this he ſaith? We cannot tell what he ſaith. Learn* 2. From the different effects which Chriſt's abſence ſhould have upon the World, and upon his Diſciples : *The World will rejoyce, but ye ſhall weep and lament. Note*, 1. That it is the wretched Diſpoſition of the World to rejoyce in the abſence and want of Chriſt out of the World. When I am gone, *the World will rejoyce.* 2. That nothing is the cauſe of ſo much Sorrow and Sadneſs to ſincere Diſciples, as Chriſt's abſence and removal from them : Such is their Eſtimation of the worth of him, ſo great is their Apprehenſion of the want of him, that there is no loſs comparable to his abſence and removal from them ; ye ſhall weep and lament at my departure, tho' the World will rejoyce. *Learn* 3. That the Believers Sorrow for Chriſt's abſence, tho' it be very great, yet it ſhall not be perpetual. *Ye have now ſorrow ; but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoyce, and your joy ſhall no man take from you.* The Joy of the Saints may be interrupted, it ſhall never be totally extinguiſhed ; it is a permanent Joy, of which they ſhall never be totally deprived, till they enter into the Ocean of eternal Joy. *Your Joy no Man taketh from you.*

23 And in that day ye ſhall ask me nothing : Verily verily *I* ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.

At the firſt reading of the 23d Verſe there ſeems to be a contradiction in the words. Chriſt tells them in the former part of the Verſe, That they ſhall ask him nothing in that Day ; and yet promiſes that whatever they ask ſhall be given them, in the latter part of the Verſe. To reſolve this, know that there is a twofold asking, one by way of Queſtion, the other by way of Petition. The former is asking that we may know, or be informed in what we doubt ; the latter is asking that we may receive, and be ſupplied with what we want. Now when Chriſt ſaith, *In that Day ye ſhall ask me nothing* ; it is as much as if he had ſaid. At preſent you underſtand but little of the Myſteries of Religion, and therefore ye put Queſtions about many things : but in that Day when the Comforter comes, ye ſhall be ſo clearly inlightened by him, that ye ſhall not need to ask me any more Queſtions. But when Chriſt ſaith, *Whatever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it*, the meaning is, in that Day when I have left the World, and aſcended to my Father, you ſhall not need to addreſs your Prayers to me, but to my Father in my name. But what is it *to pray in the name of Chriſt*? Anſwer, It is more than to name Chriſt in Prayer ; it is eaſie to name Chriſt in Prayer, but no eaſie thing to pray in the name of Chriſt. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is, 1. To look up to Chriſt, as having purchaſed for us this Priviledge, that we may pray ; for it is by the Blood of Chriſt that we draw near to God, and that a Throne of Grace is open for us. 2. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray in the ſtrength of Chriſt, by the aſſiſtance of his Grace, and the help of his Holy Spirit. 3. To pray in the name of Chriſt, is to pray by Faith in the Virtue of Chriſt's Mediation and Interceſſion, believing that what we ask on Earth, he intercedes for and obtains in Heaven. To pray thus, is no eaſie matter ; and unleſs we do pray thus, we do not pray at all.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name :

That is, explicitely and expreſly in my name, or by me as Mediator betwixt God and Man, and with reſpect to my Merits. Do this after my Death, Reſurrection, and Interceſſion at the Right Hand of God, and you ſhall receive ſuch Anſwers as will fill you with Joy, that the Saints of God under the old Teſtament, and the Apoſtles themſelves under the New, had hitherto put up all their Petitions in the name of the Meſſiah ; yet not in the name of Jeſus. But now he exhorts them to eye his Mediatory Office in all their Addreſſes to God, and promiſes them whatſoever he had purchaſed of the Father by his Sufferings and Satisfaction, they ſhould obtain it, for the ſake of his prevailing Interceſſion. *Learn hence*, That it is a mighty encouragement to Prayer, that now under the Goſpel, the perſon of the Mediator is exhibited in our Fleſh, has ſatisfied Divine Juſtice in our Nature, and in that Nature intercedes as a Mediator, for whatever he purchaſed as our Surety. Hence is the encouragement, *Whatever ye ask the Father in my name he will give it you.*

25 Theſe things have *I* ſpoken unto you in proverbs : the time cometh when *I* ſhall no more ſpeak

unto you in proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of
the Father.

Here our Saviour tells his Diſciples, That although he had ſpoken many things to them in dark Parables, and figurative Expreſſions, yet now the time was approaching, *namely*, the Comforter's coming, when he would by the Holy Ghoſt clearly enlighten their Underſtandings in the Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, and the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and particularly in the Knowledge of God as his Father, and their Father in him. *Hence learn*, 1. That the cleareſt Truths will be but Parables, Proverbs, and dark Myſteries, even to Diſciples themſelves, till the Holy Spirit enlightens their Underſtandings. 2. That the clear and full Manifeſtation of Divine Truth, was reſerved till the coming of the Comforter, who did communicate it to the Apoſtles, and by them to the Church, or Body of Chriſtians. *I*, by him, *will ſhew you plainly of the Father.*

26 At that day ye ſhall ask in my name: and I ſay not
unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 28 For
the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved
me, and have believed that I came out from God.

At that day ſhall ye ask in my name; that is, after I am aſcended into Heaven, and have ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon you, ye ſhall put up all your Prayers and Requeſts to God in my name. *And I ſay not that I will pray the Father for you, the Father himſelf loveth you.* That is, I need not tell you (tho' I ſhall certainly do it) that I will intercede with the Father for you; for he of himſelf is kindly diſpoſed and affected towards you for my ſake. When Chriſt ſays, *I do not ſay that I will pray the Father for you*, the meaning is not that he will lay aſide his Office as Interceſſor for Believers, but that they had not only his Interceſſion, but the Father's Love upon which to ground their hope of Audience. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Chriſtians Prayers put up in Chriſt's Name, cannot fail of Audience and Acceptance, for the ſake of the Mediator's Interceſſion and the Father's Love. 2. That in our Prayers, we ought ſo to eye and look up to Chriſt's Interceſſion, as not to overlook or forget the Father's Love, but ground our hopes of Audience upon both: *I ſay, not that I will pray the Father for you*, tho' I ſhall aſſuredly do it, *for the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me.*

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come in
to the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the
Father. 29 His diſciples ſaid unto him, Lo, now
ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb. 30 Now
we are ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt
not that any man ſhould ask thee: by this we believe
that thou cameſt forth from God.

Here obſerve, 1. A Proof of our Saviour's Godhead; *He came forth from the Father into the world:* He came out from the Father in his Incarnation, and came into the World to accompliſh the Work of our Redemption. *Learn thence*, That Jeſus Chriſt is true God, equal with the Father; for he was not only ſent by him, but came forth from him. *I came out from the Father. Obſerve* 2. That it pleaſed Chriſt, out of love to his People, to leave the Father, and come into the World; not by being ſeparated from the Deity, but by obſcuring the Deity with the veil of our Fleſh, in order to the finiſhing the great and glorious Work of Redemption for us. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World. Obſerve* 3. That Chriſt having finiſhed his Suffering-work here on Earth, aſcended into Heaven, and ſent down the Holy Spirit to apply unto his Church, the Redemption purchaſed by his Blood. *Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. Obſerve laſtly*, how the Apoſtles argue from the Knowledge of Chriſt's Omniſciency, to the certainty of his Divinity. *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things; by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.* The Knowledge and Experience of Chriſt's Omniſciency, may and ought fully to confirm us in the Belief of his Deity: For that Attribute of the Deity, cannot be communicated to any Perſon without the Communication of the Divine Nature.

31 Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe?
32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that
ye ſhall be ſcattered, every man to his own, and ſhall
leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, becauſe the
Father is with me.

In the foregoing Verſe, the Apoſtles made a full Profeſſion of their Faith in Chriſt's Divinity, and in Chriſt's Omniſciency: *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and that thou cameſt forth from God.* In this Verſe Chriſt intimates to them, that their Faith ſhould be put upon a great Tryal very ſhortly, *namely*, when his Sufferings came on; and that then they ſhould forſake him, and take care of themſelves: *Ye ſhall be ſcattered, and leave me alone. Learn hence*, 1. That Chriſt was forſaken and left alone by his own Diſciples, in the Day of his greateſt Diſtreſs and Danger. 2. That when the Diſciples left Chriſt, they were ſcattered every one to his own. 3. That when all forſook Chriſt, and left him alone, he was far from being ſimply alone, becauſe God was with him: *Ye ſhall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.* God was with Chriſt, and will be with Chriſtians in a Suffering Hour, in his Eſſential Preſence, in his gracious and ſupporting Preſence. *He that ſent me*, ſaith Chriſt, *is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe my Father.*

33 Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me
ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation:
but be of good cheer, I have overcome the
world.

Theſe Words are the Concluſion of our Saviour's Farewel-Sermon to his Diſciples, in which he declares to them, 1. The inevitable neceſſity of the Worlds Trouble: *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation*; that is, while ye have to do with the Men of the World; while you have any thing to do with the things of the World; nay, while you have a being in the World, you muſt look for Trouble, both from within and from without, from Friends and Foes, in Body, Soul, Name, Eſtate; Heart-breaking Troubles, Soul-rending Troubles, ſuch Troubles as will make the Heart to break, and the Back to bend; and you my Diſciples muſt expect it as well as others: *In the World you ſhall have tribulation. Hence learn*, That the Diſciples of Chriſt in this World may, yea, muſt expect and look for Trouble. *Obſerve* 2. The Remedy provided by Chriſt againſt this Malady: *In me ye ſhall have peace*, when in the World ye have Tribulation. *Ye ſhall have peace*, that is, ſerenity of Mind, a quiet and calm Temper of Spirit within, when the World like a tempeſtuous Air is full of Storms without. *Learn thence*, That though in the World Chriſt's own Diſciples muſt look for and expect Troubles, yet he has taken effectual care, that amidſt all their Troubles, in him they may have Peace; Chriſt's Blood has purchaſed Peace for them, his Word has promiſed it to them, and his Spirit ſeals it up to their Souls. *Obſerve* 3. The Cordial provided by Chriſt for the Support of his Diſciples Spirits, under the ſinking Burthen of the World's Tribulations and Troubles: *But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* I have taken the Sting out of every Croſs, and the Venom out of every Arrow. *Learn hence*, That it is a great Comfort to a Chriſtian under all the Troubles of this World, to conſider that Chriſt has overcome the World, that is, all things in the World which may hinder his Peoples Comfort and Conſolation here, and their Eternal Happineſs and Salvation hereafter; as, *namely*, the Prince of the World, the Rulers of the World, the wicked Men of the World, the Troubles of the World, the Temptations of the World, the Corruptions that are in the World through Luſt. Now Chriſt having overcome the World, all Perſons and Things in it are at his diſpoſal, and can do nothing but by his Permiſſion; and as he has overcome the World himſelf, ſo he will enable us through Faith in him to overcome it alſo, 1 *John* 5. 4. *This is the victory over the world, even our Faith.*

CHAP. XVII.

THeſe words ſpake Jeſus; and lift up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come; glorifie thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorifie thee.

Our Bleſſed Saviour having ended his Conſolatory and Valedictory Sermon, contained in the Three foregoing Chapters, in this Chapter we have recorded his laſt Prayer, with, and for his Diſciples, before he left the World, is a Copy left upon Earth of what he doth now intercede for, as an Advocate in Heaven. It is good (ſaith one) to compare Scripture with Scripture, but not to prefer Scripture before Scripture, all Scripture being written by Inſpiration of God; but if any

Part of Scripture be to be magnified above another, this Chapter claims the Preheminence; it contains the breathings out of Chriſt's Soul for his Church and Children before his Departure; not for his Diſciples only, but for the ſucceeding Church to the end of the World. In the Verſe before us, *Obſ.* 1. The Order of our Saviour's Prayer: *Theſe words ſpake Jeſus*; that is, after he had finiſhed his excellent Sermon, he cloſes the Exerciſe with a moſt fervent and affectionate Prayer; teaching his Miniſters by his Example, to add ſolemn Prayer and Supplication to all their Inſtructions and Exhortations: If every Creature of God be to be ſanctified by Prayer, much more the Word of God, which works not as a natural Agent, but as a moral Inſtrument in God's Hand. Now as God ſets the Word on work, ſo is it Prayer that ſets God on work. *Obſ.* 2. As the Order of Chriſt's Prayer, ſo the Geſture in which he prayed: *He lifted up his eyes to Heaven*, as an Indication of his Souls being lifted up to God in Heaven; to ſignifie his Reverence of God, whoſe Throne is in Heaven; and to denote his Confidence in God, and raiſed Expectation of Aid and Help from God, and not from any Creature. *Learn*, That the Geſtures which we uſe in Prayer ſhould be ſuch as may beſt expreſs our Reverence of God, and denote our Affiance and Truſt in him. *Obſ.* 3. The Perſon prayed to, God, under the appellation of a *Father*; it intimates a ſweet Relation, 'tis a Word of endearing Affection, and implies great Reverence towards God, and great Confidence and Truſt in him. *Learn*, it is very ſweet and comfortable in Prayer, when we can come and call God Father. *Obſ.* 4. The Mercy prayed for, *The hour is come; glorifie thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorifie thee. The hour is come*; that is, the Hour of my Sufferings, and thy Satisfaction; the Hour of my Victory, and of thy Glory; the Hour, the ſad Hour determined in thy Decree and Purpoſe. No Calamity can touch us till God's Hour is come; and when the ſad Hour is come, the beſt Remedy is Prayer, and the only Perſon to fly unto for Succour is our Heavenly Father. *Father, the hour is come*, the doleful Hour of my Death and Paſſion; *Glorifie thy Son*, glorifie him at his Death, by manifeſting him to have been the Son of God; glorifie him in his Death, by accepting it as the Death of thy Son, for the Sins of the World; glorifie him after his Death, by a ſpeedy Reſurrection from the Grave, and a Triumphant Exaltation at thy Right Hand. *Here Note*, How the Glory of the Father and the Son are inſeparably link'd together; it was the Father's deſign to glorifie the Son, and it was the Son's deſire to have Glory from the Father, for this end, that he might bring Glory to the Father: *Glorifie thy Son, that thy Son may glorifie thee.*

2 As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Dignity which Chriſt was inveſted with, *Power over all fleſh*, that is Authority to judge and ſentence all Mankind. *Obſ.* 2. How Chriſt came to be inveſted with this Power; it was given him by his Father: *Thou haſt given him Power over all fleſh.* Hence the *Socinians* would infer that he was not God, becauſe he received all from God: But the Text ſpeaks not of his Divine Power as God, but of his Power as Mediator. And the *Note* is, That all Mankind is under the Power and Authority of Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator; He has a Legiſlative Power, or a Power to give Laws to all Mankind; and a Judiciary Power, or a Power to execute the Laws that he hath given. *Obſ.* 3. The end for which Chriſt was inveſted with this Power, *That he might give Eternal Life to as many as God had given him. Here note*, 1. That all Believers, that is, all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are given by God the Father unto Chriſt; they are given to him as his Charge, to redeem, ſanctifie and ſave, and as his Reward, *Iſa.* 53. 10. 2. All that are given to Chriſt, have Life from him, a Life of Juſtification and Sanctification on Earth, and a Life of Glory in Heaven. 3. The Life which Chriſt gives to them that are given him, is Eternal Life. 4. That this Eternal Life is a free Gift from Chriſt unto his People; tho' they do not work for Wages, yet they ſhall not Work for nothing: *I give unto them Eternal Life*, John 10.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.

That is, This is the true Way and Means to obtain Eternal Life, *namely*, by the true Knowledge of God the Father, and of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, who was commiſſioned and ſent by his Father to accompliſh the Work of Redemption for a loſt World. *Here obſerve*, Chriſt calls God the Father, the only true God, not in oppoſition to the Son and Holy Ghoſt; who being one in Eſſence with the Father, are truly and really God as well as the Father: But in oppoſition to Idols and falſe Gods. There is a great difference betwixt theſe two Propoſitions, the Father is the only true God; and, the Father only is true God. Chriſt ſaith the former: *This is Life Eternal, to know thee the only true God.* The *Socinian* ſaith the latter, this is Life Eternal, to know only thee to be the true God, and that neither Jeſus Chriſt nor the Spirit are God, but the Father only. But how comes Eternal Life to depend as well upon the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt as of God the Father, if Jeſus Chriſt be only Man, and not truly and really God? For thus our Saviour affirms, *This is Life Eternal, to know Thee and Jeſus Chriſt. Whence learn*, 1. That the beginning, increaſe and perfection of Eternal Life lieth in Holy Knowledge. 2. That no Knowledge is ſufficient to Eternal Life, but the Knowledge of God, and Jeſus Chriſt, who is alſo God; for who can think that the Knowledge of a meer Creature ſhould be accounted equally neceſſary to Salvation, with the Knowledge of the Great and Mighty God? Surely if our Happineſs conſiſts equally in the Knowledge of God and Chriſt, then God and Chriſt are of the ſame Nature, equal in Power and Glory. The comprehenſive Senſe of the Words ſeems to be this: That the Knowledge of the only true God, and of Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, is the Life of Grace, and the neceſſary Way to the Life of Glory.

4 I have glorified thee on earth.

Learn hence, That the whole Life of Chriſt when here on Earth, it was a glorifying of his Father; he glorified his Father by the Doctrine which he preach'd, he glorified his Father by the Miracles which he wrought, he glorified his Father by the unſpotted Purity and Innocency of his Life, and by his unparallel'd Sufferings at at his Death.

4 I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.

That is, I am now about to finiſh it: he ſpeaks of what he was reſolv'd to do, as already done. *Here note*, 1. That 'tis Work that glorifies God. 2. That every Man has his Work, his proper Work aſſigned him by God. 3. This Work muſt be finiſhed here upon Earth. 4. That when we have our proproportion of Work, we may expect our Portion of Wages. 5. That it is a bleſſed thing at the Hour of Death, to be able to ſay in Sincerity and Uprightneſs, that we have glorified God in the World, and have finiſhed the Work which he appointed us to do, *Father I have glorified thee on the Earth, and have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me to do.*

5 And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

From the Connexion of this with the foregoing Verſe, *Learn*, 1. That whoever expects to be glorified with God in Heaven, muſt glorifie him firſt here upon Earth. 2. That after we have glorified him, we may expect to be glorified with him and by him. *I have glorified thee, now O Father glorifie thou me*: it follows, *with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. Hence note*, 1. That Chriſt as God, had an Eſſential Glory with God the Father before the World was: He had this Glory not in the Purpoſe and Decree of God only, as the *Socinians* would have it, for he doth not ſay, Glorifie me with the Glory which thou didſt purpoſe and prepare for me before the World was, but *which I had*, and enjoy'd with thee, *before the World was*; by which Words our Lord plainly aſſerts his own Exiſtence and Being from Eternity, and prays for a Re-exaltation to that Glory which he enjoyed with his Father before his Incarnation. *Note* 2. That Chriſt as Mediator did ſo far humble himſelf, that he needed to pray to his Father to beſtow upon him the Glory which he wanted; *namely*, the Glory of his Aſcenſion and Exaltation. *Now, O Father, glorifie me with thine own ſelf.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Father, glorifie me, embrace and honour me as thy Son, who have been in the Eyes of the World, handled diſgracefully as a Servant: It is an Actual Glory that Chriſt ſpeaks of, not in Decree and Purpoſe only, for that Believers had as well as he; but this was a Glory when no Creature was in being.

6 I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word.

By the Name of God we are here to underſtand his Nature, his Properties and Attributes; his Deſigns and Counſels for the Salvation of Mankind; Chriſt as the Prophet of his Church, made all theſe known unto his People. *Learn thence,* That Jeſus Chriſt has made a full and compleat Diſcovery of his Father's Mind and Will unto his People. *I have manifeſted thy name, unto them which thou gaveſt me. Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word. Learn,* 1. That all Believers are given unto Chriſt, as his Purchaſe and as his Charge They are given him as his Subjects, as his Children; as the Wife of his Boſom, as the Members of his Body. *Learn.* 2. That none are given to Chriſt, but thoſe that were firſt the Father's. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me. Learn* 3. That all thoſe that are given unto Chriſt, do keep his Word; they keep it in their Underſtandings, they hide it in their Hearts, they feel the force of it in their Souls, they expreſs the Power of it in their Lives. *They have kept thy word.*

7 Now they have known that all things whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee.

Obſerve here, 1. The faithfulneſs of Chriſt in revealing the whole Will of his Father to his Diſciples. 2. The Proficiency of the Diſciples in the School of Chriſt; they knew all the things which Chriſt had told them. *Namely,* That whatſoever he had, it was given him of the Father, and that he had theſe things from him to be a Mediator. *Learn hence,* That Chriſt hath approved himſelf a faithful Prophet to his Church, a faithful Meſſenger from his Father to his People; in that he hath added nothing to his Meſſage, nor taken nothing from it. 2. That it is our Duty to know and believe on Chriſt, as the only Meſſenger and Mediator ſent of God. *Now they have known all things whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee.*

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me; and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, the Meſſage by thee, my Father committed to me, I have communicated to them my Diſciples, and they have received it, and will communicate it from thee to the World; being ſufficiently aſſured that my coming and preaching, was all by Commiſſion from thee. *Hence learn,* 1. That the Doctrine of the Goſpel which was revealed by Chriſt, was received from the Father. 2. That Faith is a receiving of the Word of Chriſt, and of Chriſt in and by the Word. Receiving is a Relative Term, and preſuppoſes an Offer. God offers on his Part, we receive on our Part, the whole Word with the whole Heart. 3. That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are to Preach that, and only that which they have out of the Word of God. *I have given them the word which thou gaveſt me.*

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.

That is, I now offer up a Prayer particularly, 1. For my Apoſtles deſigned to ſo great a Work as the Preaching of the Everlaſting Goſpel, to the obſtinate *Jews* and obdurate *Gentiles.* 2. I intercede alſo for all Believers at this time for their perſeverance in the Faith, and conſtancy in Perſecution; but I do not now intercede for the Wicked and Impenitent World, they not being capable (whilſt ſuch) of theſe Mercies and Bleſſings; tho' at other times we find him praying for the World, yea for his very Crucifiers. Father forgive them, *&c.* Nay, in this very Prayer, at the 20th Verſe, he prays for the World; that is, for the Gentile World; all thoſe that by the Preaching of the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, ſhould be brought to believe on him to the end of the World. *Learn hence,* 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great and gracious Interceſſor. 2. That all Believers, all the Children of God in general, are under the Fruit and Benefit of Chriſt's Interceſſion. 3. That as all the Members of Chriſt in general, ſo the Miniſters and Ambaſſadors of Chriſt in ſpecial, have a peculiar Intereſt in Chriſt's Interceſſion; and great are the Advantages of his Interceſſion for them. 1. From the Perſon interceding, Chriſt; conſider the Dignity of his Perſon, God-Man; the dearneſs of his Perſon, God's Son. 2. From the manner of his Interceſſion, not by way of Intreaty, but meritorious Claim. 3. From the ſublimity of the Office, our Interceſſor is near to God, even at his Right Hand. 4. From the Fruits of his Interceſſion, it procures the acceptance and juſtification of our Perſons, the hearing and anſwering of our Prayers, the pardon and forgiveneſs of our Sins, our preſervation in Grace, and our hopes of Eternal Glory.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

We may underſtand this two Ways, 1. Of all Perſons, all my Friends, all my Diſciples are thine, as well as mine. *Thence learn,* That the Father and the Son have a like Share and Propriety in all Believers. 2. The Words in the Original being of the Neuter Gender, ſignifie all thy things are mine, and all my things are thine; Chriſt and his Father are one, and they agree in one; they have the ſame Eſſence and Nature, the ſame Attributes and Will; Chriſt hath all things that the Father hath, willeth all things that the Father willeth, and doth all things that the Father doth; he is therefore really and eſſentially God. It followeth, *and I am glorified in them*; that is, I am made glorious by their owning and receiving me, by their believing in me, and accepting of me for their Lord and Saviour. *Thence note,* That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is eminently glorified in, and by all thoſe that believe in him and belong unto him.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one, as we *are.*

Here obſerve, 1. Our Saviour's preſent Condition; *I am no more in the World*; that is, I ſhall continue on Earth but a ſmall time longer, and then aſcend to my Father in Heaven. *Learn thence,* That Jeſus Chriſt, as he is Man, he is gone out of this lower World into the immediate Preſence of his Father: He had been abaſed before, he muſt be exalted now: He had no more Work to do on Earth, but much to do in Heaven; therefore he left this Earth to go to Heaven. *Obſerve,* 2. Our Saviour's Prayer to his Father for his Apoſtles before he left the World. *Holy Father, keep them*; that is, preſerve them by thy Divine Power and Goodneſs, for the Glory of thy Holy Name. *Here Note,* 1. The Title and Appellation given to God; *Holy Father. Thence learn,* That when we go to God in Prayer, eſpecially for Grace and Sanctification, we muſt look upon him as an Holy Father, as eſſentially and Originally Holy, as infinitely and independently Holy. *Note* 2. The ſupplication requeſted of God: *keep through thy name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me. Thence learn,* That the Perſeverance of the Saints in a ſtate of Grace, is the ſweet Effect and Fruit of Chriſt's Prayer: Chriſt has begged it, and it cannot be denied, there being ſuch an Harmony and ſweet Conſent betwixt the Will of the Father and the Will of the Son. Three things concur to the Believer's Perſeverance. On the Father's Part, there is everlaſting Love and all-ſufficient Power. On the Son's Part there is everlaſting Merit, and conſtant Interceſſion. On the Spirit's Part, there is a perpetual Inhabitation and continued Influence. *Obſerve,* 3. The end of Chriſt's Supplication on behalf of his People; *that they may be one, as we are one. Here Note,* 1. That the Heart of Chriſt is exceedingly ſet upon the Unity and Oneneſs of his Members. 2. That Believers Union with Chriſt their Head, and one with another, has ſome reſemblance to that Unity that is betwixt the Father and the Son. For 'tis an holy and ſpiritual Union, a cloſe and intimate Union, an indiſſoluble and inſeparable Union.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I have kept, and none of them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. That thoſe which ſhall be ſaved, are given unto Chriſt, and committed to his Care and Truſt. 2. That none of thoſe that are given unto Chriſt, as his Charge, and committed to his Care and Truſt, ſhall be finally loſt. *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me, I have kept, and none of them is loſt.* It follows, *but the Son of Perdition.* A Perſon may be ſaid to be a Son of Perdition two Ways: Actively and Paſſively. Actively, he is ſo; who makes it his Work and Buſineſs to deſtroy others. Paſſively, he is a Son of Perdition, who for his Wickedneſs in deſtroying others, is deſtroyed himſelf. *Judas* was a Son of Perdition in both theſe Senſes; his Heart was maliciouſly ſet upon deſtroying Chriſt, and wilfully ſet upon his own deſtruction: His Covetouſneſs and Hypocriſie prompted him to betray our Saviour, his Deſpair provoked him to deſtroy himſelf.

13 And now come I to thee, and theſe things I ſpeak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves.

In theſe Words our Saviour declares the great Reaſon why he did at this time ſo publickly and ſolemnly pray for his Diſciples; it was to fill them with Joy and Comfort, that their Joy might not be diminiſhed by Chriſt's Departure, but rather encreaſed by the coming of the Comforter. *That they may have my Joy fulfilled in them*; that is, the Joy which they take in me, and the Joy which they have from me: There is a double Care which Chriſt takes of his People, *namely*, a Care of their Graces, and a Care of their Joy and Comfort: How ſolicitous was he to leave his Diſciples joyful before he departed from them! He delights to ſee his People chearful; and he knows of what great uſe ſpiritual Joy is in the Chriſtian's Courſe, both to enable us for Doing, and to fit us for Suffering. *Learn hence*, 1. That Chriſt is the Author and Original of the Joy of his People. *My Joy*, 2. That it is Chriſt's Will and Deſire, that his People might be full of Holy Joy. *That my Joy may be fulfilled in them.* 3. That the great end of Chriſt's Prayer and Interceſſion, was, and is, that his Peoples Hearts might be full of Joy. *Theſe things I ſpeak in the World, that they might have my Joy fulfilled in themſelves.*

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I have given them thy Word, partly by external Revelation. and partly by internal Illumination; and for thy Word ſake *the World hates them*, as alſo *becauſe they are not of the World.* *Learn.* 1. That Chriſtians, eſpecially Miniſters to whom Chriſt has given his Word, muſt expect the World's hatred. Few of the Prophets or Apoſtles died a natural Death: As their Calling is Eminent, ſo muſt their Sufferings be Exemplary. The beſt Miniſters and the beſt Men, are uſually moſt hated. There is an Antipathy againſt the Power of Godlineſs, or a cruel, cauſeleſs, implacable and irreconcilable hatred againſt the Saints, becauſe of their ſtrictneſs in Religion, and contrariety to the World. 2. That it is the Honour of Believers, that they are like unto Chriſt, in being the Objects of the World's hatred. *The World hates them, becauſe they are not of the World, as I am not of the World.* This Chriſt adds both for Information and Conſolation: For Information, that they ſhould look for ſuch Hatred, Miſery, and Trouble, they ſaw him grapple with; and for Conſolation, to think that the World can never hate us ſo bad as it hated Chriſt.

15 I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Here obſerve, 1. That the Wiſdom of Chriſt ſees fit to continue his Children and People in the World, notwithſtanding all the Perils and Dangers of the World. He has Work for them, and they are of uſe to him, for a time, in the World; till their Work be done, Chriſt's Love will not, and the World's Malice cannot remove them from hence. Yet Chriſt prays that his Father would keep them from the Evil, that is, from the Sins, Temptations and Snares of this wicked World. *Thence Note*, That a ſpiritual Victory over Evil, is to be preferred before a total Exemption from Evil; it is a far greater Mercy to be kept from Sin in our Afflictions, than from the Afflictions themſelves. *Learn farther*, How neceſſary Divine Aid is to our Preſervation and Succeſs, even in the holieſt and beſt of Enterprizes, and how neceſſary it is to ſeek it by fervent Prayer. *Note alſo.* That ſuch as ſincerely devote themſelves to Chriſt's Service, are ſure of his Aid and Protection whilſt ſo imployed.

17 Sanctifie them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Sanctifie them not initially, for ſo they were ſanctified already, but progreſſively: Let them encreaſe more and more in Grace and Holineſs. *Learn hence*, 1. That ſuch as are already ſanctified, muſt Labour, and ought to endeavour after further Meaſures and higher Degrees of Sanctification. That the moſt Holy may yet be more Holy. 2. The Word of God is the great Inſtrument in God's Hand for his Peoples Sanctification. 3. That the Word of God, is the Truth of God: *Sanctifie them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* The Word of God is a Divine Truth, an Eternal Truth, an Infallible Truth, an Holy Truth.

18 As thou haſt ſent me into the World, even ſo have alſo I ſent them into the world.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt's Miſſion: The Father ſent him into the World. Chriſt's ſending implies the Deſignation of his Perſon, his Qualification for the Work, his Authority and Commiſſion. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt himſelf, did not of himſelf undertake the Office of a Mediator, but was ſent; that is, authorized and Commiſſioned of God ſo to do. *Thou haſt ſent me into the World.* *Obſerve*, 2. As Chriſt's Miſſion, ſo the Apoſtles Miſſion: *As thou haſt ſent me, ſo have I ſent them.* *Learn thence*, That none may or ought to undertake the Office of the Miniſtry, without an Authoritative ſending from Chriſt himſelf; not immediately and extraordinarily by Voice or Viſion, but mediately by the Officers of the Church. And ſuch as are ſo ſent, are ſent by Chriſt himſelf: and if ſo, it is the Peoples Duty to reverence their Perſons, to reſpect their Office, to receive their Meſſage. *As thou haſt ſent me, ſo have I ſent them*,

19 And for their ſakes I ſanctifie my ſelf, that they alſo might be ſanctified through the truth.

The Word *Sanctifie* here, is not to be taken for the Cleanſing, Purifying, or making Holy that which before was Unclean: But Chriſt's Sanctifying himſelf imports, 1. His ſeparation, or ſetting himſelf apart to be a Sacrifice for Sin. 2. His Conſecration or Dedication of himſelf to this Holy Uſe and Service. *Hence learn*, That Jeſus Chriſt did dedicate and ſolemnly ſet himſelf apart to the great Work and Office of a Mediator. *Learn*, 2. That the great end for which Chriſt did thus ſanctifie himſelf; it was that he might ſanctifie his Members; therefore did he conſecrate and ſet himſelf apart for us, that we ſhould be conſecrated to, and wholly ſet apart for him.

20 Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word:

Hitherto our Saviour had been praying for himſelf and his Apoſtles, now he prays for all Perſons, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that ſhould believe on him, throughout the World, by the preaching of the Goſpel. *Hence learn*, That all Believers have a ſpecial Intereſt in Chriſt's Prayer. 2. That in the Senſe of the Goſpel they are Believers, who are wrought upon to believe in Chriſt through the Word. 3. That ſuch is Chriſt's Care of, and Love to his own, that they were remembred by him in his Prayer, even before they had a Being, I pray not for them alone, *but for all that ſhall believe in me.*

21. That they all may be one, as thou Father *art* in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.

The ſpecial Mercy and particular Bleſſing which Chriſt prays for on behalf of Believers, is a cloſe and intimate Union betwixt the Father himſelf and them, and alſo betwixt one another; ſuch an Union as doth in ſome ſort reſemble that Unity which is betwixt God and Chriſt; not an Unity of Eſſence and Nature, but of Wills and Affections. *Hence Note*, 1. That the myſtical Union betwixt Chriſt and his Members, carrieth ſome reſemblance with that Union which is betwixt the Father and the Son. 2. That Union amongſt the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt, is of ſo great Importance, Neceſſity and Conſequence, that he did in their behalf principally and chiefly pray for it. An Unity of Love and Affection, of Faith and Profeſſion, and Unity of Practice and Converſation, are Mercies which Chriſt earneſtly prayed for, and has dearly paid for; and nothing is more deſired by him now in Heaven, than that his Diſciples ſhould be One among themſelves here on Earth. *Father, may they be one, as we are one: That the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* Here Chriſt intimates one ſpecial Advantage that would redound to the World by this deſirable Union betwixt the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt, it will, if not convert, yet at leaſt convince the World, that I and my Doctrine came from God. *Thence Note*, That Union amongſt Chriſt's Diſciples, is one ſpecial means to enlarge the Kingdom of Chriſt, and to cauſe the World to have better Thoughts of him and his Doctrine. *By their being one, as we are one, the World will believe that thou didſt ſend me.*

22 And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one.

Here Obſerve, 1. Chriſt's Communication of that Glory to Believers, which he had received from the Father; that is, not his Eſſential Glory, but his Mediatorial Glory. *The Glory which thou gaveſt me.* Now Chriſt hath no Glory given him as God, but much Glory beſtowed upon him as Mediator. *Obſerve* 2. The end of this Communication why he gave his Diſciples that Glory, which the Father had given him, *Namely*, That *they might be one*. *Learn* 1. That God the Father hath beſtowed much Glory on Chriſt his Son, as he is Man and Mediator of the Church. 2. That the ſame Glory for Kind and Subſtance, though not for Meaſure and Degree, which Chriſt as Mediator has received from the Father, is communicated to true Believers. 3. That the great end of this Communication was and is, to oblige and enable his People to maintain a very ſtrict Union amongſt themſelves. *The Glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.* 4. That Unity amongſt Believers, is part of that Glory which Chriſt as Mediator hath obtained for them.

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.

Obſerve here, 1. That as the Father is in Chriſt, ſo is Chriſt in Believers, and they in him; the Father is in Chriſt in reſpect of his Divine Nature, Eſſence and Attributes, and Chriſt is in Believers, by the inhabitation of his Holy Spirit. *Obſerve* 2. That the Believers Happineſs conſiſteth in their oneneſs, in being one with God through Chriſt, and one amongſt themſelves. *That they may be made perfect in one.* *Obſerve* 3. That God the Father loveth Chriſt his Son; *Thou loveſt them as thou haſt loved me.* God loveth Chriſt, firſt as God, ſo he is *Primum Amabile*, the firſt object of his Love, as repreſenting his Attributes exactly. Secondly, As Mediator. *John* 10. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my Life for my Sheep.* *Obſerve* 4. That God the Father loves Believers, even as he loved Chriſt himſelf; that is, he loves them upon the ſame grounds that he loved him; *Namely*, For their nearneſs and for their likeneſs to him. 1. For their nearneſs and relation to him, he loveth Chriſt as his Son, Believers as his Children, 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the Father beſtoweth upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.* 2. The properties of the Father's Love towards Chriſt and Believers are the ſame? Doth he love Chriſt with a tender Love, with an unchangeable Love, with an Everlaſting Love? ſo doth he love Believers alſo. *Obſerve* 5. That Chriſt would have the World know that God the Father loveth the Children of Men, as well as himſelf; Chriſt is not ambitious to ingroſs all our Love unto himſelf, but would have the World take notice of the good Will of his Father as well as of himſelf, to loſt Mankind; of the Father's Love in ſending him, as well as of his own Love in coming. *That the World may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.*

24 Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.

Our Saviour had prayed for his Diſciples Sanctification before he prays for their Glorification. 1. *That they may be where he is*; now Chriſt is with them, in his Ordinances, in his Word, and at his Table; ere long they ſhall be with him, as his Friends, as his Spouſe, as his Companions in his Kingdom. 2. That they may be *with him* where he is; this is more than the former; a Blind Man may be where the Sun is, but not with the Sun; becauſe he doth not injoy the light and benefit of it: To be *with Chriſt* where he is, imports Union and Communion with him. 3. That being with him where he is, *they may behold his Glory*; that is, ſo ſee it, as everlaſtingly to poſſeſs and injoy it. *Learn*, 1. That all thoſe that are given to Chriſt as his Charge, and as his Reward, ſhall certainly come to Heaven to him; Father, *I will*, that they be with me, becauſe I have merited that they ſhould be with me; I will that they behold my Glory, becauſe I have purchaſed it at ſo dear a rate. *Learn* 2. That the work and imployment of the Saints in Heaven chiefly conſiſts in ſeeing and injoying Chriſt's Glory; for it will be a poſſeſſive ſight, the language of every look will be, This Happineſs is mine, this Glory is mine. 3. That the top and heighth of the Saints Happineſs in Heaven conſiſts in this, That they ſhall there be with Chriſt. *Father, I will that they may be with me to behold my Glory.*

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.

Obſerve here, 1. The Appellation given to God. *O Righteous Father.* This is the Sixth time that Chriſt in this Prayer has called God Father, it being ſo ſweet a Relation, and producing all Love, Delight, Joy, and Confidence in God, by him that practically improves it. *But Obſerve*, That at *Verſe* 11. When Chriſt prayed for his Peoples Sanctification, he ſaid, *Holy Father*; making uſe of that attribute which is the cauſe of all Holineſs in the Creature; but now praying for their Glorification, he ſays, *O Righteous Father*, Righteous in making good thy promiſes both to me and them. *Obſerve* 2. What it is that our Saviour affirms concerning the wicked and unbelieving World, that they have not known God, *the World hath not known thee*; not as if the World had not known him at all, but not known him aright; the unbelieving and unſanctified part of the World have no ſaving knowledge of God, not living anſwerably to what they know to be their Duty. *Obſerve* 3. What Chriſt affirms concerning himſelf; *But I have known thee, and theſe have known thee.* Intimating thus much unto us, That Jeſus Chriſt knows God immediately, and all others know him by the means of Chriſt; Chriſt is the Original and Fontal cauſe of all the ſaving knowledge that Believers have of God. There is not the leaſt Ray of ſaving Illumination, that doth not deſcend from Chriſt and the Spirit of Chriſt, *I have known thee, and theſe have known that thou didſt ſend me.*

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:

That is, I have made known unto them thy Nature, Attributes, Counſels, Will and Commands; and I will continue the manifeſtation of the ſame to the end. *Learn thence*, That the ſaving knowledge of God was not attainable by natural Abilities; but cometh to us by the ſpecial Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, *I have declared unto them thy Name.* *Learn* 2. That they that have the Name of God, his Nature and Will, ſavingly declared to them, do ſtand in need of farther declarations, and diſcoveries of God's Nature and Will to be made unto them. *I have declared to them thy Name, and I will declare it.*

26 —That the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

That is, that the Love which is Originally in thy ſelf, as the fountain of all Grace may be communicated and diſpenſed from thee to them, and become inherent in them. *Learn hence*, That it is not enough for the People of God that they are beloved of him, and that his Love is towards them; but they muſt endeavour *to have it in them*; that is, experience it in the effects of it, and in the ſenſe and feeling of it in their own Souls. The ſafety of a Chriſtian lies in this, that God loves him; but the Joy, the Comfort, and Happineſs of a Chriſtian conſiſts in the Knowledge, in the ſenſible apprehenſion and feeling of this Love; therefore Chriſt cloſeth his Prayer for his Members, with this affectionate and comprehenſive Petition, *Let the Love wherewith thou haſt loved me be in them, and I in them.*

CHAP. XVIII.

WHen Jeſus had ſpoken theſe words, he went forth with his diſciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entred, and his diſciples. 2 And Judas alſo which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his diſciples.

No ſooner had our dear Lord ended his Divine Prayer, Recorded in the foregoing Chapter, but he goes forth to meet his Sufferings, with a willing chearfulneſs. He retires with his Diſciples into a Garden, not to hide and ſhelter himſelf from his Enemies; for if ſo, it had been the moſt improper place he could have choſen; it being the accuſtomed place where he was wont to pray, and a place well known to *Judas*, who was now coming to ſeek him. *Judas which betrayed him knew the place, for Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither* *with his Diſciples*; So that Chriſt repaired to this Garden not to ſhun, but to meet the Enemy, to offer himſelf a prey to the Wolves, which in the Garden hunted him, and laid hold upon him; he alſo reſorted to this Garden now for privacy, that he might freely pour out his Soul to God. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was praying to his Father in the Garden, when *Judas* with his Black-Guard came to apprehend him. As the Sin of the firſt *Adam* which brought deſtruction upon his Poſterity was committed in a Garden, ſo the Salutary Paſſion of the ſecond *Adam*, which was to reſcue us from that deſtruction, did begin in a Garden alſo.

3 Judas then having received a band of men, and officers from the chief prieſts and Phariſees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

Obſerve 1. What a multitude were here imployed by the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees, for apprehending a ſingle Perſon, Gown-Men, and Sword-Men, Young and Old, *Jew* and *Gentile*; all ſorts of Perſons contriving his Death, as all Conditions of People were afterwards to receive Benefit by it. But what need theſe Lanthorns and Torches, it being then as ſome obſerve Full-Moon, when they ſought him in the Garden? All this argued their zealous Induſtry for our Saviour's Apprehenſion, that they might be ſure to find him, in caſe he ſhould hide himſelf in any holes or corners of the Garden. *Learn hence*, That Perſecutors and wicked Apoſtates are not aſleep in their Deſigns and Actings, but very Vigilant and Active; when at the ſame time Chriſt's own Diſciples and Followers are aſleep and careleſs; how active is *Judas*, and how watchful was his Bloody Crew, even at that time when Chriſt's Diſciples could not keep their Eyes open!

4 Jeſus therefore knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth, and ſaid unto them, Whom ſeek ye? 5 They anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am he. And Judas alſo which betrayed him, ſtood with them. 6 Aſſoon then as he had ſaid unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Lord's Sufferings were all foreknown to himſelf, before they came upon him, and yet how willingly and chearfully did he go forth to meet them! Should our Sufferings be known unto us before they come upon us, how would it diſquiet and diſturb us; yea, not only diſcompoſe us, but diſtract us; in great Wiſdom therefore, and in tender Mercy has God concealed future Events from us; but it was otherwiſe with Chriſt; he had an exact Knowledge of thoſe bitter Sufferings which he was to undergo, and yet with a compoſed Mind he goes forth to meet them. *Jeſus knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth.* Lord! How endearing are our Obligations to thy ſelf, that when thou kneweſt before-hand the bitterneſs of that Cup, which the Juſtice of God was about to put into thy hand, thou didſt not decline to drink it off for our ſakes? *Obſerve* 2. That it was not Man's Power, but Chriſt's own Permiſſion, which brought his Sufferings upon him. How eaſily could Chriſt have delivered himſelf out of his Enemies Hands, who with a word from his Mouth cauſed them to go backward and fall to the Ground: Chriſt in ſpeaking thoſe Words, did let out a little Ray or Beam of his Deity, and this ſtruck them down. Mark what a ſtrange Power was here in the word of Chriſt, and that not an angry word neither. He did not chide them and ſay, you wretches, how dare you lay hands on me, and carry me to Judgment, who ſhall one Day be your Judge. Chriſt only ſaid, *I am he*, and down they fell. O what fear will Chriſt ſend out when he cometh to judge the World; who could ſend forth ſuch a fear when he yielded up himſelf to be judged and condemned in the World! If there was ſo much Majeſty in the Voice of Chriſt, in one of the loweſt acts of his humiliation; What will the Voice of a glorified Chriſt be to Sinners, when he ſhall come as a Judge to condemn the World?

7 Then asked he them again, Whom ſeek ye? and they ſaid Jeſus of Nazareth. 8 Jeſus anſwered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye ſeek me, let thoſe go their way: 9 That the ſaying might be fulfilled which he ſpake, Of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none.

Here Note, 1. How voluntarily and freely Chriſt laid down his Life! when his Enemies were fallen to the Ground, he ſuffered them to riſe again, and offers himſelf to them, to take him and carry him away. *Note* 2. How the ſight of this glorious Miracle of the Soldiers falling to the Ground, did not deter or diſcourage them from their wicked purpoſe; they get up again and go on with their bloody deſign. *Learn thence*, That obſtinate and obdurate Sinners will not be reclaimed by the moſt evident and convincing, by the moſt miraculous and ſurprizing appearances of God againſt them. *Note* 3. How mindful in the midſt of his Sufferings, Chriſt was of his dear Diſciples, to ſecure them, at this time, from Death and Danger. *If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way*, That is, my Diſciples, againſt whom ye have no Warrant at this time. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt is ſo tender of his Followers, that he will not put them upon Trials, or call them forth to Sufferings till they are ripe and ready, fitted and prepared for them. The Diſciples yet were weak and feeble, timerous and fearful: And Chriſt had much Work and Service for them to do in the World; *Namely*, to plant and propagate the Goſpel in Foreign Countries; he therefore reſolves not to loſe any one of them by Perſecution at this time; And thus was his Word fulfilled; *of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none.*

10 Then Simon Peter having a ſword, drew it, and ſmote the high-prieſts ſervant, and cut off his right ear. The ſervants name was Malchus. 11 Then ſaid Jeſus unto Peter, Put up thy ſword into the ſheath:

Obſerve here, St. *Peter*'s Love unto, and Zeal for his Lord and Maſter, in defence of whom he now draws his Sword: But why did he not rather draw upon *Judas* than upon *Malchus*? Poſſibly, becauſe tho' *Judas* was moſt faulty, yet *Malchus* might be moſt forward to carry off our Saviour. Oh how doth a pious Breſt ſwell with Indignation at the ſight of any open Affront offered unto its Saviour! *Obſerve farther*, The Rebuke which Chriſt gave St. *Peter* for what he did; tho' his Heart was ſincere, yet his Hand was raſh; good Intentions are no Warrant for irregular Actions: Chriſt will thank no Man for drawing a Sword in defence of him, without a Warrant and Commiſſion from him. To reſiſt a lawful Magiſtrate, even in Chriſt's own Defence, is raſh Zeal, and diſcountenanced by the Goſpel.

11 The cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?

Here Obſerve, 1. A Metaphorical Deſcription of Chriſt's Sufferings: They are a Cup put into his Hand to drink off, and that by his own Father. They are a Cup, and but a Cup; God will not over-charge his People; and this Cup is from the hand of a Father, yea, from the Hand of our Father: *The Cup which my Father hath given me.* *Obſerve* 2. Our Lord's Reſolution to drink off this Cup, how bitter ſoever, being put to his Mouth by his Father's Hand. *Shall I not drink it*? That is, I will drink it. *Learn hence*, 1. That oft-times the Wiſdom of God is pleaſed to put a Cup, a very bitter Cup of Affliction into the Hand of thoſe to drink, whom he doth moſt ſincerely love. 2. That when God doth do ſo, it is their Duty to drink it with ſilence and ſubmiſſion. *Shall I not drink it?* That is, I will certainly drink it with chearfulneſs and reſignation.

12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews took Jeſus, and bound him, 13 And led him away to Annas firſt (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-prieſt that ſame year.) 14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counſel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man ſhould die for the people.

Judas having made good his Promiſe to the Chief Prieſts, and delivered Jeſus a Priſoner bound into their Hands; thoſe Evening-Wolves no ſooner ſeize the Lamb of God, but they thirſt and long to ſuck his innocent Blood; yet leſt it ſhould look like a down-right Murther, they allow him a Mock-Trial, and abuſe the Law by perverting it to Injuſtice and Bloodſhed. How impoſſible is it for the greateſt Innocence and Vertue to protect from Slander and falſe Accuſation! and no Perſon can be ſo innocent or good, whom falſe Witneſs may not condemn.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jeſus, and ſo did another diſciple. That diſciple was known unto the

high-prieſt, and went in with Jeſus into the palace of the high prieſt. 16 But Peter ſtood at the door without. Then went out that other diſciple which was known unto the high-prieſt, and ſpake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then ſaith the damſel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou alſo one of this man's diſciples? He ſaith I am not. 18 And the ſervants and officers ſtood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold) and they warmed themſelves: and Peter ſtood with them, and warmed himſelf. They ſaid therefore unto him, Art not thou alſo one of his diſciples? He denied it, and ſaid, I am not. One of the ſervants of the high prieſt, being his kinſman whoſe ear Peter had cut off, ſaith, Did not I ſee thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

All the four Evangeliſts give us an Account of *Peter*'s fall in denying his Maſter. And therein we have *Obſervable*, 1. The Sin it ſelf which he fell into, the denial of Chriſt, and this back'd with an Oath; he ſware that he knew not the Man. Lord! how may the ſlaviſh fear of Suffering drive the holieſt and beſt of Men to commit the fouleſt and worſt of Sins! *Obſerve* 2. The occaſion of his Fall. 1. His preſumptuous Confidence of his own ſtrength and ſtanding; *though all Men forſake thee, yet will not I.* Lord! to *preſume* upon our ſelves, is the ready way to *provoke* thee to leave us to our ſelves. If ever we ſtand in the Day of Trial, 'tis the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand; we ſoon fall, if we believe it impoſſible to fall. 2. His being in bad Company, amongſt Chriſt's Enemies; *Peter* had better have been a cold by himſelf alone, than warming himſelf at a Fire which was compaſſed in with the Blaſphemies of the Soldiers, where his Conſcience, though not ſeared, was yet made hard. *Obſerve* 3. The reiteration or repetition of this Sin; he denied Chriſt again and again; he denied him firſt with a Lye, then with an Oath and Curſe. Oh, how dangerous is it not to reſiſt the beginnings of Sin! If we yield to one Temptation, Satan will aſſault us with more, and ſtronger. *Obſerve* 4. The heinous aggravating Circumſtances of *Peter*'s Sin. 1. From the Character of his Perſon, a Diſciple, an Apoſtle, a chief Apoſtle; yet he denies Chriſt. 2. From the Perſon whom he denies, his Maſter, his Saviour. 3. The time when he denied him, ſoon after that Chriſt had waſhed his Feet; yea, ſoon after he had received the Sacrament from Chriſt's own Hand. How unreaſonable then is their Objection againſt coming to the Lord's Table, That ſome who go to it, diſhonour Chriſt as ſoon as they come from it? Such Examples ought not to diſcourage us from coming to the Ordinance, but ſhould excite and encreaſe our watchfulneſs after we have been there, that our after-deportment may be ſuitable to the Solemnity of a Sacramental Table.

19 The high prieſt then asked Jeſus of his diſciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the world; I ever taught in the ſynagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort. and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. 21 Why askeſt thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have ſaid unto them: behold, they know what I ſaid.

Our Saviour being brought before *Caiphas* the High-Prieſt, he examines him concerning his Doctrine, and his Diſciples, pretending him to be guilty of Hereſie in Doctrine, and Sedition, in gathering Diſciples and Followers. Our Saviour anſwers, That as to his Doctrine, he had not delivered it in holes and corners, but had *taught* publickly *in the Temple and Synagogues; and that in ſecret he had ſaid nothing*; that is, nothing contrary to what he had delivered in Publick. Chriſt never willingly affected corners; he taught openly, and propounded his Doctrine publickly and plainly to the World. A convincing Evidence that both he and his Doctrine were of God. *Learn hence*, 1. That it is not unuſual for the beſt of Doctrines, to paſs under the odious name and imputation of *Error* and *Hereſie*. Chriſt's own Doctrine is here charged. *The High-Prieſt asked Jeſus of his Doctrine.* 2. That the Miniſters of Chriſt, who have Truth on their ſide, may and ought to ſpeak boldly and openly. *I ſpake openly to the World. Veritas nihil erubeſcit præterquam abſcondi.* Truth bluſhes at nothing, except at its being concealed. *In ſecret*, ſays Chriſt, *have I ſaid nothing.*

22 And when he had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by, ſtruck Jeſus with the palm of his hand, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou the high-prieſt ſo? 23 Jeſus anſwered him, If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me? 24 (Now Annas had ſent him bound unto Caiphas the high-prieſt.) 25 And Simon Peter ſtood and warmed himſelf: They ſaid therefore unto him, Art not thou alſo one of his diſciples? He denied it, and ſaid, I am not. 26 One of the ſervants of the high-prieſt (being his kinſman whoſe ear Peter cut cut off) ſaith, Did not I ſee thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

Obſerve here, 1. How inſolently and injuriouſly an Officer ſtrikes our Saviour in this Court of Judicature: *One of the Officers ſtruck Jeſus with the Palms of his Hand.* What had the Holy and Innocent Jeſus done, to deſerve theſe Buffetings? He only made uſe of the Liberty which their Law did allow him, which was not to accuſe himſelf, but to put them upon the proof of thoſe Accuſations which were brought againſt him. But from this inſtance of our Saviour's Sufferings we *learn*, That Chriſt did endure painful Buffetings, ignominious and contemptible Uſage, even from inferior Servants; *giving his Cheek to the Smiters*, to teſtifie that Shame and Reproachful Uſage which was deſerved by us, and to ſanctifie that Condition to us, when ever it is allotted for us. *Obſerve* 2. The meek and gentle Reproof which the Lord Jeſus gives to this rude Officer, he doth not ſtrike him dead upon the Place, nor cauſe that Arm to wither which was ſtretched forth againſt the Lord's Anointed; but only lets him know, there was no Reaſon for his ſtriking of him. *Where Note*, That tho' our Saviour doth not revenge himſelf, yet he vindicates himſelf, and defends himſelf both with Law and Reaſon: *If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: But if well, why ſmiteſt thou me? Hence we learn*, 1. That we are not literally to underſtand the Command, *Matth.* 5. Of turning the Cheek to him that ſmites us. For Chriſt himſelf did not this, but defends the Innocency of his Words. 2. That to ſtand up in defence of our own Innocency, is not contrary neither to the Chriſtian Duties of Patience and Forgiveneſs, or to the practice and example of our Lord Jeſus. *Note* 3. That when the Soldier had ſtruck Chriſt upon one Cheek, he did not turn to him the other alſo, according to *Matth.* 5. 39. Which evidently ſhews, that that Precept, *if they ſmite thee on one Cheek, turn the other alſo*, commands only this, That rather than take Revenge, we ſhould take a ſecond Injury. Chriſtians ought rather to ſuffer a double wrong than to ſeek a private Revenge: Chriſtianity obliges us to bear many Injuries patiently, rather than to avenge one privately: But tho' it binds up our Hands from private Revenge, yet it doth not ſhut our Mouths from complaining to Publick Authority. Chriſt's own practice here, expounds the Precept elſewhere, *Matth.* 5. 39. For he complains here of the Officers Injuſtice in ſmiting him before the Judicatory, and challenges the Man to bear witneſs of the evil. *Obſerve laſtly*, How our Lord was not only buffetted, but bound and ſent bound from *Annas* to *Caiphas*, from *Caiphas* to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, and from *Herod* to *Pilate* again: And all this on foot through the Streets of *Jeruſalem*, from one end of the City to the other; partly to render his Paſſion more publick, being made a Gazing-ſtock to the World, and a Spectacle both to Angels and Men. And his condeſcending to go bound from one High-Prieſt to another, and from one Tribunal to another, teaches his People what Delinquents they were before the Tribunal of God, and what they deſerved by reaſon of Sin; even a Sentence of Eternal Condemnation at the Tribunal of the Juſt and Holy God.

28 Then led they Jeſus from Caiphas, unto the hall of judgment: and it was early, and they themſelves went not into the judgment hall, leſt they ſhould be defiled: but that they might eat the paſſover.

There were two Courts of Judicature which our Bleſſed Saviour was brought before and condemned by. 1. The Eccleſiaſtical Court or Sanhedrim, in which the High Prieſt ſate as Judge: Here he was condemned to Death for Blaſphemy. 2. The Civil Court or Judgment-Hall, where *Pontius Pilate* the Roman Governour ſate Judge, who becauſe he was a *Gentile*, they would not go into his Houſe, leſt they ſhould be defiled; for they accounted it a legal Pollution to come into the Houſe of a *Gentile*. *Where Obſerve*, The notorious Hypocriſie of theſe *Jews*, they ſcruple the defiling of themſelves by coming near the Judgment-Hall, where *Pilate* ſate, but make no ſcruple at all to defile themſelves with the guilt of that innocent Blood which *Pilate* ſhed. When Perſons are over-zealous for Ceremonial Obſervations, they are oft-times too remiſs with reference to Moral Duties. They *brought him to the Judgment-Hall, but they themſelves went not in, leſt they ſhould be defiled.*

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and ſaid, What accuſation bring you againſt this man? 30 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Obſerve here, 1. How *Pilate* humours theſe *Jews* in their Superſtition. They ſcruple to go into the Judgment-Hall to him; he therefore goes out to them, and demands what Accuſation they had againſt Chriſt. They charge him here only for being a Malefactor, or an evil Doer in the general; but elſewhere (*Luke* 23.) they particularly accuſe him, 1. *For perverting the Nation.* 2. *For forbidding to pay tribute to* Ceſar. 3. *For ſaying that he himſelf was Chriſt a King.* All of which was filthy Calumny; yet Chriſt underwent the Reproach of it without opening his Mouth, Teaching us, when we lie under Calumny and unjuſt Imputation, to imitate him, who opened not his Mouth, but committed his Caſe to him that judgeth uprightly.

31 Then ſaid Pilate unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what death he ſhould die.

The *Jews* being now under the Power of the *Romans*, tho' they had a Power of Judging and Cenſuring Criminals in ſmaller Matters, yet not in capital Caſes; they could not pronounce a Sentence of Death upon any Perſon, ſay ſome; they might, and did, ſay others, puniſh Blaſphemers by ſtoning them to death; but then their Sentence was to be ratified by the *Roman* Power: Accordingly here they had in their Eccleſiaſtical Court condemned Chriſt for Blaſphemy; now they bring him to *Pilate* the *Roman* Governour to confirm the Sentence of Death. From hence it appears, That Chriſt was the true Meſſias, being ſent into the World when the Scepter was departed from *Judah*, according to that ancient Prophecy of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 49. 10. *The Scepter ſhall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come.* The *Jews* had no Power abſolutely to condemn any Man, or to put him to Death; but this Power the *Roman* Emperor reſerved to his own Deputy. This contributed towards the fulfilling of our Saviour's Words, *Matth.* 20. 19. *That he ſhould be delivered to the Gentiles, and ſhould be crucified*: which was not a Jewiſh but a Roman Puniſhment. Had the *Jews* put him to Death, they had ſtoned him. But Chriſt was to be made a Curſe for us by hanging upon a Tree, and accordingly the *Jews* execute the Counſel of God, tho' they knew it not, by refuſing to put him to Death themſelves. *Learn hence*, How willing Chriſt was to undergo a ſhameful, painful, and accurſed Death, that he might teſtifie his Love unto, and procure a Bleſſing for his People. Thus *the Saying of Jeſus was fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what Death he ſhould die.*

33 Then Pilate entred into the judgment-hall again, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? 34 Jeſus anſwered him, Sayeſt thou this thing of thy ſelf? or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate anſwered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief prieſts have delivered them unto me: What haſt thou done? 36 Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Obſerve here, 1. *Pilate*'s inſnaring Qneſtion, *Art thou king of the Jews?* How jealous are great Men of Jeſus Chriſt, and how afraid are they of his Kingdom, Power and Authority, as if it would be prejudicial to their Authority and Power in the World, which was far enough from Chriſt's Thoughts. *Obſerve* 2. The Wiſdom and Caution of our Saviour's Anſwer, he neither affirms nor denies; though whenever we ſpeak, we are bound to ſpeak the Truth, yet we are not bound at all times to ſpeak the whole Truth. Chriſt tells him therefore, That upon the ſuppoſition that he was King, yet his Kingdom was no Earthly but a Spiritual Kingdom; he was no Temporal King, to Rule over his Subjects with Temporal Power and Worldly Pomp; but a Spiritual King, in and over his Church only, to order the Affairs and look afrer the Government thereof. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt as God hath an univerſal Kingdom of Power and Providence, even over the higheſt of Men; and as a Mediator hath a Spiritual Kingdom in and over his Church. 2. That it is a clear Evidence that Chriſt's Kingdom is Spiritual, in as much as it is not carried on by violence and force of Arms as worldly Kingdoms are, but by Spiritual means and methods. *If my Kingdom were of this World, my Servants would fight for me; but now is my Kingdom not from hence.*

37 Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou a king then? Jeſus anſwered, thou ſayeſt that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.

Pilate asks him again directly and expreſly, *Art thou a King or not?* Our Saviour anſwers, *Thou ſayeſt that I am a King*, and ſo it is indeed as thou ſayeſt I am a King, and the King of the *Jews* too; but not a Temporal King to rule over them after the manner of Earthly Kings, with Temporal Power, and Worldly Pomp and Splendour; but I am a Spiritual King to Rule and Govern not only the *Jews*, but my whole Church, conſiſting both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, after a Spiritual manner. *Obſerve here*, 1. The Dominion and Sovereignty of Jeſus Chriſt, he has a Kingdom; *My Kingdom*. *Obſerve* 2. The Condition and Qualification of this Kingdom, Negatively expreſt. *My Kingdom is not of this World.* *Obſerve* 3. The uſe and end of this Kingdom, that the Truth may have place among the Children of Men for their Salvation. *To this end was I born, and came into the World, to bear witneſs unto the Truth.* *Obſerve* 4. The Subjects of Chriſt's Kingdom declared. *Every one that is of the Truth, heareth my Voice.* That is, every one who is by Divine Grace diſpoſed to believe and love the Truth, will hear and obey Chriſt's Doctrine.

38 Pilate ſaith unto him, what is truth? And when he had ſaid this, he went out again unto the Jews, and ſaith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39 But ye have a cuſtom, that I ſhould releaſe unto you one at the paſſover: will ye therefore that I releaſe unto you the king of the Jews: 40 Then cried they all again, ſaying, Not this man but Barabbas. Now Barabhas was a robber.

Obſerve here, 1. The Queſtion *Pilate* put to Chriſt, *What is Truth?* a moſt noble and important Queſtion, had it been put forth with an honeſt Heart, with a Mind fairly diſpoſed for Information and Satisfaction; but it is evident, *Pilate*'s enquiry was not ſerious; nay, it is generally thought that *Pilate* ask'd this Queſtion in Scorn, Contempt and Deriſion; for he ſtays not for our Lord's Anſwer, but as ſoon as he ſtarted this Query, went off the Bench in haſte. *Learn hence*, That this Queſtion, What is Truth? or how may we come to the Knowledge of the Truth, is of unſpeakable uſe and importance, and a Queſtion whereon the whole frame and conſtitution of Religion depends. Becauſe Truth is claimed by all Parties of Men, by all Profeſſors of Religion: Ask the different Parties, from the old Gentleman at *Rome*, to the pooreſt Quaker and Muggletonian, *where is Truth?* and they will all tell you, they are in the poſſeſſion of it; every Sect hath thus much of Popery with it, that the Profeſſors of it think themſelves infallible, and every one cries out, *Here is Truth.* But God has given us a Twofold Light to ſearch for Truth by. *Namely*, The Light of Reaſon, and the Light of Scripture, or Divine Revelation: The former *Solomon* calls the *Candle of the Lord*, ſet up in our Breaſts by God, on purpoſe to diſcover Truth unto us; God allows us, yea, injoyns us, the free and impartial uſe of our Underſtandings and Judgments, in order to the finding out of Divine Truth; but becauſe Nature's Light, or the Light of Natural Reaſon is not clear and bright enough to give us a Proſpect of Supernatural Truths; for Nature and Reaſon can never dictate thoſe things which depend wholly upon God's Free Grace and good Pleaſure; ſuch are the Doctrine of a Saviour and Redeemer, and the Method of a Man's Salvation by the Sufferings of the Son of God? it had been Blaſphemy once to have ſuppoſed ſuch things, had not God revealed them in Scripture: Therefore the ſecond Standard of Divine Truth, is the infallible Word of God. The Goſpel of Chriſt is the Way and the Truth; *Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, and would Men be ruled and conducted by theſe unalterable Standards, of Truth, *namely*, Right Reaſon and Divine Revelation, they would eaſily agree in their Judgments, what is to be believed, and all Diſputes and Controverſies would vaniſh; right Reaſon and inſpired Scripture, are the beſt Judges of Controverſies; they being the fixed Standards and Meaſures of Divine Truth, can beſt reſolve *Pilate*'s Queſtion here, and tell us *What is Truth*. *Obſerve*, 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling *Pilate* was to be the Inſtrument of our Saviour's Death: He came forth three ſeveral times, and tells the *Jews* that he finds no Fault in him, he bids them take him, and judge him according to their Law. *Pilate* a *Pagan* abſolves Chriſt, whilſt the Hypocritical *Jews* that heard his Doctrine, and ſaw his Miracles, do condemn him. *Obſerve*, 3. *Pilate* having abſolved Chriſt, *I find no fault in him*, endeavours next to releaſe him, and takes occaſion from their Cuſtom of having a Priſoner releaſed to them at their Feaſt, to inſinuate his Deſire that they ſhould chuſe Chriſt. *Ye have a cuſtom, that I releaſe unto you one at the Paſſover*. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the *Jews* prefer *Barabbas*, a Robber, before the Holy and Innocent Jeſus. *They all cryed out, ſaying, not this Man but Barabbas*. *Learn hence*, That no Perſon how wicked and vile ſoever, are ſo odious in the Eyes of the Enemies of God, as Chriſt himſelf was, and his Friends and Followers now are: Chriſt did find it thus in his own Perſon when on Earth; *Barabbas* a Robber was preferred before him, and now he is in Heaven he ſuffers in his Members, the filth of the World being prefer'd before them.

CHAP. XIX.

THen Pilate therefore took Jeſus, and ſcourged *him*.

Obſerve here, 1. That as the Death of the Croſs was a *Roman* Puniſhment, ſo it was the manner of the *Romans* to Whip their Malefactors before they Crucify'd them. Accordingly *Pilate took Jeſus and ſcourged him*, Oh! Amazing Sight, the Great God of Heaven and Earth, is Laſht and Scourged like a baſe Slave. Behold! hard hearted Sinner, the Laſhes wherewith thy Redeemer is cruelly tormented, were to preſerve thee from the ſeverer Laſhes of thine own Accuſing and Condemning Conſcience, and to ſave thee from being Laſht by the Rage and Fury of Devils to all Eternity. *Obſerve*, 2. How unwilling, how very unwilling *Pilate* was to be the Inſtrument of our Saviour's Death; it is very evident that he had a mind to releaſe him, and it is concluded, that *Pilate* was thus forward to Scourge Chriſt, hoping that the *Jews* would have been ſatisfied with this lighter Puniſhment, and ſo have diſmiſt him: From this Inſtance we may gather, That Hypocrites within the Pale of the Viſible Church, may be guilty of ſuch tremendous Acts of Wickedneſs, as the Conſcience of an *Infidel* and *Pagan* may boggle at and proteſt againſt. *Pilate* a *Pagan* abſolves Chriſt, and ſeeks to releaſe him, whilſt the Hypocritical *Jews*, who heard his Doctrine, and ſaw his Miracles, condemn him. *Obſerve*, 3. How wretchedly *Pilate* ſuffers himſelf to be overcome with the *Jews* importunity, and contrary to the light of his own Reaſon and Conſcience, delivers the Holy and Innocent Jeſus, firſt to be Scourged and then Crucified. *Learn thence*, That it is a vain Apology for Sin, when Perſons pretend that it was not committed with our own conſent, but at the inſtigation and importunity of others: For ſuch is the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, that none can make him either wicked or miſerable, without his own Conſent. *Then Pilate took Jeſus and Scourged him*.

2 And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. 3 And ſaid, Hail king of the Jews: and they ſmote him with their hands.

Behold here, 1. The Crown which they have prepared for him, a Crown of Thorns, and with what Cruelty they preſs it cloſe to his Sacred Temples, whilſt thoſe ſharp pointed Briers piercing thoſe tender parts, let out that Blood which in a ſhort time was to be more freely poured forth for the Redemption of captive Souls. The next part of our Saviour's Sufferings conſiſted of cruel Mockings: Chriſt had owned himſelf to be the King of the *Jews*; that is, a Spiritual King, in and over his Church; but the *Jews* expecting that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in the pomp of an Earthly Prince, and finding it to be quite otherwiſe in our Saviour, they look upon him as a Deceiver and Impoſtor; and accordingly treat him as a Mock-king, with all the Marks of Deriſion and Scorn; for firſt they put a Crown upon his Head, but a very ignominious and painful one, *A Crown of Thorns*. They put a Scepter in his Hand, but it was that of a Reed; a Robe of Scarlet or Purple upon his Body, and then bowing their Knees unto him, as they were wont to do before their Princes; crying, Hail! King! Thus were all the Marks of Scorn imaginable put upon our dear Redeemer; yet what they did in Jeſt, God permitted to be done in Earneſt; for all theſe things were Enſigns and Marks of Sovereignty, and Almighty God cauſed the Royal Dignity of his Son to ſhine forth, even in the midſt of his greateſt Abaſement. Whence was all this Jearing and Sport? but to flout Majeſty? and why did the Son of God undergo all this Ignominy, Diſgrace and Shame? but to ſhew what was due unto us for our Sins; as alſo to give us an Example, to bear all the Scorn, Reproach and Shame imaginable, for the ſake of him, who for the Joy that was ſet before him, deſpiſed the Shame, as well as endured the Croſs. Verily nothing was omitted that either the Malice of Men, or the Rage of Devils could poſſibly invent, either to Torment or to Reproach him. But with what a Lamb-like Meekneſs, with what an aſtoniſhing Patience did he undergo all theſe Tryals both for our good and in our ſtead.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate ſaith unto them, Behold the man. 6 When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucifie *him*, crucifie *him*, Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucifie *him*: for I find no fault in him.

Obſerve here, 1. The great variety of our Saviour's Sufferings, he is made the Foot-ball of Cruelty and Scorn; his Sacred Body is ſtript of his Garments, and his Back diſguiſed with Purple-Robes, his tender Temples wounded with a Thorny Crown; his Face ſpit upon, his Cheeks buffeted, his Head ſmitten, his Hand Sceptred with a Reed. By his wearing a Crown of Thorns, he took away the bitterneſs of that Curſe, which our Sins brought upon the Earth, *Gen.* 3. 18. Thorns and Briars ſhall it bring forth: Chriſt by his Bitter and Bloody Sufferings, has turned all the Curſes of his People into Crowns and Bleſſings. *Obſerve*, 2. The noble Teſtimony given of Chriſt's Innocency, by the Mouth of *Pilate*, *I find in him no fault at all*; he doth not ſay, I find him not Guilty of what is laid to his Charge; but gives an univerſal Teſtimony of our Lord's Innocency. *I find no fault at all in him*. In ſpight of all Malice, Innocency ſhall find ſome Friends and Abettors. Rather then Chriſt ſhall want Witneſſes, *Pilate*'s Mouth ſhall be opened for his Juſtification; how fain would he have freed Jeſus, whom he found faultleſs? Our Lord found more Compaſſion from *Pilate*, an *Heathen*, then he did from them of his own Nation. *Pilate* would have ſaved him, but they cry out for his Blood: Hypocrites within the viſible Church may be guilty of ſuch monſtrous Acts of Wickedneſs, as the Conſciences of *Heathens*, without the Church, may boggle at and proteſt againſt. *Pilate* a *Pagan*, pronounces Chriſt Innocent, whilſt the Hypocritical *Jews* who had heard his Doctrine, and ſeen his Miracles, do condemn him. *Obſerve*, 3. Who influenced the main Body of the *Jews*, to deſire *Pilate* to put Jeſus to Death; it was the chief

Prieſts and Elders, *they perſwaded the Multitude:* Wo be to the Common People, when their Guides and Leaders are corrupt, and wo unto them much more, if they follow their wicked and pernicious Counſels; the *Jews* here followed their Guides the Chief Prieſts; but it was to their own Deſtruction, as well as their Leaders, *When the Blind lead the Blind, both fall into the Ditch.*

7 The Jews anſwered him, we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? But Jeſus gave him no anſwer.

Obſerve here, 1. How ambitious the Chief Prieſts were that Chriſt ſhould die under a colour of Law. *We have a Law, and by that Law he ought to die.* The Law which they allude to, is the Law for putting falſe Prophets and Blaſphemers to Death; of which number they conclude Chriſt to be, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God, whereas he did not make himſelf ſo, or only pretend to be ſo, but really and indeed was ſo; *to wit,* the Eternal Son of God. Such as are indeed Blaſphemers, and do arrogate to themſelves what is proper to God only, by the Law of God they ought to be put to Death; but Chriſt was not guilty of the Violation of that Law; for he was indeed the Son of God, and did not make himſelf ſo. *Obſerve,* 2. How full of fear the Conſcience of *Pilate* was, when the *Jews* told him that Jeſus made himſelf the Son of God; he was afraid to condemn him, not knowing but that he might be ſome Divine and extraordinary Perſon, and conſequently might draw down Divine Vengeance on his own head. *Learn hence,* That ſerious Thoughts of a Deity, will ſtrike Terror even into a natural Conſcience, eſpecially when the Sinner is following a Courſe which his own Judgment cannot approve; when *Pilate* heard of Chriſt's being the Son of God, he was afraid, knowing that what he had done to him, was againſt his own Conſcience. *Obſerve* 3. The Queſtion *Pilate* puts to Chriſt upon this occaſion, Whence art thou? that is, what is thy Original, or Parentage? Art thou a Divine Perſon or not? our bleſſed Saviour being unwilling to obſtruct his own Sufferings, or to diſcover any thing that might hinder *Pilate* from proceeding againſt him, would give him no Anſwer; having before made a reaſonable and ſufficient Defence. Oh how ready was Chriſt to lay down his Life for Sinners, and how willing to pay that Ranſom for his People, which the Juſtice of God required.

10 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not that I have power to crucifie thee, and have power to releaſe thee? 11 Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater ſin.

Obſerve here, 1. How offended *Pilate* was at Chriſt's ſilence, and how unreaſonably he boaſts of his Power and Authority. *Have not I power to crucifie thee, and power to releaſe thee?* It is the great Sin and Snare of Men in Power, to forget from whom they derive their Power, and to think that they may employ their Power as they pleaſe. *Obſerve* 2. The Piety and meekneſs of our Saviour's Anſwer. *Thou couldſt have no Power againſt me, except it were given thee from above.* That is, Thou haſt no Power over me, nor couldſt thou inflict any Puniſhment upon me, were it not that my Father had in his great Wiſdom, Divine Counſel, and for Glorious Ends, permitted it ſo to be. *Learn,* That Chriſt's being under the Power of any Man, how great and eminent ſoever, did flow from the peculiar Diſpenſation of God; who in his wiſe and wonderful Counſel, ſo ordered it, and ordained it for the Redemption and Salvation of his People; he was above all Humane Power as God, and no ways obnoxious to *Pilate*'s Power, being a perfectly Innocent Man. *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſt charges his Death more upon *Judas* and the *Jews,* than upon *Pilate* and the *Gentiles, They that delivered me unto thee, have the greater Sin.* Not that *Pilate* was excuſed from Sin, in delivering Chriſt to be Crucified; he ſinned heinouſly in abuſing his Power; but *Judas* ſinned more in delivering him up to the Chief Prieſts, and the Chief Prieſts in delivering him up to *Pilate,* than *Pilate* himſelf whom they made a Tool to ſerve their Malice and Revenge; they had better means of Knowledge than he, and ſo ſinned againſt more Light than he; and conſequently their Guilt was greater, and their Condemnation heavier than his. *Learn thence,* That the greater Means of Light and Knowledge Perſons Sin againſt, the more aggravated is their Guilt, and the more heightned will be their Condemnation. *He that delivereth me unto thee, hath the greater Sin.*

12 And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſars friend: whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the judgment-ſeat, in a place that is called the Pavement; but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Still Obſerve, How unwilling *Pilate* was to put Chriſt to Death: Conſcience bid him ſpare, Popularity bids him kill; how frequently and how fervently did he contend with the *Jews,* till they make it a State-Caſe, and tacitly accuſe him for a Traytor to the *Roman* Emperor, if he releaſed him. *If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſars friend.* When *Pilate* heard that, he delivers up the Innocent Jeſus to be Crucified. *Learn hence,* That the Natural Conſciences of Men, and the Innate Notions of Good and Evil, may carry Men on a great way in oppoſing that which is a bare-faced Iniquity; but at laſt, either fear or ſhame will over-rule, if there be not a Superior and more noble Principle. Tho' *Pilate*'s Conſcience acquitted Chriſt, and his Mouth had declared that he found no fault at all in him; yet fear of *Ceſar*'s Diſpleaſure, cauſes him to deliver up to Death, the holieſt and beſt of Men, againſt his Judgment and his Conſcience. *When Pilate heard that, he brought Jeſus forth unto them.*

14 And it was the preparation of the paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15 But they cried out, Away with *him,* away with *him,* crucifie him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucifie your king? The chief prieſts anſwered, We have no king but Ceſar. 16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.

Obſerve here, How careful the Holy Ghoſt is to Record and ſet down the Time when *Pilate* gave Sentence againſt Chriſt. In general, it was on the Day of the Preparation for the Paſſover; that is, the Day immediately before it, when they prepared every thing needful for the Solemnization; and in particular, it was about the Sixth Hour of that Day. St. *Mark* calls it the Third Hour, St. *John* the Sixth; but this is eaſily reconciled thus; the *Jews* divided the Day into four Quarters, which they called Hours; the Firſt was called the Third Hour, which anſwers our Ninth, the Second called the Sixth Hour, anſwering our Twelfth, the Third called the Ninth Hour, anſwering our Three in the Afternoon; the Fourth called the Twelfth Hour, which was the time of their Retirement from Labour, and beginning of the Firſt Night Watch; Now the whole time from the Third Hour to the Sixth; that is, from Nine to Twelve, was called the Third Hour, and the whole intervening time, from the Sixth to the Ninth; that is, from Twelve to Three, is called the Sixth Hour, and ſo of the reſt. Now when St. *John* ſays, it was about the Sixth Hour when Chriſt was condemned by *Pilate,* and led away to be Crucified, and St. *Mark* ſays it was the Third Hour, we are to underſtand that St. *Mark* takes in the whole time of the Third Hour, from Nine to Twelve; and St. *John* ſaying it was about the Sixth Hour, implies that it was near Twelve; ſo that between the Hours of Nine and Twelve our Lord was Sentenced, and led away to his Croſs, about Twelve faſtned to his Croſs, upon which he hung till the Ninth Hour; that is, till about Three in the Afternoon, during which time there was ſuch an Eclipſe of the Sun, as did occaſion Darkneſs over all the Earth. *Learn hence,* The great Love and Condeſcenſion of Chriſt in ſtooping ſo low, to have his Sufferings lengthned out upon our accounts, to expiate our Guilt which deſerveth Eternal Sufferings; that he might by his Example warn us to prepare for Trials of long continuance, and Sanctifie a ſtate of continual Affliction to us. Behold the Son of God haraſſed all Night before he ſuffered, hurried from Place to Place, poſted backward and forward, from *Pilate* to *Herod,* and from *Herod* to *Pilate,* wearied, ſcourged, buffeted, crowned with Thorns, at laſt nailed to his Croſs, and hanging thereupon from about Twelve to Three, in exquiſite Torture of Body, and under the ſenſe of his Father's Wrath in his Soul. Oh Lord! Thy Kindneſs towards us is matchleſs and inimitable, never was Love like thine.

16 And they took Jeſus and led him away. 17 And he bearing his croſs went forth into a place called *the place* of a ſcull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha; 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.

Here Obſerve, 1. That it was a Cuſtom among the *Romans*, to cauſe the Perſon condemned to crucifying, to carry his own Croſs; accordingly our Saviour bare his own Croſs part of the way, till fainting under the Burthen of it, they laid it upon another, not out of Mercy but Malice, reſerving him for a more publick Death: , they were loth he ſhould go away in a fainting Fit. But why could not Chriſt bear his own Croſs? who was able to bear the Sins of the whole World, when hanging upon the Croſs? *Anſwer*, 1. Probably the *Jews* Malice provided for him a Croſs of extraordinary greatneſs, proportionable to the Crimes they charged him with. 2. He was much debilitated and weakned, with his long watching and ſweating the Night before. 3. The ſharp edges of the Croſs grating his late whipped and galled Shoulders, might occaſion the freſh bleeding of his Wounds, and his weakning thereby. 4. Hereby he gave the World a Demonſtration of the Truth of his Humanity; that he was in all things like unto us, with reſpect to his Humane Nature, and the common Infirmities of that Nature. Herein like *Iſaac* Chriſt chearfully carried the Wood on which he was to be offered up a Sacrifice to Divine Juſtice. *Obſerve*, 2. The Infamous Company which our Holy Lord ſuffered with, two Thieves; on either ſide one, and himſelf in the midſt; it had been a ſufficient diſparagement to our bleſſed Redeemer, to be forced with the beſt of Men; but to be numbred with the Scum of Mankind is ſuch an Indignity as confounds our Thoughts. This was deſigned by the *Jews* to diſhonour and diſgrace our Saviour the more, and to perſwade the World, that he was the greateſt of Offenders. But God over-ruled this, for fulfilling an Ancient Propheſie concerning the Meſſias, *Iſaiah* 53. *laſt*. *And he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors.*

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the croſs. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jeſus was crucified, was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. 21 Then ſaid the chief prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am king of the Jews. 22 Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written.

Obſerve here, 1. The Inſcription wrote by *Pilate* over our ſuffering Saviour; *This is Jeſus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.* It was the manner of the *Romans* when they Crucified a Malefactor, to publiſh the Cauſe of his Death in Capital Letters over his Head, that ſo the Equity of their Proceedings might more clearly appear to the People. Now it is obſervable, how wonderfully the Wiſdom of God over-ruled the Heart and Pen of *Pilate* to draw this Title, which was truly Honourable, and fix it to his Croſs. *Pilate* who was before his Judge, and pronounced him Innocent, is now his Herald to proclaim his Glory. *Learn hence*, That the Regal Dignity of Chriſt was openly proclaimed by an Enemy, and that in the time of his greateſt Reproaches and Sufferings. *Pilate* without his own Knowledge, did our Saviour an eminent piece of Service; he did that for Chriſt which none of his own Diſciples durſt do; not deſignedly, but from the ſpecial Over-ruling Providence of God. No thanks to *Pilate* for all this, becauſe the higheſt Services performed to Chriſt undeſignedly, ſhall neither be accepted nor rewarded by God. *Obſerve*, 2. How the *Jews* endeavour to alter this: *Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am the King of the Jews.* The *Jews* thought it would be a diſgrace to them, that Chriſt ſhould be reported abroad to have been their King; therefore they deſire an alteration of the Writing: But *Pilate* that wrote in Honour of Chriſt, ſtifly defends what he had done: To all their Importunity he returns this reſolute Anſwer, *What I have written, I have written.* Surely the conſtancy of *Pilate* at this time, muſt be attributed to ſpecial Divine Providence. How wonderful was it, that he who before was as inconſtant as a Reed, ſhould now be fixed as a Pillar of Braſs! Whence is this, but from the God of Spirits, moving upon his Spirit to write, and to defend what was written? The Providence of God hath a Proſpect beyond the Underſtanding of all *Creatures.*

23 Then the ſoldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments (and made four parts, to every ſoldier a part) and alſo *his* coat: now the coat was without ſeam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rent it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did.

Here we have recorded our Saviour's Sufferings from the Soldiers; they ſtrip him of his Garments before they faſtned him to his Croſs, and divide thoſe Garments which could be parted amongſt them, and caſt Lots for his woven Coat, which could not be divided. Little did theſe vile Soldiers think that they were now fulfilling a Scripture Prophecy. Yet ſo it was, this Action of theirs being foretold, *Pſalm* 22. 18. *They part my Garments amongſt them, and caſt lots upon my Veſture.* Not that the Propheſie made them do it, but was fulfilled by their doing of it. From hence we may gather, That Chriſt ſuffered naked upon the Croſs; as naked (ſay ſome) as he came into the World. We had made our ſelves naked to our ſhame, and Chriſt became naked to cover our ſhame. If ſenſible of our own Nakedneſs and Shame, we flee unto him by Faith, we ſhall be cloathed upon with Robes of Righteouſneſs, and Garments of everlaſting Praiſe.

25 Now there ſtood by the croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mothers ſiſter, *the wife of* Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother, and the diſciple ſtanding by whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy ſon. 27 Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother, And from that hour, that diſciple took her unto his own *home.*

Theſe Words contain our Saviour's affectionate Recommendation of his diſtreſſed Mother to the care of a dear Diſciple: It was an Argument of Chriſt's wonderful Love to her, that when he was nailed to the Croſs and ready to die, he was more concern'd for his Mother's Sorrows than for his own Sufferings. Now was *Simeon*'s Propheſie fulfilled, *Luke* 2. 35. *A Sword ſhall paſs through thine own Soul alſo.* Her Soul was pierced for him, both as his natural Mother, and alſo as a myſtical Member of him her head; therefore Chriſt applies theſe comfortable Words as a Salve to her Wounds, even whilſt his own were bleeding unto Death: *Woman, behold thy Son. Where Note*, He calls her *Woman*, and not Mother; he doth not ſay, Mother, behold thy Son; but, Woman, behold him. Not that Chriſt was aſhamed of, or unwilling to own her for his Mother: But either, 1. Fearing that calling her by that Name ſhould augment and increaſe her Grief and Trouble. Or elſe, 2. To intimate his change of State and Condition, that being ready to die and return to his Father in Heaven, he was above all earthly Relations, and knew no one after the Fleſh, no not his very Mother: Yet ſee at the ſame time, when he was above her, and about to leave her, how his Care manifeſted it ſelf for her, when his Soul and Body were full of anguiſh to the very brim: Yet all this makes him not in the leaſt unmindful of ſo dear a Relation. *Thence learn*, That Chriſt's tender Care of his Mother, even in the time of his greateſt Diſtreſs, is an excellent Pattern for all Children to imitate and follow, to the end of the World. St. *John* here obeyed Chriſt's Command, and imitated his Example, he took her to his own Home; that is, he treated her with all that dutiful regard which a tender and indulgent Mother challenges from a pious and obedient Son. No perſonal Trial or Trouble upon our ſelves, doth exempt us from the performance of our Duty towards others, eſpecially towards our near and dear Relations; Chriſt in the extremity of his Sufferings, accounted it his Duty to take care of and provide for his dear Mother: *Teaching* us by his Example, That Children ought to evidence that they honour their Parents, by taking care of them in their decayed and deſolate Condition. *Again*, Inaſmuch as St. *John* took care of the holy Mother after her dear Son's death: *That Diſciple took her to his own home*, *We learn*, That the Lord never removes one Comfort, and taketh away the means of ſubſiſtence from his People, but he raiſes up another in the room of it. It is very probable that *Joſeph* her Husband was before this time dead, and Jeſus her Son was now dying; but ſtill God provides; he raiſes up St. *John* to take care of her; he takes her to his own home, and looks upon her as one of his Family. But how comes St. *John* above the reſt to have this honourable Service put upon him, and this high Truſt repoſed in him? *Anſwer*, The Text tells us, *he was the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; that is, in a more eſpecial manner, treating him with greater Freedom and Familiarity than the reſt; he alſo evidenced more Love unto, and more Courage and Reſolution for Chriſt than the reſt of his Diſciples, he ſtanding by the Croſs, when they got afar off, *Mark* 15. 40. *Thence we learn*, That ſuch as are beloved of Chriſt, as do keep cloſe unto him, and expreſs moſt Zeal and Reſolution for him, they ſhall be peculiarly honoured by him, and be employed in the higheſt Services for him.

28 After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt. 29 Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar, and they filled a ſpunge with vineger, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth.

Obſerve here, 1. The Afflictions or Sufferings which our Saviour complained of, and that is Thirſt; there are two ſorts of Thirſt; one Natural and Proper, the other Spiritual and Figurative: Chriſt felt both at this time. His Body Thirſted by Reaſon of thoſe Agonies which it laboured under. His Soul Thirſted in vehement Deſires, and fervent longings to accompliſh that great and difficult Work he was now about. 2. The deſign and end of our Lord's Complaint, *That the Scripture might be fulfilled, he ſaith I Thirſt*. Our Saviour finding that all was accompliſhed which he was to do before his Death, but only the fulfilling that one Scripture, *Pſal.* 69. 21. *They gave me Vineger to drink*. He for the accompliſhment thereof, *Said, I thirſt*. *Whence Note*, That ſuch were the Agonies and extream Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt upon the Croſs, that they drank up his very Spirits, and made him cry, *I Thirſt*. 2. That when Chriſt cryed out, *I Thirſt*; it was to ſhew that whatever was foretold by the Prophets concerning him, was exactly accompliſhed, and even to a Circumſtance fulfilled in him. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jeſus ſaith, I Thirſt*.

30 When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Lord's laſt words, *It is finiſhed*. 2. His laſt Act, *He bowed his head and gave up the Ghoſt*, As to the former, his laſt Words, *It is finiſhed*. This might be the probable intendment of it. 1. *It is finiſhed*. That is, Now is my Father's Eternal Councel concerning me accompliſhed; and now is the Promiſe that he made of my becoming a Sacrifice for Sin fulfilled; both my Father's purpoſe and my Father's Promiſe are now receiving their final Accompliſhment. 2. *It is finiſhed*; that is, the Scriptures are now fulfilled; all the Types that did prefigure me, all the Prophetical Predictions that were made of me, all the Jewiſh Sacrifices that pointed at me, have now received their final Accompliſhment in me, and are aboliſhed in my Death. 3. *It is finiſhed*; that is, my Sufferings are now ended, my Race is Run, my work is done, I am now putting my laſt hand to it, my Death is before me, I have finiſhed the Work, the whole Work which I came into the World for, doing as well as dying; all is upon the matter compleated, it is juſt finiſhing, it will be inſtantly finiſhed. *Again*, 4. *It is finiſhed*, that is, the Fury and Malice, the Rage and Revenge of my Enemies is now ended they have done their worſt; the Chief Prieſts and Soldiers, the Judges and Witneſſes, the Executioners and Tormenters have all tired out themſelves, with the exerciſe of their own Malice; but now their Spite and Spleen, their Envy and Enmity is ended, and the Son of God's at reſt. 5. *It is finiſhed*; that is, the Glorious Work of Man's Redemption and Salvation is perfected and performed, conſummated and compleated, the Price is paid, Satisfaction is given, Redemption is purchaſed, and Salvation inſured to a miſerable World. Wo unto us if Chriſt had left but one farthing of our Debt to the Juſtice of God unpaid, we muſt have lain in Hell to all Eternity, as being inſolvent; *But Chriſt has by one offering for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*. *Learn hence*, That Jeſus Chriſt hath perfected and compleatly finiſhed the great work of Redemption committed to him by God the Father. *Obſ.* 2. Our Saviour's laſt Act. *He bowed his head and gave up the Ghoſt*. *Whence learn*, The ſpontaneity and voluntarineſs of Chriſt's Sufferings, how freely he ſurrendred to Death; his Soul was not rent from him, but yielded up to God by him; Chriſt was a volunteer in dying; Tho' his Death was a violent Death, yet it was a voluntary Sacrifice, *He bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt*.

31 The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath day, (for that ſabbath day was an high day) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then came the ſoldiers, and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. 34 But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that ſaw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe. 36 For theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of him ſhall not be broken. 37 And again another ſcripture ſaith, They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.

Theſe Verſes contain ſeveral remarkable paſſages tending to the confirmation of our Faith, in the belief of the certainty and reality of our Saviour's Death; in which the *Jews*, the Soldiers, and St. *John* do all give their ſeveral and ſufficient Evidences. *Obſ.* 1. The *Jews* part in clearing up this Truth; They deſire *Pilate*, (who had power alone to diſpoſe of the Dead Bodies of condemn'd Perſons) that the legs of the Crucified Perſons might be broken to haſten their Death, that ſo they might be taken away and buried; becauſe according to the Law, *Deut.* 21, 22, 23. the Land was defiled with thoſe that were hang'd, if not timely buried; and they judged if the Bodies of theſe Perſons did remain on the Croſs all that Night, and the next Sabbath-day *which was an high day*, (the ordinary Sabbath, and the firſt day of the Paſſover, or Feaſt of unleavened Bread meeting together) it might pollute both them and their Feaſt. *Where Note*, the curſed Hypocriſie of theſe *Jews*; they look upon themſelves as ſtrictly bound to obſerve an outward Ceremony, but their Conſciences never ſcruple to violate the moſt weighty Precepts of the moral Law; they ſtrictly obſerve the Ceremonial Precept, that the dead bodies ſhould not remain upon the Croſs; but they ſcruple not to Crucifie the Son of God, and to uſe him with the utmoſt Rigour, deſiring his Bones may be broken. *Obſerve*, 2. The Soldiers part contributing to clear the Truth of Chriſt's Death; they execute what the *Jews* had deſired, and *Pilate* granted, breaking the Legs of the two Thieves, but not of Jeſus, becauſe he was already Dead; but one of the Soldiers reſolving to make ſure work, thruſts a Spear into his Side, and there came out ſtraight way Blood and Water, proving that he was really Dead. All which points out to us, that it is he who came by Water and Blood, 1 *John* 5. 6. and that from the merit and efficacy of his Death there floweth out Blood for the obtaining Remiſſion of Sin, and Water to regenerate and waſh us from our uncleanneſs. From the Barbarous Soldiers piercing of Chriſt's ſide after he was Dead, *We learn*, That no cruelty was omitted towards Chriſt either Dead or Alive, which might teſtifie the great deſert of our Sin, nor was there any needful Evidence wanting, which might make clear the Truth of his Death; the Soldier's piercing of our Saviour's Side was at once an exerciſe of their Cruelty, and an Evidence of the certainty of Chriſt's Death. *Obſerve*, 3. St. *John*'s part in this Evidence, he avouches that Chriſt really died, and expreſly affirms that he ſaw it with his own Eyes, for the confirmation of our Faith; *he that ſaw it, bare Record, and his Record is true*. And farther ſhews, that by theſe Actions of the Soldiers *That* was done, by which ſeveral Scripture Propheſies *were fulfilled*, and received their accompliſhment:

pliſhment: particularly, that of *Exod.* 12. 46. concerning the Paſchal Lamb, which was a Type of Chriſt, *that a Bone of it ſhould not be broken*; and that prediction, *Zach.* 12. 10. *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced. Learn hence,* That Chriſt is the Truth and Subſtance of that Type, the Paſchal Lamb, mentioned *Exod.* 12. and the true Paſſover Sacrificed for us; therefore what was ordained concerning the Paſchal Lamb, is applied here to Chriſt, as the Subſtance of that Type. *A Bone of him ſhall not be broken.*

38 And after this, Joſeph of Arimathea (being a diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly for fear of the Jews) beſought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jeſus: and Pilate gave him leave: He came therefore and took the body of Jeſus. 39 And there came alſo Nicodemus (which at the firſt came to Jeſus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrhe and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jeſus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation day, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

This laſt Paragraph of the Chapter gives us an Account of our Lord's honourable Burial; ſuch a Funeral as never was ſince Graves were firſt digged. *Where Obſerve,* 1. Our Lord's Body muſt be begg'd before it could be buried, the dead Bodies of Malefactors being in the power and at the diſpoſal of the Judge: *Pilate* grants it, and accordingly the dead Body is taken down: wrapped in fine Linen, and prepared for the Sepulchre. *Obſerve,* 2. The Perſons who beſtowed this Honourable Burial upon Chriſt, *Joſeph* of *Aramathea* and *Nicodemus*; the one provided with fine Linen, the other fine Spices, and they jointly wound and embalm'd his Body after the Jewiſh manner; both of them worthy, though cloſe Diſciples; Grace doth not always make a publick and open ſhew where it is: But as there is much ſecret Treaſure unſeen in the Bowels of the Earth, ſo is there much Grace in the Hearts of ſome Saints, which the World takes little notice of. We read of none of the Apoſtles at Chriſt's Funeral; fear had put them to flight; but *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus* appear bold: If God ſtrengthen the weak, and leave the ſtrong to the prevalency of their own fears, the weak ſhall be as *David,* and the ſtrong as Tow. *Obſerve.* 3. The Grave or Sepulchre in which our Lord was buried, it was a *Sepulchre in a Garden,* to expiate *Adam*'s Sin committed in a Garden; as by the Sin of the firſt *Adam* we were driven out of *Paradice,* the Garden of Pleaſure; ſo by the Sufferings of the Second *Adam,* who lay buried in a Garden, we may hope for Entrance into the Heavenly *Paradice.* And it was in a *new* Sepulchre wherein never any Man was laid, leſt his Adverſaries ſhould ſay, it was another that was Riſen, who was buried there before, or that he aroſe as one of the old Prophets did, by touching the Bones of ſome other dead Perſon. *Obſerve,* 4. The manner of our Lord's Funeral, it was haſty, publick, and decent; it was haſty by reaſon of the ſtreights of Time; the Sabbath was approaching, and all Buſineſs is laid aſide to prepare for that. *Teaching us,* how much it is our Duty to diſpatch our worldly Buſineſs early in the Evening of the Lord's Day; that we may be the better prepared to Sanctifie that Day. Again, our Lord's Funeral was publick and open, all Perſons that would, might be ſpectators, to cut off occaſion from any to object that there was deceit and fraud uſed in or about our Lord's Burial; yet was he alſo interr'd decently, his Holy Body being wrapt in fine Linen, and perfumed with Spices, according to the Jewiſh Cuſtom. *Obſerve,* 5. The Reaſons why our Lord was thus buried, ſeeing he was to riſe again in a ſhort time as other Men lie by the Walls; doubtleſs it was to declare the certainty of his Death, and the reality of his Reſurrection, to fulfil the Types and Prophecies which went before of him; *As* Jonas *being three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly*; he was alſo buried to compleat his Humiliation, this being the loweſt ſtep to which he could deſcend in his abaſed State. Finally he went into the Grave, that he might conquer Death in its one Territories. *Obſerve Laſtly,* Of what uſe our Lord's Burial is to us his followers. It ſhews us the amazing depth of his Humiliation, from what and to what his Love brought him, even from the Boſom of his Father to the Boſom of the Grave. It may alſo comfort us againſt the Fears of Death; the Grave could not long keep Chriſt, it ſhall not always keep us; it was a loathſome Priſon before, it is a perfum'd Bed now; he whoſe Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his Feet into the Grave. Awake and Sing thou that dwelleſt in the Duſt, for the Enmity of the Grave is ſlain by Chriſt.

CHAP. XX.

This and the following Chapter gives us an Account of our Saviour's Exaltation, and Victorious Triumph over all his Enemies, by his powerful Reſurrection. All the four Evangaliſts do confirm the Truth of it, by recording the ſeveral ſteps and degrees of the manifeſtation of it. In this Chapter, Chriſt's Reſurrection is confirm'd firſt to Mary Magdalene, *next to* Peter *and* John, *then to all the Diſciples except* Thomas.

THE firſt day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre.

In this Verſe is recorded how *Mary Magdalene* came early to the Sepulchre, on the firſt Day of the Week to anoint the dead Body of our Lord Jeſus. *Where Note,* That tho' her Heart did burn with an ardent Zeal and Affection to her Crucified Lord, yet the commanded Duties of the Sabbath were not omitted by her; ſhe kept cloſe, and ſilently ſpent that Holy Day in a mixture of Grief and Hope; her Example is a good Pattern of Sabbath Sanctification, and worthy of our Chriſtian Imitation. *Note* 2. What magnanimity and courage is found in this weak Woman; ſhe followed Chriſt Couragiouſly, when his Diſciples left him Cowardly; ſhe accompanied him to his Croſs, ſhe followed his Herſe to the Grave, when his Diſciples durſt not appear; and now very early in the Morning ſhe goes to viſit his Sepulchre, fearing neither the Darkneſs of the Night, nor the preſence of the Watchmen. *Learn thence,* That Courage is the ſpecial Gift of God, and if he gives it to the feebler Sex, even to timerous and fearful Women, it is not in the power of Man to make them afraid.

2 Then ſhe runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

It was a great Honour that God put upon this poor Woman, *Mary Magdalene,* that ſhe has the firſt Notice of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and is the firſt that diſcovers it to the Apoſtles. But why had not the Virgin *Mary,* his Diſconſolate Mother, this Privilege conferr'd on her, rather than *Mary Magdalene,* who had been a grievous Sinner? Doubtleſs, this was for the Comfort of all true Penitents, and Adminiſters great Conſolation to them: As the Angels in Heaven rejoice, much more doth Chriſt Joy in the recovery of one repenting Sinner, than in multitudes of Holy and Juſt Perſons (ſuch was the bleſſed Virgin) who need no Repentance.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other diſciple did out run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre. 5 And he ſtooping down and looking in, ſaw the linen cloths lying; yet went he not in. 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen cloths lie. 7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it ſelf. 8 Then went in alſo that other diſciple which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead.

Here Obſerve, 1. How *Peter* and *John* mov'd with *Mary Magdalene*'s Words, *They have taken away the Lord*, &c. do run to the Sepulchre to ſatisfy themſelves in the Truth of it. Such as ſincerely love Chriſt, upon the leaſt intimation that he is miſſing, beſtir themſelves with great Activity and Diligence, that they may ſee him, or hear of him; *Peter* and *John* run to the Sepulchre to ſee what was become of their Holy Maſter. *Obſerve* 2. That there was ſuch clear Evidence about Chriſt's Grave, as made it apparent that he was indeed riſen from the Dead, and not convey'd away either by Friends or Foes: It cannot be ſuppos'd that any of his Friends (could they have come at it) would have ſo handled his Holy Body, as to carry it away naked; and for his Foes had they ſtole away the Body, they would never have left the fine Linnen behind them. *Obſerve* 3. That when Chriſt aroſe from the Grave, he left his Grave-Cloaths behind him; whereas when *Lazarus* aroſe, he came forth with his Grave-Cloaths about him; it *Teaches* us, That Chriſt roſe never to Dye more, but to Live and Reign for ever; therefore he left his Grave-Cloaths in the Grave, as never to make uſe of them more. But *Lazarus* was to Dye again, Death was once more to have Dominion over him; he therefore came forth with his Grave-Cloaths about him. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How ignorant the Apoſtles were of the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and of the Holy Scriptures, which declar'd he was to riſe again from the Dead. *They knew not the Scriptures*; that is, They did not heed and regard them, ponder them in their Hearts, and feed upon them by Faith.

10 Then the diſciples went away again unto their
own home. 11 But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre,
weeping: and as ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down,
and looked into the ſepulchre, 12 And ſeeth two angels
in white, ſitting, the one at the head, and the other
at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain.

Here we have a deſcription of the great Love of *Mary Magdalene*, which ſhe expreſs'd towards Chriſt after his Reſurrection; ſhe went to his Sepulchre early, when it was yet dark; ſhe haſtily calls the Diſciples, *Peter* and *John* to the Sepulchre. And ſhe ſtays behind weeping at the Sepulchre, when they were gone away to their own home. And as *Mary* at firſt ſought him, and longeſt ſought him; ſo ſhe firſt finds him. Here *Note* 1. *Mary*'s Carriage and Behaviour towards her Saviour; this is diſcover'd by her patient Attendance, *She ſtood without at the Sepulchre*; by her paſſionate Mourning, ſhe ſtood at the Sepulchre *weeping*; by her unwearied Diligence, *ſhe ſtooped down and looked into the Sepulchre*; here was great Love indeed in this poor Woman, a Love ſtronger than Death; a Love which did out-ſtrip and go beyond the greateſt Apoſtles. *Learn thence*, 1. That true Love to Chriſt ſuffers not it ſelf to be ſtinted or limited, no not by the greateſt Examples; the weakeſt Woman that truly loves Chriſt, may piouſly ſtrive with the greateſt Apoſtle in this Point; though he be Learneder, Wiſer, more Uſeful and more Eminent than any of us; yet it is Holy and Wiſe, not to ſuffer our ſelves to be exceeded by any in our Love to Chriſt; every Chriſtian may ſtrive to exceed any one in Grace, and to attain the higheſt place in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Learn* 2. That ſtrong Love is valiant and undaunted, it will grapple and encounter with the ſtrongeſt Oppoſition; *Mary* fears nothing in ſeeking of her Lord, neither the darkneſs of the Night, nor the terror of the Soldiers, nor the malice of the *Jews*; Love is ſtrong as Death, and the Flames thereof are vehement. *Note farther*, The ſucceſs of *Mary Magdalene*'s Love to Chriſt, and unweary'd Attendance, on his Sepulchre; ſhe found not the Dead Body of Chriſt, and it was well ſhe did not; for if Death could have held him it would not have let us go. But though ſhe found not her Lord in the Grave, ſhe found two of his Servants there, two Angels; of all things in the World, one would leaſt have expected to find an Angel in a Grave, Spirits in the place of Dead Bodies, and Immortality in the place of Corruption. *But from hence we Learn*, That ſuch as ſincerely ſeek the Lord, ſhall certainly find, if not the very thing which they ſeek, yet that which is much fitter and better for them; *Mary* did not find Chriſt's Dead Body, but ſhe finds that which is more comfortable for her to find. *Namely*, Two Angels to teſtify that He was riſen. *Where Note*, The poſture of the Angels deſcribed; the one ſitting at the Head, the other at the Feet: It is matter of Comfort to the Members of Chriſt, that Angels do not wait upon the Head only, but upon the Feet alſo: And it ought to be matter of Imitation alſo. Let us imitate our Bleſſed Saviour, in having an Angel not at our Head only, but at our Feet alſo; many have an Ambition to have an Angel at their Head, a great meaſure of Light and Knowledge there, but they care not for an Angel at their Feet, they delight not to walk anſwerably to their Light and Knowledge, they have an Angelical Underſtanding, and a Diabolical Converſation; it is ſad for a Man to have all his Religion in his Brain and Tongue, and nothing in his Heart and Life.

13 And they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepeſt
thou? She ſaith unto them, Becauſe they have taken
away my Lord, and I know not where they have
laid him. 14 And when ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe
turned her ſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and
knew not that it was Jeſus. 15 Jeſus ſaith unto her,
Woman, why weepeſt thou? Whom ſeekeſt thou?
ſhe ſuppoſing him to be the gardner, ſaith unto
him, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me
where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away.

Obſerve here, 1. That the beſt Company in the World will not ſatisfy or content ſuch as are ſeeking for Jeſus Chriſt, when they find not him whom their Souls ſeek: *Mary* now enjoy'd the Preſence and Company of two Angels, but this did not ſatisfy her in the abſence of Chriſt himſelf. *Obſerve* 2. How paſſionately did *Mary* mourn for the loſs and want of Chriſt's Bodily Preſence, thereby giving Teſtimony of her great Affection towards him; but truly our Love to Chriſt is beſt ſhewn not by our paſſionate deſires for his Bodily Preſence, but by our holy longings after his Spiritual Preſence in his Word and Ordinances here on Earth, and his bleſſed and immediate Preſence in Heaven. *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſt may be preſent with and very near unto his People, and yet not be preſently diſcern'd by them; *Jeſus ſtood by Mary, but ſhe knew not that it was Jeſus*; her not expecting a living Chriſt was one cauſe why ſhe did not diſcern him. *Obſerve* 4. How exceedingly *Mary*'s thoughts were taken up with Chriſt; ſhe ſaith to the Gardiner, *If thou haſt born him hence*. What *Him*? She doth not ſay whom, but her Heart was ſo taken up with Chriſt, and her Mind ſo full of him, that ſhe concluded every Body would underſtand whom ſhe meant, though ſhe did not ſay whom ſhe meant. *Hence Note*, That the Soul of a ſincere Believer is full of earneſt and longing Deſires after Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That ſuch a Soul is yet ſometimes at a loſs for Chriſt, and cannot tell where to find him. 3. That whilſt the Soul is at a loſs for Chriſt, its Deſires are often quicker and more ſtirring after Chriſt. This was the Caſe of *Mary* here, with the Spouſe by Night on her Bed, and early in the Morning ſhe ſought him whom her Soul loved.

16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turned her
ſelf, and ſaith unto him, Raboni, which is to ſay, Maſter.
17 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I
am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren,
and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father
and your Father, and to my God and your God.

In the former of theſe Verſes, Chriſt makes himſelf known to *Mary*, and calleth her by her Name. In the latter he gives her a Prohibition and an Injunction. *Obſerve* 1. The Prohibition, *Touch me not*; together with the Reaſon of it, *for I am not yet aſcended to my Father*. It is concluded by Interpreters, That *Mary Magdalene* was now fallen at Chriſt's Feet, and embraced them; that having found him whom her Soul loveth, ſhe hugs him now, and hangs about him, but Chriſt forbids any farther embracing, and rejects ſuch Teſtimonies of her Love; As if he had ſaid, Although I will allow you as much familiarity as ſhall ſatisfactorily convince you of the Verity of my Reſurrection; yet you muſt not expect to converſe with me in that carnal manner which you did before my Death; for I am aſcending to my Father, and muſt be enjoy'd no longer after a Corporal, but Spiritual manner. *Learn hence*, That our Love to Jeſus Chriſt is beſt ſhewn, not by our Human, paſſionate Affections to his bodily Preſence, but by our Spiritual Communion with him by Faith here on Earth, in order to an immediate Communion with him Face to Face in Heaven. Chriſt now after his Reſurrection was advanced to a more Spiritual Condition, therefore refuſes at *Mary*'s Hand the Offices of Human Converſation, but expects of her the Duties and Services of Spiritual

ritual Devotion. *Obſerve* 2. Chriſt's Injunction. *But go to my Brethren and ſay, I aſcend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* *Where Note,* The endearing Title given to the Diſciples, *My Brethren*; he had before his Death called them his Servants, his Friends, his Children, but now after his Reſurrection, he calls them his Brethren; he became our Brother, by aſſuming our Nature in his Incarnation, he continues our Brother by reſuming that Nature at his Reſurrection. *Note farther,* That Chriſt calls his Diſciples Brethren after his Exaltation and Reſurrection; thereby ſhewing that the Change of his Condition, had wrought no change in his Affection toward his poor Diſciples; but thoſe that were his Brethren before, in the time of his Humiliation and Abaſement, are ſo ſtill, after his Exaltation and Advancement. *Go to my Brethren, and ſay,* Humility doth not only go before Honour, but it dwells with Honour, and doth evermore accompany it. *Obſerve Laſtly,* The good News or Meſſage of Joy which Chriſt ſends by *Mary* to his dear Diſciples; *ſay, I aſcend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*; as if Nature and Adoption gave the ſame Intereſt, Chriſt calls God, his God and his Diſciples God, his Father and their Father; firſt his, and then theirs, and therefore theirs becauſe his. *Learn hence,* That God for Chriſt's ſake hath dignify'd Believers with that near and dear Relation of his being a Father to them in and through his Son; ſo that as they ought to carry it towards him like Children by Obedience, Subjection and Reſignation; ſo they may expect he will retain a fatherly Affection toward them, and they may expect from him Fatherly Compaſſion, Proviſion, Protection, Correction, and all things needful. *Laſtly,* Remark from Chriſt's ſaying, *I go to my God and your God,* the falſe inferences of the *Socinians, viz.* That becauſe Chriſt ſtiles God his God, hence ſay they, it is evident that Chriſt is not God; but from thoſe Words it only follows, that he was not God, according to that Nature which aſcended. Thus *Pſal.* 45. it is ſaid of Chriſt, *God even thy God hath anointed thee,* and yet he adds of the ſame Perſon, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the diſciples, that ſhe had ſeen the Lord, and that he had ſpoken theſe things unto her. 19 Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt day of the week, when the doors were ſhut, where the diſciples were aſſembled for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt and ſaith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had ſo ſaid, he ſhewed unto them his hands and his ſide. Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.

Our Bleſſed Saviour's firſt appearing after his Reſurrection, having been to *Mary Magdalen,* as the former Verſes acquainted us, The ſame Day at Evening, when the Doors were ſhut for fear of the *Jews,* Jeſus miraculouſly, and as to the Diſciples inſenſibly, opens the Doors, and ſtands in the midſt of them, and ſays, *Peace be unto you,* and ſhews them his Hands and his Side. *Where Note,* 1. That it has been no ſtrange thing in the Church, that the beſt Members of it have been put to frequent their Aſſemblies with great Fear, and been forced to meet in the Night with great Caution, becauſe of the Fury of the Perſecutors: Here Chriſt's own Diſciples were forced to get together in the Night, the Doors kept ſhut, *for fear of the Jews.* *Note,* 2. Let Chriſt's Diſciples meet together never ſo privately, and with never ſo much hazard and jeopardy, they ſhall have Chriſt's Company with them; neither Bolts nor Locks, nor faſtned Doors ſhall hold Chriſt from them: *When the Doors were ſhut, Jeſus came and ſtood in the midſt of them.* *Obſerve laſtly,* The Evidence which our Saviour offers to evince and prove the certainty of his Reſurrection; *he ſhewed his Diſciples his Hands and his Side.* Chriſt appealed to, and admitted of the Judgment of their Senſes, to aſſure them that it was his real Body. And if we muſt not be allowed to believe our Senſes (as the *Romiſh* Synagogue would perſwade us) we ſhall want the beſt external Evidence we can have to prove the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; *namely,* The Miracles of our Saviour: for how can we be aſſured that thoſe Miracles were true, but by the Judgment of our Senſes? Now as our Senſes tell us that Chriſt's Miracles were true, ſo they aſſure us that the Popiſh Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is falſe.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. 22 And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, receive ye the holy Ghoſt. 23 Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.

Obſerve here, 1. The Repetition of our Saviour's endeared Salutation to his Diſciples. *Peace be unto you, Peace be unto you.* This was no more than might be needful, to ſignify his firm Reconciliation to them notwithſtanding their late Cowardice in forſaking of him, and flying from him, when the Storm fell upon him. *Obſerve* 2. How Chriſt doth renew his Diſciples Commiſſion for the Work of the Miniſtry, who poſſibly were much diſcouraged with the remembrance of their faint-heartedneſs in the time of his Sufferings; he doth therefore a-new Commiſſionate them, and ſends them forth in theſe Words, *As my Father ſent me*; that is, to preach, plant and propagate the Goſpel, *ſo ſend I you.* By the ſame Authority, and for the ſame ends, in part, for which I was ſent by my Father, do I ſend you; *namely,* to gather, to govern, and inſtruct my Church. *Learn hence,* That when Chriſt left the World, he did not leave his Church deſtitute of a Goſpel-Miniſtry, which ſhall continue to the end of the World. As Chriſt was ſent by the Father, ſo are his Miniſters ſent by him; and they may expect, having the ſame Authority and Commiſſion, the ſame Succeſs and Bleſſing; and the Contempt caſt upon them and their Meſſage, ultimately reflects upon God and Chriſt, whoſe Meſſengers they are. *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſt that ſends them forth doth furniſh them with the Gifts of the Spirit for their Office: *He breathed on them, and ſaid, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. They had received the Holy Spirit before as a Spirit of Sanctification; here they receive it in its extraordinary Gifts, to fit them for their Office. And Chriſt's conferring the Holy Ghoſt by breathing upon them, ſhews that the Holy Spirit proceeds as well from the Son as from the Father. And as by God's breathing the firſt Man was made a living Soul; ſo by Chriſt's breathing on the Apoſtles, they were quickened and extraordinarily enabled for the Service they were called to. *Learn hence,* That when Chriſt ſends forth any about his Work, he will furniſh them with Endowments anſwerable to their vaſt Employment: And the beſt Furniture they can have, is the Holy Spirit in his Gifts and Qualifications ſuitable to their Work. *He breathed on them, and ſaid, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* *Obſerve* 4. How Chriſt aſſerts their Authority in the diſcharge of their Commiſſion, and declares, that when they act Miniſterially, according to their Commiſſion here on Earth, is ratified in Heaven: *Whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted.* Where *Note,* That there is a twofold Power of remitting or forgiving Sins; the one Magiſterial and Authoritative; this belongs to Chriſt alone: The other Miniſterial and Declarative; this belongs to Chriſt's Ambaſſadors, who have a Power in his Name to bind and looſe. It is a pious *Note* of St. *Auſtin* upon this place, That Chriſt firſt conferr'd the Holy Ghoſt upon his Apoſtles, and then ſaid, Whoſe Sins ye remit, they are remitted. Thereby intimating, that it is not they, but the Holy Ghoſt by them, that puts away Sin. *For who can forgive Sin, but God only?* The Power of forgiving Sin that Man hath, is only to declare, That if Men be truly and really Penitent, their Sins are forgiven them, for the ſake of Chriſt's Satisfaction.

24 But Thomas one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jeſus came. 25 The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hands into his ſide, I will not believe.

What the cauſe of *Thomas*'s abſence was, is not declared; it is evident that he was not with the reſt of the Diſciples when Chriſt appeared to them; and his abſence had like to have coſt him dear, even the loſs of his Faith; and he might have had cauſe for ever to have bewailed his abſence from that meeting of the Diſciples, had not Chriſt been more merciful. *Learn thence,* That the letting ſlip of one holy Opportunity may prove exceedingly prejudicial to the Soul's Advantage: It is wiſe and ſafe to lay hold upon every Opportunity for enjoying Communion with God and Fellowſhip with his Saints. *Thomas*'s abſence deprived him not only of the good News which *Mary* brought of Chriſt's being riſen, but alſo of the ſight of him; which the other Diſciples got by aſſembling together; and for want thereof, *Thomas* is left under many doubts and fears. Verily, we know not what we loſe, when we abſent our ſelves from the Aſſemblies of God's People. Such Views of a Crucified Raiſed Jeſus may be Communicated to others, whilſt we are abſent, as would have confirmed our Faith, and eſtabliſhed our Joy, had we been preſent. *Obſerve farther*, What a ſtrange declaration *Thomas* makes of his obſtinate Unbelief. *Except I ſee the print of the nails, and put my finger into his ſide, I will not believe. Where Note*, How ſtrangely rooted Unbelief is in the Hearts of Holy Men, inſomuch that they deſire the Objects of Faith ſhould fall under the view of their Senſes. *Thomas* carries his Faith at his Fingers ends, he will believe no more than he can ſee or feel; whereas Faith is the Evidence of things not ſeen. Oh! *Thomas*, how deplorable had been thy caſe, if Chriſt had never given thee that proof which is very unreaſonable for thee to expect. But Chriſt takes Compaſſion on him, and appears to him, and cures his obſtinate Unbelief, which he might have juſtly puniſhed, as appears by the following Verſes, *v.* 26.

26 And after eight days, again his diſciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jeſus, the doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace be unto you. 27 Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide: and be not faithleſs, but believing.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Saviour's appearing again to his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, it was eight Days after he firſt aroſe, which was the firſt Day of the Week. *Note here*, That Chriſt's riſing the firſt Day of the Week, and appearing on the next firſt Day of the Week after to the Diſciples, and they obſerving that Day for their Solemn Aſſemblies, and St. *Paul* adminiſtring on that Day the Lord's Supper, *Acts* 20. and commanding on that Day collections for the Poor, 1 *Cor.* 16. and St. *John* calling it the Lord's-Day, *Rev.* 1. 10. From theſe Authorities, and the Primitive Practice, we derive our Chriſtian Sabbath: For we do not find in all the Scripture one Inſtance, of any one Congregation of Chriſtians only aſſembling upon the Jewiſh Sabbath, but on the firſt Day of the Week, on which we ground our Obſervation of that Day. *Obſerve* 2. The wonderful Condeſcenſion of Chriſt to the weakneſs of *Thomas* his Faith, he bids him *reach forth his hand, and thruſt it into his ſide*. Not that Chriſt was pleaſed with, but only pitiful towards *Thomas* his Infirmities; and it ought to be no encouragement to any Perſon to follow his Example, in ſeeking or expecting the like Signs of their own preſcribing for helping of their Faith. *Obſerve* 3. How mercifully Chriſt over-ruled *Thomas* his Unbelief for the Confirmation of our Faith. His Doubting proved a means for eſtabliſhing his own and our Faith. Therefore ſays *Gregory* well, *Plus mihi profuit dubitatio Thomæ quam credulitas Mariæ.* Had not *Thomas* doubted, we had not been ſo fully aſſured, that it was the ſame Chriſt that was Crucified who roſe again.

28 And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God.

Theſe words may be conſidered two ways. 1. As an abrupt Speech, importing a vehement Admiration of Chriſt's Mercy towards him, and of his own Stupidity and Dulneſs to believe. *Learn hence*, That the convincing Condeſcenſion of Chriſt turns Unbelief into a Rapture of Holy Admiration and Humble Adoration. 2. This expreſſion of *Thomas, My Lord and my God*, contains a ſhort but abſolute Confeſſion of Faith. *Thomas* rightly collects from his Reſurrection, that he was Lord, God, bleſſed for evermore, the true Meſſias, the expected Redeemer, and accordingly with an explicit Faith he now profeſſes his Intereſt in him, ſaying, *My Lord and my God.* Yet *Note*, That this Reſurrection could not make him God, and render him then the Object of Divine Worſhip, if he had been only a Creature before: and farther *Obſerve*, That Chriſt doth not reprove *Thomas* for owning him as his God, which ſhews that *Thomas* did not miſtake in owning the Divinity of Chriſt.

29 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.

Here we have Chriſt's Reprehenſion of *Thomas* for not believing without ſuch ſenſible Evidence as he deſired. He believed now that Chriſt was riſen from the Dead, but it was upon the Teſtimony of his Senſes only: Therefore Chriſt tells him, that his Faith would have been more excellent and more eminently rewardable if he had believed without ſuch demonſtrative Evidence. *Faith is the Evidence of things not ſeen.* Therefore to give Credit to a thing upon the Evidence of Senſe, is not properly believing. *Obſerve farther*, How Chriſt pronounces them Bleſſed, who ſhould hereafter believe on him through the Preaching of the Goſpel, though they did not ſee him as *Thomas* did, nor handle him as he might. This is a ſure Rule, that by how much our Faith ſtands in leſs need of the external Evidence of Senſe, the ſtronger our Faith is, and the more acceptable it is, provided what we believe be revealed in the Word of God, *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.*

30 And many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.

Obſerve here, 2. The true end for which the Miracles of Chriſt were ſo carefully recorded; *Namely, that we might believe.* By believing that Chriſt is the Son of God, we have Life; and by the Evidence of his Miracles we know and believe him to have been the Son of God: The Miracles which Chriſt wrought were the beſt external Evidence of his Miſſion. *Obſerve* 1. That all Chriſt's Miracles, both before his Paſſion and after his Reſurrection, were not recorded by the Evangeliſts. *Obſerve* 2. The great point concerning Chriſt to be known and believed from the Scripture is this, That Jeſus the Son of the Virgin is the promiſed Meſſiah, the anointed of the Father, he in whom all the Types and Shadows of the Law are accompliſhed; and that this Jeſus is for Nature Co-eſſential, for Dignity Co-equal, and for Duration Co-eternal with the Father: One in Eſſence, equal in Power and Glory. Thus believing that Jeſus is the Son of God, and accompanying that Belief with a Holy Life, if we believe well and live well, we ſhall have Life through his Name.

CHAP. XXI.

After theſe things Jeſus ſhewed himſelf again to the diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias, and on this wiſe ſhewed he himſelf.

The foregoing Chapter acquainted us with ſeveral Appearances of Chriſt to his Diſciples after his Reſurrection: All which were in *Jeruſalem*. This Chapter acquaints us with his appearing to his Diſciples in *Galilee*, whither he had ordered his Diſciples to go, promiſing there to meet them. *Jeruſalem* now becomes a forſaken Place, a People abandoned to Deſtruction, Chriſt will not ſhew himſelf openly unto them, but *Galilee* was a Place where Chriſt's Miniſtry had found better acceptance; to *Galilee* therefore doth he go. Such Places wherein Chriſt is moſt welcome to Preach, ſhall be moſt honoured with his Preſence; *Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his Diſciples at the Sea of Tiberias*, called elſewhere *the Sea of Galilee.*

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the ſons of Zebedee, and two other of his diſciples. 3 Simon Peter ſaith unto them, I go a fiſhing. They ſay unto him, we alſo go with thee. They went forth, and entred into a ſhip immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Obſerve here, That after Chriſt was Crucified, the Diſciples returned for a time to their Trade and Employment of Fiſhing; tho' they were called to be Fiſhers of Men, yet Churches not being gathered and conſtituted at preſent, nor being able to maintain them, they labour with their Hands to ſupply their preſent Neceſſities. Afterwards, when at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* they had received thoſe viſible Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which did furniſh them for preaching the Goſpel to all Nations, and they went forth to plant and propagate the Goſpel, we may believe they then gave over the Labours of their ſecular Calling, and applied themſelves wholly to the Work of the Miniſtry. That may be done (*in Eccleſiâ Conſtituendâ*) in a Church which is conſtituting or about to be conſtituted, which is not convenient to be done in a Church already Conſtituted. *Obſerve farther*, How *Peter* with the reſt, *toil* *all Night and catch nothing*; but no ſooner is Chriſt come among them, but they incloſe a multitude of Fiſhes. Thereby teaching us, That all humane Labours and endeavours are in vain, unleſs Chriſt by his Preſence and Bleſſing crown them with ſucceſs.

4 But when the morning was now come Jeſus ſtood on the ſhoar: but the diſciples knew not that it was Jeſus. 5 Then Jeſus ſaith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered him, No. 6 And he ſaid unto them, Caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip, and ye ſhall find. They caſt therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fiſhes.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt was near, very near to his Diſciples, but they perceived it not: *Jeſus ſtood on the ſhoar, but they knew not that it was Jeſus. Learn*, Chriſt is not always diſcerned by us when he is preſent with us; it is a double Mercy to enjoy his Company, and to know indeed that it is he. *Obſ.* 2. Altho' they had laboured all the Night in vain, yet at Chriſt's Command they go to work again, and with great Succeſs; *they were not able to draw the Net for the multitude of Fiſhes.* When Chriſt is about to do great things for his People, yet will he have them exert all poſſible endeavours of their own; and the want of former Succeſs muſt not diſcourage from future Endeavours. *Obſ.* 3. What a Proof Chriſt here gives of his Divinity and Godhead: How were all the Fiſh in the Sea at his Pleaſure, and obedient to his command! He knew where they ſwim, and brings them from one part of the Lake to the other, *where the Diſciples had toil'd all night and caught nothing.* Chriſt our Mediator is true God, and as ſuch he has a Sovereign Power and Providence over all the Creatures; the Cattle on a thouſand Hills, and all the Fiſh ſwimming in the Sea are obedient to his Power and obſervant of his Commands.

7 Therefore that diſciple whom Jeſus loved, ſaith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fiſhers coat unto him, (for he was naked) and did caſt himſelf into the ſea. 8 And the other diſciples came in a little ſhip (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fiſhes. 9 As ſoon then as they were come to land, they ſaw a fire of coals there, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread.

Obſerve here, 1. The great Zeal and Forwardneſs of *Peter*; hearing that it was Chriſt, he leaps into the Sea to get to him. Oh how inviting, attractive, and alluring, is a ſight of Chriſt! It will make thoſe that know him, break thro' all Difficulties to come unto him. It is not a Sea of Water, no not Seas of Blood, that can keep a zealous Soul at a diſtance from Chriſt. *When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his Coat and caſt himſelf into the Sea. Obſ.* 2. What a Complication of Miracles here were; as ſoon as they came to Land they diſcerned another Miracle, *viz.* A Fire of Coals, and Fiſh laid on, and Bread, all created and produced by Chriſt out of nothing, at this time, as an Evidence of his Divine Power; for, before they could get the Fiſh to Shoar, they ſaw Fiſh broiling upon Coals: which makes it evident that theſe were none of the Fiſh which they had catch'd. Chriſt when he pleaſes, for the Benefit and Comfort of his People, will work Miracle upon Miracle, Mercy upon Mercy, one wonder upon the head of another; For here after a Miracle at Sea they meet with another Miracle at Land. *As ſoon as they came to Land they ſaw a Fire.*

10 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Bring of the fiſh which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fiſhes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were ſo many, yet was not the net broken.

Obſerve here, 1. What was Chriſt's End in commanding his Diſciples to bring forth the Fiſh which they had now taken; *namely*; That the ſight of their number and bigneſs, together with the ſight of the Net remaining unbroken, might confirm them in the belief of its being a real Miracle. Chriſt had fed their Bellies before, his buſineſs now is to feed their Minds with the Contemplation of the greatneſs and reality of the Miracle. All Chriſt's Miracles were obvious to Senſe, and would bear the examination of the Senſes; not like the lying wonders of the Church of *Rome*, which are commonly wrought in the dark to couzin the Vulgar, and are meer Cheats and Impoſtures. *Obſ.* 2. That this full draught of Fiſhes which *Peter* and the reſt of the Diſciples now had, might probably preſage that great and wonderful Succeſs which he and they afterwards were to have, in fiſhing for Men. Here we have an hundred fifty and three great Fiſhes caught at one draught; but *Acts* 2. We find three thouſand Souls converted by St. *Peter* at one Sermon. Oh the marvellous ſucceſs of the Goſpel at the firſt preaching and planting of it! Three thouſand then proſelyted by one Sermon. Now we have cauſe to fear that there are Three thouſand Sermons preached, and ſcarce one Soul ſavingly converted. *Lord! Who hath believed our Report?*

12 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the diſciples durſt ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jeſus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fiſh likewiſe. 14 This is now the third time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples, after that he was riſen from the dead.

A twofold Reaſon may be aſſigned why Chriſt did at this time invite and call his Diſciples to dine with him: The firſt and more Principal Reaſon was, to evidence to them the reality of his Reſurrection, and to aſſure them of the Truth of his Manhood, that they might not think it was an Apparition only. By the Miracle in catching the Fiſhes, he proved himſelf to be God; by his preſent eating of the Fiſh, he evidenced himſelf to be Man: and conſequently teacheth us, That our exalted High-prieſt continues our Kinſman in Heaven. He is ſtill Bone of our Bone, and Fleſh of our Fleſh: he has taken poſſeſſion of Heaven in our Nature, ſitting there in our glorified humanity, united to the glorious Deity, clothed with that Body which hung in its Blood and Gore upon the Croſs, but now ſhining brighter than ten thouſand Suns. The ſecond and leſs principal Reaſon why Chriſt called his Diſciples to dine with him, was this, To ſhew his tender Care over the Bodies of his dear Diſciples, as being the Tabernacles of his own Spirit, the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt: Therefore Chriſt incourages, tho' not to the pampering, yet to the refreſhing of them. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come and dine.* And he would not confer with them till they had dined; as the next Verſe ſhews.

15 So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me more then theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He ſaith to him again, the ſecond time, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep. 17 He ſaith unto him the third time, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him Feed my ſheep.

Obſerve here, 1. Chriſt puts *Peter* upon a threefold profeſſion of his Love unto him; anſwerable to his threefold denial of him: His threefold denial required a threefold confeſſion. True Repentance ought, and will be as eminent in the Fruits and Effects of it, as the Saints fall hath been. A threefold denial of Chriſt, ſhall be attended with a threefold profeſſion of Love unto him. *Obſ.* 2. The ſolemn Queſtion put by our Saviour unto *Peter, Loveſt thou me? Loveſt thou me more than theſe?* That is, more than thy occupation and employment; more than thy Nets and Fiſhing-boats? if ſo, leave them, and wholly imploy thy ſelf in feeding my Sheep and Lambs. Or more than theſe, that is more than the reſt of my Diſciples. Doſt thou love me more than thou loveſt them? Or, more than they love me? If ſo, evidence the ſincerity of thy Love to me, by thy Care of mine. *Thence Note*, That Miniſters who are called to take Care of Chriſt's Flock, had need of much Love to Jeſus Chriſt, and great compaſſion for Souls; by which they will be animated and fortified to go through with the Labours and Difficulties, as well as to encounter the Dangers and Sufferings which do accompany their calling. *Simon, loveſt thou me? Feed my Flock. Note farther*, That the ſureſt Argument and beſt Evidence of a Miniſter's love to Jeſus Chriſt, is his conſciencious care to Feed; that is, to Teach, Inſtruct and Govern the whole Flock of Chriſt: Lambs and Sheep, weak and ſtrong, the feebleſt in the Fold, were purchaſed by the great Shepherd. And if he judged them worth his Blood, well may we judge them worth our Sweat. *Note again*, That ſuch as would be faithful in their Miniſterial Charge, ought to look upon their People as committed unto them by Chriſt himſelf, as loved of him, and committed to their care by him, and for which they muſt be accountable to him. Chriſt calls them three times over, *His* Lambs and *His* Sheep, and as often charges *Peter* to feed them. *Obſerve next*, *Peter*'s threefold anſwer to Chriſt's Queſtion. *Simon, loveſt thou me more than theſe? Lord! thou knoweſt that I love thee. Where note*, 1. The great Modeſty of *Peter* in his Reply, *Loveſt thou me more than theſe?* ſays Chriſt; *Peter* replies, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee*; he doth not ſay, Lord! I love thee above them all, and before them all; here is no boaſting now; once it was ſaid, and *Peter* vaunted, *tho' all Men forſake thee, yet will not I*; but now his Fall had taught him Humility; he boaſts not of his Love above others, and makes no Compariſon with others, but only ranks himſelf among the true Lovers of Chriſt. *Lord! I love thee. Note*, 2. The Evidence that *Peter* gives of his ſincere Love to Chriſt, he dares appeal to Chriſt himſelf, *Lord! thou knoweſt that I love thee*, yea, thou that art Omniſcient, the All-knowing and Heart-ſearching God, *Thou that knoweſt all things*, knoweſt that I love thee: Oh! 'tis a bleſſed thing, when we can and dare appeal to God's Knowledge; and 'tis matter of high Conſolation to know that God knoweth our Sincerity and Love unto him, and that he knoweth and approveth us as ſuch, *Lord! thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee. Note laſtly*, from theſe Words, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things*, an Argument of Chriſt's Divinity. He that knows all things, and particularly the Hearts of all Men, is God. 1. *K.* 8. 29. but ſo doth Chriſt, if St. *Peter*'s Teſtimony here be true. Saying, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things*, that is ſay the *Socinians*, very many things; but this would have deſtroy'd St. *Peter*'s Argument at once; for it follow's, not that Chriſt knew the Sincerity of *Peter*'s Heart, unleſs he knew the Secrets of all Hearts; and if he knew the Secrets of all Hearts, he is really God.

18 Verily verily I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thy ſelf, and walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not. *19* This ſpake he, ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorifie God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

In theſe Words our Saviour forewarns *Peter* of his future Sufferings, intimating, that he ſhould prove more ſtout than in his former Trial. When he was young and unexperienc'd he enjoy'd his Liberty, but when he was grown older in Years and ſtronger in Grace, he ſhould willingly ſtretch forth his Hands, and quietly ſuffer himſelf to be bound to the Croſs; for *Peter* (ſay ſome) was not nailed, but tied and bound to the Croſs only, and ſo as a Martyr or Witneſs for the Truth of Chriſt *glorified God* by his Death. *Learn hence*, 1. The Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt when they undertake the charge of his Flock, muſt prepare for ſuffering work, and lot upon it: Therefore is this Prediction of *Peter*'s Sufferings joined with the former injunction, *feed my Sheep*. 2. That Humane Nature in Chriſt's Miniſters, as well as in other Men, reluctates Sufferings, has an Antipathy againſt a violent Death, *They ſhall carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not*. 3. From the time of *Peter*'s Sufferings, *when he is old*, *Learn*, That the time of the Saints Sufferings is in Chriſt's Hands; he can, and when he pleaſeth doth, ſcreen them from ſuffering till old Age; when their work is almoſt done for God, they cloſe their Days with Suffering for him. *When thou art old thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thine Hands, and another ſhall gird thee. Learn laſtly*, That the Sufferings of the Saints in general, and of the Miniſters of Chriſt in particular, do redound much to the Glory of God; which is a conſideration that ought to reconcile them to the Croſs of Chriſt, and ſupport them under it. *This ſpake he ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorifie God.*

20 Then Peter turning about, ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved, following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter ſeeing him, ſaith to Jeſus, Lord, and what ſhall this man do? 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

Our Saviour having foretold the manner of *Peter*'s Death in the foregoing Verſes; here in theſe *Peter* is inquiſitive after, and very ſolicitous for, the knowledge of what kind of Death St. *John* ſhould die. Chriſt checks him for his Curioſity, as meddling with that which did not concern him; yet intimates to him, That *John* ſhould live till he came to take Vengeance on the *Jews* and deſtroy *Jeruſalem*. *If I will that he tarry till I come*; that is, till I come to execute Judgment upon *Jeruſalem*. *Here we may Note*, There are two great Vanities in Men with reference to Knowledge; the one a Neglect to know what is our Duty to know; the other a Curioſity to know what doth not belong to us to know. Chriſt tells *Peter*, it was none of his Buſineſs to enquire what *John* ſhould do: But he ought rather to be preparing for what he himſelf ſhould ſuffer. *If I will that he tarry, what is that to thee?*

23 Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaid unto him, He ſhall not die: but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Obſerve here, How ſtrangely our Saviour's Words were miſtaken and miſunderſtood by his own Diſciples: they apprehend preſently that *John* ſhould not die: And ſo it paſſed current among them. *From hence we may Nota*, How much the Wiſdom of God is, and ought to be admired in giving us a written Word, and tying us to it when we ſee erronious tradition ſo ſoon on foot in the World, and our Saviour's own Speeches ſo much miſtaken; and that by wiſe and holy Men themſelves in the pureſt Times. Much more may the words of others be miſreported, and wreſted contrary to their ſenſe and meaning. How great then is the Vanity and Uncertainty of Oral Tradition! Men are naturally prone to miſtake, to miſtake themſelves, and to miſtake one another. The more to be admired is their over-daring Ignorance, who think they cannot err. Such an haughty Opinion of a Man's ſelf, concludes him to be neither good nor wiſe.

24 This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things: and we know that his teſtimony is true.

The great Modeſty of the holy Evangeliſt St. *John*, is all along throughout his Goſpel very obſervable; he mentioneth himſelf hitherto under a third Perſon, he calleth himſelf a Diſciple, a Learner; who excelleth the moſt accompliſh'd Doctors of the Ages ever ſince. Here he ſpeaks more plainly and expreſly concerning himſelf, declaring that he was an Eye-witneſs and an Ear-witneſs of what he wrote, for the greater certainty thereof. And this Proteſtation here made by the Evangeliſt of the Truth of what he wrote was highly neceſſary, leſt any ſhould think that Chriſt's extraordinary Love and Affection to him (he being the beloved Diſciple) ſhould move him to exceed (as we are prone to do) in writing the Hiſtory of their Lives, who are dear to us and we to them. *Learn hence*, That this Goſpel was written by *John* the beloved Diſciple; and the Narration is of Divine Truth, worthy to be embrac'd and receiv'd by us as a perfect Rule of Faith and Life. *We know that his Teſtimony is true.*

25 And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world it ſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written. *Amen.*

John being about to conclude the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Life, aſſerts that there were many other Miracles and ſpecial Deeds done by Chriſt both before and after his Paſſion, which he had not recorded or ſet down; becauſe ſhould all that Chriſt did and ſaid be committed to Writing, it would even fill the World, the Volumes would be ſo many. *From hence we gather*, 1. The wonderful Activity, Induſtry and Diligence of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he was never Idle, but that his whole Life was ſpent in doing Good; becauſe, ſhould all the particular Inſtances have been recorded, it would amount to an incredible Bulk. *Learn*, 2. That it is impoſſible to get all ſaid, which might be ſaid of Chriſt, and in his Commendation; ſuch is the tranſcendent Excellency of his Perſon, and the weakneſs of our Apprehenſions and Judgments, that if all were written, which might be written concerning him, the World it ſelf could not contain the Books which ſhould be written. *Learn laſtly*, That altho' many of Chriſt's Sermons, Conferences, Miracles and Actions, be not Recorded; yet it doth not follow, nor can it be inferr'd from thence, That any neceſſary Doctrine is omitted, or not ſufficiently confirmed: There being ſo much written as it pleaſed God we ſhould know, and was neceſſary for us to know, in order to our improvement in Faith and Holineſs. If then, after all the Revelation and

Diſcovery which God has made of his Son Chriſt Jeſus, and of the way that leads to eternal Salvation by him, Perſons remain willingly ignorant of him and their Duty to him, *Where ſhall they appear? and how ſhall they eſcape?*

Revel. 1. Ver. 5, 6.

Now unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father: To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The CLOSE.

THE deſign of the foregoing *Notes* upon the *Holy Evangeliſts*, being to recommend the *Inſtructive Life* of our *bleſſed Redeemer* to our *Obſervation* and *Imitation*. Altho' I have upon all occaſions propounded his *Example* to be follow'd by us in all the ſteps of an *Imitable Vertue*; as the matter every where occurr'd; yet adjudging it may be *profitable* to ſum up together the ſeveral *Graces and Vertues* which were ſo Orient in the *Life* of *Chriſt*, that having them daily before our Eyes, we may be continually correcting and reforming of our *Lives* by that bleſſed Pattern; I ſhall therefore briefly offer at it. Becauſe,

Nothing is ſo proper to form us to *Holineſs*, as the *Example* of the *Mediator*, it being abſolutely *perfect*, and thoroughly accommodate to our preſent ſtate; there is no *Example* of any meer Man that is to be followed without limitation: But the *Life* of *Chriſt* was as the pureſt Gold without the leaſt Allay. His Converſation was *a living Law*, and *Chriſtianity*, which is the *Beſt and Holieſt Inſtitution* in the World, is nothing elſe but a *Conformity* to his *Precepts* and *Pattern*. The Univerſal Command of the whole Goſpel is this, *To walk as Chriſt walked*. This denotes a ſincere intention, deſign and endeavour to *imitate* and follow him in all the paths of *Holineſs* and *Obedience*.

Particularly let us imitate Jeſus,

I. IN *his early Piety*. We find him at Twelve Years old *about his Father's Buſineſs, ſitting in the midſt of the Doctors, both hearing and asking them Queſtions*. See on St. *Luke* 2. 46, 47. An early Piety gives both the Perſon and the Service a peculiar preheminency; no Comfort in Life, no Happineſs in Death, like the Happineſs and Comfort of being good betimes.

II. *In his Obedience* to his *Earthly Parents*. See on St. *Luke* 2. 15. *He went down to Nazareth and was ſubject to them*. He paid Homage to the Womb that bare him, and to his ſuppoſed and reputed Father that provided for him; Let a Perſon be never ſo high above others, he is ſtill below his Parents; if the Higheſt upon Earth think their Parents beneath them, and themſelves above their Parents Commands, Our Saviour did not ſo. What ſhall we think of thoſe Monſters of Ingratitude, the Reproach of Human Nature, who are aſhamed to own their Parents, becauſe of their Poverty, or, deſpiſe them becauſe of the Infirmities of their Age? *Prov.* 23. 22. *Hearken to thy Father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy Mother when ſhe is old.*

III. *In his unwearied Diligence in doing Good*, Acts 10. 38. *Who went about doing good.* This was his Meat and Drink by Day, his Reſt and Sleep by Night. He fed the Hungry, cloathed the Naked, viſited the Sick, was Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, and Adminiſtred to ſuch as were in Neceſſities and Streights. And he has declared that he will judge us at the great Day, according to our imitation of him in doing good to all Mankind. See the Notes on St. *Matth.* 25. ten laſt Verſes.

IV. *In his Humility and lowlineſs of Mind*, Matth. 11. 29. *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in Heart*; witneſs his ſtooping to the meaneſt Office, even that of waſhing his Diſciples Feet, St. *John* 13. 5. He that came in the form of a Servant, performs the Office of the meaneſt Servant to his Diſciples. And all this was to ſet us an Example of mutual Condeſcenſion each to other; *If I your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your Feet, you ought alſo to waſh one anothers Feet*; which Precept tho' it doth not bind us to the ſame *Action*, yet it obliges us to the ſame *Condeſcenſion*. Namely, to think no Office of Love beneath us, which the Neceſſities of our Brother call for from us.

V. *In the Unblameableneſs and Inoffenſiveneſs of his Life and Actions.* He injured none, and juſtly offended none, but was Harmleſs as well as Holy; he wrought a Miracle to pay Tribute Money, rather than give Occaſion of Offence to the Government. See on *Matth.* 19. 27. Accordingly let us be Harmleſs and Blameleſs; wiſe as Serpents, and Innocent as Doves; Piety without Policy is too ſimple to be ſafe; Policy without Piety is too ſubtile to be good.

VI. *In his eminent Self-denial*, He emptied himſelf and became poor. When he was *Rich as God* from all Eternity, he *impoveriſh'd* himſelf by *becoming Man*: Oh! what did he not deny when he left the Boſom of his Father, with the ineffable Delight and Pleaſure which he there enjoy'd from all Eternity; and inſtead thereof to drink the Cup, the bitter Cup of his Father's wrath for our ſake. Lord! how can we enough abaſe our ſelves for thee, who thus deniedſt thy ſelf for us!

VII. *In his contentment in a low and mean Condition in this World*: Yea, in a *Suffering* and *Afflicted Condition*; He would not honour the World ſo far as to have any part of it in his own hand, and was therefore of himſelf leſs provided of comfortable accommodations than the Birds of the Air, or the Beaſts of the Field. See *Luke* 9. 58. *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not, where to lay his Head.* Let us learn from him to manage an afflicted Condition with a contented Spirit; let there be no murmurings, complaints, or fooliſh chargings of God heard from us, whatever ſtraits or troubles we may be brought into; *but in whatſoever ſtate we are, let us be therewith content*, Phil. 4. 11.

VIII. *In his frequent performance of the Duty of private Prayer and Faſting*; He ſometimes ſpent a whole Night in Prayer. Luke 6. 12. *He went into a Mountain to Pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God.* And Mark 1. 35. *In the Morning riſing up a great while before Day, he went into a ſolitary place and prayed.* It is certain that we have much more buſineſs with Almighty God in Prayer than Chriſt had; he had no Sins to Confeſs, no wants of Grace to make known; yet did he delight with frequency and fervency to perform this Homage to his Heavenly Father. Lord! how doth thy Zeal and Forwardneſs condemn our remiſneſs and lukewarmneſs in praying to our Heavenly Father.

IX. *In his Affectionate performance of the Duty of Praiſe and Thanksgiving.* Our Bleſſed Saviour was a great *Pattern* of *Thankfulneſs*, Matth. 11. 25. *I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*, &c. John 11. 41. *Father I thank thee that thou haſt heard me*; when he was to eat common Bread he received it with *Thanksgiving*: What a Pattern of Thankfulneſs then was Jeſus to his followers! There is hardly any one external Duty which we do not find the Hypocrite performing in Scripture, except this of Thankſgiving and Praiſe; we find *Judas* Repenting, *Ahab* Humbling himſelf, *Saul* Sacrificing; but rarely do we find any Wicked Man bleſſing and praiſing God: Need will make us Beggars, but Grace only Thankſgivers.

X. *In his Compaſſion towards thoſe that were in Diſtreſs and Miſery*, Matth. 20. 34. *Great was his Compaſſion to the Bodies of Men*: he healed all that came unto him, he healed many undeſired; with great Condolency and tender Sympathy, he exerciſed acts of Mercy and Compaſſion when the object of Compaſſion was before him, and did perfectly abhor and ſeverely condemn all acts of Cruelty; How great was his Compaſſion to the Souls of Men; what Pains did he take, and what hazards did he run in preaching the Goſpel to loſt Sinners, and his fervent Prayers for them; but eſpecially in Dying for them! Let us imitate Chriſt herein, as his Compaſſion was univerſal to all Mankind, to the whole Man Soul and Body; as it was active and operative, as it was exerciſed with marvellous complacency and delight; as it was a preventing Compaſſion, and an unwearied Compaſſion, ſo let ours be alſo.

XI. *In his Holy and Fruitful Diſcourſe, his Lips dropt as the Honey Comb, and his Tongue was as choice Silver*, when walking with his Diſciples to *Emas*, with what Heavenly Diſcourſe did he entertain them in the way! See *Luke* 24. 13, &c. A good Pattern for our Imitation, when providentially caſt into ſuch Company as will bear it. Lord! what a Shame and Reproach is it to us, that in common Converſation we ſpend ſo many hours together, in talking over all the News of City and Country, and part without ſpeaking one Word of Jeſus Chriſt our beſt Friend.

XII. *In his free Converſation*; The Son of Man came eating and drinking, *Matth.* 11. *v.* 19. that is, was of a free and familiar Converſe, Affable and Sociable, not Sour or Moroſe, never ſhunning the Society of the worſt of Men, even of the *Phariſees* themſelves; but complying with their innocent Cuſtoms, and accompanying them at their Feaſts. *See on Luke* 5. 29. We do not find that when Chriſt was invited to any publick Entertainment, that ever he refus'd to go; not ſo much for the pleaſure of Eating, as for the opportunity of Converſing and doing Good; Chriſt Convers'd with bad Men, but as their Phyſician, not as their Companion: Let us go and do likewiſe.

XIII. *In his Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches, when he was reviled, he reviled not again*: but underwent the Burden of his Sufferings with admirable Patience and Meekneſs of Spirit; when his Name and Honour ſuffered the vileſt Indignities, Blaſphemies and Reproaches that the Malice of Satan and the Malignity of wicked Men could belch out againſt it; when he was called a Blaſphemer, a Sorcerer, a Devil, a Wine-Bibber, a Glutton, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. For an Innocent Perſon, and a Dignified Perſon, to bear all this, when he could have look'd all his Enemies into Hell, and have frown'd them into nothing: Verily, to bear all this, without the leaſt *diſcompoſure of Spirit*, is the higheſt Triumph of Patience that ever the World was acquainted with. And why all this, but to leave us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21, 22.

XIV. *In his readineſs to forgive Injuries.* One of his laſt Words upon the Croſs, was a Prayer for his Murtherers; *Father, forgive them*, Luke 23. 34. He offered up his Blood to God on the behalf of them that ſhed it. Thus to forgive our Enemies, and to beg forgiveneſs of them, will be an Evidence of a Chriſt-like Frame and Temper; when the Grace of God calms thoſe tumultuous and out-ragious Paſſions which at any time we find raging in our Breaſts, moulding our Spirits into ſweetneſs and Gentleneſs, freeing us from all malicious deſires of Revenge, which are ſo far beneath a Chriſtian, that it is the baſeneſs of a Man; yea, as Jealouſy is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice is the Rage of the Devil; 'tis the Spirit of the Apoſtate Nature.

XV. *In his laying to Heart the Sins, as well as the Sufferings of others*, Mark 3. 5. *He was grieved for the hardneſs of their Hearts.* Such was his Zeal for his Father's Glory, ſuch his Compaſſion to the Souls of Men, ſuch his Antipathy againſt, and Hatred of Sin; that he was grieved for Sin where-ever he found it, and mourning over thoſe who had no Hearts to mourn for themſelves. Lord! how far are they off from a Chriſt-like Spirit and Temper, who inſtead of mourning for other Mens Sins, rejoyce in Iniquity, and take pleaſure to ſee their Brother ſtab at once the Chriſtian Name and his own Soul.

XVI. *In his Zeal for the Publick Worſhip of God*, John 2. 17. *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up.* Now as Chriſt was, ſo Chriſtians ought to be, intenſly zealous for the Glory of God, the Honour of his Houſe, and the Purity of his Publick Worſhip. *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up.* Our Zeal for the Publick Worſhip of God glorifies him moſt, and he accepts it beſt. Now we own that God, whom we ſerve, in the face of the World: And this creates a Veneration and Eſteem of God in the Minds of Men.

XVII. *In his glorifying of his Father in all he did*, John 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on the Earth.* The whole Life of Jeſus when here on Earth, was a glorifying of his Father; he glorify'd his Father by the Doctrine which he taught, by the Miracles which he wrought, by the unſpotted Purity of his Life, and by his unparallel'd Sufferings at his Death. In like manner ſhould we glorifie God in all we do, in all we deſign, in all we deſire; in our natural Actions of eating and drinking, in our civil Employments, buying and ſelling, in our Lawful Recreations, taking care that too much of our time be not conſumed therein. Recreation is not to be our Buſineſs, but to fit us for Buſineſs; but eſpecially let us ſeek to glorify God in our Religious Duties, Publick, Private and Secret.

XVIII. *In his Impartiality in reproving Sin.* He feared the Faces and ſpared the Faults of no Offenders; the Phariſees were a Proud and Haughty ſort of People, who diſhonoured God above moſt, when they pretended to glorifie him above any. Therefore we find Chriſt denouncing a Bed-roll of Woes againſt them in one Chapter, St. *Matth.* 23. Wo to you, *Scribes, Phariſees, Hypocrites.* Eight ſeveral Woes are denounced againſt them, for ſo many ſeveral Sins committed by them. Thoſe to whom God has given his Authority to Reprove the Sin of others, ought to imitate their Pattern in his Impartiality in his reproving Sin. His very Enemies gave him that Character, St. *Matth.* 22. 17. *Thou careſt not for any Man, thou regardeſt not the Perſon of Men*; that is, Thou ſpareſt none, but telleſt all Men of their Faults.

XIX. *In his univerſal Obedience to his Father's Will, and chearful Submiſſion to his Father's Pleaſure.* He obeyed the Will of his Father univerſally, voluntarily, ſincerely, and with a ſingle Eye at his Glory, perſeveringly, and to the end; and as he was, ſo muſt we be, faithful to the Death, if ever we expect the Crown of Life. And in like manner did he ſubmit to the Will of his Providence, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt; not my Will, but thine be done.* O let us keep this Example continually before us, and every Day obey the Will of God's Precept univerſally, and ſubmit to the Will of his Providence very chearfully, this is Heaven on Earth.

XX. In his Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs both in Heart and Life. He was Holy in Nature, Holy in his Principle and Motives, Holy in his Aim and Ends; he was *perfectly Holy, preciſely Holy, uniformly Holy, exemplarily Holy*; he delighted only in *Holy Perſons and in Holy things*; it concerns us to imitate him herein, if ever we expect to be where he is. *Heaven is the Habitation of Holineſs*, the *Company is Holy*, the *Employment Holy*, the *Enjoyments Holy*, no unclean Thing can enter into Heaven, or could be happy in Heaven; Heaven is rather a Nature than a Place. 'Tis not the Place of Heaven can make us happy, but the diſpoſition and temper of our Minds in Heaven; without Conformity to the Nature of God there can be no *Communion* with him, nor *Delight* in him; What a diſcourteous Courteſy would it be to turn a filthy Swine into a Garden of curious Flowers, to lodge it in a Bed of ſweet Perfumes, to bathe it in a clear and cryſtal Fountain? Alas! its *unclean Temper* and *ſordid Inclinations* would rather chooſe to lie down in a *Kennel*, and to wallow in the *Mire*, its proper *Element.* Thus unſuitable would *Heaven* be; that place of greateſt *Happineſs* be the greateſt *Uneaſineſs* to an *unholy Heart.* Let us then pray and endeavour that the *Temper* of our *Minds*, and the *Actions* of our *Lives* may be a *lively Tranſcript* of the *Mind* and *Life* of the *Holy Jeſus*, that we may be like him in *Purity* and *Holineſs*, in *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs*, in *Patience* and *Meekneſs*, in *Charity* and Univerſal *Goodneſs.* That as he was, we may be in the World, *Holy, Humble, Harmleſs, Heavenly-minded, glorifying God* on Earth, that we may be glorified with him and by him in his Eternal Kingdom.

XXI. Yet before I cloſe this Exhortation to an Imitation of Jeſus, I muſt ſubjoyn this *cautionary Direction*; Take heed that you do not ſo imitate Chriſt for your *Pattern*, as to diſown him for your *Prieſt.* This is the dangerous Error of thoſe, who affirm, That the great End of Chriſts Death was to give the World *an Example* of Patience, Humility, Meekneſs, and the fore-mention'd *Chriſtian Graces*, and that his Sufferings were *Exemplary*, but not properly *Satisfactory.* We acknowledge that Chriſt's giving us an Example, was one End of his *coming* into the *World*, and *Dying* for us, but not *the great End.* A *Subordinate* End, but not the *Ultimate.* God preſerve us from the contagion of this growing Error; other Errors only ſcratch the Face, but this ſtabs the Heart of the Chriſtian Religion, in that it deprives us of the choiſeſt Benefit of Chriſt's Death; *namely*, The Expiation of Sin, by a proper Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God. But, bleſſed be God, we have not ſo learn'd Chriſt; as we are taught, ſo we Believe, That the Holy Jeſus by the Sacrifice of his Death has redeemed us from Death and Hell, and ſaved us from the Wrath to come; by a full and adequate Payment to Divine Juſtice, and by the Redundancy of his Merit, has purchas'd an Eternal Inheritance for us, and as we are taught and believe ſo we pray.

Almighty God, who haſt given thine only Son to be unto us, both a Sacrifice for Sin, and alſo an Example of Godly Life: Give us Grace that we may always moſt thankfully receive that his ineſtimable Benefit, and alſo daily endeavour our ſelves to follow the bleſſed Steps of his moſt Holy Life; through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Almighty and everlaſting God, who of thy tender Love towards Mankind, haſt ſent thy Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him our Fleſh, and to ſuffer Death upon the Croſs, that all Mankind ſhould follow the Example of his great Humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the Example of his Patience, and alſo be made Partakers of his Reſurrection, through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

The End of the Four Evangeliſts.

THE ACTS OF The Holy APOSTLES.

The moſt Illuſtrious Life of the Holy Jeſus, *being recorded at large in the foregoing* Goſpels, *by the ſeveral* Evangeliſts, *whoſe Names they bear : This next* Book *of the* Acts *undertaketh theſe three Things.*

I. *It recommends to our Obſervation and Imitation the* Lives *and* Actions *of the* Holy Apoſtles, *Particularly* St. Peter *and* St. Paul : *And acquaints us with their fervent Zeal, and unwearied Diligence in Planting and Propagating* Chriſtianity, *not only in* Judea *and* Samaria, *but in* Syria, Aſia, *and* Macedonia ; *yea, even to* Rome *it ſelf, where by the way,* Note, *That there is not one Word in all this Hiſtory, of St.* Peter's Primacy, *of his Superiority over the reſt of the* Apoſtles, *or of any* Biſhoprick *that he has at* Rome. *The leaſt Intimation of which, would have made a louder Noiſe than* Paſce Oves, *or* Tures Petrus.

II. *We have here an* Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory *of the firſt and pureſt* Churches, *informing us how the* Chriſtian Church *in its Infancy was Planted and Watered, Gathered and Propagated, both among* Jews *and* Gentiles, *how ſhe obſerved and obeyed* Chriſt's *Commands to his* Apoſtles, *both in Matters of* Faith, Worſhip, Communion *and* Government, *that therein the* Primitive Church, *might be an Exemplary Pattern to ſucceeding* Churches *throughout all Ages.*

III. *This* Hiſtory *gives all the Miniſters of the* Goſpel *to the end of the* World, *a Great and Noble Pattern of Miniſterial Diligence, Faithfulneſs, and Prudence : acquainting us what the* Apoſtles *did, the Pains which they took, the Hazards which they run in Preaching the glad Tydings of* Salvation *to a loſt* World. *How they Inſtructed the* Ignorant, *Reduced the* Wandring, *how they bear with the weakneſs of ſome, and patiently contended with the Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs of others. Likewiſe* Stewards *of* GOD's Family, *they gave to the whole* Houſhold *their* Portion *of* Meat *in due* Seaſon.

This firſt Chapter relates. 1. *The time and manner of our* LORD's *Aſcenſion.* 2. *The Hundred and Twenty* Diſciples *joint Devotions.* 3. *Their Election of* Matthias *by* Lot *to ſucceed in the* Apoſtleſhip *in the room of the* Apoſtate Judas.

CHAP. I.

THe former treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach.

Obſerve here, 1. The Pen-man of this Sacred Hiſtory, St. *Luke* ; the ſame that wrote the Goſpel, which he calls his *former Treatiſe*, dedicating both that and this to the ſame *Theophilus. The former Treatiſe have I made,* O Theophilus. *Obſerve* 2. The *Time* when St. *Luke* wrote this Holy Hiſtory, and the *Place* where, namely, when he was the Companion of St. *Paul* ; and as ſome think, during the time of his Impriſonment at *Rome*, if ſo, we may profitably remark, the favour which God gave the Apoſtle and his Companion in ſight of the Keeper of the Priſon ; that they were not denied Pen and Paper : When Perſecutors ſent the Saints to Priſon, God can provide a Keeper for their turn. But how doth the Apoſtle and his Companion ſpend their time in Priſon ? Very advantageouſly, the former in writing Epiſtles to the Churches for their Confirmation ; the latter in recording the Acts and Monuments of the Holy Apoſtles, for our Imitation. There is no ſuch way to be even with the Devil and his Inſtructions, for all their Malice and Spite againſt us, as by doing all the good we can, where-ever we come. Satan had better have let theſe two Holy Men alone, than have caſt them into Priſon, for by their Pens they batter'd the Walls of his Kingdom, and made them ſhake about his Ears. *Obſerve* 3. The Integrity and Impartiality of this Hiſtorian St. *Luke*, he wrote of *all things that Jeſus both did and taught in his* Goſpel, and what the Apoſtles did and taught in the *Acts* ; not that this is to be underſtood ſtrictly and abſolutely, but comparatively only : Not as if St. *Luke* recorded every Action that Jeſus did, or every Expreſſion our Saviour ſaid, for St. *John* ſays, they were ſo many, that they could not be written, *chap.* 21. 25. But by all things we are to underſtand very many things ; the moſt principal and chief things, the moſt neceſſary and uſeful things ; every thing that the Holy Ghoſt thought fit to dictate to him, and enjoyn him to publiſh for the Churches uſe and ſervice. *Learn thence*, that St. *Luke* was a very Faithful and Impartial Hiſtorian, with-holding nothing which was neceſſary for the Church to know, and leaving no room for unwritten and uncertain Traditions, *I have wrote all that Jeſus began both to do and to teach.*

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the holy Ghoſt had given commandments unto the Apoſtles, whom he had choſen.

Obſerve here, The ſpecial concern and care, which Chriſt had for his Church on Earth, before he aſcended into Heaven. The very firſt Night that he appeared to his Diſciples, after his Reſurrection, he breathed on them, and diſtributed the Holy Ghoſt amongſt them. St. *John* 20. 22. both to inform their Judgments of what they did not know ; and to direct their Practice, what he would have them do, *He, through the Holy Ghoſt, gave commandments unto the Apoſtles.* That is, he diſtributed the Holy Ghoſt amongſt them, to be their conſtant Inſtructor and Director, what they ſhould do in order to the execution of their Office and Employment. *Learn thence*, That as the Apoſtles had, ſo the Miniſters of Chriſt, *in their meaſure*, ſhall have the gracious and ſpecial Influences of the Holy Spirit to direct and inſtruct, to quicken and ſupport them in the faithful diſcharge of their Miniſterial Office to the end of the World ; that gracious Promiſe, *Lo ! I am with you always*, St. *Matth.* 28. *laſt ver.* We that live ſeventeen Hundred Years after the firſt making of it, may by Faith draw out the Comfort of it, as well as the Apoſtles, to whom it was Originally made.

3 To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Obſerve, 1. The time which our Lord ſpent here upon Earth, between his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, it was *forty days*; Chriſt would not preſently aſcend into Heaven, as ſoon as he was riſen, but thought fit to ſtay ſome time with his Diſciples, to confirm their Faith in the belief of his Reſurrection, and to ſatisfie them, that it was *he himſelf*, their Lord and Maſter that died for them, that was indeed riſen, and now appeared to them. *He was ſeen of them forty days. Obſ.* 2. What our Saviour did in that forty days ſtay upon Earth, *He ſhewed himſelf alive to his Diſciples*, appearing ſometimes to them, and giving them many infallible Proofs of the Verity of his Reſurrection, by Eating, Drinking, Talking and Converſing with them, by ſhewing his Wounds to them, and ſubmitting himſelf to be touched and handled by them. Not that Chriſt's Converſation with his Diſciples in this his exalted State after his Reſurrection was ſo frequent and familiar, as it was before his death, when he was in a ſtate of Humiliation, and accordingly we never read (I think) that Chriſt ever lodged or continued all night with his Diſciples, after he was riſen from the Grave. But he Converſed with them only upon occaſion, as he pleaſed himſelf, and when he pleaſed. *Obſ.* 3. What our Saviour ſaid, as well as what he did in his intervening time betwixt his Reſurrection and Aſſention, being forty days. *He ſpake to his Diſciples of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* That is, 1. Of the things pertaining to his Church Militant, or the Kingdom of Grace here on Earth, how he would have his Church planted and propagated by the Apoſtle's Doctrine, guided and governed by their Diſcipline: Or, 2. By the Kingdom of God, may be underſtood the Church Triumphant, or the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven; what perfect Bliſs and Happineſs he was now going to prepare for them in the preſence of his Father. *Where Note*, That Chriſt's Kingdom is purely Spiritual: That Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom is his Church, and that the Preaching of the Goſpel is the great inſtrumental means for the erecting of the Kingdom of Grace, and enlarging of the Kingdom of Glory.

4 And being aſſembled together with them, commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the father, which, ſaith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence.

Note here, 1. How frequently Chriſt renewed his Promiſe to his Diſciples of ſending down the Holy Ghoſt to confer upon them the Gifts of the Tongues and Miracles, in order to the fitting and furniſhing of them for their work of Preaching and Publiſhing the Goſpel to all Nations. *Ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, not many days hence.* That is, the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghoſt ſhall be largely poured forth upon you (as Water on the baptized Perſon,) which was fulfill'd on the day of *Pentecoſt*. When Chriſt calls his Miniſters to extraordinary Service, he affords them extraordinary Aſſiſtance, furniſhing them with Endowments anſwerable to their great Employments. *Note*, 2. The Place where Chriſt commands the Apoſtles to wait for the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them; namely, at *Jeruſalem*. *He commanded them not to depart from* Jeruſalem, *but wait there for the Promiſe.* Of all Places the Apoſtles would leaſt have Choſen *Jeruſalem* to tarry in, had not Chriſt commanded them to wait there. For *Jeruſalem* was now a juſtly abhorr'd and deteſted Place, reaking afreſh with the Blood of the Holy and Innocent Jeſus; yet *Jeruſalem* is the Place choſen by Chriſt for the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon his Apoſtles. Becauſe, 1. There had been his greateſt Humiliation. There Chriſt had ſuffered the greateſt Ignominy; therefore there will he ſhew forth his Power and Glory. 2. Becauſe at *Jeruſalem* there was the greateſt Company of Spectators to behold this Noble Work, and to be wrought upon by it. Such as would not be convinced by our Saviour's Death and Reſurrection, might probably be convinced by this miraculous effuſion of the Holy Spirit, deſcending upon the Apoſtles, in fiery cloven Tongues. Lord! What an Inſtance was this of thy love to thine Enemies! How deſirous wert thou of the Converſion and Salvation of thy very murderers! In and at *Jeruſalem* where our Lord was Crucified, the Holy Ghoſt firſt deſcended: And when Chriſt appointed where the Goſpel-Combination ſhould begin, *Jeruſalem* is the firſt Place in Nomination by him. St. *Luke* 24. 47. *And he ſaid unto them; that Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin ſhould be Preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at* Jeruſalem.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, ſaying, Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? 7 And he ſaid unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons which the father hath put in his own power.

Obſerve here, The Diſciples Queſtion and our Saviour's Anſwer, 1. The Queſtion propoſed by the Diſciples. *Lord wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom to* Iſrael, That is, Wilt thou repair the ruinous Condition of the *Jewiſh* State, and reſtore it to that great Dignity and Splendor which we have always expected ſhould be done by the *Meſſias*? Where, *Obſerve*, That notwithſtanding Chriſt had ſo often rebuked the *Jews* in general, and his Diſciples in particular, for their conceit of a Temporal Kingdom, (who were full of Ambitious Expectations to receive great Honours and Preferments here on Earth) yet it evidently appears, that this Notion ſtill ran in their Minds, and that their Maſter being now riſen from the dead, this was the time both for his and their Dignity and Advancement. *Learn hence*, That it is no wonder that Unbelievers ſtumbled at the Poverty and Meanneſs of Chriſt's outward Condition when he was here on Earth. Seeing it was ſo hard for the Diſciples themſelves to be convinced, and believe that his Kingdom was not of this World. I know not any thing wherein the Biſhop of *Rome* may ſo properly call himſelf Apoſtolical, as in his following this Error of the Apoſtles. Were they always dreaming of a Temporal Kingdom? So is he always doating upon it, and his Eyes dazled with the Splendor and Glory of it. The Diſciples not only all the time whilſt Chriſt was with them, but even now when upon the point of departing from them, when he was juſt aſcending, ye, in part aſcended, having one Foot upon the Earth and the other in the Cloud, which took him up to Heaven; yet ſtill they ask him, wilt thou now reſtore the Kingdom? That is, ſettle upon us thy followers Secular Power, and Temporal Dominion here on Earth. But mark, 2. Our Lord's Anſwer, *ver.* 7. *It is not for you to know the times and ſeaſons which the Father has put only in his own Power.* Our Saviour's Anſwer doth not in the leaſt imply that any ſuch Kingdom ſhould ever be granted as they dreamt of; but he checks their Curioſity in inquiring into the times and ſeaſons, and nature of God's Secrets, which it no ways concerned them to pry into, *It is not for you to know the Times and Seaſons.* Here Note, 1. Something implied, namely, That there are Certain Times and Seaſons, the knowledge of which only belongs to God, which yet Man's Curioſity has an itching deſire to ſearch and pry into. There is nothing more natural to Man, than a deſire to know both what ſhall be hereafter, and when that hereafter ſhall be. We are very careleſs in ſeeking out the ſeaſon of that which we our ſelves ſhould do; but over careful and curious in ſeeking out the ſeaſon of what God will do. *Note*, Here is ſomething expreſs'd, namely, That God has Times and Seaſons for executing his own purpoſes, which it is neither proper, nor profitable, nor poſſible for us to know. Not proper, becauſe none of our buſineſs. Not profitable, becauſe no part of our intereſt. Not poſſible, becauſe out of our reach. It is not poſſible for us to know either what God is about to do, or when he will do it. It is not poſſible for us to know it as Men by a natural Sagacity, nor as Chriſtians by Supernatural Illumination, no nor yet Miniſters and Apoſtles, without Divine Inſpiration and Extraordinary Revelation which we have no warrant to expect. And ſhould have no Curioſity to deſire. *Learn hence*, That it much better becomes us with an awful ſilence to adore, than with a bold curioſity to pry into God's hidden and unrevealed Secrets. Yet tho' it be not for us to know God's Times and Seaſons, it is our Duty to expect them, and be prepared for them; we know not when our Lord will come to us by Death and Judgment, whether in *the evening or at midnight, or at Cock-crowing, or in the morning.* But it is our own Duty to believe and expect it, to wait and prepare for it, and be always ready to receive him. *Finally*, Tho' it is not for us to know the Times and Seaſons which God hath put in his own Power, yet it is not for us to know the Times and Seaſons which God has put in our Power. Namely, The preſent time to improve it, and the time paſt to bewail the miſimprovement of it. To improve the time of Affliction, for Conſideration and Humiliation, and the time of Proſperity, Mercy and Deliverance, for Gratulation and Thankfulneſs, and to improve both farther Meaſures and encreaſe of Holineſs and Sanctification both of Heart and Life.

8 But ye ſhall receive power, after that the holy Ghoſt is come upon you, and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me; both in Jeruſalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth.

Obſerve here, How Chriſt, inſtead of gratifying his Diſciples Curioſity, acquaints them with their own Duty, he tells them that altho' they had received his Spirit before in ſome Meaſure, yet very ſhortly the Spirit ſhould be poured forth upon them in a plentiful manner, to confer the Gift of Tongues, Prophecies and Miracles upon them, for rendring them fit to Preach the Goſpel throughout all Nations, and alſo to Teſtifie and bare Witneſs unto the Truth of what Chriſt did and ſaid in *Judea* and *Samaria*, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, even to the uttermoſt parts of the Earth. *Here Note*, What is the ſpecial Work of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; Namely, To bear Witneſs unto Chriſt. *Ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto me.* This they do three Ways. *Chriſtum prædicando. Secundum Chriſtum Vivendo, propter Chriſtum patiendo.* By the Purity of their Doctrine, by the Piety of their Lives, and by the Patience under Sufferings, both for Chriſt and from Chriſt. *Note* 2. What it was enabled the Apoſtles thus to bear Witneſs unto Chriſt. Namely, The pouring forth of the Holy Spirit unto them. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon you, and ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto me. Thence Learn*, That ſome Meaſure of Miniſterial Gifts and Sanctifying Graces from the Holy Spirit, is abſolutely neceſſary to enable the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to bear their Teſtimony unto Chriſt with Faithfulneſs and Succeſs.

9 And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight. 10 And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men ſtood by them in white apparel. 11 Which alſo ſaid, ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.

Here an Account is given of our Saviour's Triumphant Aſcenſion into Heaven, with ſeveral Remarkable Particulars thereunto belonging. *Obſerve* 1. Who and what it was that Aſcended, even the ſame that Deſcended. Chriſt Jeſus, in his Divine Nature as God, and in his Humane Nature as Man, his Perſon conſiſting of Soul and Body, he now Aſcended in both. *Obſerve* 2. The Place he Aſcended from, from this World in General, and from Mount *Olivet* in Particular, that very place where he began his laſt ſorrowful Tragedy. Where his Heart began to be Sad, there it is now made Glad. *Learn thence*, That God can make the very places of our Trouble and Torment, (as ſick Beds, Priſons, ſtrange Countries) to become places of Comfort and Triumphant Joy unto us when he pleaſes. *Obſerve* 3. The Place whither he Aſcended, into Heaven, that is the Third Heaven, the Throne of God, the Seat of the Bleſſed. Hence he is ſaid *to aſcend far above all Heavens.* That is, above the Aereal and Starry Heavens which we ſee, into the higheſt Heavens; unto the place where he was before, as he himſelf Expreſſes it, St. *John* 6. 62. *Thence Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is returned back again to that Sweet and Glorious Boſom of Delight and Love, from which he came at his firſt Incarnation. *What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man Aſcending up where he was before. Obſerve* 2. The time when our Lord Aſcended, Forty Days after his Reſurrection. The Care and Love of Chriſt to his Church was manifeſted by this his ſtay with them. Unſpeakable Glory was prepared for him, and did now await him, but he would not go to Poſſeſs it, till he had ſettled all things for the good of his Church. And when he had ſet his Family in order, and given charge to his Diſciples concerning the Diſcipline of his Houſe, he would ſtay no longer, leſt he ſhould ſeem to effect a terrene Life. *Note hence*, That Chriſt deſired to be no longer here, than he had Work to do for God and Souls. A good Pattern for our Imitation, to deſire Life upon the ſcore of Uſefulneſs; to be willing to be gone when our Work is done. *Obſ.* 5. How and after what manner Chriſt Aſcended up into Heaven. 1. He Aſcended as well as was raiſed from the Grave by his own Power, *ver.* 10. *Whilſt they looked ſtedfaſtly he went up.* That is, by his own Divine Power. True, the Angels did attend him, but they did not aſſiſt him. *Elias* went to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire, but he was fetcht up, he could not carry himſelf up, but Chriſt needed no Chariot, no Carriage of Angels for his Conveyance, being the Author of Life and Motion. 2. He aſcended Magnificently; with great Triumph into his Kingdom in Heaven, *God went up with a Shout the Lord with the ſound of a Trumpet.* A Cloud is prepared as a Royal Chariot to carry up this King of Glory to his Royal Pavilion. *A Cloud received him out of their Sight.* And Oh! What Jubilations of the Bleſſed Angels were heard in Heaven, the Triumphs and univerſal Acclamations are not ended at this Day, nor ever ſhall end. 3. He aſcended Munificently, ſhedding forth innumerable and ineſtimable Gifts upon his Church at his Aſcenſion. *When he aſcended up on high, he gave Gifts to Men, Prophets, Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, Paſtors and Teachers.* And Oh! How many Thouſands now in Heaven and upon Earth alſo, are bleſſing Chriſt at this Day, for theſe his Aſcenſion-Gifts. *Obſerve* 6. The Witneſſes of our Lord's Aſcenſion. *Elias* had but one Witneſs of his Rapture into Heaven, St. *Paul* not one, but Chriſt will neither have all Eye Witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, nor yet too few; he did not carry all *Jeruſalem* forth to ſee his Glorious Departure, but the Select Company of his Diſciples only: The number of Witneſſes was about an Hundred and Twenty. Thoſe who had been Partners with him in his Humiliation are now made Witneſſes of his Glorious Aſcenſion. If we will Converſe with Chriſt in his lowly Eſtate here on Earth, we ſhall be made Happy with the ſight of his Tranſcendent Glory ere long above. *Obſerve* 7. The Cauſe and Reaſons why he thus aſcended. *Namely*, Becauſe had he not Aſcended, he could not have been inaugurated and inſtalled in the Glory he now enjoys above. Had not he Aſcended, he could not have Interceded as now he doth for us here below, had not he Aſcended into Heaven, we could never have enter'd Heaven, he entered *as our Forerunner*, as our Head and Repreſentative, and we Aſcend after him in the virtue of his Aſcenſion before us. In a word, had not he Aſcended before us, the Holy Spirit had not been enjoyed by us, as a Sanctifier and as a Comforter, at leaſt not in that Meaſure in which he has been ſince enjoyed by his Church. *If Chriſt had not gone, the Comforter had not come.* He begins where Chriſt ended. Take we good heed then, how we Treat the Holy Spirit whom Chriſt ſent down from Heaven at his Aſcenſion thither, that we do not grieve him by our Unkindneſs, nor vex him by our Diſobedience, nor quench him by our Sinful Neglects of Duty, for in grieving the Spirit we grieve our Comforter, and in grieving our Comforter we grieve our Selves. But let us entertain him kindly, on the account of his Nature, for he is God, *Acts* 5. On the account of his Office and the Benefits we receive by him; for he is *Vinculum Unionis*, the Bond of Union betwixt Chriſt and our Souls, without which we can never have either Intereſt in Chriſt, or Communion with him.

10 And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men ſtood by them in white apparel. 11 Which alſo ſaid, ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as you have ſeen him go into heaven.

Obſerve here, How the Spectators of our Lord's Aſcenſion were juſtly Tranſported into an Extaſy of Wonder and Admiration. Chriſt aſcended gradually and leiſurely, that he might at once confirm the Faith, and delight the Eyes and Mind of his Beholders: Whilſt they thus ſtood admiring, two Angels in the ſhape of Men, appear in White, (a colour which they oft appeared in, to ſhew both that they retained their Native Purity, and alſo to repreſent the Joyfulneſs of their Errand which they went upon) and call to the Apoſtles (who were ſome of them Men of *Galilee*) to take notice, that this Jeſus whom they now beheld Aſcending up into Heaven, ſhould come again to judge the World, and ſo come again *in like manner*; that is, Viſible, in a Cloud, by his own Power, with the like Majeſty, and with the ſame Soul and Body. But not one Word of the time when, that not knowing the Hour, we may be upon our Watch every Hour. *Ideo latet Unus Dies ut Obſerventur omnes.*

12 Then returned they unto Jeruſalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jeruſalem a ſabbath days journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,

Philip, and Thomas, Bartholemew, and Matthew, James the ſon of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 Theſe all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with his brethren.

The Apoſtles having ſeen our Saviour thus glorioſly aſcended into Heaven from Mount *Olivet*, they return to *Jeruſalem*, which is called a Sabbath Days Journey, that is, about two Miles. (Eight Furlongs make a Mile, and *Bethany*, in which was the Mount of *Olives*, was from *Jeruſalem* about Fifteen Furlongs, St. *John* 11. 18.) This was the common walk which the *Jews* uſed on the Sabbath Day, but rather for Meditation than Recreation ſake. The Apoſtles thus returned, aſſemble together at *Jeruſalem*, where they lay the Foundation of the firſt Goſpel Church. And here *Obſerve*, 1. How the Names of all the Eleven Apoſtles are Repeated and diſtinctly ſet down, to ſhew that although they had fallen from their Profeſſion and forſaken Chriſt, that yet they had recovered themſelves by Repentance and were riſen again: And upon their Recovery were continued by Chriſt in their former Office and Dignity. Oh the mighty Power of a ſincere Repentance to Reinſtate us in the Favour and Friendſhip of an offended God. *Note* 2. How the ſight of Chriſt's Aſcenſion had eſtabliſhed and confirmed the Apoſtles Faith; They now Adore and Worſhip him, and aſſemble together to perform their joint Devotions to him. Before Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, we ſcarce read of an Act of Adoration that the Diſciples paid unto him. True, they lookt upon him as a Perſon ſent from God, a great Prophet and the Son of *David.* But his Deity being Evinced and now made Evident to them by his Reſurrection from the Grave, and Aſcenſion into Heaven; they now worſhipped him as the Son of God, ſee St. *Luke* 24. 52. *Obſerve* 3. The place where this Chriſtian Congregation did Aſſemble. *In an Upper Room*, that is, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, in one of the Chambers belonging to the Temple, in the large upper Room, ſay others, where Chriſt had lately eat the Paſſover with his Diſciples; it was no doubt the moſt convenient place they could find for that Solemnity; an upper Room being Remote from Noiſe and Company, and capacious enough to receive this Primo-primitive Church, conſiſting of an Hundred and Twenty Perſons. It teaches us, that all Advantages with reſpect to Time and Place, and other Circumſtances for the better Performance of Holy Duties, ought to be made uſe of and improved by us. *Obſerve* 4. The Perſons who were the firſt conſtituting Members of this New conſtituted Church; together with the Apoſtles, mention is made of Women in general, and of the Virgin *Mary* in particular; where we may Remark, that this is the firſt and laſt time, that the Scripture makes mention of her after Chriſt's Death. None of the Evangeliſts Record one Word of our Lord's appearing once to her, during his Forty Days ſtay and continuance upon Earth after his Reſurrection. Doubtleſs, the Spirit of God in the Holy Scriptures, by ſpeaking ſo ſparingly of her Life, and nothing at all of her Death, took care, that all thoſe fabulous Reports of her Aſſumption, which have ſince ariſen, ſhould find no Foot-ſteps in the Word of God. God dealeth with her, as with *Moſes*, of whoſe Sepulchre no Man knoweth unto this Day, leſt it ſhould be abuſed to Idolatry: The Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* is of Opinion, that ſhe continued under the Care of the Beloved Diſciple, unto whom Chriſt committed her for ſome time, and at laſt was taken away by Martyrdom, according to *Simeon*'s Propheſy, *Luke* 2. 25. *A Sword ſhall paſs through thine own Soul alſo.* Which Propheſy, he thinks, pointed at the manner of her Death: But notwithſtanding the ſilence of the Scriptures, the Church of *Rome* confidently affirm, that the Virgin lived Sixty Three Years, and that all the Apoſtles were at her Funeral except St. *Thomas*, who deſiring afterwards to ſee her Holy Corps, the Sepulchre being opened the Third Day, the Body was gone, being aſſumed and taken up into Heaven.

15 And in thoſe days Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the diſciples, and ſaid, (the number of the names together, were about an hundred and twenty.) 16 Men and brethren, this ſcripture muſt needs have been fulfilled which the holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David ſpake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jeſus. 17 For he was numbred with us, and had obtained part of this miniſtry. 18 Now this man purchaſed a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling head-long, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his bowels guſhed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jeruſalem; inſomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to ſay, the field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of pſalms, let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his biſhoprick let another take.

During the Ten Days ſtay, and continuance of the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, before the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, a Motion was made amongſt them for filling up the Vacancy in the Sacred College of the Apoſtles, which was occaſioned by the Death of the Traitor *Judas*; and here we have obſervable, 1. The Perſon that made this Motion, St. *Peter*, *in thoſe Days Peter ſtood up and ſaid.* Whence the Church of *Rome* would infer his Supremacy, but very groundleſly. For St. *Peter* being the chief Speaker, and ſometimes the ſole Speaker is not to be attributed to his Superiority, but, 1. To his Seniority, he being probably elder than the reſt; 2. To his Apoſtolical Office. He was appointed to be the firſt and chief Miniſter of the Circumciſion, to Preach among the *Jews*: And therefore, no Wonder that *Peter* is firſt mentioned, when any Thing relating to the *Jewiſh* Affairs is recited. 3. His Forwardneſs to ſpeak and act for Chriſt and his Intereſt may be imputed to his Repentance, it being but neceſſary that he, who had ſo ſcandalouſly fallen, ſhould by his future Zeal convince the World both of his Repentance and Recovery. And accordingly he ſpeaks, acts and labours more abundantly than all the Apoſtles; not that the reſt were Idle, or Inſignificant, for they were equal with him, having an equal Authority; an equal Gift of Miracles; an equal Number of Tongues; an equal Power to Preach the Goſpel, and equal Wiſdom in Preaching of it! for the Reaſons above-mentioned. St. *Peter* ſpake and did ſo much, having diſhonoured Chriſt before, by his cowardly Denial of him; he now reſolves to ſignalize himſelf by ſhewing extraordinary Meaſures of Zeal and Activity for him *Obſerve* 2. The Honourable Office and Station which *Judas.* once had; *he was numbred with the Apoſtles, and obtained part of that Miniſtry with them.* *Judas*, tho' (ſecretly) a Thief, a Traitor, yea a Devil; yet had he by Chriſt's own Choice a Part or Office in the Apoſtolick Order. Oh Lord! How poſſible, and yet how ſad is it to Preach to others, and become caſt-aways our ſelves; to Propheſy in thy Name, and yet to periſh in thy Wrath; to caſt Devils out of others, and yet be caſt to the Devil our ſelves; to have our Miniſtry bleſt to others Comfort and Salvation, and at the ſame time to Miniſter to our own Condemnation. *Quis Talia fando Temperet à Lachrymis.* *Obſerve* 3. *Judas*, his Sin deſcribed, *He was Guide to them that took Jeſus*, *Verſe* 16. A Guide to the Chief Prieſts in their Counſels, as to the manner of apprehending Chriſt; and a Guide to the Soldiers as to the Time and Place of his Apprehenſion. *Note thence*, That there cannot be a greater Sin, than for a Perſon to be a Guide and Leader of others into Sin. Wo to Magiſtrates! Wo to Miniſters! Wo to Parents! that are found guilty of this Sin. *Obſerve* 4. *Judas*, his Puniſhment declared. 1. *He was hanged or ſtrangled*; ſome think by his own Hand, others by the Devil's. No doubt that Satan. who had ſo great a Hand in his Sin, had more than a Finger in his Puniſhment. Of all Mortals, no Wretch ever deſerved ſo direful a Fate as this Traitor *Judas*, and doubtleſs it was the dreadfulleſt that the Devil could inflict. 2. It is added, that *he burſt in ſunder, and his bowels guſhed out.* The Rope, or that to which it was faſtned, breaking, he fell down headlong, and burſt aſunder, and his Bowels guſhed out. A juſt and ſuitable Puniſhment for his want of Bowels to his kind and innocent Maſter. 3. *He went to his own Place*; that is, he went and was ſent to Hell and Damnation, the proper Place for the Son of Perdition; called his own Place, becauſe of his own chooſing, of his own deſerving, of his own procuring, it was what he had purchaſed to himſelf by the Wages of Iniquity, and juſtly deſerved for his final Impenitency.

21 Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us. 22 Beginning from the baptiſm of John unto the ſame day, that he was taken up from

us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his reſurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joſeph called Barſabas, who was ſurnamed Juſtus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and ſaid, thou Lord, which knoweſt the hearts of all men, ſhew, whither of theſe two thou haſt choſen. 25 That he may take part of this miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbred with the eleven Apoſtles.

Judas having in the forementioned manner made void his Office, and being gone to his one Place, St. *Peter* moves the Company, that another Perſon may be choſen to fill up the Place. *Where Note*, 1. The Electors or Perſons chooſing; namely, the Hundred and Twenty; theſe were the Eleven Apoſtles, the Seventy Diſciples, and about Thirty Eight more, all of Chriſts own Kindred, Countrey or Converſe; not that theſe were all the Believers that were found in *Jeruſalem*, for *he appeared to five hundred Brethren at once*: But theſe followed him continually, were of his Family and Society, and of his immediate Train and Retinue, and appointed by him for the Miniſtry. Theſe therefore make the Choice; and of one among themſelves is the Choice made. *Note*, 2. The Qualification of the Perſon which St. *Peter* directs the Company to obſerve in the Choice they make of this new Apoſtle, *One that accompanied with them all the Time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among them*: That is, One that had followed Chriſt from his Baptiſm to his Aſcenſion, to the Intent he might be an Authentick Witneſs, both of the Doctrine and Miracles, but particularly of the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: For the Article of the Reſurection includes many other Articles of Faith in it; for if he aroſe from the Grave, he was Buried; if he was Buried, he Died; if he Died, he was Born. Therefore, the Perſon whom they chooſe, was to be one that had accompanied with them. *Note*, 3. That the Apoſtles did not preſume to ordain an Apoſtle by Impoſition of Hands: but the other Apoſtles being choſen of God immediately, it was neceſſary that he who was to act in the ſame Office, ſhould be choſen after the ſame manner. Accordingly they caſt Lots, and leave the Determination to God, who devolving it upon *Matthias*, he was thereupon numbred with the Eleven Apoſtles. Lots were uſed amongſt the *Jews* for dividing Inheritances, for compoſing Differences, for determining Elections; and how caſual ſoever it ſeem'd, God was the undoubted Determiner of it. Therefore to caſt Lots upon trivial Occaſions, and ſolemnly to appeal to God's Determination in Ludicrous Matter, is Prophanely to take the Name of God in vain.

CHAP. II.

The Second Chapter gives us an Account of the Miraculous Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. *This was matter of Wonder and Amazement to ſome, but Scorn and Mocking Deriſion unto others. Hereupon St.* Peter *ſtands up, and in a moſt excellent Sermon defends the Apoſtles, convicts the Jews of Crucifying the Lord of Life, and exhorts them to believe on him whom they had Ignominiouſly put to Death; and the Holy Spirit crowned his Endeavours with a deſirable Succeſs.*

AND when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the ſpirit gave them utterance.

In this Extraordinary and Miraculous Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles. *Obſerve*, 1. The Time when, *when the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come*: That is, Fifty Days after Chriſt's Reſurrection. The Day of *Pentecoſt* is probably believed to have fallen then upon the Lord's Day, it is certain from *Acts* 1. That the Spirit deſcended when the Apoſtles were unanimouſly aſſembled for his Worſhip, and continued with one Accord in Prayer and Supplication. There is no way to obtain the Holy Spirit from Heaven, both as a Sanctifier and as a Comforter, like fervent Prayer, Aſſiduity and Perſeverance in our Devotions, eſpecially in the Publick Aſſemblies of the Saints. *Obſerve*, 2. The Place where, at *Jeruſalem*, the more General Place; where our Lord had undergone his Ignominy and Reproach, there he manifeſts forth his Glory and Dignity: firſt by his Triumphant Aſcenſion, and afterwards by his Miraculous Miſſion of the Holy Spirit. The more particular place was the Upper-Room where they were Aſſembled and conſtantly Prayed. This Upper Chamber was moſt raiſed towards Heaven, moſt remote from Noiſe and Company, and worldly Diſtractions. The Spirit of God deſcends upon and reſts with ſuch as have raiſed Affections above the World, and are neareſt unto Heaven, not upon ſuch as are buried alive in worldly Buſineſs: Earth will extinguiſh Fire as well as Water, and ſome ſay ſooner; not only Senſual Luſts, but an exceſs of Earthly Buſineſs and Worldly Drudgery will quench the Holy Spirit, and cauſe him to depart and go away agrieved from us. *Obſerve*, 3. The Perſons on whom the Holy Ghoſt thus deſcended; *Namely*, the Apoſtles, not that they were without the Holy Spirit until now; they had him before in his Sanctifying Graces; here they receive him in his extraordinary Gifts, to fit them for extraordinary Services. When God extraordinarily calls any of his Servants to more than ordinary Service, they may expect more than ordinary Aſſiſtance. The Holy Spirit now deſcended upon the Apoſtles in his Miraculous Gifts, and if we be not wanting to our ſelves, he will deſcend upon us in inviſible Favours every Day, making our Souls and Bodies a Temple, and fit Habitation for himſelf to dwell in, by his ſanctifying Impreſſions, by his powerful Aſſiſtances, by his quickning Influences; pouring in both the Oil of Grace, and alſo the Oil of Joy and Gladneſs into our Hearts. *Obſerve*, 4. The manner how the Holy Ghoſt at this Time deſcended on the Apoſtles. 1. Suddenly, like the Wind, *a mighty ruſhing Wind from Heaven*: Inſinuating, that it was not the Apoſtles Prayer that brought but Chriſt's Promiſe and Power, that ſent the Holy Ghoſt thus miraculouſly down upon them. This ruſhing Wind alſo did repreſent the mighty Efficacy of the Holy Spirit now deſcending. 2. In the Appearance of Fiery Cloven Tongues, Cloven, to ſignifie the variety of Languages which the Apoſtles ſhou'd be enabled to ſpeak, and to qualifie them to Preach the Goſpel unto all Nations: And Fiery, to repreſent that fervent Heat and Zeal they ſhould be endued with themſelves; that Divine Light they ſhould impart to others; as alſo that Purity and Holineſs which they and all ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to appear Beautified and Adorned with: *Finally*, As Fire diſſipated and diſperſed, multiplieth and encreaſeth, even ſo the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, the more they are diffuſed and well employed, the more will they be encreaſed; by imparting to our People, we ſhall gather to our ſelves. Thus was our Lord's Promiſe fulfilled to his Apoſtles in ſending down the Holy Ghoſt upon them, but not upon them only; the Private Chriſtian no doubt, as well as the Publick Apoſtle, did receive the Holy Spirit according to his Meaſure: To enlighten, as a Spirit of Knowledge; to enliven, as a Spirit of Life; to warm and heat, as a Spirit of Zeal; to molify and ſoften, as a Spirit of Holy Fear; to quicken and ſtrengthen, as a Spirit of Power; to guide and direct, as a Spirit of Wiſdom and Counſel; to unite and knit their Hearts together, as a Spirit of Love: And Bleſſed be God for the Promiſe of the ſame Holy Spirit to abide with all Believers, tho' not in his Miraculous Gifts yet in his ſanctifying Operations and ſaving Graces to the End of the World.

5 And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, becauſe that every man heard them ſpeak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, ſaying one to another, Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Meſo-

potamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Aſia. 10 Phrygia and Pamphillia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and Proſelytes. 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, ſaying one to another what meaneth this? 13 Others mocking ſaid, theſe men are full of new wine.

The fame of the foregoing miraculous Operation of the Holy Spirit being inſtantly ſpread abroad in *Jeruſalem*, and there being preſent at that time great multitudes of *Jews* who had come up from all parts of *Judea*, to the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, and alſo many other *Jews* and Proſelytes born in other Nations, in *Meſopotamia, Cappadocia, Phrygia* and *Pamphilia*, who were now come up to worſhip the true God at *Jeruſalem*. When they heard the Apoſtles ſpeak in their own Language, which they never underſtood before, the wonderful Works of God in the Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſome of them wondered to hear illiterate Men ſpeaking all Languages, others derided the Miracle, and imputed it to Drunkenneſs. *Here Note*, 1. The Wiſdom and Providence of Almighty God, in ſo ordering the firſt publication of the Goſpel, that the fame thereof, and of that convincing Miracle which gave Authority thereunto, might be carried unto all Nations by ſo many Eye and Ear Witneſſes, as were Worſhipping at *Jeruſalem* at this time. For *there were now ſojourning at* Jeruſalem, *Men out of every Nation under Heaven:* That is, of every Nation where any *Jews* were ſcattered at this time throughout the World, there were ſome particular Perſons come up now to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip God. *Note*,2. The Commendatory Character given of thoſe Perſons, who from their ſeveral Countries came up to the Houſe of God in *Jeruſalem* to worſhip him there. They are ſtiled *Devout Men*: And they received from God the reward of their Piety and Devotion, had they ſtaid at home, as many of their Brethren no doubt did, they had not been Witneſſes of ſo wonderful a Miracle for the Confirmation of their Faith as now they were. *Yet Note*, 3. The different Influence and effect which this Miracle of the Holy Spirits deſcent in fiery cloven Tongues, had upon the Minds of the People in *Jeruſalem*. Some were ſtruck into an extaſie of Admiration and awful Wonder; others (the Scribes and Phariſees probably) ſcornfully deride and impute the Miracle of Drunkenneſs, ſaying, *theſe Men are full of new Wine*. A ſenſeleſs Slander; for tho' the exceſs of Wine may give a Man more Tongue, yet not more Tongues. Oh! How have the Holy Operations of the Bleſſed Spirit from the beginning been ſlandered and blaſphemed; accounted the effects of Drunkenneſs then, of Enthuſiaſm or Melancholy now.

14 But Peter ſtanding up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jeruſalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel, 17 And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt day (ſaith God) I will pour out of my ſpirit upon all fleſh: and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſie, and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams: 18 And on my ſervants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my ſpirit, and they ſhall propheſie. 19 And I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of ſmoak. 20 The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. 21 And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.

Obſerve here, The holy Courage of St. *Peter*, in defending the Innocency of the Apoſtles, and confuting the Calumny of Drunkenneſs, which was now caſt upon himſelf and them. *The Men are not drunken as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day. Where Note*, 1. How he argues Negatively from the time of the day, it was but the third hour of the day, that is, nine a clock in the morning, which was the hour for the morning Sacrifice and Prayer, and the worſhippers of God, (at the great Feaſts eſpecially) were never wont to Eat or Drink before thoſe Holy Services were perform'd. In thoſe times they went to their Publick Devotions faſting, they ſerved God before they ſerved their Bellies. The firſt fruits of the day were offered in the Temple then; in the Tavern now, ten morning and evening Viſits are made by ſome to the latter, for one to the former. *Note farther*, How he argues poſitively, he aſſures them, that the Apoſtles were full of the Holy Ghoſt, and not full of Wine, filled with the Spirit of God; and that what was now done, was the Completion of a Propheſie uttered by *Joel*; *that in the laſt days*, that is, in the days of the Meſſias, there ſhould be a moſt plentiful effuſion of the Holy Spirit *upon all Fleſh*, that is, upon *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and upon all ſorts of Perſons without diſtinction, Old and Young, Sons and Daughters, Bond and Free. *Learn thence*, That the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, not confined to any Party, to any order or degrees of Men, but plentifully and abundantly poured forth under the Goſpel-diſpenſation upon all Believers; it is one of the great Cheats which the Pope has impoſed upon the World, to perſuade to believe the Spirit of God is tied to the pomel of his Chair: That he, and his Cardinals have monopolized the Holy Ghoſt. But Bleſſed be God, he has promiſed to pour out his Spirit upon all Fleſh, even upon Servants and Hand-maids, to ſhew that he doth not deſpiſe Perſons of the loweſt Rank and Condition in this World. But that the Promiſe of the Spirit is made unto them alſo. *Obſerve laſtly*, What is here foretold that ſhould come to paſs after this great effuſion of the Holy Spirit, *Namely, Wonders in the Heaven, and Signs in the Earth, the Sun turned into darkneſs and the Moon into Blood*. Which Expreſſions ſignifie the great Miſeries and Troubles, the Calamities and Deſolations which ſhould befal the *Jews* before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, for their Crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory: Unto which is ſubjoined the only way to eſcape and avoid them. *Namely*, Calling upon the Lord in fervent Prayer and Supplication, *Whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved*. Intimating that Prayer makes us ſhot-free, and is a ſure defence in all Storms, that no evil ſhall fatally touch our Perſons, or come near our dwellings, whilſt we take hold of God by Faith, and approach unto him by Prayer. Lord! how happy is it when ſtrong Afflictions from thee raiſe ſtrong Affections in us towards thee.

22 Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, among you, by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye your ſelves alſo know. 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain. 24 Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.

St. *Peter* having wiped off the unjuſt Aſperſion of Drunkenneſs caſt upon himſelf and his Brethren in the foregoing Verſes. In theſe he makes it his buſineſs to convince the *Jews* that they were the murtherers of the beſt Man that ever lived in the World, even Jeſus of Nazareth, the true and promiſed Meſſiah. In order to this he treats in this Sermon, 1. Of the Perſon and Life of Chriſt. 2. Of the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt. 3. Of the Reſurrection of him from the Grave. 1. As touching his Perſon, the Apoſtle ſhews that he was evidently ſent from God and approved of him, by thoſe many Miracles, Wonders and Signs which were wrought by him. *Hence Note*, That the many and great Miracles wrought by Chriſt, evidently prove that he was ſent of God, and came from him, and was approved by him. Our Saviour's Miracles, for the Nature of them, were beneficial to Mankind, for the number of them, they were many, for the manner of their Operation they were publick, and open in the ſight and view of all People, not in corners like the Popiſh Miracles, (wrought before their own Creatures only) but before his Enemies, and for the quality of them, they were of the greateſt Magnitude, cleanſing the Leapers, raiſing the dead, giving ſight to them that were born blind: By a word ſpoken, by a touch given, ſo that our Bleſſed Saviour had all that Atteſtations that Miracles can give, that he was Commiſſioned by God, and came from God. The ſecond part of St. *Peter*'s Sermon here Treats of the Sufferings and Death of *Chriſt*. *By wicked Hands ye have Crucified and Slain him, who was delivered by the determinate Counſels of God.* *Where Note*, 1. The Nature and kind of Death which Chriſt died: This is deſcribed more generally; 'twas a Violent Death, *ye have ſlain him*, more particularly it was an Ignominious, Curſed and Diſhonourable Death, *ye have Crucified him.* *Learn thence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was not only put to Death, but to the worſt of Deaths, even the Death of the Croſs. Now the Death of the Croſs was a violent Death, a painful Death, a ſhameful Death, a lingring Death, a ſuccourleſs Death, and an accurſed Death. *Note*, 2. The cauſes of Chriſt's Death here expreſt. The principal Cauſe, permitting and ordering, was the determinate Counſel and fore-knowledge of God. The Inſtrumental Cauſe effecting was the wicked Hands of the *Jews*. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counſel, &c. ye have taken, and by wicked Hands Crucified, &c.* *Learn hence*, That there was not any one particular Action or ſingle Circumſtance relating to the Death of Chriſt, but what came under the Holy Counſel and Wiſe Determination of God. Yet this fore-knowledge and Counſel of God as it did not neceſſitate and enforce them to it, ſo neither doth it excuſe them in it. God's fore-knowledge and determinate Counſel did no more compel or force their wicked Hands to do what they did, then the Mariners hoiſting up his Sails to take the Wind to ſerve his Deſign, can be ſaid to compel the Wind to Blow. God's end in acting was one, their end in acting was another; His, moſt Pure and Holy, theirs moſt Malicious and daringly Wicked. In reſpect of God, Chriſt's Death was Juſtice and Mercy; in reſpect of Man, it was Murther and Cruelty; in reſpect to themſelves, it was Obedience and Humility. The third part of the Apoſtle's Sermon, Reſpects the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the Grave, *Ver.* 24. *Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of Death becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* Chriſt tho' laid, was not loſt in the Grave; but revived and roſe again, and roſe by the power of his God-head. True, God is here ſaid to raiſe him, and the Spirit elſe-where; but we are not to underſtand it ſo as if they raiſed him by their Power without his own Power; for he declares it expreſly, *John* 2. In three Days I will raiſe up the Temple of my Body, and if he had not raiſed himſelf by his own Power, how could he be ſaid, *Rom.* 1. 4. *To be declared to be the Son of God by the Reſurrection from the Dead.* What more had appeared in Chriſt's Reſurrection from any other, if that were all, for others were raiſed by the Power of God as well as he. Now, becauſe the *Jews*, to whom St *Peter* here Preaches, were filled with Prejudice againſt Chriſt, the Apoſtle thought fit to tell them, that God had raiſed him from the Dead, yet by Conſequence it ſufficiently appears in the following Diſcourſe, that Chriſt raiſed himſelf from the Dead. *Learn hence*, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by the Omnipotent Power of the God-head, the Fathers, the Spirit, and his own God-head, revived and roſe again from the Dead, to the Terror and Conſternation of his Enemies, and the unſpeakable Conſolation of all Believers. As by the eternal Spirit, or the Power of his own God-head, he offered up himſelf to God when he died; So when he was put to Death in the Fleſh, he was quickned by the Spirit, that is by the Power of his Divine Nature. The ſame Spirit enabled him to do both. Obſerve alſo, the Reaſon annexed, why God raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe *it was impoſſible that* Death ſhould hold him; but how impoſſible? 1. 'Twas *Naturally* impoſſible upon the account of that Divine Power which was Inherent in his Perſon as God. 2. 'Twas legally impoſſible, becauſe Divine Juſtice being fully ſatisfied by his Sufferings, required, that he ſhould be raiſed to Life, as when a Debt is paid, the Priſoner is diſcharged and the Priſon Door opened.

25 For David ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw
the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right
hand, that I ſhould not be moved. 26 Therefore
did my heart rejoyce, and my tongue was glad:
moreover alſo my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope. 27 Becauſe
thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou
ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. 28 Thou
haſt made known to me the ways of life; thou ſhalt
make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men
and brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch
David, that he is both dead and buried, and
his ſepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore
being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn
with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins,
according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit
on his throne. 31 He ſeeing this before, ſpake of the
reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in
hell neither his fleſh did ſee corruption. 32 This
Jeſus hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.
33 Therefore being by the right hand of God
exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe
of the holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this,
which ye now ſee and hear. 34 For David is not aſcended
into the heavens: but he ſaith himſelf, The
Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Until I make thy foes thy foot-ſtool. 36 Therefore
let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that
God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified,
both Lord and Chriſt.

St. *Peter* here proceeds in this memorable Sermon, which he preached at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt to convince the *Jews*, that Jeſus, whom they had Crucified, was undoubtedly the promiſed Meſſias, becauſe he was raiſed from the Grave according to the prophetical Prediction, *Pſal.* 16. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy Holy one to ſee Corruption*: and accordingly St. *Peter* doth ſtrongly prove that theſe Words in their Literal Senſe could not be ſpoken of *David*, becauſe he was left in the Grave and ſaw Corruption; but muſt be applied unto Chriſt, who tho' he was laid, yet was not loſt in his Grave, but ſaw no Corruption; being raiſed by God the third Day. *Hence Note*, That tho' Death bound the Hands and Feet of Jeſus Chriſt, and laid him in his Grave, yet, *Sampſon like*, he ſnapt and broke thoſe Bands aſunder, it being impoſſible that he ſhould be holden of them or confined by them. It was impoſſible for Chriſt to continue Death's Priſoner in the Grave longer than three Days. 1. Becauſe he was Lord of Life and Death, he was the Reſurrection and the Life. Life to quicken himſelf, and the Reſurrection to raiſe us; he was the Reſurrection effectively, the Life eſſentially and formally. Now it was impoſſible for Death to hold him that was Life it ſelf, under its power any longer, than he who is Life, pleaſed; and for this reaſon he is ſaid *to ſwallow up Death in Victory*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. 2. Becauſe, of his undertaking for us, for if Chriſt had been held by corporal Death, we muſt have continued for ever under the Power of Spiritual Death; therefore the Holy one was not ſuffered to ſee Corruption, the leaſt Corruption, according to the prophetical Prediction, *Pſal.* 16. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, That is, my dead Body in the Grave (for *David* was left in that Hell, from which Chriſt was raiſed, but the Hell that *David* was in was not beyond the Grave) *nor ſuffer thy Holy one to ſee Corruption.* That is, I ſhall neither ſee nor feel, nor lie under the Power of Corruption; but ſhall ſuddenly riſe again; and then my Father will ſhew me the Path of Life, and make me full of Joy with his Countenance: That is, after my Reſurrection, I ſhall live for ever in Glory in the Preſence of my Father, where I ſhall have *fulneſs of Joy, and Rivers of Pleaſure for evermore.*

The laſt part of St. *Peter*'s Sermon Treats of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, *ver.* 33. *Therefore being by the Right hand of God exalted*, &c. *Intimating*, That when the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had finiſhed his work upon Earth, he was placed in the Seat of the higheſt Honour and Authority, at the Right Hand of God in Heaven, to convince the *Jews* of the certainty hereof; St. *Peter* applies that Promiſe, *Pſal.* 110. 1. unto Chriſt, *Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy Foes thy Foot-ſtool.* Shewing that theſe Words are not applicable unto *David*; for *David* is not aſcended into Heaven in his own Perſon, but his Body remained in the Sepulchre then amongſt them; but Chriſt was aſcended, and at the Right hand of God exalted, and purſuant to his Promiſe, had now ſent down the Holy Ghoſt in fiery cloven Tongues, and divers Languages upon them. *Where Note*, The great and wonderful change in the State and Condition of Chriſt, ſince his Aſcenſion into Heaven. A little while ſince they called him the *Carpenter's Son* *this Fellow*, *this Deceiver*, now he has obtained a more excellent Name than Angels. Then he had not a place to lay his Head on; now he is exalted to be *Heir of all things*. Here he Sweat, there he Sits; here he Groan'd, there he Triumphs: Never to Groan, Weep, or Bleed more. His Humane Nature is now advanced to the higheſt Honours, even to the object of Adoration both to Angels and Men. This was the Doctrinal part of St. *Peter*'s Sermon: It treated of the Perſon, Life, Miracles, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus, in a very cloſe and convincing manner. His warm Application of the whole now follows, *v.* 36.

36 Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.

That is, God the Father hath ordained and appointed this Jeſus whom ye have Crucified, to be the Head and Saviour of his Church, he being the true and promiſed Meſſiah. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was Conſtituted and Appointed by his Father, to be the Supreme Governour and only Saviour of his Church. God hath made Jeſus *both Lord and Chriſt*, both a Prince and a Saviour. *Note farther*, How very cloſe and home the Apoſtle is, in applying what he had ſaid to his Auditors; he doth not reſt in generals, but ſays plainly ye are the Men, that is, *that ſame Jeſus* whom *ye* have Crucified, whom *ye* with wicked Hands have Slain: Had not the Application been ſo cloſe, it is probable the ſucceſs of the Sermon had not been ſo conſiderable. *Thence learn*, That the ſucceſs and efficacy of the word Preached depends upon a particular and warm Application of it to every Man's Conſcience, generals will not affect. See an Inſtance of it in what follows.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?

Here the ſucceſs of St. *Peter*'s Sermon is recorded: The Auditors were not only affected, but their Hearts were touched with a kindly Remorſe, they mourn for Sin, and enquire what they ſhould do to be ſaved. Some in our days would have been offended at ſuch an enquiry, and told them, it was not doing but believing only, that God expected; that Chriſt had *done* all for them, and that they had nothing *to do*, but to believe ſtrongly that all was done to their Hands; but St. *Peter* reproves them, not for their Iniquity, but puts them upon doing: *Namely*, the Exerciſe and Practice of Repentance, in the next Verſe. *Here Note*, 1. That Converſion, where it is in Truth, begets and occaſions a very great and ſenſible Change. 2. That the Preaching of the Word is the inſtrumental Means for the effecting and accompliſhing of this Change. 3. That the beſt Preaching is that which pricks Mens Hearts, wounds and convinces their Conſciences, and makes them throughly ſenſible both of their Sin and danger, and of the great neceſſity of a Change. 4. That when Men are once convinc'd of their bad State and dangerous Condition, their firſt inquiry will be, yea ſhould, and ought to be, what they ſhould do to be ſaved? They ſaid Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do? The Apoſtle liked that inquiry very well; and anſwers it in the next Verſe.

38 Then Peter ſaid unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of Sins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the holy Ghoſt. 39 For the promiſe is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. 40 And with many other words did he teſtifie and exhort ſaying: Save your ſelves from this untoward generation.

Obſerve, 1. St. *Peter* exhorts them to Repentance. But did they not repent already? Were they not now pricked at their Hearts? And will the Apoſtles add Grief to Grief, and Pain to Smart? Know, that the Apoſtle adviſes them to joyn to their Legal Sorrow Evangelical Repentance; ſuch as is attended and accompanied with owning Chriſt to be the true Meſſias, with believing in him, with deſire and hope of pardon from him; where, by the way, *Obſerve*, That St. *Peter* preſcribes a Doſe of the ſame Phyſick for them which he had very lately taken himſelf with good ſucceſs, when upon his hearty ſorrow he obtained pardon for denying his Lord and Maſter, *Matth.* 26. 75. *He went out and wept bitterly*. No Sermons are ſo ſovereign and ſo ſucceſsful as thoſe which proceed from the Miniſters perſonal and comfortable Experience. St. *Peter* preſſes upon his Auditors the Doctrine of Repentance which he himſelf had practiſed. *Obſerve*, 2. Upon their Repentance, their owning of and believing in Chriſt, he directs them to be Baptized in his Name; and then they ſhould be capable of the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt: Even of thoſe miraculous Gifts which they now ſaw and admired in the Apoſtles. *Learn hence*, That baptiſm is a ſolemn Ordinance and ſacred Inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt, which is not to be adminiſtred to any out of the Chriſtian Church, till they profeſs Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, and ſincere Obedience to him: *Repent and be Baptized every one of you*. *Obſerve*, 3. The Argument which the Apoſtle uſes with them by way of Encouragement to perſwade them to Repent and be Baptized, for (ſays he) *The promiſe is unto you and to your Children*; to you *Jews* of the Seed of *Abraham*, and to your Seed; and to as many of the *Gentiles*, and their Seed, as ſhall be called by the Preaching of the Goſpel to profeſs Faith in Chriſt and Subjection to him; whereby *the Promiſe* is meant the gracious Covenant of God, whereby he offers Pardon and Peace to ſuch as will accept them: Now this Acceptance is two-fold, 1. Cordial, which intitles a Perſon to all the benefits of the Covenant, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal. And 2. Profeſſional only, which intitles a Perſon and his Seed to Church Priviledges only. *Hence Learn*, That when God takes believing Parents into Covenant with himſelf, he takes alſo their Children or Seed into Covenant with him likewiſe. And if ſo, then the Seal of the Covenant which is Baptiſm ought to be applied to them. It is evident that under the Old Teſtament, Children were in Covenant with God as well as their Parents, and do we any where find that ever they were caſt out under the Goſpel? The Apoſtle doth not ſay the promiſe was unto you and to your Seed, but ſtill is; for otherwiſe Children would be in a worſe Condition under the Goſpel of Chriſt than they were under the Law of *Moſes*; but ſurely the Priviledges of the Goſpel are not ſtreighter and narrower than thoſe of the Law. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How St. *Peter* cloſes all with an Exhortation to his Auditors, *to ſave themſelves from that untoward Generation*. That is, from the Scribes and Phariſees, that four ſort of Men who deſperately and maliciouſly oppoſed Chriſt and his Goſpel, and by their Authority and Example kept People from embracing the only way of Salvation revealed by Jeſus Chriſt.

41 Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized, and the ſame day there were added unto them about three thouſand ſouls.

Obſerve here, 1. The wonderful ſucceſs of St. *Peter*'s Sermon, about three Thouſand were Converted to the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion in one day, by hearing a ſingle Sermon; how many Thouſand Sermons have been ſince Preached without the Converſion of a ſingle Perſon. Oh! What an high Holy-Day was this memorable day in Heaven. This *All-Saints day* was a Feſtival of great Solemnity there, where there is joy over one Sinner that repenteth. But here did concur ſeveral Advantages to render St. *Peter*'s Sermon more effectual: 1. The Sufferings of our Saviour were ſo near in Place and ſo late in Time; that his Wounds were ſtill freſh, Bleeding in the guilty Memories of the People now Aſſembled. 2. The preſent Miracle of Tongues, beſtowed on St. *Peter*, and his unlearned Companions, did wonderfully make way for the Word delivered. And 3. His Auditors were devout Men, *ver.* 5. ignorant enough, but yet brought with them Minds fairly diſpoſed for Information and Conviction. 4. The Holy Spirit wrought now extraordinarily by and with the Word, and cauſed this Miraculous Improvement. Now did our Saviour fulfil his Promiſe to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do, when I go to my Father*. Now was *Peter* the Diſciple above his Maſter in ſucceſs: Chriſt all his Life time was Angling for a few Fiſhes, whilſt St. *Peter* comes with his Dragnet and catches Three Thouſand at one Caſt. *Obſerve*, 2. Theſe Three Thouſand were Baptized the ſame day in which they were Converted, and probably in the ſame Place, which was at *Jeruſalem*; either in the Temple or in ſome Houſe, where the Sermon was Preached. We need not inquire whether the Apoſtles did it by dipping or ſprinkling both being lawful; but this may be ſaid, it is hard to gueſs how ſuch a quantity of Water could be brought to the Place, as might ſerve for the decent dipping of Three Thouſand Perſons in ſo ſhort a time. And upon ſuppoſition, that the Water was not brought to them, but they went down to that; baptizing ſo many by dipping, would have required a Week rather than a Day to diſpatch it in.

42 And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

Which Words gives us an account of the Behaviour of the firſt Chriſtians, particularly in the Religious Aſſemblies, and of the way of Worſhip uſed in the Church of *Jeruſalem* the true Mother Church in the time of the Apoſtles. *Where Obſ.* 1. The Doctrine which they adhered to, the Doctrine of the Apoſtles: That is, the Doctrine delivered by Chriſt, and taught by the Apoſtles, and contained in the Holy Scriptures. This was the Rule which the firſt Chriſtians govern'd themſelves by, both as to Faith and Manners. It was Infinite Wiſdom in God to inſpire Holy Men for committing this Doctrine to writing, and not to leave it to the hazardous and uncertain way of Tradition. *Obſ.* 2. The ſteady adherence of the firſt Chriſtians to this Doctrine of the Apoſtles; *They continued ſteadfaſtly in it*; That is, they were conſtant hearers of it, and attendants upon it; they received it not upon Truſt, but due Examination. *Learn hence*, That Religion being the great Intereſt and common Concern of Mankind; he that eſpouſes it aright, muſt firſt underſtand and examine the fundamental Grounds and Principles of it, and then chooſe accordingly. Otherwiſe our adherence to the beſt Religion in the World, will rather be the reſult of Chance than of Judgment and Choice. *Obſ.* 3. They continued ſtedfaſt in Fellowſhip: This may ſignifie and import three things. 1. Their Communion with the Apoſtles, their keeping cloſe to their own Teachers in oppoſition to *Schiſm*, which is a cauſeleſs and therefore a culpable Separation; they were obedient to their Spiritual Governors and Inſtructers. 2. Their Society among themſelves, and Communion one with another: As the Communion of Saints in Heaven is a conſiderable part of the Happineſs of Heaven, ſo the fellowſhip of Saints on Earth is a ſort of Heaven upon Earth. The Comfort of our Lives depends much upon Society; but more upon the ſuitableneſs of Society. Theſe Primitive Saints were all of one Mind, and therefore fit to make one Body. For tho' Man loves Company, yet it is the Company of thoſe he loves. 3. Mutual aſſiſtance which they gave and received, a Communication or free Diſtribution to the Neceſſities of each other, they did by love ſerve one another, and parted with their Poſſeſſion for the ſupport of each other: This Liberality and mutual ſupplying one anothers Wants, did plainly ſhew that they eſteemed themſelves as Fellow-Members of the ſame Body; and that they were perfectly united in Heart and Affection. *Obſ.* 4. Another Religious Office in which they continued conſtant, was in breaking of Bread; That is, receiving the Sacrament; ſo great and fervent was the Devotion of theſe firſt Chriſtians, that none of their Religious Aſſemblies paſt, in which they did not make this Solemn Commemoration of our Saviour, and ſhew forth his death; looking upon their other Religious Services Lame and Defective without this. Our Saviour's Blood was ſtill warm, and thoſe firſt Chriſtians kept it ſo, by their devout and frequent Remembrances of it. And it was their conſtancy in breaking of Bread, which quickned and put Life into all their Religious Actions. This fitted them both for doing and dying; their frequent drinking of the Blood of Chriſt fired them with Zeal for ſhedding their Blood for Chriſt. Lord! What reaſon can Men now give for neglecting ſo Holy and Uſeful an Inſtitution. Are we above theſe helps to a good Life which they uſed? Have we not as much need to arm our ſelves againſt Sin and Temptations as they had? But the plain Truth is, Men are not willing to be ſo Holy now as they were then. This Ordinance, their Conſciences tell them, would engage them to greater ſtrictneſs of Life than they are willing to undergo. They muſt leave their Sins which they are loth to part with; they muſt forgive their Enemies, whom they had rather be reveng'd of; they muſt enter into new Engagements, whereas they had rather be at Liberty. So that thoſe things which made Men loth to come to the Sacrament, are indeed, if duly conſidered, the greateſt Arguments to draw them thither; and according to the example of theſe primitive Chriſtians, to be conſtant *in breaking of Bread. Obſerve*, 4. The laſt thing which they continued ſtedfaſt and conſtant in, was in Prayers: That is, in the publick and ſolemn Addreſſes made to God in the Religious Aſſemblies, whereby they poured out their Souls to God both in Prayer and Supplication, and in Praiſes and Thankſgivings. The publick Prayers and Interceſſions of the Church of Chriſt, are greatly to be eſteemed by all Chriſtians; they glorifie God moſt, he eſteems and accepts them beſt: This keeps up a ſenſe of God and Religion in the World, and nothing delights God more than the joynt Prayers and Praiſes of his People. *Pſal.* 87. 2. *The Lord loveth the Gates of* Zion *more than all performances in the dwellings of* Jacob.

43 And fear came upon every ſoul, and many wonders and ſigns were done by the Apoſtles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common. 45 And ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Obſerve here, 1. What awful reſpect God obliged the People of *Jeruſalem* to pay unto the *Apoſtles: Fear came upon every Soul at the ſight of thoſe Wonders and Signs which were wrought by the Apoſtles.* 'Tis God that keeps up the Authority and Reverence of his Miniſters in the Minds of their People: Did not he hold theſe Stars in his own right Hand, how ſoon would Men trample them under their Feet. *Obſerve*, 2. An extraordinary Inſtance of a noble Charity amongſt theſe primitive Chriſtians: *They had all things common:* That is, they choſe rather to part with their Eſtates then that any of their Brethren ſhould want; the Rich very readily ſold their Poſſeſſions and Goods to help and relieve the Poor. *Yet Note*, 1. That this Community was not of all their Goods, but of that part only which every one did voluntarily Conſecrate and Devote to the relief of the Churches Neceſſities. It was not in a ſtrict ſenſe a Community of Goods that was here practiſed; but by all things we are to underſtand, ſuch things as every one freely laid aſide for the Service of the Poor. *Note*, 2. That this practiſe was only uſed in *Jeruſalem* in the beginning of Chriſtianity, without being a Precedent for after Times and Places. *Res quæ erat Temporariæ Neceſſitatis & Liberi Arbitrii, non debet in exemplum trahi, multo minus ut Neceſſaria obtrudi.* Chriſt's Goſpel doth not deſtroy the Moral Law, the Eighth Commandment is ſtill in force; which it could not be, if there were no Property. The Leſſon for our Inſtruction to be gathered from this Inſtance, is this; that they who have Ability ought to abound always in ordinary, and ſometimes in extraordinary Works of Charity: We muſt always relieve the Saints wants as we are able, and ſometimes upon an extraordinary occaſion, above what we are well able.

46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart. 47 Praiſing God, and having favour with all the people, and the Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.

The Chapter concludes with giving us an account how theſe Primitive Chriſtians ſpent their time together in the Service of God: And in great Simplicity and Sincerity amongſt themſelves. They continued daily in the Temple: That is, at the uſual hours of Prayer they joined with the *Jews* in their Prayers in the Temple, we muſt not think that they preach'd Sermons and Adminiſtred Sacraments in the Temple, that would not be endured as appeareth, *chap.* 4. 1. But having performed their Publick Devotions daily in the Temple at the accuſtomed times of Prayer there, they uſed to reſort to a private and particular place to Celebrate the Lord's Supper, and afterwards took their ordinary and neceſſary repaſt with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of Heart. And thus theſe Holy Chriſtians converſing together with great Simplicity and Sincerity, they went on chearfully in their Chriſtian Courſe, praiſing God for what he had done for them and by them; and their holy and harmleſs Converſation procured them Favour with the generality of the People, who had not their Hearts poſſeſſed with Prejudice againſt Chriſtianity, as the Phariſees had. And thus by the Purity of the Apoſtle's Doctrine, and the exemplary Piety and Unblameableneſs of their Lives, the Lord daily added more and more Converts to his Infant-Chriſtian Church. *Learn hence*, That the work of a thorough and ſaving Converſion upon the Hearts, and in the Lives of Men, is God's Work. It was not the mighty ruſhing Wind, nor the Miracle of the fiery cloven Tongues, nor St. *Peter*'s Sermon, not any of theſe, nor all of theſe, that did or could alone produce this great effect without God and the internal Operation of his Holy Spirit. Therefore it is expreſly ſaid, that the Lord added to the Church; not St. *Peter*, nor all the Apoſtles. *Yet Note*, 2. That tho' God and his Holy Spirit be the Author and efficient Cauſe, yet the Preaching of the Goſpel, and an exemplary Converſation agreeable thereunto, were the ſubordinate Helps and inſtrumental Means conducing thereunto. *They continued daily in the Temple, and breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe did eat their Meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of Heart. And thereby, the Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.*

CHAP. III.

The Conſtituting of the firſt Goſpel-Church, we had recorded in the former Chapters. The firſt Perſecution raiſed againſt that Church, is here related in this and the next Chapter, together with the occaſion of it; which was, St. Peter*'s healing the lame Beggar. No ſooner was the Primitive Church planted, tho' miraculouſly, but a Perſecution is ſtirred up againſt it, moſt maliciouſly to root it up and lay it waſte: Wherever God has his Church, the Devil will be ſure to ſet up his Chappel*; Not a Chappel of Eaſe for the Saints, but a Chappel of Service for himſelf. *Hoping at once to ſtrengthen the Walls of his own Kingdom, and to raze the Foundation of Chriſt's Church, which yet the* Gates of Hell ſhall never *fully nor finally* prevail againſt.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

Obſerve here, 1. The remarkable Diligence and Induſtry of St. *Peter* and the other Apoſtles in Preaching the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, At the third hour of the day on the Feaſt of Pentecoſt; that is, at nine a clock in the morning St. *Peter* Preached a Sermon, *chap.* 2. 14. Which by the Bleſſing of the Holy Spirit accompanying it, Converted Three Thouſand Souls. Here, at Three a Clock in the Afternoon on the ſame Day, (as the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* Notes) He Preached a ſecond Sermon which Converts Five Thouſand more. This affords at once a good Preſident and a good Encouragement to the Apoſtles Succeſſors, the Miniſters of Chriſt to the end of the World, for Preaching twice upon the Lord's Day: If in the room of Three and Five Thouſand Souls we be inſtrumental for the Converſion of one ſingle Soul, it is infinitely worth the indefatigable Pains and Diligence of our whole Lives. *Obſerve*, 2. The place which the Apoſtle Preaches in the *Temple*; thither the Apoſtle went, not to offer Sacrifice, but to inform the *Jews*, that the Law of Sacrifices was now aboliſhed by the death of Chriſt; not to communicate with them in their antiquated Worſhip, but that they might have a larger Field to ſow the Seed of the Goſpel in. *Obſerve*, 3. The Circumſtance of time, *at the hour of Prayer.* In all Ages, ſince God had a Church in the World there has been ſtated times and places for Solemn Publick Worſhip; by which means a ſenſe of God and Religion has been preſerved and kept up in the World, which otherwiſe would be in danger of being loſt. The Worſhip of God in the Cloſet will not do this, becauſe it is unſeen; but ſtated, ſolemn, publick Worſhip glorifies God moſt, and he accepts it beſt, *Pſal.* 87. 2. *The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of* Jacob. *The Apoſtles' went up together into the Temple at the hour of Prayer.* Sine ſtationibus non ſtaret mundus.

2 And a certain man lame from his mothers womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. 3 Who ſeeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. 4 And Peter faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them.

Obſerve here, 1. The Condition of this Perſon. 1. He was poor, even to Beggery; but Poverty is no ſign of God's diſfavour, nor doth exclude any from partaking of the beſt of Bleſſings. 2. He was born a Cripple, not lamed by Caſualty or Accident, but lame from his Mother's Womb. 3. He had continued a Cripple Forty Years. *chap.* 4. 22. *The Man was above forty years old, on whom this Miracle of healing was ſhewed.* Conſequently the Cure was the harder, and the Perſon cured the more credible Witneſs againſt them that cavilled at his Cure. *Obſerve*, 2. The wonderful Mercy and Goodneſs of God towards this poor Cripple: his Miſeries and Calamities, his Lameneſs and Poverty, are over-rul'd by God for good to him: Even for the beſt good. *Namely*, For bringing him to the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and Salvation by him. Oh! How good is God, at making up all our Loſſes, and exceeding not only our deſerts, but our Expectations alſo! This poor Man only begg'd an Alms, God gives him his Limbs; yea, gives him his Son, and Salvation by him. Thus we receive of God daily more than we can either ask or think. *Obſerve*, 3. The Apoſtle's advice to the lame Man, and his ready compliance with that advice. *Look on us*, ſays St. *Peter*, he doth not ſay, Believe on us, but *look on us*, and believe on Chriſt. This the Apoſtle ſpake to quicken his attention and excite his hope. As if St. *Peter* had ſaid, You look upon many others as able to relieve your Neceſſities, now *look on us*, and ſee what we can do for you; accordingly he faſtened his Eyes upon the Apoſtles; and beheld them as expectant of relief. *Here Note*, 1. The great Mercy of God that was mingled with this poor Man's Afflictions; tho' he was Lame he was not Blind. He could and did ſteadfaſtly behold the Apoſtles with a fixed Eye both of Body and Mind. *Note*, 2. That what the Cripple could do, he muſt, and did do, towards his own healing; he could not move a Foot, but he could fix his Eye. We are Spiritual Cripples, labouring under a Moral Impotency: Being *without ſtrength*; *Rom.* 5. 6. But God expects the exerciſe of our Faculties, and the uſe of our endeavours in order to our recovery, help and healing; as the Cripple looked up to the Apoſtles, ſo may we look up to the Miniſters of God; hear them and apply to them, place our ſelves under the Word diſperſed by them; for he that made us without our ſelves will never ſave us without our ſelves; but we muſt *work out our own Salvation*; Phil. 2. 12.

6 Then Peter ſaid, Silver and gold have I none, but ſuch as I have give I thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lift him up, and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength. 8 And he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entred with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praiſing God.

Obſerve here, 1. The Poverty of this great Apoſtle St. *Peter*, and his Holy Contempt of the World; Silver and Gold he had none, his pretended Succeſſor the Pope upon his Election ſays the ſame; but with as little Sincerity as he ſays, *Nolo Epiſcopari*: The Apoſtle's Poverty was real, not Fictitious. The Holieſt, the Wiſeſt, and beſt Men, are ſeldom the Wealthieſt. *Silver and Gold I have none, but ſuch as I have I give:* As if he had ſaid, I have no Money to give thee, but that which is better than Money: I have received Power from Chriſt to cure and heal Diſeaſes, and having received it freely, I will give it freely. Therefore, *in the name of Jeſus*, that is, by the Power of Jeſus, whom in Contempt you call Jeſus of *Nazareth*, be healed, riſe up and walk. *Obſerve*, 2. The Nature of the Miracle here wrought; it was, 1. Publick and open, not done in a corner, but before all the People at a publick time, (*Pentecoſt*) and at a publick Place, (the Gates of the Temple.) The Miracles, that is, the lying Wonders wrought in the Church of *Rome*, will not bear the Light. Miracles are by them moſt pretended, to, where People are moſt Ignorant; and a dark Shop is fitteſt for their falſe Wares. 2. Inſtantaneous and ſudden; *Immediately his Feet and Ankle-bones received ſtrength.* This evidently ſhewed it to be God's Work, he was perfectly cured and inſtantly cured, tho' he was lame from his Birth, and had continued lame above forty years. All things are eaſie, yea, equally eaſie to an Almighty Power, if God ſpeaks but the Word, the Lame ſhall leap as an Hart, *Iſa.* 35. 6. *Obſerve*, 3. The Humility and Faith of this Great Apoſtle diſcovered in the manner of the Cure, *his Humility* in not diſdaining to touch and take hold of and lift up this poor Cripple from the ground; *his Faith* in being fully perſwaded of Chriſt's Preſence, relying upon his Power, and depending upon his Promiſe, *Mark.* 16. 18. They ſhall lay hands on the Sick and they ſhall recover. The Apoſtles had not a Power at their pleaſure to work Miracles; but when God pleaſed to work them he made it known to them by Inſpiration, and put them upon it. *Obſerve*, 4. How the poor Cripple piouſly aſcribes the praiſe of this Miracle to God only; *he leaped and praiſed God*, not the Apoſtles. No Inſtrument muſt rob God of his Glory; we may pay and gratifie the Meſſenger, but muſt return our prime and principal Thanks to our Benefactor. No doubt the Cripple returned Thanks to the Apoſtle, but his Prayers unto God only, to conceal God's Mercies is Ingratitude, to attribute them to ſecond cauſes is Sacriledge.

9 And all the people ſaw him walking and praiſing God. 10 And they knew that it was he which ſate for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man, which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomons, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter ſaw it, he anſwered unto the people, ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this Man to walk.

Obſerve here, 1. As ſoon as ever the poor Cripple received ſtrength, all the People behold him praiſing and bleſſing God. *Learn thence*, That the very firſt appearances of the Power and Mercy of God towards our ſelves or any of ours, ſhould put us upon the works of Praiſe and Rejoycing. We truly ſay, better late than never, but 'tis beſt to be early in every good work, eſpecially in the nobleſt and moſt Angelical Work, *Namely*, That of Thankſgiving and Praiſe. *My Voice ſhalt thou hear* (ſays David) *betimes in the morning*, my praying Voice, my praiſing Voice. *Ob*. 2. The influence and effect which this Miracle had upon the minds of the multitude; it occaſioned Wonder, but did not produce Faith. *They wondered*, but not believed. Miracles will confirm Faith, but not alone beget it. The Spirits extraordinary works may produce Aſtoniſhment, but it is the work of the Spirit that muſt produce Faith. *Ob*. 3. How the Apoſtle abaſeth himſelf and his Fellow Diſciples, that he might exalt Chriſt; he will not ſuffer the leaſt part of the Praiſe and Glory of this Miracle to ſtick to their own Fingers, but give it all to Chriſt. Think not *that we by our own Power and Holineſs have made this Man to walk*. The *Jews* had a conceit, that extraordinary Holineſs would enable a Man to work Miracles. The Apoſtle denies it: For tho' there be a great difference betwixt miraculous Faith and juſtifying Faith, yet true juſtifying Faith has a Miracle in it, tho' not ſo obvious to ſenſe, requiring the ſame Power to work it in us, which raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, *Eph*. 1. 11. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's Power, not his Apoſtles Holineſs was the cauſe of all the Miracles that were wrought by them. *Why look ye ſo earneſtly upon us, as tho' by our Holineſs we had made this Man to walk. Thro' Faith in his Name, is this Man made ſtrong*, ver. 16.

13 The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his ſon Jeſus whom ye delivered up and denied him in the preſence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the holy one, and the juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you. 15 And killed the prince of life, whom God hath raiſed from the dead, whereof we are witneſſes. 16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong, whom ye ſee and know: yea the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all.

Obſerve here, 1. How St. *Peter* lays hold upon this opportunity (when the People were gathered together to gaze upon this lame Beggar) to preach a ſecond awakening Sermon to the *Jews*; in which he rebukes them ſharply for their curſed Contempt of Chriſt, and the horrible Indignities offered to him. 1. They denied him, tho' he was an Holy and Juſt one. 2. They delivered him up to *Pilate*, when he was inclined to let him go. 3. They preferred *Barabbas*, the worſt of Men, and a Murderer, before Jeſus, the beſt of Men, and a Saviour. 4. They murder'd the Meſſias, called *the Prince of Life*; becauſe he came to bring Life into the World. *Where Note*, That tho' probably none of the *Jews* then and there preſent did actually nail Chriſt unto his Croſs, yet they having given their conſent unto it, they are charged with *killing the Lord of Life*. A plenary and full Conſent to the Sins of others, makes us deeply guilty of other Sins, *Ver*. 15. *Ye delivered up and denied the holy one; ye Crucified the Lord of Life*. *Obſerve*, 2. How St. *Peter* aſcribes the whole of this Miracle to the Power of Faith: *Verſe* 16. *Through Faith in his Name, and the Faith which is by him hath given this Man perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all*. Faith is twice named in this one Verſe, becauſe of the Apoſtle's Faith in working the Miracle, and the Cripple's Faith in receiving of it, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*: But queſtionleſs it was chiefly the Apoſtle's Faith, for the lame Man ſhewed no Faith in Chriſt before he was healed, he expected an Alms, but little thought of receiving the uſe of his Limbs; but the Apoſtle firmly relying on the Power and Promiſe of Chriſt for healing, did believe that Chriſt could and would help and heal him. *Learn hence*, That as it is the Property and Prerogative of God to do great things, it is the Duty and Property of Faith to expect great things from God; great expectations from God, Honour the greatneſs of God: We diſhonour God as much or more when we believe little, as when we do little. A great God and a ſmall Faith ſuit not well together; accordingly St. *Peter* here, knowing the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt's Power, exerts ſtrength of Faith, and through Faith in the name of Chriſt, makes this Man whole.

17 And now, brethren, I wot what through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers. 18 But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. How careful the Apoſtle was, not to drive theſe Murderers of Chriſt (and conſequently the worſt of Men) to deſpair, but to draw them to Repentance; in order to which, 1. He mitigates their Sin, imputing it rather to Ignorance and blind Zeal than to Malice. 2. He is ſo Charitable as to impute it to the Ignorance of the Phariſees their Rulers alſo. 3. He calls them Brethren, tho' guilty of ſo great a miſtake in their Judgment, and fault in their Practice. *Now Brethren, I wot that thro' Ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your Rulers. Learn hence*, That God uſed the Ignorance of ſome and Malice of others for his own glorious Ends, in accompliſhing the fore-ordained and fore-told death of our dear Redeemer. *Ob*. 2. St. *Peter* acquaints them (to keep them from deſpair) that God has decreed the Sufferings of Chriſt for Man, and by his Prophets fore-told them, who as they ſpake by one Spirit, did all ſpeak the ſame things as if they had all ſpoken out of one Mouth. So that what the *Jews* did, he tells them, was (though unknown to them) a fulfilling of ancient Propheſies and Promiſes for Man's Redemption. *Thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he has now fulfilled*. The Death and Sufferings of Chriſt, with all the Circumſtances relating thereunto, were all ordained by God, and fore-told by the Prophets, which tho' it doth not excuſe his Murderers from the Guilt of a dreadful Sin; yet may be improved as an Argument to keep them from deſpair. *What God before had ſhewed he hath now fulfilled*.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.

The Apoſtle like a wiſe Phyſician having diſcovered to the *Jews* the danger of their Diſeaſe in the fore-going Verſes; now directs them to the only effectual Remedy, *viz*. Repentance; *Repent and be Converted*. That is, Repent of your rejecting Jeſus Chriſt, and be converted to true Chriſtianity. To repent doth denote a change in the Mind and Judgment, and to be Converted a change in the Life and Converſation. The Exhortation doth denote our Duty, and ſuppoſes our Ability alſo, by the Aſſiſtance of that Grace, which will never be wanting to ſincere Endeavours. They were Subjects Recipient of that *Vis gratiæ vorticordiæ*; as St. *Auſtin* calls it, the Heart-changing-power of the Grace of God, which could and did enable them to convert and turn to God. *Note farther*, How this Duty of Repentance is urged from the Effect, and Fruit, and profitable Conſequents of it. 1. *Your Sins ſhall be blotted out*, a Metaphor taken from Creditors which have their Books of Accounts in which all Debts and Reckonings are ſet down. 2. *The times of the refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord*; by which ſome underſtand more generally the times of the Goſpel, others more particularly underſtand it of the time of *Jeruſalems* deſtruction, as if St. *Peter* had ſaid: Know, O my Brethren, that the time of Chriſt's coming to *Jeruſalem* to execute Vengeance on his Murtherers, is now at Hand! Repent therefore ſpeedily of what you have done! That thoſe dreadful days to his Enemies may be days of refreſhing to you; but the days of refreſhing are thought by moſt to ſignifie the day of Judgment, which will be a day of refreſhing to all penitent Sinners; becauſe they ſhall then enjoy a compleat and full Abſolution from all their Sins. *Note here*, 1. That Almighty God has his Book of Remembrance in which he writes down all the Sins which every Perſon commits in order to their Accuſation and Charge. 2. That it is the great Wiſdom, Intereſt and Duty of every Perſon to take care that he gets his Sins now blotted out of God's Debt Book, as ever he hopes that the reckoning day may be a day of refreſhing to him. 3. That without Repentance, Converſion and turning unto God, there will be no Forgiveneſs, Comfort, or Refreſhment from him. *Repent that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhment may come.* 4. That a compleat Abſolution and full Diſcharge from all Sin is not enjoyed, till the day of Judgment. We are in this Life continually ſubject to new Sins; and conſequently are daily contracting new Guilt, whereby ariſe new Fears; ſo that a Soul has not a full reſt till the final Abſolution be pronounced at that ſolemn day.

20 And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt which before was preached unto you. 21 Whom the heaven muſt receive, until the times of reſtitution of all things which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, ſince the world began.

Here St. *Peter* enforces his Exhortation to Repentance with a ſtrong motive: Namely, The certainty of Chriſt's coming to judge the World; *God ſhall ſend Jeſus:* This Jeſus whom we Preach to you, viſibly, to Juſtifie and Glorifie all penitent and pardoned Sinners, whom yet *the Heavens muſt contain till the reſtitution of all things.* That is, to the end of the World, when the whole Creation which now groaneth will be delivered, and Man particularly reſtored to God, to himſelf, and to a bleſſed Immortality. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt, being aſcended into Heaven in our Humane Nature, ſhall abide and continue there until the Reſtitution of all things, and his corporal Preſence here on Earth is not to be expected, until he has put all his Enemies under his Feet. Now if his Body be, and muſt continue in Heaven, ſurely then it is not in the Sacrament as the Papiſts Dream; who aſcribe to Chriſt's Humane Nature the property of a Godhead; namely, to be in ten Thouſand Places at one and the ſame time, contrary to the Nature of an Humane Body. If the Heavens muſt contain Chriſt, Chriſt muſt be contained in Heaven, and then his preſence in the Sacrament, doth not draw him from Heaven; his bodily preſence is in Heaven, his Spiritual Preſence with his People in the Sacrament.

22 For Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, a prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. 23 And it ſhall come to paſs, that every ſoul which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people.

Theſe Words are recorded, *Deut.* 18. 15. And hereby St. *Peter* pertinently applied unto Chriſt, to convince the unbelieving *Jews*, that he is the true and only Meſſiah, the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church, whoſe Doctrine it was highly dangerous to condemn, tho' out of the Mouth of ſuch contemptible Perſons as he and St. *John* appeared to be unto them. *Where Note*, 1. Chriſt according to his Prophetick Office largely deſcribed, and that three ways. 1. By his Title, a Prophet, one that by Office is to declare the whole Will of God to Man. 2. By his Type, a Prophet like unto *Moſes*: One that went between God and the People as *Moſes* did; carrying God's Mind to them, and returning their Mind to God. As *Moſes* was faithful in the execution of his Office, ſo was Chriſt. As *Moſes* confirmed his Doctrine by Miracles, ſo did Chriſt. As *Moſes* brought *Iſrael* out of literal *Egypt*, ſo Chriſt brings us out of Spiritual *Egypt*, whereof the *Egyptian* Bondage was a Figure. 3. By his Stock and Original, from which according to the Fleſh he ſprang, *I will raiſe him up from among thy Brethren.* Chriſt honoured the Nation of the *Jews*, and the Tribe of *Judah* with his Nativity. Thus this great Prophet is deſcribed. *Note*, 2. A ſtrict injunction to hear and obey this great Prophet, hear him only, hear him univerſally. The word (*him*) is to be underſtood excluſively, him and none but him; that is, in the ſame manner that we hear him: *Him* for his own Authority ſake, his Miniſters for his ſake, as ſpeaking from him, and in his Name: And we muſt hear him univerſally in all things, every Command is to be obeyed, none to be diſputed. Be the Duty commanded never ſo difficult, and the Sin forbidden never ſo tempting. *Note*, 3. A ſevere Commination, *The Soul that will not hear ſhall be cut off.* That is, God will ſeverely revenge himſelf upon the ſtubborn and diſobedient. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is conſtituted and appointed by God to be the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church. He reveals the Will of God perfectly, powerfully, perſwaſively, plainly and infallibly. *Learn* 2. That it is the Duty of all to hear and obey the voice of this great Prophet, and this under the penalty of eternal Deſtruction, *Every Soul that will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the People.*

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days.

That is, all the Prophets from *Moſes* to *Samuel*, and particularly *Iſaiah* the Evangelical Prophet did foretel the coming and Kingdom of the Meſſias, the ſpecial Mercies to them that believe on him, and the deſtruction of thoſe that reject him. *Where Note*, That *Samuel* is mentioned as the firſt Prophet after *Moſes*; altho' there were ſeveral intervening Prophets between them, becauſe he was the firſt Prophet after *Moſes* that wrote his Propheſie, and firſt erected the Schools of the Prophets. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt was the ſum of the Law as well as the ſubſtance of the Goſpel; all the Legal Sacrifices pointed at him, all the Prophets Propheſied of him, and received their Completion in him. He was *Abel's* Sacrifice, *Iſaac's* Ram, *Iſaiah's* Emanuel, *Daniel's* Holy one, *Zachary's* Branch, and *Malachy's* Angel.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed.

Still obſerve, how ſweetly St. *Peter* invites and encourages theſe Murtherers of Chriſt to Repentance; the worſt of Men muſt neither be driven to deſpair, nor be too haſtily deſpaired of: He tells them they were the Poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, with whom God firſt entred into Covenant, and conſequently they were Children of the Covenant, and alſo Children of the Prophets: That is, the People to whom God primarily and chiefly ſent the Prophets. So great were the Prerogatives of the *Jews*, that they are called Children of the Prophets, Children of the Promiſe, Children of the Covenant, Children of the Kingdom. But the higher a People are exalted by ſpiritual Privileges, the lower they fall if they miſcarry.

26 Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his ſon Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Note here, 1. That the offer of Jeſus Chriſt and eternal Salvation by him was firſt made to the People of the *Jews*, becauſe they were the Children of the Covenant, that is, the only People in viſible Communion with God throughout the whole World. *Note*, 2. The benefit offered; God's Son is raiſed up; that is, either, 1. Authorized, Conſecrated and Appointed to be a Saviour, or, 2. Raiſed from the Grave. You Crucified him with wicked Hands; but behold the Divine Clemency! he is firſt offered to you his Crucifiers, God has ſent his Son in the Preaching of the Goſpel firſt to you; and this not to take Vengeance on you, but to bleſs you: He being the great High Prieſt, bleſſes you Authoritatively and Effectually; and the Bleſſing he diſpenſes is not a Temporal Bleſſing as you expected, a pompous Meſſiah, a Secular Kingdom, but Spiritual, in turning Souls from Sin to God: He offers to bleſs you by turning every one of you from your Iniquities. *Learn hence*, 1. That it is Chriſt's proper Work to turn Sinners from their Iniquities. Oh! That we would all ſubſerve Chriſt in that great Work! he is the principal Agent. Let us be ſubordinate Inſtruments, by practiſing Holineſs our ſelves, and promoting Holineſs in others. *Learn*, 2. That to be turned by Chriſt from our Iniquities, is the greateſt Bleſſing we can receive from him; becauſe 'tis a Spiritual Bleſſing, a fundamental Bleſſing, a comprehenſive Bleſſing, an endearing Bleſſing, an everlaſting Bleſſing.

CHAP. IV.

The foregoing Chapter gave us an account of a miraculous Cure wrought by the Apoſtles upon a Cripple that was Lame from his Birth. This Chapter acquaints us how exceedingly the Governors both in Church and State were offended and inraged thereat, to ſuch a degree that they Impriſon the Apoſtles; and raiſe a Perſecution againſt the Church: Which yet God over-ruled for his own Glory and his Churches encreaſe. This Infant-Goſpel-Church in the time of the Apoſtles, being like unto the Infant-Jewiſh Church on Egypt *in the days of* Moſes. *The more the Church was moleſted the more ſhe multiplied, the more they were oppreſſed, the more they encreaſed.*

AND as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts and the captain of the temple, and the Sadduces came upon them. 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead. 3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even tide. 4 Howbeit, many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thouſand.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Apoſtles Preaching and Inſtructing the People ſtirs up the Devil's Rage, and brings upon themſelves a ſevere Perſecution. Well might *Luther* ſay, *Quid eſt Evangelium prædicare, niſi in nos furorum Diaboli derivare.* At the Preaching of the Goſpel the Gates of Satan's Priſon flie open, and the Walls of his Kingdom are ſhaken, he finds himſelf in danger of loſing his Principality: No wonder then that he raiſes all the powers of Hell, and ſtirs up all his Inſtruments on Earth, to ſtop the Mouths of the Preachers of the Goſpel. *Obſerve,* 2. The Perſons by whom, and the cauſe for which this Perſecution was now ſtirred up againſt the Apoſtles: *Namely,* The *Jewiſh* Prieſts, the *Gentile* Captain, and the Sottiſh *Sadducees. As they ſpake, the Captain of the Temple, the Prieſts and Sadducees came upon them.* Theſe were diſtinct Perſons, and they were differently diſtaſted, *the Captain* who was placed with a band of Soldiers near the Temple to Guard it, he was offended for fear of a Tumult from ſuch a vaſt appearance of People as came to ſee the recovered Cripple. The *Prieſts* they were offended becauſe the Apoſtles being private Men, went about publickly to teach and inſtruct the People, not conſidering the extraordinary Calling which the Apoſtles had. *The Sadducees* they were diſpleaſed becauſe they Preached the Reſurrection from the dead, a Doctrine which they denied; and becauſe they Preached through Jeſus the Reſurrection from the dead, that is, through the Power and Efficacy of Jeſus: Aſſerting Chriſt to be both the efficient and alſo the exemplary cauſe of the Reſurrection, and inferring from Chriſt's Reſurrection that all his Followers ſhould ariſe with him and like unto him. *Obſerve,* 3. How far God ſuffered theſe Perſecutors and this Perſecution to proceed; *They laid hands upon them, and put them in hold.* How eaſily might this band of Soldiers have taken away the Lives as well as Impriſon the Bodies of the Apoſtles; but God reſtrained them, and led on the Apoſtles to their Suffering gradually; they were yet but young Pupils in Chriſt's School; therefore they ſhall not have tryals beyond their ſtrength. God will not call his Servants to a Martyr's Fire, till he has firſt endued them with a Martyr's Faith; for this reaſon God ſuffered not the Storm of Perſecution to break forth with over much Violence upon this new planted Church at firſt. *Obſerve,* 4. What was the event of that Violence which was now offered to the Apoſtles, God over-ruled it for his Churches advantage, and a wonderful encreaſe by a new Addition of five Thouſand Souls more added to it. Oh! Wonderful draught of Fiſh at the ſecond caſting out of the Goſpel-Net: Theſe Fiſhermen, *Peter and John,* now became by the help of the Holy Spirit Fiſhers of Men according to their Maſter's Prediction, St. *Matth.* 4. 19. Follow me, and I will make you Fiſhers of Men. *Many which heard the word believed, and the number of them was about five thouſand,* ver. 4. This Infant Church flouriſh'd the more by the frownings of Men upon her. *Plures efficimur, quoties metimur ab illis,* Tertull. Like a green Meadow, which being Mown the oftner, ſprings the faſter and comes the thicker.

5 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and ſcribes, 6 And Annas the high prieſt, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high prieſt, were gathered together at Jeruſalem. 7 And when they had ſet them in the midſt, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this? 8 Then Peter filled with the holy Ghoſt, ſaid unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. 11 This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

Obſerve here, 1. What a combined force did unite and join together of *Rulers, Scribes, Elders, High Prieſts, High Prieſts Kindred,* and who not: they all, tho' of different Intereſts, yet hold together as one, to extinguiſh and put out the light of the Goſpel, as ſoon as ever it began to Shine forth. Need we wonder that the Devil ſtruggled ſo hard at the dawning of the Reformation to blow out the light of the Goſpel; when we conſider what oppoſition he diſcovered againſt the firſt Plantation and Propagation of the Goſpel. As *Herod* would have ſtrangled Chriſt in his Cradle, ſo would the High Prieſts have ſtifled Chriſtianity in its Infancy. *They all gathered together at Jeruſalem.* Sad! That a Meſſage of ſuch Glad Tidings, as the Goſpel, ſhould meet with ſo bad entertainment. *Obſerve,* 2. How the Apoſtles are here Arraigned and Queſtioned by what *Name* and *Authority.* That is, by what Power or Vertue they had done this; ſome think they ſuſpected the Apoſtles to have wrought by the Black-Art, being aſſiſted by the Devil. But did not this Miracle give a ſufficient convincing Light to demonſtrate that it was Heaven-born, and ſhewed evidently that it was wrought by a Supernatural and Divine Power. Curſed Men! Who accounting it a Credit for themſelves to do Evil, make it a Crime for the Apoſtles to do Good; was there any reaſon for their asking by *what Power,* when the thing it ſelf proclaimed it to be done by the Power of God. *Obſerve,* 3. The bold and reſolute Anſwer of St. *Peter* to the foregoing Malicious and Ridiculous Queſtion. *Where Note,* 1. His Holy Courage. 2. The cauſe of it, *He was filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* In the 5th and 6th *Verſes,* we find a full Bench, not of Juſtices but of profeſſed Enemies, enough to have daſht Ten Priſoners at the Bar out of Countenance. But behold; the ingenuous and Holy boldneſs of a Good Chriſtian in a good Cauſe. St. *Peter,* who formerly when full of himſelf was baffled by a Damſel, and Frighted into a denial of Chriſt by a ſilly Wench, now being *Filled with the Holy Ghoſt,* Silences and Confounds his moſt Potent and Malicious Accuſers. Lord! How wofully weak are we when we rely on our own ſtrength, but how able to do all things, when Chriſt ſtrengthens us. *In te ſtas & non ſtas,* ſays St. *Auſtin.* Thou art ſure to come down when thou ſtandeſt on thine own Legs; but ſhalt be mightily upheld and carried on, when ſupported and conducted by God's Hand. *Obſerve,* 4. A ſingular Inſtance of the Apoſtle's Boldneſs; Namely, in Preaching Jeſus Chriſt to them that had Impriſoned them. Be it known unto you, that *This Jeſus whom ye Crucified is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you Builders, and is become the head of the Corner, neither is there Salvation in any other,* &c. *Where Note,* 1. The Title given to the Teachers of the *Jewiſh* Church; *Builders:* So they were by Office and here are called ſo, to remind them of their Duty; Namely, to encreaſe, ſtrengthen and beautifie the Building, *The Church of God;* not to demoliſh, weaken or deface it. *Note,* 2. The contempt which theſe *Builders* caſt upon *Chriſt the chief corner-ſtone;* they refuſed him and ſet him at nought, according to the Propheſie, *Pſal.* 118. 22. which was a Propheſie of the Rejection of the Meſſiah, tho' the *Jews* would not ſo underſtand it, for they Dreamt of ſuch a Pompous Meſſias coming according to their Hearts deſire, as it ſhould be incredible that any *Jews* ſhould ever Reject or Deſpiſe him. *Note,* 3. The Title given to Chriſt, *the corner-ſtone;* ſo called, becauſe he ſupports and ſuſtains the whole Building, and as the corner Stone is equally Neceſſary for both ſides of the Building, which are united to it, and born up by it, in like manner both *Jew* and *Gentile* are united in Chriſt and ſaved by him.

12 Neither is there ſalvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.

Obſerve here, 1. A poſitive Aſſertion, that there is no Salvation but by Chriſt; or, that beſides or without him there is no poſſibility of Salvation, either for *Jew* or *Gentile,* both thoſe under the Old Teſtament had, and we under the New Teſtament have one and the ſame common Saviour. *Obſerve,* 2. The Ground and Reaſon of this confident Aſſertion, that there is no Salvation but by Chriſt; Namely, becauſe *there is no other name given under Heaven by which we muſt be ſaved.* That is, no other Perſon, Deſigned or Appointed by God, to be the Author of Redemption to, and procurer of Salvation for a loſt and miſerable World, but only Chriſt. Take we good heed then, that we do not reject or ſet him at nought; for in rejecting of Chriſt, we reject the Wiſdom of God, the Authority of God, the Love of God, yea, the Salvation of God.

13 Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jeſus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them, they could ſay nothing againſt it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conferred among themſelves. 16 Saying, What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it ſpread no further among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. How convincing the boldneſs of the Apoſtles was, together with the undeniable evidence of the Miracle wrought by them: When the Council obſerved both, they marvelled, the Apoſtles being unlearned Men, yet now able to ſpeak all Languages, and the Cripple, Born Lame, now able to leap and walk. Theſe Men were Convinced but not Converted, Silenced but not Satisfied, they Marvelled but not Believed, they were full of Admiration, but far from Faith. The Evidence of the Fact, with the courage of the Apoſtles, ſtopt their Mouths at preſent, but did not cure their hard Hearts. *Obſerve,* 2. At what a Non-plus the Council was, to know what to do with the Apoſtles, they confeſs the Miracle, but conſult upon Ways and Means how to conceal it; and at laſt conclude upon threatning them, that for time to come they ſpeak no more in the Name of Jeſus. That is, Not to Preach in his Name, nor work Miracles by a Power and Authority derived pretendedly from him. But the Apoſtles ſoon let them underſtand, that they eſteemed not the Threatnings of the Council, nor looked upon them as any excuſe for the forbearing of their Duty, as appeareth by the next Words.

19 But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard.

Obſerve here, The Prudence and Integrity of the Apoſtles in referring it back to the Judgment of their very Adverſaries, whether it were reaſonable to obey their commands, when they charged them to Preach no more in the Name of the Lord Jeſus: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid; we have received a command from God to Preach. *Go teach all Nations,* Matth. 28. 19. and we have received a command from you not to Preach: Now we leave it with you, whether it be fitteſt, and moſt reaſonable to obey God or you: It is a ſtrong way of Conviction to refer a matter to their Judgment and Conſcience againſt whom we make Oppoſition. *Learn,* That when the commands of God's Vice-gerents run counter to the commands of God himſelf, God is to be obeyed and not Man.

21 So when they had further threatned them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them, becauſe of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed. 23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lift up their voices to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou art God, which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt. 27 For of a truth againſt the holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gathered together, 28 For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done. 29 And now Lord, behold their threatnings: and grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word. 30 By ſtretching forth thine hand to heal: and that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jeſus.

Here Obſerve, 1. That notwithſtanding this rational Plea which the Apoſtles uſed: The Council added further Threatnings and ſo diſmiſt them; *becauſe of the People,* who looked upon the Miracle with Admiration, and glorified God for working it by the Apoſtles Hands: *Where Note,* That it was not the ſenſe of Sin, nor any apprehenſion of God's Diſpleaſure that influenced the Council to ſet the Apoſtles at liberty; but either the fear or favour of the People. Thus God made the People a reſtraint to the Rulers Rage. *Obſerve,* 2. That the Apoſtles thus diſmiſt, went immediately to their own Company, (that is, to the Hundred and Twenty mentioned, *chap* 1. 15.) and acquainted them both with their Danger and Deliverance, the better to prepare them for Sufferings, and encourage them to hope for the like ſupport under them. *Obſerve,* 3. What uſe the Church makes thereof; they hearing how their Enemies lay in wait to Perſecute and Deſtroy them, apply themſelves to God by fervent Prayer. *Thence learn,* That it is the Churches Duty when Enemies combine together to do Miſchief, to give themſelves much unto Prayer. Thus did the Church here, and the like, *chap.* 12. *Obſerve,* 4. The Prayer it ſelf, which they jointly put up at the Throne of Grace, with one Heart and Spirit: *And here Note,* 1. They begin their Prayer with Invocation and Reverend Compellation, ſuitable to their preſent Sufferings; adoring God's Omnipotency in Creating and Governing of the World. *Lord! Thou art God who haſt made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all that is therein.* *Whence learn,* That the Power and Wiſdom of God in Creating and Governing the World, and doth afford ſingular Support and Comfort under the ſenſe of preſent or future Sufferings. He that made all things by his Power, will over-rule all things by his Providence, for his own Glory and his Churches Good. *Note,* 2. The *Apoſtles* uſed Scripture-Language and Expreſſions in their Prayer; they allude to *Pſal.* 2. And acknowledge that all that inraged Malice of Men and Devils againſt the Meſſias, which was foretold long ago by the Prophet *David,* was now come to paſs: For both the *Jewiſh* Council and the *Roman* Governours had combined together againſt Chriſt, and in oppoſing him, had oppoſed the Father that ſent him. *Of a truth againſt thy Holy Child Jeſus, are they gathered together, to do what thy Hand and thy Council had determined before to be done.*

Where we ſee, 1. That all the Sufferings of Chriſt were Fore-ordained and determined by God the Father; God from all Eternity decreed that Chriſt ſhould die a Sacrifice for Sin. 2. That this Decree of God did not neceſſitate the *Jews* to Sin; but they acted Freely and Voluntarily, according to the wicked Determinations of their own Wills: God foreſaw and permitted it, but no ways influenced or compelled them to it. He over-ruled thoſe Evil Inſtruments to fulfil his Holy Purpoſes, while they intended only to fulfil their own wicked Councils. *Obſerve Laſtly*, They cloſe their Prayer with a fervent Petition, that God would ſtrengthen them and Glorifie his Son. 1. That God would ſtrengthen them againſt their Fears; ſteel them with Courage, and fortifie them with impregnable Reſolution. *Grant, that with all boldneſs we may ſpeak thy Word:* Boldneſs to preach the Goſpel (when unjuſtly forbidden) is a ſpecial Gift of God, and a great effect of God's Grace unto his Servants. 2. They Requeſt that God would magnify, (not them) but his Son by them, in giving them power to work Miraculous Cures in the Name of Jeſus, for confirming of the Goſpel-grant: *That Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy Holy Child Jeſus. Where Note*, That the Gift of Miracles, tho' promiſed by Chriſt, is yet prayed for by the *Apoſtles*, God will have the performance of his Promiſes to be the anſwer of our Prayers.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together; and they were all filled with the holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs. 32 And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one ſoul: neither ſaid any of them, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed, was his own, but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes, ſold them, and brought the prizes of the things that were ſold, 35 And laid them down at the apoſtles feet: and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joſes, who by the apoſtles was ſurnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the ſon of conſolation) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus. 37 Having land, ſold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apoſtles feet.

Obſerve here, 1. The ſpecial and ſpeedy anſwer which the Lord gave to the *Apoſtles* Prayer, as a Teſtimony thereof; the place where they prayed is Miraculouſly ſhaken, and many eminent Graces and ſpecial Gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the *Apoſtles*, particularly a greater meaſure of boldneſs to Preach the Goſpel; and as ſome think, the wonderful Gift of conferring the Holy Ghoſt was now conferred upon the Twelve; ſo Dr. *Lightfoot*. The Holy Spirit which cauſed them thus to Pray, gave them that Holy boldneſs which they prayed for, with a ſignal ſhaking of the place which they prayed in. Oh! How ready is God to hear and anſwer the Prayers and Pleadings of his Righteous Servants, eſpecially when ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake. *Obſerve*, 2. The great Unity and happy Unanimity which was found amongſt the Miniſters and Members of this Infant-Church, this pureſt and moſt primitive Chriſtian-Church; *They were of one Heart and of one Soul.* That is, They were one in Doctrine and Opinion, and they were one in Heart and Affection. A ſingular Pattern for ſucceeding Chriſtians to the end of the World; ſo to carry it one towards another, as Members of the ſame Body, and Influenced by the ſame Head. *Obſerve*, 3. As their Unanimity, ſo their Liberality in contributing to the Neceſſities of each other. *They called nothing their own*, when their Brethrens Wants required it; the Rich readily ſold their Poſſeſſions and Goods, to help and relieve the Poor. Notwithſtanding, This Example cannot be a Copy for after-times to follow as a Command, or to imitate as a Perfection: Seeing that ſuch was the State of the Church at that time, as was never ſince, nor like to be; it was but newly Born; it was all in one City; all in a poſſibility to be ſoon ſcattered by Perſecution. *Res quæ erat Temporariæ Neceſſitatis & Liberi Arbitrii non debet in exemptum trahi, multo minus ut Neceſſaria Obtrudi.* The Leſſon to be gathered from this Inſtance for our Inſtruction is this: That thoſe who are of Ability, ought to abound always in Ordinary and ſometimes in extraordinary Acts of Charity. We muſt always relieve the Saints wants as we are able, and ſometimes upon an extraordinary occaſion, above what we are well able. *Obſerve*, 4. How the *Apoſtles* with great Authority and Aſſurance, gave Teſtimony to the Reſurrection of Chriſt and their Doctrine, found great Favour and Acceptation with the People, *Ver.* 33. *With great power gave the Apoſtles witneſs of the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, and great Grace was upon them all.* The Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead, was the great Point now in Controverſie, therefore with evident Miracles and wonderful Gifts of the Holy Spirit, did the Apoſtles perform their Teſtimony of his Reſurrection. So that as Chriſt was declared to the *Apoſtles* to be the Son of God with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead; in like manner the *Apoſtles* by Miracles and wonderful Gifts did bear witneſs to the certainty of our Saviour's Reſurrection, and their Doctrine found acceptance with the People. *Learn hence*, 1 That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by the Almighty Power of his God-head revived and roſe again from the Dead to the Conſternation of his Enemies, and the Conſolation of all Believers. 2. That the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection being not only atteſted by the Preaching, but confirmed by the Miracles of the *Apoſtles*, found deſervedly belief in the World; and is a Point of infallible certainty amongſt all thoſe, whom wilful Obſtinacy has not blinded.

CHAP. V.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ſold a poſſeſſion, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife alſo being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apoſtles feet. 3 But Peter ſaid, Ananias! Why hath ſatan filled thine heart to lie to the holy Ghoſt, and to keep back part of the price of the land. 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own Power? why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God.

The laſt Verſes of the fore-going Chapter, acquainted us with the practiſe of the Primitive Chriſtians, at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel in ſelling their Poſſeſſions for Charitable Uſes, and laying down the Money at the Apoſtles Feet for the Relief of their Fellow-Brethren and Members in Chriſt. Now this Chapter informs us, that according to their Example one *Ananias*, and *Sapphira* his Wife, conſecrated a Poſſeſſion unto God, and ſold the ſame to that purpoſe; but fraudulently kept back part of the Price; and thus as St. *Chryſoſtom* notes, was found ſtealing his own Goods; he had the Formality to ſell his Lands as others did, but had not the Sincerity to part with his Money as others had. *Obſerve here*, 1. The true Nature of *Ananias*'s Sin, it was Sacrilege, that is, a Purloyning or Stealing of that which was conſecrated unto God; not by Actual Performance, but by Vow and inward Purpoſe of Heart, Covetouſneſs and Vain-glory, Lying and Hypocriſie, did all attend and accompany this Sin, but the Sin it ſelf was Sacrilege. *Learn hence*, 1. That what is conſecrated to God muſt not be alienated or applied to other uſes. 2. That ſuch an Alienation is Sacrilege, and a Sin againſt God, being a Breach of Vow or Promiſe made unto him, a Lying unto God, as the Text calls it. 3. That it is an heinous Sin which God will ſeverely puniſh. *Obſerve*, 2. How this ſecret Sin, Lying in the Intention of the Heart, was known to God, and by Divine Revelation made known to St. *Peter*. *Learn thence*, That not only our outward Actions are taken notice of by God, but even the Purpoſes and Intents of our Hearts are all manifeſt and open to him, and throughly underſtood by him. *Obſerve*, 3. How St. *Peter* juſtly aggravates their Sin from the Divinity of the Perſon (the Holy Ghoſt) againſt whom it was committed, *Why hath Satan filled thy Heart to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt? Thou haſt not lyed unto Man, but unto God.* But why is *Ananias* ſaid to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt, rather than to God the Father, or Jeſus Chriſt the Son? *Anſwer*, Either, 1. Becauſe it is the proper Work of the Spirit to ſearch the Heart and to know the

Thoughts and Purpoſes thereof: Or, 2. Becauſe the Wealth brought in to the Apoſtles, and laid at their Feet, was an effect of the Holy Spirit's inclining the Hearts of Believers ſo to do. *Learn hence*, The Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, that he is truly and really God; he whom the Scripture calls the great and true God, is God. But the Scripture calls the Holy Ghoſt, the great and true God, therefore the Holy Ghoſt is God; either the Holy Ghoſt is Man and God's Meſſenger, or God himſelf; but the Antitheſis or Oppoſites ſhew that he is not Man, for ſays the Apoſtle, *thou haſt not lied unto Man*; and if the Holy Ghoſt had been only God's Meſſenger, it had been as great a Sin to lie to *Peter* (he being God's extraordinary Meſſenger) as to lie to the Holy Ghoſt; therefore the Apoſtle in the fourth Verſe doth explain what he meant by Lying to the Holy Ghoſt in the third Verſe, namely, Lying unto God: *Thou haſt not lied unto Man*, a Creature like thy ſelf, *but unto God*, even to the Holy Ghoſt, which is God.

5 And Ananias hearing theſe words, fell down, and gave up the ghoſt: and great fear came on all them that heard theſe things. 6 And the young men aroſe, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the ſpace of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter anſwered unto her, Tell me whether ye ſold the land for ſo much. And ſhe ſaid, Yea, for ſo much. 9 Then Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the ſpirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy huſband, are at the door, and ſhall carry thee out. 10 Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghoſt: and the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her huſband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.

Obſerve here, 1. The Juſtice of the Puniſhment Inflicted upon *Ananias* for his Sin; he is ſtruck dead upon the ſpot for his Sacrilege, Covetouſneſs, Hypocriſie and Lying. Doubtleſs it was a very heinous Sin which God ſo ſeverely puniſhed, and it was the firſt Sin of this kind under the New Teſtament. This was the firſt Conſecration of Goods that ever was made unto Chriſt our Lord, after he was exalted at the Right Hand of God in Heaven; and this was the firſt Sacrilege: the firſt Sin of this kind, and therefore the firſt Perſons that were found guilty of it, met with this Severity (*in Terrorem*) to make all others afraid of it. The firſt Tranſgreſſors in any kind have been made publick Examples. Thus the Angels, before the Jewiſh Church. *Nadab* and *Abihu* at the Beginning of the Jewiſh Church, and here *Ananias* and *Sapphira* at the Beginning of the Chriſtian Church. *Obſerve*, 2. How *Sapphira*, the Wife's Subjection to her Huſband, doth not excuſe her from partaking in his Sin, nor exempt her from the Severity of the Puniſhment. God's Authority in commanding or forbidding, muſt be firſt obſerved and obeyed; otherwiſe we put the Creature in God's place, debaſe him, and ſet up an Idol, which the Jealouſie and Holineſs of God will never endure. *Obſerve*, 3. How the ſame Sin meets with the ſame Puniſhment, Huſband and Wife had here agreed both what to do and what to ſay, and they that ſinned together, ſuffered together; God is no reſpecter of Perſons, Male or Female, Jew or Gentile, Prince or Subject, Huſband or Wife; the Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die: *Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his Feet, and yielded up the Ghoſt*, ver. 10. *Obſerve*, 4. That this miraculous way of puniſhing Offenders with immediate Death by the Apoſtles, was not common; this is the only Inſtance in the New Teſtament of ſo ſevere a Puniſhment inflicted by the Mouth of the Apoſtles for any Sin whatſoever, and it ſeems accommodated and ſuited to that particular Time, in which Magiſtrates were ſo far from defending the Church, that they furthered the Perſecution, and endeavoured the Extirpation of it. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Effect which this Tremendous Miracle had upon the whole Church; it awfully affected them with Fear and Trembling. *Great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.* God's extraordinary Providences, either Judgments or Mercies, towards our ſelves or towards others, ought to affect us with holy Fear, and that hear which works Righteouſneſs, *Iſa.* 26. 9. *When his Judgments are abroad in the earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs*; that is, they ought to do ſo, and if ever they will do it, they will do it then: Judgments work Fear, and Fear works Righteouſneſs.

12 And by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the reſt durſt no man joyn himſelf to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women) 15 Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the leaſt, the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by, might overſhadow ſome of them. 16 There came alſo a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed every one.

Three Things are here obſervable: 1. How that Act of Severity upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira* for their Hypocriſie, is inſtantly ſucceeded with Acts of Clemency and Mercy upon others: The former Act of Severity in the Apoſtles was neceſſary to prevent the Intruſion of Hypocrites into the Chriſtian Church; Theſe ſubſequent Acts of Mercy were as neceſſary for the Propagating of the Goſpel, and to invite People to the Love of Chriſtianity. Accordingly the Apoſtles after the Death of *Ananias* are indued with Power from on High to work Signs and Wonders, to heal Diſeaſes, to caſt out Devils, inſomuch that the People brought forth their Sick into the Streets, and laid them upon Beds and Couches, hoping that the Shadow of *Peter* as he paſt by might reach and recover ſome of them. The Church of *Rome* makes a noiſe with this Text, and produce it to prove St. *Peter*'s Supremacy over the reſt of the Apoſtles, becauſe his very Shadow cured the Diſeaſed. But very groundleſly; for, 1. By the ſame Argument they may prove St. *Peter* to be Superiour to Chriſt himſelf; this being more than what Chriſt himſelf wrought, according to what he foretold; St. *John* 14. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do, &c.* 2. The Papiſts might obſerve, were they not wilfully blind, that the Napkins and Handkerchiefs which were carried from St. *Paul*'s Body, cured Diſeaſes alſo, and diſpoſſeſſed Devils, *Acts* 19. 12. 3. Beſides all this, it is not here expreſly ſaid that any Sick were actually healed by St. *Peter*'s Shadow but that the Diſeaſed were brought in hopes that his Shadow might produce ſuch Effects; and if it did do ſo, Almighty God thereby put Honours upon the Goſpel, and upon all the Apoſtles, without any particular Reſpect, or ſpecial Regard to the Perſon of St. *Peter*. *Obſerve*, 2. The place where the Apoſtles aſſembled to Preach the Goſpel, and work Miracles for the Confirmation of the ſame, *They were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Where Note*, 1. Their Unity and Unanimity; there were no Perſons among them guilty of Schiſmatical Separation in forſaking the Publick Aſſembly; but with one Mouth, as well as with one Mind and Heart, they glorified God. 2. Their prudential Boldneſs and holy Courage appeared in Preaching to the People in *Solomon*'s Porch; for the Sanhedrin, or Great Counſel, ſat in, or very near that place, even that Council which in the former Chapter impriſoned them, and in this beat them. (See *ver.* 40.) *Learn thence*, That nothing better becomes the Miniſters and Meſſengers of Jeſus Chriſt, than an holy and humble, a wiſe and meek, a zealous and convincing Boldneſs, in Aſſerting the Truths of the Goſpel, and in Reproving Sin, and denouncing Judgments againſt impenitent Sinners. Conſider we, how bold and zealous our Lord and Maſter was in his Miniſtry, *Luke* 20. 21. *We know thou teacheſt the way of God truly, and accepteſt not the Perſon of any*; and the Apoſtles learnt the ſame of their Maſter, *Acts* 4. 13. *When the High Prieſts ſaw the Boldneſs of* Peter *and* John, *they took Knowledge of them that they had been with Jeſus. Obſerve*, 3. How God over-ruled the Judgment inflicted upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and cauſed it to work for ſpecial Good. Thus, ſuch of the Apoſtles Hearers who were unſound and inſincere, durſt not joyn themſelves to them, having ſeen a great Inſtance of Severity upon concealed Hypocriſie: They were afraid to come among them any more, or to make a ſhew of ſuch Piety and Zeal as *Ananias* did, for fear of the ſame or ſuch like Puniſhments as he had.

But however the People extoll'd and magnified, admired and applauded them, and Multitudes were daily added to the Church. This ſeems to be the Senſe of *Ver.* 13. *And of the reſt durſt no Man join himſelf to them, but the People magnified them, and Believers were added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men and Women.* Nothing doth more affect and afflict unſound and droſſy Hypocrites, than the ſight of God's Judgments inflicted upon others in this World, and the Fear of the Righteous Judgment of God upon themſelves in the World to come.

17 Then the high prieſt roſe up, and all they that were with him (which is the ſect of the Sadduces) and were filled with indignation. 18 And laid their hands on the apoſtles, and put them in the common priſon. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon doors, and brought them forth, and ſaid, 20 Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life. 21 And when they heard that, they entred into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

Note here, 1. How the Perſecutions of the Holy Apoſtles did gradually advance and encreaſe. In the former Chapters the Apoſtles were only ſecured, kept in hold for a Night, and diſmiſt with a Threatning next day: but now being filled a ſecond time with the Holy Spirit, they are better enabled to grapple with Sufferings, and to Glorifie God under them; and accordingly here they are committed to the Common Priſon amongſt Malefactors, and afterwards beaten and expoſed to publick Shame, *v.* 40. O the Tenderneſs of God towards his tender Servants! While theſe Apoſtles were Striplings, their Faith feeble, and their Grace weak, God ſtayeth the rough Wind, keeps off the Storm of Perſecution from them. God will evermore ſuit the ſtroak to his People's ſtrength, proportion their burthen to their Back; and never ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able. *Note,* 2. The Apoſtles being Priſoners for Chriſt and his Goſpel, they have an Angel for their Keeper and Deliverer, who opens the Priſon Door, overpowers and puts out the Devil. God could otherwiſe have delivered them, but he makes uſe of the Miniſtry of Angels for the confirming of their Faith, and to let them ſee by Experience that he had given his Angels charge over them. Since the Eſtabliſhment of the Goſpel, God will have us live more by Faith, and to walk leſs by Senſe, and therefore we muſt not now (ordinarily) ſee thoſe Miniſtring and Benificent Spirits: But altho' their *viſible Apparitions* be ceaſed, yet their *inviſible Operations* for the Heirs of Salvation ſhall never ceaſe; *Heb.* 1. *laſt. Are they not all Miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to Miniſter for them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation. Note,* 3. The Apoſtles being thus brought out of Priſon by an Angel, are commanded to Preach, and they have their Text given them by the Angel that opened both the Priſon and Pulpit Door for them: The Angel ſaid unto them, *Go and ſpeak to the People all the Words of this Life,* v. 20. That is, of this Life for which you were impriſoned; This Life which the Sadducees, who impriſoned you, deny, namely, the Reſurrection of the Body, and eternal Life. *Learn,* That not the Things of this Life, but the Things of Eternity, and the Life to come, the unſeen Things of another World, are the Things which the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to preach, and preſs their People to the purſuit of; *Go and ſpeak to the People all the Words of this Life.* That is, the Goſpel which is the Word of Life, and directs them how to attain eternal Life and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt.

21 And when they heard that, they entred into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high prieſt came, and they that were with him, and called the councel together, and all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael, and ſent to the priſon to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and found them not in the priſon, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The priſon truly found we ſhut with all ſafety, and the keepers ſtanding without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high prieſt, and the captain of the temple, and the chief prieſts heard theſe things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, ſaying, Behold, the men whom ye put in priſon, are ſtanding in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain, with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they feared the people, leſt they ſhould have been ſtoned.) 27 And when they had brought them, they ſat them before the council: and the high prieſt asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this mans blood upon us.

Obſerve here, 1. No ſooner were the Apoſtles out of Priſon but they entred into the Temple and Preach, with a redoubled Zeal and Diligence, no doubt; Satan had better have let theſe Holy Men alone than have caſt them into *Priſon,* for the cold blaſts of Perſecution and Impriſonment beating upon their outward Man, by a Spiritual Antipariſtaſis, augmented the heat of Grace within: There is no ſuch way to be even with the Devil and his Inſtruments for all their Spite and Malice againſt us, as by doing all the good we can to the Souls of Men. *Obſerve,* 2. How the Deliverance which God wrought for the Apoſtles in bringing them miraculouſly out of *Priſon* by the Conduct of an Angel, did confound the Council which laid them in; they were non-pluſ'd and horribly perplexed at it: *They doubted whereunto this would grow.* They ſtood amuzed and amazed, and knew not what meaſures to take; but were at their Wits-end. Sin oft-times brings Men into ſtreights, but ſtreights do not always bring Men off from their Sins. Thus here, notwithſtanding their preſent Perplexity of Spirit, they ſpur on, and bring them again before the Council, *ver.* 26. *Then went the Captain with the Officers of the Temple, and brought them without Violence. Obſerve,* 3. The Crimes which the Holy Apoſtles were unjuſtly accuſed of, Namely, Obſtinacy and Sedition. They are charged with Obſtinacy for perſiſting to Preach the Goſpel, when they had ſtrictly, (but very wickedly) forbidden them: And they are accuſed of Sedition, as if they endeavoured to ſtir up the People to avenge the Blood of Chriſt upon the Rulers as being unjuſtly ſhed by them. The greateſt Innocency cannot protect the Holieſt Perſons from Slander and falſe Accuſation. The beſt of Men have ſometimes been charged with the blackeſt Crimes. No wonder that the Sanhedrim, or great Council, which charged Chriſt himſelf with Impoſture and Blaſphemy, did accuſe his Apoſtles of Sedition and Contumacy. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter. Obſerve,* 4. The Contumelious reflection which they made upon our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; *you intend* (ſays the Council) *to bring this Man's Blood upon us:* As if the Holy Jeſus had not been worthy the naming by them. Chriſt told his Diſciples, *Luke* 6. 22. That the World ſhould caſt out their Names as evil. And behold! his own is uſed no better: He is *Homo nullis Hominis:* This Man, this Fellow, this Deceiver, were the opprobrious Titles which the Learned Rabbies thought fit to impoſe upon the beſt Man that ever the World had. Lord! how can we be abaſed enough for thee, who wert degraded and debaſed for us.

29 Then Peter and the other Apoſtles anſwered and ſaid, we ought to obey God rather than man. 30 The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and ſaviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins. 32 And we are his witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is alſo the holy Ghoſt whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counſel to ſlay them.

To the foregoing Charge of Obſtinacy brought in againſt the Apoſtles, St. *Peter* anſwers in the Name and as the Mouth of the reſt; owning that they had not obeyed them in their Injunction, becauſe they had commanded that which was contrary to the Command of God. *Where Obſerve,* How the Apoſtles aſſert the Prerogative of Chriſt as their Apology for the Diſobedience to Humane Commands: *We ought* *to obey God rather than Man.* The ſecond part of the Charge was Sedition; as if the Apoſtles endeavoured to ſtir up the People to revenge the Blood of Chriſt upon the Chief Prieſts and Rulers. *Thence Note*, That it is no new thing to tax the Miniſters of Chriſt for Preaching Sedition: When Rulers deſign to ſtop their Mouths, and not ſuffer them to preach at all. But to remove this part of the Charge, the Apoſtle tells them, that this Jeſus whom they ignominiouſly ſlew upon Earth, is now an exalted Prince in Heaven, able to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin to the worſt of his Murtherers, if they unfeignedly deſire it: *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance*, &c. *Whenee Learn*, 1. That Jeſus will be a Saviour to none to whom he is not a Prince. We muſt ſubmit our ſelves to his ruling Power, as well as commit our ſelves to his ſaving Mercy. For it is in vain to expect Salvation by him if we do not yield Subjection to him. 2. That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins are the ſpecial Fruits and Advantages of Chriſt's Exaltation, *Him hath God exalted to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins. Learn*, 3. That it is the ſole Prerogative of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins. *Where Note*, The Encouragement which the Apoſtle's Miniſtry gave the Murtherers of Chriſt to hope for Pardon; he Preaches the Duty of Repentance and the Privilege of Remiſſion of Sins, but aſſureth them for their Comforts, that Chriſt ſtands ready to diſpence both. But obſerve the ſad Effects which this Sermon had upon theſe Hearers; it was for Subſtance the ſame which St. *Peter* Preached, *chap.* 2. when ſo many Thouſands were prickt at the Heart by Sorrow and Compunction; whereas theſe Men were cut to the Heart with Anger and Indignation. *Whence Learn*, 1. That the moſt Sound and Sacred Doctrine is an intolerable Torment to an unſound and unholy Heart. 2. That the Word of God diſpenſed by the ſame Miniſter, and in the ſame manner, has not always that ſame ſucceſs. The Subſtance of both theſe Sermons was the ſame, (Jeſus and the Reſurrection) and the Preacher (St. *Peter*) was the ſame, but the ſucceſs was not the ſame; to let the Apoſtle know that the Excellency of the Power was of God and not of himſelf, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 4. *ver.* 7.

34 Then ſtood there up one in the council, a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the Apoſtles forth a little ſpace, 35 And ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to your ſelves what you intend to do as touching theſe men. 36 For before theſe days aroſe up Theudas, boaſting himſelf to be ſomebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joyned themſelves: who was ſlain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were ſcattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man roſe up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he alſo periſhed, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were diſperſed. 38 And now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this counſel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apoſtles, and beaten them, they commanded that they ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the preſence of the council, reioycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. A general Councel erring, and that fundamentally in matters of Faith. They determined peremptorily that the Doctrine and Practiſe of the Apoſtles was not from God; and accordingly reſolved to ſuppreſs them, and that by Death. *Thence Learn*, That no Determination of a Council againſt a Doctrine or Practice is any demonſtrative or ſufficient Proof, that ſuch a Doctrine or Practice is not from God. *Obſ.* 2. How God raiſed up a particular Perſon in the Council, (*Gamaliel*) to interpoſe on the Apoſtles behalf, as *Nicodemus* before had done on Chriſt's behalf; and uſes him as an Inſtrument to preſerve them from the Rage and Fury of their Perſecutors. Without Queſtion, *Gamaliel*'s Spirit was acted and influenc'd by the Spirit of God; to give ſuch Council as is here given. *Obſ.* 3. The Counſel and Advice given in the ſeveral parts of it. 1. He adviſes them to take heed what they did to theſe Men, *ver.* 35. implying, that Men had need take heed how they engage themſelves in ſuppreſſing or deſtroying any ſort of Men whatſoever, until they have clear and expreſs Warrant from Heaven for the Execution. 2. He aſſures them, that if this Work be of Men, it will certainly come to nought, which he proves by a double Inſtance; *Namely*; *Theudas*, and *Judas* of *Galilee*, who both pretended to be ſent of God as Saviours of their Country, and gathered many Followers, but miſcarried in their Enterprize; intimating, that every Invention, Contrivance or Device of Man, eſpecially in things pertaining to God and Religion, will in time be blaſted and blown upon by God and come to nothing. 3. He adds, that if this Work be of God, it can never be overthrown; but the attempt will be deemed a fighting againſt God. Signifying to us, that for any perſon to attempt the Suppreſſion of any Doctrine or Practiſe that is from God, is to fight againſt God himſelf. 4. He intimates to them the great Peril and Danger of fighting againſt God, in the Word *Even*, leſt ye be found *even* fighting againſt God. *Thence Learn*, That fighting againſt God is a moſt dangerous Enterprize for any Perſon at any time to be found engaged or concerned in. *Obſ.* 4. The Succeſs and Iſſue of *Gamaliel*'s Council, his Advice being ſo Wiſe and Rational, it prevailed with the Rulers to deſiſt from their former Intention of putting the Apoſtles to Death; but they come not off without Blows; tho' not without Blood-ſhed; they are Scourged as their Maſter was before them, which was both a painful and reproachful Puniſhment: Yet were they ſo far from being diſcouraged, that they were the more reſolved. They *rejoyced* that they were ſo Graced as to be Diſgraced for Chriſt, and accounted it their higheſt Honour to be diſhonoured for him, eſteeming it a very great favour and happineſs to bear Reproach for Chriſt, according to that of the Apoſtle St. *Peter*, *1ſt. Ep.* 4. *chap.* 14. If ye be reproached for the ſake of Chriſt, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Grace and of Glory reſteth upon you. This ſent them from the Preſence of the *Council Rejoicing*, that they were accounted worthy *to ſuffer ſhame for his Name. Obſerve Laſtly*, How wiſely and well the Holy Apoſtles improve their reſtored Liberty: They re-double their Pains and Diligence in Preaching the Goſpel, and are unwearied in the way of their Duty and in the Work of their God, *verſe* 42. *daily in the Temple, and in every Houſe, they ceaſed not to Teach and to Preach Jeſus Chriſt*: That is, they laid hold on every Opportunity, in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, publickly and privately to publiſh the Goſpel to thoſe that had not received it, and farther to inſtruct thoſe that had already received the Faith of Chriſt. Thus the more outragious were their Adverſaries, the more Couragious were the Holy Apoſtles. They religiouſly profeſs the name of Chriſt, and reſolutely abide by their Profeſſion, tho' they were Derided, Impriſoned, Perſecuted and Beaten for the ſame. Lord! Help thy Miniſters at this day to ſuffer Reproach for thy Goſpel; but never let any of them either Reproach it, or be a Reproach unto it. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

In the foregoing Chapters an Account is given of the two firſt Perſecutions which befel the Chriſtian Church after Chriſt's Aſcenſion: The former in the Impriſoning, the latter in the Beating of the Apoſtles. This and the next Chapter acquaints us with a third Blow given to this Infant-Church, Blacker and Bloodier than both the former, in the Death of the Holy Martyr St. Stephen; *and the occaſion of it was thus.*

AND in thoſe days when the number of the diſciples was multiplied, there aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their widows were neglected in the daily miniſtration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the diſciples unto them, and ſaid, It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you ſeven

men of honeſt report, full of the holy Ghoſt, and
wiſdom, whom ye may appoint over this buſineſs.
4 But we will give our ſelves continually to prayer,
and to the miniſtry of the word.

Here Obſerve, 1. How the number of Chriſtians increaſed upon the foregoing Perſecution; as the *Jewiſh* Church in *Egypt*, the more it was oppreſſed the more it multiplied; ſo the *Chriſtian* Church here got ground by oppoſition, *ver.* 1. *In thoſe days the number of the Diſciples was multiplied. Obſ.* 2. How the number of Believers increaſing, there aroſe (as it too often happens among a multitude) a murmuring among them: The *Grecians* (that is, ſuch *Jews* as were diſperſed abroad among the *Greeks*) complaining that their Widows were neglected and received leſs than the Widows of the *Hebrews* in the daily Diſtribution of the Churches Money for charitable Uſes. *Thence learn*, That neglect of the Poor, particularly of the Godly Poor, is a Sin in all, but eſpecially in the Churches of Chriſt. *Obſ.* 3. How the *Apoſtle's* deſiring to have the Poor well provided for, and not having leiſure themſelves perſonally to take care of them; adviſe the Church to chooſe Seven Perſons out of the Hundred and Twenty mentioned, Chapter the firſt, to be Stewards and diſpenſers of the Churches Stock, to diſtribute the ſame with Equity and Indifference to all proper Objects of Charity without Exception. *Thence learn*, That a general concern for the Poor, and a tender regard to their Neceſſities and Wants, is a Duty that well becomes the Miniſters and Ambaſſadors of God: God's Poor are his Treaſure, his Jewels, the Signet upon his Arm; they are always in his Eye and upon his Heart; how well then doth it become the Miniſters of God to take care of them who are ſo dear to him? *Obſ.* 4. How the *Apoſtles* reſolve to perform their Duty to God and their People, with ſuch Zeal and Application, as became Perſons of their Holy Character and Profeſſion. *We will give our ſelves continually unto Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word. Where Note*, 1. That ſuch as are called by God to the Work of the Miniſtry, ought to give themſelves wholly to it: *We will give our ſelves continually thereunto.* 2. That a Miniſter's giving himſelf unto Prayer is as great, if not a greater Duty than giving himſelf to the Preaching of the Word; *We will give our ſelves unto Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word*; to the one as the End, to the other as the Means; it is God that ſets the Word on work, but it is Prayer that ſets God on work: That Miniſter that is not fervent in Prayer, cannot expect to be ſucceſsful in Preaching. Pray for us, (ſays the Apoſtle to the *Theſſalonians*) that the Word may run and be glorified; he that beg'd Prayer of others, did not neglect it himſelf, but prayed without ceaſing.

5 And the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude: and
they choſe Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the
holy Ghoſt, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor,
and Timon, and Permenas, and Nicholas, a proſelyte
of Antioch. 6 Whom they ſet before the Apoſtles:
and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on
them. 7 And the word of God increaſed, and the
number of the diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem
greatly; and a great company of the Prieſts were obedient to the faith.

Obſerve here, That to remove the forementioned murmuring at the Inequality of the Poor's relief, ſeven Deacons were choſen to aſſiſt the Apoſtles, and to diſpoſe of that Treaſury, (which had been laid down at the Apoſtles Feet) with more Indifferency to all fit Objects of Charity without Exception. *Here note*, 1. The Qualification of the Perſons choſen; *Men full of the Holy Ghoſt*: That is, Perſons that were extraordinarily aſſiſted by the Spirit to perform the Duties required of them; for the Office of a Deacon was, beſides the taking Care of the Poor, to Preach the Goſpel and to Baptize: As it appears *Philip* did; had it been only to take care of the Poor they needed not to be ſo Inquiſitive to find out Men full of the Holy Ghoſt for that Service. *Here Obſerve*, That the Scripture mentions a threefold fulneſs of the Holy Ghoſt, according to a threefold Capacity of the Receivers. There is *plenitudo Sufficientia*, the fulneſs of a Veſſel; this every Believer hath; there is *plenitudo Abundantiæ*, the fulneſs of a Stream; this the *Apoſtles* had when extraordinarily inſpired, and filled with the Spirit at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel; and there is *plenitudo Superabundantia*, the fulneſs of the Foundation, and this Chriſt had, *Col.* 1. 19. *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell. Note*, 2. The manner how theſe Deacons enter into their Office; it is by Prayer and Impoſition of Hands, *v.* 6. *They prayed and laid their Hands upon him*; this Rite of laying on of Hands was uſed Anciently upon a threefold occaſion in the *Jewiſh* Church, *Namely*, in their Sacrifices, *Exod.* 29. 15. in their Bleſſing, *Gen.* 48. 14. and in *Numb.* 27. 18. Their deſignation unto a Charge or Office. Thus *Moſes* laid his Hands on *Joſhua*, and from hence it was derived and brought into the Goſpel-Church, when Miniſters were ordained by the *Apoſtles* in the Primitive Times, they laid their Hands upon them, 1. *Tim.* 5.22. *Note*, 3. The mighty ſucceſs of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding all the violent Oppoſition that was made againſt it; *The Word of God*, that is, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *encreaſed, the number of Believers multiplied*; yea, ſome of the Prieſts themſelves, tho' formerly bitter Enemies to Chriſt, now embraced the Faith and were joined to the Church; great is Truth, eſpecially the Spirit of Truth, and will prevail: naked Truth is too hard for armed Error: Truth has the ſtrength of God in it, and therefore Humane Power can never prevail againſt Divine Truth. *So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.*

8 And Stephen full of faith and power, did great
wonders and miracles among the people: 9 Then
there aroſe certain of the ſynagogue, which is called
the ſynagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians and
Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Aſia,
diſputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able
to reſiſt the wiſdom and the ſpirit, by which he ſpake,
11 Then they ſuborned men which ſaid, We have
heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes,
and againſt God. 12 And they ſtirred up the people
and the elders, and the ſcribes, and came upon him,
and caught him, and brought him to the counſel,
13 And ſet up falſe witneſſes, which ſaid, This man
ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this
holy place, and the law. 14 For we have heard him
ſay, that this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this
place, and ſhall change the cuſtoms, which Moſes
delivered us. 15 And all that ſat in the counſel,
looking ſtedfaſtly on him, ſaw his face as it had been
the face of an angel.

Obſerve here, 1. The great Character given of St. *Stephen*; a Man full of the Grace of God, full of Faith, full of Power to work Miracles, mighty in Word and Deed; able to do all things, and to ſuffer all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him. *Obſerve*, 2. The violent Oppoſition which this good Man met with in the way of his Duty: He is, 1. Encountred by Diſputation with the Heads of five Colleges in *Jeruſalem*; Namely, *Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians* and *Aſiaticks.* Behold here an admirable Act kept wherein St. *Stephen* was the Reſpondent, againſt whom Opponents appear'd from all parts of the then known World; but all too few to reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake. He aſſerted the Truth ſo convincingly, that all his Oppoſites had no power to oppoſe them. See here how Faithful Chriſt was in fulfilling of his Promiſe, *Luke* 21. 15. *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom, which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor oppoſe.* 2. His Adverſaries being baffled in their Diſputes, they burn with Revenge; they hire Men to accuſe him falſly, that they may take away his Life. The beſt Arguments of a baffled Adverſary are ever found to be Craft and Cruelty; it has been an old Artifice of the Devil, to ſwear innocent Men out of their Lives: And therefore, it is next to a Miracle that no greater number of innocent Perſons have been murdered in the World by Perjury and falſe Accuſation; when ſo many Thouſands hate them who make no Conſcience of falſe Oaths. *Obſerve*, 3. The Charge and Accuſation brought againſt St. *Stephen*, that he ſpake diſhonourable of the *Jewiſh* Religion, that he was continually foretelling Deſtruction to the Temple, and threatning the change of all the *Moſaick* Rites; it is very probable that he told them the Shadows and Ceremonies were to vaniſh now the Subſtance was come; and that the *Moſaick* Rites were to give place, that a more excellent and ſpiritual Worſhip might ſucceed. For as God was Worſhipped aright four hundred years before either Tabernacle or Temple were built, or the *Jewiſh* Rites Inſtituted: So he might again be truly

Worſhipped after they were aboliſhed. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How Almighty God by a Miracle bears witneſs to the Innocency of his Holy Servant St. *Stephen*, and to convince his Accuſers that he had done no wrong to *Moſes*, God makes his Face to ſhine now as *Moſes* his Face had ſhined of old, and gave him an Angelical Countenance, in which appear'd an extraordinary Luſtre and Radiancy; not that an Angel has a Face or ſhines viſibly, but intimates that amazing brightneſs of Beauty which was inſtampt upon the Face of *Stephen*. He now began to border upon Heaven, and had received ſome Beams of Glory approaching; it pleaſed God ſometimes to give his Children and Servants ſome Prælibations and foretaſts of Heaven before they ſtep into Heaven, eſpecially Holy Martyrs and Confeſſors, who loved not their lives unto death; God bears an Honourable reſpect to them that bear witneſs to his Name and Truth, and as they ſhall ſhine forth in the Kingdom of their Fathers, ſo will God ſometimes put a Luſtre upon their Faces here. *All in the Council ſaw St.* Stephen'*s Face as it had been the Face of an Angel.*

CHAP. VII.

THen ſaid the high prieſt, Are theſe things ſo? 2 And he ſaid, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken, The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy countrey, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I ſhall ſhew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Caldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not ſo much as to ſet his foot on: yet he promiſed, that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, when as yet he had no child.

This Chapter contains St. *Stephen*'s Apology, or Defenſative Plea which he makes for himſelf: The *Jews* had in the foregoing Chapter accuſed him for Blaſpheming their Law, and prophaning their Temple, imagining, that Almighty God was ſo pleaſed with the Temple-Service and Moſaick-Rites, that no other way of Worſhip could be acceptable to him. Therefore, by an Hiſtorical deduction, he ſhews them that God was worſhipped aright before either Tabernacle or Temple were built, or any of the Moſaick Rites Inſtituted or Ordained, and conſequently that the true Worſhip of God was not neceſſarily and inſeperately annex'd to any of theſe things: for the proof of this, he begins at *Abraham*, and ſhews them that he living of old at *Ur* of the *Chaldeans* in the midſt of Idolaters, God was pleaſed of his free Mercy to call him, to enlighten, and draw him to own and worſhip the true God, and commanding him to leave his Native Country, and go into a Land which he ſhould ſhew, he promiſed to make of him a great Nation, and that in him all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed. Now the deſign and drift of *Stephen* in this Relation is to prove, that *Abraham* from his firſt Call in *Caldea*, when he was ſeventy years old, to the time of his being ninety years old, had ſerved God faithfully all that time, without either Circumciſion or Ceremony, without Tabernacle or Temple; and conſequently that the true Worſhip of God might be now performed acceptably after theſe Ceremonies were aboliſh'd, as well as it was perform'd before they were inſtituted. *Learn hence*, 1. That Religious Worſhip is manifeſtly due to God; by the Law and Light of Nature. 2. That the manner how that Worſhip ſhould be acceptably performed, was not known by the Law of Nature, but diſcovered by Divine Revelation. *Adam* in Innocence knew God was to be worſhipped, yet he did not know by what outward Acts he was to teſtifie that Homage, till God the Soveraign Governour and Supreme Lawgiver did give Direction. 3. That the Worſhip due from the Creature to God the Creator is a Spiritual Worſhip, and ought to be Spiritually performed. 4. The Judaical Worſhip tho' appointed by God himſelf, was fleſhly and carnal, and never pleaſed God for its own ſake. 5. The Evangelical Worſhip being Spiritual, and moſt ſuitable to the Nature of God, is therefore moſt acceptable and beſt pleaſing to him. The Ceremonial Worſhip was therefore good, becauſe God commanded it, but the Evangelical Worſhip is therefore commanded becauſe good. The Legal Worſhip is called *Fleſh* in Scripture, and a carnal Ordinance, in oppoſition to the Goſpel, which is called Spirit, and a Miniſtration of the Spirit, becauſe attended with a more Spiritual efficacy on the Hearts and Lives of Men.

6 And God ſpake on this wiſe, that his ſeed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange land, and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation, to whom they ſhall be in bondage, will I judge ſaid God: and after that ſhall they come forth, and ſerve me in this place. 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumciſion: and ſo Abraham begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day: and Iſaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

Obſerve here, The great Tryal which God put *Abraham*'s Faith unto: The Lord promiſed to give him the Land of *Canaan* for a poſſeſſion, but he gave him not a Foot's breadth: He promiſed to give it unto his Seed, when as yet he had no Child; and when God gave him Seed, yet they were to ſojourn in a ſtrange Land, (*Egypt*) and continue there in Bondage four hundred years. *Learn hence*, That there is no Grace which God delights more to exerciſe and try, than the Faith of his People; as Faith puts Honour upon God, ſo doth God put Honour upon Faith; and Faith never honours God more, nor is more highly honoured by him, than when it is put upon the greateſt Exerciſe and Trial; 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour and Glory.* Here the Apoſtle compares Faith unto, and prefers it before gold, even the moſt precious Gold purified in the Fire. Is gold precious and rare? ſo is Faith. Is gold pure and reſplendent? ſo is Faith. Is Gold laſting and durable? ſo is Faith. Is Gold purified and improved by trying in the Fire? ſo is Faith by Exerciſe. As the Inſtance of *Abraham* here fully proves. *Obſ.* 2. How God takes *Abraham* and his Seed into Covenant with him, and gives him Circumciſion, the Seal of the Covenant. *Thence learn*, That in the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, he gave himſelf to be a God to *Abraham*, and to his Seed, and received *Abraham* and his Seed to be a People unto himſelf. 2. That Circumciſion was both the Sign and the Seal of the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* and his Seed, the People of the *Jews*: It is here called the Covenant of Circumciſion, becauſe Circumciſion was both the Sign and the Seal of that Covenant made with *Abraham*. 1. Circumciſion was a Sign, and that in ſeveral reſpects: It was a Commemorative Sign of God's Covenant with *Abraham*; it was a Repreſentative Sign of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience towards God. A demonſtrative Sign of Original Sin, and the depravity of Humane Nature. A Diſcriminating and Diſtinguiſhing Sign of the true Church, and People of God, from all the reſt of the World. An initiating Sign, by which all Strangers were admitted into the *Jewiſh* Church: And laſtly, it was a Prefigurative Sign of Baptiſm, which ſucceeded in the room of Circumciſion in the Chriſtian Church. 2. Circumciſion was not only a Sign, but a Seal alſo; *Rom.* 4. 11. *He received the Sign of Circumciſion, the Seal of the Righteouſneſs by Faith.* It was a Seal on God's part to confirm all the promiſes made to *Abraham* and his Seed, and it was a Seal on his and their part, to bind them to renounce the Service of all other Gods, and to oblige them to the Obſervation of the whole *Jewiſh* Law.

9 And the patriarchs moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt: But God was with him, 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wiſdom in the ſight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he made him governour over Egypt and all his houſe. 11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no ſuſtenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he ſent out our fathers firſt. 13 And at the ſecond time Joſeph was made known to his brethren; and Joſephs kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14 Then ſent Joſeph, and called his father Jacob to

him, and all his kindred, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls. 15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, 16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the ſepulchre that Abraham bought for a ſum of Money of the ſons of Emmor the father of Sychem. 17 But when the time of the promiſe drew nigh, when God had ſworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 Till another king aroſe, which knew not Joſeph. 19 The ſame dealt ſubtilly with our kindred, and evil intreated our fathers, ſo that they caſt out their young children, to the end they might not live.

From the Hiſtory of *Abraham, Stephen* proceeds to that of *Joſeph*, and ſhews, as he did before, that *Joſeph* as well as *Abraham* worſhipped God acceptably, without either Tabernacle or Temple, and without ſuch Cuſtoms as *Moſes* delivered; and conſequently that the Worſhip of God is not confined to an outward Temple, or a Moſaical Miniſtration; and that therefore it was no Blaſphemy in him to ſay, that God might be ſo Worſhipped. This is St. *Stephen*'s Argument from the Inſtance of *Joſeph*, as to the particular Story of *Joſeph*. *Obſ.* 1. The great and ſore Afflictions which befel that Holy and Good Man; he was envied and hated of his Brethren, they conſpired againſt him, and ſought to take away his Life; he is thrown into a Pit, and afterwards ſold for a Bond-ſlave to the *Midianites*; they ſell him into *Egypt*, where he was impriſoned ſo long till the Irons entred into his Soul: That is, ſo loaded with Irons that his Fleſh was eaten with them. *Learn Thence*, That Afflictions, many and great Afflictions, long and ſore Afflictions, have been and may be, the Lot and Portion of the holieſt and beſt of Men, and all theſe occaſioned by their own Brethren: Joſeph's *Brethren moved with Envy, ſold* Joſeph *into* Egypt. *Obſ.* 2. The ſingular Support and Comfort which *Joſeph* experienced in and under his great Afflictions: *God was with him.* God was with *Joſeph* in *Potiphar*'s Houſe, and gave him favour in the Eyes of his Maſter, who repoſed an entire Confidence in him. God was with *Joſeph* in Priſon, and cauſed his Impriſonment to make way for his Inlargement. God was with *Joſeph* in *Pharaoh*'s Court, and gave him a prudent and provident Spirit, making him a Father unto *Pharaoh*, and to all his People; giving him alſo a compaſſionate and merciful Spirit to his Brethren; Pardoning their Cruelties, and forgiving the Injuries done unto him. *Hence we learn*, That all the Envy, Malice and Miſchievous Deſigns of Men ſhall never be able to hinder or diſappoint the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of God: *The Patriarchs moved with Envy, ſold* Joſeph *into* Egypt: *But God was with him.* *Obſ.* 3. The Religious Deſire which *Jacob* and *Joſeph*, and the reſt of the Holy Patriarchs had to be buried together in the Land of *Canaan*; ver. 15. 16. *Jacob died, and our Fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in a Sepulchre.* No doubt this was done by way of Declaration of their own Faith, and in order to the Confirmation of the Faith of others, that their Poſterity ſhould enjoy and poſſeſs that Land; ſo that this Act of theirs was a Profeſſion of their Faith in the Promiſes which God had made to them of their Poſſeſſing and Enjoying the Land of *Canaan*. There is a natural Deſire in Perſons to be Buried by their Anceſtors; but here it was a Religious Deſire, they died in the Faith of their Anceſtors, and lay down their Heads together upon the ſame Pillow of Duſt, in hopes of a bleſſed and glorious Reſurrection.

20 In which time Moſes was born, and was exceeding fair, and nouriſhed up in his fathers houſe three months: 21 And when he was caſt out, Pharaohs daughter took him up, and nouriſhed him for her own Son. 22 And Moſes was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words, and in deeds. 23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to viſit his brethren the children of Iſrael. 24 And ſeeing one of them ſuffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian: 25 For he ſuppoſed, his brethren would have underſtood, how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they underſtood not. 26 And the next day he ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſaying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thruſt him away, ſaying, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didſt the Egyptian yeſterday? 29 Then fled Moſes at this ſaying, and was a Stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two ſons.

From the Hiſtory of *Abraham* and *Joſeph*, St. *Stephen* deſcends to that of *Moſes*: Where we have obſervable, 1. The Birth and Education of *Moſes*, *He was born and hid three Months in his Father's Houſe*; and then being caſt out, was taken in by *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, and has a noble Education given to him: Being inſtructed in all kind of good Literature, to fit him for ſuch great Services, as a Princes Court might probably have brought him to: Moſes *was learned. Hence Note*, That the greater Men are, the greater ſhould their Care be for the Learned and Religious Education of their Children: Becauſe nothing is more incongruous and unſuitable than Greatneſs of Eſtate, and meanneſs of Underſtanding. It is a ſhame to great Men to breed up their Children ſenſually, to Gaming, Sporting and Exceſs, as if an Inheritance did ſerve to no other purpoſe but to make the Heir of it uſeleſs, and good for nothing. *Again note*, The Latitude and Extent of *Moſes* his Learning, *He was Learned in all the Learning of the* Egyptians. *Where Remark*, 1. The different End which God had in his Providence, from what *Pharaoh*'s Daughter had in her particular Care. She intended by this Education of *Moſes*, the Good of *Egypt*, but God intended the Good of *Iſrael*; ſhe deſigned the Service of *Pharaoh*, but God deſigned *Moſes* to be a Deliverer from *Pharaoh*. Thus the wiſe and holy Providence of God uſeth the Diligence of Men to effect and bring things about, which they never thought of. 2. *We may Remark*, How that *Moſes* the great Prophet, whom God ſpake to, Mouth to Mouth, is here commended for his Learning, yea, for *Egyptian* Learning. *Thence we may gather*, That Humane Learning is a noble and beneficial Gift of God, and a very great Ornament and Honour unto the greateſt and moſt excellent Men; for it is in it ſelf an Ornament and Perfection to the Mind; it renders Men the more uſeful and ſerviceable in their Generation, and a greater Bleſſing to Humane Society, but eſpecially to the Church of God. Humane Learning indeed is far inferiour to Holineſs; but in Holy Men Learning is a rare Ornament and Acceſſion to Holineſs. Sanctified Wit beautifies Religion, ſanctified Reaſon defends it, ſanctified Power protects it, ſanctified Elocution perſwades others to the Love of it. So then to decry the uſe of Humane Learning, muſt proceed either from Ignorance, or from Malice, and a deſire to have Religion betrayed. Let us ſee, that we get our Learning ſeaſoned with Holineſs, that we uſe it with Humility, Moderation and Sobriety, as an Hand-maid unto Chriſt; not Vain-gloriouſly unto Oſtentation, not Proudly with Contempt of others, not Heretically in defence of Errour; never ſuffering Humane Learning, but Divine Revelation to determine Articles of Faith; then if with *Moſes* we be Learned in all the Learning of the Philoſophers, the more Glory ſhall we bring to God, and the more uſeful and beneficial to Mankind. *Obſ.* 2. As the Education of *Moſes* in *Pharaoh*'s Court, ſo the Time of his continuing there, namely, till he was *Forty years old*: After which God put it into his Heart to viſit his Brethren, the Children of *Iſrael*, and offer himſelf to be a Deliverer to them, and he ſuppoſed that they would have underſtood the purpoſe of God to ſave them by his hand, but they underſtood it not. But what Reaſon was there for the *Iſraelites* to ſuppoſe, that *Moſes* was the Perſon deſigned by God for their Delivery? *Anſwer*, Very great Reaſon, becauſe, 1. They knew that the time of their Deliverance did now draw very near. 2. From the Extraordinarineſs of *Moſes* his Preſervation; by his being hid three Months in his Father's Houſe without diſcovery; by his floating upon the Waters in an Ark of Bulruſhes without Danger, when an Infant; they might have rationally thought that ſuch a Perſon was deſigned by God for very great Purpoſes. 3. From his Readineſs to defend them at this time, when an *Iſraelite* and an *Egyptian* contended; for it was wonderful that ſo great a Perſon as *Moſes* was, and might have been, ſhould concern himſelf in a private Quarrel betwixt two obſcure Perſons. *Moſes* might well ſuppoſe that his Brethren would have underſtood, how that God by his Hand would have delivered them, but they underſtood it not. *Obſ.* 3. The ill Treatment given to *Moſes* when he offered himſelf to be a Reconciler, they thruſt him from them, and expoſtulate with him, *Who made thee a Ruler and a Judge?* The meek Man replies, *Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye wrong one to another*; *Where Note*, 1. Who were the Perſons doing Wrong to each other, they were *Iſraelites*, both *Iſraelites*; to ſee an *Iſraelite* and an *Egyptian* ſtruggling, had been no wonder; but to ſee two *Iſraelites* who were Brethren, Brethren by Nation, Brethren by Religion, Brethren in Tribulation, both of the Seed of *Abraham*, both initiated into the ſame Covenant, both in Bondage to a cruel Tyrant (*Pharaoh*) who had condemned them to an Ignominious Slavery, and deſigned ſuch a Degree of Cruelty, as to Murther all the Male Iſſue. This was an aſtoniſhing Sight, and *Moſes* might well ſay, *Why do you wrong one another?* Plainly implying, that both Parties were to blame; but that party moſt, who would not hear of a Reconciliation, or putting a ſtop to the Quarrel; a Reconciler is more odious than a Stranger in the Apprehenſion of ſome. *Obſerve laſtly*, How *Moſes*, being thus ill treated by them, departs from them, and they hear no more of him for Forty years, *ver.* 29. *Then fled* Moſes, *and was a ſtranger in the Land of* Midian: *Where obſerve*, The Years of *Moſes*'s Life were an Hundred and twenty: Forty Years he ſpent at the Court in *Egypt*; Forty years he ſpent in *Midian* with his Father in-law *Jethro*; and the laſt Forty years of his Life in the Wilderneſs. Now all this time *Moſes* was a Worſhipper of the true God, and that in an Acceptable Manner, and moſt of this time he worſhipped God without either Tabernacle or Temple: From whence St. *Stephen* draws his Argument to prove, that as God was acceptably worſhipped by Holy Men, before either Tabernacle or Temple were erected, in like manner may he be ſo again, after both Tabernacle and Temple are deſtroyed; and conſequently, that they unjuſtly accuſed him of Blaſphemy, or ſpeaking Plaſphemous Words againſt *Moſes* and againſt God.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderneſs of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a buſh. 31 When Moſes ſaw it, he wondred at the ſight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32 Saying I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moſes trembled, and durſt not behold. 33 Then ſaid the Lord to him, Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet; for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 34 I have ſeen, I have ſeen the afflictions of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will ſend thee into Egypt. 35 This Moſes whom they refuſed, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the ſame did God ſend to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the buſh. 36 He brought them out, after that he had ſhewed wonders and ſigns in the land of Egypt, and in the Red-ſea, and in the wilderneſs forty years. 37 This is that Moſes which ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear. 38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with the angel which ſpake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us. 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thruſt him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moſes, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41 And they made a calf in thoſe days, and offered ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoyced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worſhip the hoſt of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye houſe of Iſrael, have ye offered to me ſlain beaſts, and ſacrifices, by the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the ſtar of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worſhip them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witneſs in the wilderneſs, as he had appointed, ſpeaking unto Moſes, that he ſhould make it according to the faſhion that he had ſeen. 45 Which alſo our fathers that came after, brought in with Jeſus into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David: 46 Who found favour before God, and deſired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him an houſe. 48 Howbeit the moſt High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as ſaith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footſtool: what houſe will ye build me? ſaith the Lord: or what is the place of my reſt? 50 Hath not my hand made all theſe things?

St. *Stephen* here goes on with the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, and having in the former Verſes made mention of what occurr'd to him in *Egypt*, and in *Midian*; here an account is given of what happened to him in the Wilderneſs: And the firſt thing obſervable is the Appearance of God to him in a Flame of Fire out of the midſt of a Buſh, which Burned, but was not conſumed. This Buſh was an Emblem of the Church; This Buſh burning, pointed out the Afflicted State of the Church in *Egypt*, having a long time been in the fiery Furnace there, but the burning Buſh, not conſumed, ſignified the Churches Preſervation. God was in the midſt of a Buſh, whilſt the Buſh was in the midſt of the Burning. *Where note*, How Almighty God intending to ſend *Moſes* as a Deliverer of his People out of *Egypt*, giving him a viſible Sign for confirming of his Faith, in the ſight of this burning, but unconſumed Buſh. 1. To aſſure him of his People's Deliverance, that tho' they were now Slaves in *Egypt*, yet they ſhould be ſet free and enſtated in a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; next to ſatisfy him that *he* ſhould be the Inſtrument to bring to paſs ſo glorious a Work. O how gracious is God's Condeſcenſion towards his Servants, who is pleaſed by viſible Signs to ſupport the Weakneſs of their Faith! *The Lord appeared to* Moſes *in a Flame of Fire in the Buſh.* *Obſ.* 2. How *Moſes* in the Faith of God's Preſence with him, Protection over him, and Aſſiſtance of him, goes forth for *Egypt*, where he works many Signs and Wonders before *Pharaoh*, and at laſt brings the People forth into the Wilderneſs to Mount *Sinai* where God gave them his Law, and appointed *Moſes* then to make a Tabernacle for his Worſhip. Now the uſe which St. *Stephen* makes of this, is to convince the *Jews*, that for above Four hundred years their Fathers had worſhipped God without any Tabernacle at all; and conſequently, that now that ſort of Worſhip was aboliſhed, God might be very acceptably ſerved and worſhipped in the abſence of it. *Obſ.* 3. That notwithſtanding *Moſes* was raiſed up by God, and ſent to be a Deliverer into *Egypt*, and a Law-giver to the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs; yet they rebelled againſt him, and againſt God in him; for they run into the vileſt Idolatry, even to make and worſhip a Golden Calf, to adore the Hoſt of Heaven, the Sun Moon and Stars for Deities; yea, they carried about with them the Images and Pictures of the Heathen Gods, *Mars* and *Saturn*, with deſign to worſhip them; for which groſs Idolatry, God ſent them into Captivity beyond *Babylon*. *Hence Learn*, 1. That there is a ſtrange Inclination in Man's Heart to the Sin of Idolatry; the Reaſon is, becauſe it is a Worſhip of our own Invention. Now Man is moſt fond of, and forward for, that Service of God which is of his own finding out and ſetting up: We love a Devotion of our own diviſing, very dearly. *Learn*, 2. That Idolatry in worſhipping Sun, Moon, and Stars, is a very ancient Sin; both the old *Gentiles* and old *Jews* were guilty of it: And conſequently we may infer, That neither Antiquity nor Univerſality will bear us out in Idolatrous Worſhip. Example is no Plea againſt a Rule, nor Antiquity againſt Truth: It is no Excuſe to us when we do Evil, to ſay our Fore fathers did ſo before us. *Learn*, 3. That the Idolatry of the *Jews* was a grand Iniquity, and much worſe than the Idolatry of the Heathens; the *Gentiles* knew not God, but the *Jews* owned him, and gloried in him: But *tho' they knew God, they worſhipped him not as God.* *Obſ.* 4. The *Iſraelites* being come out of *Egypt* by the Conduct of *Moſes*, and having entred the Wilderneſs at God's Appointment, and particular Direction, the Tabernacle for his Publick Worſhip and Service is erected. This is here called, *v.* 44. *The Tabernacle of Witneſs*; it being the Place where God uſed to witneſs and manifeſt his Glorious Preſence, and becauſe the Ark of the Covenant, the Law, and the Teſtimonies were laid up in it, which were Witneſſes and Declarations of God's Will how he would be ſerved. Now this Tabernacle was an Ambulatory Temple, as the Temple was a ſtanding Tabernacle. This Tabernacle was a Moveable; they carried it with them from place to place, as they ſojourned in the Wilderneſs, and at laſt they brought it with them into *Canaan*, *ver.* 45. which (Tabernacle) our Fore-fathers brought in with Jeſus (that is *Joſhua*) into the Poſſeſſion of the *Gentiles*, that is the Land of *Canaan*, where it continued all the days of *David*, till *Solomon* began his Reign, who built the Temple in a moſt magnificent and ſumptuous manner. *Here Note*, 1. That the Publick Worſhip of Almighty God is a Moral Duty founded in the Light of Nature, and the common Reaſon of Mankind. 2. That Solemn Places for Publick Worſhip have been from the beginning, before the giving of the Law. The ancient Devotion of the World delighted much in Groves, *Gen.* 21. 33. Abraham *planted a Grove, and called there on the name of the Lord.* This was a ſort of Oratory or Chappel, whither *Abraham* and his Family reſorted to, to worſhip the true God. After the giving of the Law, while the People of the *Jews* were in an unſettled Condition, God was contented with a mean Tabernacle; but when they were ſettled in *Canaan*, then a magnificent Temple is built, in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the Greatneſs and Majeſty of that God who was to be worſhipped in it. *From whence we may infer*, That the Publick Worſhip of God, tho' it doth require inward and ſpiritual Devotion; yet, as Publick, is neceſſarily external; and as ſuch, it ought to expreſs, in the beſt manner we are able, that profound Reverence, which we pay to the Divine Majeſty. And therefore, that the Circumſtances of it ſhould not only be decent, but very ſolemn and magnificent; the Light of Nature ſeems plainly to require, and the Goſpel doth no where gain-ſay. When *David* determined to build God an Houſe for Publick Worſhip, he reſolved it ſhould be exceedingly magnificent; which Reſolution was not a piece of Ceremonial Piety, but grounded upon a Moral and Eternal Reaſon, of equal Force in all Ages; namely, that the greateſt and beſt of Beings be moſt awfully adored by us, in the beſt manner we are able; and that we declare our high Regard and Eſteem of ſo glorious a Majeſty, by all outward fitting Teſtimonies of Reſpect and Reverence. *Obſerve, laſtly*, That after the Temple was built, the Worſhip of God was not ſo tied to that Place, as that he could not be worſhipped acceptably any where elſe; for God had declared by the Mouth of his holy Prophet, *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2. *That he delighted not in Temples made with Hands*, as if he were included therein, and bound thereto.

And thus St. *Stephen* by a large Induction of Particulars made good his Defence, that he was not guilty of Blaſphemy, for affirming that Chriſt would deſtroy the Temple, and change the Cuſtom which *Moſes* delivered. He cloſes his Apology with this Argument; That which was not Blaſphemy to affirm of the Tabernacle, tho' it were ſet up by God's ſpecial Appointment given to *Moſes*, is not Blaſphemy to affirm of the Temple. But it was no Blaſphemy to affirm the Uſe of the Tabernacle to have been temporary, and conſequently alterable; therefore to affirm the ſame of the Temple is not Blaſphemy, eſpecially ſince the Lord hath ſaid, that *He dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands.*

51 Ye ſtiff necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and
ears, ye do always reſiſt the holy ghoſt: as your fa-
thers did, ſo do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have
not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain
them, which ſhewed before of the coming of the
juſt one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers
and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by
the diſpoſition of angels, and have not kept it.

Obſerve here, 1. How St. *Stephen* having finiſhed his general Diſcourſe in the foregoing Verſes to the *Jews*, comes now to a particular and cloſe Application of it to them. All the while he was generally diſcourſing, they were quiet and ſtill, and made no Noiſe at all, for Generals do not affect, but when he came to apply it particularly, and ſay, you are the Men, *Ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſed in Heart*, this enrages them, and drives them into the worſt kind of Madneſs. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Efficacy of the Word preached lies in a particular and cloſe Application of it to every Man's Conſcience. 2. That it is the Miniſters great Duty not to ſatisfy themſelves with delivering general Truths to their People, but muſt point at their particular Sins (tho' not at their particular Perſons) and reprove them for the ſame, what Hazards ſoever they run, and whatever the Event may be. St. *Stephen*'s cloſe Preaching here, and impartial Reproving of Sin, he ſaw would coſt him his Life, but nothing terrified by his Adverſaries, he ſpares not to tell them, the greateſt of them, of their Faults. Accordingly, *Obſ.* 2. The particular Sins which St. *Stephen* here convicts them of, and reproves them for; 1. The Stoutneſs, the Stubbornneſs, and Stiff-neckedneſs of their Hearts, *Ye Stiff-necked and Uncircumciſed in Heart*: A Metaphor taken from a Bullock not uſed to the Yoak, who therefore will not ſubmit his Neck to bear it: Wicked Men are often called Children of *Belial*, becauſe they will not endure the Yoak of Obedience; but when God comes to put it upon their Necks, they lift up the Heel againſt him. 2. He charges them with Rebelling againſt, and Reſiſting of the Holy Spirit of God, *Ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*: That is, both the outward Teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking to them in the Miniſtry of the Prophets and Apoſtles, and alſo the inward Operations of the Holy Spirit in that Work of Illumination and Conviction which they had been under. 3. For their imitating their cruel Anceſtors who killed the old Prophets, and crucified the Lord of Life and Glory, *As your Fathers did, ſo do ye.* 4. For their wicked Violation of the Holy Law of God, which was given them by the glorious Miniſtry, and Proclamation of Angels, *You received the Law by the Diſpoſition of Angels*: That is, the Angels were *Teſtes* and *Internuncii*, Witneſſes and Meſſengers betwixt God and *Moſes*, in giving of the Law, or Jeſus Chriſt the Angel of the Covenant, who is God's Meſſenger, and the Angel that appeared to *Moſes* in the Buſh: he gave that Law to *Moſes*, and by *Moſes* to you, which Law ye have notwithſtanding violated and never kept.

54 When they heard theſe things, they were cut
to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with their teeth.
55 But he being full of the holy Ghoſt looked up ſted-
faſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of God, and Je-
ſus ſtanding on the right hand of God. 56 And ſaid,
Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the ſon of man
ſtanding on the right hand of God. 57 Then they
cried out with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears,
and run upon him with one accord. 58 And caſt him
out of the city, and ſtoned him: and the witneſſes
laid down their cloaths at a young man's feet, whoſe
name was Saul.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Jews* Angry and unreaſonable Reſentment of the fore-going Reprehenſion, tho' it was exact Truth and Matter of Fact, yet were they cut to the Heart; that is, they were angry even unto Madneſs: Here was a moſt proper corroſive, and applied by a ſkilful Hand, but they would not let it ſtick, nor endure a Cure; ſuch is the Enmity of wicked Hearts, that when the Miniſters of God reprove Sin ſharply, inſtead of receiving the Meſſage, they rage at the Meſſenger: *When they heard thoſe things, they were cut to the Heart.* *Obſ.* 2. How they diſcover their Rage againſt the holy Man, two ways; by their Geſtures, and by their Actions: Their Geſtures made a full Diſcovery of their enraged Minds. 1. *They gnaſhed upon him with their Teeth*, the Action of damned Friends. 2. They made a great outcry with an unanimous and tumultuous Rage; *They cried out with a loud Voice.* 3. *They ſtopped their Ears*, reſolved to hear no more either of his Counſels or Complaints. 4. *They ran upon him with one Accord*, like Perſons combined and united together in Malice and Madneſs. 5. They caſt him out of the City, not out of the Synagogue only, but out of the City alſo. They look upon this good Man, of whom the World was not worthy, as a Perſon not fit for Humane Society. Lord! why ſhould any of thy preſent Miniſters and Ambaſſadors wonder at, or be diſcouraged by the ill Treatment which an unkind World now gives them; when thy bleſſed *Apoſtles*, full of the Holy Ghoſt, and indued with Power to work Miracles, were *caſt out* before us, as the

Filth of the World, and the Off-ſcouring of all things: But this was not all, not only by their Geſtures, but by their Actions did they diſcover the utmoſt Effects of their Rage and Malice againſt this holy and innocent Perſon, for they put him to Death; yea, ſtoned him to Death: ſhooting a whole Volley of Cruelty at his naked Breaſt; a Shower of Stones came down upon him, from thoſe Hands which ought to have caſt the firſt Stone at themſelves; but all this did but joyn him the cloſer to Chriſt, the chief corner Stone, *Et per tot Lapides Petræ conjungiter uni.* *Learn hence*, That it is not in the Power of Piety and Religion to exempt and ſecure the moſt Holy and Religious Perſon, either from the Attempts of popular Fury, or from the Stroak of a violent and bloody Death; *They caſt him out of the City, and ſtoned him.* *Obſ.* 3. What a bleſſed Sight St. *Stephen* had of Heaven, and of Jeſus in Heaven, to prepare and fit him for his Sufferings, and to ſupport and uphold him under them, *ver.* 56. *Behold I ſee the Heavens opened, and Jeſus ſtanding on the Right Hand of God.* Bleſſed Jeſus! What an Encouragement is it to us, ſuffering for thee on Earth, to look up ſtedfaſtly by Faith unto thee in Heaven, who art continual ſtanding there to behold and obſerve, to ſtrengthen and ſupport, to receive and reward thy ſuffering Servants; to count every ſtone caſt at them, and to revenge all the Injuries and Wrongs done unto them. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How theſe bloody Perſecutors manage their Cruelties under a form of Law; that they may appear the more Specious. By the Law of God, ſtoning was the puniſhment due to Blaſpheming, and they that witneſſed againſt the Blaſphemer, were, by the Law of God, to caſt the firſt ſtone at him, *Deut.* 17. 7. Accordingly the Witneſſes here put off their upper Garments to fit themſelves for their bloody Work: and a Young Man called *Saul*, undertook to look to them, kept their Garments for them, and conſequently conſented unto his Death, and had an hand in ſtoning of him. *The witneſſes laid down their Garments at a young man's feet whoſe name was Saul.* By conſenting to the Sins of other Men, we certainly become partakers of other Men's Sins.

59 And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.

Obſerve here, 1. The Holy deportment of this Humble Saint at his Death; he Prays. *Learn thence,* That good Men ſhould ſhut up their Lives with Prayer, and die with Prayer in their Mouths. Our Saviour did ſo; his firſt Martyr here did ſo, St. *Stephen* imitated the Death of Chriſt, and he imitated Chriſt in his Death. Turning from malicious Men to ſpeak unto a merciful God in Prayer. They ſtoned *Stephen* calling upon God. *Obſ.* 2. The Object of his Prayer, or whom St. *Stephen* prays to, Jeſus Chriſt: He doth not ſay, O Bleſſed Virgin! O St. *Thomas!* O St. *Bridget!* intercede with my Saviour for me. But he directs his Supplication immediately to Chriſt, ſaying, Lord Jeſus! From whence we may ſtrongly infer the Divinity of Chriſt; Prayer is an act of Religious Worſhip, and he that is the proper Object of Religious Worſhip, muſt be God: none muſt be the Object of my Prayer, but he that is the Object of my Faith; how ſhall I pray to him, in whom I have not believed. *Obſ.* 3. The Subject of his Prayer, or what he Prays for, his Soul. Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit: He doth not ſay, Lord Jeſus ſave my Life, which is in ſo much danger of being taken away, Oh deliver me from the Hands of my Perſecutors, and bring me off ſafe! Not a word like this; but let it go well with my Soul: Lord receive my Spirit. *Learn thence,* That the Godly Man's Care, living and dying, is for his Soul: becauſe, this is the principal and immortal part, becauſe this is the greateſt Talent, that ever God put into our Hands, and becauſe the Happineſs and eternal Welfare of the Body, depends upon the bleſſed Condition of the Soul: If the Soul be Happy, the Body cannot be Miſerable. *Obſ.* 4. The ſweet Surrender, the willing and chearful Reſignation which the good Man makes of his Soul into the hands of Chriſt. *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.* 1. The Godly Man's Spirit or Soul is his own, he has not ſold it to Sin, nor pawn'd it to Satan, nor exchanged it for the World; but he has reſerved it for Chriſt, who redeemed it for him. 2. *Receive. Learn thence,* It is the Duty and Diſpoſition of a gracious Perſon to reſign up his Soul willingly and chearfully into Chriſt's Hands, whenever God calls for it; his Soul is ſurrendred by him, not extorted from him. The knowledge that a good Man has of Chriſt's Love and Care, of his Faithfulneſs and Power, encourages him to this Reſignation, *Pſal.* 31. 6. *Lord, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit, for thou haſt redeemed it.* And ſurely he that redeemed it will not hurt it.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep.

We had St. *Stephen*'s Prayer in the foregoing Verſe for himſelf, here in this Verſe he prays for his Murtherers. *Where Note,* 1. His Pious Charity in forgiving his Enemies, and praying for them, that God would forgive them alſo; *Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge*: How doth this holy Martyr imitate his dying Saviour, *Luke* 23. 34. Father, forgive them. *Note,* 2. His regular Charity; his Charity began at home; he prays firſt for himſelf, then for his Murtherers; firſt, Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit; next, Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge. *Where Remark,* That Chriſt prayed firſt for his Enemies, then for himſelf, *Luke* 23. 34, 46. Father, forgive them; Father into thy hands I commit my Spirit; but St. *Stephen* intercedes firſt for himſelf: the reaſon of the difference, this; Chriſt needed no Prayer for himſelf, but *Stephen* did: We were to love our Enemies as our ſelves; but Chriſt loved his Enemies above himſelf, and better than himſelf. Chriſt's love to Enemies was the Copy and Pattern, St. *Stephen*'s but the Tranſcript. *Note,* 3. His Holy Fervency in Prayer, he cried out with a loud Voice, endeavouring by the cry of his Prayers to drown the noiſe of the Stones which ratled about his Ears, and to divert that ſhower of Vengeance from them, with their ſhower of Stones upon him deſervedly called for from Heaven. *Note,* 4. The holy Martyr prayed for himſelf ſtanding, but for his Enemies kneeling; *ver.* 60. He ſtood when he ſaid, Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit; but *ver.* 60. when he ſaid, Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge, he kneeled down and cried. He was more importunate for his Enemies, than he was for himſelf. How near did St. *Stephen* the firſt Martyr come to his Bleſſed Maſter Chriſt Jeſus in praying for his Enemies? *Note,* 5. The ſucceſs and benefit of his Prayer; God heard and anſwered *Stephen*'s Prayer in *Saul*'s Converſion, recorded in the ninth Chapter. *Si Stephanus not oraſſet, Eccleſia Paulum non habuiſſe.* Saith one of the Ancients; *Saul*'s Converſion was owing to St. *Stephen*'s Interceſſion. *Note,* 6. The holy Man's Exit and happy Concluſion, *He fell aſleep. Where Note,* The thing recorded of him is his Death. 2. The Metaphor which his Death is ſet out by, and cloathed with, and that is *Sleep.* 3. The Circumſtance of Time when he fell aſleep, namely, after he had ſerved Chriſt, and ſuffered for him. *Learn thence,* That it is a bleſſed thing when Death calls us off the Stage of this World, after a Life of Service and Suffering. *When he had ſo ſaid, he fell aſleep.* Happy is that Chriſtian who falls aſleep with his Lord's Work in his hand.

CHAP. VIII.

The Hiſtory of Saul'*s Cruelty and Converſion, is next recorded, the former in this Chapter, the latter in the next; the deſign of both is to excite us to conſider, what a great Change the* Grace of God *can make in turning* Saul'*s into* Paul'*s; Perſecutors into Profeſſors; and the Oppoſers of Chriſt and his Truth into faithful Servants unto both.*

AND Saul was conſenting unto his death.

That is St. *Stephen*'s; mentioned in the cloſe of the laſt Chapter; how far he conſented to his Death, the Text tells us, *He kept the Garments of them that ſtoned him, they laid down their Clothes at his feet,* Chap. 7. 58. His Hand did not throw one Stone at the Holy Martyr's Head, but his Will concurred with others in that bloody Act; and this denominated him Guilty. *Learn hence,* That God chiefly inſpects the Heart, and if the Vote be paſt there, he looks upon the Man as guilty, tho' he proceeds no farther. 'Tis eaſie to murther another by a ſilent Wiſh, or paſſionate Deſire: In all Moral Actions God values the will for the Deed, and reckons that Man an Actor, that is an Applauder. Conſent unto the Sins of others, makes their Guilt our own: Saul *was conſenting unto his Death.* It follows:

2 And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Jeruſalem; and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Spite and Cruelty of the Churches Adverſaries was not quenched, but rather inflamed by the Blood of *Stephen*: From whence aroſe a bitter Perſecution againſt the Church at *Jeruſalem*, upon which the multitude of Believers fled from thence. Perſecution ſcatters the Profeſſors of Religion; but God makes ſcattering the way to encreaſing, and what was intended for the hinderance, God over-ruled for the furtherance of the Goſpel: As God overpowers the Devil, ſo he out-wits him too. This ſcattering Perſecution at *Jeruſalem*, which was deſigned to ſmother and ſuppreſs the Goſpel, did propagate and ſpread it more and more. *Obſerve*, 2. How God ſets Bounds and Limits to this ſharp Perſecution; tho' the Believers were ſcattered, yet the Apoſtles continued at *Jeruſalem*; *They were all ſcattered except the Apoſtles.* The Twelve ſtay there untouched in the midſt of the fiery Furnace of Perſecution, to comfort and cheriſh the Church in that ſad and doleful day, maugre the Malice of angry Men, and of enraged Devils; and thoſe who were ſcattered, carried the Light of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*. Thus out of the Darkneſs of Perſecution God bringeth forth the Light of the Goſpel, providing at once for the ſafety of ſome by their Flight, and for the calling home of others by their diſperſion: *They were all ſcattered abroad throughout the Regions of* Judea *and* Samaria.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Obſerve here, 1. Tho' St. *Stephen* was ſtoned to Death by his bloody Perſecutors, yet are they not ſo inhumane as to deny him Burial; it is a Mercy to have a Grave, and a decent Burial is a Bleſſing: The Body is the Garment of the Soul; we lay up this Garment in the Wardrobe of the Grave, with aſſurance that we ſhall put it on again, (when made Spiritual and Incorruptible) in the morning of the Reſurrection, and wear it to all Eternity. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſons deſcrib'd, who carried *Stephen* to the Bed of his Grave; *Devout Men*: that is, truly Religious Men, Men of eminent Piety and Holy Courage alſo; *Devout Men carried* Stephen *to his Burial*. A noble Inſtance of a Generous and Chriſtian Courage, that they durſt among ſuch a Multitude of Perſecutors and furious Zealots, own their Eſteem of, and pay their laſt Reſpects unto the Name and Memory of the Holy Martyr. *Obſerve*, 3. The doleful Solemnity of this Funeral, *They made great Lamentation over him*; and reaſon enough there was for it, becauſe of the Churches great Loſs at that Time: When any of the Miniſters of God are ſnatcht away by Death, eſpecially by a violent Death, from the Service of the Church, there is juſt cauſe for great and ſolemn Lamentation; *Devout Men carried* Stephen *to his Burial, and made great Lamentation over him.*

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entring into every houſe, and haling men and women, committed them to priſon.

Bloody *Saul*! was it not enough for thee to ſee a ſingle Saint deſtroyed, but wilt thou ſeek to deſtroy the whole Fraternity and Communion of Saints? Behold the fiery Zeal of this furious Perſecutor; he ſpares neither Age nor Sex, neither Men nor Women, neither Young nor Old, but without reſpect he hales them to Priſon. O Fury! worſe than Inhumane, not only to drag Men ſpitefully, but to hale Women ſhamefully to Priſon. Women in all Ages have been exempted from the Inſults of Tyranny, but not always freed from the Perſecutor's Fury. And bleſſed be God for that Maſculine Courage and Conſtancy which the feebler Sex have ſhewn, when they have been called forth to bear their Teſtimony for Chriſt; out of Weakneſs they have been made Strong. With what Wiſdom and Courage have they anſwered their Examiners, convicted their Accuſers, confuted their Oppoſers, kiſſing the Stake, hugging the Faggots, embracing the Flame? Thus can God help the weak Things of the World, to confound the Strong; and teach the Fooliſh to confute the Wiſe.

4 Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.

This ſevere Perſecution at *Jeruſalem* diſperſed the whole Body of the Church, and ſcattered both Members and Teachers thereof, (except the Apoſtles.) Some went to *Damaſcus*, ſome to *Samaria*, ſome to *Phœnice*, *Cyprus* and *Antioch*. But God over-ruled this ſcattering for his Churches encreaſing; he brought Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkneſs, Order out of Confuſion. 'Tis a great and certain Truth, That the Holy God would ſuffer no ſort of Evil to be, did he not know how to bring ſome excellent Good out of that Evil.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean ſpirits crying with a loud voice came out of many, that were poſſeſſed with them: and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

Obſerve here, 1. Amongſt the diſperſed, who went to *Samaria*, *Philip* was one, not *Philip* the Apoſtle (for all of them remained at *Jeruſalem*) but *Philip* the Deacon, who was the ſecond in order after *Stephen* among the ſeven Deacons: He comes to *Samaria*, and preaches there. *Obſerve*, 2. The Doctrines which he preached, he preached Chriſt unto them; that is Chriſtianity, or the Chriſtian Religion; namely, the Doctrine of Chriſt's Incarnation, Holy Life and Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, together with Remiſſion of Sins thro' Faith in his Name. *Obſerve*, 3. The ſucceſs of *Philip's* Doctrine at *Samaria*, the People with one accord embrace the Goſpel, *Giving heed to the things which he ſpake*: The preſence of the Holy Spirit accompanying his Miniſtry united his hearers Hearts as well as their Ears, to attend diligently to the Doctrine of Chriſt, delivered to them. This diligent Attention was a bleſſed Preparative to the *Samaritans* Converſion: Seeing Faith comes by hearing, yea they did not only attend to, but acquieſce in all he ſpake. *Note thence*, That were there a more reverend attention to the Word, there would be more Converſions by it, than at this day there is. *Obſerve*, 4. The external Ground and Reaſon of *Philip's* ſucceſs in his Miniſtry at *Samaria*; the Miracles which he wrought. Theſe were undeniable Evidences of the Truth of what he ſpake, and by which he ſhewed God's Authority for what he did and ſaid; he healed Diſeaſes, and caſt out Devils, (called unclean Spirits, becauſe they delight in Sin, that Spiritual Uncleanneſs of the Soul;) who cried out with a loud Voice, as very loth to leave their Lodgings, had they not been conſtrained to it. The Miracles which Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought were Heavens Broad-Seal to confirm the Truth of what they taught: *The People gave heed to what* Philip *ſpake, ſeeing the Miracles which he did. Obſerve laſtly*, What Joy and Rejoycing there was among the *Samaritans* at their Receiving and Entertaining of the Goſpel; *There was great Joy in that City*; not only for the Cures wrought upon their Bodies, but for the Doctrine of Reconciliation and Salvation preached to their Souls. As the Goſpel is in it ſelf a Meſſage of Joy and Glad-tydings, ſo it fills that Soul with Joy unſpeakable, that cordially receives and entertains it. Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, is one of the ſweet effects of the Kingdom of God; that is, the Goſpel: *Rom.* 14. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs and Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the ſame city uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himſelf was ſome great one. 10 To whom they all gave heed from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying, This man is of great power with God.

An account is here given of one of *Philip's* Auditors at *Samaria*, *Simon Magus* by name, or *Simon* the Sorcerer, a vile Man, the blackeſt *Ethiopian* that ever Baptiſmal Water wet or waſhed. Notorious for Sorcery, for Hypocriſie, for final Apoſtacy and avowed Impiety. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us of the Hereſies he broached, of the Divine Honours he aſſumed, of the Statues and Images built to him and his Strumpet *Helen*, which lewdly accompanied with him; of an Altar erected to him with this blaſphemous Inſcription, *Simoni Deo Sancto*, To *Simon* the Holy Ghoſt; and of his Tragical End, by breaking his Neck, when attempting to fly up to Heaven, becauſe the People would no longer be cheated with his Impoſtors here below. From this Example, *Note*, 1. That into the moſt Eminent and Populous Cities do oft-times enter the greateſt and vileſt Impoſtors, the moſt Atheiſtical and Diabolical Sorcerers: There they lurk and lodge, there they ſeek to ſet up and play their Prizes. *Note*, 2. That the vileſt Impoſtors, and the worſt Seducers, have yet many, very many Followers: The ſilly Multitude is ſoon deluded; *To him they all gave heed, from the leaſt to the greateſt. Note*, 3. That ſuch vile Deceivers have the Confidence to brag, and the deluded Multitude have the Weakneſs to believe, that they are very extraordinary Perſons, and can do extraordinary things. *Simon* gave it out himſelf, that he was *Some Great One*; and the People *cry him* up as the *Great Power of God.*

11 And to him they had regard, becauſe that of long time he had betwitched them with ſorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized both men and women. 13 Then Simon himſelf believed alſo, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and ſigns which were done.

Obſerve here, 1. How long a time this vile Sorcerer by God's Permiſſion, and Satan's Power, wrought theſe lying Wonders among the People; *He had of a long time bewitched them with Sorceries*, ver. 11. Deceivers are not always ſuddenly detected, and droſſy Hypocrites are not preſently diſcovered; but the Vizor will drop off ſooner or later. *Obſerve*, 2. That where the true Knowledge of God comes, and the clear Light of the Goſpel ſhines, the groſs Impieties and Impoſtors, their Cheats and Deluſions, will be found out, deteſted and abhorred: *When they believed* Philip'*s preaching*, *they were baptized both Men and Women.* Where the Light ſhines, Satan falls as Lightning; Magick vaniſhes. This *Dagon* cannot ſtand before that *Ark* of God: When the People of *Epheſus* received the Goſpel, they ſoon made a Bon-fire of their Magick Books, *Acts* 19. 19. *Obſerve*, 3. The ſucceſs of the Goſpel preached by *Philip*, the People believed, and *were baptized both Men and Women*, Mark 1. Believed, and then Baptized, theſe were Adult, or grown Perſons, not Infants, and they were Heatheniſh Idolaters, Strangers to the Covenant; and therefore muſt believe the Goſpel, and profeſs their Faith in Chriſt, before their Baptiſm. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſtred to any that are out of the Viſible Church, till they profeſs their Faith in Chriſt, and Obedience to him, *Mark* 2. The Perſons Baptized were Women as well as Men: *When they believed* Philip, *they were baptized both Men and Women.* Women under the Goſpel are capable of the Seal of the Covenant as well as Men: Under the Law they were not; then they were Circumciſed in the Men: Now they are Baptized for themſelves; *they were baptized both Men and Women.* *Obſerve*, 4. A great and ſudden Change wrought in *Simon* himſelf by the preaching of *Philip*, *He believed alſo, and was baptized.* Behold the Sorcerer is become a Profeſſor, a Believer, a Baptized Perſon. The Goſpel preached may have a common Operation upon a Soul, where it never produced inward Sanctification. All that are by the Goſpel proſelyted, are not ſavingly converted. All is not good Fiſh that is incloſed in the Goſpel's Net: But ſome Fiſh, ſome Traſh. As there will be Wheat and Tares in the ſame Field, Chaff and Corn in the ſame Floor; ſo will there be ſome Saints and ſome Sinners in the pureſt Earthly Church. *Obſerve laſtly*, Upon a bare profeſſion of Faith *Simon Magus* is Baptized. *Learn thence*, That outward Profeſſion juſtly gains Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Congregation, and gives a Perſon right to external Ordinances; *De occultis non judicat Eccleſia*: The Church's Judgment is a Judgment of Charity, not of a certainty; of the outward, not of the inward Man; of the Life, not of the Heart: The Faith of *Simon Magus* was no other than a Temporary, Hiſtorical, yea Hypocritical Faith; however, *Philip* baptizes him upon his making Profeſſion of it. An Heart-Hypocrite is no Hypocrite (*in foro Eccleſiæ*) in the ſight of the Church, tho' now abominable in the ſight of God. *Simon* the unſound Profeſſor was more odious in the ſight of God than *Simon* the Sorcerer.

14 Now when the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John. 15 Who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the holy Ghoſt. 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the holy Ghoſt.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, hearing the glad Tidings of *Samaria*'s Converſion by *Philip*'s Miniſtry, thought fit to ſend down two of the twelve to confirm the New Converts in their Faith, and to conſtitute a Church there by their Apoſtolical Authority. *Obſerve*, 2. The Perſons whom the College of the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* thought fit to ſend to *Samaria*, *Peter* and *John*. *Where Note*, That *Peter* being deputed by the reſt of the Apoſtles to this Service, is an Argument that *Peter* had no Primacy or Superiority over the reſt of the *Apoſtles*: Or if in this Imployment there was any ſign of Primacy, *John* was ſharer in it as well as *Peter*. *The Apoſtles ſent* Peter *and* John. *Obſerve*, 3. What the Apoſtles *Peter* and *John* did when they came to *Samaria*, *They pray'd, and laid their Hands on them, and they received the holy Ghoſt.* Where by the Holy Ghoſt is not to be underſtood the Sanctifying Graces of the Holy Ghoſt, which the Apoſtles never did, nor could diſpenſe, but the Extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; the Gifts of Tongues and Propheſie, and a Power to work Miracles. Theſe were now conferred on ſuch Perſons whom the Holy Ghoſt directed them to lay their Hands upon, as Perſons appointed and choſen to be Preachers of the Goſpel. *Where Note*, That Impoſition or Laying on of Hands has been an Ancient Rite uſed by the Officers of the Church in their Solemn dedicating of Perſons to the Service of God and his Church.

18 And when Simon ſaw that through laying on of the apoſtles hands, the holy Ghoſt was given, he offered them mony. 19 Saying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the holy Ghoſt. 20 But Peter ſaid unto him, Thy mony periſh with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with mony. 21 Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God.

Here obſerve, 1. How infinitely miſtaken this Wretch was, in thinking that the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt could be purchaſed with Money. 2. In ſuppoſing that the Apoſtles had a Power to diſpenſe theſe Gifts, when and where, and to whom they pleaſed. 3. And that they could inable others to impart them alſo, which were all very groſs Conceits. From this Deed of *Simon*'s, it is called *Simony*, to ſeek to buy Spiritual Gifts or Offices with Money. *Obſerve*, 2. What it was that put *Simon* upon purchaſing this Power; doubtleſs it was Covetouſneſs, and Vain-glory. He hoped to make a Penny of this Privilege, and to render himſelf Famous among his Followers by this Prerogative. *Learn thence*, That cunning and cloſe Hypocrites, Corrupt and Hypocrital Profeſſors do ſeek to make a Gain of Godlineſs, and a Merchandize of Chriſtianity. *Simon* had never bid ſo freely for the Holy Ghoſt, if he had not expected to receive as freely of others for the Holy Ghoſt: Which he deſired to buy, but not to keep, and intended to ſell not to give. *Obſerve*, 3. How Saint *Peter* ſcorns the vile Motion made by *Simon*, and rejects it with the greateſt deteſtation: *Thy money periſh with thee*. *Learn thence*, That wicked (tho' gainful) Motions are to be ſcorned and refuſed by the Godly, with the greateſt deteſtation and abhorrence. Our Hearts can never riſe too high in a juſt Indignation againſt Sin: And againſt all Temptation unto Sin; *Thy money periſh with thee*; Thou and thy Money periſh together. *Obſerve*, 4. How plainly St. *Peter* deals with him; he ſearches him to the quick, to the Heart, ſounds the depths of Sin; lays open the core of his Hypocriſie before his Face, and tells him to his Teeth, that his Heart was rotten and unſound: *Thy Heart is not right in the ſight of God.* The Baptiſmal Water had waſhed his out-ſide; but his inwards were unclean. The Heart is the worſt part of Man till it be mended, and then 'tis beſt: Where moſt Evil lies, there we muſt firſt begin to be good; all will be good, if the Heart, which is the ſeat, the ſink and the Seed-plot of all Evil, be made good. The Life would not be ſo bad, if the Heart were not worſe: All the obliquity of our Lives proceeds from the Impurity of our Hearts and Nature, as the muddineſs of the Stream from the foulneſs of the Fountain.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then anſwered Simon, and ſaid, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things which ye have ſpoke come upon me. 25 And they when they had teſtified and

preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jeruſalem, and preached the goſpel, in many villages of the Samaritans.

Obſerve here, 1. The odious Character wherewith Sin in general and Hypocriſie in particular is branded, it is bitterneſs and bondage; 'tis the Gall of bitterneſs, and the Bond of iniquity. *Learn thence*, 1. That Sin is an exceeding bitter thing; it is bitter to God, it provokes him to bitter Anger; it was bitter to Chriſt, it laid him under the bitter Wrath of God; it was bitter to the Angels, it turned them out of Heaven, and baniſhed them from the preſence of God for evermore. It is bitter to good Men, it coſts them bitter Repentance, and it occaſions them bitter Chaſtiſements; and it will be bitter, eternally bitter to the wicked and impenitent World. Now the bitterneſs of Sin, is not a medicinal and wholeſome bitterneſs; but an intoxicating and ſtupifying bitterneſs; a poyſonous and a baneful bitterneſs. Sins bitter draught is a baneful draught. *Learn*, 2. That not only bitterneſs but bondage attends the Service and Servants of Sin: As Sin is the Gall of bitterneſs, ſo 'tis the bond of Iniquity, and the bondage of Sin, it is a ſhameful and ignominious Bondage, a fruitleſs and unprofitable Bondage, a ſtupifying and inſenſible Bondage, a reſtleſs and unwearied Bondage, an endleſs and eternal Bondage. *Learn*, 3. That every Soul before Converſion, is in and under this deplorable Bondage. *Thou art in the bond of iniquity. Obſerve*, 2. The means preſcribed and directed to, for the Souls delivery out of this deplorable Bondage; Namely, Repentance and Prayer. *Repent of thy wickedneſs, and pray God.* 1. Repent. *Learn thence*, That timely and ſincere Repentance, is a ſpecial Means preſcribed and appointed by God, for the recovery of the worſt of Sinners out of this deplorable Bondage. 2. Pray. *Here Note*, 1. A wicked Man may pray, and ought to pray. As bad as *Simon Magus* was, St. *Peter* doth not drive him to deſpair, but directs him to his duty: *Pray God.* Prayer is a part of natural Worſhip, which we owe to God, it is the Souls Motion, God-ward; therefore, to ſay a wicked Man ſhould not pray, is to ſay, he ſhould not turn to God. *Note*, 2. That all the Prayer in the World, without a Man's own Prayer to God for Pardon and Remiſſion, will be ineffectual and unavailable to Salvation. *Simon Magus* deſired the Apoſtles to pray for him, *ver.* 24. but St. *Peter* bids him to pray for himſelf, as ever he hopes for forgiveneſs with God: Repent of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God. *Obſerve*, 3. The Encouragement given to make uſe of the means preſcribed; Namely, a probability of forgiveneſs and acceptance with God. *Repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of thy Heart may be forgiven thee. Learn thence*, That the vileſt and worſt of Sinners upon their true Repentance, accompanied with earneſt Prayer and Supplication unto God, have good ground of Encouragement to hope for Pardon of Sin and Acceptance with him. *Obſerve*, 4. How St. *Peter* takes moſt notice of that, of which *Simon Magus* took leaſt, and that was of the wickedneſs of his Thoughts; *That the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee. Thence Learn*, That wicked and evil Thoughts, lodged and entertained in the Heart, ought in a ſpecial manner to be repented of and humbled for by all, that expect forgiveneſs with God; for ſinful thoughts are radical and ſeminal Evils; they were the root of the Angels Apoſtacy, and of *Adam*'s Apoſtacy alſo. A World of Sin may be lodged in the Thoughts.

26 And the angel of the Lord ſpake unto Philip, ſaying, Ariſe, and go toward the ſouth, unto the way that goeth down from Jeruſalem unto Gaza, which is a deſert. 27 And he aroſe and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treaſure, and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip, 28 Was returning, and ſitting in his chariot read Eſaias the prophet. 29 Then the ſpirit ſaid unto Philip, Go near, and joyn thy ſelf to his chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Eſaias, and ſaid, Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt? 31 And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? and he deſired Philip that he would come up, and ſit with him.

Here we have recorded the Remarkable Converſion of the Eunuch by the preaching of *Philip*, concerning which ſeveral Circumſtances are to be obſerved: 1. The Author or Inſtrument converting *Philip*, who was commanded by the Angel in a Viſion to go to *Gaza*; but not the common way, or ordinary Road, but the way of the Deſert, a difficult, and perhaps a dangerous way, over Mountains and through Vallies: *Philip* knew not whither he was going, but God knew whither, and wherefore he ſent him: O *Philip!* it was worth thy going many ſteps out of thy way, to convert and ſave a Soul: Happy for the Eunuch that thou wenteſt out of thy way, and that he as happily met with thee. *Obſerve*, 2. The Subject or Perſon converted, 1. An *Ethiopian*, the moſt deſpiſed of all the *Gentiles* in the ſight of the *Jews*. Behold! the Sanctifying Grace of God waſhing a Blackamoor white, and making an *Ethiopian* clean. 2. A Nobleman, a Courtier, a Treaſurer to the Queen, yet he concerns himſelf with Religion; and being a Proſelyte travels in his Chariot as far as *Jeruſalem* to worſhip God in a ſolemn manner. O how will this Example riſe up in Judgment againſt our great Ones, who have more Light, but leſs Heart, more Knowledge, but leſs Love! 3. A Bookiſh-Man, one that delighted in Reading, and in Reading of the Scriptures too, and this whilſt he was riding in his Chariot, to loſe no time for gaining the knowledge of his Duty. If our Courtiers and great Men Read not at all in their Coaches, or if ſo, Plays and Romances only, this ignorant *Ethiopian* Lord did better, tho' he knew not ſo much as theſe. *He read in his Chariot the Prophet* Eſaias. *Obſerve*, 3. The Means which God ſanctified and bleſſed for the Eunuch's Converſion; it was the Reading and Expounding of the Holy Scriptures: The Word of God Read and Preached is the great Inſtrument in the Hand of the ſpirit for Sinners Illumination, Converſion and Salvation; and bleſſed are they that hear and read the Word with Attention, Affection and Application. *Obſerve*, 4. The wonderful Modeſty and Humility of this great Man, he thankfully accepts *Philip*'s offer to inſtruct and teach him, (ſome would have huffed at it as a rude Affront) but he condeſcends to learn of one beneath him. Such as are modeſt and throughly humble, are alſo truly docile and teachable, willing to learn Knowledge, altho' from the Mouth of an Inferior: *He deſired* Philip *to come up and ſit with him.*

32 The place of the Scripture which he read, was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch anſwered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee, of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the ſame Scripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. The particular Text of Holy Scripture which God directed the Eunuch to Read in order to his Converſion: It was a Prophecy of Chriſt the Promiſed *Meſſias*, Recorded in the 53d of *Iſaiah*; *He was led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, and as a Lamb dumb before the Shearer*: Pointing out the Innocency, the Meekneſs, and Patience of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in and under all his ſatisfactory Sufferings for our Sins; *In the day of his Humiliation*, particularly in the day of his Tryal and Sentence, *His Judgment was taken away*; that is, his Right was taken away by the unrighteous Judgment of the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrin, and no Right or Juſtice done him; and who can declare ſufficiently the Wickedneſs of that Generation which cut off ſo innocent a Perſon from the Land of the Living? This Text, *Philip* informs the Eunuch, was truly applicable to the *Meſſias*, who was certainly come into the World, and both done and ſuffered all that was propheſied of him. *Here Note*, How wonderfully the Divine Providence did work in a concurring tendency towards the Eunuch's Converſion. God moves his Heart to read, to read the Scriptures, to read this Scripture, which informed him of the Sufferings of the Lord Jeſus, and ſends *Philip* out of his way to meet him, and he meets him juſt as he was Reading that Portion of Scripture which moſt concerned him: He wanted to be informed concerning Chriſt, and *Philip* is at his Elbow at that very Juncture to inſtruct him in a moſt Fundamental Truth in order to his Converſion and Salvation. O the wonderful Love, and manifold Wiſdom of God in finding out Ways and Methods for bringing home Souls to himſelf! If his Providence brings not them under the Means, it will bring the Means to them. This Eunuch wanted the ordinary means of Knowledge; but being deſirous of Spiritual Knowledge, God ſteps out of the ordinary Road to meet him, tho' an *Ethiopian*, commonly eſteemed the meaneſt of Mankind; and thereby ſhews that as there is no reſpect of Perſons, ſo no difference of Nations with him; but whoever feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him. In the cloſe, *Philip* preaches a Goſpel-Sermon to him, diſplays Jeſus Chriſt before him, and by the Bleſſing of God upon the Ordinance, ſaving Faith was effectually wrought in the Eunuch's Soul.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, here is water, What doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip ſaid, if thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the ſpirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoycing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and paſſing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Ceſarea.

Obſerve here, 1. The Eunuch is inſtructed before Baptized, and he deſireth Baptiſm of *Philip*; it was not forced upon him by *Philip* againſt his Will, *The Eunuch ſaid, what hinders me to be baptized*; To drive Men to Baptiſm, as they drive Beaſts to Watering, and force Chriſtianity upon them againſt their Wills, to ſend forth booted Apoſtles with Javelins in their Hands, and Croſſes on their Breaſts, as the Romiſh Church doth to Dragoon Men into Chriſtianity, is the way to make Hypocrites, but not Proſelytes; for 'tis not whole Armies that can beſiege my Reaſon, nor Cannons batter my Will. 'Tis Conviction, not Compulſion that muſt induce Aſſent. *Obſerve*, 2. The Eunuch after Inſtruction deſired Baptiſm, *See here is Water*; let me be Baptized. As if he had ſaid, Oh *Philip!* as thou haſt inſtructed me; I pray thee alſo Baptize me. Now that I have received the Benefit of thy Doctrine, let me not want the comfort of the Sacrament. Where the Heart is truly touched by the Miniſtry of the Word, and the Soul throughly Converted unto God, there is a deſire to be partakers of the Sacraments. *Obſerve*, 3. The Condition required of the Eunuch before he was Baptized, Namely, A profeſſion of his Faith in the promiſed Meſſias, *if thou believeſt*, thou mayſt be Baptized. There is a Neceſſity of Faith, to render Man a meet partaker of the Holy Sacraments: If we come to any of the Sacraments without Faith, we are ſure to depart without Fruit. *Obſerve*, 4. The Qualification of that Faith which gives a Right to the Holy Sacrament; *If thou believeſt with all thy Heart*, only that Faith gives a right to Baptiſm, and entitles to Salvation; which is with all the Heart. The Eunuch believed with his whole Heart, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God. This gave him at once a right to Baptiſm, and a Title to Heaven. *Obſerve*, 5. The manner of the Adminiſtration of Baptiſm to the Eunuch, he went down into the Water and was Baptized by *Philip*: In thoſe hot Countries it was uſual ſo to do, and we do not oppoſe the lawfulneſs of Dipping in ſome caſes; but the Neceſſity of Dipping in all caſes.

In Sacraments, it is not the quantity of the Elements; but the Significancy of them that ought to be attended, as in Circumciſion, it was not the quantity of the Fleſh cut off; and in the Lord's Supper, it is not the quantity of the Bread and Wine taken down; ſo in Baptiſm, a few drops of Water poured upon me doth ſignifie and Seal, and conveigh and confirm me to a Right and Intereſt in all the Benefits of my Saviour's Death and Reſurrection, as fully as with *Jonah*, I were plunged into the main Ocean. *Obſerve*, 6. What followed upon the Eunuch's Baptizing and coming out of the Water. 1. The Spirit of the Lord caught away *Philip*, by the Miniſtry of an Angel he was carried out of his ſight, that the Eunuch might be the more aſſured of the Truth of thoſe things, which were taught him by *Philip*'s Miniſtry; and that he was a Perſon ſent of God to direct him in the way to true Happineſs. 2. The Eunuch went on his way rejoycing, and well he might, it was the happieſt Journey he ever took, to meet with Chriſt and Converſion in his way, and Heaven and Salvation at his Journey's end. A converted Man hath great cauſe of rejoycing; the Goſpel proclaimed much more, heartily embraced, is matter of great Joy. Behold the fruit of Faith, Joy and Rejoycing; the Eunuch is inſtructed, Believed, is Baptized, and goes home Rejoycing. The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. *Obſerve laſtly*, *Philip* was found at *Azotus*, or *Aſhdod*, Thirty four Miles from *Gaza*, ſo far had the Miniſtry of the Angels carried him, and there ſafely ſet him down. Learn, How good it is to obey God in the moſt difficult Command. *Philip* had a hard and tireſome Journey from *Samaria* to *Gaza*, footing it through a Deſert, in untrodden Paths, and running as faſt as the Eunuch's Chariot, to joyn himſelf unto it at the command of God. But now from *Gaza* to *Azotus*; he has a ſwifter and an eaſier Paſſage, he rides in an Angelical flying Chariot. When we attend the execution of God's Commands, the Holy Angel ſhall attend us, and take care of us, and adminiſter neceſſary help unto us; like tender Nurſes they keep us ſafe whilſt we live, and bring us home in their Arms to our Father's Houſe when we die; Bleſſed be God for the Miniſtry of his Holy Angels.

CHAP. IX.

This Chapter relates to us, both Saul'*s Cruelty and Converſion; and acquaints us with the wonderful Method which the infinitely Wiſe God took for his Churches deliverance from the Fury of Perſecution; Namely, by the Converſion (not Confuſion) of* Saul *the Principal Perſecutor; whereby the Churches had Reſt and Peace. His Cruelty is Recorded, verſe* 1. *and* 2.

AND Saul yet breathing out threatnings, and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, went unto the high prieſt, 2 And deſired of him letters to Damaſcus to the ſynagogues, that if they found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem.

Obſerve here, 1. The lively Character of a bloody Perſecutor; *He breaths out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the Members of Chriſt*. His very breath ſmells of Fire; Threatnings and Slaughter, like Lightnings and Thunder, proceed out of his Mouth. Whilſt a Perſecutor hath in him the breath of his own Life, he breaths nothing but Death againſt others: Nothing will ſatisfie him but the Death and Deſtruction of the Members of Jeſus Chriſt. An Indiſcreet and Ungovernable Zeal ſoon degenerates into Fury and Madneſs. *Obſerve*, 2. How reſtleſs and unwearied Perſecutors are in the Proſecution of their bloody Deſigns and Purpoſes. *Saul* was now *Inquiſitor hereticæ pravitatis*; away he trots to the High Prieſt for a Commiſſion to bind Hereticks, who believed on Jeſus, and oppoſe the Traditions of the Fathers, and having, as he thought, ſwept *Jeruſalem* of Saints, he reſolved next to ranſack *Damaſcus*, tho' it was five or ſix days Journey from *Jeruſalem*: However he ſpurs on, away he goes through Fire and Water to revenge his Malice on the poor Members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn hence*, That Perſecutors will ſpare neither Purſe nor Pains, they will ſtick and ſtop at nothing, tho' never ſo toilſome and hazardous, ſo they may glut their Malice, and ſatisfie their Revenge upon the poor Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. The High Prieſt needed not to hire *Saul* to this black Work, he both offers himſelf, and ſues for the Office: No doubt the High Prieſt and Council highly applauded his Zeal and forwardneſs for extirpating Hereticks, commending the Gallantry of his Reſolution, and the Bravery of his Mind; and having ſealed his Commiſſion, ſent him away with wiſhes of Succeſs.

3 And as he journied he came near Damaſcus: and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from Heaven. 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying unto him Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 5 And he ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt: It is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks.

Saul being now on-ward of his Journey to *Damaſcus*, (the worſt Journey that ever he intended, but the beſt that ever he undertook) a Journey moſt maliciouſly purpoſed by him, but moſt mercifully diſpoſed by God. Heaven had deſigned him for better Service and Work of another Nature; and accordingly he is ſtopt in his way, knockt off his Horſe, a ſudden Beam of Light beyond the brightneſs of the Sun darts upon him, dazles him, and he hears a Voice, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* That is, *Me*, in my *Members*. Whatever is done againſt Chriſtians; for any thing that Chriſt commandeth them, he takes it as done againſt himſelf. Such as perſecute the Saints for their Sanctity, perſecute Chriſt himſelf; and he can no more endure to ſee them wronged, then himſelf. As the Honour of Chriſt, the Head redounds to the Members, ſo the Sorrows of the Members are reſented by the Head. Chriſt ſaid not thus to his Murtherers on Earth, why bind ye me? why buffet ye me? why ſcourge ye, and why Crucifie ye me? But here, when his Members ſuffer, he cries out from Heaven, *Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord, thou art more tender of thy Body Myſtical, than thou wert of thy Body Natural, more ſenſible of thy Members Sufferings, than of thine own. *Obſerve*, 2. The wonderful Power of the Heart-changing Grace of God, *Saul* crys out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Saul* is no longer a Lyon, but a Lamb; the Wolf that hunted before for his Prey, now gently couches like a Sheep; hears and obeys the Voice of Chriſt the great Shepherd; and of a Perſecutor of the Church, becomes the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*. Behold! the Tare is become Wheat; the Child of Wrath, a Choſen Veſſel; the Prodigy of Nature, the Miracle of Grace. Lord, who can enough admire and magnifie the Sovereignty and Omnipotent Prevalency of Divine Grace, which could refine and did extract very precious Gold from ſo rough, ſo courſe and ſo baſe a Metal. Converſion is a work of wonder in all Men, but a Miracle in this Man, and extrordinary ſtrange and inſtantaneouſly ſudden; and therefore, is by no means to be made the Meaſure and Common-ſtandard of every Man's Converſion: Shall we think no Man Converted, unleſs he be ſtruck down with a Light and Power immediately from Heaven, and be taken with a fit of Trembling, and frighted almoſt out of his Wits. How many be the benefits of a good Education, others by the Bleſſing of God upon ſome Affliction, and upon calm Conſideration, without any great Terrors and Amazement, have been viſibly changed and converted? The Effects and Fruits of Converſion are very viſible in all; but the Manner of Converſion is not alike in all. Things may be very viſible in their Effects, which yet are not viſible in their Cauſe: If the Fruits of our Converſion be viſible, the certainty of it is unqueſtionable, and the Advantage of it will be unſpeakable, although we cannot tell the time when, or the manner how the Holy Spirit wrought it in us.

6 And he trembling and aſtoniſhed, ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord ſaid unto him, Riſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.

Obſerve here, 1. How eaſily God can make the fierceſt Perſecutor to quake and tremble: *Saul* is ſtruck down, but it is to Convert him, not Confound him; he trembles, but his Trembling was in order to Rejoycing. It was a favourable tho' an affrighting ſtroak, which ſtruck him down, but with deſign to raiſe him up again. Humiliation for Sin, in ſome meaſure, always goes before a Soul's Acceptance of Chriſt, and Subjection to him. *Obſ.* 2. How ready and deſirous a Converted Perſon is to know and do the Mind and Will of God; *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* He is inquiſitive after his Duty, and deſirous of the Knowledge of it. We may ſooner find Fire without Heat, than a true Convert without operative Grace. It is not, Lord, What wilt thou have me to ſay? but, What wilt thou have me to do? It is not the talking, but the walking and working Perſon that is the true Chriſtian. *Obſerve*, 3. God's Anſwer to *Saul*'s Inquiry, *Ariſe, go into the City, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.* Mark, He was going to *Damaſcus* before upon the Devil's Errand; now God bids him go; he had a better Authority for his going thither now, than what he had from the High Prieſt before; he went before for others Deſtruction; he goes now for his own Inſtruction, in order to Salvation; *There it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.*

7 And the men which journyed with him ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, but ſeeing no man.

Obſerve here, The Teſtimony or Witneſſes of *Saul*'s Converſion, to wit, the Men that journeyed with him; it is probable that he had a conſiderable number of Officers with him, to bring both Men and Women that profeſſed Chriſtianity bound to *Jeruſalem*. Theſe ſaw the Light ſhining, and heard a confuſed Noiſe like Thunder; but they ſaw not Chriſt himſelf as he did, nor heard the articulate Voice of Chriſt that he heard, which ſpake ſo powerfully, ſo convincingly, and ſo convertingly to his Soul, Lord, how many are there that come under thine Ordinances, who hear only (like *Saul*'s Companions) a confuſed Noiſe, an empty Sound; they do not hear the diſtinct voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to their Hearts with a ſtrong hand, inwardly and effectually, and ſo remain under the power of Unbelief in an unconverted ſtate.

8 And Saul aroſe from the earth: and when his eyes were opened, he ſaw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damaſcus. 9 And he was three days without ſight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Obſerve here, 1. The change of *Saul*'s Poſture, *He aroſe from the Earth.* He that fell to the Earth a Perſecutor, riſes up a Saint: Oh free Mercy, and aſtoniſhingly rich Grace! that the Earth upon which he lay, did not open her Mouth, and ſwallow him up alive; he that had run away from God, and imployed his Feet in the Service of the Devil, is once more ſet upon his Feet again. *Obſerve*, 2. His blindneſs and loſs of ſight, *When his eyes were opened he ſaw no Man.* Chriſt taught him by his bodily blindneſs, the blindneſs of his Soul in Spiritual Things, which till now he was inſenſible of. As *Saul* was, ſo all Men naturally are ſpiritually blind, before Regeneration and Converſion; true, he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, and was a great Proficient in Humane Learning; but after his Converſion, he accounted that knowledge no better than blindneſs, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. *Obſerve*, 3. His Manuduction or leading by the Hand into the City, *They led him by the Hand into* Damaſcus: Who led him? doubtleſs his Companions that came along with him upon his bloody deſign from *Jeruſalem*. Here the blind led the blind; thoſe very Hands led him to *Damaſcus*, which ſhould have haled the Saints from *Damaſcus* to *Jeruſalem*: But Oh *Saul!* Thou hadſt a better Leader than all theſe, even Chriſt himſelf: He led thee by the hand into the City, in order to the compleating of thy Converſion; Now happy *Saul!* tho' formerly rebellious, who haſt thy Saviour for a Leader, thou ſhalt neither wander nor miſcarry. *Obſerve*, 4. The Duration and Continuance of *Saul*'s Blindneſs, *He was three Days without Sight.* This was a long Night to him who perſecuted the Children of the Day; a juſt time for him to be in darkneſs, who ſo implacably attempted to blow out the light of the Goſpel: But perhaps no leſs time would have been ſufficient to humble him for his Rage and Madneſs againſt Chriſt and his Members. Beſides, there are ſome that think, that in theſe three Days of his continued Blindneſs, he had that Rapture into the Third Heaven; which is mentioned, 2 *Cor.* 12. 2. But however that be, doubtleſs in this time, his Mind was filled with Divine Contemplations; and that Glorious Goſpel was taught him in three Days, which he taught to others all his Days. *Obſerve*, 5. His Abſtinence from Food, *He did neither eat nor drink*: He ſpent thoſe three Days, we may believe, in Faſting and Prayer, and extraordinary Humiliation before God for his former wicked Life, and particularly for his violent Perſecution of the Church of Chriſt: He Faſted to make him more fervent in Prayer; For Faſting prepares for Prayer, and gives wings to Prayer.

10 And there was a certain diſciple at Damaſcus, named Ananias, and to him ſaid the Lord in a viſion, Ananias? And he ſaid, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord ſaid unto him, Ariſe, and go into the ſtreet, which is called Straight, and inquire in the houſe of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarſus: for behold he prayeth. 12 And hath ſeen in a viſion a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his ſight.

Obſerve here, 1. Tho' Chriſt converted *Saul* himſelf, yet *Ananias* his Miniſter muſt inſtruct him. By Chriſt is Grace infuſed, but by his Miniſters increaſed; ſuch an Honour doth Chriſt put upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel, That he makes uſe of their Endeavours ordinarily, both for the Production and Augmentation of Grace in the Hearts of his People. Oh, the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of a ſtanding Miniſtry? 'Tis a ſingular Favour to have the Mind of God made known to us by Men like our ſelves: And behold the Honour that God puts upon his Miniſters, in uſing them as Conduit-Pipes, for conveying the Water of Life to us, which he is not pleaſed to communicate immediately from himſelf. *Obſerve*, 2. What an exact Knowledge the Lord has of particular Perſons and particular Places: He tells *Ananias* in what City *Saul* was, in *Damaſcus*; in what Street he was, in the Street called *Straight*; in whoſe Houſe he was, in the *Houſe of Judas*: It is matter of Conſolation, yea of higheſt Conſolation to the Children of God, to know and remember that God knows them; that God knows their Perſons, knows their Purpoſes, knows their Performances, knows their place of Abode; that he knows who they are, what they do, and where they dwell. It aſſures them as to their Perſons, that they ſhall be accepted; as to their Performances, that they ſhall be rewarded; and as to their Habitations, that they ſhall be loved, bleſſed and protected by him. So dear are the holy Servants of God unto him, that he loves the very Street in which they Lodge, the Houſe in which they Dwell, the Walls of their Habitation are always before him; and he delights continually to look upon them. Let Holineſs to the Lord, then, be always writ in fair and legible Characters upon the Walls of our Houſes, *Zach.* 14. *ver.* 10. *Obſerve*, 3. The Courſe which Almighty God takes to remove all fear from *Ananias* his Mind, and to encourage him to go to *Saul*, according to the Direction given him; altho' he had been ſuch a bloody Perſecutor: He tells him, That behold, he prayeth; as if he had ſaid, Tho' he has been bad, he is not now what he was, he is another Man; nay, he is a new Man, he is truly and thoroughly Converted, and this is the undeniable Evidence and Teſtimony of it, that whereas before he Perſecuted, now he Prayeth; *Behold he prayeth. Learn thence*, That Spiritual Breath is a good ſign of Spiritual Birth: None of God's Children are Still-born, they all come crying into the World. The Duty of Prayer faithfully and perſeveringly performed, is a good Evidence that a Soul is thoroughly Converted and Brought home by Repentance unto God; *Behold*, Saul *Prayeth!* But did he never pray till now? Yes, no doubt many a time when he was a ſtrict *Phariſee*, he prayed after a looſe and cuſtomary manner; but he never prayed ſo Senſibly and Feelingly, ſo Spiritually and Affectionately, ſo Fervently and Perſeveringly before, as he did after his Converſion: His Prayer before, was the cry of the Old, now of the New Creature; before he Prayed with Coldneſs and Indifferency, now he Prays with Warmth and Fervency, as a Perſon in earneſt for his Soul's Happineſs and Salvation; therefore Chriſt brings it in with a Note of Attention and Obſervation: Now behold, he prayeth.

13 Then Ananias anſwered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief prieſts, to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thy way: for he is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Iſrael. 16 For I will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my names ſake.

Obſerve here, 1. *Ananias* his Reluctancy and Fear, to go to *Saul*; becauſe of his former violent Perſecution and preſent Commiſſion; *Lord, I have heard of this Man*, &c. *Learn*, That ſuch as are very ready and forward for Chriſt's Service, may upon appearing Difficulties hang back, till they be helped over thoſe Difficulties by the helping hand of Chriſt. Thus it was with *Ananias*, *Behold*, (ſays he) *here I am Lord, ver.* 10. To ſhew his readineſs to run on any Errand that Chriſt would ſend him: but when he came to underſtand his Meſſage, he was afrighted and began to draw back: therefore the Lord graciouſly condeſcends to remove the Stumbling-block that lay in the way of his Servants Obedience, fear not; as if Chriſt had ſaid, *Go thy way*: He is not what he was, he is another Man, yea, he is a new Man. *Obſerve*, 2. The Honourable Title which Chriſt puts upon *Saul*, *He is a choſen Veſſel.* That is, a Perſon choſen of God to convey the Divine Treaſure of the Goſpel, not only to the *Jews* but *Gentiles* alſo, even to the greateſt and higheſt amongſt them. *He is a choſen veſſel to bear my name before the Gentiles and Kings. Where Note*, 1. The Term of Uſefulneſs, he is a Veſſel. Now a Veſſel is not a Natural but an Artificial Inſtrument. No Man is Born but made a Miniſter of the Goſpel. Veſſels are not of equal Capacity, ſome are greater, others leſs; all Miniſters have not alike Endowments, nor are they equally fitted for the Sacred Employment. Again, *Veſſels* are receptive Inſtruments: they muſt take in, before they can give out, what the Miniſters of the Goſpel have received of the Lord, that they deliver to their People; they give out what God gives in. Finally, *Veſſels* are for Effuſion as well as for Reception: they let out as well as take in, yea therefore take in, that they may let out; therefore have the Miniſters of Chriſt a Treaſure of Divine Knowledge in themſelves, that they may communicate and impart it to others. And it is not impaired by imparting, but like the Oyl *in the Widow's Veſſel*, increaſed by pouring out. A Miniſter by communicating the Treaſure of his Knowledge, inriches others without impoveriſhing himſelf. *Note*, 2. The Term of Excellency, He is *a choſen Veſſel*, *choſen* to preach Chriſt, *choſen* to ſuffer for Chriſt; a Veſſel *choſen* to bear the Divine Treaſure of the Goſpel, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles.* Lord! what Honour doſt thou put upon thy Miniſters in making them Veſſels of Honour fit for the Maſter's Uſe, and the Families Service? If I may not be a Veſſel of Gold or Silver, let me be a Veſſel of Wood or Stone, ſo I may be a Veſſel unto Honour; a ſucceſsful Inſtrument in thy hand, for thy Glory and the Churches Good.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entred into the houſe; and putting his hands on him, ſaid, Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt) hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the holy Ghoſt. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been ſcales; and he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was ſtrengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the diſciples which were at Damaſcus.

Obſerve here, 1. *Ananias*, tho' no *Apoſtle*, no *Deacon*, nor *Miniſter*, that we read of, but an ordinary and private Chriſtian only; yet he has power to heal *Saul* of his Blindneſs, and to confer the Holy Ghoſt; *Receive thy ſight and be filed with the Holy Ghoſt*: If ſo, undoubtedly, he had an extraordinary Warrant for this extraordinary Work; for none but the *Apoſtles* had power to confer the Holy Ghoſt. No ordinary Perſon ought to undertake any part of the Miniſterial Function, without an extraordinary Call and Commiſſion. *Obſerve*, 2. The Title given by *Ananias* to *Saul*. Brother *Saul*: They were now Brethren by Faith and Profeſſion, owning the ſame God, United to the ſame Saviour, Animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame Promiſes, Partakers of the ſame Hope, and Heirs of the ſame Glory. As the Scripture ſpeaks of a Brotherhood betwixt Chriſt and Believers; *He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren*, as it ſpeaks of a Brotherhood betwixt believers themſelves, *Love the Brotherhood*. That is, the whole Fraternity and Society of Chriſtians, who are *Sanguine Chriſti Conglutinati*, Cemented by the Blood of Chriſt, and United by the Bond of Love. *Obſerve*, 3. How this Converted Perſon, *Saul*, takes upon him the Badge of Chriſtianity, by *Baptiſm*, *He aroſe and was Baptized*. Liſting himſelf thereby a Soldier under Chriſt's exalted Banner, and entring himſelf a Member of that Church which heretofore he had made havock of. *Obſerve*, 4. The prudent Care which *Saul* takes of his Health, by giving Nature its neceſſary Refreſhment. *He received Meat, and was ſtrengthened.* Doubtleſs his Body was much weakned and enfeebled, by his long Journey partly, but by his Conſternation, Fear and Grief eſpecially, as alſo by his Humiliation, Watchings, Faſting and Prayer: It was therefore his Duty to refreſh Nature, and to ſtrengthen himſelf for the Service of his great Maſter, where-ever he ſhould pleaſe to ſend him. Whilſt we are in the Body, there is a Debt of Care which we owe to the Body: Meat and Drink are the Supports of Life, under the influence of the Divine Bleſſing; and all ſuperſtitious Abſtinence from Food, is no better than Will worſhip. *Obſerve laſtly*, *Saul* is no ſooner changed himſelf, but he changeth his Company and Acquaintance. He no longer aſſociates with the Chief Prieſts and Rulers of the Synagogue, but with the Followers of Jeſus; *v.* 19. *Then was* Saul *certain days with the Diſciples which were at* Damaſcus. Men who cunningly conceal their Inclinations, may yet be known by their conſtant Companions. *Saul* was now a Companion of them that feared God, and kept his Commandments. The Diſciples at *Damaſcus*, whom he came to deſtroy, are now become his delight; *He continued certain days with the Diſciples.*

20 And ſtraightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that he is the ſon of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this he that deſtroyed them which called on this name in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief prieſts? 22 But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt. 23 And after that many days were fulfilled the Jews took counſel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the diſciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

Here we have an Account of St. *Paul's* Entrance upon his Miniſterial Office in Preaching the Goſpel, *Straightway he preached Chriſt in the Synagogues. Where Note*, 1. The time of his Preaching, *Straightway*; he fell preſently to his Maſter's Work, not conſulting Fleſh and Blood about the Difficulties and Dangers that might attend it. But performs his Duty with ſuch Zeal and immediate Application, as became a Perſon of his holy Character and Profeſſion. *Note*, 2. The Place where he Preached, *in the Jewiſh Synagogues*: He was afterwards indeed the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, but according to Chriſt's Command he firſt preached the Word of Life to the *Jews*, to convert ſome, and to leave others without excuſe: After which he turned from them unto the *Gentiles*, according to *Acts* 13. 46. *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt be ſpoken to you; but becauſe you put it from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting life: Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. Note*, 3. The Doctrine he preached, *That Jeſus was the Son of God,* the true, promiſed, and expected *Meſſias*; and that all the Prophecies and Predictions of the Prophets concerning the *Meſſias*, were exactly fulfilled in his Perſon. *Note*, 4. The Effect of his Preaching: 1. Some of his Auditors were amazed, admiring that ſo peſtilent a Perſecutor was become a powerful Preacher, *Theſe glorified God in him.* 2. Others were confuted, yea confounded, being unable to withſtand the Force and Dint of his Argument, by which he proved, that this is the very Chriſt. *Note*, 5. The Hazard which the Apoſtle ran in Preaching the Goſpel at *Damaſcus*; his Enemies who were not able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake, took Counſel to kill him, and in order to it, watched the Gates of the City day and night, there being in their Apprehenſions no poſſibility of his eſcaping. *Note*, 6. The Manner and Means of his Deliverance; ſome Chriſtians who dwelt in *Damaſcus*, let him down in a Basket by the Wall, and ſo he eſcaped the hands of his bloody Enemies. The Wiſdom of God is never at a loſs to find out Ways and Means either ordinary, or extraordinary, for the Deliverance of his Servants, when Deliverance makes moſt for his own Glory, and the Goſpel's Advantage. God had much work for *Paul* to do; and till he had finiſhed his work, his Enemies could not take him off with all their combined Power and Malice.

26 And when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to joyn himſelf to the diſciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a diſciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, and that he had ſpoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus. 28 And he was with them, coming in, and going out at Jeruſalem. 29 And he ſpake boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and diſputed againſt the Grecians: but they went about to ſlay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ceſarea, and ſent him forth to Tarſus.

Here we have an Account of the ſecond Place which *Paul* exerciſed his Miniſtry in, namely, *Jeruſalem*. Having eſcaped with his Life at *Damaſcus*, he comes to *Jeruſalem*, and attempts to joyn himſelf to the Diſciples there, who were all afraid of him, knowing how bloody a Perſecutor he had been. The Converſion of a Perſecutor is ſo rare, and ſeldom heard of, that it puts the largeſt Charity hard to it, to believe the Verity and Reality of ſuch a Perſon's Converſion unto God. The Diſciples, who had formerly felt the Effects of *Saul's* perſecuting Rage and Fury, might juſtly be afraid of taking him into intimate Fellowſhip and Communion with the Church. *Obſerve next.* How *Barnabas* was ſtirred up by the Spirit of God, to preſent *Saul* to the Church, and free their Minds of all Fears and Jealouſies which they had entertained concerning him; and this he doth by a threefold Argument: 1. Becauſe he had *ſeen Jeſus Chriſt in the way*, as he went to perſecute the Saints at *Damaſcus*. 2. Becauſe *the Lord had ſpoken to him* with a ſtrong Hand, and wrought a mighty Change in him, and upon him; the Perſecutor being now become a great Profeſſor. 3. Becauſe he was not only become a *Profeſſor*, but a *Preacher* of that Goſpel he had perſecuted and this boldly and publickly, both at *Damaſcus* and in *Arabia*; proving undeniably that Jeſus was the Chriſt, and the true *Meſſiah*. This Teſtimony of *Barnabas* was full and ſatisfactory, both to the Church at *Jeruſalem*, and alſo to *Peter*, *James* and *John*, who gave *Paul* the Right-hand of Fellowſhip, and he went with them to the Work. *Obſerve laſtly*, How the Enemies of the Goſpel conſpire againſt *Paul's* Life, here at *Jeruſalem*, as they did before at *Damaſcus*, for preaching Chriſt, and diſputing with the *Grecians*, in defence of the Goſpel of Chriſt, they lay Siege for his Life. *Learn thence*, That always Oppoſition, and often Perſecution, is the evil Ghoſt that haunts the Preachers and Preaching of the Goſpel where-ever it goes: To preach the Word convincingly, brings the Ill-will of an Evil World infallibly upon the head of the Preacher.

But why did theſe Men rather ſeek to kill *Paul* than *Peter*, *James* or *Barnabas*? *Anſwer*, Becauſe he was formerly one of their own, of their own Company, of their own College; a Perſecutor like themſelves, and a Perſecutor with themſelves. This enraged them; they looked not upon him as an Apoſtle, but as an Apoſtate; one that had revolted from them, a Runnegado, and as ſuch they meditate his Deſtruction night and day; inſomuch that it is probable, that never were ſo many Sufferings heaped upon the head of any Miniſter of the Goſpel throughout the World, as upon St. *Paul*, (ſee them reckoned up, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, &c.) partly thro' the Hatred of the *Jews*, and partly thro' the Fury of the blind *Gentiles*; yet the Lord delivered him out of all. 'Till his Work was done, and his Race run, and he had finiſhed the Courſe of his Miniſtry, neither the Malice of Men, nor the Rage of Devils, could take him off. Bleſſed be God our Times are in his hands, not in our Enemies, nor yet in our own.

31 Then had the churches reſt throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.

That is, after *Saul's* miraculous Converſion, and after he was ſent away, and departed from thoſe parts, where the *Jews*, his old Companions in Perſecution, could not endure his Preſence, he having been juſt before as zealous a Perſecutor as themſelves: Then the Churches planted by *Philip* and others, throughout *Judea*, *Samaria* and *Galilee*, had much Reſt and Peace, and were greatly edified in Knowledge and Faith, in Holineſs and Love, and the Graces and Comforts of the Holy Spirit daily encreaſing in them, the number of Believers daily multiplied. *Learn hence*, That after the Perſecutions and weariſome Troubles of the Church, God has his time for their Peace and Reſt. God ſends his Church Sunſhine after Showers: A Calm after a Storm, Health after an Hectick, and a *Canaan's* Reſt after a Wilderneſs-Journey. *Learn*, 2. That it is the Church's Duty to improve her Peace and Reſt for her Spiritual Edifying: That is, for her Settlement and Growth, for her Eſtabliſhment and Encreaſe in all the Graces and Comforts of the Holy Spirit. *Learn*, 3. That it is a very great Bleſſing to have the Churches of God multiplied, and their Multiplication is the happy Fruit and Conſequent of their having Peace; *Then had the Churches reſt were edified and multiplied.*

32 And it came to paſs as Peter paſſed throughout all quarters, he came down alſo to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed

eight years, and was ſick of the palſie. 34 And Peter ſaid unto him, Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe, and make thy bed. And he aroſe immediately. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, ſaw him, and turned to the Lord.

The Holy Ghoſt now leaves the Relation of St. *Paul's* Life and Actions for the preſent, and returns to give a farther Account of St. *Peter*, what he ſaid, what he did, and what he ſuffered, particularly at *Lydda*, at *Joppa*, and *Ceſarea*; at *Lydda* he healed *Eneas*, at *Joppa* he raiſed *Dorcas*, and at *Ceſarea* preached the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*. *Obſerve*, 1. What this great Apoſtle St. *Peter* did at *Lydda*: He there *in the Name*, that is, by the Power of Chriſt, healeth *Eneas*, who lay ſick of the Palſie, and kept his Bed eight Years. *Where Note*, The Difficulty of the Cure, the Manner of the Cure, and the Effects of the Cure. *Note*, 1. The Difficulty of the Cure: the Diſeaſe was a Dead Palſie, which had taken away the uſe of his Limbs, and made him Bed-rid for eight years: All this is recorded to ſhew the Difficulty of the Cure, and the Greatneſs of the Miracle; *Omnipotenti Medico, nullus inſanabilis occurrit morbus:* To ſuch an Almighty Phyſician as the great God is, no diſeaſe is found incurable. *Note*, 2. The Manner of the Cure: St. *Peter* acts in Chriſt's Name, not his own; and lets the lame Man know whom he ſhould own for his Benefactor, Chriſt himſelf: The Apoſtle was but the Inſtrument in Chriſt's hand, and that the Cure was perfectly miraculous appears by this. The Cripple was cured immediately, and cured perfectly; it was a preſent Cure, *ver.* 34. *And he aroſe immediately.* The Inſtantaneous Manner of the Cure ſhews it to be miraculous, and by a Divine Power; for Nature and Art act in time and by Degrees, bringing nothing to Perfection on a ſudden. Whereas this Cure was wrought in a Moment, his Strength is reſtored in an Inſtant, it was alſo a perfect Cure, and as an Evidence of it he makes up his Bed. This was to ſhew that he was fully recovered. *Note*, 3. The Effects of this Cure; it had ſuch an Influence upon the Spectators of this Miracle, *that all that dwelt at* Lydda *and* Saron, *when they ſaw it, turned to the Lord*, *ver.* 35. That is they embraced the Faith, ſeeing this Cripple ſo ſtrangely, ſo ſuddenly, and ſo perfectly cured.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain diſciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which ſhe did. 37 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that ſhe was ſick and died: whom when they had waſhed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And foraſmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the diſciples had heard that Peter was there, they ſent unto him two men, deſiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter aroſe, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows ſtood by him weeping, and ſhewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while ſhe was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and turning him to the body, ſaid, Tabitha, ariſe. And ſhe opened her eyes, and when ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lift her up; and when he had called the ſaints and widows, preſented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to paſs that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a Tanner.

The Chapter concludes with a Relation of a ſecond Miracle wrought by St. *Peter* at *Joppa*, in raiſing dead *Dorcas* to life. *Where Note*, 1. The Perſon upon whom this Miracle was wrought, *Dorcas*, a Woman rich in good Works, full of Alms Deeds; yet neither her Piety towards God, nor her Liberality to the Poor, could preſerve her either from Death or from Diſeaſes. A dear Diſciple may be diſeaſed, and Die: *Behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick*, *John* 11. 3. yea, and dead too. Strength of Grace, and dearneſs of Reſpect, even from Chriſt himſelf, can prevail againſt Diſeaſes. Good *Dorcas* here lies dead, with her Body waſhed, not only to fit her for Burial, but eſpecially to ſhew their hope of the Reſurrection. *Note*, 2. The doleful Lamentation made by the Widows, for the Loſs of this good Woman, who uſed to cloath the Naked with the Labour of her Hands: She did not ſpend her time in making rich Apparel for her ſelf, but in making Garments for the Poor; and it ſeems ſhe had good ſtore of them ready made, by her, for the Poor's uſe, as their Neceſſities did require; *They ſhewed the Coats and Garments which* Dorcas *had made*; the undoubted Tokens and Evidences of her pious Charity. *Learn thence*, That the beſt Relicts of Saints that can remain in honour of them when departed, are Acts of Piety towards God, and of Charity to the Poor. *Note*, 3. The Manner of St. *Peter's* working this Miracle. 1. He puts them all out of the Room where the Dead lay; partly to prevent Oſtentation and Vain-glory, partly to prevent Diſturbance by their immoderate Mourning, and partly to prevent Interruption in the Exerciſe of Prayer which he was now about to perform. 3. He kneeled down, which recommends to us that Reverential Poſture in our Prayers to the great God, of Kneeling before him. 3. He prayed, thereby owning and acknowledging, that the Power of raiſing her was from God, not from himſelf. *Note*, *Laſtly*, The Effect of this Miracle; many believed in the Lord: She was raiſed more for the good of others than her own, for her reſtoring to natural Life was the occaſion of raiſing many to a Life of Faith. Upon the ſight of this famous Miracle performed by St. *Peter*, many believed in the Lord.

CHAP. X.

This Chapter acquaints us with the fiſt Overture, which the Apoſtles *made, to Preach the* Goſpel *to the* Gentiles: *According to* Chriſt's *Command, they began at* Jeruſalem, *and Preached to the* Jews *throughout* Judea, Samaria *and* Galilee; *but now the time was come, for beating down and laying flat the Partition Wall betwixt* Jew *and* Gentile, *which accordingly is done in this Chapter, by St* Peter's *Preaching to* Cornelius, *who was the firſt Fruits of the* Gentiles *Converſion to* Chriſtianity.

THere was a certain man in Ceſarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon deſcribed, to whom St. *Peter* is ſent to preach the Goſpel by his Name, *Cornelius*, by his Occupation, a Soldier, by his Religion, a Proſelyte or Converted *Gentile*, of which there were two ſorts, ſome were Proſelytes of the Covenant. That is, ſuch *Gentiles* as ſubmitted themſelves to Circumciſion, and the whole *Moſaical pædigogy*: Theſe were counted as *Jews*, and freely Converſed with as ſuch. Others were called Proſelytes of the Gate: Theſe were not Circumciſed, nor did they Conform to the *Moſaick* Rites; but were obliged only to obſerve the ſeven Precepts of *Noah*: Namely, to worſhip the true God, and not *Idols*; to abſtain from Blood, from Fornication, from Robbery; to adminiſter Juſtice impartially; and to do as they would be done unto. Such a Proſelyte as this, the *Jews* would not Converſe with, but counted unclean, being *Gentiles*, and ſuch a one was this *Cornelius*; but tho' a *Gentile*, tho' a Soldier, tho' a Commiſſion Officer, yet a Pious, Charitable, Good Man. In all Nations, in all Places, of all Employments God has a number of Holy and Gracious Perſons, to Honour him in the World, according to their preſent meaſure of Light received from him. *Obſerve*, 2. The Evidence which *Cornelius* gave of his Religious fearing God; *he feared God with all his houſe. He gave much alms, and prayed to God always.* *Cornelius* was therefore Really, becauſe Relatively, Religious, he obligeth his Family to fear God as well as himſelf, and together with himſelf, like *Abraham*, *He commands his houſhold after him, to keep the way of the Lord*, *Gen.* 18. 19. And thus the Bleſſing of *Abraham* came upon this *Gentile*, *Cornelius*. *He feared God with all his Houſe*, and his Charity was as eminent as his Piety; *He gave much Alms to the People:* That is, to the People of the *Jews*, to whom Alms was not unclean tho' given by an Heathen Perſon. It is farther added, *that he prayed to God always*, he prayed to the true God, God not to *Idols*: And he prayed to God always; that is, at every fitting

Seaſon, and convenient Opportunity for the Duty. we are ſaid in Scripture to do a thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably. Thus to pray always, to pray evermore, to pray without ceaſing, is firſt, to keep the Heart continually as much as may be in a praying Frame and Diſpoſition, and 2*dly*, To embrace the proper Seaſons and Opportunities for Prayer. The beauty of Religion lies much in the Harmonious performance of the Duties of it. When one Duty doth not interfere with another, but we prudently find time for all. Thus did *Cornelius* here, *He feared God with all his Houſe, gave much alms to the People, and prayed to God always.*

3 He ſaw in a viſion evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and ſaying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and ſaid, What is it, Lord? And he ſaid unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Obſerve here, 1. The extraordinary favour afforded to *Cornelius*: Namely, the Viſion of an Holy Angel. This Devout Man did not ſeek the face of God in vain; God ſends him firſt an Angel to Comfort him, then an *Apoſtle* to Inſtruct him. *He ſaw in a viſion an Angel of God.* *Obſ.* 2. The Effect which this ſight of the Angel had upon *Cornelius*; *He was afraid.* *Learn hence,* That whilſt our Souls inhabit theſe mortal and ſinful Bodies, the appearance of Angels is Terrible and affrighting to them, and cannot be otherwiſe: Partly upon a Natural, and partly upon a Moral Account: upon a Natural Account, becauſe the dread of Spirits ſtrikes our Natural Spirits, they ſhrink and tremble at the approach of Spirits, both of the Spirits of Men and of Beaſts quail at it, witneſs the *Aſs, Numb.* 22. 25. that *Balaam* rode upon; and alſo upon a Moral Account; becauſe of our Conſciouſneſs of Guilt; where ever there is Guilt, there will be fear upon any extraordinary Appearance of God to us, tho' it be but mediately by an Angel. *Obſ.* 3. The joyful Meſſage which the Angel brings to *Cornelius*: That his *Prayers and his Alms were come up for a memorial before God, where Note*, That as God Records all the Prayers of his People, ſo he Books all the Acts of Mercy, which any of them at any time do Exerciſe and ſhew unto his Members, he takes notice of the Perſon, of the Action, of the time When, of the manner How, of the Meaſure and Degree how much; if it be but a Cup of Water, yea, a Cup of cold Water given in love to Chriſt in his Members, it ſhall not be forgotten, but be Recorded and Rewarded.

5 And now ſend men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a Tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea ſide: he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.

Obſerve here, 1. That altho' God ſent an Angel to *Cornelius*, to acquaint him with his Will, yet the Angel was to direct him to the Apoſtle, who was to inſtruct him in the Faith. This, no doubt, God did to put Honour upon the Miniſters and Miniſtry of the Goſpel; as alſo, to let us underſtand and know, that we are not to expect extraordinary ways of teaching, when God affords us the uſe of ordinary Means. *Send to Joppa, and call for* Peter, *he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.* *Obſ.* 2. What an exact Knowledge Almighty God has of particular Perſons, and particular Places; he tells *Cornelius*, (by the Angel) in what Town *Peter* was, in *Joppa*, in whoſe Houſe he lodg'd, in *Simon*'s the Tanner; in what part of the Town the Houſe ſtood, by the Sea-ſide. It is matter of Conſolation, yea of great Conſolation to the People of God to know, and remember that God knows them: He knows their Perſons, their Purpoſes, their Performances, their places of Abode; he knows who they are, what they do, and where they dwell. So dear are the Holy Servants of God unto him, that he loves the very Street in which they lodge, the Houſe in which they dwell, the Walls of their Habitation are continually before him, and he delights perpetually to look upon them: O let Holineſs to the Lord be writ in legible Characters upon the Walls of our Houſes, *Zach.* 14. 20. Then will God dwell where we dwell; and the beloved of the Lord ſhall dwell in ſafety by him.

7 And when the angel which ſpake unto Cornelius, was departed, he called two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier of them that waited on him continually: 8 And when he had declared all theſe things unto them, he ſent them to Joppa. 9 On the morrow as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the houſe-top to pray, about the ſixth hour. 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And ſaw heaven opened, and a certain veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of four footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts and creeping things, and fouls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Riſe, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter ſaid, not ſo, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice ſpake unto him again the ſecond time, What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the veſſel was received up again into heaven.

Here Obſerve, 1. That as *Cornelius* had a Viſion from God to encourage him to ſend for *Peter*, ſo the Apoſtle had likewiſe a Viſion to encourage him to go to *Cornelius*. *In which Note*, 1. The time when he had this Viſion, it was *at the ſixth hour*, or high Noon; which was one of their three hours of Prayer: When we are upon our Knees in Prayer, then is the time for receiving gracious Manifeſtations from God. *Note*, 2. The place where he had this Viſion, when at Prayer upon the Houſe top; the *Jewiſh* Houſes being flat-roofed with Battlements upon them, *Peter* went up to the Houſe top to pray, as a place of Privacy and Retirement, free from Noiſe and Diſtraction; as alſo, to take the advantage of the Place for Divine Contemplation, and perhaps to look towards the Temple, which was formerly a Type of Chriſt. It teaches us, that fitting Places as well as fitting Seaſons for Prayer are to be ſought out and improved by us. *Peter went up upon the Houſe top to pray.* *Note*, 3. The Frame wherein St. *Peter* was as to his Body, when he had this Viſion. Namely, Exceeding hungry; God ordered it ſo, to fit him the more for this Viſion of Dainty Meat. O taſt and ſee how gracious the Lord is? in ſending down a Diſh of Dainties from Heaven to his hungry Children, that are praying to him here on Earth. *Note*, 4. The manner how the Viſion was made to St. *Peter*: It was in the way of a Divine Rapture or Extaſie, *He fell into a Trance*; his Soul was, as it were abſtracted out of the Body and abſent from it: That is, drawn off from the perception of all earthly and ſenſible Objects, and enabled unto a more entire attendance upon ſpiritual and heavenly Matters and Myſteries: To be ſure, it made him forget his Dinner, and filled him with Divine Conſolations; a Soul fed and filled with Divine Dainties, doth ſometimes forget bodily Hunger, we read no more of St. *Peter*'s ſharp Hunger after this Divine Entertainment. *Note*, 5. The Viſion it ſelf, or what was Repreſented to St. *Peter*, firſt to his Eye, then to his Ear; to his Eye firſt: *He ſaw Heaven opened*, *v.* 11. Teaching, that altho' Heaven had been ſhut to the Children of Men by the Sin of the firſt *Adam*, yet now was it opened by the Grace of the ſecond *Adam* to all Believers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles.* Next he ſaw a great Veſſel Deſcending like a large Sheet, with all ſorts of Meats in it, both Clean and Unclean; and he hears a Voice from God, giving him a Commiſſion (tho' he was a *Jew*) to feed freely without Diſtinction of Clean and unclean: ſignifying to him, thereby that he might indifferently Converſe with *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, and Preach the Goſpel to one as well as the other. *Note, Laſtly*, How St. *Peter*'s *Jewiſh* Principles made him ſtartle at this large Commiſſion, looking upon the command as Unlawful and Impious, *ver.* 14. *Not ſo, Lord! for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean*; but mark the Divine Correction: *What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common?* His miſtake was rectified by God; who gave him by his Viſion a clear Intimation, that the Diſtinction of Meats was now taken away, and the Difference between Nation and Nation was now removed by the Death of Chriſt, and conſequently, that he might go and Preach the Goſpel to *Cornelius a Gentile* without Scruple or Doubtfulneſs. The partition Walls betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, being now broke down. *Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of the Converſion of the *Gentiles* came firſt from Heaven, was revealed and made known by God himſelf, who has Graciouſly declared, *Gal.* 3. 28. *That there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Bond nor Free, neither Male nor Female. For we are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.* Thanks be to God, *That the bleſſing of* Abraham *is come upon us Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt.*

17 Now while Peter doubted in himſelf, what this viſion which he had ſeen, ſhould mean: behold, the men which were ſent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simons houſe, and ſtood before the gate. 18 And called, and asked whether Simon which was ſurnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19 While Peter thought on the viſion, the ſpirit ſaid unto him, Behold, three men ſeek thee. 20 Ariſe therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have ſent them.

Here Note, 1. How St. *Peter* ſets himſelf to meditate, upon what he had ſeen and heard from God. *He pondered with himſelf what this viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean.* Whatever paſſes from God to Man, either by the Eye, or through the Ear, ought to be the Subject of our deepeſt Meditation: We are to contemplate the excellencies and perfections, which were in the Word and Works of God with an intellectual Eye, and to dwell upon them in our ſerious Thoughts. *Note,* 2. The care which the Holy Spirit took to reſolve ſatisfactorily the inward doubtings and reaſonings of St. *Peter*'s Mind concerning this Matter. I have ſent them, *ſays the Holy Spirit, therefore ariſe and go down, nothing doubting. Where Obſerve,* both the Divinity and Perſonallity of the Holy Ghoſt: He that knows the thoughts, the doubtings and reaſonings of Man's Heart, as the Holy Ghoſt here did St. *Peter*'s is truly and really God; and he that commands and forbids is really a Perſon. So doth the Holy Spirit here, he commands St. *Peter* to go to *Cornelius*, and forbids his doubting of the Lawfulneſs of Succeſs of his Journey. *Go with them doubting nothing, for I have ſent them.*

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were ſent unto him from Cornelius; and ſaid, Behold, I am he whom ye ſeek: what is the cauſe wherefore ye are come? 22 And they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, a juſt man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to ſend for thee into his houſe, and to hear words of thee, 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entred into Ceſarea: And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinſmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worſhipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, ſaying, Stand up; I my ſelf alſo am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together, 28 And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath ſhewed me, that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gain-ſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have ſent for me.

Obſerve here, 1. The Meſſengers whom *Cornelius* ſent to St. *Peter*, two of his Houſhold Servants, and a devout Soldier. All Soldiers are not rude, but ſome are religious: Behold a devout Soldier under a devout Captain, and two Howſhold Servants, whom their Maſter's Example had rendred humble and modeſt. *Obſerve,* 2. The juſt and laudable, not falſe and flattering Character, which they gave of their Maſter, *Cornelius*; *That he was a juſt Man, one that feared God, and one of good report among all the Nation of the Jews.* It is both the Duty, and the Commendation of Servants to give to their Maſters due Honour, and when called to it, their deſerved Character. *Obſerve,* 3. How St. *Peter*'s doubts being reſolved, he diſputes no farther, delays no longer, but haſtens immediately to *Cornelius*: When once God's Command is plain, we muſt not diſpute, but diſpatch; we muſt no longer object, but obey. *Obſerve,* 4. The Reverence given by *Cornelius* to St. *Peter*, *He fell down at his Feet, and worſhipped him.* It ſeems to be more than a Civil Reverence which he gave him: It looks as if *Cornelius* took him for an Angel in Humane ſhape, or a Perſon ſent immediately from Heaven to him, and accordingly he proſtrates himſelf before the Apoſtle; but St. *Peter* would by no means receive any undue Honour or Reſpect from him, aſſuring him that he was but a Man, and God's Meſſenger ſent unto him. Whatever *Peter*'s pretended Succeſſor challenges as his due, of Reverence and Homage, St. *Peter* himſelf would not ſuffer *Cornelius* to lie at his Feet, much leſs to kiſs his Feet: The Ambaſſador would not run away with the Honour which belonged to the Prince that ſent him. *Obſerve,* 5. How St. *Peter* acquaints *Cornelius*, that that Partition-wall betwixt the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which was erected and ſet up by God's Command, was now by the ſame Authority pulled down and removed; and that no Man is now unclean by any Ceremonial Uncleanneſs, becauſe he is not circumciſed; and conſequently, that *Cornelius*, tho' of another Nation, might converſe and be converſed with as freely as if born a Jew. Since the coming of Chriſt, no Perſon or Nation is Legally or Ceremonially unclean, but every Nation, or every Perſon by Nature Morally unclean.

30 And Cornelius ſaid, Four days ago I was faſting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe, and behold, a man ſtood before me in bright clothing. 31 And ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whoſe ſirname is Peter; he is lodged in the houſe of one Simon a tanner, by the ſea-ſide; who when he cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I ſent to thee: and thou haſt well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Obſerve here, 1. *Cornelius* relates the occaſion of his ſending for St. *Peter*, and the Warrant which he had for ſo doing: He declares that as he was faſting and praying in his Family, he had a Viſion, in which an Angel directed him to ſend for the Apoſtle. *Where Note,* That *Cornelius* doth not talk of his Faſting, Praying and Alms-giving by way of Oſtentation, to boaſt of himſelf, but only to give Satisfaction to St. *Peter*, that he had certain Advice from Heaven for what he did in ſending for him. *Obſ.* 2. The readineſs of *Cornelius*'s Obedience in ſending for St. *Peter*: *Immediately therefore I ſent to thee. Joppa* from *Ceſarea* is computed to be about forty Miles; but no ſooner did *Cornelius* receive the Commandment, but without delay he put it in Execution, *and ſent Men to Joppa.* When our Call is clear, our Obedience muſt be ſpeedy. *Obſ.* 3. The kind Reception which *Cornelius* gives St. *Peter*; *Thou haſt well done that thou art come:* He doth not only approve of the Apoſtle's coming, but thanks him for it. *Obſ.* 4. The Preparation and Readineſs of *Cornelius* and his Friends, to hear and receive the Word of God from St. *Peter*'s Mouth; *We are all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Where Note,* 1. He deſires the ſame holy Doctrine which the Apoſtle came to preach, may be delivered to his Family, his Friends, and his Kinsfolk, as well as himſelf. A good Man would not go to Heaven alone, but is deſirous of the Inſtruction, Converſion, and Salvation of others, as well as of himſelf; *We are all here. Note,* 2. That the Place of God's pure Worſhip is the Place of his ſpecial Preſence; *We are all here preſent before God. Note,* 3. The End for which they were now come into the Preſence of God; it was to hear what God ſhould ſpeak, yea to hear all things which God ſhould command the Apoſtle to ſpeak: Intimating to us, that as St. *Peter* himſelf was, ſo all the Miniſters of Chriſt are, confined within their Commiſſion, and muſt only ſpeak what God commands; neither are hearers bound to receive any thing elſe. Wo unto us, if when God ſends us of his Errand, we tell our own Tale: The Word is *the Counſel of God*; now it is the Counſel of God only, and the whole Counſel of God alſo, that we are to declare, and which our People are to hear; *They are all preſent*

ſent before God to hear all things that are commanded us of God.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpector of perſons: 35 But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I now very plainly perceive that the Partition-wall is broken down, and that National Prerogatives, or Perſonal Excellencies find no Acceptance with God: But that any Man, be he of what Nation, or Family ſoever, if he feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, ſhall find Acceptance with him. *Obſerve here*, 1. That no external Qualifications, Perſonal Privileges, and Prerogatives, will procure Favour and Acceptance with God, who neither receives nor rejects Men barely for outward Reſpects; *I perceive that God is no reſpector of Perſons. Obſerve*, 2. The true Character of a Religious Man; he is one that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs; that is, a ſtrict obſerver of the Duties of both Tables of Piety towards God, and of Juſtice and Charity towards Man; and the Phraſe of working Righteouſneſs implies Diligence, Delight and Perſeverance in the Ways and Works of Righteouſneſs. *Obſerve*, 3. The Privilege of ſuch a Religious, and truly Religious Man; *He is accepted of God. Thence Learn*, That both the Perſon fearing God, and his Works of Righteouſneſs, are accepted with him. Of any Nation under Heaven, of any Calling, Sex, or Condition whatſoever; *In every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.*

36 The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt (he is Lord of all.) 37 That word (I ſay) you know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached: 38 How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the holy Ghoſt, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil: for God was with him. 39 And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jeruſalem; whom they ſlew, and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly. 41 Not to all the people, but unto witneſſes, choſen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtifie that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

Obſerve here, 1. The Antiquity of the Goſpel, or of the Doctrine of Reconciliation by Jeſus Chriſt; it was preached to the Patriarchs, and by the Prophets to the ancient *Iſraelites*; *The Word which God ſent to the Children of* Iſrael, *preaching Peace by Jeſus Chriſt. Thence Learn*, That there is but one way to Salvation, namely, Reconciliation with God through the Blood of Chriſt, and this was declared to the Children of *Iſrael*, as well as unto us; to them more darkly, to us more clearly. They went to Heaven then the ſame way that Believers do now, namely, by Faith in the Lamb of God, who was to be ſlain, we by Faith in him as already ſlain. *Obſ.* 2. The dignifying Title given to Chriſt; *He is Lord of all.* 1. He is Lord of all, as God together with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt: The abſolute and ſupreme Lord of the whole Creation, and unto whom all Creatures are ſubject. 2. He is Lord of all as Mediator, Lord of all Men, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*: He is Lord of his Church, Lord over Saints and Sinners, Hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians, all are his Subjects by Obligation; ſome by voluntary Conſent, and by an abſolute Obedience unto his Commands. *Obſerve*, 3. The Argument by which the Apoſtle proveth Chriſt to be *Lord of all*: as Mediator, namely, from his Divine Unction, *ver.* 38. *How God anointed Jeſus of* Nazareth *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power*: That is, indued the Humane Nature of Chriſt with the Fulneſs of the Graces of his Holy Spirit, and conſecrated him to the Work and Office of a Mediator. *Obſerve*, 4. How Chriſt faithfully executed this Office, which he was anointed to: He went about doing Good all the time he was on Earth, healing Diſeaſes, and caſting out of Devils; for God was with him in the fulneſs of the Deity, as he was his Eternal Son; and in Power, Grace and Favour, as he was Man and Mediator. *Here Note*, 1. The great Work and Buſineſs of our Saviour's Life; it was to do Good, namely, to the Souls and Bodies of Men, to promote the Temporal Happineſs of the one, the Spiritual and Eternal Happineſs of the other. *Note*, 2. Our Saviour's Diligence, and indefatigable Induſtry in this Work of doing Good; he made it the great Buſineſs, and conſtant Employment of his Life: *He went about doing Good*; that is, Seeking out all Opportunities of being Uſeful and Beneficial to Mankind. *Obſerve*, 5. The Evidence and Teſtimony which the Apoſtle produces for all that he affirmed concerning Chriſt, *We are Witneſſes of all things which he did in the Land of* Judea *and in* Jeruſalem. Chriſt took the twelve Apoſtles as it were into his Family, that by their familiar Converſe, and conſtant Converſation with him, they might be enabled to teſtifie of him: 1. Touching his Death, that he was ſlain, and hanged on a Tree; dying an ignominious and ſhameful, as well as a dolorous and painful Death. 2. Concerning his Reſurrection, that God raiſed him from the dead; tho' he was laid, he was not loſt in the Duſt. God would not ſuffer the Beloved of his Soul to rot in a Grave, but raiſed him up, and ſhewed him openly: And, 3. As to the final Judgment the Apoſtles were commanded to preach and teſtifie to the People, that Jeſus Chriſt was ordained of God to be the Judge both of Quick and Dead; That is, of all that are in their Graves, and of all that ſhall be found alive at his coming.

44 While Peter yet ſpake theſe words, the holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumciſion which believed, were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out of the gift of the holy Ghoſt. 46 For they heard them ſpeak with Tongues, and magnifie God. Then anſwered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the holy Ghoſt, as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Obſerve here, 1. What a miraculous Power of the Holy Ghoſt did accompany St. *Peter*'s Miniſtry at this time, thereby giving him an Aſſurance of the future Converſion of the *Gentiles*, to the great Wonder and Aſtoniſhment of the *Jews*, who thought the Promiſe of ſending down the Holy Ghoſt belonged only to the Houſe of *Iſrael*. Accordingly while *Peter* was thus Preaching to *Cornelius* and his Friends, the Holy Ghoſt by his wonderful Gifts of Tongues deſcended on them, tho' *Gentiles*; at which the *Jews* marvelled. *Obſerve*, 2. The Concluſion which the Apoſtle draws from this; for as much as the *Gentiles* were Baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, he infers, that they ought to be Baptized with Water, and the Argument runs thus: They that have the Grace ſignified by, and promiſed in Baptiſm, have an undoubted Right to Baptiſm, the Seal of the Promiſe. But theſe *Gentiles* have the Grace ſignified by, and promiſed in Baptiſm; they have the inward Part or Thing ſignified, why then ſhould the outward Sign be denied them; He that has the Inheritance may claim the Writings, the Seal, *&c.* belonging to the Inheritance. *Obſerve*, 3. The Apoſtle without Scruple Baptized theſe *Gentile* Converts; *Then commanded he them to be Baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus*: That is, He either Baptized them himſelf, or gave Commandment to others to do it; and tho' only the Name of the Lord Jeſus be mentioned, yet this does not imply, but that they were Baptized according to our Saviour's Preſcription; *Matth.* 28. *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* This done, they deſired him to ſtay ſome days with them, that they might be farther inſtructed, confirmed and comforted by his Miniſtry.

CHAP. XI.

This Chapter gives us an Account, how the Promiſes of Jew *and* Gentiles *becoming one Flock, and enfolded in one Church, received its Accompliſhment, This was performed by the Miniſtry of St.* Peter, *who was the firſt that opened the Door of Faith to the Gentiles; of which he gives a ſatisfactory Account in this Chapter, to the Objections made by the* Jews *againſt him for the ſame.*

AND the apoſtles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had alſo received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, they that were of the circumciſion contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them.

Obſerve here, 1. How the *Jews*, apprehending that Chriſt and his Grace had been only promiſed and confined to themſelves, the Call and Converſion of the *Gentiles* became a dreadful Stumbling-block unto them, even to the Believing as well as the Unbelieving *Jews*. *Hereupon Obſerve*, 2. How they contended with *Peter* for Eating and Converſing with the *Gentiles*, and eſpecially for admitting them into Goſpel Communion without Circumciſion: whereas altho' God forbad Marriages with the *Gentiles*, he never forbad Commerce and Converſation with them: No Converſation with the *Gentiles*, in order to the gaining of the *Gentiles* unto God, was ever forbidden by God; but only ſuch as might withdraw the *Jews* from God, and corrupt them by Idolatry.

4 But Peter rehearſed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, ſaying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I ſaw a viſion: A certain veſſel deſcend, as it had been a great ſheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me. 6 Upon the which when I had faſtened mine eyes, I conſidered, and ſaw four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, 7 And I heard a voice ſaying unto me, Ariſe, Peter; ſlay, and eat. 8 But I ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for nothing common and unclean hath at any time entred into my mouth. 9 But the voice anſwered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common. 10 And this done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the houſe where I was, ſent from Ceſarea unto me. 12 And the ſpirit bid me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, theſe ſix brethren accompanied me, and we entred into the mans houſe: 13 And he ſhewed us how he had ſeen an angel in his houſe, which ſtood, and ſaid unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whoſe ſirname is Peter: 14 Who ſhall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy houſe ſhall be ſaved. 15 And as I began to ſpeak, the holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembred I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, John indeed baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt. 17 Foraſmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I that I could withſtand God? 18 When they heard theſe things, they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Obſerve here, 1. How far St. *Peter* was from pretending a Superiority over the reſt of the Apoſtles; he did by no means think himſelf ſo far above them, as to diſdain to render an account of his Actions to them; but with great Sincerity and Humility, rehearſed and related the whole Matter of Fact, to their entire and joynt Satisfaction. *Obſerve*, 2. How he acquaints the Apoſtle with the Viſion he had ſeen, in which he was commanded to make no Diſtinction of Clean and Unclean: becauſe there was no natural Turpitude in any kind of Meat, ſave only as it was prohibited by God; and that God, who having made the Law about difference of Meats, had now abrogated it, and made all Meats, clean and free to be eaten. *Obſ.* 3. How he gives them the Interpretation of this Viſion, and acquaints them with the end for which this Viſion was deſigned: Namely, not ſo much to reveal to him the Lawfulneſs of Eating all ſorts of Meats, as to acquaint him with his Liberty and Duty to Converſe with, and Preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; whom he was no longer to look upon as Unclean, tho' they were not Circumciſed; but as *Heirs and Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God*. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Concluſion which St. *Peter* drew from the Premiſes: Seeing God hath made the *Gentiles* equal in Grace with the Believing *Jews*; ſeeing the Holy Ghoſt came down upon them in the ſame Manner, and with the ſame Effects as he did upon us Apoſtles: I could not reaſonably deny them Baptiſm, and by Baptiſm Admiſſion into the Goſpel-Church, for having the Grace ſignified by Baptiſm, they ought to have Baptiſm, the Seal of that Grace; they that have the inward, are not to be denied the outward Baptiſm; they that were Baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, (as *Cornelius* and his Family were) might and ought to be Baptized with Water, as *Cornelius* was; for had I denied them Church-Communion, for want of the Ceremony of Circumciſion, it had certainly been a down-right reſiſtance of, and diſobedience againſt God. *Thence Learn*, That it is a down-right Oppoſition to the Will of God, to ſhut them out of the Church, and to debar them from the Communion of it, who have received the Sanctifying Graces of God's Holy Spirit; but differ from us in external Rites and Ceremonies only.

19 Now they which were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jeſus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of theſe things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jeruſalem: and they ſent forth Barnabas, that he ſhould go as far as Antioch. 23 Who when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. That *Antioch* becomes the *Jeruſalem* of the *Gentile* Chriſtians: That is, the Chief Place whither the *Gentile* Converts reſorted, as *Jeruſalem*, before the diſperſion by Perſecution, was reſorted to by the *Jews*, and made the Principal Seat of their Reſidence. *Obſ.* 2. How God overruled the Perſecution, and Diſperſion occaſioned by St. *Stephen*'s Death, for diſſeminating and ſcattering the Goſpel as far as *Antioch*, Verſe 19. *They which were ſcattered abroad upon the Perſecution that aroſe about* Stephen, *travelled as far as* Antioch, *preaching the Word*. Thus has the Blood of the Martyrs all along been the Seed of the Church, and what the Devil and his Inſtruments have deſigned for the Extirpation, God has conſtantly over-ruled for the Propagation of the Goſpel. *Obſerve*, 3. The great Succeſs which the Miniſters and Miniſtry of the Goſpel had at *Antioch: The Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed.* By the Hand of the Lord, is meant the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Lord, which did accompany them in diſpenſing of his Word, and enable them to work Miracles for the Confirmation of it. The Hand is the Organ or Inſtrument of working in Man. When it is attributed to God, it denotes his Power and Help: the Hand of God was manifeſted in the Miracles which they wrought, and in Faith and Converſion, which the ſight of thoſe Miracles produced. *Learn hence*, that Faith and Converſion are wrought by the Hand of the Lord; they are his Work: Study and Endeavour is the Miniſter's, the Bleſſing and Succeſs is Gods; when he takes the Sword of the Spirit into the Hand of the Spirit, then ſhall it work Wonders. *Obſ.* 4. How the joyful Tidings of the Succeſs of the Goſpel at *Antioch* being heard and underſtood by the Apoſtles, that remained at *Jeruſalem*, they ſent *Barnabas* to Confirm their New Converts at *Antioch* in the Chriſtian Faith. *Learn hence*, That the News of any Sinners, much more of many Sinners Converſion unto God by the Preaching of the Goſpel, is matter of great Delight and Rejoycing to the Miniſters of Chriſt. *Obſ.* 5. The Holy and Honourable Character which the Spirit of God gives of *Barnabas, He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Faith, and much People were added to the Lord.* By a good Man, is meant, a kind and charitable Man; he having actually ſold his Eſtate, and laid it at the *Apoſtles* Feet, for the Benefit of the Poor, as *Acts* 4. 36, 37. informs us, and his good Works accompanying his good Preaching, his good Life ſeconding his ſound Doctrine, was a great means of the Converſion of ſo many; and that much People were added to the Lord. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Holy Exhortation which *Barnabas* gave theſe New Converts at *Antioch*: *he exhorted them, that with purpoſe of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord.* That is, with a firm and fixed Reſolution of Will to keep cloſe to the Profeſſion of the Truth of Chriſt; whatever Tribulation or Diſtreſs they might meet with: Young Converts need Exhortation and Counſel to Eſtabliſh and Confirm them in the Faith of the Goſpel, and to encourage them to hold faſt to Chriſt.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarſus for to ſeek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to paſs, that a whole year they aſſembled themſelves with the church, and taught much people; and the diſciples were called chriſtians firſt in Antioch.

Obſerve here, A further Inſtance of the Piety of that good Man *Barnabas*; having a great Zeal and fervent deſire, that the Goſpel might be more and more propagated, he went to *Tarſus* to ſeek out *Saul*, that they might joyn together in the Work of Chriſt: And having found him, he brought him to *Antioch*; where for a whole year they inſtructed the Church in that City, and taught much People. O how happy is it for the Church of Chriſt, when her Miniſters, laying aſide all private Intereſt, do unitedly apply themſelves to promote the common Intereſt of Chriſtianity, by propagating the Goſpel far and near! *Obſerve farther*, How the Believers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were united in one common Name at *Antioch*, the *Jews* had hitherto called them *Nazarites* and *Gallileans*, and they called themſelves *Diſciples, Believers, Brethren*, and *thoſe of the Church*; but now in this Place (*Antioch*) they were firſt called *Chriſtians*: A very great Honour conferr'd upon this *Gentile City*, which exalted her now above *Jeruſalem* it ſelf. At *Antioch*, a *Gentile City*, Chriſt ſet up his Standard for the *Gentiles*, and diſplayed his Banner, and put his own Name upon the deſpiſed *Gentiles*: They who before were counted Dogs, and the Off-ſcouring of all things, have now the Venerable Name of Chriſt impoſed upon them. *The Diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt at Antioch. Note Laſtly*, That the Diſciples did not call themſelves *Chriſtians firſt at Antioch*, much leſs did their Enemies give them that Name; but they had it by Divine Authority impoſed upon them: God would have Chriſt's Diſciples called *Chriſtians*. 1. As Scholars, who receive their Denomination from their Maſter; they are taught to learn of, and imitate Chriſt, whoſe Name they bear. 2. As the Word *Chriſtians* ſignifies Anointed Ones, it puts them in mind of their Divine Unction, which they have received from the Holy One, whereby they are made Kings and Prieſts unto God. We are at this day called Reformed Chriſtians, God grant that we may not cheat our ſelves with an empty and inſignificant Name; but let us fill up that Glorious Title, and be reformed in our Lives, as well as in our Religion; beautifying our Holy Profeſſion by an Holy and becoming Converſation, otherwiſe an unbaptiſed *Heathen*, at the Great Day, will not change Eſtate with many Baptized *Chriſtians*.

27 And in theſe days came prophets from Jeruſalem unto Antioch. 28 And there ſtood up one of them named Agabus, and ſignified by the ſpirit, that there ſhould be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Ceſar. 29 Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. 30 Which alſo they did, and ſent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Wiſdom of God, at the firſt planting of the Chriſtian Church, did confer upon ſome of its Members extraordinary Gifts; as the Gift of Tongues, the Gift of Miracles, the Gift of Prophecy, and the like. Accordingly, at this time, certain Perſons who had the Gift of Prophecy, and did foretel things to come; being now at *Antioch*, by Revelation from the Spirit of God, foretold, that there would ſhortly be a great Famine over all *Judea*, and ſeveral other parts of the World; which exactly came to paſs in the Reign of the Emperor *Claudius*. *Where note*, That as it is God's Prerogative to fore-know future things, ſo it is his Prerogative to enable others to foretel future things. This Famine was here foretold, not by Judicial Aſtrology, but by Divine Revelation: That God, who provided for the Patriarchs, by means of *Joſeph*'s foreſeeing the Famine in *Egypt*, provided now for the Chriſtians, by *Agabus* his fore-telling the Famine which came upon *Judea*: *Agabus ſtood up, and ſignified by the Spirit, that there ſhould be a great dearth throughout all Judea.* As God's Omnipotence is exerted for his Churches Protection, ſo is his Omniſcience imployed for its Suſtentation and Preſervation: Yea, all his Attributes are engaged for her Benefit and Advantage. *Obſ.* 2. The full Proof and Evidence which the New Converts at *Antioch* gave of the truth of their Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion: Namely, Their Charity and Alms ſeaſonably ſent to the Succour and Relief of their Fellow-Members in Chriſt, which were in *Judea*. Theſe were become very poor, by reaſon of the extraordinary Malice, and long Perſecution of the *Jews* againſt them. And the ſeaſonable Succour, now ſent them from *Antioch*, was a ſingular Comfort to them; and a ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice unto God. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The wiſe Regulation of their Charity, *Every Man gave according to his Ability*. This is the true Standard of Charity. We are to give Alms of ſuch things as we have, and according to what we have, Chriſtian Prudence muſt direct us in the Exerciſe of Chriſtian Charity; that muſt direct us in finding out fit and proper Objects for our Charity, that we may give moſt to them that have moſt need. Prudence muſt alſo direct us in timing of our Charity, that we do not put our poor Brethren off with frivolous Excuſes and tedious Delays. And it muſt direct us in the meaſure of our Charity, that it doth not exceed the bounds of our Eſtates. Few indeed are guilty of erring on that hand; but it is poſſible there may be an Errour in the Exceſs, as well as in the Defect of our Chriſtian Charity. To prevent both Evils, let the Practice of theſe Primitive Chriſtians be a Pattern for our Imitation: *Who determined every one according to his ability, to ſend relief unto the Brethren, and ſent it by the hands of* Barnabas *and* Saul.

CHAP. XII.

Saint Luke *the writer of this Hiſtory, having related what Succeſs the* Apoſtles *had at* Antioch; *he now returns into* Judea, *and declares what Perſecution the Church met with at* Jeruſalem: *Where* St. James *was beheaded*, St. Peter *impriſoned*; *but by an Angel miraculouſly delivered, as that Chapter informs us.*

NOW about that time, Herod the king ſtretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

Obſerve here, Satan, the grand Enemy of the Church of God, never wants Inſtruments for carrying on his Perſecuting Deſigns againſt the Church: he had many *Pharaohs* in the *Old Teſtament* Times; bitter Oppreſſors of the *Jewiſh Church*; and ſeveral *Herods* under the *New Teſtament*; as *Herod Antipas*, and *Herod Agrippa*, who were very warm in the worſt work, Namely, that of Perſecution. *Herod ſtretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church*: That is, to Kill ſome, and to Impriſon others; Satan's Blood-hounds have ſuch an Inſatiable Thirſt after the Blood of the Saints, that they can never be ſatiated with it, nor ſatisfied without it. A tyrannical Perſecutor, is like an hydropick Perſon, the more he drinks, the more he thirſts.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the ſword. 3 And becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter alſo. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

Note here, 1. The Perſon ſlain by the Sword of *Herod*, *James* the Brother of *John*. We read in the Goſpel that he was one of the Sons of *Zebedee*, that deſired of Chriſt the Preheminence to ſit at his Right-hand in his Kingdom, and now he is the firſt of the *Apoſtles* that ſuffered Martyrdom, who drank of Chriſt's Cup, and was Baptized with his Baptiſm. He was called *Boanarges*, or a Son of Thunder, for his zealous and earneſt Preaching: No wonder then that *Herod*, and the enraged *Jews*, hated him, and were ſtirred up by Satan to deſtroy him. For ſuch as are moſt uſeful to, and moſt eminent in the Church, are always the Objects of Satan's Wrath and Anger, and of the Perſecutors Rage and Fury: *He killed James the Brother of John with the Sword. Obſ.* 2. *James* being ſlain, *Peter* is to follow; *He proceeded farther to take Peter alſo.* The Rage of Perſecutors is not eaſily ſatisfied, and the Blood which they ſhed, is but Oyl to feed the flames of their Revenge: But mark the over-ruling Power and Goodneſs of God; tho' St. *James* was murdered, St. *Peter* ſhall be but impriſoned: the Husbandman doth not commit all his Corn to the Oven, but ſaves ſome for Seed. Perſecutors cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can.

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in priſon, and delivered him to four quaternians of ſoldiers to keep him, intending after Eaſter to bring him forth to the people.

Peter being impriſoned, *Obſerve*, what an exceſs of Care and Caution *Herod* takes for ſecuring his Priſoner: Sixteen Soldiers are ſet to guard him; four at a time, and to take their Turns at the four Watches of the Night, to relieve one another. *Thence Learn*, That the Enemies of the Church make the ſureſt work they can, when at any time God permits his Servants to fall into any of their Hands. Thus they dealt with the Head, when they had apprehended him: the Watch-word was, *Hold him faſt*. Saint *Matth.* 26. 48. When they crucified him, they nailed him faſt to his Croſs; when they buried him, they made the Sepulchre ſure, ſealing the Stone, and ſetting a Watch: And thus they deal with the Members; St. *Peter* he has Guard upon Guard ſet over him, ſome Soldiers chained to him, and others always ſtanding at the Door to obſerve him. But all this Care, Concern and Caution, to ſecure the Priſoner, did illuſtrate the Glory of the Miracle in his wonderful Deliverance.

5 Peter therefore was kept in priſon; but prayer was made without ceaſing of the church unto God for him.

That is, fervent and importunate Prayer was put up to God by the Church on *Peter*'s behalf: with the united Strength of their whole Souls they ſtormed Heaven, and took him by force out of *Herod*'s hand. *Learn*, 1. That when the Church is plunged into deep Perplexities, the only help ſhe can hope for, muſt come unto her in the way of Prayer. *Learn*, 2. That when God ſuffers any of the Miniſters of his Church to fall under the Rage of Perſecutors, it is the Church's Duty to wreſtle with God by Prayer in an extraordinary manner on their behalf: *Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church. Learn*, 3. That when God intends to beſtow any extraordinary Mercy upon his Church, he ſtirs up the Hearts of his People to pray for it in a very extraordinary manner.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the ſame night Peter was ſleeping between two ſouldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the priſon.

Obſerve, *Peter* continued in Priſon till the very Night before *Herod* intended to bring him out to the People; and if they deſired it, 'tis probable he intended to put him to death the next day. *Learn thence*, That God oft-times ſuffers his Children to come to the Pit's brink, and then delivers them, that they may be the more ſenſible of his Mercy, and have the greater cauſe to magnify his Power. *Peter* was now come to his laſt Night; the Tyrant *Herod* probably intended his Execution next Morning. Now was the time for God to ſtep in: Our Extremity is his Opportunity. *Obſerve farther*, That notwithſtanding *Peter*'s imminent and impending Danger, he ſleeps very ſoundly, reſigning up himſelf into the Hands of Chriſt, and reſolving that if he may no longer live Chriſt's Servant, that he will die his Sacrifice. I queſtion whether *Herod*, that impriſoned him ſlept half ſo ſoundly. Lord! how ſoft and ſecure a Pillow is a good Conſcience, even in the Confines of Death, and in the very Jaws of Danger? *Obſerve laſtly*, That God takes moſt care of *Peter*, when he was able to take leaſt care of himſelf: When he was aſleep, and altogether inſenſible of his Danger, God was awake, and acting effectually in order to his deliverance. Happy Priſoners! who have God with them in Priſon: Such are Priſoners of Hope indeed, and ſhall certainly experience Divine Help.

7 And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light ſhined in the priſon: and he ſmote Peter on the ſide, and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel ſaid unto him. Gird thy ſelf, and bind on thy ſandals: and ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed him, and wiſt not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he ſaw a viſion. 10 When they were paſt the firſt, and the ſecond ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city, which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and paſſed on through one ſtreet, and forthwith the angel departed from him.

Obſerve here, 1. That God hath ſometimes made uſe of the Miniſtry of Angels to effect Deliverance for his People. *Obſ.* 2. The ſeveral good Offices which the Angel now did for *Peter*, in order to his Enlargment. *Peter* is aſleep, the Angel awakes him; he is laid, the Angel raiſes him; he is amazed, the Angel directs him; he is bound, the Angel unties him; he knows not where he is, the Angel goes before, and guides him: He is to paſs through many Difficulties, the Angel conducts him. Lord! how innumerable are the good Offices, which at thy Command the Holy Angels do for us, tho' they are not ſenſibly in this manner apprehended by us: What Love and Service do we owe to thee? What Honour and Reſpect ſhould we pay to them, for their Care over us, and Attendance upon us? *Obſ.* 3. *Peter* muſt ariſe, gird himſelf, bind on his Sandals, caſt his Garments about him, follow the Angel, and uſe his own Endeavours in order to his own Deliverance. God will have him uſe the Means, even then when he was about to work a Miracle for him: What a Tempting of God is it then to neglect the Means when we cannot expect Miracles? As to truſt to Means, is to neglect God; ſo to neglect the Means is to tempt God. We muſt always ſubſerve the Providence of God in the uſe of ſuch Means as his Wiſdom has appointed and directed us unto. *Obſerve Laſtly*, That this Deliverance was ſo amazing and ſurpriſing that *Peter* thought it a Dream only; *ver.* 9. *He wiſt not that it was true, but thought he ſaw a viſion. Learn thence*, That ſometimes the Deliverances of the Godly from imminent and apparent Dangers, are ſo very wonderful, and attended with ſuch a Croud of Improbabilities, that they have much ado to believe them, tho' they ſee them with their Eyes. When God turned the Captivity of *Peter*, he was like unto them that dream, *Pſal.* 126. 1.

11 And when Peter was come to himſelf, he ſaid, Now I know of a ſurety, that the Lord hath ſent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had conſidered the thing, he came to the houſe of Maty the mother of John, whoſe ſirname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damſel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when ſhe knew Peters voice, ſhe opened not the gate for gladneſs, but ran in, and told how Peter ſtood before the gate. 15 And they ſaid unto her, Thou art mad. But ſhe conſtantly affirmed, that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed. 17 But he beckning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon. And he ſaid, Go

ſhew theſe things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Obſerve here, 1. The wiſe and holy Courſe which the Church took for obtaining the Apoſtle's Enlargement, and that was keeping a day of Prayer; a number of Chriſtians got together, and importune Heaven, the Enemies plot, the Church prays; they ſhut the Priſon-doors, the Church open Heaven's doors, and God gives *Peter* in, as an anſwer of Prayer before they roſe off from their Knees. Oh how good is it to draw nigh to God! What a God-hearing-Prayer is our God? How great is the Power and Prevalency of the conjoyned Prayers of Good Men? God's Praying People ever have been, and will be a prevailing People. Whilſt theſe Pious Souls were in the very act of calling upon God for *Peter*'s Releaſe; God gives in *Peter* releaſed to them. God never wants Means for his Peoples Deliverance, when he is once ſet on Work by the Prayers of his People. *Obſerve,* 2. St. *Peter* being delivered, meditates whilſt he was walking in the Streets, and going along by himſelf, of the greatneſs of his Danger, and the Graciouſneſs of his Deliverance: Holy and ſuitable Thoughts, pious Meditations and Ejaculations, do well become us in any Place, at all Times, and upon all Occaſions; but eſpecially after ſingular Deliverances from ſignal Dangers. We can never enough ruminate upon them, or be ſufficiently thankful for them. *Obſerve,* 3. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Providence in directing *Peter* in the dead of the Night, to the Houſe where the Saints were Praying for him. This is the more remarkable, becauſe the Angel having done his Work which God ſent him upon, after he had delivered *Peter* from his Chains and Impriſonment, he left him to ſhift for himſelf, and to take Care of his own Safety; but tho' the Angel left him, yet the Providence of God conducted him to a Place where he was both ſafe and welcome. *Obſ.* 4. What an ancient Opinion it was, that every Good Man had a Guardian Angel appointed him by God to take a ſpecial Care of him to his Life's end; to direct him in his way, to guard him from Dangers, and to deliver him in his Diſtreſſes; *They ſay it is his Angel.* For which Saying there could be no reaſon, had there not been a current Opinion among them of Guardian Angels. Bleſſed be God, his holy Angels are our Keepers, our Councellors, our Defenders, our Loving and Friendly Aſſociates; and they ſhall never depart from us, till they have conducted us ſafely to our Heavenly Father's Houſe, where we ſhall be *as the Angels of God in Heaven.* *Obſerve,* 5. How *Peter* gives God, and not the Angel, the Glory of his Deliverance, *Ver.* 17. *He declared how the Lord had brought him out of the Priſon.* The Angel was but the Inſtrument, God was the principal Agent, *ver.* 11. *The Lord hath ſent his Angel, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod.* All Deliverances muſt be aſcribed to him, who commands Deliverance for his People. *Obſerve,* 6. The prudential Care which St. *Peter* takes for his future Preſervation; *He departed, and went to another place.* He could not think himſelf ſafe whilſt *Herod* was ſo near, no more than a Lamb could be ſafe near the Lion's Den. He knew he ſhould be hunted for, therefore eſcapes for his Life: And beſides his own Danger, he was not willing to endanger his Friends, who did not entertain and harbour him, but both for his own and their Preſervation, he departs to another place. *Learn,* That a prudential uſe of all lawful Means for our own and others Preſervation, in Subſerviency to the Divine Providence, is our Duty, our Wiſdom, and Intereſt, both as Men and Chriſtians.

18 Now as ſoon as it was day, there was no ſmall ſtir among the ſouldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had ſought for him, and found him not; he examined the keepers, and commanded that they ſhould be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Ceſarea, and there abode.

Obſerve here, 1. How wicked Perſecutors are mightily enraged, when their bloody Purpoſes are diſappointed. *Herod* having loſt his Prize, is ſo incenſed, that he cauſed the Keepers firſt to be examined, (and poſſibly by Tortures) and then to be put to Death. *Obſ.* 2. The Juſtice of God, and the great Injuſtice of *Herod*: It was juſt in God to ſuffer the Soldiers, who were *Herod*'s Inſtruments in Perſecution, to die by the Bloody hand of *Herod*, whoſe Tools they were. Inſtruments in Perſecution God oft-time meets with in this World, and ſometimes they fall by the Hands of Perſecutors themſelves; yet was it notorious Injuſtice in *Herod* to put to Death thoſe innocent Soldiers, who could not help what was done, and were no ways acceſſary to the Priſoners Eſcape.

20 And Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blaſtus the kings chamberlain their friend, deſired peace, becauſe their country was nouriſhed by the kings country.

Obſerve, Herod, upon St. *Peter*'s Eſcape out of his Hands leaves *Jeruſalem,* and goes to dwell at *Ceſarea,* where being highly diſpleaſed with the rich Citizens of *Tyre* and *Sidon,* he deſigns to make War upon them. But they being ſenſible that their Cities lying upon the Sea-coaſts, and having little Land belonging to them, they muſt be beholden to *Judea* and *Galilee,* (which were under *Herod*'s Juriſdiction) for a great part of their Proviſions; therefore they prudently compound the Matter with him, knowing that to fight with him who fed them, was the ready way to be famiſhed. And opening the Breaſt of *Blaſtus* the King's Chamberlain, with a Golden-key, thro' that Paſſage, they made their Acceſs to pacify the King. Intereſt leads us to pay Homage to them whom our Dependency is upon: Yet tho' Men depend upon God for all, for Life, and for all the Comforts and Supports of Life which they do enjoy, (our Country being nouriſhed by the King of Heaven's Country;) yet how few by Prayer do own their Dependency upon him, or by Praiſe and Thankſgiving do acknowledge the Hand that ſupplies them?

21 And upon a ſet day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a ſhout, ſaying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt.

Upon a ſet day, that is, as ſome ſuppoſe, on his own Birthday; he was arrayed in Royal Apparel, in a Cloak made of Cloth of Silver, (but died with St. *James*'s Blood, *verſe* 2.) which being beaten upon by the Sun-beams, did plainly dazle the Eyes of all Spectators: He makes an Eloquent Oration, more gaudy than his Apparel, unto the People, who cried out in Approbation thereof. *The voice of a God, and not of a Man! Herod,* inſtead of repelling this their impious Flattery, embraces and hugs their Praiſes, as proper to himſelf; and thereupon, an Angel and Worms, the beſt and the baſeſt of Creatures meet in his Puniſhment: the Angel ſmiting him, and the Worms eating him up; and no wonder that Worms quickly devoured him, whom thoſe Fleſh-flies had blown up before; no wonder that he is eaten up of Worms, who forgat that he was a Worm! *Queſt.* But why were not the People puniſhed as well as the Prince; ſeeing they were equally guilty of robbing God of his Honour? True, *Herod* was the Receiver, but they were the Thieves! Why then fell not the Puniſhment on the whole Multitude? *Anſ.* Becauſe more Diſcretion is expected from a Prince, than from a Rabble: beſides, what in them was but a blaſphemous Complement, was by his Acceptance of it made a Reality, and was uſurped by him, and aſſumed to him as due to his Deſerts: From the whole, *Note,* 1. That Flattery either given or taken, is a very dangerous Sin, a God provoking, and a Wrath procuring Sin. If we flatter Men, God will not flatter us; but deal plainly, yet ſeverely with us: One of the Ancients ſaid, he was afraid of Praiſe and Commendation, as much as of a crack of Thunder. When Men give much Glory to Men, it is very hard for Men to give that Glory back again to God. *Herod* was ſo pleaſed and tickled with the Glory which the People gave him, that he could not part with it; but by keeping that he loſt his Life. *Note,* 2. That tho' God bears long with many ſorts of Sinners, yet not with Sinners of this ſort. *Immediately the Angel of the Lord ſmote him:* Agreeable to that of *Job, chap.* 32. 22. *I know not how to give flattering titles, for in ſo doing my Maker would ſoon take me away.* The Great God will admit of no Co-rivals; he will not ſuffer his Glory to be given to another; he will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Flatterer, as well as againſt the Falſe-ſwearer, *Malachy* 3. 5. He can deſtroy both Flatterer and Flattered with the twinkling of an Eye, or with the turning of a Hand; and thoſe that are cryed up as Gods to Day, are as Dung to Morrow.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeruſalem, when they had fulfilled their miniſtry, and took with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark.

Obſerve, *Herod* the Tyrant and Perſecutor being dead, the Goſpel proſpered, and was preached up and down with great Succeſs: Perſecutors, by their weak Endeavours to pull down the Church, do build it up the ſtronger. The Church in *Egypt* never grew ſo high, as when *Pharaoh* laboured moſt to keep it low; the more he moleſted them, the more he multiplied them. Thus here, after *Herod*'s Death and *Peter*'s Deliverance, the Word of God grew and multiplied: That is, the number of Believers, encreaſed through the Preaching of the Word. As Seed is multiplied by the ſcattering of the Hand; the Word Preached is the Seed ſown in the Furrows of the Field: The Ground was now harrowed by the Hand of the Perſecutors, and the Seed grew the better, and the Fruits of Faith and Obedience did by every ſhower of Perſecution more and more abound. The Truth of God may for a time be oppreſſed, but it ſhall never be fully or finally ſuppreſſed; ſtill *the Word of God grew and multiplied.*

CHAP. XIII.

Saint Luke *the Writer of this Hiſtory, having given us an Account how the* Chriſtian *Church was firſt planted among the* Jews *by St.* Peter's *Miniſtry in the Twelve firſt Chapters. He now applies his Pen in declaring how the Goſpel was planted and propagated amongſt the Gentiles by St.* Paul's *Miniſtry, to the end of the Book. Now in this Chapter we have the Solemn Miſſion of* Saul *and* Barnabas *to their Miniſtry among the Gentiles fully related.*

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon, that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

Obſerve, here, That the City of *Antioch* being the firſt *Gentile* City which entertained the Goſpel, there was at that time ſeveral Prophets and Teachers in that City to inſtruct the People, and to lay the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church amongſt them, and amongſt others, there was found one very Eminent Perſon named *Manaen*, who was of that high Rank and Quality; that he was brought up with *Herod* at Court; and as the Learned *Lightfoot* thinks, was Converted there by the Preaching of St. *John the Baptiſt*: yet this Man contemning with *Moſes* the Pleaſures of the Court, did think it no diſparagement to him to be a Teacher at *Antioch*. *Learn thence*, That God is pleaſed to manifeſt the freeneſs of his Grace in effectually calling ſome of all Sorts and Ranks of Men to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Goſpel, and to a Participation of the Benefit offered in, and by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Manaen which had been brought up with* Herod *the Tetrarch.*

2 As they miniſtred to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had faſted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they ſent them away.

Obſerve here, How the Holy Ghoſt takes occaſion, when the Teachers of the Church at *Antioch* were aſſembled together in God's Preſence, and about his Work, to give them particular Inſtructions and Directions concerning his Will and their Duty. *Obſerve farther*, The Solemn Charge given by the Holy Ghoſt, to ſet apart *Saul* and *Barnabas* by Solemn Impoſition of Hands, for Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*: This was a great Work, and not to be undertaken without a Special Call from God; therefore ſays the Holy Ghoſt, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them*: Which words prove both the Deity and Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt: He who calls Miniſters to the Office, and unto whoſe Service they are ſeparated, is both God and a diſtinct Perſon in the Godhead; but this the Holy Ghoſt did: *Separate me Barnabas and Saul. Here Note*, 1. That the work of the Miniſtry is a ſeparate work. Miniſters muſt be ſet apart for the work of the Miniſtry before they undertake it; a Call from God is not ſufficient, without a Separation by Man. *Note*, 2. That this Separation ought to be performed by the Chief Miniſters of the Church, who have Authority from Chriſt to ſeparate and ſet others apart for the Work of the Miniſtry. The Holy Ghoſt ſaid to the Teachers of the Church at *Antioch*, *Separate me*. *Note*, 3. That this Solemn Act and Ordinance ought to be performed in a very Solemn manner by Faſting, Prayer and Impoſition of Hands. *Note*, 4. That when thus performed it is agreeable to the Mind, and according to the Inſtitution and Appointment of the Holy Ghoſt: The *Holy Ghoſt ſaid*, *Separate*, &c. *Note Laſtly*, Tho' the Office of the Miniſtry be an Honourable Office, yet withal, it is a laborious Work. Separate them for the *Work* whereunto I have called them. 'Tis a Work that requires Attendance, and zealous Application, both in Seaſon and out of Seaſon: Praying, Preaching, Adminiſtring Sacraments; guiding and governing the Flock by private Admonition, and publick Cenſure: Theſe are weighty Works, found ſo now by thoſe that perform them faithfully, and will be found ſo at the great Day by the Slothful and Negligent. How can that be eſteemed by any ſlight and inconſiderable Work, unto the faithful Performance whereof, ſo great a Reward is promiſed, and unto the Omiſſion thereof ſo dreadful a Wo is denounced. If *Satan* deſtroy Mens Souls, he ſhall anſwer for them as a Murtherer only, not as an Officer intruſted with the care of them; but if the Watchman doth not warn, if the Shepherd doth not Feed; if the Prophets do not Inſtruct; if the Steward doth not provide, he ſhall anſwer not only for the Souls that have miſcarried; but for an Office neglected, for a Tallant hidden, and for a Stewardſhip unfaithfully Adminiſtred. Lord! how unable ſhall we be at the making up of our Accounts to endure the hideous Outcrys of diſtreſſed Souls, ſaying, *Parentes Senſimus Parricidas*: Our Guides have miſled us, our Watchmen have betrayed us, our Stewards have defrauded us; and the following of their Evil Example has undone us.

4 So they being ſent forth by the holy Ghoſt, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they ſailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the ſynagogues of the Jews: and they had alſo John to their miniſter. 6 And when they had gone through the iſle unto Papos, they found a certain ſorcerer, a falſe prophet, a Jew, whoſe name was Barjeſus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and deſired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elimas the ſorſerer (for ſo is his name by interpretation) withſtood them, ſeeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul (who alſo is called Paul) filled with the holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him, 10 And he ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt and a darkneſs; and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy when he ſaw what was done, believed, being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Apoſtle Barnabas* and *Saul*, having received their Commiſſion, ſet forth for the work to which they were Deſigned; and their firſt Journey, was from *Antioch* to *Cyprus*, an Iſland of the *Gentiles* Lewd and Wicked; where *Venus* was worſhipped: And much filthineſs was committed by them in that abominable Pagan Worſhip. Yet the Free Grace of God caſts a look of pity and love upon ſinful *Cyprus*, the Holy Ghoſt directs theſe *Apoſtles* thither to reclaim them from Sin and reduce them to the Obedience of the Goſpel. *Obſerve*, 2. That tho' *Saul* and *Barnabas* were ſent forth to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*: Yet they made the firſt Tender of it to the *Jews* where-ever they came, accordingly here in *Cyprus*, there being a great number of *Jews*, the *Apoſtles* went into the *Synagogues* and Preached to them. Chriſt was the Miniſter of Circumciſion, who was himſelf *ſent to the loſt Sheep of the houſe of Iſrael*; and accordingly ſent his *Apoſtles* out firſt, to feed and gather thoſe poor ſcattered Sheep, theſe were accounted the Children of the Houſe of the Gentiles, reckoned as Dogs; but when thoſe wanton and full-fed Children, began to waſte their Meat, and caſt it under the Table, then did the Gentile-Dogs gather up their leavings. *Acts* 13. 46. *It was neceſſary* (both by vertue of Chriſt's Command and Example alſo) *that the Word of God ſhould be firſt ſpoken to you: but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of eternal Life, Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. Obſerve*, 3. What an early oppoſition the Devil made againſt the *Apoſtles* in their Preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles; he feared the battering down the Walls of his Kingdom, and therefore ſtirs up his Inſtrument *Elymas* the Sorcerer, to withſtand them, and particularly to endeavour to divert *Sergius Paulus* (who governed that Iſland) from the Faith. *Where Note*, The Character given of this vile Man by the *Apoſtle*: *O full of all ſubtilty and miſchief; A child of the Devils; an enemy of all Righteouſneſs*; *intimating*. 1. That to be ſubtil to do miſchief, is the genius or diſpoſition of the Devils Children. 2. That to be an oppoſer of Good, is to be conformable to the Devil: It is the height of wickedneſs, not only to do Evil but to oppoſe Good; to be an Enemy to, and an oppoſer of Goodneſs, is the very Character of *Satan* and his Children. So much as any Man oppoſes goodneſs, ſo much he has of the Devils Diſpoſition in him. *Thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all Righteouſneſs. Obſerve*, 4. The judgment inflicted by God on this wicked Inſtrument of the Devil, and the ſuitableneſs of the Judgment inflicted to the Sin committed, he wickedly ſhut the Eyes of his Underſtanding againſt the light of the Goſpel, and God deprives him of his bodily ſight. Thus the Wiſdom of God doth oft-times ſo ſuit his Judgment to the Sins committed, that a Perſon may even read his Sin in his Puniſhment: Yet how did God temper Mercy with the Judgment, inflicting blindneſs upon this vile Wretch only for a ſeaſon, even the very Judgments of God are Medicinal and in Mercy: when God puniſhes, it is with deſign not to Ruine but Reform. *Obſerve laſtly*, What ſucceſs St. *Paul's* Miniſtry, together with the ſight of this Miracle, had upon *Sergius Paulus* the Governour; he was thereby Converted to the Faith; When he ſaw what was done he believed; being aſtoniſhed at the Doctrine of the Lord; the Word never works more kindly, than when it is received with Admiration. Yet doth the Word ſometimes work Admiration, where it doth not produce Faith: Many marvelled who never believed; but this Governour was aſtoniſhed and believed alſo.

13 Now when Paul and his company looſed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jeruſalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Piſidia, and went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on.

Here we have an account of another Journey which *Paul* and *Barnabas* took to Preach, Plant, and propagate the Goſpel: Namely, to *Perga* in *Pamphilia*; and from thence to *Antioch* in *Piſidia*, ſo called to diſtinguiſh it from the other *Antioch* in *Syria*, from whence they were ſent forth, *ver.* 1, 2, 3. where their Collegue and Companion *John Mark* withdrew from them, and went no farther with them to the work. This *Paul* took very ill, as well he might; if he left them becauſe of the Difficulties and Dangers which he ſaw did accompany and attend them in the planting and propagating of the Goſpel, for he that putteth his hand to that Plough, and then draweth back, juſtly deſerveth Cenſure and Reproof. However, ſuch was the Zeal of the two *Apoſtles*, that they Travel on to *Antioch* without their Companion. Where entring into one of the Synagogues of the *Jews* on the Sabbath-day; after the reading ſome Sections in the Law and the Prophets, as their manner was, the Rulers of the Synagogue deſired a Word of Exhortation from them. *Where Note*, How wonderfully God over-ruled the hearts of theſe Rulers of the Synagogue, not only to ſuffer, but to deſire the *Apoſtles* to Preach the Goſpel to them. Here-upon the *Apoſtle* St. *Paul* ſtands up and makes a moſt excellent Sermon to them in the following Verſes. *Where Note*, How readily the bleſſed Apoſtle embraces an Opportunity to preach the Goſpel; the Rulers need not ask him twice: Little Importunity will ſerve to perſwade an holy Heart to undertake the Work of God. The faithful Miniſters of Chriſt are forward for, as well as zealous in their Maſter's Work. No ſooner did the Rulers of the Synagogue Requeſt a word of Exhortation from the Apoſtle, but immediately (tho' not unpreparedly) he ſtands up, and preaches to the People.

16 Then Paul ſtood up, and beckning with his hand, ſaid, men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Iſrael choſe our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as ſtrangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs. 19 And when he had deſtroyed ſeven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges, about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they deſired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the ſon of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the ſpace of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raiſed up unto them David to be their king; to whom alſo he gave teſtimony, and ſaid, I have found David the ſon of Jeſſe, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this mans ſeed hath God according to his promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour Jeſus: 24 When John had firſt preached before his coming, the baptiſm of repentance to all the people of Iſrael. 25 And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me, whoſe ſhoes of his feet I am not worthy to looſe. 26 Men and brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.

This latter part of the Chapter containeth an Hiſtorical and Practical Sermon, preached by St. *Paul* at the Requeſt of the Rulers of the Synagogue. *Where Obſerve*, 1. His Prologue or Preface, in which he craves their careful Attention; withal intimating, that none of them would attend but only ſuch as truly fear God: *Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give Audience.* That is the proper Character of a right Attentive Hearer. *Obſerve*, 2. The Narrative which the *Apoſtle* gives of the many Divine Favours, Benefits and Bleſſings, which the Lord beſtowed of old upon *Iſrael* his People; namely, his free Electing and Chooſing them before all Nations, his wonderful Deliverance of them out of *Egypt*, his great indulgence towards them for Forty years in the Wilderneſs, as a Mother bears with her Child's Frowardneſs and Stubborneſs. And his Conſtituting a Form of Government for them under the Judges firſt, and Kings afterwards, particularly *Saul* and *David*; who is deſcribed firſt, by his Conformity to the Nature of God; He was *a Man after his own Heart.* Secondly, By his Conformity to the Will of God. *He ſhall fulfil all my Will.*

Having thus ended the Hiſtorical Part, he next begins the Practical Part of his Diſcourſe; And lays down this Grand Propoſition, That Jeſus is the Chriſt and Saviour of the World. This Aſſertion he defends, and proves, 1. From his Stock and Family, according to the Fleſh foretold by God. 2. From the Teſtimony of *John* the Baptiſt his Fore-runner, *verſe*, 23, 24. *Of* David's *Seed hath God, according to his Promiſe, raiſed unto* Iſrael *a Saviour, when* John *had firſt preached the Baptiſm of Repentance.* After this he makes a cloſe Application of the whole to them, *Men and Brethren, to you is the Word of this Salvation ſent. Learn thence*, That the Goſpel is the Doctrine or Word of Salvation ſent by God unto a loſt World. The Goſpel is a Meſſage of Glad Tidings; the Glad Tidings which the Goſpel brings, is Salvation, and the Way and Manner how the Goſpel brings Salvation, is threefold: 1. By way of Patefaction and Diſcovery; the Goſpel makes a Diſcovery of Salvation excluſively to any other way; no Angel in Heaven could have diſcovered it, if God had not firſt declared it, in and by the Goſpel. 2. By way of Tender and Offer: O this joyful Meſſage of Salvation is ſent to every Man's Door! Free Grace falls upon its Knees, and beg of every Sinner to accept it. 3. By way of Efficacy and Power; the Goſpel brings with it a convincing and converting Power to put Men into a ſtate of Salvation, and hath alſo an eſtabliſhing and confirming Power to preſerve them in that Eſtate. Bleſſed be God, that to us, even to every one of us, is the Word of this Salvation ſent. What Monſters then are they who are Enemies to the Preaching of the Goſpel? They are Enemies to our Salvation; the only way to Heaven is by Chriſt, the only way to Chriſt is by Faith, and the only way to Faith is by the Word. It cometh by Hearing.

27 For they that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every ſabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cauſe of death in him, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a ſepulchre. 30 But God raiſed him from the dead: 31 And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, who are his witneſſes unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the Fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another pſalm, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Apoſtle* declares the Ignominious Death. 2. The Glorious Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, whom he proves to be the true and promiſed *Meſſias*. 1. For his Ignominious Death, the *Jews hanged him upon a Tree*. The Son of God was not only put to Death, but to the worſt of Deaths, even the Death of the Croſs, by the wicked *Jews*: Yet the *Apoſtle* acknowledges that neither the Jewiſh Rulers nor People did underſtand him to be the *Meſſias*, as they might have done, had they conſidered the Predictions of the Prophets; and therefore their Ignorance would not excuſe them; for the Ignorance and Heedleſneſs of Men, enjoying the Means and Opportunities of Knowledge, will certainly bring Deſtruction upon them. To ſin blindly without Knowledge, or to ſin wilfully againſt Knowledge, when we have the Means of Knowledge, is a damnable Sin: *The Rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets, have fulfilled them in condemning him. Obſerve*, 2. To take away the Scandal of the Croſs, the *Apoſtle* ſhews, That our Saviour's Reſurrection was as glorious as his Death was ignominious. God wip'd away the Reproach of the Croſs by raiſing up Chriſt from the Grave, and declared him to be his Son with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead: And accordingly the *Apoſtle* applies that Propheſie to Chriſt, in *Pſal.* 2. 7. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* As if the Father had ſaid, Now thou haſt again recovered thy Glory, and thy Reſurrection-day is to thee as a new Birth-day. Three ways is Chriſt ſaid to be begotten: 1. Of the Eſſence of the Father before all Worlds. 2. When his Body was formed of the Subſtance of the Virgin's Fleſh. 3. When God raiſed him from the Dead; *This day have I begotten thee:* That is declaratively, for he was the Son of God before, even from all Eternity; but whilſt he was in a ſuffering Condition, his Divinity was veiled: Whereas after his Reſurrection, it was more apparent, and he was then declared to be the Son of God, not then made the Son of God, but then made manifeſt to be the Son of God by the Reſurrection from the Dead. *Learn*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God, antecedent to his Reſurrection, even from all Eternity; he was declared and manifeſted, but not made or conſtituted the Son of God by the Reſurrection. Then it was that his Divinity brake forth as the Sun, after it had been ſhut up under a dark and thick Cloud. Chriſt was the Eternal Son of God; but his Reſurrection was a Declaration, and full Manifeſtation of it to the World; *Rom.* 1. 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

36 For David after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption.

The Holy Ghoſt here gives us a compendious Account of *David*'s Life and Death: Of his Life, *He ſerved his Generation according to the Will of God*; of his Death, *He fell aſleep, and was gathered to his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption.* In the Account given of *David*'s Life, *Note*, 1. His Activity and Zeal for God, he ſerved as well as Reigned: This Serving implies not a ſingle or individual Act, but a Series and Succeſſion of good Actions throughout the whole Courſe of his Life. *Note*, 2. The Publickneſs of his Activity, he ſerved not himſelf, but, his own Generation. 3. *Note*, The Rule of his Activity, and that was the Will of God; as he ſerved his Generation, ſo he ſerved God in his Generation faithfully, according to his Will. All our Serviceableneſs for God and our Generation muſt be guided and directed by the Word and Will of God. *David* ſerved his own Generation by the Will of God. This is the Account of his Life. *Obſerve next*, The Relation of his Death, *He fell aſleep, was gathered to his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption, he fell aſleep.* Death to the Servants of God is as a Sleep, and but a Sleep. As a Sleep it gives Reſt and Ceſſation from Labour; and as a Sleep it gives Refreſhment after Labour; and as they that ſleep ſhall certainly awake, ſo thoſe that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall awake in the Morning of the Reſurrection, to ſee their glorified Redeemer Face to Face. *Note*, 2. No Serviceableneſs to God in our Generation, can exempt from Death; for *David* fell aſleep; this is the Lot of the faithful as well as of the ſlothful Servants. *Note*, 3. It is a bleſſed thing when we fall aſleep with our Work in our hand; when Death meets us after a Life ſpent in the Service of Chriſt. *David* after he had ſerved his Generation fell aſleep; it follows, he was gathered to his Fathers; that is, he was buried amongſt his Anceſtors, and ſaw Corruption; that is, his Body corrupted in the Grave like other Mens.

37 But he whom God raiſed again, ſaw no corruption.

That is, Jeſus Chriſt, whom God the Father raiſed to Life the Third Day; he ſaw a Diſſolution, but no Corruption. Sin had no Inheritance in him; therefore Death could have no dominion over him; but he overcame Death in its own Territories, the Grave. Thus the *Apoſtle* draws the Argument home, that the Fore-going words could not be meant of *David*'s Perſon, but of the *Meſſias*, whom *David* typified and repreſented.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: 39 And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes. 40 Beware therefore, leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the prophets, 41 Behold ye diſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh, for I work a work in your days, a work which you ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.

The *Apoſtle* having proved his Point, that Jeſus was the True, the Promiſed, and expected *Meſſias*, by his Reſurrection from the Dead, he now applies it to his Auditory; and tells them, that by the meritorious Satisfaction and prevailing Interceſſion of this Jeſus, Remiſſion of Sins is to be obtained, and Deliverance from the Wrath of God; from which the Law of *Moſes* could not, with all its Ceremonial Waſhings and Sacrifices, cleanſe and free them. *Here Note*, The Impoſſibility of our being Juſtified by the Law, and the Certainty of our Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt; *By him all that believe are juſtified. Where Obſerve*, The Procurer of our Juſtification, *Chriſt*; the Qualification of the Subjects juſtified by him, *them that believe*; and the Extent and Meaſure of our Juſtification; not from ſome, but from all things, *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things.* Next, the *Apoſtle* exhorts his Hearers to take heed, leſt by their obſtinate Rejecting and Refuſing this way of Salvation now preached to them, they bring ſuch a remarkable Deſtruction upon themſelves now, as God threatned to bring upon their Fore-fathers of old. The Senſe is, If ye reject this Jeſus, and the way to Life and Salvation by him, ye ſhall be deſtroyed by the *Romans*, as your Anceſtors were by the *Chaldeans*. Sin is as odious to God at one time as another, and in one People as another; and particularly the Sin of obſtinate Infidelity and Unbelief, is a God-provoking, and a Wrath-procuring Sin: *Behold ye Deſpiſers, wonder and periſh.*

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the ſynagogue, the Gentiles beſought that theſe words might be preached unto them the next ſabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews, and religious proſelytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who ſpeaking to them, perſwaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 And the next ſabbath-day came almoſt the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews ſaw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and ſaid it was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, ſaying, I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts. 51 But they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and came to Iconium.

Obſerve here, 1. The *Apoſtle* having ended his Sermon to the *Jews*, the *Gentile*-proſelytes deſired to hear more of this Subject the next Sabbath-day. Such to whom the Word of God is ſavoury and ſweet, are not ſoon cloyed with it, but hunger after it: Neither do they loath the Heavenly Manna, becauſe it is rained down frequently about their Tents. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Apoſtle* readily complies with their deſire; he preaches again the next Sabbath, when almoſt the whole City came together to hear the Goſpel. But this angred the Devil, and occaſioned great Envy and Perſecution to the *Apoſtles*. *Learn thence*, That a Croud of Hearers, but eſpecially of young Converts, is very hurtful to *Satan*, and doth uſually ſtir up abundance of rage in his Servants againſt the Miniſters of Chriſt: *When the Jews ſaw the Multitudes they were filled with Envy*. *Obſerve*, 3. The Inſtruments *Satan* makes uſe of, to carry on this fierce Perſecution againſt the *Apoſtles*; *He ſtirred up the Devout and Honourable Women, and chief Men of the City*. *Learn thence*, 1. That the powerful and ſucceſsful Preaching of the Goſpel uſually ſtirs up violent Perſecution againſt the Preachers of the Goſpel. 2. That devout Women and great Men, nouriſhed up in Ignorance, are oftentimes great Oppoſers of the Truth, and Inſtruments of Perſecution; *The Jews ſtirred up the devout Women*, &c. *Obſerve*, 4. How the Apoſtle with great Boldneſs and Courage, acquaints them with their Sin and Danger; *Ye judge your ſelves unworthy of Eternal Life*. But how ſo? not directly and formally, but interpretatively and practically: They thought very well of themſelves no doubt, and judged themſelves worthy of Eternal Life, but their Practice pronounced them unworthy, and gave Sentence againſt them, whilſt they acquitted themſelves; for this their Contempt of the Grace of the Goſpel, did declare them unworthy of Eternal Life. *Obſerve*, 5. The Emblematical Action performed by the Apoſtles, to ſignifie God's Rejection of this miſerable People; *They ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them*. This ſignified, 1. That the very Earth was polluted where ſuch Refuſers of the precious Goſpel did inhabit, and was therefore to be ſhaken off as a filthy thing. 2. That they were a baſe People, vile as the Duſt, and that as ſuch, God had now ſhaken them off. 3. That the Duſt of the *Apoſtles* Feet there left, might be as a Witneſs againſt them, that the Goſpel had been preached to them. This Action of ſhaking off the Duſt of their Feet, was a diſmal Signification of a forſaken People. *Obſerve*, 6. With what Joy and Gladneſs the poor *Gentiles* entertained the glad Tidings of the Goſpel; *When the* Gentiles *heard this they were glad, and as many as were ordained to eternal Life believed*: That is, when the *Gentiles* heard the Good-news, and underſtood their own Intereſt in it, they rejoyced exceedingly, and as many as were by the Holy Spirit of God prepared and diſpoſed to ſeek after Eternal Life, believed.

52 And the diſciples were filled with joy, and with the holy Ghoſt.

That is, The *Apoſtles* and Diſciples in this City were nothing diſcouraged with the *Jews* Blaſphemies, Oppoſitions and Perſecutions, but were filled with Spiritual Joy that they had embraced the Goſpel, and went on couragiouſly in the Profeſſion of it. *Learn thence*, That God's Grace, and the Churches Joy, may and doth encreaſe under the greateſt Oppoſition and Perſecutions of Men. Infinite Wiſdom and Sovereign Power, knows how to over-rule the Contradiction of Sinners, for Glory to himſelf, and Good to his Church.

CHAP. XIV.

AND it came to paſs in Iconium, that they went both together into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and ſo ſpake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and alſo of the Greeks, believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected againſt the brethren.

Here we have an Account of the fourth Journey which *Paul* and *Barnabas* undertook in their Travels, to plant and propagate the Chriſtian Faith, and that was to *Iconium*. *Where Obſerve*, 1. The Unity of theſe two great *Apoſtles*, both amongſt themſelves, and in the Work of God; *They went both together into the Synagogue*. O how happy is it for the Miniſters of Chriſt to walk and work together in Unity! to go hand in hand together in the Service of the Goſpel, and with united Endeavours promote the Glory of God, and the Intereſt of Souls. *Obſerve*, 2. As their Unity, ſo their great Conſtancy in performing their Duty, notwithſtanding all their Perſecutors Fury and Obſtinacy: Tho' *the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles againſt the Apoſtles*, yet they continue preaching in the Synagogues. *Obſerve*, 3. The great Succeſs with which it pleaſed God to crown the Endeavours of the Holy *Apoſtles*, (*a great multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed*;) and that which doth conſtantly attend the Succeſs of the Miniſtry of the Word, namely, the Envy and Oppoſition of wicked Men: They exaſperated, or made the *Gentiles* Minds evil-affected againſt the Brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands.

Note here, 1. The Manner of the *Apoſtles* Preaching at *Iconium*, *They ſpake boldly*: That is, openly in the Synagogues, and there with great Freedom and Plainneſs of Speech, aſſerting Truth, condemning Error, reproving Sin, and denouncing Judgments againſt impenitent Sinners; and this with a wiſe, but convincing Boldneſs; with a meek, but zealous Boldneſs; knowing that if they had not now been bold for Chriſt, they could not at the great Day be bold before him. That Miniſter that is afraid to ſpeak and plead for Chriſt now, will certainly be aſhamed to look him in the face then. A ſerious Thought of this when we are going to preach, will make us ſhut all baſe Fear out of the Pulpit. *Note*, 2. The Time of their Preaching at *Iconium*; it was not a ſingle Sermon or two, (*in Tranſitu*) but *long time they abode ſpeaking boldly in the Lord*. A conſtant Courſe of Preaching is needful to root that Word which one or two Sermons oft leaveth looſe: The end of the Miniſtry is to build up, as well as to bring in, and this is done by our Conſtancy in Preaching, and Exemplarineſs in Holy Living. *Note*, 3. How God honoured his Word, in the Mouth of his Miniſters; confirming their Doctrine by Miracles, *He gave Teſtimony to the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their hands.* The Miracles which the Apoſtles wrought, were the convincing Cauſe of the Credibility of the *Apoſtles* Teſtimony.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and
part held with the Jews, and part with the apoſtles.
5 And when there was an Aſſault made both of the
Gentiles, and alſo of the Jews, with their rulers, to uſe
them deſpitefully, and to ſtone them. 6 They were ware
of it, and fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia,
and unto the region that lyeth round about:
7 And there they preached the Goſpel.

Obſerve here, 1. How upon the Preaching of the Goſpel, there follows great Diviſions; *The multitude was divided*: Not that the Goſpel is the Cauſe of Diviſion, but the Occaſion only, and that by accident too. The Sacred Inſtitutions and Ordinances of Chriſt, are not to be quarrelled with, or objected againſt, becauſe thro' Man's Corruption they breed Differences, Diſcord and Diviſions. *Obſerve*, 2. How this Diviſion was the cauſe of Perſecution; *The City was divided, and an attempt was made to uſe the Apoſtles deſpitefully, and to ſtone them.* Lord! what ill Uſage have thine Ambaſſadors met with from the firſt publication of the Goſpel. The unkind World has treated them, as if they were not fit to live, driving them from place to place, and perſecuting them from City to City. But *Obſerve*, 3. The prudential Care which the *Apoſtles* uſe for their own Preſervation: *They were aware of it, and fled to Lyſtra and Derbe*, according to Chriſt's Command, *When they perſecute you in one City, flee unto another.* Chriſt allows his Miniſters a Liberty of flight, in time of Perſecution, that they may preſerve their Lives for future Service. We muſt not expect Safety by a Miracle, when we may have it in the uſe of Means: Yet probably it might not be Fear, or deſire to ſave their Lives, which made the *Apoſtles* flee: but becauſe they were unwilling to loſe time there, where their Miniſtry was obſtructed, and where they ſaw the Goſpel was rejected. Accordingly they fled to *Derbe* and *Lyſtra*, and there preached the Goſpel. From whence *Note*, How greatly Perſecution by ſcattering, tends to the encreaſing of the Goſpel. Thouſands had never heard of Jeſus Chriſt, if Perſecution had not driven the Miniſters of the Goſpel unto them. The Wiſdom of God well knows how to order thoſe things which are deſigned for the Prejudice, to tend to the furtherance of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. *ver.* 12.

8 And there ſat a certain man at Lyſtra, impotent
in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb,
who never had walked. 9 The ſame heard Paul ſpeak:
who ſteadfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving that
he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice,
Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.
11 And when the people ſaw what Paul had done, they
lift up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia,
the gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.
12 And they called Barnabas Jupiter: and Paul Mercurius,
becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker.

Here we have an Account of the Fifth Journey which the *Apoſtles Barnabas* and *Paul* undertook in their Travels to plant and propagate the Chriſtian Faith; and that was at *Lyſtra* and *Derbe*. Here their firſt work was to preach the Goſpel, which done, God honoured *Paul* to Work a glorious Miracle for the Confirmation of what he had Preached. *Where Note.* 1. The Subject whom this Miraculous Cure was wrought upon, a Man that was a Cripple, not by Accident, but by Nature, *From his Mother's womb*; and conſequently, *had never walked*: They that are Lame by Caſualty, may poſſibly be relieved by Art and Induſtry; but to cure one that is born Lame, nothing leſs is required than a Divine Power: Such Defects as are from Nature, can only be relieved by the God of Nature. *Note.* 2. What an Extraordinary Spirit of Diſcerning was at ſometimes, and upon certain occaſions found with the *Apoſtles*: Saint *Paul perceived*, that this poor Cripple had Faith to be healed: that is, by that Extraordinary Gift of diſcerning Spirits, which at this time the *Apoſtle* had. The like had St. *Peter* alſo, upon a ſpecial occaſion, (for this Gift of diſcerning Spirits, was not at all times found with the *Apoſtles*) he diſcerned the Hypocriſie and Falſhood of *Ananias* and *Simon Magus*. The Gift of Working Miracles, and the Gift of diſcerning of Spirits were for a time conferred upon the *Apoſtles* for confirming their Teſtimony, but are long ſince ceaſed in the Church: The Reaſon of them ceaſing, the Goſpel being ſufficiently Eſtabliſhed and Confirmed. *Note*, 3. The Reality of this Miracle; it was not a lying Wonder, but a Real Miracle: the Man not only walked but leaped for Joy, to ſhew that he was perfectly cured and thoroughly recovered. All the Works of God, eſpecially his Miraculous Works, are perfect: Whom God Cures, he Cures effectually. *Note*, 4. What Influence the Sight of this Miracle had upon the Minds of the People of *Lyſtra*; they aſcribe the Honour of this glorious Miracle to their Dunghil-deities, not to the true God: They pay their Rent to a wrong Land-lord. Such was the blind Superſtition of theſe poor *Pagans*, that believing their Gods were come down to them, in the likeneſs of Men; they called *Barnabas Jupiter*, who was their chief God, and *Paul Mercurius*, whom they accounted the Meſſenger and Interpreter of the Gods. Lord! how blind are the Principles of corrupt Reaſon in fallen Mankind? And how forcible is an evil Cuſtom, and a vain Converſation received by Tradition from our Fore-fathers? And how hard a matter is it to rectifie ſuch Miſtakes in Religion as Time, and general conſent have rooted and riveted in the Minds of Men.

13 And then the prieſt of Jupiter which was before
their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates,
and would have done ſacrifices with the people.
14 Which when the apoſtles, Barnabas and Paul heard
of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people
crying out, 15 And ſaying, Sirs, Why do you theſe
things? We alſo are men of like paſſions with you,
and preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe
vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and
earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein, 16 Who
in time paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own
ways. 17 Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without witneſs,
in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven,
and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and
gladneſs. 18 And with theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained
they the people, that they had not done ſacrifice unto
them.

Obſerve, 1. How far Paganiſh Superſtition did Tranſport and carry theſe Men; they came to the Gates of the Houſe where the *Apoſtles* had Lodged, and bring Oxen with them, trimmed with Garlands of Flowers according to their heatheniſh Rites; verily intending to offer Sacrifice unto them. *Learn*, How forward the Devil is to put Honour, much Honour, yea overmuch Honour upon the Miniſters of Chriſt when it is to contradict their Doctrine, and gain Advantage to himſelf by it. The Devil Laughed to ſee the blind ſuperſtitious *Lyſtrians* adore the *Apoſtles*, and adorn them with the names of their heathen Gods, hoping to make Advantage thereby to himſelf. *Obſerve*, 2. With what Indignation and Diſdain, Deteſtation and Abhorrence the *Apoſtles* rejected this vile Idolatry: Telling them, they were Men of like Paſſions, and in the ſame Condition of Mortality with themſelves, and that their buſineſs was to turn them from their Idols, which were meer Vanities, and nothing, compared with the Living and True God; who made them and all the World. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Worſhipping of Idols, is the moſt ſenſeleſs and irrational Vanity that ever the Devil put into the ſtupified Heart of Man. 2. That all good Men hate Idolatry in others, and abhor to be idolized themſelves. *Obſerve*, 3. The Deſcription which the Holy *Apoſtle* gives of the true God, to draw the People off from worſhipping Idols; he ſtiles him the living God that made the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all things therein. A good God that giveth Rain, and fruitful Seaſons, filling his Creatures Hearts with Food and Gladneſs. *Initiating*, 1. That whatſoever concerns the happineſs and felicity of Man in this Life, is wholly derived from God. 2. That there is no Nation, nor Perſon under Heaven, to whom God exhibits not the evident Tokens of his Goodneſs. The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. *Obſerve*, 4. The Character which the *Apoſtles* give of the former times, in which the Heathen World lived; *In times paſt they were ſuffered to walk in their own ways.* That is, of Old, God ſuffered all Nations (except the *Jewiſh* Nation) to walk in their own ways. The meaning is, he did not check or ſtop them in their ſinful Ways and Courſes as he did his own People the *Jews*.

Yet we muſt not underſtand the *Apoſtle* abſolutely, but comparatively only; there never was any Man, much leſs any Nation, whom God ſuffered to go on in a courſe of Sin without any ſtop. Every Perſon and every Nation, has had the ſtop of the light of Nature at leaſt; but every Nation has not had the ſtop of the light of the Goſpel, the ſtop of Ordinances, the Preaching of the Word, the motions of the Holy Spirit; theſe the *Jews* had; but the *Gentiles* had not. In this Senſe, God ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways; he did not give them his Word, his Statute or his Judgments; to ſhew them his ways, or to hinder them in walking in their own ways, and this was a ſore Judgment. To ſuffer either Nation or Perſon to walk without controule or check from Word or Rod, from Ordinances or Providences, in the ways of Sin and Wickedneſs, is a very dreadful and tremendous Judgment. *In times paſt, he ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways.*

19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who perſwaded the people, and having ſtoned Paul, drew him out of the city ſuppoſing he had been dead. 20 Howbeit, as the diſciples ſtood round about him, he roſe up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Note here, 1. The ill Requital St. *Paul* had for his excellent Diſcourſe to theſe Blaſphemous Idolaters; *They ſtoned him to death* in their own Apprehenſion. The ſharpeſt and keeneſt Edge of Perſecution, is uſually turned againſt the Miniſters of Chriſt, and falls heavieſt on the Prophets of God. The Devil will do his utmoſt to take away their Lives, who are continually endeavouring the deſtruction of him and his Kingdom. *Note*, 2. The great inconſtancy and incredible fickleneſs of the common People; who one day would Sacrifice to the *Apoſtles* as Gods, and the next day ſtone them to death as Malefactors. What wiſe Man will value himſelf by the applauſe of the Multitude, and live upon the breath of the People, (that contingent judge of Good and Evil) which rather attend the Vain then the Vertuous. But thus the common People dealt with Chriſt himſelf, crying one day *Hoſannah!* and the next day *Crucifie*. *Note*, 3. The miraculous recovery of the *Apoſtle*, after his Perſecutors had ſtoned him, *he roſe up and came into the City:* His recovery ſeems to be Miraculous, elſe his ſtoning would have diſabled him for walking; God had farther work for this great *Apoſtle* to do; and therefore neither the wrath of Men nor rage of the Devil, could at that time cut him off.

21 And when they had preached the goſpel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lyſtra, and to Iconium, and Antioch. 22 Confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Obſerve here, The great and good uſe which the *Apoſtle* makes of his miraculous Recovery; he is no ſooner upon his Legs, but he Travels to *Derbe* to Preach the Goſpel: Nothing do the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt more fervently deſire, and more diligently endeavour, than to lay out their Lives, their Strength, their Time, their All for God, in his Service, and to his Glory. Yet, *Obſerve farther*, That notwithſtanding the *Apoſtles* were Perſecuted at *Lyſtra* and *Iconium*; yet they return thither again, having planted Churches there, they go back to water their own Plantations. Perſecution did not, could not make them forſake the Plantations which they had newly made. It is not enough that the Seed of the Word be ſown, it muſt be watered alſo, otherwiſe it will Fade and Wither, Languiſh and Die: But what did the *Apoſtles* do, when they were returned to viſit their new planted Churches? *Anſwer*, 1. They confirm and eſtabliſh them in the Doctrine of the Goſpel; they exhorted them to ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance in their holy Religion, and Arm them againſt the fears of Affliction and Perſecution, for the ſake of Chriſt and his Holy Religion: Acquainting them, that they *muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Afflictions, like the Waters of *Marah*, muſt be met with in our Way to the Heavenly *Canaan*; there is no coming at the Crown but by the Croſs. The Head having been crowned with Thorns, 'tis unſuitable that the Feet ſhould tread on Roſes. Chriſtianity is the Doctrine of the Croſs, which the Miniſters of Chriſt ought to let their People underſtand and know, that they may not *think ſtrange of the fiery Tryal, as if ſome ſtrange thing had befallen them; but rather rejoyce, in as much as they are partakers of the Sufferings of Chriſt; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, they may be glad alſo with exceeding joy*, 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Here we have two farther Inſtances and Evidences of the *Apoſtles* care of theſe new planted Churches, and the firſt was to ſettle them in Church-order, ordaining Elders in every Church, to be the Guides and Teachers of the reſt, and this with Faſting and Prayer in regard of the great ſolemnity and importance of the Work. *Hence Learn*, That Ordination of Miniſters is a Miniſterial Act; the Officers of the Church, and not the People, muſt ſeparate and ſet apart, Conſecrate and Ordain the Perſons who are to attend upon God and his Church in holy Things. When they (that is, *Paul* and *Barnabas*) had ordained them Elders in every Church. *Learn*, 2. That this ſolemn Action ought to be very ſolemnly performed, by Faſting and Prayer. *They ordained Elders in every Church, and prayed with faſting.* The ſecond inſtance of this Apoſtolical care was, *their commending them to the Lord on whom they had believed.* That is, they committed them as young Converts to the Power of Chriſt, to ſtrengthen and confirm them, and they committed them as their Treaſure to the care of Chriſt, to preſerve and keep them. The greateſt and beſt thing that the Miniſters of God can do, either preſent with, or abſent from their People, is to commit and recommend them to the Power and Care of Chriſt, *who is able to keep them from falling, and to preſent them faultleſs before the preſence of his Glory with exceeding joy.*

24 And after they had paſſed throughout Piſidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence ſailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearſed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the diſciples.

This laſt Paragraph of the Chapter, acquaints us with the return of *Paul* and *Barnabas* to *Antioch* in *Syria*, from whence they ſet out two Years before, and where they were, by the Prayers of the Church, moſt affectionately recommended to the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God, for carrying on of that great Work, to wit, the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; which God had abundantly ſucceeded them in. *Learn hence*, That the beſt Proviſion and Preparation for any Buſineſs, eſpecially any Buſineſs of Importance, wherein the Glory of God is concerned, is fervent Prayer: Thus the *Apoſtles* here, being ſent out from *Antioch* with Prayer, they return with Praiſe; the Lord granted them both ſafety and ſucceſs: Safety as to their Perſons, and Succeſs as to their Labours. *Obſerve farther*, Being returned to *Antioch*, they call the Church together, and declare the great things which God had done with them, and by them; to the intent, no doubt that the Church might joyn them in their Praiſes and Thankſgivings, who had before aſſiſted them with their Prayers and Supplications. *They rehearſed all that God had done with them*, that he might have the intire Praiſe and Glory from them. *Obſerve laſtly*, The ſubject matter of that Report which they joyfully made to the Church at *Antioch*, namely, how God had opened the door of Faith to the *Gentiles*; that is, given them an Opportunity to know, and Ability to believe the Goſpel; which like a Door was formerly ſhut to them, but now mercifully opened: And which was the far greater Mercy yet, Almighty God did not only open the Door of the Goſpel to them by bringing his Word amongſt them, but he opened the door of their Hearts to receive it, and entertain it when brought. The opening the Heart and Mind of Sinners, effectually to receive the Truths of the Goſpel, is the ſpecial Work of the Holy Spirit of God. Lord! how inſufficient are all external Means, how excellent ſoever in themſelves, to operate ſavingly upon Mens Minds, unleſs the Holy Spirit opens the Underſtanding, as well as his Miniſters open the Scriptures. He that opened the Door of Faith to the *Gentiles*, opened the *Gentiles* Hearts to receive the Doctrine of Faith, and inclined their Wills to the Obedience of Faith. Eternally praiſed be God for the gracious Illuminations, the ſanctifying Impreſſions, the powerful Aſſiſtances, and the quickning Influences of the Holy Spirit, which worketh in us both to will, and to do of his good Pleaſure.

CHAP. XV.

This Chapter relates the ſecond Journey of St. Paul *and* Barnabas, *from* Antioch *to* Jeruſalem, *where the firſt and moſt famous General Council was held for deciding of this Queſtion, Whether the Gentiles converted to Chriſtianity, and living among the Jews, ſhould be compelled to be circumciſed, and obſerve the Ceremonial Law? Which was determined in the Negative, as the Chapter informs us.*

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and ſaid, Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſſention and diſputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion.

Obſerve here, 1. How very forward Satan and his Inſtruments were to ſow the Seeds of Diſcord and Diſſention amongſt the converted Chriſtians at *Antioch:* He takes the firſt Opportunity to break the Church in pieces, before it was well ſettled. O the reſtleſs Malice of an envious Devil againſt the Goſpel, and Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt; *Certain Men came down from Judea*; no doubt of the Devil's ſending to diſquiet the Brethren, and diſtreſs the Church. *Obſerve*, 2. The Bone of Contention thrown in by the falſe Apoſtles, to diſturb the Diſciples of Chriſt, and that was, the urging the Neceſſity of *Circumciſion*, and impoſing that part of the Moſaick Yoak upon the Neck of the converted *Gentiles*, excluding them from all Hopes of Salvation unleſs they were circumcis'd; altho' Circumciſion was not commanded but only to the Poſterity of *Abraham*, and as to them alſo, had received its Aboliſhment at the Death of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 3. With what warmth of Zeal the meek Apoſtle St. *Paul* oppoſes this Antichriſtian deſign of Introducing Circumciſion into the Chriſtian Church: Paul *and* Barnabas *had no ſmall Diſputation with them*; he that could *become all things to all Men*, could not become Sin to any Man; he therefore enters the Liſts with them, and earneſtly contends for the Faith of the Goſpel, urging that by the Death of Chriſt we are freed from the whole Ceremonial Law, and that if Circumciſion were retained, for the ſame Reaſon, all the other Ceremonies ought to be reſtored; for the Circumciſed Perſon was obliged to obſerve the whole Ceremonial Law. *Obſerve*, 4. The prudential courſe which the Diſciples at *Antioch* took for the deciding of this Controverſie; they determine to ſend *Paul* and *Barnabas* up to *Jeruſalem*, where in a full and free Synod of the Apoſtles, the Matter is debated, and finally decided. *Learn hence*, That the uſe of Synods, or General Aſſemblies of the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church for deciding Controverſies, for determining Matters of Faith, and directing to Matters of Practice, as it has been of ancient Authority in the Church of Chriſt; ſo is it of ſingular Benefit and Advantage both to Miniſters and People. Here *Paul* and *Barnabas* go up to the firſt Synod, or General Council at *Jeruſalem*, to conſult *the Apoſtles and Elders about this Queſtion.*

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the converſion of the Gentiles: and they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the church, and of the apoſtles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

Here Note, 1. How that great, but humble Apoſtle St. *Paul*, who had learn'd of his Maſter to be meek and lowly in Spirit, was willing and content to be a Servant and Meſſenger of the Church to the Apoſtles, tho' he was nothing inferior to the chiefeſt Apoſtles; Paul *and* Barnabas *went up to the Apoſtles that were at* Jeruſalem. The more Holineſs a Chriſtian has, the more Humility he has: Humility is a great part of our Holineſs, it is an Argument of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion; it is the great deſign of the Goſpel to make us humble, and keep us humble. *Note*, 2. With what great Pleaſure and Satisfaction, *Paul* and *Barnabas* make report of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry, (both at *Phenice, Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*) in the Converſion of the poor *Gentiles*, and with what Joy the Report was received and entertained; *They declared the Converſion of the Gentiles, and it cauſed great Joy unto all the Brethren. Thence learn*, That nothing more rejoyces the Hearts of Believers, than the hearing of Souls brought home to God by converting Grace, and thereby of the increaſing and inlarging of the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt: The *Gentiles* Converſion was joyful News to the Saints at *Jeruſalem. Note*, 3. With what great and due Reverence and Reſpect the Church at *Jeruſalem* received and entertained thoſe laborious Apoſtles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who were now ſent unto them by the Church at *Antioch*; *When they were come to* Jeruſalem, *they were received of the Church:* That is, received with great Veneration and Regard for their indefatigable Labours in order to the *Gentiles* Converſion. *Learn thence*, That double Honour and Reſpect is certainly due, and payable to ſuch Miniſters of Chriſt as labour in the Word and Doctrine, and perform their Duty to God and their People, with ſuch Zeal and Application as becomes Perſons of their holy Character and Profeſſion. O how beautiful ſhould the Feet be of them that preach the Goſpel of Peace, and bring glad Tydings of good things: even the joyful Tydings of Salvation to the Ears of a loſt World.

5 But there aroſe up certain of the ſect of the Phariſees, which believed, ſaying, That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command them to keep the law of Moſes. 6 And the apoſtles and elders came together for to conſider of this matter.

That is, Some *Jews* of the Sect of the *Phariſees* converted to Chriſtianity, thought and taught that Circumciſion, and keeping of the Law of *Moſes*, was neceſſary to Salvation, both to *Jew* and *Gentile* Chriſtians. *Where Obſerve*, 1. How early the ſound Doctrine of Chriſtianity was corrupted by erring Teachers. *Obſerve*, 2. That the Spirit of Infallibility, with which the Apoſtles were at that time certainly indued, did not prevent the Riſe of Controverſies and Diſputes in the firſt Ages of the Church, nor yet ſilence, and put an end to ſuch Diſputes when riſen; much leſs can a pretended Infallible Head of the Church, and an Unerring Judge of Controverſies now do it. *Obſerve*, 3. That Errors and falſe Opinions creeping into a Church, are not a ſufficient Warrant to forſake the Communion of that Church: We find here, that in the moſt primitive and pureſt Churches, even whilſt the Apoſtles themſelves were upon the ſpot, dangerous Errors crept into the Church, and proved of ſuch fatal and pernicious Conſequence, that the Apoſtle wiſhes, *They were even cut off who thus troubled them*, Gal. 4. 12. Separation then from a Church is not warrantable upon any other grounds then that which makes a Separation between God and that Church, which is either the Apoſtacy of that Church into groſs Idolatry, or in point of Doctrine into damnable Hereſie, *Rev.* 2. we read of Chriſt's walking among the Seven Golden Candleſticks; and altho' ſome of them were ſufficiently beſmear'd, yet were they favoured with Chriſt's gracious Preſence. *Obſerve laſtly*, The regular and prudential Means uſed by the Apoſtles for the Suppreſſing of this Error, which endanger'd the Church's Purity; and for quenching of this Spark of Diſſention, which threatned the Church's Peace, *They gathered together at* Jeruſalem *to conſider of the matter:* That is, to conſult about it, and debate upon it. *Where Note*, That tho' the Apoſtles were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, yet they made uſe of their own Reaſon and Judgment for the Deciſion of this Controverſie. God's Inſpiration did not make the Apoſtles Conſultation needleſs, either for ſatisfying themſelves, or ſilencing gain-ſayers.

7 And when there had been much diſputing, Peter roſe up and ſaid unto them, Men, and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth ſhould hear the word of the goſpel, and believe. 8 And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſs, giving them the holy Ghoſt, even as he did unto us: 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God; to

put a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples, which neither
our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we
believe that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,
we ſhall be ſaved even as they.

Obſerve here, 1. The Council aſſembled, the firſt and moſt famous Council of *Jeruſalem*, the Council of Councils: in other Councils were Holy Biſhops, in this inſpired Apoſtles, who could not err in Matters of Faith. *Obſ.* 2. The Grand Debate, or Matter in Controverſie, namely, whether Faith in Chriſt were not ſufficient to Juſtification, unleſs Circumciſion, and an Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, were joined with it. *Obſerve*, 3. The Perſons managing this Debate, the three great Apoſtles, St. *Peter*, St. *Paul*, and St. *James*. The firſt that ſpeaks in the Council is St. *Peter*; from whence the Papiſts would infer, that he as Head of the Church ſpake firſt, and conſequently that the Pope, whom they will have to be St. *Peter*'s Succeſſor, ought to have the firſt and chief Voice in all General Councils: But all this is but Preſumption, for we ſhall find at *ver.* 13. St. *James*, who was then Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, ſays, *Hearken unto me*; and at *ver.* 19. gives the definitive Sentence, ſaying, *My Sentence is*; or thus I judge and determine: Had St. *Peter* ſaid this, it had been a better Proof of his Preheminency, and made a louder noiſe than *Paſce Oves*. *Obſerve*, 4. St. *Peter*'s Argument to prove, that the Believing *Gentiles* might be juſtified and ſaved without Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law. The Argument runs thus: The way of Juſtification for all Men, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, is one and the ſame: But *Cornelius* a *Gentile*, with his whole Family, by the Bleſſing of God upon my Miniſtry, was converted, and juſtified without being circumciſed; therefore Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, ought not to be impoſed as neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation. *Obſerve*, 5. How St. *Peter* ſtrengthens his Argument, by declaring that what was done to *Cornelius* and his Family, was by the ſpecial Command of God, that God gave Teſtimony of his Approbation of *Cornelius*, (as the firſt Fruits of the *Gentiles*) by ſending down the Holy Ghoſt upon him and his, (as well as upon us and ours) by purifying their Hearts by Faith. *Where Note*, 1. That Purifying begins at the Heart; not at the Head, nor at the Hands, but at the Heart; the Head may be purified from falſe Principles, the Hand from falſe Practices, and yet the Heart remain unpurified, and continue a ſink of Pollution and Uncleanneſs; therefore we muſt purifie our Hearts; as well as cleanſe our Hands, yea, firſt begin with our Hearts; *Having purified their Hearts by Faith*. *Note*, 1. That as purifying begins at the Heart, (but muſt not end there) ſo Faith is the Inſtrumental Cauſe of our Purification: The Blood of Chriſt cleanſes from all Sin meritoriouſly, the Spirit of Chriſt efficiently, but Faith is the Inſtrument in the Hand of the Spirit, which apprehends and applies the Merit of that Blood for Pardon and Purification. *Obſerve*, 6. The Character given by St. *Peter* of the Ceremonial Law; he calls it a Yoke, an intolerable Yoke, too heavy to be born by the *Jews* themſelves, much more the *Gentiles*, whoſe Necks God never deſigned this Yoke for, but for the Seed of *Abraham* only. Now the Law of Ceremonies impoſed upon the *Jews*, might well be called a Yoke, if we conſider; 1. Their Number and Variety; they were a Multitude of Legal Obſervances. 2. Their Burthen and Difficulty; the Ceremonial Law was a moſt laborious Adminiſtration of a very painful Service. 3. They were very coſtly and chargeable: So many Bullocks, Rams and Lambs for Sacrifice, that the Miſers of this Age would think themſelves undone with the Expence. 4. Their Inſufficiency; they were only ſhadows of good things to come, and could not make the Obſervers of them perfect. Thus was the Ceremonial Law in it ſelf, a Yoke and Burthen; and the Impoſing of it upon the *Gentiles* is called *a tempting of God*; that is, a dangerous provoking of him, becauſe it never belonged to them, but to the *Jews* only, which yet were never able to bear it; that is, ſo to obſerve it as to be juſtified and ſaved by it. *Learn thence*, That it was never the intent or deſign of God, that his People ſhould be juſtified by their Obedience to the Ceremonial Law; but that being preſſed with the Weight, and pinched with the Uneaſineſs of the Yoke, they ſhould ſeek unto Chriſt for Righteouſneſs and Life, who alone was the fulfiller of it. There was this difference between the Ceremonial and Moral Law, the Ceremonial Law was therefore Good, becauſe God commanded it: The Moral Law was therefore commanded, becauſe good. Chriſt by his Death abrogated the former, but by the Obedience of his Life fulfilled the latter.

12 Then all the multitude kept ſilence, and gave
audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles
and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles
by them.

The ſecond Speech made in this Council was that of *Barnabas* and *Paul*, who declared what Miracles God had enabled them to work among the *Gentiles*, which was an Evidence of God's Approbation of the *Gentiles*, (tho' uncircumciſed) and that he was pleaſed with their Adminiſtration among them. Hence they conclude very well, that the Miracles wrought among the *Gentiles*, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon the *Gentiles*, was God's Approving Teſtimony in the caſe, that the Believing *Gentiles* without Circumciſion, ſhould find no leſs Acceptance with God than the Believing *Jews*, who were of the Circumciſion.

13 And after they had held their peace, James anſwered,
ſaying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.
14 Simeon hath declared how God at the firſt did viſit
the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.
15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is
written. 16 After this I will return, and will build again
the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down:
and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet
it up: 17 That the reſidue of men might ſeek after the
Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is
called, ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things.
18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning
of the world. 19 Wherefore my ſentence is,
that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles
are turned to God. 20 But that we write unto them,
that they abſtain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication,
and from things ſtrangled, and from blood.

Obſerve here, 1. The excellent Order in which this grand Debate was managed by the Apoſtles; they do not break in upon one another, like proud Magiſterical talkers, ſo full of themſelves, that they could not hear one another ſpeak; but while one ſpeaks, all the reſt ſilently and attentively hear, no one ſtopping another by rude and uncivil Interruption; *After they had held their Peace* James *anſwered*. *Obſerve*, 2. The third and laſt Speech uttered at this Council at *Jeruſalem*, was by St. *James* the Biſhop, and Reſidentiary Apoſtle of the Place: *James* ſaid, *Hearken unto me*. *Where Note*, 1. He puts the Council in mind of the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God in ſending the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, which he calls his *Viſiting* of them, and the deſign of God in that gracious Viſitation, namely, *to take* out of the *Gentile* World *People for his Name*. *Hence Learn*, 1. That when God gives his Goſpel to a People, he gives that People a merciful and gracious Viſitation. 2. That God's deſign in viſiting a Nation with and by the Goſpel, is, to take out of them, and from amongſt them, a People for his Name: That is, a People to call upon his Name, a People to be called by his Name, and a People to honour and glorify, to advance and magnify his Holy Name. *Note*, 2. With what Wiſdom and Caution St. *James*, the Preſident of the Council, proceeds in the final deſiding of this Controverſie: He propoſes a Mean betwixt the two Extreams, between thoſe that would have all the *Moſaick* Rites impoſed, and thoſe that would have none at all; deſigning by this *Medium*, that neither the *Jews* ſhould be too much offended, nor the *Gentiles* too heavily burthened; but Brotherly Love between both be maintained and preſerved. *Note*, 3. How St. *James* in the deciding of this Controverſie, appeals to Scripture; *Ver.* 15. *To this agree the words of the Prophets, as it is written:* Not to the Authority of the Council; the Holy Canon of the Scriptures ought to over rule all Debates; this is the infallible Judge, which all the Councils are to appeal to, and none muſt preſume to appeal from. *Note laſtly*, That the Sum of the Councils Determination came to this; That Circumciſion ſhould not be impoſed upon the *Gentiles*, that the *Gentiles* nevertheleſs ſhould ſo far Judaize, or comply with the *Jews*, as to abſtain from Meats offered to Idols, from things ſtrangled, and from Blood, and from Fornication: All which are called indifferent things, becauſe the three firſt were made ſo by the Death of Chriſt, (after which there was to be no more diſtinction either of Meats or Nations;) and the fourth, namely, Fornication, is reckoned, amongſt the indifferent things; becauſe the *Gentiles*, (tho' falſly) did think and ſpeak it to be ſo: *Non eſt flagitium ad oleſcentem Scortari*. To prevent therefore giving offence to the weak *Jews*, the *Gentiles* are required to abſtain from theſe things, till Time and fuller Acquaintance with the Goſpel did better inform them concerning their Chriſtian Liberty. From this Example learn, That whenever Differences do ariſe in a Church about tolerable Matters, and Indifferent things, the neareſt courſe to Unity, and a charitable Compliance, is for both Parties to ſtep towards, and meet one another; and what may be left at liberty without apparent prejudice to Purity, to be left for Peace ſake.

21 For Moſes of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the ſynagogues every ſabbath day. 22 Then pleaſed it the apoſtles and elders, with the whole church, to ſend choſen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas ſurnamed Barſabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren ſend greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. 24 Foraſmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, Ye muſt be circumciſed, and keep the law; to whom we give no ſuch commandment: 25 It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; 26 Men that have hazarded their lives, for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 27 We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who ſhall alſo tell you the ſame things by mouth. 28 For it ſeemed good to the holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than theſe neceſſary things: 29 That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep your ſelves, ye ſhall do well. Fare ye well.

Obſerve here, 1. That tho' the Apoſtles were the infallible deciders, yet the Elders, and the whole Church, were unanimous Conſenters; for no Contradiction to this Determination of this Controverſie, did ariſe from any Hand, but there was an happy Acquieſcency in this Apoſtolical Deciſion; *It pleaſed the Elders and the whole Church*. *Obſerve*, 2. The Decrees of this Synod, and the Determinations of this Council at *Jeruſalem*, are committed to Writing, and diſpatch'd by unprejudiced Meſſengers of their own to the Church of the *Gentiles*, which was at *Antioch*. In which Decretal Epiſtle, 1. The falſe Apoſtles who ſtarted this Controverſie, are ſharply reproved. 2. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, for their Courage and Conſtancy, are highly commended. 3. *Judas* and *Silas* are mentioned to teſtifie, that theſe Decrees were not forged nor Counterfeited. 4. That it would conduce much to their Advantage to have theſe Decrees duly obſerved. *Obſerve*, 3. The Divine Authority of theſe Decrees; they were dictated and directed by the Holy Ghoſt; *It ſeemeth good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us:* That is, It ſeemed good unto us, being directed and aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe Inſpiration and Conduct we have followed, not to impoſe unneceſſary things upon you. *Where Note*, That the Holy Ghoſt is againſt impoſing unneceſſary things as neceſſary, and making them the Terms of Church Communion. Here are four things impoſed; namely, Abſtaining from Meats offered to Idols, from Blood, from Fornication, and from things ſtrangled; but they are called *Neceſſary things*. Two of them, to wit, Abſtaining from Fornication, and from things offered to Idols, were of a ſimple and abſolute Neceſſity; the other two, namely, Abſtaining from things ſtrangled, and from Blood, were of an accidental and temporary Neceſſity, for the preſent time, and to avoid giving ſcandal to the weak *Jews*, till they ſhould be better informed, and better underſtand their Liberty in Chriſt; for afterwards St. *Paul* ſheweth that no Creature of God is unclean, but that unto the pure all things are pure; 1 *Tim*. 4. 4. *Tit*. 1. 15.

30 So when they were diſmiſſed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epiſtle. 31 Which when they had read, they rejoyced for the conſolation.

Obſerve here, 1. With what Fidelity and Care *Paul* and *Barnabas* and *Judas* and *Silas*, deliver this Decretal Epiſtle to the Church at *Antioch*: that is, to the whole Body of Chriſtians, believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, then and there aſſembled; *When they had gathered the Multitude together, they delivered the Epiſtle*: That is, they called the whole Church together, and preſented the Epiſtle to them. *Obſerve*, 2. How this Decree was received; namely, with univerſal Joy and Satisfaction, *When they had read, they rejoyced*. Every one in this Chriſtian Council was a Star devoted by his Office to lead Men to Chriſt; but now being gathered together and condens'd into a Council, they become a moſt bright add glorious Conſtellation, every way prepared by the Emanations of Heavenly Light to guide the Church in this obſcure Affair; and accordingly their Authority being ſo Illuſtrious and Commanding, and their Decree ſo Pious and Prudential, their Determination was received with univerſal Satisfaction. *They delivered the Epiſtle, which when they had read, they rejoyced*. *Obſerve*, 3. What was the Subject matter of their Joy, and the ſpecial occaſion of their Rejoycing; *they rejoyced for the Conſolation*: That is, for the great Conſolation which they had, in being freed from the burden of the Legal Ceremonies, altho' they were Originally of Divine Inſtitution, and appointed by God himſelf. From whence we *learn*, That Liberty from Toilſome Ceremonies, tho' Originally of Divine Inſtitution, much more a Freedom from Superſtitious Ceremonies of Humane Invention is matter of great Joy to the Church of Chriſt. Lord, what numerous and burdenſome Ceremonies has the Church of *Rome* impoſed upon her blind Votaries, when in their Worſhip they would be thought truly Zealous they are really ridiculous. They pleaſed themſelves perhaps, but cannot pleaſe their Maker: All the acceptance they will find with God will be ſignified to them in that chiding Queſtion, Who hath required theſe things at your Hands?

32 And Judas and Silas being prophets alſo themſelves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33 And after they had tarried there a ſpace, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apoſtles. 34 Notwithſtanding it pleaſed Silas to abide there ſtill. 35 Paul alſo and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others alſo.

Judas and Silas being Prophets: That is, Perſons extraordinarily inſpired, and endued with eminent Gifts for Teaching and Interpreting the Holy Scriptures; they employed themſelves at *Antioch*, confirming and building up their Brethren in the Faith of Chriſt. And after they had ſtaid at *Antioch* ſome time, they were with all kindneſs diſmiſt of the Church there, and *Judas* returned to *Jeruſalem*, to acquaint the Apoſtles with the Reception which their Letter had met with, and what Obedience was readily given to their Decrees.

36 And ſome days after, Paul ſaid unto Barnabas, Let us go again and viſit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and ſee how they do.

Obſerve here, The pious and prudential Care which St. *Paul*, who had planted Churches, takes to viſit and inſpect them; that he might ſee and underſtand how they did thrive and grow in the knowledge of Chriſt, and in their ſincere Obedience to him. This great Apoſtle had been ſowing the good Seed of the Word of God, his next Care is to examine and inquire whether the Envious One had not ſowed Tares in his abſence. A Miniſter's Work, and an Husbandman's Buſineſs are never at an end, but runs round in a Circle; *Reddit Labor actus in orbem*; after Plowing and Sowing, there muſt be Weeding and Watering, before Reaping and In-gathering. Accordingly St. *Paul* reſolves upon the Viſitation here mentioned: *Let us go again and viſit our Brethren in every City, where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and ſee how they do.* Here

Note, 1. The Viſiters *Paul* and *Barnabas*. 2. The Viſited, *Our Brethren*; both the Elders and Members of the Church. 3. The Action performed, *Viſiting*: The word imports a ſtrict View, a moſt diligent and ſollicitous Scrutiny, leſt ſome Errors in their Abſence might be crept into the Doctrine and Converſation of theſe new planted Churches. 4. The place where the Viſitation is to be held, *In every City where they had preached the Word of the Lord*: Where they had Planted, they were obliged to Water; and where they had begotten any to the Chriſtian Faith, they thought it their Duty to Nurture, and Nouriſh them: And therefore, tho' there were Presbyters no doubt in every City, yet *Paul* and *Barnabas* challenged to themſelves a power of Viſitation, where they had Perſonally Preached. The *Apoſtles*, who firſt Converted them, had a peculiar Right to Inſpect and Govern them. Converted Souls, and Planted Churches, muſt be further viſited, obſerved and watered. 5. The End and Deſign of the Viſitation, *to ſee how they do*, and what they do; to take an Account of their Faith and Practice: From the whole, *Obſ.* 1. A Diſeaſe which the Churches of the *Apoſtles* own Planting, were ſuppoſed to be liable and obnoxious to: The pureſt of Churches, and beſt of Men in this Military and Mortal State, are apt to fall into Diſtempers, Witneſs this Chapter: Where we find the Converted *Jews* nauſeating the Bread of Life, and making it their choice to pick and eat the Rubbiſh of the Partition-wall, which Chriſt had demoliſhed; I mean Circumciſion, and the Legal Ceremonies, which tho' expired at the Death of Chriſt, and by this time had an honourable Burial; yet they attempt to pull out of their Graves, and give a Reſurrection to them. Such Diſtempers will be in the pureſt Churches, if we conſider the Hereditary Corruption, which is in all by Nature: The remains of it in thoſe who are renewed by Grace, and the endeavours of *Satan* to ſolicite theſe Remains, and invite them forth into Act and Exerciſe. *Obſ.* 2. The Remedy reſolved upon for preventing and healing of this Diſeaſe; Namely, Apoſtolical Viſitations, and Epiſcopal Inſpection, as the word ſignifies: The Conſtitution of the Church is ſuch, that it cannot continue long in Repairs, without Inſpection and Government. For tho' the Univerſal Church is ſecure, being built upon a Rock; yet particular Churches are liable to Dilapidations: And accordingly it is the Duty of the Governours of the Church, frequently to inſpect the Authority of thoſe that Preach, to examine their Doctrines, to inquire into their Lives, to give Rules for preſerving Order, and to cenſure thoſe who neglect thoſe Rules, and diſturb that Order. In fine, we ſee the Church of Chriſt muſt be governed; in that Government, there muſt be a Superiority in ſome, and a Subordination in others: Superiors muſt frequently viſit, and narrowly inſpect the Doctrine, the Lives, and Manners, both of the Miniſters and Members of the Church, according to the Practice and Example of theſe two great *Apoſtles* St. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *who ſaid, Let us go again and viſit our Brethren in every City, where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and ſee how they do.*

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was ſo ſharp between them, that they departed aſunder one from another: and ſo Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus. 40 And Paul choſe Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches.

St. *Paul* having made a motion to *Barnabas* in the foregoing Verſes, to viſit and inſpect the New-planted Churches, *Barnabas* very readily complied with the Motion; but deſired that he might take his Nephew *John Mark* along with him: This St. *Paul* would not conſent unto; becauſe he left them at *Pamphylia*, and did not accompany them conſtantly in Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*: St. *Paul* was in the right; *Mark's* Cowardize in leaving them when they undertook a tedious and hazardous Journey to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, was a conſiderable Objection againſt his preſent going with them, and weighed more than his Conſanguinity or nearneſs of Blood to *Barnabas*. Accordingly St. *Paul* inſiſted upon it, that he ſhould not go now along with them; but this occaſioned a very ſharp and unhappy Contention between them; inſomuch, that theſe two great and good Men parted aſunder, *Barnabas* going to *Cyprus*, and St. *Paul* to *Cilicia*; but God over-ruled this Evil for Good, cauſing their Separation to tend to the Publication and farther ſpreading of the Goſpel. *Hence Learn*, 1. How Induſtrious, yea, Ambitious the Devil is, to ſow the Seeds of Diſcord and Diſſention amongſt the Members, but eſpecially amongſt the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; and how ready he is to take all occaſions to divide them. Theſe Holy Men of God, theſe great *Apoſtles*, whoſe Hearts were united in the Work of God, and went hand in hand together, to plant and propagate the Everlaſting Goſpel: They divide among themſelves, and are parted by Satan's Policy and their own Paſſions. *Learn*, 2. That the holieſt and wiſeſt of Men are but Men; Men of like Paſſions with other Men; and whilſt on this ſide of Heaven, not wholly free from paſſionate Infirmities. Theſe two great *Apoſtles* verified here by their Actions, what they affirmed before in their words, *Acts* 14. 15. *We are men of like paſſions with you.* *Learn*, 3. That Natural Affections are apt to over-ſway the wiſeſt and beſt of Men. *Barnabas's* great love to his Kinſman here prevailed contrary to his Judgment. *Learn*, 4. That ſuch is the Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of God, that he knows how to bring Good out of the greateſt Evil, and to over-rule Sin it ſelf, and make it ſubſervient to his own Glory and his Churches good. The Lord was pleaſed to over-rule theſe Diviſions and Diſſentions betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas* for inlarging the Kingdom of Chriſt, and for ſpreading the Goſpel farther, into ſeveral Nations. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How this Reflection upon *Jolm Mark's* faint-heartedneſs in declining the hardſhips and the hazards of the Miniſtry, made him for the future more Vigilant and Valiant in the cauſe of the Goſpel, which occaſioned that kind Salutation which St. *Paul* gives him, *Coloſſ.* 4. 10. Tho' Sin be only Evil, abſolutely Evil, and infinitely Evil; yet the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God ſanctifies the Miſcarriages of his Saints, rendring them more humble for the time paſt, and more watchful and vigilant for time to come. Thus it was with *Mark* here; he was humbled for his Sin, and afterwards became profitable to St. *Paul* for the Miniſtry, was his Fellow-labourer, and the *Apoſtle* gives a ſpecial charge to the *Coloſſians* to entertain him kindly whenever he ſhould come unto them, *Coloſſ.* 4. 10. *Marcus, Siſter's Son to Barnabas, when he comes unto you, receive him.*

CHAP. XVI.

THen came he to Derbe and Lyſtra: and behold, a certain diſciple was there, named Timotheus, the ſon of a certain woman, which was a Jeweſs, and believed: but his Father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lyſtra, and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have go forth with him; and took and circumciſed him, becauſe of the Jews, which were in thoſe quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

The latter end of the foregoing Chapter gave us a ſad account of a Diſſention and Difference ariſing between *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon which they parted; *Barnabas* ſails for *Cyprus*, but what ſucceſs he had there, the Scripture ſays not: St. *Paul* goes thro' *Syria* and *Ciliſia*, confirming the Churches, and doing good Service for God in his Peregrination and Travels. *Here Obſerve*, That St. *Paul* and *Silas*, before they ſet forth their Work, they were in a ſolemn manner (by Prayer) *Recommended by the Brethren to the Grace of God, Chap.* 15. *Ver.* 10. And accordingly their Labours are ſucceeded and bleſt. *Barnabas* and *Mark* ſet forth for *Cyprus*; but we read not of any ſolemn Recommendation of them by the Brethren to the Grace of God; nor a word of any ſucceſs they had in their Work: Teaching us the great Neceſſities of fervent Prayer to precede, accompany, and follow the Preaching of the Goſpel. Let Miniſters pray, and People pray, and engage all the Prayers they can for the ſucceſs of their Miniſtry. Lord, let me ſteep that Seed I ſow amongſt thy People in Tears and Prayers before I ſcatter it. O pour out thy Spirit with thy Word, that it may be mighty thro' God for pulling down of Strong-holds. Verily there is ſo little Efficacy in Ordinances, for want of fervent Wreſtlings with God in Prayer. *Obſerve next*, The place which *Paul* and *Silas* in their Travels firſt came unto, namely, *Derbe* and *Lyſtra*, where he finds young *Timothy*, whom he takes along with him, and breeds him up for a Goſpel-Miniſter, calls him his Fellow-worker and Companion in his Travels. *Note farther*, The account here given of *Timothy*'s Birth and Parentage; his Mother *Eunice* was a believing *Jeweſs*; his Father was a *Greek*, a *Gentile*: for which reaſon *Timothy* was not circumciſed, becauſe it was not lawful for the Mother to have her Child circumciſed againſt her Husband's Conſent. Now St. *Paul* intending to take *Timothy* along with him as his Companion in preaching the Goſpel, that his Miniſtry might be the more acceptable to the *Jews*, who knew him to be Uncircumciſed, becauſe the Son of an Uncircumciſed Father, he takes him and circumciſes him: but at the ſame time *Titus*, who was a *Gentile* both by Father and Mother, him he would not circumciſe; neither ſuffering the Yoak of Circumciſion to be laid upon the *Gentiles*, which God had never impoſed, nor would he ſeem to countenance thoſe, who held Circumciſion neceſſary to Salvation. O what an admirable Pattern has this Great and Humble *Apoſtle* left to Poſterity! he became all things to all Men, and either uſed or refuſed indiffering things, according as the uſe or diſuſe of them tended to the Church's Edification, and Mens Salvation. *From whence Learn*, That in things not abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, Chriſtians ought to act prudentially, and either do, or not do, ſome things of leſſer moment, according as it may promote, and beſt conduce to the Church's Peace and Edification.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained
of the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem.
5 And ſo were the Churches eſtabliſhed in the
faith, and increaſed in number daily.

The ſenſe is this, That as *Paul* and *Silas* paſſed through the Cities in *Syria* and *Cilicia*, they delivered to the ſeveral Churches as they paſſed along the Decrees to obſerve, which were ordained by the *Apoſtles* and Elders met in Council at *Jeruſalem*, whereby thoſe Churches were eſtabliſhed in the Faith, and many more every day converted unto Chriſt. *Here Note*, 1. The Meſſengers which delivered theſe Decrees, *Paul* and *Silas*, with a ſpecial regard to the Church's Unity and Peace. Behold here, an excellent Pattern for Chriſtians in general, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel in particular; as to maintain Truth, ſo to procure, promote and preſerve the Church's Peace. Truth and Peace, which God has joined together, *Zach.* 8. 19. let none dare to put aſunder. *Note*, 2. What it was that St. *Paul* here made the delivery of the Degrees made by the Apoſtles and Elders at *Jeruſalem*; not the Decrees made by the whole Church, but by the Miniſters of the Church only. None ſo fit to determine Church-Differences, as Church-Officers. *Note*, 3. To whom theſe Decrees were delivered; namely to the Churches as they paſſed along through the ſeveral Cities; ſo many Cities, ſo many Churches: The whole Company of Chriſtians within a City, and the adjacent Territory, were wont to be framed into a Chriſtian Society or Church, and ſeveral Congregations made but one Church. To ſet up Churches againſt Churches, and to gather Churches out of Churches, has no Preſident, no Warrant, no Countenance from any Phraſe of Scripture, or Practice, of the Apoſtles Times. *Note*, 4. The end for which theſe Decrees were delivered, namely, to bring all the Churches to Unity and Uniformity; to Unity in Judgment, and Uniformity in Practice, that they might all be of one Heart, and one Way. *Learn thence*, That Unity and Uniformity among the Churches of Chriſt, is a thing to be earneſtly deſired and endeavoured; their Unity is their Strength and Beauty both. *Note Laſtly*, The Succeſs and Fruit of the Delivery of theſe Decrees to the Churches; *Verſe* 5. *So were the Churches eſtabliſhed in the Faith, and increaſed in number daily. Where Obſerve*, A double Bleſſing accruing to the Churches, the one of Confirmation, *So were the Churches eſtabliſhed*; the other of Argumentation, *They increaſed in number daily. Learn*, 1. That as Diviſions do ſhake and unſettle, ſo Unity and Uniformity do eſtabliſh and confirm the Church of Chriſt; *So were the Churches eſtabliſhed.* 2. That it is a bleſſed Thing to hear of the Churches encreaſing, provided it be by way of Addition, not Diviſion: to hear of Churches Multiplying, by the number of Converts encreaſing, is happy: but to multiply Churches by breaking Churches in pieces, this is a ſad Multiplication. The Lord keep his Churches from ſuch Encreaſes; and the Lord pardon thoſe who for private Intereſt have ſo encreaſed Churches, by gathering Churches out of Churches, pretendedly for greater Purity ſake, but really for Worldly advantage ſake. Doctrines crying up Purity to the ruin of Unity, reject, for the Goſpel calls for Unity as Well as for Purity.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia,
and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the
holy Ghoſt to preach the word in Aſia. 7 After they
were come to Myſia, they aſſayed to go into Bithynia;
but the Spirit ſuffered them not.

Obſerve here, How the *Apoſtle* and his Companions, had a Deſire and Deſign to propagate the Goſpel in ſeveral Provinces, but were forbidden by a ſecret Impulſe of the Holy Spirit. *Learn thence*, That the fruſtrating our Attempts and diſappointing our Deſigns to preach the Goſpel to particular Places, which we were purpoſed to go unto, doth ſometimes ariſe from the Holy Ghoſt; the *Apoſtle* intended to go into *Bithynia*, but the Spirit ſuffered him not. The very Journeyings of the *Apoſtles*, and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, as well as their Divine Exerciſes, were all ordered by the Wiſdom and Will of God; they might neither Speak, nor Act, nor Walk, but according to Divine Directions: *They were forbidden by the Holy Ghoſt to preach the Word in* Aſia. Thus Almighty God at pleaſure orders the Candle of the Goſpel, to be removed out of one Room into another, ſends it from one Place and People to another; and accordingly ought all Places and Perſons to prize it highly, and improve it faithfully.

8 And they paſſing by Myſia, came down to Troas,
9 And a viſion appeared to Paul in the night: There
ſtood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, ſaying,
come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And
after he had ſeen the viſion, immediately we endeavoured
to go into Macedonia, aſſuredly gathering,
that the Lord had called us for to preach the goſpel
unto them.

Theſe words are the Relation of a Meſſage from Heaven unto St. *Paul* to direct him in his Preaching and publiſhing of the Goſpel, both as to the Place where, and as to the Perſons to whom he was to deliver it. *Where Note*, The manner of it, it was by a Viſion, *A Viſion appeared.* The time of it, it was in the Night: The Bringer of it, a Man of *Macedonia*: The Matter of it, Help for the *Macedonians*, interpreted (*v.* 10.) to be by the preaching of the Goſpel. *Learn hence*, 1. That no Men in the World want help, like them that want the Goſpel: Of all Diſtreſſes, want of the Goſpel cries loudeſt for Relief and Help: For by want of the Goſpel, they want every thing that is worth having; they want Jeſus Chriſt, who is revealed only by the Goſpel. They want Communion with God: They want the Comforts and Refreſhments of Ordinances; and they will at laſt want Heaven and Salvation. But that which is moſt deplorable is this; Thoſe that want the Goſpel, tho' they want all theſe things, yet are they not ſenſible that they want any thing. *Learn*, 2. That the ſending of the Goſpel to one Nation, Place, or People, and not to another, proceeds from the determinate Will and Pleaſure of Almighty God, and is the Effect of his own free Grace and good Pleaſure: *Stay not in* Aſia, *go not into* Bithynia, but come over into *Macedonia*, *even ſo Father, for thus it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.*

11 Therefore looſing from Troas, we came with a
ſtraight courſe to Samothraſia, and the next day to
Neapolis; 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is
the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony:
and we were in that city abiding certain days.
13 And on the ſabbath we went out of the city by a
river-ſide where prayer was wont to be made; and
we ſat down, and ſpake unto the women which reſorted
thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia,
a ſeller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which
worſhipped God, heard us: whoſe heart the Lord opened,
that ſhe attended unto the things which were
ſpoken of Paul: 15 And when ſhe was baptized, and

her houſhold, ſhe beſought us, ſaying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my houſe and abide there. And ſhe conſtrained us.

A farther Account is here given of St. *Paul*'s Travels to preach the Goſpel; he departs from *Troas* to *Samothraſia*, from thence to *Neapolis*, and thence to *Philippi*, the chief City of *Macedonia*. Here on the Sabbath day he went out of the City to the River's ſide, where a Meeting-place for Prayer, ſay ſome, was built, and made uſe of, as being remote from the Noiſe and Obſervation of the Multitude. In this Oratory S. *Paul* preaches to the Women, they being both moſt numerous and moſt zealous, and God gives him the Seal of his Miniſtry in the Converſion of *Lydia*. In which famous Converſion obſerve how particular the Holy Ghoſt is in relating the ſeveral Circumſtances belonging to it: She is deſcribed by her Perſon and Sex: A certain Woman, by her name, *Lydia*: by her Calling and Imployment, a Seller of Purple; by her City *Thyatira*; by her pious Diſpoſition, ſhe worſhipped God. Her Converſion is deſcribed, 1. By the efficient Cauſe of it: the Lord opened her Heart. 2. By the inſtrumental Cauſe of it, her attending to the things that were ſpoken of *Paul*.

Learn, 1. That the Hearts of Perſons are naturally ſhut up, and faſt barr'd againſt Jeſus Chriſt. 2. That the Opening of the Heart to receive Jeſus Chriſt, is the peculiar Effect of the Soveraign Power, and Omnipotent Grace of God. 3. That till God opens the Heart of a Sinner, the preaching of the Goſpel little affecteth, tho' never ſo plainly and perſuaſively preached. That when once the Heart is opened, the Bar will not be ſhut, the Perſon truly attentive to the Preaching of the Goſpel; *The Lord opened* Lydia'*s Heart, and ſhe attended*. *Obſerve next*, The Seal of her Converſion and Salvation received by her, *She was baptized, and her whole houſe*. It was the ordinary way of the Apoſtles to baptize Houſholders; not that they were ſure that they were all Believers, or that the Family-Governours could make them ſo; but it was their Duty to devote all in their Power to God, and to do their utmoſt to perſwade: and God uſually ſucceeded their Endeavours. *Note here*, That the Church of God, for near Seventeen hundred Years, never refuſed the Baptizing of Infants of Believing Parents, as being taken into Covenant with themſelves: Having then for ſo many Ages been in the Poſſeſſion of this Privilege, we may more reaſonably require the Anabaptiſts, to prove by expreſs Scripture, that Children were not baptized by the Apoſtles, (when they Baptized whole Families, yea whole Nations, according to their Commiſſion, *Matth.* 28. 19.) than they can require us to prove that they were. *Lydia* and her Houſe were Baptized, ſay the Text; that is, ſay the Syriack, *Lydia* and her Children. *Lydia* by reaſon of her Faith in Chriſt, having a Right to Baptiſm, all her Family, upon her undertaking to bring them up in the Knowledge of Chriſt, were admitted to the Ordinance with her. *Obſerve laſtly*, A ſpecial Fruit and Evidence of *Lydia*'s Converſion; ſhe conſtrained the Apoſtles with an amicable Violence, by fervent Intreaties and paſſionate Importunities, to receive the Civilities of her Houſe. Converted Perſons have ſo much Love to Chriſt's Miniſters, who were the Inſtruments of their Converſion, that they greatly deſired to expreſs it by all Acts of poſſible Kindneſs: *If ye have judged me faithful, come into my houſe, and abide there; and ſhe conſtrained them.*

16 And it came to paſs, as we went to prayer, a certain damſel, poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of divination, met us, which brought her maſters much gain by ſoothſaying: 17 The ſame followed Paul, and us, and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation. 18 And this did ſhe many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and ſaid to the ſpirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her. And he came out the ſame hour. 19 And when her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place, unto the rulers. 20 And brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our City. 21 And teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither do obſerve, being Romans. 22 And the multitude roſe up together againſt them: and the magiſtrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many ſtripes upon them, they caſt them into priſon, charging the jaylor to keep them ſafely. 24 who having received ſuch a charge, thruſt them into the inner priſon, and made their feet faſt in the ſtocks.

As we went to Prayer, a Damſel poſſeſſed met us. That is, As the Apoſtles went towards the forementioned Place of Prayer, a Damſel poſſeſſed with the Devil, by whoſe Inſpiration ſhe foretold future things, and revealed many Secrets to them that conſulted her, following them, crying out, *Theſe are the Servants of the moſt high God, who declared unto us the way of Salvation. Where Obſerve*, 1. That the Father of Lies ſometimes ſpeaks the Truth, tho' never for Truths ſake, but for his own Advantage: Here what the Devil ſaid was Truth, but it was for Deviliſh ends; he transforms himſelf now into an Angel of Light, to draw men on to believe him, the Prince of Darkneſs. *Obſerve*, 2. How St. *Paul* refuſes the Devil's Teſtimony concerning himſelf, even when he ſpake the Truth. The Teſtimony of Truth from the Father of Lies, is enough to render Truth it ſelf ſuſpected. *Obſerve*, 3. The Authority which St. *Paul* takes upon him in the name of Chriſt to diſpoſſeſs the Devil, and caſt him out of this Damſel: *Paul ſaid, I command thee in the name of Jeſus to come out of her, and he came out the ſame hour.* Theſe words St. *Paul* uttered by the motion of the Holy Spirit, and relying by Faith on the Promiſe of Chriſt made by himſelf to his Apoſtles, *Mark* 16. 17. *That in his name they ſhould caſt out Devils*; accordingly he received Power from on high to caſt out this darling Devil. *Obſerve*, 4. How Satan ſeeks to be revenged on *Paul* for diſpoſſeſſing of him; he raiſes up an hot Perſecution, and ſoon caſt him into Priſon who had caſt the Devil out of the Damſel. If we diſturb and trouble Satan, he will be ſure to trouble and diſturb us. Such Miniſters as make the greateſt Oppoſition againſt Satan, muſt expect to meet with the greateſt Oppoſition from him. *Obſerve*, 5. Who were the Inſtruments which Satan ſtirs up to raiſe this Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles; they were the Rulers and the Rabble; *The Multitude roſe up, and the Magiſtrates rent their Cloaths, caſt them into the inner Priſon, and made their Feet faſt in the Stocks.* Thus were the holy Apoſtles, and innocent Servants of Jeſus Chriſt impriſoned, and treated as the vileſt Malefactors, only for oppoſing Satan, and ſeeking the Welfare of Mankind. *Obſerve laſtly*, That love of Mony was the root of all this Perſecution. The Damſel's Maſters perceiving that their Gain was gone, and that ſhe could help them to no more Money by telling People their Fortunes, the Devil of Diſcontent poſſeſt them. They ſtir up Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles, they caſt them into Priſon, into the inward Priſon, and to make all ſure, ſet them in the Stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and ſang praiſes unto God: and the priſoners heard them. 26 And ſuddenly there was a great earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were looſed. 27 And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon-doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the priſoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Do thy ſelf no harm; for we are all here.

The Apoſtles are here, by Satan and his Inſtruments, caſt into Priſon; but obſerve, they have their Priſon Comforts: 1. The Joy of their Hearts runs out at their Lips, they ſang Praiſes unto God, when their Bodies were in Priſon, and their Feet were in the Stocks. Theſe holy Servants of God were not only meek and patient, but joyous and chearful under Perſecution; rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for him who had undergone ſo much Indignity and Shame for them. 2. They enjoy ſweet Communion with God in Prayer; *At Midnight they prayed, and the Priſoners heard them*: No Place can be improper, no time unſeaſonable for Prayer. No Priſon can bolt out God, nor deprive us of our Communion with him: Prayer will get up to Heaven in ſpight of all the Oppoſitions, either of Hell or Earth. *Obſ.* 3. How ſudden the Anſwer, and how ſenſible the Return of Prayer was which the Lord graciouſly gave his ſuffering Servants: *Suddenly there was a great Earthquake.* This Earthquake was an infallible Sign of God's Audience; that he heard them, and would ſtand by them. *Obſ.* 4. The powerful Efficacy of St. *Paul*'s Prayer; his Prayer ſhoke the Heavens, the Heavens ſhoke the Earth, the Earth ſhoke the Priſon, even to the very Foundations of it. Prayer had a Divine Kind of Omnipotency it it: *Vincit Invincibilem & Ligat Omnipotentem; It overcomes God with his own Strength. Obſ.* 5. What Influence this Earthquake had upon the Jaylor, it occaſioned ſuch a Heart-quake in him, that to give himſelf eaſe, ſilly Soul, he reſolves to murther himſelf. Lord! how miſerable are the conſolations which the carnal and unregenerate World have recourſe, and fly unto, when Trouble and Diſtreſs takes hold upon them? They run to an Halter to rid them of their Trouble, having no God to go unto, and thereby plunge themſelves into endleſs Troubles, yea Eternal Torments. *Obſerve laſtly,* How kind the Apoſtle was to his cruel Keeper; he that hurt the Apoſtle's Feet in the Stocks, hears the Apoſtle crying to him in the midſt of the Earthquake, *Do thy ſelf no harm.* Good Men ever have been, and are Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions; not ſo ſolicitous for their own Liberties, as for others Lives. The Apoſtles might have held their peace, and ſuffered the Jayler to have ſlain himſelf, and thereby made their own eſcape: But they preferred the Jayler's eternal Salvation, before their own Temporal Liberty and Happineſs: Paul *cried with a loud Voice, ſaying, do thy ſelf no harm.*

29 Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; 30 And brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved? 31 And they ſaid believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe. 32 And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe.

As if the Jayler had ſaid, Sirs, now I ſee and acknowledge that the Doctrine taught by you is the Truth of the Eternal God, and he hath by this miraculous Earthquake teſtified to me, that you are his true and faithful Servants; Tell me therefore I beſeech you, what I muſt do to attain Salvation. They anſwer; Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.* That is, if you and your Family receive the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and regulate your Lives according to it, you ſhall be ſaved. *Here Note,* 1. That Scorners and Perſecutors will become Tremblers when once God hath touched their Hearts, and wounded their Conſciences with Remorſe for Sin. The Jayler here came trembling, and fell down before *Paul* and *Silas:* Trembling under a Senſe of his Guiltineſs, and falling down upon his Knees to ask them Forgiveneſs. *Note,* 2. That Trembling ſinners are always inquiſitive, yea very inquiſitive Perſons: An awakened Conſcience will put a Man upon Inquiry, upon great and much Inquiry, what he ſhould do. *Note,* 3. That the chief thing which the trembling Soul enquires after, is the Buſineſs of Salvation, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Note,* 4. The trembling Sinners, and troubled Souls, muſt be directed to Jeſus Chriſt, and to faith in him, as the only way to obtain Salvation by him; *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

33 And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed their ſtripes; and was baptized, he and all his, ſtraightway.

Behold how ſudden and ſtrange a Change was wrought in this Jayler: before his Converſion he was cruel, barbarous and hard-hearted; now he is meek, merciful and compaſſionate: He that before had beaten, impriſoned and hurt the holy Apoſtles Feet in the Stocks, now pities them, mourns over them, and waſhes their Stripes. *Learn thence,* That Religion, and the Grace of God, intenerates and molifies the hardeſt Hearts, ſweetens the ſioureſt Natures, and changes the moſt barbarous and bloody Diſpoſitions. Behold this Jayler, before his Converſion a Savage Perſecutor, a Tyger and a Vulture, like the Dæmoniack in the Goſpel, exceeding fierce: But now diſpoſſeſt of his Fury, and by Grace turned into a Lamb for Meekneſs, and a Dove for Innocency. *Obſ.* 2. How the Jayler believing, he and all his Houſe were baptized. The Apoſtle denied not Baptiſm to the Jayler's Houſhold, upon the Jayler's ſincere Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith; yet no doubt he promiſed to uſe his utmoſt Endeavours to bring them to the Knowledge and Obedience of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve laſtly,* How improbable it is that the Jayler and his Houſhold were Baptized by Dipping: We do not deny the Lawfulneſs of Baptizing by Immerſion, but we cannot aſſert the abſolute and indiſpenſible Neceſſity of it. St. *Paul,* who was newly waſht, and his Sores dreſt (occaſioned by Stripes) cannot be ſuppoſed either to go out himſelf, or to carry the Jayler, and all his Family in the dead of the Night, to a River or a Pond to baptize them; neither is it in the leaſt probable that St. *Paul* himſelf was baptized by Dipping: See *Acts* 9. 18, 19. *He aroſe and was baptized, and when he had received Meat, he was ſtrengthned.* The Context may convince us, that he was baptized in his Lodgings, being ſick and weak, having faſted three days, and being in a very low Condition, partly by his miraculous Viſion, and partly by his extraordinary Faſting; it was no ways probable, that *Ananias* ſhould carry him out to a River in that Condition, to plunge him in cold Water. Dipping then ſurely cannot be ſo eſſential unto Baptiſm, as for want of it to pronounce the Baptiſm of all the Reformed Churches throughout the World, to be null and void, as ſome amongſt us do.

34 And when he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them, and rejoyced, believing in God with all his houſe.

See here a ſpecial Evidence, and ſweet Fruit of the Jayler's Converſion; he brings the Apoſtles, who were the Inſtruments of his Converſion, into his Houſe, and having waſhed their Stripes, refreſhes their Bowels, he ſet Meat before them. The Truth of Converſion will manifeſt it ſelf in all Thankfulneſs, and other Tokens of Reſpect towards thoſe whom God has made the Inſtruments of our Converſion. True Converſion changes Mens Thoughts of God's Miniſters, and cauſes Men to love and honour thoſe whom before they did diſdain and ſcorn, perſecute and hate. *Obſ.* 2. How full of Joy and Spiritual Rejoycing, this new Convert was, *he rejoyced.* O the ſweet Fruits of Faith in Chriſt! namely *Peace* with God, and *Joy* in the Holy Ghoſt. Converſion always puts Men into a joyful State: Rejoycing, Spiritual Rejoycing, is the Portion, the proper Portion, and the peculiar Portion of converted Perſons; as it is ſometimes their preſent Portion: The Jayler upon his *Believing in God, inſtantly rejoyced.*

35 And when it was day, the magiſtrates ſent the ſearjeants, ſaying, Let thoſe men go. 36 And the keeper of the priſon told this ſaying to Paul, the magiſtrates have ſent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul ſaid unto them, they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt us into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themſelves, and fetch us out.

Obſerve here, 1. The Willingneſs of the Magiſtrates to releaſe thoſe innocent Priſoners, the holy Apoſtles, and what might be the probable Occaſion of it: Namely, 1. The Terror of the Earthquake, which affected them with Fear. 2. The Conſciouſneſs of their own Guilt from the injurious Dealing with the Apoſtles, ſcourging them, and caſting them into Priſon, only for caſting a Devil out of a Poſſeſſed Servant. The Conſciences of the vileſt and worſt of Men at one time or other, do make furious Reflections upon them for their Cruelty and Injuſtice towards the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſ.* 2. How the innocent Apoſtles refuſed to be thus clandeſtinly releaſed, and privately brought out of Priſon: They were unjuſtly laid into Priſon, and without any Legal Trial ſcourged and bound, contrary to the Law and Privileges of the *Romans;* and therefore the Apoſtles inſiſt upon their Privilege, and would not be content with a ſneaking clandeſtine Diſmiſſion after ſuch a publick ignominious Puniſhment, injuriouſly inflicted on them. *Learn thence,* That it is lawful to plead our Right by Law, againſt unjuſt Magiſtrates; and tho' we muſt not return Evil for Evil, yet we may uſe all lawful Means for Redreſſing and Removing our own Grievances. Thus did S. *Paul* here, yet more for the Goſpel's ſake than his own; leſt the Word of God ſhould be deſpiſed with their Perſons.

38 And the ſeargeants told theſe words unto the magiſtrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and beſought them, and brought them out, and deſired them to de-

part out of the city. 40 And they went out of the priſon, and entred into the houſe of Lydia: and when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.

Obſerve here, 1. What an Awe God has over the Conſciences of Men in general, and of Magiſtrates in particular: They ſtoop to the Priſoners, and beſeech them to come out of Priſon, and depart from the City. The ſame can God do for all his Servants who have been diſgracefully and deſpitefully uſed: He can make their Enemies become Benefactors at his Pleaſure, and their very Perſecutors ſhall be their Deliverers. *Obſ.* 2. That as deſirable as Liberty was, thoſe honeſt Hearts choſe rather to go without it, than to accept it upon diſhonourable Terms; either to the blemiſhing of their Innocency, or to the aſperſion of the Goſpel: had they been privily releaſed, they might have been publickly ſlandered, for making their Eſcape by compact with the Jaylers whom they had now made their own; therefore, they ſtay in Priſon till publickly diſcharged, and then they go forth, *The Magiſtrates beſought them and brought them out*. *Obſ.* 3. The Holy uſe which theſe good Men made of their reſtored Liberty. They *viſit the brethren, and comfort them*, and confirm them, and ſtrengthen them in the Faith of Chriſt.

Thus this Chapter concludes with an account of what St. *Paul* did and ſuffered at *Philippi*, where he laid the Foundation of that eminent Church, to which he wrote his Epiſtle, which bears the Title of his *Epiſtle to the Philippians*; wherein he mentions many Fellow-labourers that he had there, in the work of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 4. 3. *Help thoſe which laboured with me in the Goſpel, with* Clement *and other my Fellow-Labourers, whoſe Names are in the Book of Life.* It is an happy Encouragement to the Miniſters of Chriſt, when they are all found helping and not hindring one another, ſtrengthning each others Hands, and not ſadding one anothers Hearts; but by united endeavours in publick Preaching and private Inſpection, promoting the grand deſign of the Goſpel; Namely, to fear God, honour their Superiours, love one another; So be it.

CHAP. XVII.

The foregoing Chapter acquaints us with the Travels of St. Paul *to* Lyſtra *and* Philippi, *and alſo with the hard uſage which he met with at both places; at* Lyſtra *he cured a Cripple, and was ſtoned for it. At* Philippi, *he caſt out a Devil, and was Scourg'd and Impriſon'd for it: Thus Bonds and Afflictions did abide him wherever he went. To do Good and to ſuffer Evil, is the Portion of the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt.*

NOW when they had paſſed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where was a ſynagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three ſabbath days reaſoned with them out of the ſcripture. 3 Opening and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead: and that this Jeſus whom I preach unto you, is Chriſt.

This Chapter begins with St. *Paul's* Travels to *Theſſalonica*, the chief City in *Macedonia*, where this Apoſtle gathered a famous Church, unto which he wrote two excellent Epiſtles: coming to *Theſſalonica* at this time, he went (as his manner was) into the Synagogue, not into a private Houſe: as Chriſt taught daily in the Temple, ſo did his Apoſtles teach in the Synagogues; it was the falſe Apoſtles that crept into Houſes, and led Captive ſilly Women, as St. *Paul* complains, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. Truth ſeeks no Corners, but rejoyces to be publickly ſeen; beſides, the Goſpel was firſt to be Preached to the *Jews*, and upon their rejection, to the *Gentiles*: Accordingly the Apoſtle takes the Advantage of the Synagogue where all the *Jews* were gathered together, and Preaches to them Jeſus and the Reſurrection. *Where Obſerve*, The firſt grand Point which the Apoſtle inſiſted upon, was to demonſtrate that this Jeſus whom he preached, was the long expected Meſſias. Now to prove this, he produces the Propheſies of the Old Teſtament, and compares them with what was both done and ſuffered by Chriſt, making all things as plain and obvious to the Eye of their Underſtandings, as if they had been ſeen with their Bodily Eyes; Satisfactorily Demonſtrating to their Judgments that Jeſus is the Chriſt. *Obſ. Laſtly*, How the Goſpel, (like the Sea) what it loſt in one place, it gained in another; St. *Paul* is ſent away from *Philippi*, but by that Means the Goſpel was Preached at *Theſſalonica*. God over-rules the Motions of his Miniſters, and the Malice and Madneſs of their Perſecutors, for the furtherance and ſpreading of his own Goſpel.

4 And ſome of them believed, and conſorted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company, and ſet all the city on an uprore, and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon, and ſought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jaſon, and certain brethren, unto the ruler of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo; 7 Whom Jaſon hath received: and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar, ſaying, That there is another king, one Jeſus. 8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard theſe things. 9 And when they had taken ſecurity of Jaſon, and of the other, they let them go.

The fore-going Verſes acquainted us with St. *Paul's* Preaching at *Theſſalonica* in the *Jewiſh* Synagogue, as alſo with the Argument he inſiſted upon: Namely, That the Meſſiah according to the Scriptures, was to die, and riſe again from the Dead; and that Jeſus whom he Preached was that Meſſiah. Now theſe Verſes before us acquaints us with the different Succeſs which this Sermon had upon the Hearers: Some believed, others were blinded; ſome were converted, others enraged. O the different and contrary effects which the Word has upon its Hearers! opened the Eyes of ſome, cloſing the Eyes of others; ſoftning the Hearts of ſome, hardning the Hearts of others; to ſome it is a ſavour of Life unto Life, to others the ſavour of Death. Thoſe to whom the cleareſt Light is afforded, who ſinfully ſhut their Eyes againſt it, and ſay they will not ſee; how juſt is it with God, to cloſe their Eyes judicially, and ſay, they ſhall not ſee. *Obſ.* 2. How the Apoſtle Specifies and particularly declares the Succeſs which the Preaching of the Goſpel had upon the People of *Theſſalonica*; both good and bad. The good Succeſs in the fourth Verſe, ſome (tho' few) of the *Jews* were Converted; but many *Proſelytes*, and not a few of the *Gentiles*, and a conſiderable number of the Devout Women, and Honourable Matrons of the City. The bad Succeſs and Event is Recorded, *ver.* 5. The unbelieving *Jews* call the Lewd Fellows of the City together into a Confederacy with them, and raiſe a Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles. *Thence Note*, 1. That the Progreſs and proſperous Succeſs of the Goſpel ever was, is, and will be a grievous eye-ſore to the Devil and his Inſtruments. *Note*, 2. That the worſt Enemies which the Goſpel ever met with in the World, are the unbelieving *Jews*. Here, *the Jews which believed not*, engaged the Rabble on their ſide, who are the fitteſt tooles to raiſe Perſecution againſt the Miniſters of Chriſt. *The Jews which believed not, took certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and aſſaulted*, &c. *Note*, 3. That the Devil's old Method for raiſing Perſecution againſt the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt, has been, and ſtill is, to lay the moſt grievous Crime (falſly) to the Chriſtians Charge. Here the Apoſtles are charged with *Innovation and Sedition*, with *turning the World upſide down*. Thus afterwards in the Primitive Times; whatever Calamities came upon the State and Kingdom; whatever Commotions or Tumults did ariſe in Nations, preſently Chriſtianity was blamed, and inſtantly the Chriſtians were caſt to the Lyons; whereas, it is not the Goſpel, but Mens Corruption, which breed diſturbance; as it is not the Sea, but the foulneſs of the Stomach, that makes the Men Sea-ſick. *Note*, 4. How Merciful and Marvellouſly the Lord delivered the Apoſtles, *Paul* and *Silas*, at this time, out of the Hands of their Perſecutors. *They ſought them in the Houſe of* Jaſon, *but found them not*. The Devil now miſt of his Prey, for the Lord hid the Apoſtles here, as he hid the Prophets before; *Jeremy* and *Baruch*, *Jer.* 36. 26. having more Work and farther Service for them to do: The Wiſe Husband man doth not commit all his Corn to the Oven, but reſerves ſome for Seed. *Note Laſtly*, That as the Panther, when it cannot come at the Perſon, will fly upon, and tear the Picture in pieces:

So theſe enraged Perſecutors finding that the Apoſtles were eſcap'd their Hands, fall foul upon *Jaſon*, who had entertain'd them, and drag him before the Rulers and Magiſtrates; charging him as an Abettor of Treaſon: Yet obſerve, how God over-ruled the Hearts of theſe Rulers, that they did offer no violence to *Jaſon*, but only took ſecurity of him, for his own and others appearance before them when called for. Thus *the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of Tribulation, and to make a way for eſcape.*

10 And the brethren immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the ſynagogue of the Jews. 11 Theſe were more noble then thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. 12 Therefore many of them believed: alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Theſſalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the people.

Obſerve here, 1. The pious and prudential Care, which the Brethren took of the Holy Apoſtles, and the means which they uſed for their Preſervation. *They preſently ſent them away unto* Berea. The Devil ſeeks nothing ſo Induſtriouſly, as the Lives of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; (they making the greateſt oppoſition to him and his Kingdom) but God finds out ways and means for their Preſervation, to reſerve them for farther Work and future Service: *The Apoſtles came by night unto* Berea. *Obſ.* 2. St. *Paul* makes again the *Jews* Synagogue his Preaching Place, here at *Berea*, as he had done before at *Theſſalonica*, *ver.* 2. and did afterwards at *Athens*, *ver.* 17. O how cloſe did the Apoſtle keep to his Commiſſion, to Preach Jeſus Chriſt; firſt to the *Jews*, and to wait upon them with the repeated tender of the Goſpel, till they put it far from them, and judged themſelves unworthy of Eternal Life, before he turn'd unto the *Gentiles*. *Obſ.* 3. The honourable Character which the Holy Ghoſt here gives of theſe *Bereans*, *They were more noble than thoſe of* Theſſalonica: That is, of more ingenuous, mild and pliable Temper of Minds; they were not ſo poſſeſt with Prejudice and Obſtinacy againſt the Goſpel, they did not meet it with Rage, but thought it worthy their Search and ſerious Inquiry; for which they are ſtiled *more Noble*. *Thence learn*, That to be of a Teachable Temper, and tractable towards the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, is the beſt ſort of Gentility and Nobleneſs. The *Bereans* were better bred, and better deſcended than the *Theſſalonians*, yet not by Civil, Humane Dignity, but by Spiritual and Divine Dignation. God gave them this Preparation of the Hearts, and made them to differ from their Neighbours. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica*. *Obſ.* 4. What it is theſe *Bereans* are ſo highly commended for: Namely, for *ſearching the Scriptures*. *Where Note*, 1. That the Scriptures then were in the Vulgar Tongue. 2. That as they were in their own Tongue, ſo the Layety had them in their own Hand. 3. That the common People did read them, and hear them read, ſearcht and examined them, and yet were ſo far from Cenſure and Blame, that they met with Commendation for it from God himſelf. From the Whole, *Note*, That a diligent reading of, and daily ſearching into the Holy Scriptures, is a Duty incumbent upon all thoſe, in whoſe Hands the Scriptures are, or may be found. Theſe Chriſtians at *Berea* ſearching the Scriptures, were a noble Pattern for all ſucceeding Chriſtians to imitate and follow. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How the inveterate Malice of the unbelieving *Jews* at *Theſſalonica* purſues the *Apoſtles* as far as *Berea*, *ver.* 13. *When the* Jews *of* Theſſalonica *had knowledge, that the Word of God was preached of* Paul *at* Berea, *they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the People.* As Chriſt ſends his Miniſters, ſo the Devil ſends his Meſſengers from place to place: And as the Miniſters of Chriſt are never weary of his Service for the good of Souls: ſo Perſecutors are reſtleſs, they will compaſs Sea and Land to harras and drive the Faithful Ambaſſadors of Chriſt from City to City, and if it were in their Power, to baniſh them out of the World: Lord, help all thy faithful Miniſters to execute this piece of Holy Revenge upon Satan, that we may be even with him for all his Malice and Spite againſt us. O let us endeavour to do all the poſſible Service, and the utmoſt Good we can, whereever we come.

14 And then immediately the brethren ſent away Paul, to go as it were to the ſea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there ſtill. 15 And they that conducted Paul, brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all ſpeed, they departed. 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his ſpirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore diſputed he in the ſynagogue with the Jews, and with the devout perſons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philoſophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountred him: and ſome ſaid, What will this babbler ſay? other-ſome, He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods: becauſe he preacheth unto them Jeſus, and the reſurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, ſaying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou ſpeakeſt, is? 20 For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things to our ears: we would know therefore, what theſe things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and ſtrangers which were there, ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to tell, or to hear ſome new thing.

The prudential care, which the believing Brethren took of the holy *Apoſtle*, was obſerved before, *ver.* 10. His Life being in danger at *Theſſalonica*, they ſend him to *Berea*; being perſued to *Berea*, they ſend him to *Athens*, and detain *Silas* and *Timotheus*: Not that St. *Paul* was more fearful than the other two; but more uſeful, and conſequently more hateful to the unbelieving *Jews*, and his Life more ſought after. To preſerve which, his Friends uſe an innocent Policy; they make as if they ſent him away to Sea; but really he goes on foot to *Athens*; *Immediately the Brethren ſent away Paul to go as it were to the Sea*. *Hence Learn*, That Humane Policy and Prudence may lawfully be made uſe of, in ſubſerviency to Divine Providence. It was good Policy and great Providence in the Apoſtle and his Friends to look one way, and go another; to look towards the Sea, and to go to *Athens* by Land. There is a Wiſe and Holy Subtilty in foreſeeing the Evil, and hiding our ſelves: A Serpent's Eye is a ſingular Ornament in a Dove's Head. Piety without Policy, is too ſimple to be ſafe; and Policy without Piety, is too ſubtile to be good. The Sagacity of the Serpent, and the Innocency of the Dove, both may and ought to go together. *Obſ.* 2. The Place which the *Apoſtle* comes to, *Athens*, a Sovereign City, a Famous Univerſity. The Eye of *Greece*, as *Greece* was reputed the Eye of the World; yet notwithſtanding all their Scholarſhip, they were ignorant of God in Chriſt; all their Learning could not teach them to attain any Saving Knowledge, but both City and Univerſity are wholly given to Idolatry. *Learn hence*, That Humane Learning alone can never teach any Place or People the Divine Truths of Chriſt and his Goſpel. 'Tis a good Handmaid, but a bad Miſtreſs: 'tis good in it ſelf; but when corrupted by a buſy Devil, and a baſe Heart, it degenerates into the worſt Inſtrument in the World: For, *Corruptio optimi eſt peſſime*, the ſweeteſt Wine makes the ſowreſt Vinegar.

Obſerve, 3. The Temper of the Men of *Athens* deſcribed to us: They were great and greedy News-mongers, they ſpent their Time in Telling and Hearing News of any ſort: All which was the Effect of an Itching Curioſity; a Diſeaſe which has deſcended from Age to Age, from Place to Place, from Perſon to Perſon, occaſioning a ſinful Expence of Time, which can never be recalled, the Neglect of our Neceſſary Affairs, which can never be redeemed, ſpreading falſe Stories of others, and provoking Diſpleaſure againſt our ſelves. O how wiſe and happy were it, if we enquired after News not as *Athenians*, but as *Chriſtians*! That we might know the better how to manage our Prayers and Praiſes for the Church and Nation. *Obſ.* 3. How the Wickedneſs and Idolatry of this Place did vehemently affect this great Apoſtle; *His Spirit was ſtirred*, when he ſaw the City full of Idols, and *wholly given to Idolatry*. Their Idolatry put him into a *Paroxiſm*, as the word ſignifies; his mind was in a Concuſſion by contrary Paſſions: He was affected firſt with Sorrow and Grief, that a City ſhould be ſo Learned, and yet ſo Blind; next with Indignation and Anger, at the ſuper-abounding Idolatry of that knowing People; And laſtly, with fervent Zeal, and an ardent Deſire to undeceive them, and better inform them. In order to which, he takes all Opportunities both in the City, in the Synagogue, and in the Market-place, to preach to the People, to diſpute with the Philoſophers, particularly the *Epicureans*, who denied the Providence of God, and the Immortality of the Soul; who placed all their Happineſs in Pleaſure, and held nothing to be deſirable but what delighted their Senſes: A Doctrine which made them rather Swine than Men. And alſo with the *Stoicks*, who placed all Happineſs in want of Paſhion, deny'd all Freedom of Will, and aſcribing all Events to an Abſolute and Irrevocable *Fate*: And having diſputed with them, he preaches Chriſt Crucified, Riſen and Glorified to them: But he ſeemed a Babbler to them, and a Setter forth of ſtrange Gods. *Whence Learn*, That Chriſt and his Doctrine the Goſpel, was the grand Stumbling-block both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, Learned and Unlearned. St. *Paul* took moſt Pains to convert *Athens*, yet here his Succeſs was leaſt; tho' it was a Learned Univerſity, where no doubt were many Men of excellent Natural Accompliſhments. From whence we may infer, That if Moral Diſpoſitions, and improvement of Natural Abilities had fitted Men for Grace, we might have expected the greateſt number of Converts at *Athens*, where many were Mocking, but very few Believing. Surely the *Apoſtle*'s Plantations there were different, not ſo much from the Nature of the Soil, as from the different Influences of the Spirit.

Obſerve, 5. How wonderfully the Over-ruling Providence of God concerned it ſelf for the *Apoſtle*'s Preſervation here at *Athens*: They halled him away to their High Court of Judicature, which ſat upon *Mars-hill*, (ſo called becauſe the Temple of *Mars* ſtood upon it) where the moſt Learned Men aſſembled, to Hear and Determine what new God was to be worſhipped. *Here Note*, 1. How the Providence of God brought St. *Paul* to a publick Place to Preach in (*Mars-hill*) where was a confluence of all the People, and a Congregation of the moſt Learned *Gentile* Philoſophers: This gave the *Apoſtle* a mighty Opportunity for the Service of Preaching. And, 2. *Note*, How tenderly the *Apoſtle* was treated in this cruel Court, altho' this Court had condemned *Diagoras*, *Protagoras*, and *Socrates* himſelf, for under-valuing their Gods, and bringing in new Deities; yet the *Apoſtle*'s Life is not only ſpared by theſe Judges, but they ſpeak candidly and kindly to the *Apoſtle*, and court him to gratifie their Curioſity by informing them of this Novelty, which they were ſo inquiſitive after, and deſired to hear more of his Divine Diſcourſe. Thus the Lord eminently ſhews, how the Hearts of Men are in his Hand, and that without his Permiſſion all the bitter Enemies of his Church ſhall not move a Tongue, nor lift up a Finger againſt any of his Miniſters or Members.

22 Then Paul ſtood in the midſt of Mars-hill, and ſaid, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious. 23 For as I paſſed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this Inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, ye Men of *Athens* have a great number of Gods, whom ye ignorantly worſhip: The God therefore whom ye acknowledge not to know, and yet profeſs to worſhip, is He that I preach unto you; for as I paſſed up and down in your City, beholding your Altars and Images, I found an Altar with this Inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The Light of Nature diſcovered: The Alter is inſcribed, TO A GOD. The true God of the *Jews*, was an unknown and uncertain God to the wiſeſt of the *Gentiles*. *Learn*, That ſome Diſcoveries of God may be made, even by the Light of Nature: Theſe *Heathens* who had nothing but the Dim-light of Nature to guide and direct them, do yet own a God, and acknowledge a Worſhip due unto Him by the Erection of an Altar. *Obſerve*, 2. The Darkneſs of Nature declared; the Altar, tho' erected to a God, yet it is to a God unknown. *Thence Learn*, That Natural Light in its moſt elevated and raiſed Improvements, can make no full and ſaving Diſcoveries of God: The true God was but an Unknown God, even to the wiſeſt of the Heathens, to the Men of *Athens*, who were the moſt Famous in their Day for the ſevereſt Wiſdom and Gravity.

24 God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands! 25 Neither is worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: 27 That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, For we are alſo his off-ſpring.

Here begins St. *Paul*'s famous Sermon to the Men of *Athens* in which the firſt thing that occurs to our Obſervation is, how the Preacher doth adapt and accommodate his Diſcourſe to the Capacity of his Hearers, as alſo to their Sentiments and Opinions. His Auditory conſiſted of Philoſophers, particularly of *Epicureans* and *Stoicks*: The former, inſtead of a God, and a Wiſe Providence to make and govern the World, brought in *Fortune*, or Blind *Chance*, to bear all the Sway. The latter, tho' they acknowledged a God, yet introduced a rigid Fatality as ſuperiour to the Deity, denying to Man all Freedom and liberty of Choice. Accordingly St. *Paul* addreſſes himſelf; Firſt, to prove a God and a Providence, to the Excluſion both of *Fate* and *Fortune*: And then, Secondly, from the very Nature and Notion of God, he infers the Folly and Abſurdity of their *Pagan* Superſtition. *Obſerve next*, The *Apoſtle*'s Argument to prove the Being of a God, and a Providence: 1. From the Works of Creation; *He made the World, and all things therein; he giveth Life and Breath, and all things.* The whole Univerſe is his Work, and he planted the Earth, and repleniſht it with Inhabitants. The Inviſible God is made Viſible in his Creatures, and the Being of God demonſtrated from the Formation of a World of Creatures. From the Formation of Man in Particular, *In him we live and move*, &c. Here are three great Benefits enjoy'd by Humane Nature; Life, Motion, and Being, all derived from God, and demonſtrating the Being of God. 1. Life: This is valuable above all Bleſſings, becauſe it renders us capable of Enjoying all Bleſſings. 2. Motion: A great Mercy, but little conſidered: How uncomfortable would Life be without it? Were we ſtaked down to the Earth, as Trees, or did we move by a conſtant Law of Nature, as the Sun and Moon do move, it had been a Favour beyond our Deſert; but to move as we do at pleaſure, with Choice and Eaſe, to help our ſelves, and aſſiſt others, is at once a Demonſtration of God's Being, and an Evidence of his Bounty. 3. Being: This is eſſential and neceſſary to none but God. To us it is an Act of Divine Favour; and his Being is a Mercy, then being what we are, is a double Mercy; that we do not creep and crawl upon the Earth, as Worms and Toads, but are built high upon the Earth, with wonderful Wiſdom and Care; and that a Soul, which is an immortal and an eternal Being, inhabit within us; a Being which ſhall continue when Heaven and Earth ſhall be conſumed. *Obſerve next*, The Apoſtle having proved the Being of a God, next demonſtrates the Certainty of a Divine Providence; *He hath determined the Times that are fore-appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation.* That is, God has as it were chalked out, and drawn a Line, where the Bounds and Habitations, whither the Dominions and Poſſeſſions of Men ſhould be extended, and where they ſhall be confined. The common Bleſſings of God are not diſpenſed without a ſpecial Providence, and the ſpecial Providence of God in upholding, diſpoſing, and governing of the World, doth as much prove the Being of a God, as the general Creation of it: Every hour's Preſervation is virtually a new Creation, and both of them ſufficient Demonſtrations of the Divine Being and Bounty. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Duty which the *Apoſtle* infers on Man's part, from all this Goodneſs and Bounty, demonſtrated on God's part, *That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, and find him who is not far from every one of us.* It is the Duty of all Men to follow after God; that God hath made Man, ſhould draw Man after God; inaſmuch as we are his Off-ſpring, (*ver.* 29.) our Hearts ſhould ſpring and riſe up to Him in Love and Thankfulneſs, as the Rivers, becauſe they come from the Sea, go back thither; ſo we, being the Off-ſpring of God, and derived from him, ſhould be always returning to him. And if it be the Duty of all Men to follow after God, becauſe they have Natural Life, Breath, and Motion from Him; how much more ſhould the New Creature, who has a Spiritual Life breathed into him, and beſtowed upon him, follow hard after God, in the Enjoyment of whom his preſent Happineſs and future Felicity doth conſiſt? To follow God in his Way, and to propoſe God as our End, contains the Sum of all Duty.

29 Foraſmuch then as we are the off-ſpring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and mans device.

Obſerve here, 1. How our *Apoſtle* quotes one of the Heathen Poets in this his Divine Diſcourſe. This Poet was *Aratus*; what he attributes to *Jupiter*, St. *Paul* applies to the true God; *We are his Off-ſpring. Where Note*, For the Honour of Humane Learning, and the Lawfulneſs of making uſe of it in our Sermons, the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed three ſeveral times in the New Teſtament to make mention of the Heathen Poets, of *Aratus* here, *Acts* 17. 28. of *Menander*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. of *Epimenides*, *Tit.* 12. Truth is God's where-ever it is found; as a Mine of Gold is the King's, in whoſe Ground ſoever it is diſcovered. *Obſ.* 2. The force of the *Apoſtle*'s Argument, ſeeing we are Gods Off-ſpring; that is, ſeeing God is our Creator, we cannot ſuppoſe him to be the Workmanſhip of our Hands, as an Image of Gold, Silver or Stone is; and conſequently, how irrational it is for Man to adore an Image made by his own Hands, for and inſtead of God. *Learn*, That there is a ſtrong Propenſity and Inclination in the Heart of Man, to the ſin of Idolatry. Secondly, That the ſin of Idolatry is not only a very great ſin, but a very unreaſonable and abſurd ſin; it is not only ſacrilegious, but ſilly, for a Man to worſhip his own Workmanſhip, and to fall down upon his Knees to the Work of his own Hands.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

That is, tho' God in his infinite Patience hath long born with the World lying in Darkneſs and Ignorance; yet now by cauſing his Goſpel to be Preached to all Nations he calls and invites them to Repentance, to forſake their Idols, and ſerve the true God. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The Cenſure of the paſt Times, they were times of Ignorance, *and God winked at them*, or over-look'd them; not that God did allow or approve of their Idolatry, but did not deſtroy and cut them off for the ſame; nor afford them ſuch Helps and Means as now he did, having brought his Goſpel among them. *Obſ.* 2. The Duty of the preſent Time declared, To Repent: This is a commanded Duty, and an univerſally commanded Duty; *Now he commands all Men, every where to Repent.* From the whole, *Note*, 1. That times of *Paganiſm* were times of Ignorance: 2. That 'tis an unſpeakable Miſery to be born and be brought up in ſuch Times: 3. That to live impenitently in times of Knowledge, is a Sin that God will by no means wink at: 4. That the great Purpoſe and Deſign of the Goſpel, whereſoever it is Sent and Preached, is to invite Men to Repentance; *Now he commandeth all men every where to Repent.*

31 Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

Theſe Words are an Argument or Motive to enforce the fore-going Duty of Repentance; God requires every Man, every where, and that now immediately, to forſake their Idols and ſinful Ways; becauſe he hath appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by his Son Chriſt Jeſus, of which he hath already given aſſurance, by raiſing him from the Dead. *Where Note*, 1. A Judgment to come aſſerted; He, (that is God) will judge the World; he that hath now an obſerving Eye, will hereafter have a rewarding Hand. *Note*, 2. That there not only is a Judgment to come, but the Day or Time of it is determined and fixt; *He hath appointed a Day.* As the preciſe time of Chriſt's firſt Coming was fixt by an unalterable, tho' unknown Decree, ſo is alſo the time of his ſecond Coming; that not knowing the Hour, we may be upon our Watch every Hour. *Note*, 3. That as the Day of Judgment is determined, ſo the Perſon of the Judge is alſo conſtituted and ordained; *He will judge the World by that Man whom he hath ordained.* This is an Act of Juſtice to our Saviour; that he having humbled himſelf to take our Nature, ſhould as the reward of his Humiliation, judge that World which he died to ſave; and an Act of Kindneſs towards us; that he ſhould be our Judge, who took upon him our Nature, and had ſo much Love to us as to die for us: Had we leave to chooſe our own Judge, what choice could we make better for our ſelves than that Man whom God hath ordained. *Obſ.* 4. The Aſſurance which God has given us of having Chriſt for our Judge: Namely, his raiſing him from the Dead: But how doth that aſſure us of Chriſt being our Judge? *Anſwer*: Our Bleſſed Saviour, when he was in the World, often declared, that he was appointed by God to judge the Quick and the Dead, and appealed to his Reſurrection as the great proof of what he ſaid. Now when Almighty God did accordingly raiſe him in ſuch a wonderful manner (as we know he did) what is it leſs than God's ſetting his Seal to his Commiſſion, and openly proclaiming him to be the Judge of all the World. *Obſ.* 5. The Manner of this Judgment, or the Meaſures which this Judge will proceed by at the great Day; and that is, according to Righteouſneſs; *He will judge the World in Righteouſneſs*: Not in Rigour and Severity, taking all the Advantages that Power can give him: Nor yet arbitrarily and upon Prerogative; but according to known Laws, nor yet partially, with reſpect of Perſons. But every Man's Doom ſhall depend upon the Holineſs or Unholineſs of his Heart and Life: Farther, our Judge will candidly interpret Mens Actions, and make the very beſt of things that the caſe will bear; principally looking at the Sincerity of Mens Intentions, and making all favourable Allowances for their Failing and Infirmities, that can conſiſt with Juſtice, and will diſtribute his Rewards of Happineſs and Glory to good Men in the other World, in proportion to the meaſures of their Difficulties and Sufferings, which they met with here in this World. Now having this high and full Aſſurance of a Judgment to come; let us ſeriouſly believe it, daily expect it, and duly prepare for it; let neither Profit tempt us, nor Pleaſure allure us, nor Power imbolden us, nor Privacy encourage us to do that thing, which we cannot anſwer at the great Tribunal. When St. *Paul* preached of Judgment, *Fœlix*, tho' a *Pagan*, trembled at the Sermon; Lord! what ſhall we ſay to thoſe worſe than *Pagan-Infidels* amongſt our ſelves, who ridicule a Judgment to come, and cry beforehand, God Judge me! yea, God Damn me? Alas, unhappy Men, he will Judge you ſure enough, and Damn you ſoon enough, if a ſerious Repentance prevent it not.

32 And when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked: and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionyſius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Here we have the Succeſs of St. *Paul*'s Sermon declared; it was various and different; ſome of his Hearers derided, others doubted, and a few believed: Thoſe that derided and mocked, it is very probable were the *Epicureans*, who denied, That the World was either Created or Governed by God; as alſo that there were any Rewards or Puniſhments for Men after Death; therefore they ridiculed St. *Paul*'s Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Dead. The ſublimeſt Doctrines, and moſt comfortable Truths of the Goſpel, are matter of Deriſion and Mockery to ſenſual Minds: Thoſe that doubted, probably were the *Stoicks*, who did own the Reſurrection and a State of Rewards and puniſhments in another World; and therefore, for obtaining better Satisfaction to their Doubts, deſired to *hear* the *Apoſtle again* diſcourſing farther *of that Matter.* Thoſe that believed are few indeed, if no more than are here mentioned, which are *Dionyſius* and *Damaris*, with ſome others: *Dionyſius* was a famous Perſon, one of the great Council mentioned, *Ver.* 19. Whoſe Converſion probably might afterwards have a great Influence upon many others, and it was no ſmall honour and advantage to the Goſpel to be owned by ſuch an Honourable Perſon, as this *Dionyſius* was; not many Wiſe, not many Noble were called: Bleſſed be God that any were, that any are, that any of the great ones of the World ſtoop to the Scepter of Jeſus Chriſt, and pay their Homage and Subjection to Him.

Thus ends the *Apoſtle*'s Divine Sermon at the Famous Univerſity of *Athens* which yielded few, very few Converts to Saint *Paul:* For we read of no Church founded here, as we did before at *Philippi*, and in the next Chapter at *Corinth*;

what reaſon can be aſſigned, but this; That theſe grave Philoſophers, profound Schollars, venerable Senators and Citizens, who had a name for Wiſdom throughout the World, were too wiſe to be ſaved by the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching. As the Wiſdom of the World is Fooliſhneſs with God, ſo the Wiſdom of God in the Goſpel is accounted Fooliſhneſs by the Wiſe Men of the World; according to that of the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. *When the World by Wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe; we preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God; becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men.*

CHAP. XVIII.

AFter theſe things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

The foregoing Chapter acquainted us with the ſmall ſucceſs, which St. *Paul* found of his Miniſtry at *Athens*; upon his Preaching Jeſus and the Reſurrection there, the Philoſophers and Wiſe Men mocked and derided him: If Natural Diſpoſitions and Abilities had fitted Men for Grace, we might have expected the greateſt number of Converts at *Athens*, where many were Mockers, but very few Believers: Hereupon St. *Paul* leaves *Athens*, and goes to *Corinth*, a famous City in *Achaia*; where he meets with more Encouragement and better Succeſs; for here he gathers a famous Church, unto which he wrote two Epiſtles, under the Title of the Firſt and Second Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*.

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priſcilla (becauſe that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. 3 And becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and wrought (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

The Apoſtle being now come to *Corinth*, where he was altogether a Stranger, and wanting Money for his Subſiſtence, the Providence of God directed him to the Houſe of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; who being of the ſame Trade with himſelf, (*Tent-makers*) he works with his own Hands to maintain himſelf, that he might not be burthenſome to others. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The occaſion of *Aquila*'s and *Priſcilla*'s coming to *Corinth*, with whom St. *Paul* lodged. The *Roman* Emperor *Claudius*, had baniſh'd them from *Italy* and *Rome*, *Ver*. 2. *Claudius commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome. Thence Note*, That a wicked World is ſoon weary of the Saints of God, and longs to worm them out of their Cities and Societies, never conſidering that their own Preſervation from Ruine is for the Saints ſake. As the Allies in a Garden are watered for the ſake of the Flowers, which otherwiſe will lie dry. *Obſerve*, 2. That the *Apoſtle* had learnt a Trade, (Tent-making) before he was called to the Miniſtry, and he wrought upon it, (occaſionally) after he was a Miniſter. The moſt learned among the *Jews* did always learn ſome Handicraft Trade, it being a Tradition amongſt them, That he that doth not learn his Child a Trade, teaches him to be a Thief. So that altho' their Children were deſigned for Students, yet they did learn ſome Trade. Accordingly St. *Paul* having learnt to make Tents (much uſed in thoſe hot Countries by Soldiers and others, to keep off the violence of the Weather) he works at *Corinth* upon his Trade for his own Subſiſtence: Men ſeparated to the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, may upon an Exigency labour for their Living; not but that the *Apoſtle* had Power and ſufficient Warrant to challenge Maintenance for his Preaching, (as he often intimates in his Epiſtle.) But there was not yet any Church at *Corinth* to maintain him, and when there was, they were moſtly of the poor and meaner ſort of People, and he would give them a Convincing Demonſtration, that he ſought not theirs but them; he demands therefore no Maintenance, leſt it ſhould hinder the Succeſs of his Miniſtry; but being of the ſame Trade with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, he takes up his Lodging with them at *Corinth*, and works of their Trade.

4 And he reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath, and perſwaded the Jews, and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was Chriſt. 6 And when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, he ſhook his raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Obſerve here, How vehemently deſirous the Holy *Apoſtle* was to plant a Chriſtian Church at *Corinth*, and to bring the *Jews* of *Corinth* to embrace the Goſpel; *He was preſſed in Spirit, and Teſtified*. That is, Reaſoned with them, with great vehemency and earneſtneſs of Affection, as well as with great Judgment concerning the *Meſſias*. *Obſerve*, 2. That the *Jewiſh* Synagogue at *Corinth* was the Preaching-place that St. *Paul* made choice of, hoping to gather the beginnings of his Chriſtian Church out of the Converted *Jews*; *He reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day*. Still the *Apoſtle* kept to his Commiſſion, to Preach the Goſpel firſt to the *Jews*, and afterwards, upon their Rejection, to the *Gentiles*. *Obſerve*, 3. The blaſphemous Oppoſition which the *Jews* made to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *They oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed*: That is, they oppoſed his Doctrine, reviled his Perſon, and blaſphemed Chriſt, whom that *Apoſtle* Preached. *Obſerve*, 4. How the Holy *Apoſtle* clears himſelf of the Blood of thoſe *Jews*, whom he had now preached the Goſpel unto: *He ſaid, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.* The faithful Miniſters of Chriſt ſhall never have the Blood of a periſhing People laid to their Charge; they having warned them of their damnable ſtate, and diſcovered the way of Life and Salvation to them, deliver their own Souls: whilſt the People which they preached to, die in their Sins, and for their Sins.

7 And he departed thence, and entred into a certain man's houſe, named Juſtus, one that worſhipped God, whoſe houſe joyned hard to the ſynagogue. 8 And Criſpus the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, believed on the Lord with all his houſe: and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized. 9 Then ſpake the Lord to Paul in the night by a viſion, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued there a year and ſix months, teaching the word of God among them.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Oppoſition which St. *Paul* met with, while he lodged in the Houſe of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* moved him to change his Quarters, and betake himſelf to a new Lodging; he goes into the Houſe of *Juſtus*, by birth a *Gentile*, but a *Jewiſh* Proſelyte, whoſe houſe joyned nigh to the Synagogue, where St. *Paul*'s Preaching-work lay, to ſuch as would be willing to hear him. *Obſerve*, 2. The good Succeſs which the *Apoſtle* had in his Preaching at *Corinth*; *Criſpus* the Chief Ruler of the Synagogue and his Houſhold were brought to believe, and were baptized: After whoſe Example, many of the People in *Corinth* believed alſo. Rulers and great Men are like Looking-glaſſes in the places where they live, by which many dreſs themſelves. *Obſerve*, 3. That notwithſtanding this good Succeſs which St. *Paul* had at *Corinth*, he ſeems thro' Humane Frailty, to be poſſeſt with Fear, and under an Apprehenſion of Danger from the *Jews*, and accordingly had thoughts of leaving the City; againſt which Fears, God Antidotes him with a gracious Promiſe of his Preſence with him: *Be not afraid, for I am with thee, and no Man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee. Hence Learn*, 1. That the beſt and holieſt of God's Saints and Servants, are ſometimes under ſad and ſlaviſh Fears, and prone to be diſcouraged when they meet with Difficulties in the way of their Duty. 2. That the Promiſe and Aſſurance of God's gracious Preſence with them will raiſe them up above all their Fears, and be a ſufficient Encouragement to them, for their abiding in any Place and amongſt any People: let the Difficulty or Danger be what it will; *Be not afraid, for I am with thee, and none ſhall hurt thee*. *Obſerve*, 4. A farther Encouragement given by God to the *Apoſtle*, to continue his Miniſtry ſtill at *Corinth*; *I have much People in this City*. That is, Here are many Souls whom I deſign effectually to call and bring home by the Miniſtry: Accordingly the *Apoſtle* continued his Miniſtry amongſt them a Year and ſix Months. *Learn hence*, That altho' the Ingratitude and Perverſeneſs of a People do ſadly diſcourage their Miniſters, and tempt them to remove from them, yet God encourages them to their Duty; That for the Malice of ſome, the Salvation of others, may not be neglected. 2. That no Oppoſition muſt diſcourage the Miniſters of God in the way of their Duty; God's Servants muſt not ſuffer themſelves to be out-done by the Devil's Slaves, but bare down all Oppoſition made againſt them with Patience and Joyfulneſs; notwithſtanding all the malicious Oppoſition made by the *Jews* againſt the *Apoſtle*, yet did he continue a Year and ſix Months to preach at *Corinth*: Chriſt had a great Harveſt a ripening in that City to be Reaped by the *Apoſtle*'s Miniſtry, and being encouraged with the Promiſe of his protecting Preſence, he committed himſelf to the Divine Care, and the Lord both preſerved and ſucceeded him.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection with one accord againſt Paul, and brought him to the judgment-ſeat, 13 Saying, This fellow perſwadeth men to worſhip God, contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you: 15 But if it be a queſtion of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of ſuch matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment-ſeat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Soſthenes, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat him before the judgment-ſeat: and Gallio cared for none of thoſe things.

Obſerve here, How St. *Paul*, taking heart from the foregoing Promiſe, made by God unto him; goes on couragiouſly in the Work of his Miniſtry at *Corinth*; but the unbelieving *Jews* were ſo enraged againſt him, that they combined together as one Man, and *with one accord, made inſurrection againſt Paul: Where Note*, What great Unity and Unanimity there is amongſt wicked Men, the Devil's Friends; he well knows that his Kingdom could not long ſtand, if it were divided. The Unity of all Societies is their ſtrength. *Obſerve*, 2. They accuſe the *Apoſtle* before *Gallio* the Deputy, for perſwading Men to worſhip God, contrary to the Law of *Moſes*; who would not think but that theſe Men were truly Pious, Vertuous and Good, who were ſo zealous for the Worſhip of God according to the Law? And yet were they wicked Men, and fiery Perſecutors. There is a noiſy Religion in the World; ſome Men think by crying, The Church, the Church, and by pleading loud for the Worſhip of God, as eſtabliſhed by Law, to attone for all their Immoralities: Praying is good, Hearing and Receiving the Sacraments is good, if they be joined with holy Walking; but if otherwiſe, the howling of Wolves, is as acceptable to Almighty God, as the Prayers of thoſe Men, who call Chriſt Maſter, and the Church Mother; but do not the things which they have commanded: yea, the very Dogs which follow them to the publick Aſſemblies, ſhall as ſoon find Acceptance as themſelves, if they do not Obey Him whom they pretend to Adore. It is no matter what Church a wicked Man is of, for it is certain he can be ſaved in none. *Obſerve*, 3. What low and mean Thoughts *Gallio* had, and all Perſons prejudiced againſt Religion and the Power of Godlineſs have of ſincere Chriſtianity; *If it be a queſtion for words and names, ſays* Gallio. As if he had ſaid, Do not trouble me about the Niceties of your Religion, decide ſuch Queſtions amongſt your ſelves; for I will be no Judge in ſuch Matters. The Great Men of the World, little care to trouble their Heads about the Matters of Religion; they look upon it only as matter of Notion and Speculation, (whereas it is not a *Speculative Science*, but a *Practical Art of Holy Living*) and accordingly, like *Gallio*, they care for none of theſe things. *Obſerve laſtly*, That altho' this *Gallio* had no kindneſs for Chriſtianity; yet God made uſe of him as an Inſtrument at this time, to preſerve and skreen St. *Paul* from the Rage of his Enemies, inſomuch that *he drove* his Accuſers *from the Judgment-ſeat*: Thus God performed his Promiſe to *Paul, Suffering no Man to burn him*; but cauſing *Gallio* the Governour to defend him, whom his Enemies were in hope would have deſtroyed him. Lord, how happy and wiſe is it for thy Servants *to commit the care of themſelves to thee in well-doing*. If we with a purity of Intention, concern our ſelves for thy Glory, thou wilt certainly take care of our ſafety; or if any Danger ſhould come, Danger it ſelf ſhall do us no harm.

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and ſailed thence into Syria, and with him Priſcilla and Aquila: having ſhorn his head in Cenchrea; for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Epheſus, and left him there: but he himſelf entered into the ſynagogue, and reaſoned with the Jews. 20 When they deſired him to tarry longer time with them, he conſented not: 21 But bade them farewel, ſaying, I muſt by all means keep this feaſt that cometh in Jeruſalem: but I will return again unto you, If God will. And he ſailed from Epheſus. 22 And when he had landed at Ceſarea, and gone up, and ſaluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had ſpent ſome time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, ſtrengthening all the diſciples.

A farther Account is here given of the Laborious Travels of the great *Apoſtle* St. *Paul*: Namely, from *Corinth* to *Epheſus*, from *Epheſus* to *Ceſarea*, from *Ceſarea* to *Antioch*, &c. *Where Obſerve*, 1. That St. *Paul* having continued a Year and a half at *Corinth*, and planted a Church there, (which yet ſoon after ſadly degenerated) he determines now to ſail to *Epheſus*; and accordingly at *Cenchrea* (an Haven near to that City) *he ſhaved his head, for he had a vow*: That is, the Vow of a *Nazarite*, which *He*, (that is, *Aquila* ſay ſome, St. *Paul* ſay others) had before taken upon him, (for a time) whereby he was obliged to abſtain from Wine, and ſhaving his Head, and touching of the Dead; but having now accompliſhed his Vow, he ſhore his Head, and returned to the common way of living; where the Wiſdom and Moderation of this great *Apoſtle*, in complying in indifferent things is to be Noted and Imitated: *To the Jew I became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews*: He willingly complied with their Weakneſs, to ſhew that he was no contemner of their Law; for which reaſon he cauſed *Timothy* to be Circumciſed, and Purified himſelf in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*. And behold the Succeſs of this his Complyance; for by gratifying the *Jews* in this Condeſcenſion to the Preſcription of the Law; he brought over very many of them to the Faith of Chriſt. Let not any ſuſpect this for a ſinful complyance with the *Jews*, in obſerving a Ceremony, which the Goſpel had aboliſhed, nor cenſure it for a low and mean ſtoop in ſo great a Man, to the Honour of the People; for tho' the Ceremonial Rites died with Chriſt, yet were they a long time in Burying, and the *Jews* were indulged in the obſervation of them, till they came to a clearer ſight of their Chriſtian Liberty; accordingly, the *Apoſtles* yielded to them for the preſent in indifferent things without Diſſimulation or Blame. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Apoſtle* being now come to *Epheſus*, he taught in the Synagogue of the *Jews*, and reaſoned with them: Where we may Note, both how cloſe the *Apoſtle* kept to his Commiſſion, in firſt Preaching the Word of Life to the *Jews*, and alſo the fervent Love which he bare unto his own Countrymen, whom tho' he had ſuffered all manner of Indignities from, yet doth he give them Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line; and with an unwearied Diligence, diſpenſes the Word of Life and Salvation to them. *Obſerve*, 3. Our *Apoſtle* ſtays not long at *Epheſus*, but haſtens to *Jeruſalem*, to keep the Feaſt there: Namely, The Feaſt of the *Paſs-over*; not that he took himſelf obliged to obſerve the Feaſts, or any of the Antiquated Ceremonies; but becauſe of the vaſt Concourſe which he knew would be at *Jeruſalem* at the time of the Feaſt from all Quarters, and which will give him an opportunity to make Chriſt known to a great Multitude. The Miniſters of the Goſpel, without the Imputation of Vain-glory, or ſeeking Popular Applauſe, may warrantably deſire, and occaſionally lay hold upon an opportunity of diſpenſing the Word to a numerous Auditory, in hope that caſting the Net among many they may incloſe ſome. *Obſerve laſtly*, The inceſſant Care, indefatigable Diligence, and unwearied Pains of this great *Apoſtle*, in travelling from place to place, and at ſuch great diſtance to Preach the everlaſting Goſpel to loſt Sinners: From *Epheſus*, he ſails to *Ceſarea*, from *Ceſarea* to *Jeruſalem*, from *Jeruſalem* to *Antioch*, from *Antioch* to *Galatia* and *Phrygia*. *See how the care of all the Churches was upon him, and how he laboured more abundantly than they all*. Lord, what a Pattern is here of Miniſterial Diligence and Faithfulneſs! what Pains did St. *Paul* take!

taked! what Hazards did he run, in planting and propagating the Goſpel of Chriſt! in Labours more abundantly, in Sufferings above meaſure! Well might he ſay, I am able *to do all things through Chriſt, that ſtrengthens me:* And bleſſed be God, the ſame Power that aſſiſted him, ſtands ready to ſuccour us: and if ever he calls us to extraordinary Service, he will come in with more than ordinary Strength.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus. 25 This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the ſpirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John. 26 And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue. Whom when Aquilla and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him: who when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, ſhewing by ſcriptures, that Jeſus was Chriſt.

The firſt thing here obſervable is, how the Wiſdom of God provided for the ſeveral Churches, that in the Abſence of one powerful Preacher, they were ſupplied with another; when the Providence of God called St. *Paul* from *Epheſus* and *Corinth*, it brought *Apollos* thither; ſo that what *Paul* planted, *Apollos* watered. The judicious *Calvin* upon the Place, piouſly admires the Providence of God over his Church, in not ſuffering it to be without a ſettled Miniſter; but upon the Removal of one, to raiſe up another. *Obſerve*, 2. How admirably qualified *Apollos* was for the Work of the Goſpel, and excellently fitted and furniſhed for their Places he was called to *Epheſus* and *Corinth*, famous for Philoſophers and Orators; accordingly he is a Man of raviſhing Eloquence, who by his profound Knowledge in the Sacred Scriptures, was both apt to teach the Truth, and able to maintain it. *Hence learn*, That Scripture-knowledge is the choiceſt Qualification, and higheſt Commendation of a Goſpel-Miniſter; Apollos, *an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures:* Without this, he can never truly and ſavingly make known, and diſcover Jeſus Chriſt; without this, he can never rightly divide the Word of Truth; without this, he can never convince Gainſayers, either Gain-ſayers in Opinion, or Gain-ſayers in Practice; without this, he can never inſtruct the People fully in their Duty, nor declare to them the whole Counſel of God. *Obſerve*, 3. The great Humility of *Apollos*; altho' he was an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet he did not diſdain farther Inſtruction. Thoſe that are more knowing, if humble, are moſt ſenſible of their Ignorance. The Knowledge of the beſt, while they are on this ſide Heaven, is capable of Improvements. *Apollos* knew much, yet *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* farther enlightened him, ſo that he knew more. An humble Man will be content to learn of the meaneſt Woman. Theſe poor Tent-makers, *Aquila* and his Wife *Priſcilla*, Catechize the great *Apollos*, and add ſomething to the Treaſure of his Knowledge. *Obſerve*, 4. The place where *Apollos* preached, in the Jewiſh Synagogue, *ver.* 26. *He began to ſpeak boldly in the Synagogue.* It was a Cuſtom amongſt the *Jews* to allow a Liberty for Learned Men, tho' no Prieſts, to teach in their Synagogues. Thus *Paul*, tho' of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and not of the Tribe of *Levi*, was permitted to preach in their Synagogues, as we read throughout this Book of the *Acts*. In like manner we find *Apollos* here preaching in the Synagogue; *Non ut habens Authoritatem, ſed Scientiam*, ſays *Eſtius*; taking the Advantage of that Indulgence, which the *Jews* gave him in their Synagogues to preach, and ſpread the Doctrine of Chriſt. *Obſerve laſtly*, That this *Apollos* afterwards became an Eminent Authorized Preacher in the Church of *Corinth*, and is called St. *Paul*'s Helper and Brother; and when he came to *Corinth*, was ſo eminent that he proved the Head of a Sect and Faction; *One ſaith, I am of* Paul, *and I of* Apollos: And here at *Epheſus* he mightily convinced the *Jews*, ſhewing by the Scriptures, that Jeſus was the Chriſt.

CHAP. XIX.

AND it came to paſs, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, came to Epheſus: and finding certain diſciples, 2 He ſaid unto them, Have ye received the holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed; And they ſaid unto him, We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any holy Ghoſt. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were you baptiſed? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm. 4 Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the Baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is on Chriſt Jeſus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hand upon them, the holy Ghoſt came on them; and they ſpake with tongues, and propheſied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

The latter end of the foregoing Chapter informed us, how *Apollos* was imployed at *Corinth*: The beginning of this acquaints us how St. *Paul* ſpent his time at *Epheſus*. He finds there twelve Diſciples, he Catechizes them, lays his Hands upon them, and God confers the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. *Here obſerve*, 1. The Queſtion put by St. *Paul* to the twelve Diſciples; *Have ye received the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed?* He doth not mean in its Sanctifying Operations, but in its Miraculous Gifts; as ſpeaking with Tongues, the Gift of Prophecy, and the Gift of Healing. *Obſerve*, 2. The Diſciples anſwer, *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt:* Not that they were ignorant of the Eſſence or Perſon of the Holy Ghoſt; but had not heard of the Effuſion of the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; for it was a received Opinion among the *Jews*, that after the death of *Haggai*, *Zachary* and *Malachi*, the Holy Ghoſt; or the Spirit of Propheſie, departed from *Iſrael*. And they never heard that he was returned, or of his being given anew with his Miraculous Gifts. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Apoſtle ſets them right: They tell him they were Baptized into *John*'s Baptiſm: The Apoſtle tells them, that *John*'s Baptiſm and Chriſt's was the ſame for ſubſtance, and had both the ſame end, tho' they differ'd in ſome Circumſtances. The Diſciples of *John* believed in Chriſt to come, the Diſciples of Jeſus believed in Chriſt as already come, and were Baptized in that Faith; and the Ordinance ſealed unto both, the Remiſſion of Sins: Yet being eſſential to Chriſtians Baptiſm, to Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; thereby profeſſing our ſelves to be buried, and riſen with Chriſt: And *John*'s Baptiſm having not this, when the Diſciples heard that, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus; that is, In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, which is of the Eſſence of Chriſtian Baptiſm. *Obſerve*, 4. How the Apoſtle lays his Hands upon theſe Diſciples, to confirm them in the Faith they were baptized into; whereupon the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were immediately conferred on them, and they ſpake divers Tongues, which before they underſtood not, and were endued with the Gift of Prophecying; that is, of declaring Things to come, and interpreting the Writings of the Prophets, that they might be fit to teach and inſtruct others. *Thence learn*, That at the firſt planting and propagating of the Goſpel, the Wiſdom of God thought fit to furniſh the Preachers and Diſpenſers of it with extraordinary Gifts, and miraculous Powers, to qualifie them for, and to give them Aſſurance of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry; and alſo to aſſure thoſe, whom they preach unto, that their Doctrine was from Heaven, Almighty God never ſetting the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Lie. Such miraculous Gifts are long ſince ceaſed in the Church, the Cauſe of them, and Occaſion for them, being long ſince ceaſed.

8 And he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſwading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude, he de-

parted from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyranus. 10 And this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia, heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul. 12 So that from his body were brought unto the ſick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

St. *Paul* being now come to *Epheſus* with a deſign to ſtay there for ſome conſiderable time, as his manner was, he enters into the Synagogue, and preaches the Goſpel firſt to the *Jews*, and this for the ſpace of three Months. But when, inſtead of imbracing the Goſpel, they oppoſed it, blaſpheming Chriſt the Author, and the Apoſtle the Diſpenſer of it, and vehemently contending with him for preaching the Goſpel, (which ſome conceive he calls his *fighting with Beaſts at* Epheſus, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32.) he left the *Jews* and their Synagogue, ſeparating the Chriſtians that were in *Epheſus* from them, whom he daily inſtructed in a certain place called, *The School of Tyrannus. Here Note*, 1. The vehemency of St. *Paul*'s Affection to his own Countrymen the People of the *Jews*, notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition they made againſt his Doctrine, and the virulent Reproaches which they caſt upon his Perſon; he continues to preach in their Synagogue at *Epheſus* for three Months without ceaſing, thereby keeping cloſe to his Commiſſion, which was to preach the Goſpel firſt to the *Jews*, and upon their Rejection of it, to tender the Word of Life unto the *Gentiles*. *Note*, 2. As great an Apoſtle, and as faithful a Miniſter as St. *Paul* was, yet he wanted to ſee the Succeſs of his Labours: Many of his Hearers at *Epheſus* believed not his Word, but were hardened under it. The ſame Sun that ſoftens the Wax, hardens the Clay: The ſame doctrine of the Goſpel becomes the Savour of Death unto ſome, which is the Savour of Life unto others. Wo be unto that People who by their habitual Hardneſs through their actual Reſiſting the Impreſſions of God's Word, do provoke the Almighty to ſuperadd Judicial Hardneſs of Hearts unto them; making their Sin to become their Puniſhment. *Note*, 3. How upon this Oppoſition, which St. *Paul* met with in the Jewiſh Synagogue, he leaves it, and retires to a more private Place, the School of *Tyrannus*, where he had more Freedom, and leſs Oppoſition. *Learn hence*, That ſuch Places of Publick Worſhip, were nothing but Contradiction to the pure Chriſtian Doctrine can be met with, may be lawfully withdrawn from. The Apoſtle he ſeparates himſelf and the Diſciples from the *Jews* Synagogue, where he had preached three Months, meeting only with Contradiction to his Doctrine, and Blaſphemy againſt his dear Redeemer. *Note*, 4. How it pleaſed God to confirm St. *Paul*'s Miniſtry at *Epheſus* by his working Miracles, and the Miracles he wrought were *ſpecial*, that is, very extraordinary, inſomuch that even Handkerchiefs or Aprons having but touched St. *Paul*'s Body, and being brought unto the Diſeaſed, became a miraculous Means both to cure Diſeaſes, and caſt out Devils. Thus according to our Saviour's Promiſe his Apoſtles did greater Miracles than himſelf, *John* 14. 12. not greater in regard of the Manner, but in regard of the Matter of them: Chriſt wrought his Miracles in his own Name, and by his own Power, but the Apoſtles wrought theirs in the Name, and by the Power of Chriſt; yet it ought to be obſerved and conſidered, That altho' it pleaſed God at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles to confirm Chriſtianity by many ſpecial Miracles; (as new ſet Plants are well watered, till they have taken faſt rooting;) yet that Church which wants Miracles may be a true Church: Becauſe, 1. There is no Promiſe made in the Scriptures to the Church for her perpetual injoyning the Gift of Miracles. That Promiſe, St. *Mark* 16. 17. *Theſe Signs ſhall follow them that believe, &c.* was only a temporary Promiſe. 2. We are forbidden to expect Miracles, *John* 4. 48. and forbidden to truſt to Miracles without Scripture, or to regard ſuch Miracles as are wrought to confirm any Doctrine that is contrary to Scripture, *Deut.* 13. 3. Becauſe the Miracles of the laſt Times are declared to be the ſigns of *Antichriſt*; 2 *Theſſ.* 2. *v.* 9, 10. From all which it follows, That Miracles are no infallible Note of the true Church, as the *Papiſts* would make it; who alſo produce St. *Paul*'s Handkerchiefs here, and St. *Peter*'s Shadow, *Acts* 5. 15. as a warrant for their Superſtitious Relicks, but the Text aſſures us, it was God that wrought Special Miracles, not St. *Paul*, nor his Handkerchiefs, but God by his Hand. The Miracles in the Church of *Rome*, pretended to be wrought by the Relicks of Saints and Martyrs, are no better than Lying Wonders.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorciſts, took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits, the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, We adjure you by Jeſus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were ſeven ſons of one Sceva a Jew, and the chief of the prieſts, which did ſo. 15 And the evil ſpirit anſwered and ſaid, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed againſt them ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks alſo dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds. 19 Many alſo of them which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

Here Obſerve, 1. That we read not of any of the Old Teſtament, that were bodily poſſeſt with Devils and Evil Spirits; but in the New Teſtament, we meet with many both in our Saviour's time, and alſo in the Apoſtles, to the intent, that the Power of Chriſt might more ſignally appear in their Ejection, and caſting out. *Obſerve*, 2. How ſome of the *Jewiſh* Exorciſts, (like our Jugglers) who made it their Trade, to wander up and down, to get a livelihood by pretending to cure Diſeaſes, and caſt out Devils: Seeing what great Miracles *Paul* had wrought in the Name of Jeſus, they attempted to caſt out a Devil of a poſſeſſed Man, by uſing the ſame Name; tho' in Jeſus they believed not: But *Satan* was ſo far from obeying them, that he made the poſſeſſed Man fall violently upon them and wounded them. *Thence learn*, 1. That *Satan* ſcorns all Humane Attempts, as weak and impotent, and is conquered only by a Divine Power. *Jeſus I know, but who are ye? Learn*, 2. That the Devil would gladly be God's Ape: The *Jewiſh* Jugglers would by all means imitate the Apoſtles in caſting out Devils; accordingly they uſe the Name of Jeſus as a Charm; but ſaying the ſame words with the Apoſtle, ſignified nothing without exerciſing the ſame Faith and Grace. Theſe Exorciſts, ſoon found that Words without Faith, would not work to caſt out Devils, and that Chriſt would not give Power to his Name, when uſed as a Charm. *Learn*, 3. That the Devil by God's Permiſſion, has power over thoſe that prophane the Name of Chriſt: *Satan* here was too hard for thoſe Conjurers, he ruſhes upon them, and maſters them, tears their Cloaths, wounds their Bodies, and had not God reſtrain'd him, had unavoidably deſtroyed them. *Satan*'s Malice is infinite, but his Power is limited and bounded. Lord, abate his Power, ſince his Malice cannot be abated. *Obſerve laſtly*, How this Execution of Divine Vengeance wrought wonderfully for the Conviction and Converſion, both of *Jews* and *Greeks*, *ver.* 18. *Many believed, and came and confeſſed their ſinful deeds.* And as an Evidence of their Deteſtation of their former Faults and Follies, they make a Bon-fire of all their Magical Books; burning ſo many of them as the Learned ſay, the price amounted to Eight Hundred Pounds: Thus theſe Conjurers evidenced themſelves to be real Converts, by plucking out their right Eye, and cutting off their right Hand: That is, Sacrificing their Boſom and beſt beloved Luſt and Corruption. *Thence learn*, That there is no better Evidence of the truth of a Perſon's Converſion, than chearfully to part with a very profitable and pleaſing Luſt.

21 After theſe things were ended, Paul purpoſed in the ſpirit, when he had paſſed through Macedonia, and Achaia, to go through Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, I muſt alſo ſee Rome. 22 So he ſent into Macedonia two of them that miniſtred unto him, Timotheus and Eraſtus; but he himſelf ſtayed in Aſia for a ſeaſon. 23 And the ſame time there aroſe no

ſmall ſtir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a ſilver-ſmith, which made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, brought no ſmall gain unto the craftſ-men. 25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and ſaid, Sirs, Ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: 26 Moreover, ye ſee and hear, that not alone at Epheſus, but almoſt throughout all Aſia, this Paul hath perſwaded and turned away much people, ſaying, That they be no gods which are made with hands. 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought: but alſo that the temple of the great goddeſs Diana ſhould be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſhould be deſtroyed, whom all Aſia, and the world worſhippeth. 28 And when they heard theſe ſayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, ſaying, Great is Diana of the Epheſians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confuſion: and having caught Gaius and Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they ruſhed with one accord into the theatre.

Obſerve here, 1. How angry the Devil grows at the Succeſs of the Goſpel, mentioned in the foregoing Verſes; where we read how the whole College of Diabolical Conjurers were brought over by the Apoſtle's Preaching at *Epheſus*, to burn their Books, and leave their wicked courſe of Life. Hereupon the Devil beſtirs him, and raiſes a Perſecution againſt the Apoſtle. Thoſe that will diſturb *Satan* in the quiet and peaceable poſſeſſion of his Kingdom, ſhall be ſure to meet with Trouble and Diſquiet from him. Let not any of the Saints of God in general, nor any of the Faithful and Zealous Miniſters of Chriſt in particular, expect any long continuance of their outward Tranquility and Peace in this World, where they are every day up in Arms againſt *Satan*, and meditating the Ruin of him and his Kingdom; for which he will certainly ſeek Revenge. *Obſerve*, 2. The Inſtruments which the Devil imploys to raiſe this Storm of Perſecution againſt the Apoſtle, namely, *Demetrius* the Silver-ſmith, and his Craftmen: They looking upon St. *Paul* as one that impaired their Profit, and ſpoiled their Trade of making Silver Shrines for *Diana*'s Temple, by his crying down the Worſhip of Idols. But what were theſe Silver Shrines made for *Diana*'s Temple? *Anſw.* The Temple of *Diana* was at that time one of the Seven famous Structures of the World; and the Silver Shrines made by theſe Silver-ſmiths were certain Medals, or Images of this Temple, wherein their Idol Goddeſs *Diana* was ſet forth, which Shrines or portable Temples, all the People of *Aſia* carried about with them, to ſtir up the more their own Devotions towards this Idol. So that this Shrine-making muſt needs be a very gainful Trade, when all *Aſia* was addicted to this Superſtition. No wonder then, that *Demetrius* upon the ſight of the Loſs of his Gain, makes an horrible Out-cry, and ſets the City in an Uproar: For carnal Men, whoſe Gain is their God, and their Godlineſs, account themſelves undone when their God *Mammon* is in danger: If you take away their Gods, what have they more? *Learn hence*, That Gain-getting, and maintaining of Mens Livelihood, are mighty Temptations to carnal Men, to uſe impious Means for ſupporting Superſtition and Idolatry. *Obſerve*, 3. The Arguments which *Demetrius* uſeth to ſtir up the People againſt the Apoſtle, and they are three: 1. The Plea of Profit, *By this Craft we get our gain*: If this Man's Doctrine obtain, our Trade will quickly fall under Diſgrace, and die. This was the moſt cogent, the moſt pungent Argument that could be uſed, for though an Argument drawn from our own Intereſt is not the moſt weighty, yet uſually it is the moſt perſuaſive. 2. The pretence of Piety; not only are we like to loſe our Livelihood, but our Religion too: *Our Goddeſs Diana* will be deſpiſed, her Temple prophaned, and her Worſhippers ſcorned. This eaſily heated the Rabble's Blood, put the Multitude into a ferment, and cauſed an hideous Out-cry for two hours together, *Great is* Diana *of the Epheſians.* 3. The Plea of the Antiquity and Univerſality, and the common Conſent of all Worſhippers: Diana, *whom all* Aſia *and the World worſhippeth.* As if *Demetrius* had ſaid, What! ſhall we ſuffer the Temple of *Diana* to be ſet at nought by the Preachments of this Babler *Paul*; a Place ſo magnificent for Structure, being, ſome ſay One Hundred, others Two Hundred and twenty Years a building; ſo renowned for the Oracles of the Gods, ſo magnified for the Image that fell down from *Jupiter*; ſo honoured by the Oblations of the *Aſiatick* Potentates, and crowded with the Devotions of the *Epheſians*, and admired throughout the whole World. Lord! what danger was the Life of the Great Apoſtle now in? How did this Popular Tumult threaten the preſent Deſtruction of him and his Companions, *Gaius* and *Ariſtarchus*? Now is ſuppoſed to be the time when the Apoſtle ſays, *That after the manner of Men he had fought with beaſts at* Epheſus; and this is probably the Deliverance which he gratefully commemorates in 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Who hath delivered us from ſo great a Death, and doth deliver: in whom we truſt, that he will yet deliver us.*

30 And when Paul would have entred in unto the people, the diſciples ſuffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Aſia, which were his friends, ſent unto him, deſiring him, that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and ſome another: for the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the ſpace of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Epheſians.

Obſerve here, 1. The undaunted Courage of St. *Paul* in the Cauſe of Chriſt; he reſolves to adventure his Life, by going into the Theatre, there to make an Apology for himſelf and his Companions, and in defence of the Chriſtian Religion: He did not account his Life dear unto him, but was willing not only to be bound, but to die for the Name of Jeſus. *Obſerve*, 2. How the Divine Providence is to be admired, and awfully adored in directing to means and ways for the Apoſtle's Preſervation in this time of imminent Danger. God now made uſe of the Advice, not only of the Apoſtle's faſt Friends, *the Diſciples*; but of his Foes, that is, (certain of the People of *Aſia*, who were now become his Friends) to diſſwade him from going into the Theatre, leſt he ſhould have been torn in pieces by an outragious Rabble of inſolent Idolaters in this unaccountable Uproar: It is all one with God, to ſave by many or by few; by Friends or by Foes, for he can make Enemies become Benefactors at his Pleaſure, and command Deliverance for his People ſometimes without Means, ſometimes by weak and contemptible Means, ſometimes by improbable and unlikely Means, ſometimes by oppoſite and contrary Means: Lord, who would not truſt thee in a time of imminent or impendent Danger, who haſt all created Nature at thy Beck, the Hearts of all in thy Hand, the Tongues and Hands of the moſt unruly and outragious in thy Power; and wilt deliver thine in Six Troubles, and in Seven, and there ſhall no Evil touch them: Thou canſt and wilt deliver as often as thy Children need Deliverance, and ſave them from Evil, even when they are in the midſt of Trouble. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Rabble at *Epheſus* treated *Alexander*, being in the Theatre; the place where they judged Offenders, and caſt them to the wild Beaſts: They would not ſuffer him to make any Defence for himſelf or the People of the *Jews*. This *Alexander* is ſuppoſed, by many, to be that *Alexander* whom St. *Paul* afterwards told *Timothy* did him much Evil? If ſo, we find here, he was firſt a Proſelyte, then a Profeſſor, next a Confeſſor, almoſt a Martyr; yet after all, an Apoſtate; making Shipwrack of the Faith, for which he was Excommunicated by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19, 20. *Of whom Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan.* This Excommunication of the Apoſtle, probably was the Provocation that occaſioned him to do ſo much Miſchief to the Apoſtle, of which he complains, 2 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Alexander the Copper-ſmith did me much evil, of whom be thou aware alſo. Learn hence*, 1. That it is poſſible for a glorious Profeſſor, to turn a furious Perſecutor. This *Alexander* did not only withſtand the Apoſtle's Perſon, but his Doctrine alſo; for which being Excommunicated, he ſought Revenge. *Learn*, 2. That Excommunication, not only angers but inrages wicked and impenitent Men: So that inſtead of being Reformed, they ſeek

Revenge; yet muſt the Cenſures of the Church be executed and inflicted, without either Fear or Favour.

35 And when the town-clerk had appeaſed the people, he ſaid, Ye men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly. 37 For ye have brought hither theſe men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftſ-men which are with him, have a matter againſt any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in queſtion for this day's uproar, there being no cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe. 41 And when he had thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

Obſerve here, 1. The Inſtrument which God ſtirs up to ſtem the Tide, and to ſtop the Stream of this Hair-brain'd Aſſembly; and that is, *the Town-clerk*; who was always preſent at their publick Meetings, and regiſter'd all their City-Acts: His Preſence and Eloquence God made uſe of to appeaſe this Tumult, to preſerve the Apoſtle, and to diſmiſs the Aſſembly. *Obſerve*, 2. The *Town-clerk's* Oration was full of Craft and Policy, of Fraud and Fallacy; for he tells the Multitude, that St. *Paul* and his Friends, were againſt Images only that were made with Hands; whereas, theirs was not ſuch, but one that fell down from *Jupiter*: It was his Duty by Office, to appeaſe the Rabble's Rage, with Reaſon and Authority, he ought not to have done it Fallaciouſly. But we muſt conſider he was a *Pagan*, and his Deſign was only to ſtill the People; accordingly he encourages the Credulous Multitude to believe what the Crafty Prieſt had inſinuated into them, that the Image which they worſhipped was not made with hands, but fell immediately down from Heaven; hoping thereby to gain more Veneration to their Idols, and to get more Pounds into their own Purſes. Thus God made uſe of the Wordly and (ſomewhat) wicked Eloquence of this *Heathen* to preſerve St. *Paul*. *Obſerve*, 3. How God opens the Mouth of this Man, to vindicate the Apoſtle's Innocency and his Companions alſo. *Theſe Men* (ſaith he) *are neither Robbers of Churches, nor yet Blaſphemers of your Goddeſs.* It's very likely, that the Apoſtle and the Chriſtians in *Epheſus* had in Wiſdom aſſerted Chriſtianity, without ſaying much againſt *Diana*, which would have but enraged the Multitude; much leſs did they offer any Violence either to her Temple or her Image. *Here Note*, That altho' the Apoſtles were great Enemies to theſe Mens Idolatry, yet did they offer no outward Violence to their Idol-Temples, either to demoliſh them, or deface any Image in them: They well knew, that ſuch a Work of publick Reformation, was not their Buſineſs, but their Magiſtrates; therefore they endeavoured by Preaching to caſt Idols out of the People's Hearts, but not by violence to throw them out of the Temple. Thus ends this Chapter, With the account of St. *Paul's* Marvellous, if not Miraculous Preſervation at the City of *Epheſus*; where being ſurrounded with Difficulties and Dangers on all hands; yet being found in the way of his Duty, and in the Work of his Maſter, he eſcapes all Perils: Safety evermore accompanies Duty. When we are in God's Way, we are under God's Wing; Preſervation and Protection we ſhall have, if God may thereby be more glorified; but ſometimes, Danger is better than Safety; a Storm more uſeful than a Calm: And bleſſed be God for the aſſurance of his Promiſe, that all things, be they Mercies or Afflictions, Comforts or Corrections, Dangers or Deliverances, Life or Death, all ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are found ſtedfaſt in their Obedience to Him, *Rom.* 8. 28.

CHAP. XX.

AND after the uproar was ceaſed, Paul called unto him the diſciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over thoſe parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. 3 And there abode three months: and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to ſail into Syria, he purpoſed to return through Macedonia. 4 And there accompanied him into Aſia, Sopater of Bera; and of the Theſſalonians, Ariſtarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 Theſe going before, tarried for us at Troas.

The foregoing Chapter acquaints us with a very great and imminent Danger, which the Apoſtle eſcaped at *Epheſus*, where he had like to have been torn in pieces by thoſe Heatheniſh Idolaters; which gave occaſion to ſay, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. *That after the manner of men, he had fought with Beaſts at Epheſus.* In this Chapter we find, that the Apoſtle yielding to the Fury of his Perſecutors, prudently withdraws from *Epheſus* into *Macedonia*; yet not ſo much for his own Safety, (for he was willing to die Chriſt's Sacrifice, if he might live no longer Chriſt's Servant) As for the Church's future Advantage, that the Diſciples in *Epheſus* might be no farther perſecuted upon his Account. *Hence learn*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel may depart from a Place and People, where their Miniſtry has been very Succeſsful, when driven from thence by the fury of Perſecution: Thus St. *Paul* here, obeyed the Command of Chriſt elſewhere; *When they perſecute you in one City, flee to another*, *Matth.* 10. 23. *Obſerve*, 2. Tho' St. *Paul* withdrew from *Epheſus*, to allay the fury of Perſecution there; yet he left *Timothy* behind, to confirm and comfort the Diſciples as his Subſtitute, and to ſtrengthen them in the Faith of the Goſpel, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. *I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus, when I went into Macedonia*, &c. *Obſerve*, 3. The Apoſtle no ſooner eſcapes the Fury of the Heathens at *Epheſus*, but he is in danger of his Life at *Macedonia* by his own Countrymen the *Jews*, *ver.* 3. *The* Jews *laid wait for him*; well might the Apoſtle ſay, he was in *Deaths often, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils in the City, in Perils by my own Countrymen, in Perils among falſe Brethren*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 26. The wicked *Jews*, when they could not prevail againſt St. *Paul* by open force, they contrive his Ruine by ſecret Treachery; but God gave him knowledge of their Deſigns, and he avoided them, by turning another way. *Thence learn*, That it is high Preſumption, and a bold tempting of God, to run headlong upon evident and imminent dangers; and not to improve all lawful Means we can to prevent and decline them: To truſt to Means, is to neglect God; but to neglect the Means for our own Preſervation, is to tempt God: St. *Paul* would not tempt God by running into Dangers, tho' his Cauſe was never ſo Good. *Obſerve*, 4. The Perſons are mentioned by Name, who Accompanied the Apoſtle, and Adminiſtred unto him; to wit, *Sopater*, *Ariſtarchus*, and *Secundus*, *Gaius*, and *Timotheus*, *Tychycus* and *Trophimus*; Theſe accompanied the Apoſtle, not out of State, but for neceſſary Service: to which may be added, St. *Luke*, but being the Pen-man of this Book, he declines mentioning of himſelf by Name, tho' his Praiſe will for ever be in the Goſpel, and Eccleſiaſtical Story.

6 And we ſailed away to Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode ſeven days. 7 And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his ſpeech until midnight. 8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together. 9 And there ſat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep ſleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he ſunk down with ſleep, and

and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, ſaid, trouble not your ſelves, for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broke bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, ſo he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted:

The next Journey of St. *Paul,* is from *Macedonia* in *Greece* to *Troas* in *Aſia,* where he abode Seven Days; during his Stay here, ſeveral things are to be Remark'd and Obſerv'd. *Obſerve here,* 1. How this Great Apoſtle became all things to all Men, tho' he would not become Sin to any Man; *To the Jew he became as a Jew,* for he ſtayeth his Journey all the Seven Days of the *Jewiſh* Paſſover's Solemnity, and would not ſet forth Travel that time, becauſe he would not offend the weak *Jews*; accordingly he ſailed not from *Philippi* till after *the Days of unleavened Bread.* Thus did St. *Paul* comply with the *Jewiſh* Rites, which though dead by the Death of Chriſt, yet were not buried; and therefore his Compliance was not ſinful; but managed with Deſign to gain the *Jews. Obſerve,* 2. That the change of the Sabbath, from the Seventh to the Firſt Day of the Week, was of Apoſtolical Obſervation now, as it was before of Chriſt's Inſtitution; on this Day, the Lord aroſe; on this Day, the Diſciples met, *and Chriſt honour ed them with his Preſence,* John 20. *on this Day the Collection for the poor Saints was made,* 1 Cor. 16. 2. Now this Neceſſarily infers the Abrogation of the Saturday-Sabbath; for Six Days they were commanded to Labour; and if they reſted the Seventh Day and Firſt Day too, they violated the Law of God, which we cannot ſuppoſe they did: And conſequently the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians obſerved the Firſt Day of the Week, in remembrance of the Work of Redemption, as the *Jews* of Old obſerved the Seventh, in remembrance of the Work of Creation. *Obſerve,* 3. The fervent Zeal and unwearied Diligence of the great Apoſtle for the Souls of Men; and alſo the Patience and Complacency with which his Auditors attended upon his Sermon at this time; *Paul preached till Midnight, ver.* 7. A very long Sermon upon a particular Occaſion is neither unſcriptural, nor unapoſtolical. We do not find that either the Apoſtle was weary, or the Auditory drouzy at that dead time of the Night, their Wakefulneſs at Midnight under a Sermon, Condemns our Sleepineſs at Mid-day. *Obſerve,* 4. The Pious and Prudential Care which the Apoſtle and his Hearers took, that their Night-meeting ſhould not fall under any Calumny, or their ſelves reproached, for doing any thing indecently in the dead of the Night; to prevent this, the Eighth Verſe informs us, that *There were many lights in the upper Chamber, where they were gathered together*; expoſing themſelves, and what they did, to the view of all. Religious Meetings in the Night Seaſon are not only Lawful in times of Perſecution, but Neceſſary: Yet eſpecial Care ought to be taken to avoid all occaſion of Calumny; that the leaſt Suſpicion may not ariſe concerning the Honeſty and Holineſs of thoſe that do Aſſemble at ſuch unſeaſonable Times. *Obſerve,* 5. What a Warning the Holy Ghoſt here leaves upon Record, for ſuch as ſleep under the Preaching of the Word; *Eutychus* when aſleep under St. *Paul*'s long Sermon falls down from the third Loft, and is taken up Dead. *Here Note,* The time when he was overtaken with Sleep, not at Noon-day, but at Midnight; and it was not a Sermon of an Hour long that he fell aſleep under; but after St. *Paul* had Preached ſeveral Hours: This is not the Caſe of our common Sermon-Sleepers, who at Noon-day ſleep under the Word; nay ſettle and compoſe themſelves to Sleep, and do what they can to invite Sleep to them: What if with *Eutychus* any of them fall down Dead, here is no *Paul* to raiſe them up; or what if this wretched Contempt of the Word provoke God to ſay, *Sleep on,* and be ſo ſtupified that no Ordinances ſhall awake you? *Sleep on,* till Hell Flames awake you. *Obſerve,* 6. *Eutychus* is raiſed to Life by a Miraculous Power Communicated to St. *Paul,* which was matter of great Conſolation to the Spirits, and great Confirmation to the Faith of the Diſciples, *ver.* 12. *They brought the young Man alive, and were not a little Comforted:* Not only for the young Man's Sake, but eſpecially for their own Sakes, for hereby God gave a convincing Teſtimony *to the Word of his Grace*; God did hereby bear Witneſs to it, and many were thereby confirmed in the Belief of it.

13 And we went before to ſhip, and ſailed unto Aſſos, there intending to take in Paul: for ſo had he appointed, minding himſelf to go a foot. 14 And when he met with us at Aſſos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene, 15 And we ſailed thence, and came the next day over againſt Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and arrived at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had determined to ſail by Epheſus, becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia: for he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt.

Here an Account is given of ſeveral Travels of the Apoſtle; Namely, from *Troas* to *Aſſos,* from thence to *Mitylene,* next day to *Samos,* then *Trogyllium,* and the day following to *Miletus,* paſſing by, and not touching at *Epheſus*; for the Apoſtle having an earneſt Deſire to be at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt,* that ſo he might in that Concourſe have a larger Opportunity of ſpreading the Goſpel, he would not now call at *Epheſus,* leſt he ſhould be detained too long by the Brethren there. From the whole *Note,* 1. The indefatigable Diligence of this great Apoſtle, and his unwearied Induſtry in the Service of the Goſpel: How he Travels from Place to Place; and here from *Troas* to *Aſſos* on Foot all alone by Land; he did not affect to ride with a Pompous Train and Retinue; but he goes on Foot expecting to meet with more opportunity of ſowing the Seed of the Goſpel as he paſſed through Towns and Villages by Land, among thoſe he Converſed with, ſo intent was this Holy Man upon the Work of winning Souls; whereas had he Travelled by Sea, this opportunity had been loſt. An happy Example for all the Miniſters of Chriſt, to prefer an opportunity of doing good to the Souls of others, before their own Eaſe or Profit. *Note,* 2. The true Reaſon why St. *Paul* was ſo very deſirous to be at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt: Not that he placed any Religion in obſerving this abrogated Feaſt; but becauſe that vaſt Concourſe of People at ſuch times would give him the fairer opportunity to Glorify Chriſt, and to propagate the Goſpel: This made him ſo deſirous to get to *Jeruſalem* by the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. *Learn thence,* That the Miniſters of Chriſt without the Imputation of Vain-glory, or ſeeking popular Applauſe, may warrantably deſire, and occaſionally lay hold upon an opportunity of the diſperſing of the Word to a numerous Auditory, in hopes that caſting the Net of the Goſpel among many, they may incloſe ſome.

17 And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he ſaid unto them, Ye know, from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe, 21 Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The fore-going Verſes acquainted us, how very intent St. *Paul* was upon his Journey to *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, he hoping then and there to have a precious opportunity for Preaching Jeſus Chriſt, and him Crucified to his Country-men the *Jews*; now leſt he ſhould be hindred in his Expedition, he determines to ſlip by *Epheſus* without touching there; but could not ſatisfy himſelf without ſeeing of, and ſpeaking to, the Miniſters of *Epheſus,* which for that purpoſe he ſends for to *Miletus,* and there in a grave and pious Diſcourſe which warmed their Hearts, and melted them into Tears; he takes his farewel of them. *Here Note,* 1. That St. *Paul* ſpeaks much in his own Vindication, but nothing by way of Oſtentation: A Miniſter when he is leaving a People, may modeſtly enough ſay ſomething in his own Vindication; for there are enough as ſoon as his Back is turned, will ſay more than is true by way of Accuſation. *Note,* 2. That when the Apoſtle here ſpeaks much, that looks like Self commendation, it is rather to propound himſelf as a Mirrour for Goſpel Miniſters, and a Pattern for all Pious Paſtors, that whenever they leave their People, they may go off with a clear Conſcience, and be able to appeal to the Conſciences of their People, as touching their Carriage and Converſation amongſt them. *Note*, 3. The ſeveral particular Inſtances of his Miniſterial Faithfulneſs: 1. He inſtances in his own Humility, tho' he was lofty in his Miniſtry, yet was he lowly in his Mind: *He ſerved the Lord with all Humility of Mind.* The better any Man is, the lower Thoughts he has of himſelf. Almighty God renders that Man moſt Honourable, that Miniſters moſt Serviceable, whom he finds moſt Humble. 2. In his Affectionateneſs in Preaching the Goſpel, he mingled Tears with his Exhortations, *ſerving the Lord with all Humility of Mind, and with many Tears.* 3. In his Conſtancy in Preaching, and private Inſpection, *publickly* in the Synagogues, and *privately from Houſe to Houſe*, like a good Shepherd, labouring to underſtand the State of his whole Flock, and of every Lamb in it, that no Soul might miſcarry thro' his Neglect, for which the great and good Shepherd died. 4. He acquaints them, not only with the manner, but alſo with the matter of his Preaching: Namely, *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: which two Graces comprehend the Sum of a Chriſtians Duty. Miniſters muſt joyn theſe two together in their Preaching, and our Hearers muſt not ſeparate them in their Practice. They who Repent without Believing, or Believe without Repenting, indeed do neither.

22 And now behold, I go bound in the ſpirit unto Jeruſalem, not knowing the things that ſhall befal me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry, which I have received of the Lord Jeſus to teſtify the Goſpel of the grace of God. 25 And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all Men. 27 For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.

Here the Apoſtle proceeds not to boaſt of himſelf, but to clear himſelf, of any charge and ſurmiſe of Miniſterial Miſcarriages, and alſo to propound himſelf as a Pattern of Miniſterial Faithfulneſs to the Elders of that Church at *Epheſus*, and here again: 1. Our Apoſtle inſtances in his Holy and Heroick Reſolution and Activity for God; *I know that Bonds and Afflictions abide me, nevertheleſs I go bound in the Spirit to Jeruſalem and nothing moves me.* As if he had ſaid, I am fully reſolved, (by the Grace of God enabling) that nothing ſhall divert me from my Duty, neither deterring Fear, nor deluding Favour of Men ſhall ever effect me; but I will go out, and go on in the ſtrength of Chriſt, running my Race with Patience, and finiſhing my Courſe with Joy. *Hence Learn*, 1. That the apprehenſion of Sufferings muſt not ſhake the Reſolution of a Chriſtian, much leſs daunt the Courage of a Goſpel Miniſter, *ver.* 24. *None of theſe things move me.* True Miniſterial Courage delights in the Air of that Danger where Duty dwells, and will neither be beaten off from doing an incumbent Duty, nor be beaten on to a Compliance with any known Sin. *Learn*, 2. That the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould endeavour, not only to finiſh their Miniſtry and Courſe of Chriſtianity with Faithfulneſs but with Joy; and that they may do ſo, let them ſee that they give up themſelves wholly to the Service of Chriſt without Reſtriction or Reſerve, and live daily by Faith on the Mediation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Here was ſuch a maſculine Spirit in our Apoſtle, as bids Defiance to Death and Danger; and the Argument that excited him was, that he might finiſh his Courſe with Joy. Next, the Apoſtle declares his Impartiality in Preaching the Goſpel, *ver.* 27. *I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God*: *Where Obſerve*, He doth not ſay he had declared the whole Counſel of God, for who but God himſelf can do that; but he had not ſhunned to declare the whole Counſel of God, that is, he had not concealed from them any Truth neceſſary to Salvation, and this freed him from the Blood of Souls, if any periſh it was not long of him; but their Blood was upon themſelves. *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men*: It is happy when the Miniſters of God can appeal to the Conſciences of their People, and ſummon them in as Witneſſes to bear Record for them at the Bar of *Chriſt*. *Laſtly*, The Apoſtle tells them, they were never like *to ſee his Face again*: A cutting killing Word. how would it fire the Zeal of Miniſters, and inflame the Afflictions of a People, did they remember that in a ſhort time they muſt ſee the Faces and hear the Voices of each other upon Earth no more: Lord, What fervent Prayer for, what yearning of Bowels towards periſhing Sinners would be found with us! What Zeal for their Converſion, what Endeavours for their Salvation, did we believe that the Grave was making ready to receive us! How ſhould we louden our Cry to God, to Man, and now fulfil our Truſt, did we conſider our Grave and Coffin are at Hand! Our Glaſs has but a little Sand; now we are Preaching, and anon it will be ſaid of us, we are gone; *And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone a preaching ſhall ſee my Face no more.*

28 Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. 30 Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them. 31 Thereforefore watch, and remember that by the ſpace of three years, I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The Bleſſed Apoſtle, having in the former part of his farewell Sermon to the Elders of *Epheſus*, vindicated his own Sincerity among them, both as to his Doctrine and Practice, and cleared himſelf by cloſe Addreſſes and ſmart Appeals to their Conſciences: He now urges them in a rouzing and heart-melting Exhortation to the utmoſt Care and Diligence in the Exerciſe of their paſtoral Charge, and to take heed to themſelves and the Flock, to the whole Flock, which Chriſt had purchaſed with his Blood, and the Holy Ghoſt had committed to their Care; *ver.* 28. *Take heed to your ſelves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers. Here Obſerve*, A twofold Duty and a threefold Motive to enforce that Duty: The firſt Duty is to take heed to themſelves: The ſecond is, to take heed to all the Flock. The firſt part of a Miniſter's Duty is to take heed to himſelf; *Committe animam diligentibus ſuam*, ſays St. *Bernard*, He, that neglects his own Soul, will never take a Faithful Care of the Souls of others. We muſt firſt look to our ſelves, that our Judgments be ſound, our Hearts Holy, and our Lives exemplary: We muſt take heed to our ſelves, that we be fit for the Employment which we undertake; this is not a Burden for a Child's Shoulder; he that is himſelf a Babe in Knowledge, is altogether unfit to teach Men the Myſteries of Salvation. Take we heed, that our Example doth not contradict our Doctrine, that our Practice doth not give our Profeſſion the Lye: That we *Do* as well as *Teach*, not preach Angelical Sermons, and lead Diabolical Lives: but ſecuring that Grace our ſelves which we offer unto others, and ſhunning that Sin, our ſelves, which we condemn in others: And this, becauſe, we have a depraved Nature, and vicious Inclinations in us, as well as others, becauſe we have a Heaven to win, and a Soul to ſave, as well as others; yea, when others have only their own Souls to account for, we have not only our own, but others too; in a Word, becauſe *our* Sins do more diſhonour God, more diſcredit Religion, more gratify the Devil, more harden Sinners, and have more of Wilfulneſs in them, more Perfidiouſneſs in them, and more Hypocriſy in them, than other Mens: And we ſhall certainly be adjudged by God to a double Damnation for them. Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay to the *Epheſian* Elders, *Take heed unto your ſelves*; next he adds, *and to all the Flock*: That is, with a conſtant Care and laborious Diligence acquaint them with their Duty, inform them of their Danger, ſhew them where their Happineſs lies, and the way and means for attaining of it, and in order to this, *all the Flock* muſt be *known*, that it may be *Heeded*, and we muſt labour to be acquainted with the State of all our People as fully as we can; we muſt, as the Apoſtle before us did, viſit our People from Houſe to Houſe, that we may know their Perſons, know their Inclinations, and know the manner of their Converſation, what Sins they are moſt in Danger of, what Temptations moſt liable to, and what Duties they neglect, either for the matter or the manner of them, and give them the beſt Encouragement, Directions, and Aſſiſtance, we are able: This is the Sum of the Apoſtle's Exhortation to the Elders of *Epheſus, Take heed unto your ſelves, and unto all the Flock.* The Motives to enforce the Duty follow, and they are, 1. Drawn from their Office, they are *Overſeers* of the Flock: That is, Officers appointed by Solemn Ordination to Teach, to Guide, to Govern, the Churches committed to their Care, and under their Charge. 2. From the Authority and Excellency of him, that call'd them to their Office, *the Holy Ghoſt.* We read of ſome that were nominated by the ſpecial and immediate Inſtinct of the Holy Ghoſt, as *Acts* 1. 24. *Acts* 13. 2. Others were Ordained by the Apoſtles, who were guided by the Holy Ghoſt then, and whoever is ſet apart to that Office now, according to the Rule of God's Word, may truly be ſaid to be made an *Overſeer* by the Holy Ghoſt; Almighty God concurring to own and bleſs his own Inſtitution. 3. From the dear Purchaſe, which Chriſt paid for, and the tender regard he bears to this his Flock; *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood. Where Obſerve*, The Divinity of Chriſt aſſerted, he is expreſly called God, in Oppoſition to the *Arians*, and their unhappy Spawn the *Socinians*, who will allow him to be only Man; but then his Blood could never have purchaſed the Church, which it is here ſaid to do; being God and Man in one Perſon; Man, that he might have Blood to ſhed, and God, that his Blood might be of infinite Value, and ineſtimable Precioudneſs when Shed. *Obſerve alſo*, The Force of the Apoſtle's Argument; if the Church be thus dear to Chriſt the Chief Shepherd, ſhe ought to be very dear to all under Shepherds: If Chriſt judg'd her Salvation worth his Blood, well may his Miniſters judge it worth their Sweat. 4. From the Danger which the Church is in by Seducers and falſe Teachers, *ver.* 29. Grievous Wolves will enter, not ſparing the Flock; and even from among your ſelves ſhall ariſe Hériticks, who will vent their unſound Doctrine to debauch Men, firſt in their Principles, and then in their Practiſes: Therefore, *take heed to all the Flock.*

Now from the whole, *Note*, 1. The Church is Chriſt's Flock, conſiſting of Sheep and Lambs, Chriſt himſelf is the Great and Good Shepherd; his Miniſters under Shepherds and Overſeers; bloody Perſecutors, Heretical Seducers, and falſe Teachers, are Wolves which worry and divide the Flock. *Note*, 2. That every Flock ſhould have its own Paſtor, and every Paſtor his own Flock. *Note*, 3. That the Flock ſhould be no greater ordinarily, than the Overſeers are capable of taking heed of. 4. That every Overſeer of Chriſt's Flock ought to take great heed, both to himſelf, and to the whole Flock, in all the Parts of his paſtoral Work, particularly, publick Preaching, and private Inſpection.

32 And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.

Here the Apoſtle takes a very ſolemn Farewel of the Elders of the Church at *Epheſus*, commending them to the Guidance and Protection of the Grace of God, which was able to build them up in Holineſs here, and to bring them to Heaven hereafter. *Where Obſerve*, 1. His courteous Compellation, and therein his great Condeſcenſion. Although he was an Apoſtle of the higheſt Eminency, yet he diſdains not to call theſe Elders, who where both in Office, and alſo in Gifts and Graces, much inferiour to him, by the Name of *Brethren*; *And now Brethren*, ſays the Apoſtle to the Elders of *Epheſus*. But probably together with the Elders of *Epheſus*, here were ſome of the Church and People of *Epheſus*, who came to take their laſt Leave of the departing Apoſtle; and then we may remark; that there is a near Relation, even that of Brethren, between Miniſters and People, as well as between the Miniſters themſelves, and this founded upon the account of Religion and Grace. *Obſ.* 2. The Apoſtle being now to take his laſt Leave and Farewel of Miniſters and People at *Epheſus*, he commends them to God. It well becomes the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt at all times, when they are with their People, but eſpecially then, when they are about to leave their People to commit and commend them unto God; that is, to recommend them to God's Care and Keeping, and to commit them to his Conduct and Guidance, and this as a Teſtimony of our Faithfulneſs to God, whoſe our People are, and for whom we muſt become accountable to him, and alſo as a Teſtimony of our Love to our People, and of our fervent Deſires for their Salvation. *Obſerve*, 3. As the Apoſtle commends them to God, ſo likewiſe to the Word of his Grace: To God as the efficient Cauſe, and to the Word of his Grace, as the inſtrumental Cauſe of their building up; *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up. Here Note*, 1. That the Goſpel is the Word of God's Grace, ſo called becauſe it is the Effect, the Fruit, and Product of rich Mercy, and free Grace; becauſe it reveals the free Grace of God in Chriſt to poor Sinners; becauſe it works inherent Grace and Holineſs in the Hearts of Sinners, and becauſe it carrieth on, and perfecteth the Work of Grace unto Glory. *Note*, 2. That Believers, who are in a State of Grace, have need of the *Word of God* for their Edification and building up. *Note*, 3. That the Word of God is able to *build up* Believers; it is able to preſerve and keep them from decaying in Grace and Holineſs, and 'tis able to farther their growth in Grace, and to bring it to Perfection. Well and wiſely therefore doth the Apoſtle ſay, *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace*, he doth not ſay, I commend you to God, and the impulſe of his Spirit; or, I commend you to God, and to the Light within; or I commend you to God, and to the Traditions of the Church; but *I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace*, which is able to build you up. *Obſ.* 4. A ſuperadded Commendation, which is hear given of the Word of God's Grace; it is not only able to build us up, but to give us an Inheritance amongſt them that are Sanctified: that is, the Word of God, if we follow the Dictates and Directions of it, will infallibly bring us to the Glorious Inheritance which God had provided for all his Saints, or Sanctified Ones. *Here Note*, 1. That Heaven is an Inheritance, not like an Inheritance on Earth; but it is the moſt ſure, the moſt ſatisfying, the moſt durable, and the moſt delightful Inheritance; *an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* Note 2. That Heaven is the Inheritance *of Saints*, of all Sanctified or Holy Perſons, and only of ſuch, 'tis purchaſed for them, 'tis promiſed to them, 'tis taken up in their Names, and Poſſeſſion of it kept for them by their Fore-runner: In a Word, Heaven is prepared for them, and they are daily preparing for it; and it ſhall be adjudged to them at the Great Day. *Note*, 3. That this Inheritance of Heaven, is a Gift, and free Gift; *Luke* 12. 32. *It is your Father's Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom.* This Inheritance is all of Grace, our Right and Title to it is of Grace, our fitting and preparing for it is of Grace; all of Grace, nothing of Merit, all of God, nothing of our ſelves, nothing in a way of Meritorious Caſualty; but only in the way of Miniſterial Endeavour. *Note Laſtly*, That God gives this Inheritance by his Word. ——*To the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance.* The Word reveals to us the Notice and Knowledge of this Inheritance, the Word makes an offer of this Inheritance to every one of us, yea, it calls us to the Acceptation, and invites us to the Participation of it. Finally, God by his Word, begets his People to a lively Hope of this Inheritance, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4. And alſo prepares and fits them by the Word, for the Participation and Poſſeſſion of it, *Col.* 1. 12. *Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* And how doth the Father make us meet for this Inheritance in Glory, but by the Word of his Grace: I commend you therefore Brethren, ſays the Apoſtle, to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to give you an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's ſilver or gold, or appa-
rel, 34 Yea, you your ſelves know, that theſe hands
have miniſtred unto my neceſſities, and to them that
were with me. 35 I have ſhewed you all things, how
that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak;
and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he
ſaid, it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

In the Concluſion of St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe to the Elders of the Church at *Epheſus*, he vindicates himſelf from the ſordid ſin of Covetouſneſs, affirming that he had coveted no Man's Silver or Gold; but by the labour of his Hands had maintained himſelf, and them that were with him. *Where Note*, That it is not ſimply unlawful for a Miniſter of the Goſpel to labour with his Hands, for his own and his Family's Support: When the Poverty of the Members of the Church is ſuch, that they cannot maintain him without it. *Obſerve farther*, He directs theſe Elders to labour as he did, if the Caſe required it with them, as it did with him, that they might be labouring as he; be in a capacity to ſupport the Weak, and relieve the Poor. *Yet Note,* He doth not propoſe this his Practiſe as a Precept or Preſident, or Rule to all Miniſters; for tho' St. *Paul* laboured with his Hands in a caſe of Neceſſity, and becauſe Falſe Teachers were watching all Advantages againſt him; yet he often declares a Right and Priviledge, which he had to be maintained by the Church without labouring with his Hands for his own Livelihood and Subſiſtance: Nay, aſſerts it to be the Ordination and Appointment of God himſelf, that *They which preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel. Obſerve Laſtly,* A remarkable Saying of our Bleſſed Saviour, not recorded by the Evangeliſts, but undoubtedly ſpoken by him; Namely, *That it is more Bleſſed to give than to receive:* That is, the Condition of the Giver is more deſirable than that of the Receiver, and Giving is more commendable than Receiving. 1. The Condition of the Giver, is more deſirable than that of the Receiver; becauſe, 1. Giving, is a ſign of Sufficiency and Power, he that gives to another, is ſuppoſed to be well provided himſelf; he that gives, looks like a full Being, and like a ſwelling River; whereas Receiving, implies Want and Weakneſs, Emptineſs, and unſatisfied Deſires. 2. Becauſe Giving includes Choice; for what a Man parts with to another, he has a freedom to keep himſelf; but the Receiver is not to be his own Carver, but muſt depend upon the Courteſie of his Neighbours. 3. Becauſe the Condition of the Giver, implies an Honourable Truſt committed to him by God Almighty. Givers are God's Almoners and Stewards, the Patrons. An Honourable Truſt this is, by which the Lives and Livelihood of the Poor are in a manner committed to us. By all which it appears, that the Condition of the Giver, is more deſirable than that of the Receiver. *Note* 2. That Giving is more commendable than Receiving; it is a clearer Evidence of a Noble and Vertuous Diſpoſition of Mind: For 1. It is a ſign of our Victory over the World, and that our Converſation is in Heaven, that we have worthy Apprehenſions of God, and Honourable Thoughts of his Providence; and that we can truſt him, and give him a part of his own whenever he calls for it. 2. Giving is better than receiving, becauſe there is a more laſting Pleaſure in Giving than in Receiving: An Alms taken, is ſoon ſpent and forgotten, and the Pleaſure of it over in two or three Moments; but the Pleaſure of Giving, bears us Company all along in this World, and will keep us Company in the next; there is no ſuch ſatisfactory Pleaſure as in doing good. Let us then often remember, and always put in practice the Words of our Lord Jeſus, which he ſaid: *It is more Bleſſed to give than to receive.*

36 And when he had thus ſpoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him, 38 Sorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ſhip.

Obſerve here, 1. What a Solemn and Sacred Farewel St. *Paul* and the Elders of *Epheſus* take of each other; *They kneeled down and prayed* together; inſtead of a parting-cup, here is a Parting-Prayer, and this accompanied with Tears; *They all wept ſore.* There is a ſufficient Occaſion for Sorrow and Weeping, when the Church loſes a Faithful Paſtor, it is a publick Loſs, and many are concerned in it. *Obſerve,* 2. How loth, how very loth they were to part with the Apoſtle, who had ſo exceedingly endeared himſelf unto them, by his Holineſs, Humility, and univerſal Uſefulneſs: Accordingly they accompany him unto the Ship, and when gone off to Sea, ſend a long look after him; being more eſpecially grieved at thoſe Words, *That they ſhould ſee his Face no more. Learn thence,* That a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt is enjoyed with much Love, and finally parted from with much Sorrow, by thoſe who believe and obey the Goſpel: Parting work is hard Work: How hard is it for Husband and Wife, for Parents and Child to part; and perhaps it is as hard ſometimes for Miniſters and People, who have lived in mutual Indearments to the Glory of God, and ſingular Comfort of each other; when they are pulled one from another alive by cruel Perſecutors, or when dying by the King of Terrors: The Parting is ſad; but bleſſed be God, the next Meeting will know no Parting. When Miniſters and People meet together at the Right Hand of Chriſt in Heaven, they ſhall never part more, but ſhall for ever be with the Lord.

CHAP. XXI.

The Chapter before us acquaints us with St. Paul's *dangerous Voyage to* Jeruſalem, *and enumerates the ſeveral Places, thro' which he paſſed in his Journey thither; Namely, thro'* Coos, *and* Rhodes, Phœnicia, Ptolemais, Tyre, Ceſarea, *through many parts of* Europe *and* Aſia; *and at laſt arrives ſafely at* Jeruſalem. *O Bleſſed Apoſtle! What Tongue can declare, what Pen can ſet forth the Pains which thou tookeſt, and the Hazards which thou runnedſt, in Preaching the Glad Tidings of the Goſpel to the Heathen World? And who can ſufficiently magnify, and holily admire the Conduct of Divine Providence, in carrying thee cheerfully through all the Difficulties of Life, and enabling thee to finiſh thy Courſe with Joy? Lord! who would not be found faithful in the Service? who takeſt ſuch an uninterrupted and unintermitting Care of thy Servants, that ſafely evermore accompanies Duty.*

AND it came to paſs, that after we were gotten from them, and had lanched, we came with a ſtrait courſe unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara. 2 And finding a Ship ſailing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and ſet forth.

The latter end of the foregoing Chapter, acquainted us with the ſorrowful and heavy parting of the Elders and Church of *Epheſus* from the holy Apoſtle. Now the firſt Verſe of this Chapter informs us, that it was not leſs ſorrowful on the Apoſtle's, and his Companions part: So much the word here imports, *After we were gotten from them,* Ἀπὸς πασθέντας ἀπ' Αὐτῶν, after we were torn from, and pull'd as it were Limb from Limb from each other, intimating the mutual Endearments which were between them whilſt together, and that inexpreſſible Sorrow, which was found amongſt them at their Parting: Verily there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection betwixt any Relations upon Earth, than betwixt the Miniſters of Chriſt and ſuch of their People, as they have been inſtrumental to bring home to God. Spiritual Affections are ſtronger than Natural; the removing of a Spiritual Father by Death, or otherwiſe, is like tearing Limb from Limb; yea, like rending the Head from the Body. Lord, with what great Difficulty and deep Reluctancy, did the holy Apoſtle and the Church of *Epheſus* here part from one another, they were pull'd and torn one from another, as the Word imports.

3 Now when we had diſcovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and ſailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ſhip was to unlade her burden. 4 And finding diſciples, we tarried there ſeven days. who ſaid to Paul through the ſpirit, that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem.

The Divine Providence is not more ſignally diſcovered in governing the Motions of the Clouds, than it is in ordering the Spirits and Motions of his Miniſters: The Motion of the Clouds is not Spontaneous and from themſelves, but they move as they are moved by the Winds; neither can the Miniſters of Chriſt chooſe their own Stations, and govern their own Motions, but muſt go when and whither the Spirit and Providence of God directs and guides them: as evidently appears by St. *Paul's* preſent Voyage to *Jeruſalem,* though the Journey was full of danger; yet his Spirit was fully bent and ſet upon it, *I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem.* It was happy for the Apoſtle, and his great Advantage, that the Will of God was ſo plainly revealed to him, touching this his Journey to *Jeruſalem:* For no ſooner did he prepare himſelf to obey the Call of God, and undertake the Journey, but he is preſently aſſaulted by many ſtrong Temptations to decline it. The firſt Rub he met with in his Way, was from the Diſciples at *Tyre; who ſpake by the Spirit,* that he ſhould not go up to *Jeruſalem:* But did not the Spirit of God then contradict it ſelf, in bidding the Apoſtle go, and then ſpeaking to him by theſe Diſciples not to go? Not at all: St. *Paul* by extraordinary Revelation, was commanded to go up to *Jeruſalem;* theſe Diſciples by a Spirit of Prophecy, only foretold the Difficulties and Dangers that would attend him in his Journey; and ſo thro' Kindneſs and Humane Affection, they diſſwaded him from undertaking it. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the Prediction of Trouble and the Counſel of

Safety: The Prediction of Trouble; ſo they ſaid thro' the Spirit, that it would be dangerous for *Paul* to go to *Jeruſalem.* The Counſel of Safety proceeded from their Private Love and Affection to him; whereby they diſſwaded him from going to *Jeruſalem. Learn from hence,* 1. That Divine Precept and not Providence is to rule out our way of Duty. *Learn,* 2. That no Diſcouragements or Hindrances whatſoever will juſtify our neglect of a commanded Duty; Whatever Difficulties or Diſcouragements lay in the way of the Apoſtle's Duty; he overcame them all with an Heroick and truly Chriſtian Reſolution, ſaying, *ver.* 13. I am ready not only to be bound, but alſo to die at *Jeruſalem* for the Name of Jeſus.

5 And when we had accompliſhed thoſe days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip, and they returned home again. 7 And when we had finiſhed our courſe from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais and ſaluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. 8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Ceſarea; and we entred into the houſe of Philip the Evangeliſt, (which was one of the ſeven) and abode with him. 9 And the ſame man had four daughters, virgins, which did propheſy.

Obſerve here, 1. That nothing could divert the Apoſtle from his intended Journey to *Jeruſalem*; the report of Sufferings was no diſcouragement to him, nor could the perſuaſive Entreaties of his Friends prevail with him; ſeeing therefore he was reſolved to go on, they all of them, with their Wives and Children to teſtify their great Reſpect and Affection to him, accompany him out of the City, and he and they kneeling down on the Shore, Pray together, and take their Farewel of each other. The loving Communion of Saints and Prayer, are the Marks of Chriſt's true Diſciples. *Obſ.* 2. The Apoſtles next remove towards *Jeruſalem* was from *Tyre*, to *Ceſarea*, where he lodges with *Philip* the Evangeliſt; that is, One of them who were ſent forth as Itinerary Preachers, here and there to diſpenſe the Goſpel, and to confirm the Churches; and one of the Seven, that is, One of the Seven Deacons, *Acts* 6. *Here Note,* That this *Philip*, in whoſe Houſe St. *Paul* now lodged, was before driven out of his Houſe by *Paul*'s Perſecution. See *Acts* 8. 1, &c. *There was a great Perſecution againſt the Church, and they were all ſcattered abroad, and Philip went down to Samaria.* This *Philip* who was driven out of his Houſe by *Paul* when a Perſecutor, gladly received him into his Houſe, being now *Paul* a Convert; and this without any upbraiding, yea, without the leaſt mention of what he had formerly been or done. 'Tis an ill Office to rake in the Filth which God has covered, and to reproach Men with, or for the Sins which God has pardoned: It argues ſome degree of Envy at the Grace of God, to upbraid Men with the Sins committed before Converſion: Former Miſcarriages and injuries ſhould be forgiven and forgotten upon true Repentance, and we ſhould receive them into our Embraces, whom Chriſt has taken into his own Boſom. *Paul went into the houſe of Philip the Evangeliſt.*

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the holy Ghoſt, So ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that oweth this girdle, and ſhall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Obſerve here, 1. That during the Apoſtle's ſtay at *Ceſarea* in *Philip*'s Houſe, a certain Prophet called *Agabus* comes thither, and Propheſieth of *Paul*'s Bonds at *Jeruſalem*: *Where Note,* That tho' *Agabus* was a Prophet, yet by what appeareth of him in Scripture, he was always a Prophet of Evil Things and bad Tidings: He foretold the Famine before, *Acts* 11. And *Paul*'s Bonds now. Such Meſſengers of God, as give warnings of Judgments to come, ſhould and ought to be accepted, as well as they that bring us hopes of Mercy and Deliverance; that Meſſage may be true, which yet is diſpleaſing. *Obſ.* 2. *Agabus* uſeth a Sign, after the Manner of the Old Prophets, who often Propheſied by Symbols and ſignificant Expreſſions; that they might the better imprint their Predictions on the Hearts of Men. Thus *Iſaiah* went naked and bare foot, to ſhew what the People of *Iſrael* ſhould meet with under the King of *Aſſyria*, *Iſaiah* 20. And *Ezekiel was to pack up his ſtuff, and remove, to ſignifie the Peoples removal into Captivity,* Ezek. 12. It pleaſed God to teach his People by viſible Signs, as well as by Word of Mouth; that what was received by both Senſes, Seeing and Hearing, might make the deeper Impreſſion upon their Minds. In like manner here, *Agabus* uſeth a Sign, he takes St. *Paul*'s Girdle, and binds his own Hands and Feet with it; ſignifying, that after that manner, the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* would bind the Apoſtle, and deliver him to the *Gentiles*; Firſt to the *Roman* Governour of *Judea*, and afterwards to *Nero* the *Roman* Emperor: From hence we may remark, The great Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion of God, in giving the Apoſtle ſo many Warnings of his Bonds; the Holy Ghoſt firſt made it known to him, *Acts* 20. That Bonds and Afflictions did abide him. The Diſciples at *Tyre* Propheſied the ſame, *Acts* 21. *v.* 4. And here *Agabus*, by a ſenſible Sign, makes it known to him; and all this, that he might be thoroughly prepared for a ſuffering Condition. God doth not love to take his Children unprovided; St. *Paul* Therefore was not ſurpriſed, but had Warning upon Warning of his preſent Danger. If a ſudden and unexpected flock of Miſeries and Calamities break in upon us, (for Afflictions ſeldom go ſingle) it is not becauſe we want Warnings, but becauſe we are not ſo wiſe as to take Warning. When we are well and at eaſe, we will not think of Death and the Croſs, and therefore if we be ſurpriſed and unprovided, we may thank our own *Security*; *Our Apoſtle here being fore-warned,* was fore-armed.

12 And when we heard theſe things, both we and they of that place, beſought him not to go up to Jeruſalem. 13 Then Paul anſwered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem, for the name of the Lord Jeſus. 14 And when he would not be perſwaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, The will of the Lord be done.

Obſ. here, 1. The intire Affection of the Diſciples to the Holy Apoſtle, *Both we, and they of the place beſought him, that he would not go up to* Jeruſalem. *Learn,* That the Lives and Liberties of thoſe who are eminent Inſtruments of God's Glory, are very dear and precious to the Faithful Servants of God; who can blame either St. *Paul*'s Companions, or the Diſciples here, for deſiring and endeavouring the Preſervation of ſo precious an Inſtrument, as the Apoſtle was? And yet, it is not improbable, but *Satan* might have an hand in this matter, and endeavour by the Apoſtle's Friends Perſwaſion to weaken his Reſolution; for the Devil oft endeavoureth to take us off from our Duty by the Entreaties of our Friends, who mean well in what they ſay. Thus when St. *Peter* lovingly adviſed our Saviour againſt his Sufferings; *Be it far from thee, Lord, This ſhall not be unto thee. Matth.* 16. *Get thee behind me Satan,* Says Chriſt: It was *Peter*'s Tongue, but *Satan* tuned it; who would have thought that Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould have been *Satan*'s Inſtruments. We muſt not meaſure our Friends Counſel by their good meaning, but by God's Word: We muſt be deaf to all Relations, that we may diſcharge our Duty to God. Thus we find the Apoſtle here, *He would not be perſwaded,* but expoſtulates with them, *What mean you to weep, and to break my heart. Obſ.* 2. St. *Paul*'s intire Affection to God, and his firm Reſolution for his Duty; *He would not be perſwaded*: But did the Apoſtle do well in this, to withſtand all the Importunities, and reject the unanimous Advice of all his Friends? how doth this Carriage agree with that Character of Heavenly Wiſdom, *James* 3. 17. *That is eaſy to be intreated.* I Anſwer, To the Practice of our Duty, it is Praiſe-worthy to be eaſie to be intreated, but not from our Duty. St. *Paul* knew his Duty, and underſtood the Will of God, and therefore his Friends might ſooner break his Heart than break his Purpoſe. *Learn hence,* That no perſwaſions of Friends, no Apprehenſions of Dangers ſhould ever be able to turn us out of the way of our Duty. When *Peter* diſſwaded Chriſt from Suffering, our Saviour rebuk'd him with the ſame Indignation, as he did the Devil tempting him to Idolatry. *Obſ.* 3. How the Apoſtle lovingly and gently rebukes, their fond and inordinate Sorrow for his Departure; *What mean you to weep, and to break my heart:* As if he had ſaid, What mean theſe paſſionate Tears and Entreaties? Alas, whether you think it ſo or not, they are but ſo many Snares and Temptations of *Satan*, to turn my Feet out of the way of Obedience; you do as much as in you lies to break my Heart; but by the Grace of God, nothing ſhall break me off from my Purpoſe, nor weaken my Courage and Reſolution for God. When a Saint is once ſatisfied in the Call and Command of God to any Duty, he fears neither impending nor approaching Dangers in the way of Duty. *Obſ.* 4. The Apoſtle's quieting and calming Arguments, with which he labours to charm their unruly Paſſions: *I am ready, both to be bound and to die for Chriſt, I am ready.* 1. That is, God hath fitted me for Suffering-work; Fleſh and Blood is over-ruled in me by the Spirit of God: I am prepared for whatever God pleaſeth, be it a Priſon, be it a Scaffold, be it Life be it Death, I am provided for both: Liberty is dear, and Life is dear, but Chriſt is dearer than either; therefore what mean you to work againſt the Deſign of God, who hath fitted and prepared my Heart for Suffering-ſervice? *I am ready.* 2. That is, My Will and Reſolution ſtands in a full Bent, my Heart is fixed, my Friends, my Heart is fixed, do not therefore diſorder and diſcompoſe my Spirit, by caſting ſuch Temptations as Stumbling-blocks in my way; for I am come to a point, nothing ſhall divert me from this Noble Enterprize for God: I am ready; 3. That is, fully determined to comply with the Call and Command of God whatever befals me. I am not ſolicitous about that, my Captain that leads me on, I'm ſure will bring me off ſafe, either dead or alive; therefore all your Tears and Intreaties are but caſt away upon me; you had better be quiet, and chearfully reſign me up to the Will of God, for I am ready both to be Bound and to Die. *From whence Learn,* That it is a bleſſed and excellent frame of Spirit, when the Servants of God are prepared and ready for the hardeſt Services and ſharpeſt Sufferings, to which the Lord may at any time call them: *I am ready, not only to be bound, but alſo to die at* Jeruſalem *for the name of the Lord Jeſus.* *Obſ.* 5. The Diſciples Diſcretion, *When he would not be perſuaded, they ceaſed.* That is, they gave over their Importunities, and urged him no farther beyond his own Inclinations, and Reſolutions. It is the Diſpoſitions of humble Spirits, to ſubmit to thoſe that are wiſer than themſelves, and not to be too ſtiff and peremptory in their own Opinions and Conceits; a Leſſon which moſt Men have great need to Learn. *Obſ.* 6. The pious Ground of this Their Diſcretion: Namely, Acquieſency in the Divine Will; *The will of the Lord be done*: They refer the Event to God's Determination, and ſubmit all to his Sovereign Pleaſure. *Thence Learn,* That it is the Duty and deſire, and ought to be the care and endeavour of all the Children of God, to be willing to ſubmit themſelves and theirs to the Diſpenſation of God's Providence, in whatever befals either them or theirs. For this we have Chriſt's Example, *Matth.* 20. 39. *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; The Example of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. *Here am I, let him do what ſeemeth good in his ſight*; The Example of *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do whatſoever he pleaſeth.* Such is his Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, that he can do his Children no wrong; and ſuch is his tender Mercy and loving Kindneſs, that he will do them no harm. The abſolute Soveraignty of God over us, and the ſight of God in all his providential Diſpenſations towards us, influences at once our Judgments, our Wills, our Affections, our Expreſſions and Actions, that we neither dare to think, ſpeak, or act any thing in contradiction to, or in oppoſition againſt the Wiſdom and Will of God: That which is oft againſt our Will, is not always againſt our Intereſt; but if we belong to God, all Afflictions upon us, are Federal Diſpenſations and Covenant Bleſſings to us, and either are good, or ſhall work for good: Therefore it is both our Duty and Intereſt, to ſubmit to the Wiſdom of Providence, and ſay with theſe Diſciples, *The will of the Lord be done.*

15 And after thoſe days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jeruſalem. 16 There went with us alſo certain of the diſciples of Ceſarea, and brought with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an old diſciple, with whom we ſhould lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jeruſalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James: and all the elders were preſent. 19 And when he had ſaluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his miniſtry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord,——

The Apoſtle having holily reſolved, that come Life, or come Death, he would be obedient to the call of God by his Spirit; and that nothing ſhould divert him from his intended Journey to *Jeruſalem*, ſets forward from *Ceſarea* to *Jeruſalem*, accompanied with certain Diſciples of *Ceſarea*, who brought him to the Houſe of one *Mnaſon* an old Diſciple, who had long ago received the Faith, and now lived at *Jeruſalem*, in whoſe Houſe the Apoſtle lodged. *Here Note,* What a Badge of Honour is put upon *Mnaſon*, even that of being an Old Diſciple; to be an Old Man is an Honour; but to be an Old Diſciple is a double Honour; it is a reſemblance of him, who is the Ancient of Days, where Antiquity and Piety, where Agedneſs and Holineſs do Concur, it renders a Perſon as like the Divine Majeſty as can be expected on this ſide Glory. To be an Old Diſciple is a greater Honour than to be a King or Emperor. *Obſerve next,* The Apoſtle being come to *Jeruſalem* is kindly received of the Church there; he enters the Houſe of St. *James*, the Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, where the Elders that were preſent Congratulated his Arrival, and he relates to them what great things God had wrought by his Miniſtry, and they all gave Praiſe to God for the great and Glorious Succeſs of the Goſpel. *Learn thence,* That all Chriſtians in general, but the Miniſters of Chriſt in ſpecial, ought to make a particular Declaration of the great and marvellous Works which the Lord hath wrought for them, and by them. Thus did St. *Paul* here, he was very particular no doubt in relating the mighty Works of God in the Converſion of the *Gentiles* by his Miniſtry from time to time, and from place to place: and all this, not to extol himſelf, but to exalt God for receiving the *Gentiles* into the Faith and Fellowſhip of the Goſpel.

20 —— And ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teacheſt all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forſake Moſes, ſaying, That they ought not to circumciſe their children, neither to walk after the cuſtoms. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude muſt needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we ſay to thee: we have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thy ſelf with them, and be at charges with them, that they may ſhave their heads: and all may know, that thoſe things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thy ſelf alſo walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believed, we have written and concluded, that they obſerve no ſuch thing, ſave only that they keep themſelves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from ſtrangled, and from fornication.

We had St. *Paul*'s Report to the Church at *Jeruſalem* of the Succeſs which God had given him in his Miniſtry amongſt the *Gentiles*, this is related in the foregoing Paragraph of the Chapter: In theſe Verſes before us, we have the Churches Reply to the Apoſtle's Relation, *they glorified God.* Firſt, for the great Succeſs given to the Word of his Grace amongſt the *Gentiles*, and withal acquaint him with the like Succeſs, which the Preaching of the Goſpel had amongſt the *Jews*; *Thou ſeeſt, Brother, how many Thouſands of* Jews *there are which do believe*; the Original runs, *how many Tens of Thouſands do believe*; Which intimates the great and wonderful Succeſs of the Goſpel; well might our Saviour compare it to a Grain of Muſtard ſeed, ſeeing it had ſpread it ſelf far and near in ſo ſhort a time; if we conſider the ſmalneſs of its beginning, the deſpicableneſs of the Inſtruments, the ſhortneſs of the Time, the obſtinacy and prejudices of the *Jews* againſt the Goſpel, and yet remark the vaſt number of Thouſands and Ten Thouſands of the *Jews* which did already believe, embrace, and entertain it; we need not wonder that St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. reckons it as one of the greateſt Myſteries of Godlineſs, that Jeſus Chriſt was Preacher to the *Gentiles*, and believed on in the World: That is, that ſo many Thouſands both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were brought to own him, and ſubmit to him as Lord and Saviour. *Obſerve next,* The Advice given by the Church at *Jeruſalem* to St. *Paul*, concerning the *Jews* which did believe in that Place. It ſeems the *Jews* tho' they had received the Goſpel, yet thought that the Ceremonial Law muſt ſtill be obſerved; therefore in Condeſcenſion to their weakneſs, and to prevent their taking offence, they adviſe the Apoſtle, not as a thing Neceſſary in it ſelf, but as an Expediency in reference to their weakneſs, to conform himſelf to ſome of the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies and Purifications; for tho' they were not then needful, yet were they not then unlawful; they might then be uſed, when the uſe of them would any ways conduce to the gaining and bringing over the *Jews* to a love of Chriſtianity. The Synagogue was not haſtily to be caſt out of the Church like the Heatheniſh Superſtitions; but to die by degrees, and be decently interr'd. *Here Note*, That the Law of *Moſes*, as to its Moral Part Chriſt continued as his Law: the Ceremonial Part, as to the uſe of the Types and Ceremonies, ſignifying him that was to come, this was abrogated at Chriſt's coming, and the Political Part ceaſed, when the Jewiſh Polity was diſſolved; but the Abrogation of the whole was not fully made known at the firſt, but by degrees; and the exerciſe of it, long tolerated to the *Jews*. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The particular Adviſe which they give the Apoſtle, to go into the Temple, and perform the legal Ceremony of Purification; *We have four men which have a vow, them take, and purify thy ſelf, that all may know that thou walkeſt orderly and keepeſt the Law*: That is, ſeeing we have four Men here which have a Nazarite's Vow upon them, the time of which Vow is now expired, and they are to ſhave themſelves Ceremoniouſly in the Temple; Go thou with them, and perform the Legal Ceremony of Purification there, that the People may know, that the Report of thee is not true; but that thou being a *Jew* doſt thy ſelf keep the Law. Here we may obſerve the Truth of what St. *Paul* elſewhere declared; that *to the Jew he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; yea, became all things to all Men, that he might gain ſome.* A noble Patern for the Miniſters of the Goſpel to write after, in yielding, ſo far as we may without Sin or Scandal, to the weakneſs of others in order to the furtherance of the great ends of our Miniſtry amongſt our People; *to the Jew I became as a Jew.*

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himſelf with them, entred into the temple, to ſignifie the accompliſhment of the days of purification, until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them. 27 And when the ſeven days were almoſt ended, the Jews which were of Aſia, when they ſaw him in the temple, ſtirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where againſt the people, and the law, and this place: and farther, brought Greeks alſo into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had ſeen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppoſed that Paul had brought into the temple) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were ſhut.

Obſerve here, 1. That at the inſtance and importunity of his Friends, *Paul* is perſwaded to purify himſelf in the Temple, partly to gain upon the Affections of the believing *Jews*, who were ſtill Zealous for the Law; and partly to confute the falſe Aſperſions of them that reported him to be againſt all Ceremonial Obſervances. If any had grudg'd that after the coming of the Goſpel, ſo much coſt ſhould be beſtowed on the Law, and ſay with murmuring *Judas*, *To what purpoſe was this waſte?* The Law might truly anſwer with our Saviour, and ſay, he did it for my Burial, and for the more ſolemn Interment thereof. *Obſ.* 2. How blind was the Zeal, and how furious the Rage of the unbelieving *Jews* againſt the Apoſtle? They ſeek, and becauſe they could not find, they take an occaſion to vent their Malice upon him, accordingly they put the whole City of *Jeruſalem* into an Uproar, upon a Pretence that he had brought *Trophimus* a *Gentile* into the Temple to Prophane and Pollute it; and in their blind Rage, they drag'd the Apoſtle out of the Temple, as a Prophaner of it: Well might the Apoſtle ſay he was in *deaths often*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23. He was now in danger to be pull'd in pieces by this Tumult, and of being made a Sacrifice to the Fury of the Rabble: But God who never wants ways and means for the ſeaſonable Succour and Relief of his Faithful Servants, in an unexpected manner, and by unthought of Means, reſcued the Apoſtle from the Jaws of Death and Danger; as the next Verſes inform us.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jeruſalem was in an uproar. 32 Who immediately took ſouldiers, and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they ſaw the chief captain and the ſouldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 34 And ſome cried one thing, ſome another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the caſtle. 35 And when he came upon the ſtairs, ſo it was that he was born of the ſouldiers, for the violence of the people. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

Note here, 1. How the Great and Gracious God provideth ſeaſonable Reſcues for his perſecuted and perplexed Saints and Servants; *when they went about to kill Paul*, God raiſes him up a Deliverer. *Note*, 2. The unexpected Inſtrument of the Apoſtle's Deliverance, and that was an *Heathen Governour*: The *Romans* never durſt truſt ſuch vaſt Multitudes at *Jewiſh* Feſtivals without a ſtrong Gariſon to be a cheek upon them; accordingly the Governour having Tidings of the Tumult, brings down a Band of Soldiers to ſee the Peace kept, he Reſcues the injured Apoſtle out of their Hands, commands him to be bound with Two Chains, (as *Agabus* had foretold) and the Soldiers bear him up in their Arms from the Violence of the People. *Hence we Learn*, 1. That a bad Government, even an Heathen Government, is better than Anarchy. Under a Tyrannical Government many may be uneaſy, but under Popular Rage none can be long at Reſt. *Learn*, 2. That Heathens are oftentimes the Protectors of Chriſtians againſt the blind Rage of thoſe that profeſs to worſhip the ſame God. St. *Paul* and theſe unbelieving *Jews* worſhipped the ſame God, and yet the Heathen Soldiers were fain by force to carry and guard the Apoſtle from the Fury of the bloody unbelieving *Jews*. Thus God raiſeth up what Inſtruments he pleaſes to ſubſerve his own Gracious Ends and Deſigns in the Preſervation of his People. The Barbarous Heathen Soldiers protect St. *Paul*, and keep him from being torn in pieces by the *Jews*, who worſhip the ſame God with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the caſtle, he ſaid unto the chief captain, May I ſpeak unto thee? Who ſaid, Canſt thou ſpeak Greek? 38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murderers? 36 But Paul ſaid, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarſus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beſeech thee, ſuffer me to ſpeak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul ſtood on the ſtairs, and beckened with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great ſilence, he ſpake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, ſaying,

Obſerve, 1. The Juſtice which the chief Captain, tho' an Heathen Soldier, doth St. *Paul*: he demands *what he had done* before he puniſhes him; an Heathen would hear the Cauſe before he condemn the Perſon; a piece of Juſtice which the Law of Nature requires and obliges to. *Obſ.* 2. The unjuſt Suſpicion which the chief Captain had of St. *Paul*'s being a very bad Man. *Art not thou that Egyptian which madeſt an uproar, and leadeſt out four thouſand men that were murderers.* Here St. *Paul* without Cauſe, is ſuſpected for a Rebel, a Seducer and a Murtherer, by the chief Captain. It is not in the Power of the moſt unſpotted Innocency to protect from Jealouſies and Suſpicion, from Cenſure and Calumny, from Slander and falſe Accuſation: The peaceable Apoſtle is ſuſpected for a Turbulent Incendiary, *Art not thou the Egyptian that madeſt an uproar?* *Obſ.* 3. The juſt and neceſſary Apology which St. *Paul* makes for himſelf, *I am a Jew of Tarſus, a* *citizen of no mean city.* *Where Note*, 1. He deſcribes his Original; I am a *Jew*, not that wicked *Egyptian* which you ſuſpected me to be, but a *Jew* of a Religious and Noble Extraction. *Learn thence*, That to be deſcended from Religious and noble Anceſtors, is a deſirable Privilege, and ſingular Prerogative: St. *Paul* was a *Jew*, deſcended from *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and the Holy *Patriarchs*. *Note*, 2. He deſcribes the Country where he was Born, he was Born in *Cilicia*, a rich and fruitful Countrey in *Aſia*. *Learn thence*, That to be Born in a rich and fruitful Country, (if Godly and Religious) is a very conſiderable Favour and Privilege; it was not blind Chance and Fortune, but the Wiſe and Merciful Providence of God, which appointed both the Place of our Birth, and determineth the Bounds of our Habitation: What Mercy is it that we were born, not in *Spain*, not in *Turkey*, not in a Land of Darkneſs, but in a Valley of Viſion? If the *Spaniards* have the Golden Mines, we have the Golden Treaſure of the Scriptures, *more to be deſired than gold, yea, than much fine gold*, Pſal. 19. *Note*, 3. He Deſcribes not only his Country, but his Native City and the Dignity of it; *He was born in Tarſus, a citizen of no mean city*, it being the Metropolis or chief City of all *Ciliſia*; in this Famous City was the Apoſtle Born. *Learn thence*, That to be Born in a Noble, Free, and Famous City, eſpecially if Religious, is a deſirable Favour and Priviledge. St. *Paul* was Born in the Noble City of *Tarſus*; but how could he then ſay, as he did, *Acts* 22. That he was a *Roman*? Anſwer, So he was, but not by Birth, but by Immunity and Priviledge. *Tarſus* was inveſted with the *Roman* Priviledges, and made free of *Rome* by *M. Antoninus*: Thus *Paul* was Free-born, and declared that they ought not to Scourge a *Roman* Citizen. *Note Laſtly*, That tho' the forementioned Priviledges are conſiderable Priviledges; Namely, To be deſcended from Noble Anceſtors, to be Born in a Famous Country, and in a Free City, Paſſages of Divine Providence not to be overlooked or diſregarded, but very highly valued, and thankfully acknowledged: Yet muſt it be remembred, that all theſe are but outward and temporal Priviledges, common to the worſt, as well as the beſt of Men; ſuch Priviledges as a Man may enjoy, and yet be under the Wrath of God, and the Guilt of eternal Damnation. Let us labour to be Nobly Minded, as well as Nobly Deſcended. By Regeneration Born from above, otherwiſe we are low Born, mean Born; be our Parents never ſo High. Thus the Chapter concludes with an account of the Apoſtle's eminent Preſervation in a time of eminent Danger; when likely to have been torn in pieces by the riotous Rabble, God ſtirs up the chief Captain, an Heathen, belonging to the bloody Trade of War, to reſcue oppreſſed Innocency; and the Guard of Soldiers who had no manner of Affection for *Paul*, God ſets as a Life-Guard about his Perſon, they bear him up in their Arms, give him liberty to ſpeak for himſelf, and his Apology or Defenſative Plea, we have Recorded in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XXII.

In the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, we have the Apoſtle craving Leave of the Chief Captain to ſpeak unto the People, who without any juſt Cauſe, had made a violent Aſſault upon him, and attempted to take away his Life: Liberty of Speech being granted him, he ſtands upon the Stairs, near the Gate of the Caſtle in which he was a Priſoner, makes a Sign to the People to hold their Peace, and when they gave Audience, in the Hebrew Tongue, *he thus beſpeaks them.*

MEN brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he ſpake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more ſilence, and he ſaith) 3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarſis, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I perſecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into priſons both men and women. 5 As alſo the high prieſt doth bear me witneſs, and all the eſtate of the elders: from whom alſo I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damaſcus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jeruſalem, for to be puniſhed.

Here begins the Apoſtle's Apology, or defenſirive Plea which he makes for himſelf before the People at *Jeruſalem*, who, in the foregoing Chapter, had ſo injuriouſly Treated him: In which Apologetical Narration, we have theſe Particulars Obſervable. *Firſt Obſerve*, With what Lenity and Mildneſs he beſpeaks his cruel and peſtilent Perſecutors, the People of the *Jews*; he acoſts them with Titles of Reſpect and Honour; *Men, Brethren, and Fathers*, not with opprobrious Invectives; he doth not render Evil for Evil, or Railing for Reviling, he had not ſo learned Chriſt, he knew how to ſuffer Reproach for the Goſpel; but to Perſecute his Perſecutors with hard Names and Characters of Reproach, this was a piece of Zeal which St. *Paul* and the holy Sufferers of thoſe times were little acquainted with. *Obſerve*, 2. How the Apoſtle inſinuates himſelf, into his Auditors, that ſo he might gain their Attention to what was ſpoken; *Brethren and Fathers, hear ye*, (I pray) *my defence which I make unto you*: There is a Lawful and Pious Inſinuation for gaining the Attention of our Auditors, which the Miniſters of Chriſt may and ought to make uſe of, as the Workman, that would drive his Nail, dips it in Oil. We gain our Auditors Attention by our Courtious and Loving Compellations; *Men, Brethren, and Fathers, hearken*. *Obſerve*, 3. The Apology or Plea it ſelf, in which he ſets before them: 1. His Extraction, *I am a Jew born in Tarſus*: 2. His Education, *brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel*: 3. His Profeſſion, *he was zealous towards God*: That is, he was one of that Sect among the *Jews* which were called Zealous, and was very ſtrict and exact in the Obſervation of the Law, a bitter Enemy to Chriſtianity, and a Bloody Perſecutor of all that owned themſelves the Diſciples of Jeſus, as the High Prieſt very well knows, ſays he, *From whom I received a Commiſſion, that if I found any of this way, whether men or women, I ſhould bring them bound unto Jeruſalem*. *Here Note*, That *Damaſcus* was Five or Six Days Journey from *Jeruſalem*, yet *Paul* when a Perſecutor ſticks not at it, but ſpurs on through Fire and Water to glut his Malice and Revenge on the poor Members of Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn thence*, That Perſecutors will ſpare neither Purſe nor Pains, they will ſtick and ſtop at nothing, though never ſo Toilſome and Hazardous, ſo they may but ſatisfy their Revenge upon the poor Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; *I perſecuted this way unto Death, binding and delivering into Priſon, both men and women.*

6 And it came to paſs, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damaſcus, about noon, ſuddenly there ſhone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice ſaying unto me, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 8 And I anſwered, Who art thou, Lord? and he ſaid unto me, I am Jeſus of Nazareth whom thou perſecuteſt. 9 And they that were with me, ſaw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that ſpake to me.

Our Apoſtle having related what he was before his Converſion in the foregoing Verſes, in theſe and the following Verſes he declares the manner of his Converſion; namely, that when he was travelling to *Damaſcus* to purſue his perſecuting Deſign, a great Light ſhined round about him, upon which he fell to the Ground, and heard theſe Words Articulately ſpoken to him; *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* *Where Obſerve*, That Chriſt takes the Oppoſition made againſt his Goſpel, and the Perſecution carried on againſt his Members, as done unto himſelf; it being againſt his Friends, his Cauſe and Intereſt: As the Honour given to the Head, redounds unto the Members, ſo the Wrongs and Injuries offered to the Members are reſented by the Head: Chriſt ſaid not thus (when upon Earth) unto his Murtherers, *Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why ſcourge ye me, and crucify me?* But now when his Members ſuffered, he cries out from Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord, Thou art more tender of thy Body Myſtical, than thou wert of thy Body Natural; more ſenſible of thy Members Sufferings, than of thine own. *Obſerve next*, How ready the Apoſtle was to underſtand and know, and how deſirous to execute and do the Will of God, *Who art thou, Lord, and what wilt thou* *have me to do?* We may ſooner find Fire without Heat, than a true Convert without operative Grace. *Obſerve farther*, Chriſt's Anſwer to *Paul*'s Enquiry, *Who art thou, Lord*, ſays *Paul*: *I am Jeſus of Nazareth, whom thou perſecuteſt*, ſaith Chriſt. *Where Note*, That Contemned, tho' not Contemptible Name, *Jeſus of Nazareth*, is owned by Chriſt from Heaven. *Mark*; He ſaid not I am Jeſus the Son of God, I am Jeſus the Heir of the World, and Lord of all; but I am *Jeſus of Nazareth*, he gloried in that Reproach which his Enemies caſt upon him, *Jeſus of Nazareth*, he owned his Name from Heaven, to teach his Members not to be aſhamed of it when Reproached by it here on Earth. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Witneſſes of *Paul*'s Converſion, *the men that were with him, who ſaw the light, but heard not the voice*. It is very probable that he had a conſiderable Number of Officers with him, to bring both Men and Women that profeſſed Chriſtianity bound to *Jeruſalem*. Theſe ſaw the Light ſhining, and heard a confuſed Noiſe like Thunder, but they heard not the Articulate, much leſs the Efficacious Voice of Chriſt, which ſpake ſo convincingly to his Soul; Lord, how many are there who come under the Preaching of the Goſpel, that, with *Paul*'s Companions, hear only a confuſed Noiſe, an empty Sound, they do not hear the Efficacious Voice of Chriſt ſpeaking to their Hearts with a ſtrong Hand, and ſo remain ſhut up under the Power of Unbelief.

10 And I ſaid, What ſhall I do, Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto me, Ariſe, and go into Damaſcus, and there it ſhall be told thee of all things, which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not ſee for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damaſcus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and ſtood, and ſaid unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy ſight. And the ſame hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he ſaid, The God of our fathers hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that juſt one, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men, of what thou haſt ſeen and heard. 16 And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Here Obſerve, 1. That altho' Chriſt Converted *Paul* himſelf, yet *Ananias* as his Miniſter muſt Inſtruct him; by Chriſt is Grace infuſed, but by his Miniſters increaſed. Such an Honour doth Chriſt put upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel, that he makes uſe of their Endeavours (ordinarily) both for the Production and Augmentation of Grace in the Hearts of his People. O the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of a ſtanding Miniſtry! 'Tis a ſingular Favour to have the Mind of God made known to us by Men, like unto our ſelves; And behold the Honour which God puts upon his Miniſtry, in uſing them as Conduct-Pipes for conveying the Water of Life unto us, which is not ordinarily Communicated immediately from himſelf, nor immediately received by us. *Obſ.* 2. The Title given by *Ananias* to *Saul*, *Brother Saul*. They were now Brethren by Faith and Profeſſion, owning the ſame God, united to the ſame Saviour, animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame Promiſes, Partakers of the ſame Hope, and Heirs of the ſame Glory: As the Scripture ſpeaks of a Brotherhood betwixt Chriſt and Believers, *He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren*. So it ſpeaks, of a Brotherhood betwixt Believers themſelves, *love the Brotherhood*; that is, the whole Fraternity and Society of Chriſtians, who are, *Sanguine Chriſti Conglutinati*; Cemented by the Blood of Chriſt, and united by the Bond of Love. *Obſ.* 3. *Ananias* acquaints *Saul* with the ſpecial Favours which God intended for him; *The God of our Fathers hath choſen thee*, or taken thee by the Hand, as the Word ſignifies, that thou ſhouldſt *know his Will* and ſee *that juſt One*: So, he calls the Bleſſed Jeſus to convince them of their Sin in putting him to Death; *And be a witneſs unto all men, of what he had ſeen and heard*. The Work of the Miniſters of the Goſpel is now to Witneſs for, hereafter to Witneſs againſt, now they Witneſs for God and his Truth, and perſwade Sinners to believe it, hereafter they will Witneſs againſt Sinners, for not believing and obeying the Truth of God. Lord, what a ſad Conſideration is this, that the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt be brought in as witneſſes againſt the Souls of their Neighbours and Friends, and be forced to teſtify to their Faces for their Condemnation: Ah Lord, with what an Heart muſt a poor Miniſter ſtudy when he conſidereth, that every Sermon that he Preaches muſt be brought in for a Witneſs againſt many, if not moſt of his Hearers; Doubtleſs this ſad Reflection makes every Faithful Miniſter of Chriſt Study hard, Pray hard, Intreat hard, be earneſt and inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, that they may not be condemners of their Peoples Souls. *Obſ.* 4. The Adviſe which *Ananias* gave to this New Convert to take upon him the Badge of Chriſtianity, to wit, Baptiſm; *Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy Sins*. *Here Note*, That Sacraments are not empty, inſignificant Signs; but God by his Grace and Bleſſing, renders his own Ordinances effectually for thoſe great ends, for which his Wiſdom has appointed them; *Be Baptized and waſh away thy Sins*; as Water cleanſeth the Body, ſo the Blood of Chriſt ſignified by Water, waſhes away the Guilt of the Soul. Where true Faith is, together with the Profeſſion of it by Baptiſm, there is Salvation promiſed, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.*

17 And it came to paſs, that when I was come again to Jeruſalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And ſaw him ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem: for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me. 19 And I ſaid, Lord, they know that I impriſoned, and beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee. 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him. 21 And he ſaid unto me, Depart: for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

St. *Paul* having thus declared to the *Jews*, his wonderful manner of Converſion, proceeds next to acquaint them, how deſirous he was to have Preached to the *Jews* rather than to the *Gentiles*, if the Will of God had ſeen fit; but it proved otherwiſe, for as he was praying in the Temple, he had a Viſion, in which he was commanded to haſten out of the City; becauſe his former Zeal in oppoſing the Goſpel would hinder his preſent Preaching of it from being ſucceſsful: Againſt this, he humbly argued that his former Zeal againſt Chriſtianity might he hoped, be an Argument to perſwade the *Jews* his Countrey-men to embrace Chriſtianity: But this Argument did not prevail for his ſtaying at *Jeruſalem*; but he was commanded to depart from thence to Preach the Goſpel to the deſpiſed *Gentiles*, who had not ſuch ſtrong Exceptions againſt him, but would with more readineſs embrace his Doctrine. *Learn hence*, 1. That Carnal Reaſonings are very apt to ariſe in the Hearts of God's own Servants, and cauſe them to object ſomething againſt their Obedience to the Divine Commands; Here the Apoſtle objects, that according to his Reaſon he ſaw greater probability of doing good by his Miniſtry among the *Jews*, than he could hope for among the *Gentiles*, who would be afraid of him as *Ananias* was; but Chriſt repeats his Command, *depart and get thee hence, for I will ſend thee to the Gentiles*. And now the Apoſtle doth no longer Diſpute but Diſpatch. This teacheth us, 2. To lay by all our Carnal Reaſonings and vain Pretences, when once the Call and Command of God is clear, and no longer cavil but comply, no longer object, but inſtantly obey. We may ſafely follow God blind-fold, when once we have aſſurance that he goes before us, and obey every Command without Heſitation or Limitation.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices, and ſaid, Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he ſhould live. 23 And as they cried out, and caſt off their clothes, and threw duſt into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the caſtle, and bade that he ſhould be examined by ſcourging: that he might know wherefore they cryed ſo againſt him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that ſtood by, is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a

Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, ſaying, Take heed what thou doeſt; for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and ſaid unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He ſaid, Yea. 28 And the chief captain anſwered, With a great ſum obtained I this freedom. And Paul ſaid, but I was free-born. 29 Then ſtraight-way they departed from him, which ſhould have examined him: and the chief captain alſo was afraid after he knew that he was a Roman, and becauſe he had bound him. 30 On the morrow, becauſe he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accuſed of the Jews, he looſed him from his bands, and commanded the chief prieſts and all their counſel to appear, and brought Paul down, and ſet him before them.

Obſerve here, 1: With what Patience the *Jews* heard the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe until he made mention of the *Gentiles*, and that he was appointed to Preach to them; upon which they brake forth into Fury and Paſſion, and expreſt their Fury by throwing Duſt into the Air, and caſting off their Clothes, as if they would preſently ſtone him, whom they lookt upon as the worſt of Villains, and unworthy to live: Where we may remark at once, both what a vile Opinion the *Jews* had of the *Gentiles*, whom they called and accounted Dogs; and what an high Eſteem they had of themſelves, and a proud Conceit of their own Deſervings, as if the Favours of Heaven belonged to none but themſelves, who yet trampled upon them, when they were tendered to them. *Obſ.* 2. What a vile Eſteem theſe wicked *Jews* had of the Holy and Innocent Apoſtle, who deſired, above all things, to Preach the Glad Tidings of the Goſpel to them, and long'd moſt affectionately for the Converſion and Salvation of them: They account him the greateſt Villain upon Earth, and unworthy to live upon it. But the Good Man had learnt, (and let all the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt learn it after him) to take Pleaſure in Reproaches, in Perſecutions, in Neceſſities and Diſtreſſes for Chriſt's Sake. *Away with ſuch a Fellow from the Earth, it is not meet that he ſhould live.* *Obſerve*, 3. The Pious Prudence and Innocent Policy, which the Apoſtle uſes for his own Preſervation, when they were about to bind him to a Poſt, in order to the Scourging of him, the Apoſtle declares himſelf a Free-Denizon of *Rome*, by being Born in one of the Cities, which the Roman Emperor had made Free; accordingly St. *Paul* pleads for himſelf the Priviledge of a *Roman* Citizen, who neither ought to be Bound nor Beaten: Tho' we may not render Evil for Evil, yet we may right our ſelves by all lawful Means: Chriſt allows as much of the Serpent, as the Dove in his Servants, provided the Subtilty of the one, doth not deſtroy the Simplicity of the other: The Head of the Serpent, and the Heart of the Dove do beſt together; for as Policy without Piety, is to Subtle too be good, ſo Piety without Policy, is too ſimple to be ſafe. *Obſ.* 4. How the chief Captain fearing he had done more than he could anſwer; becauſe it was Death for any one in Authority to violate the *Roman* Priviledges; therefore more out of Fear than Love, or more out of Love to himſelf than the Apoſtle, he looſes St. *Paul*'s Bands. *Thence Note*, That when at any time the Perſecutors of the Saints do deſiſt from their bloody purpoſes, it is not out of Love to them, but love to themſelves. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Saints Deliverances from Affliction and Perſecution whileſt on this ſide Heaven, are not Total or Final, but Momentary and Partial: The Apoſtle was delivered from his Chains, not from his Confinement; tho' unbound, not ſet at Liberty: Next Day we find him before the Great Council or *Sanhedrim*, and freſh Bonds and Afflictions abide him; little reſt is to expected by the Members, and leſs reſt by the Faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt in this World. Bleſſed be God for the believing Hopes of an everlaſting Reſt. Where the Fury of the Perſecutor, the Injuries of the Oppreſſor, ſhall ceaſe for ever: Where no Sin ſhall affect us, no Sorrow afflict us, no Danger affright us; but we ſhall be perfectly like unto God, as well in Purity as in Immortality. In the mean time, may we the Miniſters of God, who are ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel, bear the Burthen and Heat of the Day with Patience and Courage, Reſolution and Conſtancy; may we gird up the Loyns of our Minds, not accounting either our Labours or our Lives dear unto us, ſo we may finiſh our Courſe with Joy, and fulfil the Miniſtry, which we have received of the Lord, glorying in our Reproaches for well doing; yea, tho' we be accounted the Filth of the World, and the Off-ſcouring of all things: For when the Chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we ſhall receive a Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away, *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIII.

In the foregoing Chapter we find the Apoſtle in Priſon, but having leave given him to make his Defence, which accordingly he did, but little to the ſatisfaction of the enraged Multitude. In this Chapter we find him before the Sanhedrin, *or great Council at* Jeruſalem, *profeſſing his own Innocency; but inſtead of ſetting him at liberty, the curſed* Jews *conſpire his Deſtruction, but the Providence of God interpoſed wonderfully for his deliverance, as the Chapter before us fully informs us.*

AND Paul earneſtly beholding the council, ſaid, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day. 2 And the high prieſt Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him, to ſmite him on the mouth. 3 Then ſaid Paul unto him, God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall: for ſitteſt thou to Judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law?

Here we have obſervable the Apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous Profeſſion and Proteſtation. *Ananias* his inſolent and injurious Injunction. St. *Paul*'s zealous Anſwer and Conteſtation. *Obſerve*, 1. The Apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous Profeſſion and Proteſtation, *Ver.* 1. *I have lived in all good Conſcience unto this day*; that is, during his continuance in the Jewiſh Religion, and ſince his Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion; he had walked uprightly, and according to his Knowledge and the Light of his Conſcience. But had *Paul* a good Conſcience, when he perſecuted the Chriſtians; *Anſ.* He went according to his Conſcience, when he perſecuted, he verily thought he did God Service in ſo doing, and it was not any ſelfiſh end or ſiniſter Deſign he propounded to himſelf, but zeal for his Religion provoked him to Perſecution, *Phil.* 3. 6. *Concerning zeal perſecuting the Church*; it is certainly a Man's Duty to follow his Conſcience; but then it is as much his Duty to inform his Conſcience, as it is to follow it; *I have lived in all good Conſcience until this day.* *Here Note*, The Apoſtle ſets forth the Goodneſs of his Conſcience theſe four ways. 1. From the Goodneſs of his Converſation, *I have lived*; A good Converſation is the beſt Evidence of a good Conſcience. God doth not meaſure Mens Sincerity by the Tides of their Affections; but by the conſtant bent of their Reſolutions, and the general Courſe and Tenor of their Converſations. Every Man's Conſcience is as his Life is. 2. From the generality of his Care and Obedience; *I have lived in all good Conſcience*; if it be not a Conſcience all good, it is no good Conſcience at all. *Herod* has *ſome* good Conſcience, *he did many things*; but the Apoſtle went farther, he lived not in ſome, but *in all good Conſcience*. 3. The Apoſtle ſets forth the goodneſs of his Conſcience, from the Integrity of it towards God; *I have lived in all good Conſcience before God*: Many a Man's Conſcience paſſeth for a good Conſcience before Men, and perhaps before himſelf, which yet are not good *before God*, the Judge of Conſcience. 4. From his Continuance and Conſtancy, *until this day*, *I have lived in all good Conſcience before God until this day*: It is not ſufficient to begin a good Life, and to have a good Conſcience; but we muſt keep it too, and that all our Days, even to our laſt Day. Happy Man! that can truly ſay at his dying day, I have lived in all good Conſcience until this Day. *Obſerve*, 2. As the Apoſtle's Solemn Proteſtation, ſo the High Prieſt's injurious Injunction; *Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him to ſmite him on the mouth.* *Here Note*, What is the Reward and Portion of a good Conſcience from the World; to be ſmitten, either on the Mouth or with the Mouth, either with the Fiſt or with the Tongue. There is nothing ſo enrages Men of wicked Conſciences, as the Profeſſion and Practice of a good Conſcience doth: But better ten Blows on the Face, than one on the Heart; better a thouſand

Blows for a good Conſcience than one from it. *Obſerve*, 3. St. *Paul*'s zealous Anſwer and Conteſtation, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall. Where Note*, 1. That altho' the Apoſtle doth not ſmite again as he was ſmitten, tho' he did not ſmite *Ananias* on the Cheek, as he ſmote him on the Mouth, yet he gives him a Check, and ſharp Reproof for his Violence and Injuſtice. *Thence Learn*, That Chriſtian Patience, tho' it binds a Man's Hands, yet it doth not always bind his Tongue; tho' it lays a Law upon a Man to forbear Violence, yet it lays not a Law upon him to enjoin him Silence. St. *Paul*, tho' he did not ſtrike, yet he durſt ſpeak; tho' he held his Hands, yet he did not hold his Peace: Tho' Religion pinions a Man's Arms from ſtriking, yet he doth not ſeal up a Man's Lips from ſpeaking; but we may declare both our own Innocency, and others Injuſtice. *Note*, 2. St. *Paul* doth not ſay, God ſhall judge thee, or God ſhall Plague thee; but God ſhall ſmite thee: *denoting* that as there is always *Equity*; ſo ſometimes a *Retaliation*, in the Executions of Divine Juſtice or a Recompenſing like for like. God ſometimes returns Smiting for Smiting, ſo that the Sinner is forced to cry out, *as I have done, ſo God hath requited me.* God puniſhes ſometimes in the ſame kind, ſometimes in the ſame manner, ſometimes in the ſame place; that Sinners are forced to cry out, Righteous art thou, O Lord! and juſt are thy Judgments.

4 And they that ſtood by, ſaid, Revileſt thou God's high prieſt?

Obſerve here, That *Ananias* the High Prieſt having commanded the Apoſtle unheard and uncondemned to be Smitten, the Apoſtle denounces the juſt Judgment of God upon him for the ſame; yet not in a way of Imprecation, but Prediction: rather foretelling what would come, than wiſhing or deſiring that it ſhould come; not in a way of Revenge, or recompenſing Evil for Evil, but in a way of a Mineſterial Reproof, which the Standers-by called *Reviling, Revileſt thou God's High Prieſt? Thence Learn*, That profane Sinners look upon the faithful Reproofs, which the Miniſters of God give them for their Leudneſs, to be no better than Revilings, they think we Revile them, if we do but Rebuke them; whereas tho' we chaſten Sinners, with the Rod of Reproof, we dare not ſting them with the Scorpion of Reproach.

5 Then ſaid Paul, I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt: For it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Several Interpretations are given by Expoſitors of theſe Words, *I wiſt not, Brethren, that it was the High Prieſt.* 1. Some think that St. *Paul* really did not know the High Prieſt, having been gone ſo long from *Jeruſalem*; and the High Prieſts being made Yearly: Others ſay, 2. That there being a great throng about him, the Apoſtle could not diſtinctly hear who it was that ſpake to him. 3. Some underſtand it of abſolute denial, that any ſuch Office as that of the High Prieſt ought then to be in being. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I do not own any Man to be a lawful High Prieſt now, that Function being aboliſhed and diſanulled at the Coming of the *Meſſias. Again*, 4. Others underſtand the Words, as if the Apoſtle denied him to be the lawful High Prieſt, one of God's appointing, he being one of Man's making, having purchaſed the place with Money, for the Power and Covetouſneſs of the *Romans*, put a new High Prieſt every Year to Officiate; accordingly St. *Paul*, knowing this Man to be none of the Poſterity of *Aaron*, but brought in by ſordid Gain, might juſtly diſown him to be the High Prieſt. *Laſtly*, There are who affirm, That the Apoſtle did certainly ſee and know the High Prieſt; and that his meaning is, That having received ſuch unjuſt Uſage in the Court, as to be openly ſmitten in the time of hearing, he did not know; that is, he did not conſider who it was that ſpake to him, and therefore ſpake haſtily and unadviſedly. The Scripture will not bear us out to uſe ill words to Magiſtrates, ſhould we be (as St. *Paul* here was) ill uſed by them; yet are Magiſtrates no more to be flattered than they are to be reproached; The greateſt may be reproved, and with a gracious Severity told of their Faults, and St. *Paul* did no more. It is no Sin to tell the Judgments of God, which will certainly come upon injurious and unjuſt Oppreſſors.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cryed out, in the Council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Phariſee, the Son of a Phariſee: of the hope and reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion.

Obſerve here, The innocent Policy which the Apoſtle uſes for his own Preſervation: He perceiving, that the Council before whom he ſtood were not all of a piece, but patched up of *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, he publickly profeſſes himſelf a *Phariſee* by Education, and of that Perſwaſion now in point of Reſurrection. Thus at once he caſt in a Bone of Contention between the *Sadducees* which denied the Reſurrection, and the *Phariſees* which owned it; and obliged the *Phariſees* (at leaſt as to that Opinion) to take his part, and ſo by pious Prudence he turned their Oppoſition againſt him upon one another, that by ſetting them at variance, he might the better eſcape. *Learn hence*, That an Innocent and Prudent Policy may warrantably be made uſe of by the Members and Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, without any blemiſh to their holy Profeſſion, in order to our Preſervation from the hands of Perſecutors, a Serpentine Subtilty may be made uſe of, together with a Dove-like Innocency. Thus did St. *Paul* here, when he perceived that one part were *Sadducees*, and the other *Phariſees*, *He cryed out*, &c.

7. And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſention between the Phariſees, and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees ſay, that there is no reſurrection, neither angel nor ſpirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both, *9* And there aroſe a great cry: and the ſcribes *that were* of the Phariſees part aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, We find no evil in this man: but if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt God.

Obſerve here, 1. How ſad a State, and how bad a Condition was the *Jewiſh* Church now in, when in the *Sanhedrin* or great Council, Men had Power and Authority, who believed no Life but this; and what Hypocrites were the *Phariſees*, that could thus Incorporate and Embody with damnable Hereticks, the *Sadducees*; and yet at the ſame time hated and perſecuted the Chriſtians: The *Sadducees* were ſo far from believing, that there was any Spirit, that they blaſphemouſly maintained, that God himſelf was no Spiritual but only a Corporeal Being. When Men ſin with Obſtinacy againſt Supernatural Light, God juſtly withdraws from 'em even Natural Light, and ſuffers them to fall from one degree of Error to another. *Obſerve*, 2. How Partiality will change Mens Judgment, according to the Intereſt of a Party or Faction. The *Phariſees* were bitter Enemies to the Apoſtle; but becauſe he owned himſelf of their Sect, they inſtantly take part with them, and cry, *We find no fault in him:* The Feuds about Religion, are commonly the ſharpeſt Feuds; Men are more fond of the Notions of their Brains, than they are of the Iſſue of their Bodies: *Odia Religioſorum ſunt Acerbiſſima*, Religious Heats are hotteſt. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Diſſentions of God's Adverſaries, ofttimes becomes the Deliverance of God's Servants. Thus here, the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees* quarrel about the Reſurrection; the *Phariſees* juſtify St. *Paul*, and tells them that oppoſe him. They are in danger of fighting againſt God. Thus God, when he pleaſeth, can find or make Patrons of his People, and raiſe up Friends from amongſt his very Enemies, to defend his Cauſe.

10 And when there aroſe a great diſſenſion, the chief captain, fearing leaſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the ſouldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the caſtle. 11 And night following, the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.

St. *Paul* was now in the midſt of Difficulty and Danger; but obſerve how ſeaſonably God ſteps in for his Succour and Deliverance: Firſt, he ſtirs up that heathen Tribune, the chief Captain *Lyſias*, who was preſent at the Trial, to ſee his Priſoner have fair Play; the Lord ſtirs up this Man to reſcue the Apoſtle from the hands of Violence, by which he was in danger of being pull'd in pieces, and he is returned ſafe to the Caſtle again. O how do God's Encouragement evermore accompany his Commands, his Faithful Servants when they ſuffer for him, ſhall certainly be delivered by him, either in Trouble or out of Trouble. Secondly, God comforts the Suffering Apoſtle with his own Preſence, and with the gracious Manifeſtations of his ſpecial Favour, *The Lord ſtood by him,and ſaid,Be of good cheer*,Paul. *Where Note*,That if the Lord ſtand by, and be graciouſly preſent with his Servants in a ſuffering hour, 'tis no matter how many and how mighty they be that do withſtand them,and appear againſt them; no doubt this Word,*Be of good cheer*, Paul, turned the Apoſtle's Priſon into a Palace, yea,into a Paradice, and enabled him to bid a bold Defiance to all the Deviliſh Deſigns of the *Jews* in *Jeruſalem* againſt him. Having got ſuch good Security for his Safety, even from God himſelf,in the Faith of which our Apoſtle holily Triumphs, ſaying, *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* Rom. 11.31. That is, None can be againſt us, either ſafely or unmercifully. The Preſence of God with his ſuffering Servants outweighs all their Diſcouragements.

12. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themſelvs under a curſe, ſaying, That they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul: 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conſpiracy. 14 And they came to the chief prieſts and elders, and ſaid, We have bound our ſelves under a great curſe, that we will eat nothing until we have ſlain Paul. 15 Now therefore ye with the counſel ſignifie to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

Obſerve here, 1. A barbarous and bloody Plot, a curſed Combination and Conſpiracy againſt the Life of the Innocent and Uſeful Apoſtle: No ſooner was it Day-light, but the wicked *Jews* bind themſelves by an Oath,never to eat nor drink more,until they eat the Apoſtle's Fleſh and drink his Blood. Thus *the wicked plotted againſt the juſt,and gnaſheth upon him with his Teeth*,Pſalm 37.12. *Obſerve*, 2. The Numbers which were engaged in this Conſpiracy, more than forty,they all agreed as one Man. Lord, how Numerous, how Unanimous, how Reſolute and Outragious are the Enemies of thy Holy Religion to carry on their accurſed Contrivances for the Extirpation of it; thus was it here, theſe Enemies were numerous,*more than forty.* The Devil's Deſigns never miſcarry for want of fit Inſtruments; he has a Party ever ready to oppoſe the Goſpel in every place. And they were Unanimous, as well as Numerous; they combined together in one curſed Bond; here was Unity, but not a Unity in the Truth, but a Conſpiracy againſt it: Here was Agreement and Friendſhip, but it was like that of *Herod* and *Pilate* againſt Chriſt, and not for him: And they were Reſolute and Outragious, *They bound themſelves under a Curſe*,under a bloody Vow,to purſue their Purpoſe of Murthering the Apoſtle: It has been the Old Policy of the Enemies of the Church, to oblige and bind themſelves by Oaths and Execrations, by Leagues and Aſſociations, to carry on their wicked and bloody Deſigns againſt the Church; *They were more than Forty, which made this Conſpiracy.* *Obſerve*, 3. The Quality of the Perſons which were engaged in this bloody Purpoſe; they were the *Sadducees*,who denied the Immortality ofthe Soul,and a Life after Death. And they apply themſelves to the High Prieſt and *Sanheidrin* or Great Council, not doubting of his and their readineſs to join with them. O what a low Ebb was the *Jewiſh* Religion now at! What an High Prieſt and Prieſthood was here that muſt head a Confederacy of murdering *Sadducees!* how great was the degeneracy of the *Jewiſh* Church,when their Chief Prieſts were thus ready to comply with,and contribute their beſt Aſſiſtance to ſuch a cruel Crew of Cut-throats,and bloody Aſſaſſines; but they had almoſt filled up the meaſure of their Sins,and their final Deſtruction was near approaching. *Obſerve Laſtly*, What Craft and Cruelty, what Fraud and Force are here found combin'd together in the Church's Enemies. The Council muſt court the Captain, that he bring down his Priſoner, *as tho' he would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him.* Thus was the Plot againſt the Apoſtle's Life laid Craftily as well as Cruelly, under a pretence of having the Priſoner re-examined,they contrive to have him brought down from the Caſtle, and in his way to the Council, they combined together for his Deſtruction. Lord,abate the Power of the Church's Enemies, ſince their Malice cannot be abated.

16 And when Paul's ſiſters ſon heard of their lying in wait, he went and entred into the caſtle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and ſaid, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and ſaid, Paul the priſoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ſomething to ſay unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aſide privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou haſt to tell me? 20 And he ſaid, The Jews have agreed to deſire thee, that thou wouldſt bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire ſomewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto hm: for they lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themſelves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink, till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promiſe from thee.

Note here, 1. That no Conſpiracies are or can be kept ſecret from God, who tan both detect them and Defeat them at his Pleaſure. *Note*, 2. The remarkable Providence of God in bringing this Conſpiracy to the Knowledge of St. *Paul*'s Siſter's Son: he was perhaps by,when the Conſpirators were contriving the Miſchief, and over-heard them; it is happy for the Innocent,that the Malicious cannot keep their own Counſel: God oftentimes cauſes the Tongues of the Peoples Enemies to fall upon themſelves, and they diſcover the wicked Purpoſes of their Hearts, which none but themſelves were privy to: *Note*, 3. How the Hearts of all Men are in the Hand of the Lord,and how he turneth them as he pleaſeth. This is evident from the Chief Captain's great Humanity towards St. *Paul*, and his courteous Humility towards his Siſter's Son, taking the Youth by the Hand and as readily giving him both Attendance and Diſpatch; ſuch a Sovereignty and Dominion has God over the Hearts of Men, that he can inſtantly incline them as he pleaſeth, and make very Enemies become Benefactors at his Pleaſure.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man, that thou haſt ſhewed theſe things to me. 23 And he called unto him two centurions, ſaying, Make ready two hundred ſouldiers, to go to Ceſarea, and horſemen threeſcore and ten, and ſpearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night. 24 And provide *them* beaſts, that they may ſet Paul on, and bring *him* ſafe unto Felix the Governour.

Obſerve here, 1. How wonderfully God over-ruled the Heart of the Chief Captain,in that he took care both of St. *Paul*,and the young Man alſo; he bids the young Man depart, for had it been known,and that he had diſcovered the Conſpiracy, they had conſpired againſt his Life; and had not the Chief Captain conveyed away the Apoſtle,his Enemies who had been diſappointed in this, would have made further Attempts againſt his Life: Thus wonderfully doth the good Providence of God work for his Servants Preſervation. *Obſerve*, 2. What a ſtrong Guard does God raiſe and ſet round the Apoſtle for his Defence and Safety,even a Guard of Heathen Souldiers,to ſecure him from the *Jewiſh* Rage; Two Hundred Souldiers,Threeſcore and Ten Horſemen, and Spearmen Two Hundred: What a Royal Life-Guard was here,raiſed for the Apoſtle's ſafe Conduct to *Ceſerea.* None of all theſe Souldiers intended him any good; but made uſe of them as effectually, as if they had had the greateſt Good-will for him; God can make bad Perſons ſhew kindneſs to his good Servants, and do his Will by them, who know nothing of his Mind and Will. When God has work to do, he will find Inſtruments to do it by. And tho' we ſee them not,yet they are never the farther off.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26 Claudius Lyſias, unto the moſt excellent governour Felix, *ſendeth* greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould have been killed

led of them: then came I with an army, and reſcued him, having underſtood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cauſe, wherefore they accuſed him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of Bonds. 30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I ſent ſtraightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what *they had* againſt him. Farewel.

The Chief Captain *Lyſias*, having ſent St. *Paul* under a ſtrong Guard to *Ceſarea* by Night, where *Felix* the *Roman* Governour reſided, he writes a letter to acquaint *Felix* with the Accuſation ſo laid to the Priſoners Charge. In which Letter, *Obſerve*, 1, The Title given to the *Roman* Governour, *Moſt Excellent*; *Claudias Lyſias, to the moſt Excellent Governour Felix, ſendeth greeting.* Titles of Civil Honour and Reſpect given to Perſons in Place and Power are agreeable to the Mind and will of God: There is an Honour which belongs to Men, with reſpect to their external Degree and Place, when none is due to them, with reſpect to their Internal Qualifications. He that is very Honourable as to his Place, may not deſerve any Honour as to his worth; yet ought he to be Honoured ſo far as his place requireth. *Obſerve*, 2. How God over-ruled the Heart and Pen of this Captain *Lyſias*, to do the Apoſtle right in repreſenting his Caſe fairly and indifferently: That he found nothing brought againſt him that was puniſhable, either with Death or Bonds, by the *Roman* Law. *Obſerve*, 3. How triflingly he ſpeaks of the great things in Queſtion concerning our Bleſſed Redeemer's Death and Reſurrection, as alſo of the whole Goſpel; he calls them (Undervaluingly) *Queſtions of their Law*. As the Wiſdom of the World is Fooliſhneſs with God, ſo the manifold Wiſdom of God is accounted and eſteemed Folly by the ignorant and blind World: Yet *Obſerve* 4. How God over-ruled his very ſlighting of theſe Controverſies in Diſpute for the Apoſtle's Advantage; he being by that means preſerved from the Rage of the *Jews*, *When this Man was taken of the* Jews, *and ſhould have been killed by them, I came with an Army, and reſcued him.* Behold now, God accompliſhes his own Deſigns for the Preſervation of his Servants, by the hands of thoſe from whom Deſtruction could rather have been expected. *Thus here*, God made uſe of an Heathen Captain to reſcue and defend the Apoſtle from the enraged *Jews*, who ſends him under a ſtrong Guard, with a friendly Letter, in Favour of him, to *Felix* the Governour at *Ceſarea*, where he gives notice to his Accuſers to implead him Face to Face. Bleſſed be God, that our Times are in his Hand, not in our Enemies Hands, nor yet in our own; until we have finiſhed the Work which God deſigned us, neither Men nor Devils ſhall take us off.

31 Then the ſoldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. 32 On the morrow they left the horſemen to go with him, and returned to the caſtle. 33 Who when they came to Ceſarea, and delivered the epiſtle to the governour, preſented Paul alſo before him. 34 And when the governour had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he underſtood that he was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Judgment hall.

The Apoſtle being brought before *Felix* the *Roman* Governour, alth' he was an Heathen, yet he ſhewed the Apoſtle far more Favour than his own Countrymen the *Jews*: For, *Obſerve*, 1. His Affability to St. *Paul*, *in asking him of his Country*: 2. His Juſtice, He would not judge him till he had his Accuſers Face to Face; *I will hear thee, when thine Accuſers are come.* If it be enough to Accuſe, who can be Innocent? And if it be ſufficient to deny, who would be found guilty? Magiſtrates muſt know a Cauſe before they give Sentence or Judgment about it, otherwiſe, tho' they pronounce a right Sentence, yet it is not in Judgment, but by accident. Magiſtrates muſt be Stars as well as Miniſters, they muſt do nothing blind-fold or blindly. *Obſerve*, 3. His great Favour towards the Apoſtle, in committing him Priſoner, not to the common Goal, but to *Herod*'s Palace; A fair Priſon (if a place of Confinement may be ſo called) the *Sanhedrin* at *Jeruſalem*, tho' of his own Country, and of his own Religion, yet were not ſo kind to him as *Felix* the Heathen Governour.

Thus the Chapter concludes with an Account of the Apoſtle's wonderful Deliverance from the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem*, (who conſpired his Deſtruction) together with the inſtrumental Means and Manner of it: In the next Chapter we find him brought to *Ceſarea*, Tried before *Felix*, making a Defence for himſelf, and ſo reaſoning that *Felix* trembled: Behold, a Priſoner at Liberty, and his Judge in Bonds.

CHAP. XXIV.

In the beginning of this Chapter we find St. Paul *brought to his Trial before* Felix *the* Roman *Governour; a famous Trial, at which the Plaintiff was* Ananias *the High Prieſt, and ſeveral Members of the* Sanhedrin; *the Defendant St.* Paul. *The Judge* Felix, *the Emperor's Attorney-general* Tertullus; *and the* Indictment *drawn up againſt the Priſoner,* Hereſy *and* Sedition: *from which Imputation the Apoſtle clears himſelf; and in the end of the Chapter, makes a Declaration of his Faith, and gives an account of the Holineſs and Innocency of his Life.*

1 AND after five days, Ananias the high prieſt deſcended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governour againſt Paul.

Obſerve here, How *Ananias* the High Prieſt, with the Elders or Heads of the *Jewiſh* Council at *Jeruſalem*, travel from thence to *Ceſarea*; a great many Miles to inform the Government againſt St. *Paul*; *After five days* Ananias *deſcended*, &c. The Devil's Drudges ſtick at no Pains, ſpare for no Coſt in doing his drudgery. A perſecuting Spirit claps wings to a Perſon, it makes him ſwift in his Motion, and zealous in his Application and Endeavours. *Obſerve*, 2. How the High Prieſt carrieth with him one of their moſt Eminent and Eloquent Advocates, to implead the innocent Apoſtle. *Satan* never miſcarries in any of his Enterprizes and wicked Deſigns for want of fit Tools to carry them on. He hath his *Tertullus*, an Eloquent Orator ready, who could tune his Tongue any way for a large Fee. *Ananias deſcended with a certain Orator named Tertullus*, &c.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuſe *him*, ſaying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence. 3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs. 4 Notwithſtanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy clemency a few words.

Obſerve here, St. *Paul* the Priſoner, being called forth, *Tertullus* the Orator begins to ſhew his Art by a flattering Inſinuation, which mightily prevails with Men of mean and corrupt Minds. There is no Cauſe ſo foul and bad, but ſome will be found to plead it; yea, to juſtify and defend it. And if ſo, Judges had need be wiſe as the Angel of God, diſcerning between Truth and Falſhood. *Obſerve farther*, How *Tertullus* ſeeks to gain the Judge's Favour by Flattery and Falſhood: To win Judges by Flattery, hath ever by falſe Accuſers been taken for the ſureſt way of Succeſs; but after all Flattery is a very provoking and wrath procuring Sin: And it is hard to ſay which is moſt dangerous, to receive Flattery or to give it. When Men give much Glory to Man, 'tis hard for Man to give that Glory back again to God: 'Tis Hell and Death to flatter Sinners, or ſuffer our ſelves to be flattered by them. *Obſerve laſtly*, That bad Government is better than no Government; Tyranny it ſelf is better than Anarchy. The *Jews* were not now their own Maſters, but Tributaries to the *Romans*. Yet *Tertullus* acknowleges, *Many worthy Deeds were done unto their Nation by the prudence of the* Roman *Governour, ſeeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy Deeds are done unto this Nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, moſt noble* Felix.

5 For we have found this Man a peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes. 6 Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our Law. 7 But the chief captain Lyſias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands. 8 Commanding his Accuſers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thy ſelf mayſt take knowledge of all theſe things, whereof we accuſe him. 9 And the Jews alſo aſſented, ſaying, that theſe things were ſo.

Tertullus having prepared the Judge, preſently falls upon the Matter, and charges St. *Paul* with being a peſtilent Fellow, a ſeditious Perſon, a diſturber of the Nation, a prophaner of the Temple, a Ringleader of the Sect of the *Nazarenes.* And adds, That out of meer Zeal to the Jewiſh Religion, they had themſelves before now, diſpatcht him out of the way, but that he was violently reſcued out of their Hands by *Lyſias* the Chief Captain, and brought thither to be tryed. Concluding, That theſe things which he had ſpoken, were the Senſe of all thoſe who came down with him as Witneſſes, *ver.* 9. *The* Jews *alſo aſſented, and ſaid that theſe things were ſo. Here Note,* 1. What an heavy load of Reproaches and falſe Accuſations, our Innocent Apoſtle laboured under; he is accounted, and called a walking Peſtilence. Thus the Holy and Faithful Servants of God are eſteemed by the World; the Plague and Bane of the Place, and Nation where they live: Altho' it is really for their Sakes, that God ſtaves off Plagues and Judgments from falling upon the World; *We have found this Man a Peſtilent Fellow.* It is not the greateſt Holineſs towards God, nor Righteouſneſs towards Man, that can ſufficiently ſhield and defend a Saint from Cenſure and Slander, from Calumny and falſe Accuſation. *Note,* 2. Beſides the General Charge, that the Apoſtle was the very Peſt and Plague of Mankind: We have a Threefold Accuſation brought againſt him, That he was a Mover of Sedition, a Prophaner of the Temple, and a Ringleader of the Sect of the *Nazarenes.* Lord, how ſhould thy Faithful Miniſters and Ambaſſadors prepare themſelves for, and comfort themſelves under, the moſt helliſh Reproaches, when we find the great Apoſtle, (whom St. *Chryſoſtom* honours with this Character, *That the Earth never bare a better Man ſince it bare our Redeemer*) yet thus miſcalled and accounted a Peſt, a Plague, the Filth of the World, and the Off-ſcouring of all things! O why ſhould ſuch worthleſs Worms as we murmur, when we meet with much leſs Reproaches! Lord help us in Imitation of thy Example, for the Joy that is ſet before us to deſpiſe the ſhame, as well as to endure the Croſs. The beſt Men that ever the World had, have fallen under the laſhes of invenom'd Tongues. What foul Aſperſions have Malice caſt upon Innocency it ſelf. Our Bleſſed Saviour in the cleareſt act of Innocency, his caſting out of Devils, ſuffered the moſt horrible Imputation, even of *caſting out Devils through Belzebub the prince of Devils,* St. *Matth.* 9. 34. Now the Servant muſt not expect to be above his Maſter; If Chriſt thus ſuffered, needs muſt Chriſtianity, needs muſt Chriſtians, needs muſt Miniſters and Ambaſſadors.

10 Then Paul, after that the governour had beckened unto him to ſpeak anſwered, Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this Nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for my ſelf: 11 Becauſe that thou mayeſt underſtand, that there are yet but twelve days ſince I went up to Jeruſalem for to worſhip, 12 And they neither found me in the temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in the ſynagogues, nor in the city: 23 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.

Our Apoſtle being accuſed of three notorious Crimes, namely, *Sedition, Hereſy* and *Prophanation* of the *Temple,* anſwers diſtinctly to every one of them. *Where obſerve,* 1. How undaunted Innocency is in a good Perſon, and in a good Cauſe; St. *Paul* was ſo far from being daunted by the greatneſs of his Enemies, or by the Vehemency of their Accuſation, that he tells the Governour he did *with all chearfulneſs* undertake his Defence. *Obſerve,* 2. How the Apoſtle anſwers diſtinctly to the particulars of his Accuſations. And Firſt, as to the Crime of *Sedition,* charged upon his Perſon. Secondly, as to the Crime of *Hereſy* charged upon his Religion; as to the former, the Crime of *Sedition,* this is a very infamous Charge: What *Schiſm* is, in matter Eccleſiaſtical; that is *Sedition* in matters Temporal and Civil. As the one violates the Peace of the Church, ſo doth the other the Peace of the Commonwealth. *Sedition* is committed three ways; by the Head, by the Tongue, and by the Hand. A Seditious Head plots and contrives Miſchief, a Seditious Tongue vents it, and a Seditious Hand executes it. None of theſe ways was the Apoſtle guilty of *Sedition:* He never imployed his Head to contrive, or his Tongue to utter, or his Hand to practiſe any thing that tended that way; yet is he charged with it; *We have found this Fellow a mover of Sedition. Learn thence,* It is no new Stratagem to repreſent the Faithful Servants of God as Enemies to States and Kingdoms, as Diſturbers of the Peace, as Troublers of *Iſrael,* as Trumpets of Rebellion, as Movers of Sedition, on purpoſe to bring them into hatred with Princes, that they may fall under the Sword of the Magiſtrate as Malefactors, and be lookt upon as Perſons unworthy to live. But how does St. *Paul* free himſelf from the Charge and Imputation of *Sedition?* Thus, 1. By demonſtrating the Improbability of it; how unlikely it was, that he who came up to the Temple to worſhip God, and to bring Alms to the Poor, and was in *Jeruſalem* but a very few days, and did not ſo much as Diſpute either in the Temple or in the Synagogue, ſhould yet ſtir up the People to *Sedition.* 2. He puts his Adverſaries upon proof of their Article, *ver.* 13. *Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.* From the Apoſtle's Practice in clearing his own Innocency. *We Learn,* That it is a piece of Juſtice which every Man owes to himſelf, to vindicate and clear his Reputation from all Guilt falſely imputed to him, and eſpecially from that of *Sedition.*

14 But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.

Here the Apoſtle anſwers the Second Part of the Charge brought againſt him; Namely, the Charge of *Hereſy,* and being the Ringleader of the Sect of the *Nazarenes. Where Note,* That although the Apoſtle would not out of his great Modeſty, take upon himſelf to be one of the Heads or Chiefs among them, a *Ringleader,* as they ſtiled him; yet as to the Owning of that way, notwithſtanding all Imputations they had caſt upon it, he doth it with the greateſt Freedom and Courage in the preſence of his Judge and Accuſers; *This I confeſs, that after the way which they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I,* &c. *Here Obſerve,* 1. The falſe Imputation which Chriſtianity ſuffered under, in its firſt Appearance; *After the way which they call Hereſy.* It is no new thing to Nick-name the worſhippers of the true God, to call them Hereticks, and their way of Worſhip *Hereſy. Obſerve,* 2. The way taken by St. *Paul* to remove this falſe Imputation; Namely, by an Appeal to Scripture and Antiquity: *So worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets. Where Note,* How he appeals to Scripture, as the Ground and Rule of his Faith, the Law and the Prophets; and then he appeals to the beſt and pureſt Antiquity for the Object of his Worſhip: *So worſhip I the God of my Fathers. Obſerve,* 3. The Freedom and Courage of the Apoſtle in owning his Religion, notwithſtanding theſe falſe Imputations, even in the preſence of his greateſt Enemies, and when they were in hopes to deſtroy him for it; *This I confeſs unto thee.* The Apoſtle abhorred that mean and baſe Spirited Principle, which makes it lawful for Men to deny their Religion, when it brings them into Danger: No, he valued his Religion above, and preſer'd it before his Perſonal Safety. God Almighty inſpire us with the ſame Courage and holy Reſolution, that when our Adverſaries of the Church of *Rome* pronounce us Hereticks, and call our Religion Hereſy; we may anſwer them as our Apoſtle anſwered their Forefather, the ſubtil *Phariſees, After the way which you call Hereſy, ſo worſhip we the God of our Father, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

15 And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt. 16 And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have al-

ways a conſcience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Our Apoſtle had made a free and open Profeſſion of his Religion in the foregoing *Verſe: After the way called Hereſy, do I worſhip the God of my Fathers.* Here at the 15th *Verſe* he aſſerts the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, which was a principal Article both of the Jewiſh and the Chriſtian Religion; *I have hope towards God, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt.* And having made this Declaration of his Faith, *Ver.* 14, 15. he next gives an Account of his Life at *Ver.* 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards Men. Obſerve here,* 1. What is the Principle and Guide of a good Man's Actions, and that is *Conſcience*: The Word and Law of God is the Rule of our Actions, but Conſcience is the immediate Guide and Director of them. *Obſerve*, 2. The Extent of a good Man's Pious Practice, *to keep a Conſcience void of offence towards God and Man*: To exerciſe a faithful Care in performing the Duties of both Tables, is both an Argument of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion. *Obſerve*, 3. The Apoſtle's Conſtancy and Perſeverance in this Courſe to have *always a Conſcience void of Offence.* We muſt not make Conſcience of our Duty by fits and ſtarts; but in the whole Courſe and Tenour of our Lives and Actions, Religion ſhould be a conſtant Frame and Temper of Mind. *Obſerve*, 4. The Apoſtle's earneſt Care and Endeavour to this purpoſe, *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf*: The Original Word is of an intenſe Signification, and denotes the Apoſtle's applying his Mind in good earneſt, to be throughly inſtructed in all the Parts and Points of his Duty, and his being very Careful and Conſcientious in the Diſcharge and Performance of it. *Obſerve*, 5. What was the Apoſtle's great Motive and Encouragement to do all this: Namely, The Belief of the Reſurrection, and the future State of Rewards and Puniſhments conſequent upon it: Becauſe *I hope for a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt*; therefore *do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence.* If we believe the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Judgment to come, we ſhall be very careful to diſcharge a good Conſcience now, in order to the rendring of a good Account of our ſelves then. Happy Man, who when he goes into another World, carries with him thither a Conſcience clear of all Guilt, either by Innocency or by Repentance: For verily at the hour of death, to be free from Stings and Upbraidings, from the Terrors and Tortures, from the Confuſion and Amazement of a Guilty Conſcience, is a Happineſs ſo deſirable, that its well worth the Care and beſt Endeavours of our whole Life. May the Apoſtle's Exerciſe be our daily Practice: Namely, *To keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards all Men.*

17 Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Aſia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought againſt me. 20 Or elſe let theſe ſame *here* ſay, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I ſtood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried ſtanding among them, Touching the reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion by you this day.

The Apoſtle had vindicated himſelf from the Charge and Imputation of Sedition and Hereſy before; he comes now to clear himſelf of the third charge; namely, the Prophanation of the Temple: In order whereunto he declares that he had not been a long time at *Jeruſalem* before this Journey; and that now he came to bring Alms to the poor *Jews* that were converted to Chriſtianity: He acknowledges that at this time, he went indeed into the Temple, yet not to prophane it, but to perform thoſe Rites in it, which the Laws of the *Jews* required of ſuch as had the Vow of *Nazarites* upon them. Thus the Apoſtle cleared himſelf of all that was objected againſt him, and made it evidently appear to the Face of his Enemies, that all the Accuſations brought againſt him were falſe and clamorous. *Learn thence*, That generally the Accuſations lay'd by the Malicious to the Charge of the Innocent, are nothing but empty Noiſe and Clamour, Having thus vindicated himſelf to their Faces, he next makes an Appeal to the Conſciences of his Accuſers; whether there was any thing of moment charged upon him more than this, That he profeſſed and believed the Reſurrection of the Dead. Thus bravely did the Apoſtle plead his own Cauſe here, or rather the Spirit of God that ſpake in him. Tho' *Satan* had got the High Prieſt *Ananias*, and his Eloquent Oratour *Tertullus* to Implead and Impeach St. *Paul*: Yet behold with what a flood of Truth and Eloquence doth the Apoſtle vindicate his own Innocence. *Magna eſt Veritas, & prævalebit*: Great is the Truth, and will finally prevail.

22 And when Felix heard theſe things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and ſaid, When Lyſias the chief captain ſhall come down, I will know the uttermoſt of your matter. 23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he ſhould forbid none of his acquaintance to miniſter, or come unto him.

The Senſe of this is: When *Felix* underſtood and diſcerned how things went, he would not paſs any Sentence in the Caſe at preſent; but put them off, ſaying, *When I have got a more perfect knowledge of this way of Chriſtianity*; and when I have ſpoken with *Lyſias*, and underſtand the truth concerning the Tumult, I will then determine the Difference between you: In the mean time, the Captain of the Guard ſhall have the Priſoner in Cuſtody, to gratify the *Jews*: *Where obſerve*, Both the Equity and Clemency of *Felix* the Judge: His Equity, in that he would not pronounce Sentence, before he had throughly and fully underſtood the Matter of Fact: His Clemency, in ſuffering the Apoſtle to be Priſoner at large, and allowing his Friends and Acquaintance liberty to come and viſit him. Behold, the former Rigour towards the Apoſtle mercifully relaxed; he is no more confined to a cloſe Dungeon, but goes abroad with a Chain and a Keeper, and none of his Friends are forbidden either to Viſit him or Relieve him. Thus God in an unexpected Hour, caſts ſuch outward Comforts to his ſuffering Saints and Servants as he ſees will do them moſt good: Yea, and can cauſe his and their Enemies to become Contributors thereunto.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drucilla, which was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt. 25 And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come; Felix trembled, and anſwered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.

This Chapter now concludes with the Apoſtle's Famous Sermon before *Felix* his Judge, in which we have conſiderable; the Preacher, the Hearers, the Text or Subject preached upon, and the ſucceſsful Effect of the Sermon. *Obſerve*, 1. The Preacher, St. *Paul*, *As* Paul *reaſoned*: The Apoſtle now was in Bonds, yet had liberty to Preach, and he preaches with Liberty; with great Boldneſs and Freedom of Speech, tho' under great Diſadvantages; his Perſon Impriſoned, his Reputation blotted and defamed, loaded with Calumnies and odious Imputations; yet under all theſe Diſadvantages the Apoſtle preaches. *Obſerve*, 2. His Hearers, *Felix* and his Wife *Druſilla*; *Felix* a bad Man, guilty of Bribery, *&c.* *Druſilla* a vile Woman, forſook her own Husband, and lived in Adultery with *Felix*, as *Joſephus* ſays: Here was a pair of hopeful Hearers; yet St. *Paul* boggles not to preach to them as bad as they were, hoping to make them better. *Learn thence*, That the Goſpel muſt be preached by us, when we are lawfully called thereunto, whatever the Perſons be that make up the Auditory; we know not what Perſons, or in what Hour God may call. *Obſerve*, 3. The Text or Subject matter preacht upon, Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come: Where the Wiſdom of the Preacher appears by the Suitableneſs of the Subject; the Apoſtle choſe a very proper Subject for them both. *Felix* was guilty of Bribery, or at leaſt was ready to commit it; for the next Verſe tells us, That he hoped to have Mony given him by *Paul* to releaſe him, therefore to him he preaches of Righteouſneſs. *Druſilla* was guilty of Incontinency and Adultery, to her he Preaches of Temperance, and to both of a Judgment to come; happy were it, if great Offenders had ſuch wiſe Admoniſhers near them; but too often they meet with flattering *Paraſites* inſtead of Faithful *Preachers*. *Obſerve* 4. The Succeſs or Effect of the Sermon, *Felix trembled*: He trembled, but not believed; he trembled at the guilt of Sin, and at the Apprehenſions of the Wrath of God due unto Sin; but his trembling did not ariſe from an holy Dread and Reverence of the Majeſty of God ſpeaking to him in and by his Word: The Word of God can make the proudeſt and ſtouteſt Sinner in the World to quake and tremble. *Obſerve Laſtly*, How *Felix* his Trembling-fit, or Sick-qualm of Conſcience, ſoon went over; he diſmiſſes the Preacher for that time, and tells him he will call for him at a more convenient Seaſon. But we never read of any ſuch Opportunity taken afterwards for that purpoſe; ſo dangerous is it to ſtop our Ear at the preſent Call and Command of God; if to day we will not, to morrow, God may ſay, you ſhall not hear my Voice.

26 He hoped alſo that money ſhould have been given him of Paul, that he might looſe him: wherefore he ſent for him the oftner, and communed with him. 27 But after two years, Porcius Feſtus came into Felix's room: and Felix willing to ſhew the Jews a Pleaſure, left Paul bound.

Obſerve here, What ſmall Succeſs the Apoſtle's Preaching had, it found and left *Felix* a bad Man; Covetouſneſs and Bribery were his Sins before, and they are ſo ſtill: *He hoped that money ſhould be given him of* Paul. That is, he expected a Bribe for ſetting the Apoſtle at Liberty, contrary to the Law both of God and Man. To this Covetouſneſs he added Cruelty; for tho' he had nothing to charge *Paul* with, yet to gratify the *Jews*, *He left* Paul *bound*; minding the Pleaſing of Men more than the Diſpleaſing of God. An Hypocrite can become all things to all Men, that he may gain by all; but behold the Hand of God upon *Felix*, he that had ſo unjuſtly kept *Paul* bound for two years, and cruelly left him bound at laſt, to pleaſe and gratify the *Jews*; is ſent a Priſoner in Bonds himſelf to *Rome*, to anſwer before *Nero* for his Miſdemeanour in the Managing of his Government. A juſt Reward for him who preferred the Pleaſing of Men more than the Diſpleaſure of God.

CHAP. XXV.

St. Paul*'s Tryal before the* Roman *Governour* Felix, *was recorded at large in the foregoing Chapter. In this we find him brought upon his Tryal before* Feſtus, *who ſucceeded* Felix *in the Adminiſtration of the Government. And altho'* Feſtus *could find the Apoſtle guilty of no Miſdemeanour, yet had he neither the Courage nor Honeſty to ſet him at Liberty, but ſends him bound from* Ceſarea *to* Rome, *as St.* Luke *relates in this and the following Chapters.*

1 NOW when Feſtus was come into the province, after three days he aſcended from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem. 2 Then the high prieſt, and the chief of the Jews informed him againſt Paul, and beſought him. 3 And deſired favour againſt him, that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Feſtus anſwered, that Paul ſhould be kept at Ceſarea, and that he himſelf would depart ſhortly *thither*. 5 Let them therefore, ſaid he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuſe this man, if there be any wickedneſs in him.

St. *Luke* here informs us, that *Feſtus* being come to the Government, and going up to *Jeruſalem*, the High Prieſt and Rulers of the *Jews*, quickly began to inform him againſt *Paul*, and beſought him that he would ſend for him to *Jeruſalem*, reſolving to lay ſome Villains by the way to kill him as he came; but the Divine Providence ſo over-ruled the matter, that *Feſtus* would not conſent to it, but ordered his Accuſers to come to *Ceſarea*, and implead him there. *Here Note* 1. How reſtleſs is the Rage, and unwearied the Malice and Enmity, which the Perſecutors of the Truth, have againſt the Profeſſors and Preachers of it. The High Prieſts and Chief of the *Sanhedrin* or Eccleſiaſtical Court, continue their murderous Deſign againſt the Innocent Apoſtle; and are ſorry they could not get an Heathen Governour as cruel as themſelves, to joyn with them. Heathens have ſometimes bluſht at the mention of thoſe Crimes, which the Profeſſors of Religion have committed without either ſhame or remorſe. *Note*, 2. How deplorably corrupt and degenerate the Jewiſh Church at this time was. Lord, what Prieſt and Church Governours were here, who call it *A Favour* to have an opportunity granted them to murder an Innocent Man in cool Blood, contrary to the Law of Nature and of Nations; but behold, the Juſtice of God upon them, they were now given up to a reprobate Senſe, and are hurried headlong by a Diabolical Spirit, a little before their final Deſtruction. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, who killed the Prophets, and ſtonedſt them that were ſent unto thee. Note*, 3. What an over-ruling Providence was here ſeen, in that *Feſtus*, by no Flatteries nor Perſwaſions would be prevailed with, to remove the Apoſtle from *Ceſarea* to *Jeruſalem*: This broke the High Prieſt's Meaſures, who deſigned to have killed him by the way, no, ſaith *Feſtus*, the *Priſoner* ſhall not come to you, but you ſhall go to him. This was a marvellous Providence for the Apoſtle's Preſervation. O how eaſy is it with the moſt Wiſe God to baffle and blaſt the moſt cunning contrivances of the Devil, to befool the Enemies of his Church and People, by making the Counſels of the wicked to be of no Effect: God looks and laughs at all the Plots of wicked Men againſt the Righteous; Fruſtration and Diſappointment attends all their Deſigns, and Perdition and Deſtruction doth awe their Perſons; *Pſalm* 2. 5. *He that ſitteth in Heaven laughs them to ſcorn, the Lord has them in deriſion.*

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Ceſarea; and the next day ſitting in the judgment-ſeat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jeruſalem, ſtood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints againſt Paul, which they could not prove, 8 While he anſwered for himſelf, Neither againſt the law of the Jews, neither againſt the temple, nor yet againſt Ceſar, have I offended any thing at all?

Obſerve here, 1. The Equity and Juſtice of *Feſtus* an Heathen Judge, in his Proceedings at St. *Paul's* Tryal; he will have the High Prieſt and Elders that accuſed him, ſpeak to his Face; he will have the Priſoner brought forth, and he will have the Matter examined by, and before himſelf. When the Malicious bring the Innocent upon their Tryal, God will provide a Judge for their turn. *Obſerve*, 2. The Indictment or Charge which the *Jews* brought in againſt the Apoſtle, that he had offended againſt Law, prophaned the Temple, and raiſed Sedition againſt the *Roman* Government. Here we find the Devil at his old Trade: Namely, Stirring up the Rage and Malice of the World againſt the Saints of God, under pretence of their being Enemies to the State, and Subverters of Civil Government. *Obſerve*, 3. That to be loaded with Calumnies and Reproaches, has been the common Lot and conſtant Portion of the Faithful Friends and Servants of Chriſt, from the firſt beginning of Chriſtianity; *The* Jews *laid many and grievous Crimes againſt* Paul, *which they could not prove*. Reproach has been the Reward of Religion and Righteouſneſs; but St. *Paul* eaſily wipes off the ſeveral Reproaches caſt upon him, affirming himſelf to have been always a religious Obſerver of the Law, tha the went into the Temple upon a Religious account, that he had never taught nor practiſed any Rebellion againſt *Ceſar*. The Servants of Chriſt are happy in their own Innocency, and their Adverſaries render themſelves odious by belying them, and laying that to their charge which every one can diſprove.

9 But Feſtus willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, anſwered Paul, and ſaid, Wilt thou go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe things before me? 10 Then ſaid Paul, I ſtand at Ceſar's judgment-ſeat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews I have done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to die: but if there be none of theſe things whereof theſe accuſe me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Ceſar. 12 Then Feſtus when he had conferred with the councel, anſwered, Haſt thou appealed unto Ceſar? unto Ceſar ſhalt thou go.

Obſerve here, How *Feſtus*, being willing to gratify the *Jews*, aſks St. *Paul* if he would go to *Jeruſalem*, and be tryed there, in the Jewiſh Court, about thoſe Matters: The Apoſtle replied,

plied, That he was his Priſoner, and that he was his proper Judge under the *Roman* Emperor, and not the *Jews*; and that being a *Roman*, he might claim the Privilege of a *Roman*, which accordingly he did, by appealing unto *Ceſar*: *Feſtus* hearing that, not only admitted his Appeal, but was glad of it, and gets rid of him without Peril on the one hand, and Ill-will on the other. *Here we may remark*, 1. That Carnal Politicians do not ſo much conſider what is Juſt and Righteous in its own Nature, as what is of Uſe and Advantage to themſelves, be it right or wrong. The Apoſtle had cleared himſelf from all ſlanderous Accuſations, and yet, *Feſtus, willing to do the* Jews *a pleaſure*, would not ſet him at Liberty. It is too often the Practice of corrupt Judges, that they may pleaſe the People, to deliver up Truth to be injuriouſly Crucified; conſulting more their own Intereſt, than the Priſoner's Innocency. *Note*, 2. How the Apoſtle appeals from *Jeruſalem* to *Rome*, from his own Countrymen to Heathens; from the High Prieſt to the Emperor *Nero*; expecting to find more Juſtice at the hands of Infidels, than from the Jewiſh *Sanhedrin*: And to this, That the Apoſtle was in a ſort Divinely admoniſhed by Chriſt himſelf, to make this Appeal to *Rome*, Acts 23. 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul, thou ſhalt bear witneſs to me at Rome.* Doubtleſs, this was a mighty Support and ſtrong Conſolation to him, to know, that he appealed and deſired to go to *Rome*, where God had appointed to have him go.

13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Ceſarea to ſalute Feſtus. 14 And when they had been there many days, Feſtus declared Paul's cauſe unto the king, ſaying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15 About whom, when I was at Jeruſalem, the chief prieſts and the elders of the Jews enformed *me*, deſiring *to have* judgment againſt him: 16 To whom I anſwered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accuſed, have the accuſers face to face, and have licence to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid againſt him. 17 Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I ſat on the judgment-ſeat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth. 18 Againſt whom when the accuſers ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch things as I ſuppoſed: 19 But had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of queſtions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe Matters. 21. But when Paul had appealed to be reſerved unto the hearing of Auguſtus, I commanded him to be kept till I might ſend him to Ceſar.

Obſerve here, 1. How God will not be wanting to his Servants in their greateſt Streights and Sufferings, but will providentially diſpoſe of all matters in order to their Deliverance, when it may moſt conduce to his own Glory and their Good. *Thus here*, King *Agrippa* comes to congratulate *Feſtus*; *Feſtus* declares the cauſe of God's oppreſſed Servant to the King, and God makes uſe both of *Feſtus* and *Agripppa* to skreen the Apoſtle from the violence of his Enemies: *In the mount will the Lord be ſeen*, his People's Extremities are the Seaſons of his Succour. *Obſerve*, 2. How the very light of Nature in and among the Heathens condemns it as an Act of manifeſt and notorious Injuſtice in a Judge to paſs Sentence upon a Perſon unheard and unallowed to make his Defence. This baſeneſs was below the *Roman* Gallantry whilſt *Pagans*; *Feſtus* demands the Accuſers and the Accuſed to appear Face to Face; and yet ſuch a diabolical Spirit of Malice had ſo blinded the *Jews*, that contrary to the Law of Nature, and the Law of all Nations, they would have had St. *Paul* here Condemned without knowing the Cauſe, or hearing his Defence. *Obſerve*, 3. What baſe and vile, what low and undervaluing Thoughts and Apprehenſions have Carnal Men of the High and Holy things of God. *Feſtus* here, calls the Religion and Worſhip which was of God's own Inſtitution, moſt prophanely and contemptuouſly by the name of Superſtition; *They had certain queſtions againſt him of their own Superſtition*: And how ſlightly doth he alſo ſpeak of our Glorified Redeemer, ſtileing him *One Jeſus*; but no wonder, that the Dunghil-Cocks of the World know not the worth of the Pearl of Price.

22 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Feſtus, I would alſo hear the man my ſelf. To morrow, ſaid he, thou ſhalt hear him. 23 And on the morrow when Agrippa was come, and Bernice with great pomp, and was entred into the place of hearing with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Feſtus commandment Paul was brought forth. 24 And Feſtus ſaid, King Agrippa, and all men, which are here preſent with us, ye ſee this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jeruſalem and alſo here, crying, that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found, that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himſelf hath appealed to Auguſtus, I have determined to ſend him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and ſpecially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have ſomewhat to write. 27 For it ſeemeth to me unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and not withal to ſignify the crimes *laid* againſt him.

Obſerve here, 1. King *Agrippa*'s Curioſity to ſee and hear St. *Paul*: he was Born and Bred up amongſt the *Jews*, and probably underſtood ſomething of the Chriſtian Religion; and poſſibly had heard of much of *Paul*, and therefore deſired to ſee him, as *Herod* deſired to ſee Chriſt, and to hear *John* the Baptiſt, only to gratifie his Curioſity, not to be advantaged by his Miniſtry. *Obſerve*, 2. How contemptuouſly the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks of all the Pomp, Retinue and State, which *Feſtus*, *Agrippa* and *Bernice* appeared in; at the time and place of Hearing, he calls it Phanſy, ſo the Original word ſignifies, intimating, That all the Pomp, Gayety and Glory of the World, is nothing but Phanſy, a Dream, and a Shadow, having no real Exiſtence, but a Being in Imagination only. *Obſerve*, 3. That Truth and Innocency ſhine forth the more ſplendidly by the greater Oppoſition that is raiſed againſt them. The more Malicious the *Jews* were in accuſing *Paul*, the more did his Innocency appear; and the more was he acquitted and diſcharged by his Judges. Thus we ſee the Providence of God wrought all matters for St. *Paul*'s Juſtification, and for the *Jews* Reprehenſion: *Feſtus* had nothing to write to *Ceſar*, no Crime to inform him of againſt the Apoſtle. *Thence Learn*, That altho' God ſometimes permits his Servants to be loaden with Slanders and Reproaches; yet he will find a time to clear their Innocency, and cauſe their very Judges, if not their Accuſers, to proclaim them Guiltleſs. *I find*, ſaith *Feſtus*, *that he hath committed nothing worthy of Death.* It is no ſmall Mercy to have our Innocency vindicated for God, to clear up our Righteouſneſs as the Light, and our juſt dealing as the Noon-day, and to free our Reputation from thoſe Blemiſhes which the uncharitable Suſpicions, or raſh Cenſures of Men, have caſt upon us. There is no Spot ſo unbeautiful, as that upon our Credit, ſaving only a Spot upon our Conſciences: God made the Apoſtle's Enemies here do him Right, and his Name was cloathed with Honour in the eſtimation of his very Adverſaries.

CHAP. XXVI.

This Chapter brings St. Paul *to his third Tryal, namely, before King* Agrippa, *in which we have the Apoſtle's Apology or defenſative Plea, which he makes for himſelf againſt thoſe blind* Jews, *which did ſo maliciouſly Proſecute him; in which Plea he declares,* 1. *His manner of Life before his Converſion, which was very Phariſaical.* 2. *The manner of his Converſion, which was Miraculous and Wonderful.* 3. *His manner of Life after his Converſion, which was Religious and Remarkable: Before his Converſion he perſecuted the Goſpel, which others preached; after his Converſion he preached the Goſpel, which himſelf had Perſecuted, and the great Charge brought againſt him was this; that of a great Oppoſer, he was now become a great Profeſſor: But the Particulars of his Defence are before us in the following Chapter.*

1 THen Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thy ſelf. Then Paul ſtretched forth the hand and anſwered for himſelf. 2 I think my ſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for my ſelf this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews: 3 Eſpecially, becauſe I know thee to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon whom the Apoſtle make his Defence before; *Agrippa, Agrippa* a King, whom he begs the favour patiently to hear him: It is a great favour for great Men, ſo much as to hear an innocent good Man Plead for himſelf. *Agrippa,* who by reaſon of his Birth and Breeding, among the *Jews,* was acquainted with the Scriptures, the Law and the Prophets. *Obſerve,* 2. How the Providence of God wonderfully procures St. *Paul* a Liberty to ſpeak for himſelf; hereby he had an opportunity at once, to make known his Caſe, and to publiſh the Goſpel. *But Note further,* That as the Providence of God procured him Liberty, ſo the good Spirit of God gave him ability to ſpeak ſo efficaciouſly and effectually, with ſuch Evidences and Demonſtration, that he not only took the Ears but captivated the Conſciences of the whole Court, and almoſt perſwaded the King himſelf to turn Chriſtian.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the Jews. 5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would teſtifie) that after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee.

Here the Apoſtle begins his Defence with a Relation of the innocency and ſtrictneſs of his Life before his Converſion; he did and could appeal to all that knew him concerning the unblameableneſs of his Converſion. *Thence Note,* That an innocent and blameleſs Life from our Youth upward, is a ſingular Support and Encouragement to us in a ſuffering Hour, eſpecially when we are called forth to ſuffer for Religion and Righteouſneſs ſake. *Obſerve further,* The inſtance which the Apoſtle gives of his ſtrictneſs in Religion, *after the moſt ſtraiteſt Sect of our Religion, I lived a Phariſee.* Of all the Sects among the *Jews,* there were none that took up ſuch an extraordinary ſtrict way of Religion as the *Phariſees;* of this Sect was St. *Paul,* before Converted to Chriſtianity, and in this he reſted for Salvation. *Thence Learn,* 1. That an extraordinary ſtrict way taken up in Religion, is thought by many a ſure and ſufficient Foundation for their eternal Salvation. *Learn,* 2, That many may reſt upon a ſtrict way of Religion, which yet cometh not up to, but is oft-times beſides the appointment of the Word of God, the *Phariſees* for there unuſual and ſupererogating way of exactneſs, concluded that they ſhould certainly go to Heaven if any did; when alas many things which they practiſed with extraordinary Zeal and Strictneſs were never required by God at their hands.

6 And now I ſtand and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our fathers. 7 Unto which *promiſe* our twelve tribes, inſtantly ſerving *God* day and night, hope to come: for which hope ſake, king Agrippa, I am accuſed of the Jews.

Our Apoſtle had vindicated his Life before, his Doctrine now: he tells *Agrippa,* that for believing, expecting and preaching the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, he was queſtioned of the *Jews:* This he calls the *Hope of the promiſe made by God unto the Fathers:* Others underſtand it, of the Promiſe of the *Meſſias,* which was made unto the Fathers, and was generally depended upon by the moſt Pious among the Twelve Tribes ſcattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth; and in the Faith and Expectation whereof they frequently ſerved God Night and Day. *Learn thence,* 1. That the Pious and Godly amongſt the *Jews,* lived in hope of the *Meſſia's* appearing, of a Glorious Reſurrection by him, and of Eternal Life and Salvation with him. 2. That their Hope of this promiſed Mercy did cauſe them to ſerve God inſtantly Day and Night; Hope is the great Exciter of Induſtry and Endeavour; Expectation puts us upon Action; Hope of attaining is the motive to every Undertaking; the Chriſtians Hope, (or thing hop'd for) is great and excellent in his Eſteem, (namely Eternal Life) and where the Eſteem is high, the Endeavour will be ſtrong; that Chriſtain who has a well-grounded Belief and Hope of a Life to come, will ſerve God with unwearied Diligence and Induſtry: if by any means he may attain the Fruition and Injoyment of it, *Unto which promiſe our twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night, hope to come.*

8 Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The great Point in Controverſie between me and you is this, whether the dead in general ſhall ariſe, and whether Chriſt in particular be riſen from the Dead; now why ſhould either ſeem incredible to you? Is it too hard for God, who made the World, and upholds the World, and gives Life to all living? Is it too hard or difficult for him to raiſe the Dead? If not, why ſhould it be thought Incredible or Impoſſible? *Learn hence,* That the Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Dead, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt, is neither incredible nor impoſſible, neither againſt right Reaſon nor true Faith.

9 I verily thought with my ſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt *them.* 11 And I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled *them* to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted *them* even unto ſtrange cities.

Here the Apoſtle frankly Declares, that he was once as ſharp and bitter an Enemy to Chriſt and to all that believed in him, as any one whatever; and thought himſelf bound in Conſcience, to Perſecute all that owned him; and with Threatnings and Tortures compelled them to deny Chriſt; and being exceeding Fierce, he forced them to fly to Heathen Cities to eſcape his Fury. *Where Note,* 1. That we ought to be upon very good and ſure Grounds before we Oppoſe and Perſecute any. 2. That ſome Perſecute others, and at the ſame time think they do well in ſo doing; *I verily thought,* ſays the Apoſtle, *that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus.* He ſpake as if his Conſcience would have troubled him, unleſs he had troubled others, for that which was indeed their Conſcience. *Note* 3. That *Paul* being a Blaſphemer himſelf, compelled the Profeſſors of the Goſpel to Blaſpheme. This he probably did two ways; Firſt, by his Example, they imitated him in blaſpheming or ſpeaking Evil of the Ways of Chriſt; or Secondly, by his Cruelty; vexing them ſo in the Profeſſion of Chriſt, that ſome who were unſettled, probably fell away, and Blaſphemed the Name of Chriſt, which they had profeſſed; *He compelled them to Blaſpheme:* There is a compelling Power and conſtraing Force in Example, eſpecially in the Example of Perſons in Power and Authority. Men Sin with a kind of Authority: *Paul's* Blaſphemous Example compelled others to Blaſpheme.

12. Whereupon as I went to Damaſcus, with authority and commſſion from the chief-prieſt; 13 At midnight, O king, I ſaw in the way a light from Heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard voice

ſpeaking unto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 15 And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.

Our Apoſtle having declared his manner of Life before Converſion, proceeds next to declare the extraordinary manner of his Converſion: he tells *Agrippa*, that as he went with a perſecuting Purpoſe towards *Damaſcus*, at Mid-day a Light from Heaven above the brightneſs of the Sun ſhin'd round about him, and when they were all fallen proſtrate on the Earth, he heard a Voice ſpeaking to him in the *Hebrew* Tongue, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me: 'Tis hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. Here Note*, 1. How reſtleſs and unwearied Perſecutors are in the Execution of their bloody Deſigns and Purpoſes; *Paul* (as he thought) had ſwept and cleanſed *Jeruſalem* of Saints before, after which he reſolves to ranſack *Damaſcus*, and undertakes a long Journey of Five or Six Days, in order to that end: The worſt Journey that ever he intended, but the beſt that ever he undertook; a Journey moſt maliciouſly purpoſed by him, but moſt mercifully diſpoſed by God, and accordingly he is met with in the way, Chriſt appears to him, a ſudden beam of Light ſhines round about him, and a Voice is heard by him, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* That is, *Me* in *my Members.* Such as Perſecute Saints for their Sanctity, Perſecute Chriſt himſelf; and he can no more endure to ſee them wrong'd than himſelf; as the Honour of the Head redounds to the Members, ſo the Sorrows of the Members are reſented by the Head: Chriſt ſaid not thus to his Murtherers on Earth, Why bind ye me? Wy Buffet ye me? Why Scourge ye and Crucifie me? But here when his Members ſuffer, he cries out from Heaven; *Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Lord, Thou art more tender of thy Body Myſtical, then thou wert of thy Body Natural; more ſenſible of thy Members Sufferings than of thine own.

16 But riſe, and ſtand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of theſe things, which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I ſend thee. 18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkneſs to light, and *from* the power of ſatan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me.

St. *Paul* had given King *Agrippa* an account of his miraculous Converſion in the former Verſes, in theſe he declares to him his extraordinary Commiſſion to Preach the Goſpel; that Chriſt, who appeared to him from Heaven, choſe him to be a Preacher as well as a Profeſſor of the Goſpel; aſſuring him that he would ſtand by him, and deliver him from the Perſecutions both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom he ſhould ſend him, and would Bleſs his Endeavours to the opening the Eyes of their Underſtanding, and to the turning of them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they might receive by Faith in Chriſt Remiſſion of Sins, and a Portion of the Heavenly Inheritance among ſuch as are Regenerated by his Holy Spirit. *Here Note*, 1. The Honour which God is pleaſed to put upon the Miniſtry of the Word, his own Ordinance; the Apoſtle who was only the Iuſtrument, is ſaid to open the Eyes of the Blind, and turn Sinners from Darkneſs to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God; all which is properly and principally the Work of the Spirit of Chriſt, yet he is pleaſed to put this Honour upon his Inſtruments the Miniſters, by whom he worketh all this, and for which Reaſon they are called Co-workers, or Workers together with Chriſt, *Note*, 2. The Apoſtle's Miſſion, *I ſend thee.* Great is the Dignity of Goſpel Miniſters, they are God's Meſſengers; their Commiſſion is ſealed by the whole Trinity, and intimates both their Dignity and Duty: To intimate their Holineſs, they are called Men of God; their Vigilancy, Watch-men; for their Courage, they are called Soldiers; for their Painfulneſs, Harveſt Labourers; for the Care of the Flock, Shepherds; for their Wiſdom, Overſeers; for their Induſtry, Husband men; for their Patience, Fiſhermen; for their Tenderneſs, Nurſes; for their Affectionateneſs, Fathers and Mothers; for their Faithfulneſs, Stewards. A very high and honourable Calling, the Son of God deſpiſed it not. *Note* 3. St. *Paul*'s Commiſſion in the ſeveral Branches of it. 1. *To open their Eyes*; that is, to enlighten their Underſtandings, that they may know God and their Duty to him, in order to which there is required, 1. Ability in the Preachers; how can they open the Eyes of others, who are Blind and Ignorant themſelves? Ought not they that undertake to be Guides and Leaders, very well to know the way themſelves? 2. Perſpicuity in the Sermon; what hope can there be of opening Men's Underſtandings, when the matter delivered is cloſed up from them? 'Twas St. *Paul*'s aim to ſpeak Words eaſie to be underſtood, and it ſhould be ours; it is the ſame thing to Preach in an unknown Tongue as in an unknown Style, above the reach of our Hearers. Painted Glaſs is more coſtly, but the plainer Glaſs is the clearer and more uſeful; but we muſt take care, that tho' we come in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of Speech. The ſecond part of St. *Paul*'s Commiſſion was, to turn Men from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, in order to which, he was turned from theſe himſelf; he has little Reaſon to expect, that God will Honour his Miniſtry for the Converſion of others from Sin and Satan, who is under the Dominion of both himſelf. The Miniſter's Life is the Peoples Looking-glaſs, by which they uſually dreſs themſelves. *Note*, 4. The happy Fruit of St. *Paul*'s Miſſion and Commiſſion both, *That they may receive forgiveneſs of Sin, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.* Whereſoever true Repentance is wrought by the Miniſtry of the World, there is forgiveneſs attained, and a Title to the Inheritance of Heaven attained with it. *Note laſtly*, A three-fold metaphorical Deſcription of the ſinful State of Nature before Converſion, and the like of a State of Grace after Converſion. The State of Nature is a State of Blindneſs, *To open their Eyes:* A State of Darkneſs, *Turn them from darkneſs to Light:* A State of Slavery, *Turn the Power of Satan unto God:* The State of Grace after Converſion is ſet forth by Sight, Light and Liberty. All this is Chriſt's Work Originally, but his Miniſters Work Inſtrumentally: *I have ſent thee to open their Eyes, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God.*

19 Whereupon. O king Agrippa, I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion: 20 But ſhewed firſt unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For theſe cauſes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me.* 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying no other things, than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come: 23 That Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, *and* that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Obſerve here, 1. How obedient the Apoſtle was to the Call of Chriſt, having had ſo Glorious a Viſion; he did not, he durſt not, rebel againſt the Light of it; but immediately went forth and preached, firſt at *Damaſcus*, then at *Jeruſalem*, then throughout all *Judea*, and at laſt among the *Gentiles:* The Doctrine of Repentance, and the Neceſſity of good Works. *Obſerve*, 2. The ill requital which the good Man met with for his Diligence and Faithfulneſs in preaching the glad Tidings of the Goſpel; for this he had like to have been killed by the *Jews* in the Temple: *Evangelicum prædicare eſt furorem mundi in ſe derivare*; to preach the Goſpel is nothing elſe but to bring the wrath and fury of the World upon our ſelves. *Obſerve*, 3. With what thankfulneſs the Apoſtle own and acknowledges the merciful Providence of God in preſerving him both from the fraud and force of his Enemies, *having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.* And how did the ſenſe of Divine Goodneſs upon his Soul provoke him to go on with his Work, declaring no other thing concerning Chriſt; but what *Moſes* and the Prophets did of Old foretel of him: Namely, That he ſhould be put to death, and ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe again by his own Power, and be the Author of our Reſurrection. *Note here*, That the Sufferings of Chriſt were taught by *Moſes*, in all the Commands given about Sacrifices; and not by *Moſes* only, but by the Prophets alſo, particularly the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* the 53d. That Evangelical Prophet and Prophetical Evangeliſt, who wrote as clearly of Chriſt's Coming, as if he had then been come: From whence the Apoſtle Argues how black the Wickedneſs of the *Jews* was, who went about to kill him, for Preaching the ſame Doctrine which *Moſes* and the Prophets had taught before him.

24 And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice, Paul thou art beſide thy ſelf: much learning doth make thee mad. 25 But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs. 26 For the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom alſo I ſpeak freely: for I am perſwaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

Hitherto *Feſtus* had heard the Apoſtle with great Patience, but now he interrupts him and tells him, he talks like a Man that was crazed; Carnal Minds paſs very uncharitable Cenſures upon Spiritual Perſons and Spiritual Things. Chriſt's Kindred ſaid, *He was beſides himſelf*, St. *Mark* 2.21. *Feſtu* here judged *Paul* to be Mad, thinking that he had over-ſtudied himſelf by meddling with Matters too high for his Capacity, and too deep for his Underſtanding, he had brought himſelf into a deep Melancholy. *Paul thou art beſide thy ſelf, much Learning hath made thee mad.* But obſerve with what Meekneſs and due Terms of Reſpect the Apoſtle Replied to this reviling Governour: *I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus. Here Obſerve*, 1. The Title of Honour given to *Feſtus*, not ſo much to his Perſon, for that was unworthy, as to his Office, which was truly Honourable, *Moſt Noble Feſtus.* Titles of Reſpect and Honour given to Perſons in Place and Power, are agreeable to the Mind of God, and Countenanced by Chriſtianity. *Obſerve*, 2. What an happy Victory and Conqueſt the Apoſtle had over his own Paſſions! he waves the Reflections *Feſtus* had made upon him, and had learnt of his Maſter, who when he was Reviled, Reviled not again. 'Tis an happy Attainment for a Man to be Maſter of himſelf under a Provocation, to be Regulated by Right Reaſon, and not hurried by blind Paſſion.

27 King Agrippa, believeſt thou the Prophets? I know that thou believeſt.

The Apoſtle knowing that *Agrippa* was Educated among the *Jews*, tells him that he could not but hear of the Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Death, and Reſurrection of Chriſt; all which were done openly and not in Corners, and he could not but believe the Prophets, and what they had foretold concerning the *Meſſias*; and if the Power of Worldly Intereſt did not overcome him, his Life and Practice would be anſwerable to his Faith and Belief. *Learn thence*, That a right Belief of the Holy Scriptures is of great Efficacy and Force, to conform a Perſon's Life to the Practice of real and univerſal Holineſs.

28 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, almoſt thou perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. 29 And Paul ſaid, I would to God, that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.

Obſerve here, 1. What an Efficacy St. *Paul*'s Doctrine had upon *Agrippa*; tho' he would not be Converted, yet he could not but be Convinced: His Conſcience was touch'd, tho' his Heart was not renewed. *Learn thence*, That there is certainly that in Religion which carries its own Evidence along with it, even to the Conſciences of ungodly Men. *Obſerve*, 2. How ſad it is when Perſons have enjoyed the Scriptures, the preaching of the Word, and all means of Salvation, and yet are but almoſt Chriſtians, and ſhall never enjoy the leaſt Salvation; they are within ſight of Heaven, and yet ſhall never have a ſight of God. *Obſerve*, 3. That ſuch as will be Chriſtians indeed, muſt not only be almoſt, but altogether Chriſtians: *I would that you, and all that hear me*, ſays the Apoſtle, *were altogether ſuch as I am, except my Bonds. Where Note*, The extraordinary Charity and Chriſtian Compaſſion of St. *Paul:* He wiſhed them his Graces, not his Chains; he did not wiſh them his Bonds and Impriſonment, but he wiſh'd them the ſame Liberty and Enlargement by Jeſus Chriſt which he enjoyed; he would keep his Sorrows and outward Troubles to himſelf, but wiſhes they were acquainted with his inward Conſolations and Comforts. A good Man wiſheth others as well as he wiſhes himſelf; and if at any time he wiſhes that which is penally evil to the worſt of his Enemies, he doth it with an Eye to their Spiritual and Eternal Good: A good Man dare not wiſh ill to thoſe that have actually done ill to him; but Wiſhes, Prays and Endeavours the beſt good for them.

30 And when he had thus ſpoken, the king roſe up, and the governour, and Bernice, and they that ſat with them. 31 And when they were gone aſide, they talked between themſelves, ſaying, This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds. 32 Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, this man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Ceſar.

Obſerve here, How *Agrippa*, *Feſtus*, and the whole Company acquit the Innocent Apoſtle in their Judgments and Conſciences, yea with their Tongues declare that he deſerved neither Death nor Bonds, yet at the ſame time, that they acquit him, they diſcharged him not, but he is left in his Enemies hands, and at laſt put to Death by the *Gentiles:* But how (may it be ſaid) was God's Promiſe fulfilled then, *v.* 16, 17. of this Chapter, *I have appeared to thee, to make thee a Miniſter and a Witneſs, and will deliver thee from the People, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I know ſend thee:* How did God deliver him from the *Gentiles*, when he was at laſt delivered into their Hands, and put to Death by the *Gentiles.* Anſwer, As long as the Wiſdom of God ſaw it fit and convenient for the purpoſes of his Glory, and as a real Mercy conducing to the Apoſtle's good; as long as it was a true and beneficial Deliverance, ſo long God wrought deliverance for him; nay, rather than fail, in a miraculous manner, no Chains could bind him, no Iron Gates, nor Priſon-Walls, confine him; but when he had finiſhed his Courſe, run his Race, fought the good fight of Faith, and done the Work which God ſet him about; it would not then have been a deliverance, but a real detriment to have been kept longer from his Reward: Now might the Apoſtle ſay, give me my Robes and my Crown. God now made his Word good to the Apoſtle to deliver him from the People and the *Gentiles*, by making Death his Deliverer and Deliverance. Thus faithful is God in his Promiſes to the People, he will deliver them in Six Troubles, and in Seven, in every Danger, in every Difficulty; but when Death is the beſt Deliverance, they ſhall have it as a Covenant Mercy and Bleſſing, for all things are ours, if we be Chriſt's, whether Life or Death, 1 *Cor.* 3.22.

CHAP. XXVII.

This Chapter gives us an Account of St. Paul'*s Voyage from* Ceſarea *to* Rome; *the Providence of God ſo diſpoſed, that the Apoſtle was ſent by Land, leſt the* Jews *ſhould lie lurking in the way to take away his Life, but by Sea, which tho' it proved a very dangerous Voyage, by reaſon of Tempeſtuous Winds and Storms, yet the Divine Care watcht over him, preſerved him, and all that were with him for his ſake: A full Relation both of the Danger and Deliverance we have Recorded in the Chapter now before us.*

ANd when it was determined that we ſhould ſail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other priſoners unto one name Julius, a centurion of Auguſtus band. 2 And entring into a ſhip of Adramyttium, we lanched, meaning to ſail by the coaſts of Aſia, one Ariſtarchus a Macedonian of Theſſalonica being with us. 3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon, and Julius courteouſly entreated Paul and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refreſh himſelf.

The time being now come for the fulfilling of God's purpoſe and determinate Counſel concerning *Paul*, Recorded *Acts* 23.11. *Be of good cheer Paul, as thou haſt teſtified of me at Jeruſalem; ſo ſhalt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* Purſuant to this purpoſe of God, *Feſtus* the *Roman* Governour delivers the Apoſtle and his Aſſociates, *Luke*, *Timothy* and *Ariſtarchus*, to *Julius*, in order to their ſending, with ſeveral other Priſoners, (who probably were great Malefactors) to the City and Court of *Rome*, where all Appeals made to the *Roman* Emperour, were heard and determined before himſelf. *Now here we have Obſervable*, 1. The Perſon whom the Apoſtle was delivered to, *Julius*, a very civil Perſon to the Apoſtle, who ſuffered him to ſee and receive the Civilities of his Friends. Thus God raiſes up his People Friends in the midſt of their Sufferings, and when Perſecutors ſend his Saints to Priſon, he will provide Keepers for their turn. *Julius* an Heathen Soldier, was kinder to him then his own Country-men the *Jews*. *Obſerve*, 2. The villanous Company of Malefactors and Priſoners that the Innocent Apoſtle was packt with, *They delivered Paul and certain other Priſoners to Julius*. Saints and Sinners, Good and Bad, Innocent and Nocent, ſhare together in the ſame outward Miſeries; but tho' they be thus jumbled together in this World (where all things come alike to all) yet the Righteous Judge will make a difference between them in the other World, according to their Works. *Obſerve*, 3. Tho' the Apoſtle was thus yoaked with Malefactors and Criminals in the Ship, yet God favoured him with ſome Companions which were according to his Heart's Deſire, namely, his dear Aſſociates. St. *Luke*, *Timothy* and *Ariſtarchus*. 'Tis a great Comfort to the Afflicted, to have good Companions in their Afflictions, *Optimum Solatium eſt Sodalitium*: But above all, was the Happineſs of the Apoſtle, that he enjoyed the Preſence of God with him in ſo comfortable a manner, in and under all his Sufferings, according to his Promiſe, *chap.* 18. 10. *I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee.* The gracious ſpecial Preſence of God with his Children and People, is a ſure and ſufficient ſupport unto them in and under all the Difficulties and Tryals, which his Wiſdom ſeeth fit to Exerciſe and try them with. *Obſerve*, 4. What an additional Favour it was from God, that St. *Paul* found Friends in *Sidon*, ſuch Saints as he could comfortably converſe with, and receive Refreſhments from, even needful Accommodation, for his tedious Voyage. *Learn hence*, That God's Care of, his Compaſſion towards, and his Proviſion for his Children and People, is univerſal and perpetual, at all times and in all places.

4 And when we had lanched from thence, we ſailed under Cyprus, becauſe the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had ſailed over the ſea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra *a city* of Lycia. 6 And there the centurion found a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing into Italy, and he puts us there in. 7 And when we had ſailed ſlowly many days, and ſcarce were come over againſt Cnidus, the wind not ſuffering us, we ſailed under Crete, over againſt Salmone: 8 And hardly paſſing it, came unto a place which is called, The fair havens, nigh whereunto was the city *of* Laſea. 9 Now when much time was ſpent, and when ſailing was now dangerous, becauſe the faſt was now already paſt, Paul admoniſhed *them*, 10 And ſaid unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this Voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of our lives. 11 Nevertheleſs, the centurion believed the maſter and the owner of the ſhip, more then thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul.

An account is here given of the very hazardous Voyage which the Apoſtle had from *Ceſarea* towards *Rome*; he ſails from *Ceſarea* to *Cyprus*, from *Cyprus* to *Cilicia*; from *Cilicia* to *Crete*, and having been long at Sea, and the Summer wearing away, and the great Faſt being paſt; that is, the Anniverſary Faſt of Expiation, which was on the Tenth Day of *September*. After which the Sea growing Tempeſtuous, the Ancients left off ſailing until *March*, becauſe of the ſhortneſs of the Days. St. *Paul* foreſeeing the Danger of the Seaſon, and being alſo inſpired by the Spirit of God, admoniſhed them of the great Hazard of the Voyage, both to the Ship and alſo to the Lives of thoſe that were in it, and adviſed them to adventure no further till the Sea was calmer; but the Owner and Governor of the Ship, (who was ſuppoſed to be better skilled in his own Art) adviſing otherwiſe, the Captain of the Guard prefers his Judgment before *Paul*'s, and ſo ſets forward; but with great *hazard* and greater *loſs*; as the *Event* declared. From the whole we gather, that the fitteſt Seaſons ought to be obſerv'd and taken for every Enterprize both Sacred and Secular: Winter Journeys by Land, or Voyages by Sea, are unſafe as well as uncomfortable. A Seaſon is beautiful for all things, and has a Luſtre upon it above all other Parts of Time: This Winter Voyage about our *October* was very hazardous and unſeaſonable, for the Winds were boſterous and contrary, the Days were ſhort, the Light little, the Night long, the Clouds thick, the Weather dark, the Storms raging; therefore the Apoſtle adviſed to Winter in the fair Havens, knowing that the Seaſon for Sailing was now paſt.

12 And becauſe the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part adviſed him to depart thence alſo, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter, which is an haven of Crete, and lieth towards the ſouthweſt, and northweſt. 13 And when the ſouthwind blew ſoftly, ſuppoſing that they had obtained *their* purpoſe, looſing thence they ſailed cloſe by Crete. 14 But not long after there aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15 And when the ſhip was caught and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive. 16 And running under a certain iſland which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: 17 Which when they had taken up, they uſed helps, undergirding the ſhip; and fearing leaſt they ſhould fall into the quickſands, ſtrake ſail and ſo were driven. 18 And we being exceedingly toſſed with a tempeſt, next *day* they lightned the ſhip; 19 And the third *day* we caſt out with our own hands the tackling of the ſhip.

The farther Difficulties and Dangers which the Apoſtle met with in this Winter Voyage, are here deſcribed and declared, and the propereſt Leſſons of Inſtruction which can (I think) be gathered from them, will be by way of Alluſion. *Thus*, 1. The Ship in which they ſailed, is an Emblem of the Church, in her militant State here on Earth; ſhe is Afflicted, toſſed with Tempeſts, and in danger of being Shipwrackt every Moment, many Tempeſtuous Euroclydons ariſe ſuddenly, and threaten her Fatally; but her wiſe Pilot ſits at the Helm, Stears her with a fixed Eye and a ſteady Hand between Rocks and Shelves, undergirding her by his everlaſting Arms of Power and Love which are underneath her; and when in our Apprehenſions ſhe is brought to a Hopeleſs and Helpleſs State, without the light of Sun or Stars to Comfort her; then doth the Lord enlighten her Darkneſs, and at midnight there ſhall be Light. *Again*, 2. This Voyage neglected in the Summer and undertaken in the Winter Seaſon, to the Peril of the Paſſengers, and loſs of the Ship; lively repreſents unto us both the Folly and Danger of Perſons who ſuffer the Spring of Youth, and the Summer of Ripe-Age to ſlip and ſlide away from them; and when the Winter of old Age comes upon them, then they think of Lanching forth towards the Fair Haven of Eternal Happineſs; and not before ſet we forth never ſo ſoon, the Winds will be contrary, the Weather Tempeſtuous, the Rocks many, the Difficulties great: And yet Lord! How is our Precious Time ſpent and ſpilt? When Age comes upon us, we complain we want Time, whereas we fooliſhly waſte it; how are miſerable Souls that ſet out late for Heaven (when they can ſerve Sin no longer) Benighted, Bewilded, Shipwrackt, eternally and irrecoverably loſt: Behold now only is the accepted Time, now is the day of Salvation.

20 And when neither ſun nor ſtars in many days appeared, and no ſmall tempeſt lay on *us*, all hope that we ſhould be ſaved, was then taken away, 21 But after long abſtinence, Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Sirs, ye ſhould have harkened unto me, and not have looſed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loſs. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there ſhall be no loſs of *any mans* life among you, but of the ſhip. 23 For there ſtood by me this night the angel of God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. 24 Saying, fear not Paul; thou muſt be brought before Ceſar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee. 25 Wherefore ſirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we muſt be caſt upon a certain Iſland.

Here Obſerve, 1. The Hopeleſs, Helpleſs, Comfortleſs State which St. *Paul* and thoſe in the Ship with him were now reduced to; neither Sun nor Stars appeared, and the Weather proved very Tempeſtuous, and when they utterly deſpaired of Life, then God gives *Paul*, and he the reſt, a comfortable Aſſurance that nothing ſhould be loſt, but the Veſſel only. O how doth God delight to deliver thoſe that are forſaken of their Hopes; what a preſent Help is he to the helpleſs? He reſerves his Holy Hand for a dead Lift, our Extremities are the Seaſons of his Succour. *Obſerve*, 2. The great and ſpecial Favour which God indulged the Holy Apoſtle, even to ſend an Angel to him to Comfort him; *The Angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I Serve, ſaid, fear not.* O what an Encouragement is it to us, to enter upon and be faithful in the Service of God, when he cauſes his Holy Angels upon all occaſions to ſerve us: when viſible Dangers are before us, God has inviſible Servants round about us, both to Succour us and Secure us. Lord: Help me in Sincerity to ſay, *Thine I am, and Thee I Serve:* let me be found faithful in all the Inſtances of my Duty to thee, and then ſhall I find, (as the Apoſtle here) that ſafety ever more accompanies Duty. *Obſerve*, 2. How God was pleaſed for St. *Paul*'s ſake to ſave all that were with him in the Ship; Sinners are ſpared and favoured for the Saints ſake, whom yet they hate and ſeek to deſtroy. The Wicked are oft-times delivered from Temporal Deſtruction for the ſake of the Godly, who live among them and intercede with God for them; there are two Hundred Threeſcore and Sixteen Perſons, all Heathens, except three or four, ſaved for St. *Paul*'s ſake, who no doubt begged their Lives of God. Lord, what Foes and Madmen are the Wicked, who ſeek the Deſtruction of thoſe for whoſe ſake it is that they are not themſelves deſtroyed. The Breaches which wicked Men make by ſinning, they make up by Praying. *Obſerve*, 4. How ſteady and ſtedfaſt the Apoſtle was in the Faith and Belief of God's Promiſe and Providence for his own and the Company's Preſervation. *I believe God, that it ſhall be even as was told me.* We Honour God exceedingly, when we depend upon his Promiſe, rely upon his Power, believe his Word, tho' what he ſays be very improbable and unlikely to come to paſs.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria about midnight, the ſhipmen dreamed, that they drew near to ſome country: 28 And ſounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they ſounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms, 29 Then fearing leſt they ſhould have fallen upon rocks, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, and wiſhed for the day. 30 And as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, when they had let down the boat into the ſea, under colour as though they would have caſt anchors out of the fore-ſhip, 31 Paul ſaid to the centurion, and to the Soldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved. 32 Then the ſouldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

A farther Account is here given both of the Apoſtle's imminent Danger and extraordinary Deliverance; for Fourteen Days together the Ship was continually toſſed in the Sea; at laſt the Mariners caſt four Anchors out of the Ship, and by the help of the Boat, intended to make their Eſcape, leaving the Paſſengers to ſhift for themſelves: St. *Paul* perceiving this, told the *Centurion* and the Soldiers, that tho' Almighty God had promiſed to preſerve them, yet they muſt not expect it without uſing due Means for their own Preſervation, which was to ſtay the Mariners in the Ship; whoſe Help and Diligence, Direction and Care would be eſpecially needful to them on ſuch an Occaſion. Hereupon the Soldiers, to prevent the Mariner's Deſign, cut the Ropes of the Boat and let it fall into the Sea. *Learn hence*, That the End and the Means are always join'd together in the Purpoſe and Decree of God. The ſame God that ordained the End, ordained the Means in order to that End; therefore as to truſt to Means, is to neglect God, ſo to neglect the Means, is to tempt God. *As here*, That God who Decreed that they ſhould not periſh with the Ship, Decreed, that the skilful Seamen ſhould abide in the Ship. Almighty God likes not to be tyed to Means himſelf; but it is his Pleaſure to tye us: Sometimes (to ſhew his Sovereignty) he is pleaſed to work without Means. (Sometimes to ſhew his Omnipotency) he works againſt Means; the Fire ſhall not Burn, the Water ſhall not drown, the Iron ſhall ſwim, the Sun ſhall ſtand ſtill, nay, go ſeveral Degrees backward: The firſt Cauſe can ſuſpend the Power and Operation of ſecond Cauſes when he pleaſes. But as the care of the Ends belongs to God, ſo the Care of the Means belongs to us, and muſt be uſed when they may, and where they can be uſed. Accordingly here, Mariners, in order to their own and others Preſervation, ſtay in the Ship, lighten the Ship, under-gird her, caſt out their Anchors, hoiſed up the Main Sail, looſe the Rudder-bands, and do every thing in order to their Preſervation, which was needful. The Purpoſe of God to prolong our Lives, muſt not leſſen our Care for the Preſervation of our Lives; when God has ordained and appointed Means, we cannot expect to find Safety in the neglect or contempt of that Means.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul beſought them all to take meat, ſaying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued faſting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take *ſome* meat; for this is for your health: for there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus ſpoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in preſence of them all, and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they alſo took *ſome* meat. 37 And we were in all in the ſhip, two hundred threeſcore and ſixteen ſouls.

Obſerve here, What Honour God puts upon the Holy Apoſtle; altho' he was a poor Priſoner in Chains, yet God made him the only Counſellour and Comforter unto all that were in the Ship. Firſt he adviſeth them to Eat, becauſe that through Conſternation of Mind, and Horrour of Death, they had made no ſet Meal for Fourteen Days, not that they ſubſiſted Miraculouſly without any Nouriſhment at all, but eat ſo little, that it was in a manner, continual Faſting: Next he becomes the Chaplain of the Ship, *He gave thanks to God in the preſence of them all.* That is, He deſir'd God's Bleſſing upon what they eat, and praiſed him for it: Thanks ſhould be returned when Benefits are received, from the hand of Man, much more from the hand of God; what ſhall we think of thoſe that ſit down to a full Table as a Beaſt to his Forrage, without taking any notice of the Bountiful Hand that feeds them. St. *Paul* having thus refreſht himſelf, and by his Example and Words, Encouraged all the reſt to do the like: An Account is taken of the exact number of Perſons which were in the Ship, and it was found to be Two Hundred and Threeſcore and Sixteen Souls: probably, this was done at the Motion of St. *Paul*, that ſo after their Deliverence, it might appear how exactly his Prediction mentioned, *Verſe* 22. *That there ſhall be no loſs of any Man's Life, nor an hair fall from the head of any*, was verified and fulfilled. What ever God ſpeaks by the Mouth of his Holy Servants; be it by way of Prediction or Denunciation, ſhall certainly be accompliſhed and come to paſs: God is Honoured in his Truth; when his Promiſes are fulfilled towards his People, and Threatnings inflicted on his Enemies.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ſhip, and caſt out the wheat into the ſea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they diſcovered a certain creek with a ſhore, into the which they were minded, if it were poſſible, to thruſt in the ſhip. 40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themſelves* unto the ſea, and looſed the rudder-bands, and hoiſed up the main ſail to the wind, and made toward ſhore. 41 And falling into a place where two ſeas met, they ran the ſhip aground; and the fore-part ſtuck faſt, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the ſouldiers counſel was to kill the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out, and eſcape. 43 But the centurion, willing to ſave Paul, kept them from *their* purpoſe, and commanded that they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt *themſelves* firſt into the ſea, and get to land: 44 And the reſt, ſome on boards, and ſome on

broken peices of the ſhip; And ſo it came to paſs, that they eſcaped all ſafe to land.

Here Obſerve, 1. How willing Men in Diſtreſs are, to part with all things for the preſervation of Life; theſe Sea-faring Men are here found three times lightning their Ship of their Lading and Burthen; Firſt, The Merchandize was caſt over Board, *ver.* 18. next all the Ships Furniture was heaved over, *ver.* 19. and now, *ver.* 38. goes over the very Wheat, which they had provided for their daily Bread; future Proviſion is caſt away to ſave Life at preſent: Life is the moſt precious Treaſure, the moſt excellent thing in Nature: a Man will part with all the Comforts and Supports of Life, rather than with Life it ſelf. *Obſerve,* 2. What a wonderful Work of God was here upon the Hearts of theſe poor Pagans; thus, to venture their Lives, by parting with their Food which they had to live upon; barely upon St. *Paul*'s Word, that they ſhould want Wheat no more in the Ship. Such an Influence has God upon the Hearts and Minds of Men, when he pleaſes to make uſe of it. *Obſerve,* 3. How God's delivering Power is moſt gloriouſly Manifeſt in the moſt deplorable Extremities of his People. Now when the Ship was fallen into a place where two Seas met, when ſhe ran a ground, and was broken with the violence of the Waves: This Extremity was God's Opportunity, and this ſtreight was the ſeaſon of his Succour. *Obſerve,* 4. What horrid and cruel Ingratiude was found with theſe wretched Soldiers toward the Apoſtle, they deſign to take away his Life, who had taken ſuch care of them, and for whoſe ſake all their Lives were preſerved: It is no new thing for an unkind World to return Evil for Good, and Hatred for good Will; but to do Good and ſuffer Evil is the Chriſtians Exerciſe at preſent: *They conſulted* to kill the Priſoners (of whom the Apoſtle was chief) leſt any *of them ſhould Swim out and eſcape. Obſ.* 5. How God put it into the Centurion's Heart, to defeat that Barbarity and bloody Counſel, and to ſave the Apoſtle for whoſe ſake the Centurion and all in the Ship were ſaved. Many are the wicked Devices in the Heart of Man, but the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand. *Obſerve,* 6. How God performed his Promiſe to the Apoſtle to a very Tittle: They were all ſaved, not a Man drowned, no not any one of the bloody Soldiers who gave Counſel to kill *Paul.* O how good is God to the unthankful and unholy; his tender Mercies are over all his Works, and how well do Sinners fare ſometimes for the Saints ſake.

Thus after a long and dangerous Voyage, the Providence of God brought St. *Paul* with the reſt of the Paſſengers at laſt ſafe to Shore: O how punctual is God to what he promiſes. What he foretels he will fulfil. He had foretold by *Paul,* that they ſhould ſuffer Ship-wrack, and at laſt be caſt upon a certain Iſland; and accordingly here they eſcaped to an Iſland called *Melita,* where what ſignal inſtances of Humanity they received from the hands of Barbarous Heathens, the following Chapter fully Informs us.

CHAP. XXVIII.

**1 AND when they were eſcaped, then they knew
that the iſland was called Melita. 2 And the
barbarous People ſhewed us no little kindneſs; for they
kindled a fire, and received us every one, becauſe of the
preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold. 3 And when Paul
had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the
fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and faſtned on
his hand. 4 And when the barbarians ſaw the venomous
beaſt hang on his hand, they ſaid among themſelves,
No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath
eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live.
5 And he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and felt no
harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he ſhould have
ſwollen, or fallen down dead ſuddenly: but after they
had looked a great while, and ſaw no harm come to
him, they changed their minds, and ſaid that he was a
god.**

After a long and dangerous Voyage Recorded in the foregoing Chapter, the Providence of God brought St. *Paul* and the reſt of the Priſoners to an Iſland called *Melita,* where they were all courteouſly received by the Iſlanders; who finding them wet and cold, made them a Fire to warm and Refreſh them: When behold, a Viper that was in the Wood, and feeling the heat of the Fire, leaped out upon St. *Paul,* and faſtened on his Hand; which the Iſlanders ſeeing, inſtantly concluded, that the Apoſtle was ſome notorious Malefactor, whom Divine Vengeance followed: But the Apoſtle (according to our Saviour's Promiſe, St. *Mark* 16. 18. *If ye touch any deadly thing it ſhall not hurt you*) ſhaking off the Venemous Beaſt into the Fire without harm: The People preſently changed their Opinion, and took him for a God, that was come to them in the ſhape of a Man. *Here Note,* 1. How it pleaſed God by a new Miracle, to confirm the Apoſtle's Authority, and thereby to prepare the Hearts of thoſe Barbarous People for the receiving of the Goſpel. God will Honour his Goſpel, and the faithful Diſpenſers of it, where-ever they go, by preparing the Hearts of a People to receive and entertain it. *Note,* 2. That great and manifold Dangers and Diſtreſſes may and oft-times do befall gracious Perſons; no ſooner is one Affliction paſſed over and gone from them, but preſently another comes on with a freſh Aſſault. *Thus here, St. Paul* had no ſooner eſcaped the Ship-wrack and gets to ſhore, but a Viper faſtens upon his Hand; *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous. Note,* 3. That the very light of Nature ſuggeſts even to the moſt Barbarous Heathens, that wickedneſs ſhall not go unpuniſhed; *No doubt, this Man is a murtherer, whom vengeance ſuffereth not to live. Note,* 4. That Natural Agents cannot act or exert their Natural Powers, without the concourſe and concurrence of ſupernatural Providence: This Viper, according to its Nature, did not, and could not ſting the Apoſtle, being reſtrained by the Over-ruling Providence and Power of God. *Note,* 5. That the Humanity of theſe Barbarous Heathens towards thoſe that ſuffered Ship-wrack, may juſtly condemn the Inhumanity of them that are called Chriſtians towards thoſe that are Ship-wrackt: How do ſome that live near the Sea-coaſts Rejoyce at a Wrack at Sea, in hopes of inriching themſelves with the ſpoils of others? The Barbarous were Humane here, but the Humane are now Barbarous. *Note,* 6. How prone and ready Men are to draw ſinful Inferences from ſorrowful Premiſes; to conclude, that ſuch a Man, or ſuch a People are Wicked, becauſe they are Wretched; great Sinners, becauſe great Sufferers. This was the barbarous Logick of theſe Iſlanders: it had been well that it had been confined to that Iſland; *When the Barbarians ſaw the venemous Beaſt on the Apoſtles hand, they ſaid, no doubt, this Man is a murtherer. Note,* 7. How mutable is the mind of Man, and how conſtant are Men in their eſteem and opinions of Men; the Apoſtle had no ſooner ſhook off the Viper into the Fire, but the Barbarians change their Opinions in another extreme; he whom they accounted a Murtherer before, they call a God now; *They changed their minds, and ſaid that he was God.* They are as Light and Laviſh in their Applauding, as before they were Raſh and Severe in Cenſuring. Thus upon changes of Providence, many change their Opinions of Men, ſometimes for the better, but commonly for the worſe. Lord, help me to eſteem my ſelf only by the eſteem which I have with thee. Let me never be lift up with the Applaudings, nor caſt down by the Deſpiſings of Men; neither Praiſe nor Reproach are much to be accounted of, while we are innocent, and make thee our Friend. *Queſtion,* But why did not St. *Paul,* that ſhook off the Viper from his Hand, ſhake off the Chain from his Arm, and ſet him at Liberty? *Anſwer,* St. *Paul* was not the Author, but a Miniſter or Inſtrument in this Miracle; it was not St. *Paul* himſelf, but God by him, that wrought this Miracle; *Acts* 19. 11. *God wrought ſpecial Miracles by the hand of Paul.* Now when the deliverance of the Apoſtle from the Bonds made moſt for the Glory of God, he was delivered; but when his Bonds would more advance the Goſpel, God kept him in Bonds.

**7 In the ſame quarters were Poſſeſſions of the chief
man of the iſland, whoſe name was Publius, who received
us and lodged us three days courteouſly. 8 And it
came to paſs that the father of Publius lay ſick of a
feaver, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in,
and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.
9 So when this was done, others alſo which had diſeaſes
in the iſland, came, and were healed. 10 Who alſo honoured
us with many honours, and when we departed,
they laded *us* with ſuch things as were neceſſary.**

Obſerve here, How God goes on ſtill to Honour the Perſon and Miniſtry of St. *Paul*, in the Eyes and Hearts of this Barbarous People, by enabling him farther to work Miracles in the Iſland; Firſt on *Publius* the Governour's Father, and then on others that were diſeaſed in the Iſland. *Here Note*, 1. How great the Civility of Governor of the Iſland was towards St. *Paul*, entertaining him and all the Company with him, even more then Two Hundred Perſons at his own Charge. And, 2. How well the Governour was rewarded for his Hoſpitable Charity: His Father lying Sick of a Fever and Bloody-Flux, is miraculouſly Recovered by God. As there is no Duty more certainly Rewarded in another World than that of Charity; ſo is it frequently rewarded in this World. *Publius* was well paid by his Fathers Recovery, for what he did for St. *Paul* and his Company. *Note* 3. The Means which the Apoſtle uſed for recovering this Sick Perſon: Prayer and Impoſition of Hands, *ver.* 8. *Paul prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him.* Now hereby the Apoſtle ſhewed that he could do nothing of himſelf; accordingly he applies by Prayer to that God, who killeth and maketh alive, and the Lord heard him. St. *Paul* had honoured God, and now God Honours him: How grieved was the Holy Apoſtle when God's Honour was ſacrilegiouſly given to him. I doubt not, but it grieved the good Man more, when they called him a God, when they accounted him a Murtherer: Here therefore he returns the Honour to God, by Prayer, aſcribing all to him: And God Honours him by making him the Inſtrument of the miraculous Cure. *Note*, 4. How the infinitely Wiſe God made all things work together for his own Glory; That the Apoſtle ſhould ſuffer Ship-wrack, that he ſhould be caſt upon an Iſland, that he ſhould be caſt upon a Barbarous Iſland, where the name of God was not known, that a Viper ſhould faſten upon him and not hurt him, that the Governour of the Iſland's Father, and other Inhabitants of the Iſland, ſhould at this time be Sick, and miraculouſly cured by St. *Paul*; All theſe tended towards the promoting of God's Glory, by opening an effectual door for the Converſion of many Souls; for during the three Months that the Apoſtle ſtayed there, he planted a Chriſtian Church in the Iſland, which became Famous for it's ſtedfaſtneſs in the Truth. *Note* 5. The Proof and Evidence which the Iſlanders gave of the Truth of their Converſion by the Apoſtles Miniſtry amongſt them: Namely, That thoſe New Converts loaded St. *Paul*'s Ship with Neceſſaries for their Voyage when he went away from them; This was a real Fruit of their effectual Faith, as alſo their honouring him with many Honours. The beſt Evidence of ſincere Faith is an Holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works, in Works of Piety towards God, and Works of Charity towards Man; *They honoured us with many honours, and when we departed, they loaded us with ſuch things as were neceſſary.*

11 And after three months we departed in a ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſle whoſe ſign was Caſtor and Pollux. 12 And landing at Syracuſe, we tarried *there* three days. 13 And from thence we ſet a compaſs, and came to Rhegium: and after one day, the ſouth-wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found brethren, and were deſired to tarry with them ſeven days: and ſo we went toward Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the Three taverns: whom when Paul ſaw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. *Paul*, at the command of God, tho' Ship-wrackt before, yet puts forth to Sea again. A clear call from God will carry on a Chriſtian chearfully; to grapple with all imaginable Difficulties and Dangers, without either diſpute or delay. Thus did the Apoſtle here; he enters a Ship of *Alexandria*, Sails from *Malta* to *Syracuſe* in *Sicily*, from thence to *Rhegium* in *Italy*, from thence to *Puteoli*; where they found ſome Chriſtians, with whom they abode ſeven Days. *Here Note*, How wonderfully the Chriſtian Religion was ſpread abroad in the *Italian* Country; yea in and about *Rome*, before St. *Paul*'s coming thither from *Puteoli*. The Apoſtle paſſes to *Rome*, the chief City in *Italy*, the Empreſs of the World, the Seat of the *Roman* Emperour: Behold, how God bears witneſs to, and puts Honour upon his ſuffering Servant; he paſſes to *Rome*, more like a Conqueror than a Priſoner; he is met upon the Road by many eminent Perſons, as Conquerors uſed to be, to congratulate their great Victories; even by Chriſtians, who are called Brethren, *ver.* 15. Who were not aſhamed of St. *Paul*'s Chain; but left their Houſes and came forth to meet him, ſome Fifty Miles, others Thirty; ſome one days Journey, others two; to congratulate his coming, and pay their Reſpect unto him: For which Favour the Apoſtle, *Thanks God and took Courage.* That is, he owned it as an Encouragement ſent from God unto him, and was greatly refreſhed by their Company. But how came Chriſtians ſo early to be found in *Rome?* Who Converted them? St. *Paul* had never been there till now, and we read not of St. *Peter*'s or any of the Apoſtles having been there thus early; yet St. *Paul* finds many Chriſtians at and about *Rome*. *Anſwer*, Theſe Brethren are thought to be Converted by ſuch as were preſent at *Jeruſalem*, at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. *Acts* 2. 10. Where it is expreſly ſaid, that there were *ſtrangers of Rome then preſent*, when thoſe mighty Miracles were wrought there, and we may ſuppoſe that they becoming true Converts at that time, did propagate the Goſpel in and about *Rome*, according to their Ability; and the Bleſſing of God ſo accompanied and ſucceeded their Endeavours, that the Apoſtle now found ſome Saints, even in *Nero*'s Houſe. *Thus mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.*

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the priſoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was ſuffered to dwell by himſelf, with a ſouldier that kept him. 17 And it came to paſs, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together, and when they were come together, he ſaid unto them, men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing againſt the people, or cuſtoms of our fathers, yet was I delivered priſoner from Jeruſalem into the hands of the Romans. 18. Who when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, becauſe there was no cauſe of death in me. 19 But when the Jews ſpake againſt *it*, I was conſtrained to appeal unto Ceſar; not that I had ought to accuſe my nation of. 20 For this cauſe therefore have I called for you, to ſee *you*, and to ſpeak with *you*: becauſe that for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain.

Now is the great Apoſtle landed and lodged a Priſoner at *Rome*, according to the Divine Prediction: *Chap.* 23. *ver.* 11. *Be of good cheer, Paul; as thou haſt teſtified of me at Jeruſalem, ſo ſhalt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* *Yet Obſerve*, 1. The Favour which God gave him in the ſight of his Enemies; he is not clapt up in the Common Goal, but a ſort of Priſoner at Large; he dwells by himſelf in his own hired Houſe, with a Keeper with him: This liberty was highly valued by the Apoſtle, (we may believe) not ſo much for his own Comfort, as for his Benefit and Advantage of the Goſpel; for by this Means he had an opportunity of going abroad and preaching the Word of God in every place, as the Providence of God gave him opportunity. *Obſerve*, 2. St. *Paul* is no ſooner come to *Rome* with deſire and deſign (no doubt) to Preach the Goſpel there to his Country-men the *Jews* in the firſt place; but he ſends for the Jews to come to him, ſtates his Caſe to them, lays the matter of Fact before them, and endeavours to remove all Prejudice from their Minds, which they might have taken up againſt him, and ſo have miſt of the benefit of his Miniſtry. *From whence Learn*, That is is the great Duty of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, prudently to prevent (if poſſible) or preſently to remove all Prejudices which may be taken up by their People againſt their Perſons, knowing that if they have a Prejudice againſt their Perſons, they will never reliſh their Doctrine, nor be benefitted by their Miniſtry. Thus did the great Apoſtle here endeavour to ſet himſelf right with his Auditors the *Jews*, before he began to Preach to them. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Apoſtle was not aſhamed of, but rather Glories in, the Cauſe for which he ſuffered, *for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this Chain:* As if he had ſaid, for Preaching *that Meſſiah*, who hath long been hoped and prayed for, I am come hither a Priſoner; or for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt the promiſed *Meſſias*, whom all true *Iſraelites* long expected and hoped for, who is now come in the Fleſh, to be their Redeemer, and in whom all the true *Iſrael* of God repoſe all their hope of Salvation, and by whom they expect a joyful Reſurrection; *I am bound with this Chain.* *Here Obſerve*, 1. The hard uſage which this Bleſſed Apoſtle meets with, from the hand of a wicked World; a Chain is clapt upon him as if he were ſome Rogue or Thief: *Paul* the Lamb was now a Priſoner to *Nero* the Lyon. The beſt of Men may, and oft do ſuffer under the Notion of the moſt vile and wicked Perſons. *Obſerve*, 2. The true Cauſe of St. *Paul*'s Sufferings, *For the hope of Iſrael I am bound.* That is, for the Object of *Iſrael*'s Hope, or the *Meſſiah* which they ſo long expected, and ſo much hoped for. *Obſerve*, 3. The Publication which St. *Paul* makes of his Sufferings here at *Rome*; he tells all the World for whom, and in whoſe Cauſe, he now ſuffered. *Thence Learn*, That Sufferings for Chriſt and the Goſpel, are no matter of Shame but Glory: The Apoſtle doth not Bluſh to ſay, *for the hope of Iſrael* I wear this *Chain*; the Shame belonged to them that clapt on the Chain, not to him that wore it. *Obſerve*, 4. The end why the Apoſtle makes known his Sufferings; namely, that all the *Jews* now at *Rome* might know the true Cauſe wherefore he ſuffered. St. *Paul*'s Enemies had laid heavy things to his Charge, which poſſibly might fly as far as *Rome*; now altho' he little regarded what the wicked World ſaid of him, yet he deſired to ſtand right in the thoughts of the *Jews* here at *Rome*, and therefore, as ſoon as he was come thither, he ſends for them to acquaint them with the Cauſe of his Impriſonment. When good Men are in a ſuffering Condition, the Devil is very induſtrious to defame them, and the World very ready to miſrepreſent them; therefore it is a Duty which is owning to themſelves, to vindicate their own Innocency, and to ſet forth the Cauſe of their Sufferings in a clear and true Light. It is verily *for the hope of Iſrael, that I am bound with this Chain.*

21 And they ſaid unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came, ſhewed or ſpake any harm of thee. 22 But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt: for as concerning this ſect we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt. 23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and teſtified the kingdom of God, perſwading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the law of Moſes, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And ſome believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.

Obſerve here, 1. The Advantage which the Apoſtle had to Preach the Goſpel to theſe *Jews* at *Rome*; they aſſure him that they had entertained no Prejudice againſt his Perſon, for they had received no Letters out of *Judea* concerning him; neither had any of their Brethren that came from *Judea* ſpoken any Evil of him: Yea, they aſſure him, it was their deſire to hear him Preach, and to underſtand what he had to ſay for the Chriſtian Religion, (which they call a Sect or Hereſie) that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* did generally oppoſe and ſpeak againſt, and talk hardly of. *Obſerve*, 2. How readily the Apoſtle complies with their Requeſt in Preaching to them; Time and Place are appointed, the People Aſſembled: the great Truth defended and proved, was this; That Jeſus of *Nazareth* was the true and promiſed *Meſſiah*, in whom all that deſire to be ſaved, ought to Believe and Truſt. This Argument he confirmed by Teſtimonies out of the Law of *Moſes*, and out of the Prophets, continuing his Diſcourſe from Morning until Night; ſo unwearied was this faithful Labourer in his Lord and Maſter's Work. *Obſerve*, 3. The different Succeſs of the Word Preached, and the contrary Effects which it had upon its Hearers; *Some believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.* As the ſame Sun that ſoften the Wax hardens the Clay, ſo has the Goſpel different Effects upon thoſe it is Preached to; there are ſome, whom no Sun will Tan, no Heat will Warm, no Influence will quicken: To ſome *we* are the ſavour of Life unto Life, to others the ſavour of Death unto Death: But Bleſſed be God, if we his Miniſters be found Faithful, we ſhall be a ſweet ſavour unto God, as well in them that Periſh, as in them that are Saved.

25 And when they agreed not among themſelves, they departed, after that Paul had ſpoken one Word, Well ſpake the holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. 27 For the heart of this people is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed; leſt they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and underſtand with *their* hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the Salvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it. 29 And when he had ſaid theſe words, the Jews departed, and had great reaſoning among themſelves.

The obſtinate Infidelity and unreaſonable unbelief which was found amongſt theſe *Jews* under the Apoſtle's Preaching was no doubt a great grief of Heart unto him; but at their departure, he tells them that they would not be perſwaded, that this Unbelief of theirs, was what the *Prophet Eſaias* had long before punctually foretold, that hearing they will not hear, and ſeeing they will not ſee: Having contracted ſuch a wilful hardneſs, blindneſs and deafneſs, as will not ſuffer them to hearken to any Counſel which may tend to their Converſion and Salvation. *Here Note*, That tho' the preſent unbelief of the obſtinate *Jews*, to whom the Apoſtle now Preached, was long before foretold by the Prophets of God: Yet the Prophet's Prediction was no cauſe of their Unbelief; or that which laid them under an impoſſibility of believing: But the fault lay in their own obſtinate Wills; with reſpect to which, by the juſt Judgment of God, they were blinded and hardned. When Sinners cloſe their Eyes wilfully, and ſay they will not ſee, it is juſt with God to cloſe their Eyes judicially, and ſay they will not ſee. *Deus non deſerit niſi Deſerentem*; the *Jews* had forſaken God, and now God forſakes them; but the Apoſtle tells them, that upon this Refuſal of theirs, he was to Preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and that they would hear it and gladly receive it, *ver.* 29. *The Salvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.* ***Where*** *Obſerve*, The Epithet or Title given to the Goſpel; the Salvation of God: 1. It is ſtiled *Salvation*, becauſe it makes a tender and univerſal offer of Life and Salvation unto loſt Sinners. 2. It is called the *Salvation of God*; becauſe it is a Salvation of his providing and contriving, of his revealing and diſcovering; it is his by way of pateſaction and diſcovery; his by way of tender and offer; his by way of power and efficacy; *The Salvation of God is ſent unto the Gentiles.*

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Note here, 1. The ſpecial Favour indulged St. *Paul* now a Priſoner at *Rome*, with ſo much Freedom and without any Moleſtation, to Preach the Goſpel in his own hired Houſe for 2 years together. Where *Obſerve*, 1. Who Preached; St. *Paul* a Priſoner, who ſcarcely hath liberty to hear, rarely to Preach. 2. Where he preached, even in proud, powerful and imperious *Rome*, and in his own hired Houſe there 3. To whom he preached, *To all that came unto him.* He ſet open the Doors of his Houſe for all Comers, excluding none from the Gracious Offers of Salvation by a Redeemer, upon the Goſpel Condition of Faith and Obedience. 4. How long he continued his Miniſtry at *Rome.* For two whole Years at that time; he would neither be Allured by Flatteries, nor Hector'd by Threatnings to lay down his Miniſtry, or deſiſt from his Preaching Work. 5. After what manner he Preached, with all Confidence, Boldneſs, Openneſs and Freedom, with ſuch an undaunted Courage, as neither the love of Life, nor fear of Death, could overcome. 6. The Subject Matter of his Preaching. *The Kingdom of God, and things concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; not vain Janglings or envious Railings, but Jeſus Chriſt, and the way of Salvation by him. *Laſtly*, With what Freedom he did all this, *no man forbidding him*; neither Emperor, nor Senate, nor Magiſtrate, nor Soldier, nor Prieſt, nor People, tho' in an Heathen City, devoted to Idolatry, in the leaſt hindering or forbidding him. *Where Note*, That *Roman* Heathen of old, was far leſs cruel and much more courteous to the Preachers of the Goſpel then *Rome* Anti-Chriſt ſince has been. Then an Apoſtle might Preach two Years together without Moleſtation in his own hired Houſe, to all Comers, but now a Miniſter of God muſt there have no publick or private place of meeting to Worſhip God according to his Word and Will, without the danger of an Inquiſition.

To Conclude, ſee how impoſſible it was at that day to hinder the Progreſs of the Goſpel; even as impoſſible as to hinder the Sun from ſhining, or the Wind from blowing. That God who ſhut the Mouth of the hungry Lyons that they hurt not *Daniel*, did open the Mouth of the Apoſtle, that neither *Nero*, nor the *Jews* could ſtop it; yea, after this, *he was delivered from the Mouth of the Lyon*; Reſcued out of *Nero*'s Hands. And God would have continued to deliver him, had not his Death been more for the Glory of God and his own Advantage than his Life, which at laſt was offered up as a Sacrifice, and Sweet-Smelling Savour, acceptable unto God through Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus St. *Luke* concludes his Hiſtory of St. *Paul*'s Life, without giving us any Particulars of his Death. He leaves him at *Rome*, a Priſoner under *Nero*: Where after two Years Confinement, the Scriptures ſeems to hint, that he was ſet at liberty, and that he went about Preaching the Goſpel, and confirming the Churches for ſome Years; but an attempt to trace this Apoſtle farther without Scripture light may be the ready way to looſe our ſelves: Let us therefore conclude with Prayer,

That Almighty God, *who through the Preaching of his Bleſſed* Apoſtle *St.* Paul, *did cauſe the* Light *of the Glorious* Goſpel *to Shine throughout the* World, *would mercifully grant, that we having his wonderful Converſion and inſtructive Example in our remembrance, may ſhew forth our thankfulneſs unto him for the ſame; by following the Holy Doctrine which he taught,* Through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *Amen.*

THE
Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO THE
ROMANS.

This Epiſtle to the Romans, *has always been eſteemed by the* Church of GOD, *one of the chiefeſt and moſt excellent Portions of* Holy Scripture: *The Reaſon why this Epiſtle ſtands Firſt, is not becauſe it was wrote firſt;* (*the Epiſtle to the* Corinthians, Galatians *and* Theſſalonians, *being writ before it*) *But either becauſe of the Imperial Dignity of the* City, *to wit* Rome, *unto which it was directed; or elſe becauſe of the Sublimity of the Matter, and the Excellency of the Doctrine contained in it, with reſpect to which, ſome have called it,* The Marrow of Divinity; The Key of the New Teſtament; The Chriſtian Church's Confeſſion of Faith; and the moſt Divine Epiſtle of the moſt Holy Apoſtle.

The Scope and Deſign of which is Twofold; Firſt, *To ſhew that neither the* Gentiles *by the* Law of Nature, *nor the* Jews *by the* Law *of* Moſes, *could ever attain to* Juſtification *and* Salvation; *but only by* Faith in Jeſus Chriſt: *For the ſake of whoſe Merits alone we are accounted* Righteous *in the ſight of God.* Secondly, *To ſhew that Faith is not ſeparated from* Good Works, *but productive of them; being the Parent and Principle of* Obedience, *without which, whoſoever liveth, is accounted Dead before* GOD.

The Subject Matter of this Epiſtle is Twofold, partly Doctrinal, *and partly* Practical: *In the* Doctrinal part, *which makes up the firſt Eleven* Chapters, *the* Apoſtle *treats of* Juſtification by Faith alone, *without the Works of the Law, of* Original Corruption *by the* Fall *of* Adam, *of* Sanctification *by the* Spirit of Chriſt; *of the* Calling *of the* Gentiles; *that is, of the preſent Rejection of the* Jews, *and the future recalling of them, when the fulneſs of the* Gentiles *was come in.*

In the Applicatory, *or* Practical *part of this* Epiſtle, *which begins at* Chapter 12. *we have many uſeful and excellent* Exhortations, *both to general and particular* Duties, *Reſpecting* GOD, *our* Neighbour, *and* our Selves; *and ſeveral* Encouragements *given us to the* Love *and* Practice *of* Univerſal Holineſs.

CHAP. I.

In this Firſt Chapter our Apoſtle (*after Salutation given*) *proceeds to his principal Deſign and Scope; namely, To aſſert and prove the* Grand Doctrine *of* Juſtification by Faith; *that is, by Believing and Obeying the* Goſpel *of* Chriſt, *and that no Perſon, either* Jew *or* Gentile, *could poſſibly be* Juſtified *by any* Works *of their own.*

As to the Gentiles, *he ſhews in this* Chapter, *That their* Works *were ſo far from* juſtifying *them before* GOD *that they were* an Abomination *in his Sight; That for* Rebelling *againſt the* Light *and* Law *of* Nature, GOD *delivered them up to their* unnatural Luſts, *which expoſed them to unutterable and inevitable Condemnation,* (*as the cloſe of this* Chapter *will inform us*) *and this as a* juſt Judgment *and* righteous Puniſhment *for their Sins.*

1 PAul a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called *to be* an apoſtle, ſeparated unto the Goſpel of God.

Obſerve here, The Author and Pen-man of this Epiſtle deſcribed: 1. By his Name, *Paul*, before his Converſion he was called *Saul*, then *Saul* the Perſecutor: after his Converſion

ſion he was *Paul* the Profeſſor, *Paul* the Preacher, *Paul* the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*. O wonderful Power of the *Heart-changing Grace of God!* Which is able to turn *Sauls* into *Pauls*, *Perſecutors* into *Profeſſors*; *Faithleſs Sinners* into *Faithful Servants* of *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Obſerve*, 2. He is deſcribed by his general Office; *A Servant of Jeſus Chriſt:* an higher and more honourable *Title* than that of *Emperour* of the whole Earth. *Servire Chriſto eſt regnare*, to ſerve Chriſt, eſpecially in the Quality of an Ambaſſador, is a greater Honour than to have the *Monarch* of the *World*, to ſerve us, and bow the Knee before us. *Obſerve*, 3. He is deſcrib'd by his particular Office; *called to be an Apoſtle*, that is, conſtituted and appointed by Chriſt to that holy Function, without any Merit or Deſert of his own: He did not aſſume the Honour of an Apoſtle till *called*, and when *called*, it was not any Deſert of his own, but the free and undeſerved Grace of God that *called* him. *Obſerve*, 4. That as he was *called* to, ſo he is ſaid to be *ſeparated* for the great work of preaching the Goſpel, *ſeparated unto the Goſpel of God*; that is, ſet apart in the Purpoſe and Decree of God: *ſeparated from his mothers womb*, Gal. 1. 15. immediately and extraordinarily called by Chriſt himſelf to this great Work, *Acts* 9. 15. And immediately by the Offices of the Church, *Acts* 13. *ver. &c.* The work of diſpenſing the Myſteries of the everlaſting Goſpel, is to be undertaken by none but thoſe who are ſolemnly *ſeparated* and ſet apart for it, and regularly called to it: I would to God, the Herd of Lay-preachers at this day, would conſider this. Theſe Uſurpers of the Sacred Function can neither Pray in Faith for a Bleſſing upon what they undertake, becauſe they have no promiſe to bottom their Faith upon, nor can the People expect to profit by what they hear from them; for this would be to expect God's Bleſſing out of God's way. Read *with trembling* what God ſays; *Jeremy*, 23. 32. *I ſent them not, neither commanded them, therefore ſhall they not profit this People at all. Where mark*, That the Peoples not profiting by theſe Men, is not charged upon their falſe Doctrine, but upon their want of a Call and Commiſſion: It is not ſaid, that their Doctrine is *unſound*, but they preach *unſent*; therefore they ſhall not profit this People at all, theſe Men contradict the Command of God, the univerſal Practice of the Chriſtian Church; violate the Rules of Order and right Reaſon, and expoſe a moſt awful and tremendous Ordinance of God to contempt and ſcorn; yea lay it open to the bold preſumption of every ignorant and impudent Pretender. *Obſerve*, 5. The glorious Title given to the Goſpel, which St. *Paul* was called forth to preach; it is here ſtiled the *Goſpel of God*, and elſewhere the *Goſpel of Chriſt*. It is the Goſpel of God, as he was the Author and Contriver of it; it is the Goſpel of Chriſt, as he is the ſubject Matter and Scope of it; as Jeſus Chriſt was the Sum of the Law, ſo is he the Subſtance of the Goſpel: Indeed St. *Paul* ſometimes calls it *his Goſpel*, *Rom.* 2. 16. becauſe he was the Diſpenſer and Promulger of it; it was *Depoſitum fidei ſuæ commiſſium*, a Divine Treaſure committed to his Care and Truſt: And if the Goſpel preached, be the Goſpel of God, let us entertain it in our Judgments, retain it in our Memories, embrace it in our Affections, hide it in our Hearts, confeſs it with our Mouths, and practice it with our Lives.

(2 Which he had promiſed afore by his prophets in the holy ſcriptures.)

That is, which Goſpel God had promiſed before by his Holy Prophets ſpeaking in the Holy Scriptures. *Where Note*, 1. The Antiquity of the Goſpel, how Ancient that Doctrine is, even as old, as the old Prophets themſelves, nay as old as *Adam* himſelf. The Goſpel, or glad Tidings of a Saviour, was firſt preached to *Adam* by God himſelf, *Gen.* 3. 15. next to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. Then it was predicted by all the Prophets which have been ſince the World began: The Goſpel which we Preach can by no means fall under the charge and imputation of Novelty: It is no new or modern Doctrine, but almoſt as old as the World it ſelf; *Which* Goſpel *he had promiſed before by his holy Prophets*. Behold then, a great Correſpondency, a ſweet Agreement and Harmony between the Old and New Teſtament, between the Prophets and Apoſtles; tho' great difference in the manner and meaſure of the Revolution. For as one ſays, the Old Teſtament is the *hiding* of the New; the New Teſtament is the *opening* of the Old. The Old Teſtament is the New Teſtament *veiled*; the New Teſtament is the Old *revealed*. *Note*, 2. The venerable Title given to the Scriptures; they are called the *Holy Scriptures*, *which he had promiſed before by his Prophets*, *ſpeaking in the holy Scriptures*. The Scriptures are Holy in ſeveral Reſpects. 1. In regard of their Author and Inditer, the Holy Spirit of God. 2. In regard of the Pen-men and Writers of them, Holy Men of God. 3. In regard of the ſubject Matter contained in them, the Holy will of God. 4. In regard of them to make us Holy both in Heart and Life: And if the Word of God be an Holy Word, then let it be treated by us with all Holy Deference and Regard. Lord, what an impious Liberty do ſome Men take in this wanton Age, to furniſh out a Jeſt in Scripture-Attire, and in their Jocular Humour to make light and irreverent Applications of Scripture Phraſes and Sentence! They lay their Schemes of ridiculons Mirth in the Bible, and play the Buffoons with the moſt ſerious things in the World. Theſe Men bring forth Scripture, as the *Philiſtines* brought forth *Sampſon*, only to *make them ſport*; but they ſhall e're long find Almighty God in Earneſt, tho' they were in Jeſt: He that has magnified his Word above all his *name*, will not brook it, that any Man ſhould make it vile and contemptible by rendring it the Theme of his giddy Mirth and prophane Drollery.

3 Concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which
was made of the ſeed of David, according to the fleſh, 4
And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according
to the ſpirit of holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the dead?

The Apoſtle having told us in the foregoing Verſes, that he was particularly called to, and by God ſet a part for the preaching of the Goſpel. In the Verſes before us, he declares that Jeſus Chriſt was the main Subject of that Goſpel which he preached, and deſcribes him by his two-fold Nature; by his Human Nature, *v.* 3. by his Divine Nature, *v.* 4. According to his Human Nature he was *made of the Seed of David*, that is, Deſcended from *David* and one of his Poſterity, by the Mothers ſide, who was of that Houſe and Line. *According to the Fleſh*, that is, the Weakneſs, Frailty and Mortality of his Human Nature. *Where Obſerve*, 1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had a Being, even an Eternal Exiſtence before his Incarnation, or Manifeſtation in our Fleſh and Nature. He was the Son of God, before he was the Son of Man; hence he is ſaid to be *made* of the Seed of *David*; intimating that he was then *made* what he was not before: In regard of his Divine Nature he was *begotten*, not *made*; but in regard of his Humane Nature, he was *made*, not *begotten*. *Obſerve*, 2. That Jeſus Chriſt, the Eternal Son of God, did in the fulneſs of time aſſume the true and perfect Nature of Man into a perſonal Union with his God-head. The Humane Nature was united to the Divine Nature miraculouſly and extraordinarily, by the over-ſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt, *Luke* 1. 34, 35. and alſo, integrally and compleatly; that is to ſay, Chriſt took a compleat and perfect Humane Soul and Body, with all the Faculties of the one, and all the Members of the other, that thereby he might heal the whole Nature of that Leproſie of Sin, which had ſeized upon, and diffuſed its Malignity into every Member, and every Faculty.

Next, we have a Demonſtration of Chriſt's Divine Nature, *v.* 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with Power*, &c. As if our Apoſtle had ſaid; that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, tho' according to the frailty and weakneſs of his Humane Nature he was of the Seed of *David*; yet in reſpect of that Divine Power of the Holy Ghoſt, which manifeſted it ſelf in him, eſpecially in his Reſurrection from the Dead, *he was declared to be the Son of God with Power*; that is, mightily and powerfully demonſtrated ſo to be. *Learn thence*, 1. That the Reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, by the Holy Ghoſt, is a powerful and convincing demonſtration that he was the Son of God. Chriſt *as Man* is no where ſaid in Scripture to be the Son of God, but with relation to the Divine Power of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom he had Life communicated to him from the Father, both at his Conception and at his Reſurrection. At his Conception he was the Son of God, by being convinced by the Holy Ghoſt; but this was ſecret and inviſible, known only to the Mother of our Lord. Therefore at his Reſurrection, *by the Spirit of Holineſs*; that is, by the immediate power of the Holy Ghoſt, God thought fit to give a publick and viſible Demonſtration to the whole World, that Jeſus was his own Son, the promiſed and true *Meſſias*, and conſequently did thereby give Teſtimony to the Truth and Divinity of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracles. God did now publickly own his Son in the Face of the whole World, and freed him from all Suſpicion of being an Impoſtor or Deceiver; for it is not ſuppoſable, that God ſhould put forth an Almighty Power to Raiſe him from the Grave, if he had by robbery aſſumed that glorious Title of the Son of God; therefore ſays the Father of him in the Morning of the Reſurrection, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten Thee*; that is, in the Words of our Apoſtle here, declar'd and made thee conſpicuouſly appear *to be the Son of God with Power*, *according to the Spirit of Holineſs by* *the Reſurrection from the Dead.* Yet *Obſerve*, 2. That tho' Chriſt was raiſed from the Dead, by the Power of God's Holy Spirit, yet did he certainly raiſe himſelf by his own Power, as God, according to his own Prediction, *John* 2. 19. *Deſtroy* ye *this Temple* of my Body, *and in three days I will raiſe it up*; and according to St. *Peter*'s Aſſertion, 1. Epiſt. 3. 18. *Being put to death in the fleſh*, that is, in his Humane Nature, *but quickned by the Spirit*; that is, by the Power of his God-head, or Divine Nature, quickning himſelf: For had he been only raiſed by the Power of God, and not by his own Power, how could his Reſurrection have been a Declaration that he was the Son of God? What had more appeared in Chriſt's Reſurrection than in other Men's, for they were raiſed by the Power of God as well as he: But here lies the Difference; Chriſt roſe by a Self quickning Principle; others are raiſed by a quickning Principle derived from Chriſt, with reſpect to which he is called the Reſurrection and the Life, *John* 11. 25. that is the Principle of quickning Life, by which the dead Saints are raiſed. *Obſerve*, 3. That the Apoſtle doth not ſay, Chriſt was made or conſtituted the Son of God, by his Reſurrection from the Dead, but declared ſo to be; *Multa tunc fieri dicuntur quando facta eſſe manifeſtantur*, according to the Phraſe of Scripture, things are then ſaid to be, when they conſpicuouſly appear: Nothing can be more evident than that Chriſt was the Son of God before his Reſurrection, yea, before his Incarnation, being the Father of Eternity, *Iſa.* 9. 6. But the Glory of his Divinity was much clouded, darkned and eclipſed, by the Frailty of his Humanity, by the Miſeries of his Life, and the Ignominy of his Death. But by his Reſurrection God rolled away his Reproach, and freed him from all the Aſperſions and Accuſations of his Enemies, who charged him with Blaſphemy for affirming, that he was the Son of God; and thus, our Jeſus, in whom we truſt, was *declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

5 By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name: 6 Among whom are ye alſo the called of Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. St. *Paul* declares the Perſon from whom he received Authority to be an Apoſtle, namely, from Chriſt himſelf: *By whom he received Apoſtleſhip*; that is, by Jeſus Chriſt mentioned in the foregoing Verſe; who called him immediately, and furniſhed him with Authority and Ability for a Goſpel Preacher, even then when he had been a furious and fiery Perſecutor. *Obſerve*, 2. He declares how free and undeſerved a favour this was, he acknowledges he had *received Grace* to be an Apoſtle; *intimating*, that to be rightly called to be an Apoſtle, or Meſſenger of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, is a ſpecial Act and Inſtance of Divine Grace and Favour; *by whom we have received Grace and Apoſtleſhip. Obſerve*, 3. What is the ſpecial Office and Duty of an Apoſtle, and the great End and Deſign of that honourable Function, namely to call all Perſons to believe and obey the Goſpel. *Learn thence*, That the great End of the Miniſtry of the Word is to bring Sinners to believe and obey the Goſpel of Chriſt, toperſwade them to yield, not a profeſſed Subjection only, but a real Obedience alſo to the Goſpel of Chriſt; *by whom we have received Grace and Apoſtleſhip for Obedience to the faith among all Nations. Obſ.* 4. How the Apoſtle puts the *Romans* in mind of their Condition by Nature, before the Goſpel wes revealed to them, and received by them; they were *Then* Pagans and Heatheniſh Idolaters, but *nov* Chriſtians, or the *called of Jeſus Chriſt, among whom*, (that is amongſt the *Gentile* Nations) *ye are alſo the called of Chriſt Jeſus. Learn thence*, That is a neceſſary Duty for Miniſters, and profitable Duty for the People to put, and be often put in mind of what they were and are by Nature; it is profitable both to encreaſe their Humiliation and alſo to excite their Gratulation. You *Romans*, (as if the Apoſtle had ſaid) who are now *the called of Chriſt Jeſus*, were once a far off, even amongſt the vile and curſed *Gentiles*; let the Remembrance of what you once were, keep you continually humble, and the knowledge of what now by Grace ye are, render you for ever Thankful.

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* ſaints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Two things are here *Obſervable*, 1. The General Inſcription of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle, and next, the particular Salutations therein given. In the Inſcription we have the Perſons deſcribed to whom the Epiſtle is directed. And that, 1. By their place of Abode and Habitation: *To all that be at Rome. Thence Note*, That *Rome*, tho' now a Grove of Idols, a Neſt of unclean Birds, yet was once an Habitation of Holineſs; a Receptacle for the Saints, and dearly beloved ones of God. *Rome*, that is now a lewd and impudent Strumpet, was once the Chaſte and Holy Spouſe of Chriſt. Behold the Grace and Favour of God is not confined to Place or Perſon! The Lord is with you while you are with him: and not longer. 2. They are deſcribed by their Titles; *Beloved of God, Saints* and *Called. Where Note*, The order of their Titles; firſt, *Beloved of God*, then called and *Sanctified*; *intimating*, that the Love and Grace, the Favour and free Good-will of God are the Source and Spring, the Root and Original Cauſes of all Bleſſings and Benefits; namely, of Vocation, Sanctification and Remiſſion, *&c.* We love him becauſe he firſt loved us, 1 *John* 4. 10. The love of God is the Cauſe of our Holineſs, and our Perſeverance in Holineſs will be the Preſervation of his Love, *John* 15. *If ye keep my Commandments ye ſhall abide in my Love. Qeuſtion*, But how could the Apoſtle call the whole Church at *Rome Saints*, when doubtleſs there were many Hypocrites amongſt them? *Anſwer*, 1. They were all Saints by external Communion and viſible Profeſſion. They were called out of the World, that is, Separated from the World and Conſecrated to the Service of Chriſt; and ſo lay under a neceſſary Obligation to be true and real Saints. 2. They were denominated Saints from the better, and we would hope, from the greater part amongſt them: Doubtleſs there were many, very many of them, that anſwered their Character, who were holy in the habitual frame of their Hearts, and in their general Courſe of their Lives, and from them the whole received their Denomination of Saints, or Holy. *Obſerve*, 2. After the *Inſcription* follows the Apoſtl's Salutation, *Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where Note*, 1. The Comprehenſiveneſs of the Salutation: Grace and Peace comprehend all Bleſſings Spiritual and Temporal; Grace implies and includes both the Spring and Fountain of all Divine Favour, and likewiſe the ſeveral Streams which flow from that Fountain: All the Effects and Fruits of Grace and Peace, according to the *Hebrews* manner of ſpeaking, implies all good Things for Soul and Body, for Time and Eternity. *Note*, 2. The Perſons from whom theſe Bleſſings are derived, from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: From God, as the Sovereign and fontal Cauſe; and from Chriſt, as the Mediator of all, without whom we have nothing to do with any of the Divine Favours; for both Grace and Peace come by Jeſus Chriſt: And whereas Chriſt is called Lord, and here joined with the Father, and the ſame Bleſſings are ſaid to flow from Chriſt as from the Father; *We Learn*, That Chriſt is really and undoubtedly God, equal with the Father, and bleſſed for evermore. *Queſtion*, But why is the Holy Ghoſt here excluded, no mention at all being made of him? *Anſwer*, He is not excluded tho' he be not named, but neceſſarily implied in the forementioned Gifts: Becauſe Grace and Peace are the Fruits of the Spirit, they come from God the Father through the Mediation of the Son, and are wrought in us by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt. Beſides, in other Salutations, (tho' not in this) the Holy Ghoſt is expreſly mentioned, as in 2 *Cor.* 13. 13, 14. *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and Communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you.*

8 Firſt, I thank my God through Jeſus Chriſt for you all, that your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world.

Obſerve here, 1. The great and wonderful Succeſs of the Goſpel; it had produced Faith in the Hearts, and Obedience in the Lives of the *Romans*, which had made them Famous throughout the World; *Your Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is ſpoken of throughout the whole World*: That is, thro' all the *Roman* Empire, which at that time ruled over a great part of the known World. The entertaining of the Goſpel at *Rome*, made that Place more Celebrated and Famous than all the Victories and Triumphs of the *Roman* Emperors: Faith and Holineſs make a Place and People more Renowned than all outward Proſperity and Happineſs. *Obſ.* 2. That this their renowned Faith was the Ground, yea, the higheſt and chiefeſt Ground of the Apoſtle's Rejoycing; *Firſt, I thank my God that your Faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole World. Learn thence*, That it is both the Duty and the Diſpoſition of the faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, to be highly thankful to God, above all things, for the powerful Succeſs of the Goſpel, in begetting Sinners to the Faith, and Obedience of Jeſus Chriſt. This is our Rejoycing, nay, this will be our Crown of rejoycing in the Day of Chriſt: We value our Lives only by our Uſefulneſs to the Souls of our beloved People; we live as we ſee ſome of you ſtand faſt in the Lord; we die as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their Sins.

9 For God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my Prayers, 10 Making requeſt (if by any means, now at length I might have a proſperous journey, by the will of God) to come unto you.

Here we have obſervable, 1. The Apoſtle's ſolemn Proteſtation of his affectionate Love unto, and great Care and Concern for theſe *Roman* Converts whom he was now abſent from, yea, whoſe Faces he had never as yet ſeen; *Without ceaſing*, ſays the Apoſtle, *I make mention of you always in my Prayers*. Behold here, as in a Glaſs, the Face of every faithful Miniſter of Chriſt; he continually bears his People upon his Heart, whenever he goes in and out before the Lord; as *Aaron* bear the Names of the Children of *Iſrael* upon his Breaſt-plate; he pours out his very Soul in fervent Suplications for them, and can no ſooner be forgetful of himſelf than unmindful of them, *Without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my Prayers*. *Obſerve*, 2. That becauſe the Apoſtle was yet a Stranger to them, had never ſeen them, and it was impoſſible for them to know the Out-goings of his Heart towards them, he ſolemnly appeals to the Heart-ſearching God, calls him to witneſs how affectionately he loved them, and how fervently he prayed for them: *God is my witneſs*. The words have the force, if not the form of an Oath, and teach us, that it is unqueſtionably lawful in important Affairs to Swear; to Appeal to God, and call him to be a Witneſs of what we either ſay or do. We find St. *Paul* did it often, and our Saviour himſelf did not refuſe to Anſwer upon Oath, when ſolemnly adjured. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Apoſtle ſwears by God, not by the Creatures, which is the ſwearing condemn'd by our Saviour and by St. *James*, *Matt.* 5. and *James* 5. *Note farther*, How St. *Paul* appeals to that God, *whom he ſerved in or with his Spirit*; that is with the Apoſtle's own Spirit, with his Heart unfeignedly. *From whence we may Remark*, That no Service can be performed acceptably to Almighty God, except the Heart and Spirit of a Chriſtian be engaged in it: True, the Body has its part and ſhare in Divine Worſhip as well as the Soul; but the Service of the Body is never accepted by God unleſs animated and quickned by an obedient Soul. O Chriſtians, ſerve thy God with thy Soul and Spirit as well as with thy Tongue and Knee! And then thy Offering will be more acceptable to God than the moſt adorned Temples, the moſt pompuous Ceremonies, and moſt coſtly Devotions whatſoever, in the want of theſe.

11 For I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſtabliſhed, 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

The Apoſtle having declared in the foregoing Verſes, how fervently he prayed for them, and how paſſionately he deſired to come unto them; he now acquaints them with the Reaſon of that Deſire, namely, for the furtherance of his own Joy and their Eſtabliſhment; *I long to ſee you, that you may be eſtabliſhed, and I may be comforted*. *Learn hence*, 1. That Eſtabliſhment in Faith and Holineſs is that which the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians do ſtand in need of. *Learn hence*, 2. That the Preſence of the Miniſters of Chriſt with, and among their People, as well as their preaching the Doctrine of Faith to them, is abſolutely Neceſſary, in order to their Eſtabliſhment; God has joined the Duties of publick Preaching and private Inſpection together, and wo unto us, if by our Non-Reſidence, and not dwelling among our People, or if living with them, we haughtily refuſe, or ſloathfully neglect Perſonally to converſe with them, we deny them one ſpecial Means for their Edification and Eſtabliſhment. *Obſerve laſtly*, That the Apoſtle deſired to be perſonally preſent with the Church and Saints at *Rome*, for his own Benefit as well as for their Advantage; *That I may be comforted*. *Learn thence*, That the Miniſters of Chriſt do certainly improve and benefit themſelves, as well as edifie and eſtabliſh their People by their conferring with them; as Iron ſharpneth Iron, and the rubbing of one Hand warmeth another, ſo the meaneſt of Chriſt's Members may contribute to the Advantage of the greateſt Apoſtle; God's weak Servants may ſtrengthen thy ſtrong Shoulders: *Verily I have ſometimes gained more Knowledge by an Hours Conference with a private and experienced Chriſtian, than by half a Days Study*. Moſt certainly the Miniſters of God are great looſers by being Strangers to their People.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant brethren, that oftentimes I purpoſed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have ſome fruit among you alſo, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians, both to the wiſe, and to the unwiſe. 15 So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo.

Here Obſerve, How the Apoſtle obviates an Objection, and prevents a Reflection upon himſelf: Some at *Rome* might be ready to ſay, if *Paul* had ſuch a longing deſire to ſee us as he expreſſes, why did he not come all this time and preach here as he has done at *Corinth* and *Epheſus*, and elſewhere? He truly tells them therefore, that it was not for want of Inclination and Will, but for want of Opportunity, he had often intended it, and attempted it alſo, but was providentially hindred. *From whence I gather*, That the Miniſters of God cannot always diſpoſe of themſelves and of their Labours, according to their own Inclination and Deſires, but both their Perſons and Miniſtry are directed and diſpoſed of by the Providence, and according to the Pleaſure of Almighty God. *Obſerve*, 2. The great Modeſty and condeſcending Humility of our Apoſtle, in telling the *Romans*, that tho' he deſired and intended to take this long Journey to *Rome* to preach the Goſpel to them; yet this was rather a Debt than a Gift: He doth not intimate to them, that his coming amongſt them was an arbitrary Favour, for which they ſhould be indebted to him, but a bounden Duty which he owed to them; *I am a debter both to Jew and Greek, and ready to preach the Goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo*. *Here Note*, That the Debt ſpoken of is the preaching of the Goſpel; St. *Paul* contracted this Debt, and laid himſelf under an Obligation to pay it then, (as every Miniſter doth now) at his firſt entring upon the Office of the Miniſtry: By virtue of his Miſſion, it was his Duty to Preach the Goſpel to all both to the learned *Greeks* and unlearned *Barbarians*. *From whence Learn*, That to Preach the Goſpel of Chriſt both far and near with a laborious Diligence, when regularly called thereunto, is a Miniſterial Debt and Duty. We are firſt indebted to God that ſends us forth, we are alſo indebted to the People we are ſent unto. But O how many People are there that would willingly forgive their Miniſters this Debt, but we muſt tender payment at the time and place appointed, or we can never be diſcharged, whether the Debt be accepted or not.

16 For I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: for it is the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.

Obſerve here, 1. The glorious Deſcription which the Apoſtle gives of the Goſpel; *it is the power of God unto Salvation*. That is, the preaching of it is attended by, and accompanied with an Almighty Power, which renders it effectual to Salvation, if we do not bolt our Ears and Hearts againſt it. *Learn*, That the plain and perſwaſive Preaching of the Goſpel, is the choſen Inſtrument in God's Hand, which he uſes and Honours for the Conveyance of Spiritual Life into the Souls of Men, tho' it be deſpiſed and rediculed by the Men of the World. The Goſpel is powerful, it is the Power not of Men or Angels, but the power of God, not the eſſential but inſtrumental Power of God; it works as an Inſtrument, yet not as a Natural but as a Moral Inſtrument in God's Hand freely and arbitrarily. The Word gives out to us as God gives in to that, the Power of the Goſpel is not from the Preachers of the Goſpel; therefore do not idolize them, but they are the Inſtruments in God's Hands, their Words are the Vehicle, or Organ, thro' which the vital Power of the Spirit is conveyed; therefore do not villifie and think meanly of them. *Obſerve*, 2. The ſolemn Proteſtation and bold Profeſſion which the Apoſtle makes of his not being aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt; *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*. *Where Note*, 1. He doth not ſay I am not afraid to preach the Goſpel, but I am not aſhamed, becauſe ſhame hinders our readineſs more than fear; a Man may be fit and ready to preach the Goſpel, and yet be afraid to undertake it; but he that is aſhamed of the Work can never be fit for it. *Note*, 2. That when the Apoſtle ſays he is not aſhamed of the Goſpel, more is intended than is expreſſed; I am ſo far from being aſhamed, that I account it my Glory; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, verily I eſteem it the higheſt Honour that God can confer upon me, to preach the Goſpel at *Rome*, tho' it ſhould coſt me my Life. O how exceeding well doth a bold profeſſion of the Goſpel become all the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt! Let all ſay with the Apoſtle, we are not aſhamed of the Goſpel; none of the Miniſters of Chriſt to preach it, none of the Members of Chriſt to profeſs and practiſe it.

17 For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the juſt ſhall live by faith.

Here the Apoſtle produces an Argument, to prove that the Goſpel is the Power of God unto Salvation, *becauſe by it the Righteouſneſs of God is Revealed from Faith to Faith.* That is, the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, called the Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe it is of his providing, and of his approving and accepting, and for the ſake of which God pardons our Unrighteouſneſs and receives us graciouſly. This *Righteouſneſs* is by the Goſpel *revealed* to beget Faith in Men, even ſuch a Faith as goes from Faith to Faith; that is, groweth and encreaſeth from one Degree and Meaſure to another; and thus the Apoſtle falls upon his main Propoſition, (which is the Scope and Deſign of this Epiſtle) namely, That there is no poſſible way for the Juſtification of a Sinner, either *Jews* or *Gentiles*; but by Faith in the Mediator. *Learn hence*, That the Righteouſneſs whereby we are juſtified in the ſight of God, is diſcovered to us in the Goſpel, to be only by Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the appointed Mediator betwixt God and us; *The Righteouſneſs of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:* The Apoſtle proves this by a Citation out of the Prophet *Habbakuk: The juſt ſhall live by Faith*; that is, as the pious *Jews* in the time of the *Bybalonian* Captivity did live and find Comfort in their Troubles, by Faith and Affiance in God: In the like manner the Apoſtle ſhews, that he that is Evangelically Juſt or Religious, ſhall live a Life of Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven, by Faith in Chriſt; that is, depending upon the Merits and Righteouſneſs of the Mediator in the way of Holineſs and ſtrict Obedience to his Commands. *Learn hence*, That a juſtified Man lives a more holy, uſeful and excellent Life than other Men, his Life is from God, his Life is with God; yea, he lives the Life of God himſelf. 2. That whatever Life a juſtified Man lives, (in a more excellent manner than other Men) he lives that Life by vertue of his Faith, *the juſt ſhall live by Faith.*

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted and laid down a general Propoſition, That the juſtification of a Sinner is only to be expected, by the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator in a way of Faith: He now undertakes the Proof and Demonſtration of it thus; he diſtributes the whole World into *Gentiles* and *Jews*; the former ſeeking Righteouſneſs by the dim light of Nature, or the Law written in their Hearts: The latter by the Works of the Law, that is, by their external Conformity to what the Law of *Moſes* exacted and required of them. Now his preſent Buſineſs is to prove diſtinctly and fully, that neither *Gentile* nor *Jew* could ever find what they thus ſought: He begins here with the *Gentiles*, and ſhews that indeed they had inbred Notions of a God imprinted in their Minds by Nature, and alſo had the Book of the Creatures before their Eyes, in which much, very much of God might be ſeen; yet theſe common Notices of God, and of Good and Evil, they did not obey and put in practice, but rebelled againſt the Light and Dictates of their Natural Conſciences; for which Cauſe the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt them. *Here Obſerve*, 1. A dreadful manifeſtation of Divine Wrath, *The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven.* The Wrath of God, that is, the Indignation or Vengeance of God: This the Sinner ſhall feel who doth not fear it; for the fear of an incenſed Deity are no Bugbears; nor the Effects of Ignorance and Superſtition, as the Atheiſts fancy. This Wrath is ſaid to be *revealed from Heaven*; that is, diſcovered and made manifeſt by the God of Heaven; *partly* by the Light of Nature, their own Conſciences giving them notice and warning of it, and *partly* by the Examples of others: In the laſhes of a Divine ſeverity on the Back of Sinners, by the Hand of an incenſed God; *Thus the wrath of God was revealed* to the *Gentiles from Heaven. Obſerve*, 2. The Object or impulſive Cauſe of his revealed and inflicted Wrath; namely, *All ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of Men:* Ungodlineſs comprizeth all Sins againſt God, or neglect of the Duties of the firſt Table: Unrighteouſneſs comprehends all Sins againſt our Neighbour, or the breaches of the ſecond Table. *Note here*, That the Abſtract is put for the Concrete, the Sins for the Sinners that commit them; the Wrath of God is revealed againſt all *Ungodlineſs* and *Unrighteouſneſs of Men*; that is, againſt all *ungodly and unrighteous* Perſons; the meaning is, that God will certainly puniſh theſe Sins upon the Perſons of the Sinners. *Obſerve*, 3. The ſpecial Aggravation of theſe their Sins, or that which made them ſo very provoking to Almighty God, namely, that they *held the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; that is, their Natural Convictions were kept down, under the Dominion and Power of their Corruptions: Luſt in their Wills and Affections was too hard for the Light in their Underſtandings; they entertained the light of Truth in their Minds, but did not ſuffer it to have its proper Effect and Influence upon their Hearts and Lives; thus making that a Priſoner which would have made them Free. *Learn* 1. That it is a very great Aggravation of Sin, for Men to offend againſt the light of their own Minds, and to rebel againſt the Convictions of their own Conſciences. 2. That the Wrath of God is dreadfully incenſed againſt all thoſe that live in any courſe of Sin, rebelling againſt the Dictates and Convictions of their own enlighted Conſciences; dread it then as thou dreadeſt Hell it ſelf, to Sin againſt Knowledge, to rebel againſt the Light of their own Mind, to ſlight the Whiſpers or ſtifle the Voice of thy own Conſcience, but reverance and obey its Dictates as the Commands of God.

19 Becauſe that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them: for God hath ſhewed *it* unto them.

That is, much of the Nature and Properties of God may be known by the Light of Nature; his infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs is manifeſt in the Minds and Conſciences of all Men; *For God hath ſhewed it unto them*, partly by imprinting theſe Notions of himſelf upon the Hearts of all Men, and partly by the Book of the Creatures, in which his glorious Attributes are written in large and legible Characters. *Learn hence*, That all Men have a Natural Knowledge of God, and thoſe great Duties which reſult from the Knowledge of him. 2. That the natural Knowledge which Men have of God, if they live contrary to it, is a ſufficient Evidence of their holding the Truth of God in Unrighteouſneſs, and is a God-provoking and a Wrath-procuring Sin.

20 For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe:

The Apoſtle here proceeds in acquainting us with that Knowledge of God which the Heathens had by the light of Nature, which was in their Hearts, and augmented and encreaſed by what of God they ſaw in the Book of the Creatures; namely, in the Works of Creation and Providence: *The inviſible things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen*, &c. The ſenſe I conceive is this, That the wiſe and wonderful frame of the World, which cannot reaſonably be aſcrib'd to any other Cauſe but God, is a ſenſible Demonſtration to all Mankind of an eternal and powerful Being, that was the Author and Contriver of it. The ſtrokes of the Creator's Hand are engraven in all parts of the Univerſe; the Heavens, the Earth, and the capacious Sea, with all things contained in them, are evident Teſtimonies of the excellency of their Orignal Cauſe: And therefore ſuch of the Heathens of old as ſhut their Eyes, and ſuch of the Atheiſts at this day as wink-hard, and will not ſee the Footſteps of a Deity in the Works of Creation and Providence, are, and will be, everlaſtingly left *without excuſe. Learn hence*, 1. That much of the Being and eſſential Perfections of God may be known by the Light of Nature if attended to, and much more may be underſtood by the Book of the Creatures if attentively looked into: *The viſible things of God are clearly ſeen from the Creation.* That is, the Creation of the World is a plain Demonſtration to Men of the Being and Power of God. *Learn*, 2. That all ſuch Perſons will be left for ever, *without Excuſe*, before God, who either extinguiſh the Light of Nature, and ſmother the natural Notices which they have of God, or do not improve them by a due Conſideration of the Works of God; without opening the Eye of Reaſon, the Book of the Creation is of no more uſe to us than the brute Beaſts: They ſee the Creatures as well as we, but many of us conſider the Creatures and ſee God in the Creation no more than they: And this will leave us *without excuſe. Learn* 3. How endearing are *our* Obligations to Almighty God, for the Favour and Benefit of *Divine Revelation*; that together with the Light of Nature, we have the ſuperadded Light of Scripture, the Law to convince us of our Sin; the Goſpel to diſcover a Saviour: The Heathen had only thoſe natural Apoſtles of

Sun, Moon and Stars, to guide them to God, and inſtruct them in their Duty to him; but we have the Wiſdom of the Father, the incarnate Son of God, and his inſpired Apoſtles and Miniſters to lead us into all Truth, and his holy Spirit to excite and quicken us in our Obedience to him. Therefore eternally Magnified be omnipotent Love, for the Light of Scripture, for the Benefit of Divine Revelation: For altho' there be a natural Theology, there is not a natural Chriſtology; there is a natural Divinity, but not a natural Goſpel, a knowledge of God by the light of Nature, but no knowledge of Jeſus the Mediator, without the light of Scripture. All Thanks, eternal Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable Gift! Lord, how will all ſuch as contemn it be left *without Excuſe!*

21 Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened.

From this Verſe to the end of the Chapter, we have a large and black Catalogue of the Sins which the old Heathens or *Gentiles* were guilty of; ſome of which they voluntarily committed, and others they were judicially delivered up unto, (for God without any impeachment of his Holineſs often puniſhes Sin with Sin,) the ſins voluntarily committed are here recited, and the firſt of them is their ſinning againſt Light and Knowledge. They had ſome natural Notices of God implanted and imprinted in their Minds, and ſuch an additional knowledge of his Being and Attributes, as might be gained by an attentive Study in the *Book* of the Creatures; but they rebelled againſt this Light, and thereby contracted and aggravated Guilt. *Learn thence*, That to Sin againſt Light and Knowldge, either in the Omiſſion of Duty, or Commiſſion of Sin, is the higheſt aggravation of Sinfulneſs: As Ignorance leſſeneth, ſo Knowledge aggravateth the malignity of Sin. The next Sin charged upon them was, that they did not glorifie that God whom they had the knowledge of: That is, they did not conceive of him and worſhip him as became his Divine Perfections and Excellencies; they did not eſteem ſo high of him as they ought; and pay that Homage and Honour to the Deity which they ſhould. *Learn thence*, That the knowledge, which we have of God and his Attributes, if it do not engage us to Honour, *Glorifie* and Worſhip him, ſuitably to his adorable Perfections, it is *vain* and *uſeleſs* in God's Account, and will but expoſe us to a more dreadful Condemnation: Another Sin mention'd in this Verſe, which the Heathen were guilty of, was the Sin of *Unthankfulneſs.* They *Glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.* That is, they had not a due ſenſe of the Favours and Benefits of God conferred upon them, but aſcribing the Bleſſings of Heaven to Chance and Fortune, to Fate and Deſtiny, to the influence of the Stars and Planets, to their own Prudence and Providence: They paid their Thanks to blind Fortune for a Favour, which the Eye of Providence had beſtowed upon them: It is impoſſible that God ſhould receive Tribute of Thankfulneſs, if we do not ſee all our Mercies flowing from him. *Obſerve farther*, the ſad Effect, Fruit and Conſequence of the fore-mention'd Sins. The Heathen which committed them it's ſaid. 1. *That they became vain in their Imaginations.* That is, they had various Opinions and vain Conceptions of the God-head. Some of them denied that there was a God, others doubted whether there was a God or no; ſome affirmed there was but one God, others owned a plurality, yea, a multiplicity of Gods. Some acknowledged God's Being, but denied his Providence, others owned his Providence, but confined it in its Exerciſe to ſecondary Cauſes. Thus vain in their Imaginations, thus abſurd in their Notions, and thus ſottiſh in their Reaſonings, were the Heathen concerning God, his Nature and Worſhip. Well might our Apoſtle ſay, they *became Vain in their Imaginations.* And 2. *That their fooliſh Hearts were darkned*; that is, for Rebelling againſt the Light received, their Minds and Underſtandings were more and more darkned; their Natural Reaſon obſcured; becauſe not improved. Lord, how dangerous is it not to improve our Knowledge! How fatal to rebel againſt the Light and Convictions of our own Minds! It provokes thee to deliver us up to the Power of ſpiritual Darkneſs on Earth, and conſigns us over to an eternal Darkneſs in Hell, where is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, as the Puniſhment and Portion of thoſe that rebel againſt the Light, and Sin againſt Knowledge.

22 Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools: 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.

The next Sin which the Apoſtle charges upon the *Gentiles*, is the Sin of Idolatry. Such as *profeſs themſelves to be the moſt wiſe* and knowing Men among them, as their celebrated Philoſophers, Poets and Orators, they debaſed and diſhonour'd the All-glorious God, by framing vile Images of Men and Beaſts, of Birds and creeping things, to repreſent him by. Theſe Idolaters changed the Glory of the living, ever-living God, into the likeneſs of lifeleſs things: Whereas the Lord is ſo infinitely Glorious that nothing can ſet forth his Glory ſufficiently; the moſt excellent Creature cannot repreſent his Super excellent Perfections, and accordingly it is as real a debaſing of the Divine Majeſty, to repreſent him by an Angel, as by a Worm or a Fly. All attempted Repreſentations of God by any Creature whatſoever, are Idolatrous Provocations.

24 Wherefore God alſo gave them up to uncleanneſs, through the luſt of their own hearts, to diſhonour their own bodies between themſelves:

Obſerve here, 1. Another infamous Sin charged upon the Heathen, namely, the Sin of Uncleanneſs; yea, baſe, unnatural uncleanneſs, and pollutions of the moſt odious kinds. *Learn thence*, That Idolatry and Uncleanneſs often go together. *Solomon*'s Uncleanneſs led him to Idolatry, and his Idolatry encreaſed his Uncleanneſs. The City of *Rome at this Day*, which is a Grove of Idols, the chief Seat of Idolatry, is next to a *Sodom* for Uncleanneſs; witneſs their allowing of Stews by publick Authority. *Learn*, 2. That all kinds and degrees of Pollution, both Natural and Unnatural are to be deteſted and abhorred as *diſhonouring the Body*: our Bodies are Chriſt's Members, the Holy Ghoſt's Temples; let us therefore glorifie God with our Bodies on Earth, which ſhall be Subjects capable of Glory with himſelf in Heaven. *Obſerve*, 2. God's judiciary Tradition of theſe Idolatrous Heathens to the Sin of Uncleanneſs; *Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanneſs.* Almighty God often doth, and always Righteouſly may puniſh Sin with Sin: God puniſht the Idolatry of the Heathens here, by *delivering* them up *to vile Affections*, to Uncleanneſs, and unnatural Luſts: But how is this conſiſtent with God's Holineſs and hatred of Sin. Thus, God neither infuſes Sin into their Hearts, nor excites to Sin in their Lives, but leaves Sinners to themſelves to act without Reſtraint according to the Inclination of their own Luſts and Corruptions, and alſo gives them up to Satan, that unclean Spirit, who will not fail to provoke them to ſuch uncleanneſs, as he knows their Inclinations ſtanding ready to comply with. Lord! keep back thy Servants from ſinning againſt the Light of Nature, againſt the Light of Scripture, leſt we be judicially darkned *and given up to a ſottiſh and injudicious mind*, to hardneſs of Heart, and the vileſt of Affections.

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the Creature more then the Creator, who is bleſſed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cauſe God gave them up unto vile affections: For even their Women did change the natural uſe into that which is againſt nature: 27 And likewiſe alſo the men, leaving the natural uſe of the woman, burned in their luſt one toward another, men with men working that which is unſeemly, and receiving in themſelves that recompenſe of their errour which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient.

Here our Apoſtle proceeds to give a particular and diſtinct Account of the abominable Idolatry and unnatural Filthineſs, which he had charged the Heathens with in the foregoing Verſes: As to their Idolatry, he had told us at the 23*d* Verſe, that they had made falſe and unworthy Repreſentations of the ever Bleſſed God; Worſhipping God in and by the Creatures: in this 25*th* Verſe, they are charged with a falſe Object of their Worſhip, giving Divine Honour to a Creature; *they changed the truth of God into a lie*; That is, the true God into an Idol, called a *lie*, becauſe it deceives Men as a lie doth, by ſeeming to be that, which indeed it is not; it ſeems in the Idolaters Fancy, to have ſomething of Divinity in it; when in reality it is but Wood or Stone. Every Image of God is a falſe and lying Repreſentation of God. Secondly, As to their uncleanneſs, he ſhews that they were ſo given up to the Ravings of Luſts, for ſinning againſt the Light of Nature, that they forſook the Order of Nature, and were more Brutiſh than the very Bruits. *Learn hence*, That when Men provoke God finally to forſake them, and judiciouſly to give them up to their own Hearts Luſts; they will not ſtick to commit ſuch monſtruous and unnatural Uncleanneſs as the very Bruit Beaſts abhor: Here Men and Women burnt in worſe than beaſtly Luſts towards thoſe of their own Sex. Lord, If we are not more vile than the vileſt of thy Creatures, we owe it all to thy Sanctifying, or at leaſt thy reſtraining Grace; as by the Grace of God we are what we are, ſo by thy Grace it is that we are not, what we are not.

29 Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whiſperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventers of evil things, diſobedient to parents, 31 Without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Here the Apoſtle ſums up the Sins, which the Heathen committed againſt the ſecond Table, or againſt their Neighbour; not that every particular Perſon was guilty of all theſe black Crimes, but all were guilty of ſome, and ſome perhaps were guilty of all or moſt of them. *Learn hence*, That the Heart of Man doth naturally ſwarm and abound with ſtrange and monſtrous Luſts and Abominations. Lord! what a ſwarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more in the depths of the Heart: Whatever Abominations were found in the Hearts and Lives of Heathens and Sodomites, and the moſt profligate Wretches under Heaven, are radically and ſeminally in our corrupt and degenerate Natures, *Matt.* 15. 18. *Out of the Heart proceeds evil thoughts*, *Murders*, *Adulteries*, &c. What are our Luſts, but ſo many Toads ſpitting of Venom and ſpawning of Poyſon. O deplorable Degradation! *Learn*, 2. How much ſadder is the condition which unregenerate Souls abide in, who remain in, and under the Power and Dominion, the Vaſſalage and Slavery of theſe imperious Luſts, which perpetually rage within them, and inceſſantly conteſt and ſcuſſle for the Throne. *Learn*, 3. To ſtand aſtoniſhed at the Heart-changing Grace of God, which has delivered thee from ſo diſmal a Condition. O fall down and kiſs the Feet of Mercy, Adore the Soveraignty and freeneſs of Divine Grace, which ſtept in ſo ſeaſonably to thy Reſcue. Lord! what black Imaginations, what vile Affections, what Helliſh Deſires, what monſtrous Abominations were lodged in thy Heart and Nature, before Regeneration wrought a change. O that ever the Holy Ghoſt ſhould ſet his Eyes upon any of the ſinful Off-ſpring of Apoſtate *Adam*; in whom were Legions of unclean Luſts, and whoſe Nature was become the Sink and Seed-plot of all Sin. *Obſerve Laſtly*, Two particular Sins, which of all others ſeems moſt Monſtrous in theſe Heathens. 1. They were *haters of God*, not of his Eſſence, Being and Goodneſs, but haters of his Holineſs, Juſtice, and Providence. 2. They were *without natural Affection*. This appeared by ſacrificing their Children to their Idols; and expoſing themſelves and their deareſt Relations to Ruin: No ſooner did we fall out with God, but we fell out with our ſelves and one another.

39 Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things, are worthy of death) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.

The Apoſtle here cloſes the Chapter with the blackeſt Character that could be given of the *Gentiles* Sin, namely, that altho' by the Light of Nature, and the dictates of natural Conſcience they knew, that their Adulteries and unnatural Luſt, did deſerve Death, and expoſe them to the Wrath of God, yet they not only committed thoſe Sins themſelves, but took a real Pleaſure and Delight in thoſe that committed them. Now this was the top and height of their Wickedneſs. It is a greater Wickedneſs to approve and applaud Sin, than it is to act and commit Sin; to delight in Sin is worſe than to do Sin: A Man may fall into Sin by the Policy of the Tempter, and the prevalency of Temptation, but by conſideration may be brought to a ſenſe of his Folly, and repent of it: But when he is arrived to ſuch a pitch of Wickedneſs, that he not only approves and applauds, but takes pleaſure and delight in the wickedneſs of others; this demonſtrates ſuch a ſtrong Affection to Sin, as brings a Man neareſt to the Devil in ſinning. *Learn hence*, 1. That there is in God an avenging Juſtice, engaging him to puniſh Sin with the eternal Death of the Sinner. 2. That there is that evil and malignity in Sin, which deſerves that Judgment and Sentence of eternal Death. 3. That this deſert of Sin, as alſo the avenging Juſtice of God upon the Sinners is ſufficiently made known to all Men, to ſome by the Light of Nature, to others by the ſuper-added Light of Scripture. 4. That notwithſtanding this diſcovery of Sins deſert of divine Wrath, yet multitudes of Sinners every where do not only commit Wickedneſs themſelves, but delight in it, and in them that do it, which lays them under an aggravated *Guilt*, and will both heighten and haſten their Condemnation, *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do ſuch things, are worthy of Death, not only do the ſame, but take pleaſure in them that do them.*

CHAP. II.

The Apoſtle having in the firſt Chapter diſcovered at large the rueful State of the Gentiles *by Nature, and their worſe condition by reaſon of Sin in Rebelling againſt the Light and Law of Nature. In this ſecond Chapter he comes to ſpeak of the Jews, and lays them as low as he did the Gentiles, upon deſign to convince both of the utter impoſſibility of being juſtified before God by any Righteouſneſs of their own, but only by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt.*

1 THerefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt: for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thy ſelf; for thou that judgeſt, doeſt the ſame thing.

Leſt the *Jews* ſhould ſwell and be puft up with Pride, by hearing what the Apoſtle ſaid in the former Chapter of the deteſtable wickedneſs of the *Gentiles*, and the heavy diſpleaſure of God againſt them for the ſame; St. *Paul* in this Chapter Pronounces the *Jews* to be guilty of the ſame Sins of which he had accuſed the *Gentiles*, affirming that the *Jews* had offended as much againſt the Law of *Moſes*, as the *Gentiles* had offended againſt the Law of Nature; and conſequently their Cenſuring and Judging others, when they did the ſame thing themſelves, would render them totally inexcuſable, at God's Tribunal. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O Man, that judgeſt another, and by doing the ſame things condemneſt thy ſelf! Learn hence*, 1. That it is too uſual and common a practiſe to condemn that Sin in another which Men practiſe themſelves. 2. That when Perſons commit themſelves the Sins, which they Cenſure and Condemn in others, they are totally inexcuſable, and pronounce Sentence againſt themſelves.

2 But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth, againſt them which commit ſuch things. 3 And thinkeſt thou this, O man, that judgeſt them which do ſuch things, and doeſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, We that are *Jews*, know by the light of the Scripture, what the *Gentiles* knew imperfectly by the light of Nature, that the juſt God judges uprightly, *according to Truth*, and not according to Appearance. It is equitable that he ſhould, and certain that he will, deal with Men according to his Word, and reward every Man according to his Work: Think not then, O *Jew!* who judgeſt the *Gentiles*, for doing *ſuch things* againſt the Law of *Moſes*, that thou ſhalt eſcape the Judgment of God, which they have ſo ſeverely felt. *Learn hence*, That ſuch is God's hatred againſt Sin, and ſuch is the impartiality of his Juſtice towards Sinners, that no Offenders can expect eſcaping the Judgment of God for preſumptuous Sinning: *Thinkeſt thou, O Man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?* No Affection, or nearneſs of Relation can blind God, or put out the Eye of his Juſtice; if *Gentile* or *Jew* Sin together, they ſhall ſuffer together; for if there is no Reſpect of Perſons with God, God will judge Men in Truth and Righteouſneſs, and condemn every Sinner, whatever his Knowledge or Profeſſion be. *Learn*, 2. That no Man's Zeal in condemning Sin in others, will Juſtify or Save him, if he lives in Sin himſelf: *Think not O Man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God.*

4 Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?

pentance? 5 But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The indulgent Carriage of Almighty God towards poor Sinners, diſcovered in the vaſt expence of the Riches of his Goodneſs and Bounty upon them, and in the patient exerciſe of his Forbearance and long Sufferings towards them. *Obſerve*, 2. The gracious end and deſign of God in his expence of his Goodneſs, and in the exerciſe of his Patience and Forbearance; namely, *to lead Sinners to Repentance.* The end of Goodneſs, is to oblige and engage Perſons to love and ſerve their Benefactor; this is the moſt natural and unconſtrained conſequence, that the Mind of Man can infer from God's Bounty and ſparing Mercy; *The goodneſs of God leadeth to Repentance.* *Obſerve*, 3. The unanſwerable and undue returns, which Sinners make to God for the exerciſe of ſo much Goodneſs and Forbearance towards them; they *deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs and long ſuffering.* They deſpiſe it by being unthankful for it, by not improving of it, and by miſimproving or ſinning againſt it: They melt the Mercies of God into Bullets, and ſhoot them at the very Breaſt of the Almighty. *Obſerve*, 4. The ſad and fatal Conſequence of theſe undue returns made to God by Sinners: Hereby *They treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, the more patience God expends upon thee, if perverted and abuſed by thee, the greater Wrath is treaſured up for thee; which the longer it has been treaſuring up, will break forth the more fiercely and violently to conſume thee. *Obſerve*, 5. The Deſcription given by the Apoſtle of the *Day of Judgment*; he calls it, *A Revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* The Judgment of God is Righteous now, but it is not always revealed and openly made manifeſt now; therefore a time ſhall come, when there ſhall be a Revelation of his Righteous Judgment fully. *From the whole*, *Note*, 1. That the goodneſs of God is a Natural and Genuine Motive to Repentance. 2. That not to be perſwaded by, is in God's Account to deſpiſe his Goodneſs. *Note*, 3. That this deſpiſing of Goodneſs by delaying our Repentance, is a treaſuring up of a Wrath againſt the day of Wrath: As Sinners have treaſures of Sin, ſo God has treaſures of Wrath for Sinners. *Note laſtly*, That the Day of Judgment will be a day of Revelation, a day in which the Righteouſneſs of God's Proceeding ſhall be univerſally Manifeſted and Magnified; then will all the Divine Attributes be conſpicuouſly Glorified; his wonderful Clemency ſweetly diſplayed, his exact Juſtice terribly Demonſtrated, his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded; all the knotty Intreagues of Providence wiſely reſolved, all the myſterious depths of Divine Counſels fully diſcovered, and the injured Honour and Glory of Almighty God *viſibly* cleared and repaired to the joyſul Satisfaction of all good Men, and to the dreadful Conſternation and Confuſion of the wicked and impenitent World: O how well might the Apoſtle call this Day; *The revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life. 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation and wrath; *9* Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo the Gentile. 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile. 11 For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.

The Apoſtle in the foregoing Verſe, had given a Deſcription of the general Day of Judgment, which he called *a revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Here he acquaints us with the impartiality and uprightneſs of God in the Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments in that Day; according to the Merits and Deſerts of Men: *Who will render to every one according to his Deeds:* That is, according to his Kind and Quality, and according to the Meaſures and Degrees of every Man's Works. *Where Note*, He doth not ſay God will render to every Man a Reward *for* his Works, but *according* to his Works; Works are *Regula Retributionis, non cauſa mercedis:* Our Works are the Rule of God's Proceedings, but not the Cauſe of his Rewards. Having thus Deſcribed the Impartiality of the Judge, he next declares the univerſality of the Perſons, that ſhall then be judged; namely, the Righteous and the Wicked, which ſhall both have their diſtinct Rewards aſſigned them, according to the quality of their Works. *Obſerve*, 1. The Righteous Perſons deſcribed, and their Reward declared; they are deſcribed by their *well-doing*, by their *continuance* in well-doing, by their *patient continuance* in well-doing; they are not weary in well-doing, they can undergo Sufferings for the ſake of well-doing, and they can patiently wait for the Reward of well-doing till hereafter, whilſt oothers ſnatch at their Reward here: Yet in the mean time they are ſeeking after, and ſecuring of this their Reward: *They ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality.* That is, they ſeek for a Portion of Glory and Immortality in the World to come, they leave the World to the Men of the World; and whilſt *they* are ſcrambling for Earth, *they* are makiug ſure of Heaven. Next, Their Perſons being deſcribed, their Reward is declared; *Eternal Life*, an Eternity of Glory and Happineſs in a future State, ſhall certainly be the Reward of well-doers, and of patient continuers in well-doing. *Obſerve*, 2. The Wicked are here Characterized, and their Reward aſſigned: *They are contentious, they obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs*; that is, they contend with God and reſiſt the Light of his revealed Truth; they refuſe the Offers of his Grace, and kick againſt his Word, diſobeying the Goſpel of Truth, but obeying unrighteouſneſs. God will pour forth upon ſuch, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh. Lord, who knoweth the Power of thine Anger, or who can bear the weight of thy Wrath! It broke the back of Angels, How ſhall Sinners ſtand under it? 'Tis ſtiled Fire in Scripture, it's a conſuming Fire, and an unquenchable Fire: It preys upon the Sinner, but never devours him; it is unquenchable by any thing but the Blood of Chriſt. A myſterious Fire, whoſe ſtrange Property it is always to torture, but ne'er to kill, or always to kill but never to conſume. *Obſ.* 3. With what Equity as well as Impartiality this diſtribution of God's Indignation and Wrath will be made, *Upon every Soul that doth Evil, but upon the Jew firſt, and then of the Gentile*; the *Jew* firſt, that is, principally and eſpecially; becauſe the Light and Mercy which the *Jews* abuſed and ſinned againſt, was far greater than that beſtowed upon the *Gentiles.* *Learn hence*, That the Light under which Men Sin, puts extraordinary Aggravations upon their Sins, anſwerable whereunto will be the degrees of their Puniſhment. The *Gentiles* will be condemned for diſobeying the Light of Nature, the Law of God written on their Hearts; but much greater Wrath is reſerved for *Jews*, unto whom were committed the Oracles of God: But the greateſt of all is reſerved for Chriſtians who obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Theſe ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9, 10.

12 For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law: and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law

That is, as many as have ſinned without the *written* Law, which is the Caſe of the *Gentiles* or *Heathens*, ſhall alſo periſh without *that* Law; being judged and condemned by the Law of *Nature* written in their Hearts; but as many as have ſinned *in*, or *under* the Law of *Moſes*, which is the Caſe of the *Jews*, ſhall be judged and condemned by *that* Law. *Obſerve here*, 1. A Truth plainly implied and neceſſarily ſuppoſed; namely, that as ſome Sinners *periſh* having the *written Word*, and all external means of Salvation, ſo others *periſh* having not the *written Word* or Law of God, and the outward and ordinary means of Salvation: *As many as have ſinned without the Law, ſhall periſh without Law.* God in the Diſpenſations of his Grace acteth in a way of Sovereignty, according to his own Pleaſure; yet in his penal Diſpenſations he proceeds according to the Meaſures of ſtrict Juſtice, upon the previous Demerits of Sinners. *Obſerve*, 2. That all Men ſhall not be proceeded againſt in the Day of Judgment after one and the ſame manner; but every Man according to the Demerit of his Sin, and according to the Capacity and Relation in which he ſtood in his Life. The *Gentiles* which had only the Law of *Nature*, ſhall not be judged by the Law of *Moſes*: The *Jews*, which had both the Law of *Nature* and the Law of *Moſes* ſhall be judged by both: And conſequently Chriſtians, which have the Law of *Nature* unwritten, the *Moſaical*

Law written, and the *Evangelical* Law both written and preached, ſhall lie under greater Guilt, and receive a more aggravating Condemnation. Chriſt will exactly proportion every Man's ***Hell*** hereafter to his *Sin* committed here; the greater Light we have quenched, the greater Darkneſs will be inflicted, *Heb.* 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation.*

13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified.

That is, not the *bare hearers* of the Law, ſhall upon that Account be juſt before God, but the *doers* of the Law ſhall be *juſtified*; that is, accepted of God, as acting ſuitably to their holy Profeſſion. It is notoriouſly known, the *Jews* gloried in, and reſted upon their outward Privileges for Salvation, becauſe they were *Abraham*'s Seed, becauſe they were Circumciſed, becauſe they were employed in reading and hearing of the Law; they concluded this ſufficient to render them acceptable with God; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, not the *Hearers* but *Doers* of the Law ſhall be juſtified; that is, the Perſons whom God will accept and account Righteous for the ſake of Chriſt. *Note here*, That the Doers of the Law or Word of God are the beſt Hearers, yea, the only Hearers in the account of God: Hearing is good, but it muſt not be reſted in; a great underſtanding may Man have by much reading the Word and Law of God, but *a good underſtanding* only have they that *do* the *Word* and *Will* of God; *the praiſe* and Fruit *of that endureth for ever*, Pſalm 111. 10.

14 For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves. 15 Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſciences alſo bearing witneſs, and *their* thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another.

The Senſe is, that the *Gentiles*, which have not the Law of *Moſes* promulged, are yet not without a Law ingrafted in their Conſciences; and altho' they have not a written Law, yet are they a *Law*; that is, a Rule of living to themſelves; doing thoſe things which ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſciences bearing Witneſs to it, and their natural Reaſon either accuſing or defending of them for it. *Learn*, 1. That there is a Law of Nature ingrafted, and written by God in the Hearts of Men, whereby the common Notions of Good and Evil are found with them. *Learn*, 2. That this Law of Nature ſerveth for the Inſtigation and Provocation of Men, to many good Actions and Duties towards God and Man. 3. That to rebel againſt, and not walk in Conformity unto, this ingrafted Law of Nature, it is a God-provoking and a Wrath-procuring Sin. 4. That altho' many of the *Gentiles* gave themſelves over to all manner of Uncleanneſs, yet others *ſhewed the works of the Law written in their Hearts:* They *ſhewed* it two ways; 1. By their Temperance, Righteouſneſs and moral Honeſty; wherein (to our ſhame) they excelled many of us who were called Chriſtians. 2. In the Efficacy of their Conſciences; which as it cleared and comforted them for things well done, ſo it witneſſed againſt 'em; yea, judged and condemned them for doing Evil: And theſe Evidences of a Law written on the Heart, are every where to be found, where ever Men are found: *The Gentiles having not a written Law, are a Law unto themſelves, and ſhew the work of the Law written in their Hearts.*

16 In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my goſpel.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, if any ſhall ask, when ſhall Rewards and Puniſhments be diſtributed to *Jew* or *Gentile?* the Anſwer is, *In that day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of Mens Hearts by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel:* That is, as my Goſpel teſtifies, he will moſt certainly do. *Here Obſerve*, 1. A fundamental Doctrine aſſerted, That there will be a Day of Judgment, in which the Secrets of all Men's Hearts ſhall be judged by Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator. All the Thoughts, Words and Works of all Men, that lived from the beginning of the World, or ſhall live to the end of the World, will then be produced in Judgment; and if ſo, may we not infer, that the Day of Judgment muſt certainly and neceſſarily take up a vaſt ſpace of Time; for if all Records and Regiſters now made, ſhall then be opened and read, and all the Witneſſes for, and againſt a Man, ſhall be then examined and heard, what a vaſt ſpace of then muſt that great Day take up. Some Divines are of Opinion, that the Day of Judgment may laſt as long as the World hath laſted: This we may depend upon, that things will not be huddled up, nor ſhuffled over in haſte; but as Sinners have taken their time for Sinning, ſo God will take his time for Judging. *Obſerve*, 2. The Proof and Confirmation of this Doctrine of a future Judgment: *According to my Goſpel*; that is, as certainly as I have foretold you of it in the Doctrine which I have preach'd; ſo, certainly ſhall all Men, and the ſecrets of all Men's Hearts be judged by Jeſus Chriſt. But was it not a preſumption in St. *Paul*, to call the Goſpel his Goſpel: Anſwer, He means that he was the Publiſher, not the Author of it; it was God's in reſpect of Authority; St. *Paul*'s in reſpect of Miniſtry, it was God's in reſpect of Revelation; ***His*** only in reſpect of Diſpenſation.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reſteſt in the law, and makeſt thy boaſt of God. 18 And knoweſt *his* will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the law, 19 And art confident that thou thy ſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkneſs, 20 An inſtructer of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, which haſt the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.

Here the Apoſtle proceeds in his former Argument; namely, to prove, That the *Jews* could no more Rationally expect to be juſtified before God by the Law of *Moſes*, than the *Gentiles* by the Law of *Nature*; the Apoſtle allows them all their Priviledges which they ſo much doated upon, boaſted of, and gloried in; but withal, aſſures them, that theſe, all theſe, yea, more than theſe were inſufficient to juſtifie them before God. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, thou beareſt thy ſelf mightily upon this; that *thou art called a Jew*; That is, a Profeſſor of the true Religion, and a worſhipper of the true God; *thou reſteſt in the Law*; that is, either in the Divineneſs and Perfection of it, or in thy external Obedience to it, and in the outward Performances of it; *Thou makeſt thy boaſt of God.* As a God in Covenant with thee above all Nations of the Earth, and *thou knoweſt his Will*; having his Word and Law in thy Hands; the Oracles of God committed to thee, and the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets *alone* found with thee; and *approveſt things that are moſt excellent, being inſtructed out of the Law*; that is, thou thinkeſt that thou haſt ſuch a degree of Knowledge of God's Word and Will, that thou canſt clearly diſcern between Sin and Duty, and compare one Duty with another, preferring that which is moſt excellent: *And art confident that thou thy ſelf art a guide of the Blind, a light of them that are in Darkneſs*; that is, thou haſt a ſtrong Conceit that ſuch are the Meaſures of thy Knowledge, that thou art able to be a Guide to the blind *Gentiles* who ſet in Darkneſs, and to be a *teacher of Babes.* That is, ſuch as have little or no knowledge in the matters of Religion, conceiting, *That thou haſt the form of knowledge and of truth in the Law*: That is, ſuch a Method and Meaſure of Divine Knowledge as may enable thee to inſtruct others, whether *Gentiles* or *Jews*, which never reached to thy Attainments: Theſe external Privileges the preſumptuous *Jew* reſted upon, and thought them ſufficient to Salvation, tho' he lived looſely, and his Practice gave his Profeſſion the Lye. *Hence Learn*, 1. That Perſons are exceeding prone to be proud of, and puffed up with Church-privileges, glorying in the Letter of the Law, whilſt neither in Heart nor Life they are conformed to the Spirituality of the Law. *Learn*, 2. That Gifts, Duties and ſuppoſed Graces, are the ſtay and ſtaff which Hypocrites reſt upon, and repoſe their Truſt and Confidence in: *Thou art called a Jew, and reſtleſs in the Law*; That is, in the outward profeſſion of the Law, or in an external Obedience to the Law; the Apoſtle ſpeaks of this their *reſting in the Law*, not barely by way of Narration, but by way of Reproof, telling us not only what they did, but how ill they did in ſo doing. The Duties which Chriſt has appointed, are the truſt and reſt of the Hypocrites; but Chriſt himſelf is the reſt and truſt of the Upright, they deſire to be ever acting Graces, never truſting to them; to be much in Duty, and yet much above Duty; much in it in point of Performance, much above it in regard of Dependance.

21 Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? thou that preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? 22 Thou that ſayeſt a man

ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? thou that abhorreſt idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege. 23 Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law, through breaking the law diſhonoureſt thou God; 24 For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written.

The Apoſtle proceeds to the end of this Chapter to convince the *Jews*, that they were equally in a ſinful and wretched Condition with the deſpiſed *Gentiles*, and therefore ſtood in need of Jeſus Chriſt to juſtifie them by his Grace as well as they: And becauſe the *Jews* were ſo exceeding apt to dote upon, and reſt in their external Privileges, he did in the foregoing Verſes recount and reckon up the ſeveral Privileges which they enjoy'd: *Thou art called a Jew, thou makeſt thy boaſt of God*, &c. But now in the Verſes before us, he takes occaſion to aggravate their Sins committed, from their high Privileges and Prerogatives enjoined becauſe they ſinned againſt Light and Knowledge, againſt the Convictions of their own Conſciences, and contradicted the Dictates of their Minds, as the *Gentiles* did: But beſides all that rebelled againſt the Precepts of the written Word, which was in all their Hands. The Law of *Moſes* was near in their Mouths but far from their Reins; for thus the Apoſtles expoſtulates the Caſe with them: *Thou that teacheſt another; teacheſt not thou thy ſelf.* Thou that undertakeſt to be a Teacher of, and a Guide unto the Ignorant and Blind *Gentiles*, wilt thou not practice thine own Inſtructions? But condemn thy ſelf out of thine own Mouth? Wilt thou O *Jew!* (as if the Apoſtle had ſaid) be guilty of Theft, Adultery, Sacrilege, Rapine and Murthers? Sins which the very Heathens condemn, and all this while call your ſelves the only People of God; verily, *The name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you* Jews, who pretend to be the Favourites of Heaven, whilſt you do the Works of Hell. *Learn hence*, 1. That it is much eaſier to inſtruct and teach others than to be inſtructed and receive Inſtruction our ſelves. *Learn*, 2. That it is both ſinful and ſhameful to teach others the right way, and to go in the wrong our ſelves. It is a double fault in a private Perſon, when his Actions run croſs to his Profeſſion; but it is an inexcuſable if not an unpardonable Fault in a *Teacher*, when the Crimes which he condemns in others may be juſtly charged upon himſelf: *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf.* *Learn*, 3. That the name of God ſuffers much, very much; yea, by none ſo much as thoſe who preach and preſs the Duties of Chriſtianity upon others, but practice them not themſelves. *The name of the Lord is blaſphemed* by ſuch Preachers, the wicked prophane World taking occaſion from thence, to wound the Name of God with the poiſoned Arrows and Darts of Reproach. The Sins of Teachers are teaching Sins; true Sin, ſtrictly ſpeaking, cannot injure the Name and Glory of God. He is above the reach of any miſchief that Sin can do him: His eſſential Glory is perfect, and can neither be encreaſed nor diminiſhed by the Creature; God can no more be hurt by our Sins than the Sun can be hurt by throwing Stones into the Air, or the Moon hurt by the barking of Dogs. But his manifeſtive Glory, or the preſent manifeſtations of his Glory; theſe are clouded and eclipſed by Sin, and therefore God will deal with knowing Sinners, eſpecially with ſuch as undertake to be *Teachers* of others, as with thoſe that have *blaſphemed his Name*, wounded his Glory, trampled upon his Honour, and cauſed his Holy ways to be evil ſpoken of, by reaſon of their wicked and unholy Lives. Lord, let all that Adminiſter unto thee in holy Things conſider, that they have not only their own Sins to account for, but alſo the Sins of their People, if committed by their profligate *Example.*

25 For circumciſion verily profitteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion. 26 Therefore if the uncircumciſion keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion? 27 And ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law;

It is ſufficiently known what great ſtreſs the *Jews* laid upon Circumciſion; they taught, that this alone was enough to procure the Favour of God, and to free them from Hell, God having, as they ſaid, promiſed *Abraham*, that if his Children tranſgreſſed, he would remember the Odour of the Fore-skins, and deliver them for the Merit of Circumciſion: but all this was a falſe and vain-glorious Buſtle. Our Apoſtle therefore in the Words before us, aſſures the *Jews*, that Circumciſion without Holineſs of Converſation, would never free them from Condemnation: That a circumciſed *Jew*, who walks not in Obedience to the Law of God, is in as bad, or worſe Condition, than any uncircumciſed Heathen; yea, the *Uncircumciſion*, that is the uncircumciſed Perſon that *keeps the Law*, ſhall be accepted of God, as well, as if he had been *Circumciſed*; and be preferr'd by God before the Circumciſed *Jew* that trangreſſes the Law. The Sum is, that the obedient *Gentile* ſhall condem the diſobedient *Jew*, and be ſooner accepted by God, with whom there is no reſpect of Perſons, but with reſpect to their Qualifications: That no Church-Privileges, no external Prerogatives, nor higheſt Profeſſion of Piety and Holineſs, without an humble, uniform and ſincere Obedience, will be any thing available to Salvation. And as then an uncircumciſed *Gentile* found better acceptance with God than many Circumciſed *Jews*, even ſo an unbaptized Heathen at the great Day will not change place with many baptized Chriſtians: It is a ſad, but a certain Truth, that the Caſe of the Pagan World will be much eaſier in the Day of Judgment, than others that live and die Diſobedient under the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. The Heathens have abuſed but one Talent, *the light of Nature*; but we Thouſands, even as many thouſands as we have ſlighted the Tenders of offered Grace. Lord! what a fearful aggravation doth it put upon our Sin and Miſery, when we fall from the height of Mercy into the depth of Miſery, we muſt certainly be accountable to thee at the great Day, not only for all the Light we had, but for all that we might have had in the Goſpel Day; and eſpecially for that Light we have ſinned under and rebelled againſt.

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh: 29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumciſion *is that* of the heart, in the ſpirit, *and* not in the letter, whoſe praiſe *is* not of men, but of God.

Here our Apoſtle comes cloſe and home to the Self-confident *Jews*, and touches them in the moſt ſenſible part; it was the hardeſt ſaying that could ſound in a *Jewiſh* Ear, to affirm, that *Circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh*, profiteth nothing, for they ſo gloried in it, that they accounted it equal to the keeping of all the Commandments of God: Now our Apoſtle here takes away the very Foundation of this their boaſting and glorying by a plain and true Diſtinction. There is, ſaith he, *a Jew outwardly*, that only has the Badge of Circumciſion in his Fleſh; now he is *not a Jew* in God's Account who is only ſo by outward Circumciſion: Neither is *that Circumciſion* valuable or available, which is only *outward in the fleſh*; but then there is *a Jew who is one inwardly*; namely, by the Purification of his Heart from all filthy Luſts, evil Affections, and ſinful Diſpoſitions, and a *Circumciſion of the Heart, and in the Spirit:* That is, a Circumciſion wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and not barely by the Letter of the Law: and the *praiſe of this is not of Men*, who can't diſcern the Heart, *but of God*, who is the Searcher of the Heart, and Trier of the Reins. *Learn hence*, That altho' Men are very prone to reſt upon Church Privileges and external Performances, as Evidences of Divine Favour, yet they are no Teſtimonies nor Signs of the truth of Grace. What Circumciſion, Sacrifices, and the Temple were to the *Jews* of old, the ſame are Baptiſm, the Lord's-Supper, and Publick Aſſemblies to profeſſing Chriſtians at this Day. And as the *Jews* reſted in thoſe Externals without eying Chriſt in them, without deſiring to derive Holineſs and Sanctification from them: In like manner, multitudes of Profeſſors ſet up their reſt in outward Duties, and repoſe a fleſhly carnal Confidence in Ordinances, without either deſiring of, or endeavouring after any lively Communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the exerciſe of Faith and Love, without any regard to ſpiritual warmth in Religious Duties, and being by Ordinances rendred more like to the God of the Ordinances, which are the moſt deſirable things next to Heaven it ſelf. So that I ſhall conclude the Chapter with the ſame Application to Chriſtians now, as the Apoſtle did to the *Jews* then: *Circumciſion*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy Circumciſion is made Uncircumciſion*; For he is not a *Jew*, &c. In like manner, ſay I, *Baptiſm*, verily profiteth, if we perform the Condition of that Covenant which we entred into by *Baptiſm:* But if we do not, our *Baptiſm* is no *Baptiſm*; for if he is not a Chriſtian, who is one outwardly, nor is that *Baptiſm* which is outward in the Fleſh; but he is a *Chri-*

ſtian which is one inwardly, and Baptiſm is that of the Heart in the Spirit, and not in Water only, and ſuch ſhall have Praiſe, if not of Men yet of God.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter proceeds in his grand Deſign *and* Purpoſe *in writing this Epiſtle; namely, to prove all Perſons, both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *to be under Sin, and conſequently under an impoſſibility of being juſtified by Works, but only by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus. In the former part of the Chapter, he Anſwers the Objections of the* Jews *againſt what he had Aſſerted in the foregoing Chapter; and the firſt Objection runs thus.*

1 WHat advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is* there of circumciſion? 2 Much every way: chiefly, becauſe that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

The Senſe is this; but you of the *Jews*, will Object and ſay, if outward Circumciſion avails nothing, but the inward Circumciſion is all in all: And if the uncircumciſed Perſon keeping the Law is to be reckoned as Circumciſed, *what advantage then hath the Jew* above the *Gentile*, or what Profit is there of the *Circumciſion* above Uncircumciſion. He Anſwers it, *verſe* 2. ſaying, the Advantage is *much every way*; but chiefly, becauſe unto them were *committed the Oracles of God*: That is the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old Teſtament, the Sacraments and Seals of the Covenant, the Propheſies and Promiſes of the Meſſiah, and the whole Revelation of the Word and Will of God was then found with them, and in their Hands only. *Hence Learn*, 1. Great is that People's Priviledge and Mercy, who enjoy the Word of God, the audible Word in the Holy Scriptures, the viſible Word in the Holy Sacraments. This enlightneth the Eyes, rejoyceth the Heart, quickneth the Soul. This is compared to Gold for Profit, to Honey for Sweetneſs, to Milk for Nouriſhing, to Food for Strengthning. O how many Souls are bleſſing God eternally for the Benefit and Bleſſing of Divine Revelation! The *Jews* had this ſpecial Favour, *to them were committed the Oracles of God*; that is, the Writings of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*. But we Chriſtians have a *Priviledge* beyond them, the Doctrine of Jeſus delivered to us by Evangeliſts and Apoſtles; not like the killing Letter of the Law, but a Goſpel bringing Life and Immortality to Light. *Obſerve*, 2. The Title which St. *Paul* gives to the Holy Scriptures, he calls them *the Oracles of God*. St. *Steven* calls them the *lively Oracles*, Acts 7. 38. partly becauſe delivered by a lively Voice from God, partly becauſe they ſhould be to us as *Oracles*; that is, conſulted with upon all Occaſions, for reſolving all Doubts, determining all Controverſies. Had the Church of *Rome* conſulted theſe Oracles more, and Councils, *&c.* leſs, ſhe had kept the Doctrine of Faith much freer from Corruption than ſhe hath done. *Obſerve laſtly*, That the Original Word here rendred *Oracles*, is the ſame which prophane Wretches made uſe of for the dark and doubtful Oracles of the Devil: Nevertheleſs the Holy Ghoſt doth not diſdain, nor decline, to make uſe of this Word, (as he alſo doth ſeveral others) tho' abuſed to heatheniſh Superſtition, which may ſerve to rectifie their Miſtake who ſcruple to make uſe of Words, much more of ſome things which have been abuſed to Superſtition: Verily there may be Superſtition in avoiding Superſtition; and tho' we cannot be too circumſpect in our Words and Actions, yet we may be too Nice and Preciſe in both. *Yet Note*, That tho' the ſame Word (Λώγια) ſignifies God's Oracles and Satan's, yet theſe Oracles were not delivered in the ſame manner; Satan delivered his Oracles Ambiguouſly and Doubtfully, keeping his dark and blind Votaries as much as might be in the Dark; what he ſaid might bear ſeveral Conſtructions, that ſo whatever the Event or Iſſue proved to be, he, the Father of Lies, might have the Reputation of ſpeaking Truth: But God's Oracles are plain and clear, free from Ambiguity and Darkneſs; the Scriptures are not dark tho' ſome places are difficult, and that proceeds from the Sublimity of the Matters, not from the Intention of the Writer.

3 For what if ſome did not believe? ſhall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged.

Here follows a ſecond Objection; ſome might ſay, True, The *Jews* had the Oracles of God, but ſome of them never believed them, nor gave any Credit to the Promiſe of the Meſſias contained in them, therefore they had no Advantage by them. Be it ſo, ſaith the Apoſtle, yet ſhall the unbelief of ſome make the *Faith*, or Fidelity of God in his Promiſes, of no *Effect* to others? *God forbid!* that ſuch a thought ſhould enter into our Hearts: But on the contrary, let God be acknowledged *True*, and faithful to his Word, tho' all Men ſhould prove *Liars*. *Learn thence*, 1. That Man's Infidelity cannot ſhake the Stability of God's Word, whether we believe the Fidelity of the Promiſes, or aſſent to the Veracity of God in his Threatnings or not; his *Word ſtandeth faſt for ever*: The Promiſe ſhall be fulfilled; the Threatning executed; only with this difference, we cannot perſonally find the Comfort of the Promiſe without Faith, but we ſhall experimentally feel the Terror of the Threatning whether we believe it or no. *Learn*, 2. The wonderful condeſcending Grace of God towards thoſe who have any meaſures of true Faith, tho' with great mixtures of Unbelief. O how faithful is God to us (if in truth Believers) in the midſt of our Unfaithfulneſs to him. The Unbelief of Men ſhall not make the Fidelity or *Faith of God of no Effect*. *Learn* 3. That as God is a God of Truth, ſo all Men are falſe and Liars compared with God: As God cannot lie, neither deceive nor be deceived, ſo every Man is fallible and falſe; that is, under a poſſibility of deceiving and being deceived: *Let God be true, but every Man a Liar*. *Learn*, 4. That a good Man under Afflictions, is very careful to juſtifie and clear God from dealing unjuſtly with him in any of his ſevereſt Diſpenſations towards him. The Apoſtle here quotes *Pſalm* 51. 4. *That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and clear when thou art judged.* As if *David* had ſaid, I know the Men of the World, when they ſee me afflicted will be ready to judge hardly of God for it; therefore to ſtop their Mouths, to clear the Juſtice of God, that he may overcome, when he is judged for dealing rigorouſly with me: I do freely confeſs my Sin unto him, with all the aggravating Circumſtances of it; that all the World may juſtifie him, how great ſoever my Sufferings may be from him. A Child of God, under the Rod of God, deſires nothing more than to juſtifie him in all his ſevereſt Dealings with, and Diſpenſations towards him.

5 But if our unrighteouſneſs commend the righteouſneſs of God, what ſhall we ſay? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengence? (I ſpeak as a man). 6 God forbid: for then how ſhall God judge the world?

A third Objection here followeth: namely, That if the Unrighteouſneſs of Men, that is, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, tends ſo viſibly to *commend*, that is, to illuſtrate and recommend the Righteouſneſs of God, namely, his Wiſdom, Grace and Favour, in appointing this way of Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt; How can it be right in God to puniſh them for this Unrighteouſneſs, which tends ſo highly to illuſtrate the Glory of his Goſpel-Grace. The Apoſtle tells us, that in making this Objection, *He ſpake as a Man*; that is, as natural and carnal Men are ready to think and ſpeak: But, ſays he, God forbid, that we ſhould entertain ſuch a thought, as if God either were or could be *unrighteous*; *for how then ſhall God judge the World*, for their unrighteouſneſs. *Learn hence*, 1. That altho' the Unrighteouſneſs and Wickedneſs of Men be over-ruled by God, to ſubſerve the Purpoſes of his Glory; yet is God juſt in puniſhing all Unrighteouſneſs and Wickedneſs whatſoever. God is never intentionally, but is ſometimes accidentally glorified by the Sin of Man; there never was ſuch an helliſh Wickedneſs committed as crucifying Chriſt, nothing, by which God ever reaped greater Glory than by the death of his Son: Yet is the Wrath of God come upon the *Jews* to the utmoſt, and that moſt juſtly for their committing of that Wickedneſs. *Learn*, 2. That the Righteous God neither doth, nor can do any Iniquity or Unrighteouſneſs whatſoever: *Is God unrighteous? How then ſhall God judge the World.* God is Judge of the World, and cannot but do right; becauſe the univerſality of his Power, puts him above all poſſibility of Error in the exerciſe of his Power. The very reaſon why God cannot exerciſe his Power is altogether unlimited; he can do whatever he will do, and whatever he will do is for that Reaſon juſt. *Shall not the judge of the Earth do right?*

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I alſo judged as a ſinner? 8 And not *rather*, as we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay,

Let us do evil, that good may come? whoſe damnation is juſt.

We muſt by no means underſtand theſe Words are ſpoken by the Apoſtle himſelf in his own Name, as if he had told Lies for upholding of the Truth; and that the Truth of God had abounded to the Glory of God thro' his Lies; but he ſpeaks in the Perſon of a prophane Objector. Thus ſome Men (as if the Apoſtle had ſaid) may poſſibly plead thus for his Sin. The Truth of God hath gained by my Lie, the Faithfulneſs of God is made more manifeſt by the unfaithfulneſs of Men; therefore why ſhould I be judged and condemned as a Sinner, when the Glory of God will ſhine more bright upon the occaſion of my Sin. The Free-Grace of God diſcovered in the Goſpel will be manifeſted, ſay ſome, and magnified in the pardoning of our Sin; let us therefore ſin our fill, that the Immeaſurableneſs of Divine Goodneſs may appear, and the abundance of pardoning Mercy may abound. The Apoſtle rejects this Doctrine and Practiſe of doing Evil that good may come, with the greateſt Abhorrency and utmoſt Deteſtation, affirming that their Damnation is juſt, who either faſten this Doctrine upon the Apoſtles or affirm it themſelves. *Learn hence*, That no Perſon muſt adventure to do the leaſt of Evils; no not for the ſake of the greateſt good. True, Almighty God can bring Good out of Evil by the ſame Word of his Power, by which he brought Light out of Darkneſs, and ſomething out of nothing; but to do any thing really Evil for obtaining the greateſt Good, is dangerous and damnable. Sin, or that which is ſinful, ought not to be choſen whatever we chooſe. *Learn*, 2. That nothing is more Juſt and Righteous than their Damnation who will adventure to do Evil that Good may come: A good Intention will not excuſe, never juſtifie a bad Action in the ſight of God: He will condemn evil Doers, tho' they do Evil that Good may come. *Learn*, 3. That the Apoſtle pronounces their Damnation juſt, who laid theſe Slanders to the Apoſtle's Charge, as if their Doctrine did allow of this damnable Practiſe, to do Evil that Good might come. *Their Damnation is juſt, who thus ſlanderouſly report and affirm that we ſay, let us do evil, that good may come. Whence Note*, That it is a juſt thing with God to damn thoſe Men, that raiſe or ſpread abroad Reports of his Miniſter's Doctrine, as giving liberty to licentious Practiſes: Verily, the Slander of a Miniſter's regular Doctrine is more than ordinary Slander. The original Word here rendered Slander, ſignifies Blaſphemy; the Word which God makes uſe of to ſet forth his own Reproaches by. Behold God's Reſentments of his Miniſters Wrongs! The Slander and Contempt caſt upon our Office and Doctrine is eſteemed Blaſphemy in God's Account. *As we be ſlanderouſly reported, or blaſphemed, and as ſome affirm, that we ſay, let us do evil, that good may come, whoſe Damnation is juſt.*

9 What tho? are we better *than they?* No in no wiſe; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin;

Here the Apoſtle ſtarts another Objection in the Name of the *Jews*; ſome of them might ſay, are not we better than the *Gentiles?* Do we not excel them in outward Privileges? Is not the Knowledge of the Law found with us, and the Oracles of God committed to us? True, ſays the Apoſtle, the *Jews* are better than the *Gentiles* in reſpect of outward Diſpenſations, but not in reſpect of inward Qualifications. *Jew* and *Gentile* are alike by natural Corruption; alike under Sin by actual Tranſgreſſion, and ſo ſtand in need both alike of Juſtification by Faith; and the Goſpel Righteouſneſs is no leſs neceſſary for the one than for the other. To prove what he had ſaid, namely, that the whole Race of Mankind, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, were under Sin, and void of all true Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, and conſequently ſtanding in need equally of Juſtification by Chriſt; the Apoſtle produces ſeveral Texts out of the Old Teſtament, and particularly out of the 14th *Pſ.* which ſpeaks fully of the Original Corruption and Univerſal Depravation of all Minkind, in the following Words.

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: 11 There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open ſepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed deceit; the poyſon of aſps *is* under their lips: 14 Whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs. 15 Their feet *are* ſwift to ſhed blood. 16 Deſtruction and miſery *are* in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known. 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle proves his Aſſertion; namely, that both *Jew* and *Gentile*, were under the Guilt both of original and actual Tranſgreſſion, from the Teſtimony of *David*, Pſalm 14. Where the State of corrupt Nature is deſcribed, and the natural Condition of all Men declared, till they are either reſtrained or renewed by the Grace of God; *There is none righteous, no not one.* Which Words are true in ſeveral Reſpects. 1. There is none originally Righteous, no not one; none Righteous in their firſt Plantation in the World, until they are tranſplanted into the Body of Chriſt, wrought and faſhioned by his Holy Spirit. 2. There is none efficiently Righteous, no not one: None have a Righteouſneſs of their own making but of God's. The Righteouſneſs of Juſtification and Sanctification both are from Chriſt, not from our ſelves; we are his Workman-ſhip, not our own. 3. There is none meritoriouſly Righteous, no not one; none that can deſerve or demand any thing as a due Debt at God's Hand; but the moſt righteous and Holy Saints are but unprofitable Servants. 4. There is none perfectly and compleatly Righteous, no not one; but Inchoatively only: None Righteous in a ſtrict and legal Senſe, but in a Goſpel and qualified Senſe only: *He that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous*, in the Account of God: And as ſuch, ſhall be accepted and rewarded by them. *Obſerve*, 2. How the Apoſtle proves the Corruption of Mankind in general, by an Induction of Particulars. He ſurveys him in all the principal Faculties of his Soul, and Members of his Body; his Underſtanding, Will, Affections, his Eye, Hand, Tongue and Feet, all corrupted and depraved: *Their mouth is full of curſing*, and bitter Speeches, *their throat an open Sepulchre*, gaping after and devouring the good Name of their Neighbours, and belching out filthy, ill ſcented and unſavory Words againſt them. *They ſeek not God* in any thing that they do, and *there is no fear of God*, no reſpect of God, *before their Eyes.* The Apoſtle ſhuts up all with this, becauſe, want *of the fear of God before our Eyes*, is the Fountain from which all other Evils do proceed and flow. The Fear of God is the Bridle and Curb which reſtrains from Sin; where that is wanting all Iniquity abounds; where this is preſent and prevalent it keeps the Soul cloſe to God, *Jer.* 32. 32. *I will put my fear in their Hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me.* We uſually depart far, yea, run faſt from thoſe we fear; but the true fear of God will make us cleave cloſe unto him, becauſe Love is intermixed with it, and renders it a delightful Fear.

19 Now we know that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Obſerve here, Leſt the *Jews* ſhould think to elude and evade the force of the foregoing Teſtimonies, concerning Man's Corruption and Depravation, as not belonging to him but to the *Gentiles* only, he tells them, that *what the Law*, that is, the Books of the Old Teſtament, do thus *ſay*, it ſays, *to thoſe that are under the Law*; that is, to thoſe that are Subjects of it, and obliged by it; to ſuch as are under the Inſtruction and Direction of it, as the *Jews* are known to be; and if ſo, than *every Mouth muſt be ſtopped. Jew* and *Gentile* both, muſt own themſelves before God, obnoxious to his Wrath, without being able to ſay any thing for themſelves. *Learn hence*, That the Holy Law of God brings ſuch plain Evidence and Conviction with it, that no Man can have a Word to ſpeak againſt it: When God ſpreads before Men the Purity of his Laws, and the Impiety of their own Lives, every Man muſt ſet down ſilent, and lay his Hand upon his Mouth, not having one Word to Object why Sentence ſhould not be Executed, becauſe they have all tranſgreſſed.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of ſin.

Here we have St. *Paul*'s Concluſion drawn from all the foregoing Premiſes; ſeeing all Mankind ſince the Fall are diſabled by their innate Corruption, and actual Tranſgreſſion to fulfil the Law, either natural or written: It muſt neceſſarily follow, that *by the works of the Law can no fleſh*; that is, no Perſon, either *Jew* or *Gentile*, be juſtified *before God.* All the Efficacy which the Law now has, being to diſcover Sin, and condemn for Sinning; *By the law is the knowledge of Sin*: By the Law we apprehend our Malady, but by the Goſpel we underſtand our Remedy. *Learn hence*, That no Son of *Adam*, ſince the breach of the Law, can ſtand juſtified before God by his beſt Obedience to the Commands of the Law: By being juſtified underſtand that gracious Act in God, whereby we are acquitted, and finally diſcharged from the Guilt and Puniſhment of all our Sin. By the Law here, and by the Deeds of the Law, we are to underſtand Ceremonial and Moral Law both, eſpecially the latter; for by the Moral Law is the knowledge of Sin: 'Tis the Moral Law that forbids Theft, Adultery, *&c.* beſides it is evident, that the Antitheſis, or Oppoſition runs along, not between Ceremonial Works and Moral Works, but between Works in general and Faith: The Law of Works, and the Law of Faith, are oppoſed to each other, *ver.* 27. But why *can no fleſh*, that is, no Perſon *be juſtified by the deeds of the law?* Anſ. 1. Becauſe he is Fleſh, that is, depraved by original Corruption, and obnoxious to the Curſe of the Law by actual Tranſgreſſion: Now that which condemns cannot juſtify. An after Obedience to the Law can never atone for a former Diſobedience. 2. Becauſe the beſt Obedience we can perform to the Law is imperfect; now he that mixes but one Sin with a Thouſand good Works, can never be juſtified by his Works; he that would be juſtified by his Works, muſt not have one bad Work amongſt all his Works, for that one will lay him under the Curſe and condemnatory Sentence of the Law, *Gal.* 3. *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Book of the law to do them.* Nothing that is imperfect can be a ground of Juſtification before God, becauſe the Deſign of God is to exalt his Juſtice as well as his Mercy in the Juſtification of a Sinner. *Again*, 3. No Fleſh can be juſtified by the Works of the Law, becauſe all that we do, or can do, is a due Debt which we owe to the Law: We owe all poſſible Obedience to the Law as Creatures, and by performing our Obligations as Creatures, we can never pay our Debts as Tranſgreſſors. But now our Surety Chriſt Jeſus, who has given ſatisfaction for our violation of the Law, was under no Obligation to the Law, but what he voluntarily laid himſelf under upon our Account. And if ſo, let us eternally bleſs God with the higheſt elevation of Soul for the Goſpel-Revelation, for ſending his own Son to juſtifie and ſave us, by working out a compleat and everlaſting Righteouſneſs for us: And let us plead with him inceſſantly for the Grace of juſtifying Faith, which is as neceſſary in its place as the Death of Chriſt; one renders God reconcilable unto poor Sinners, the other actually reconciled.

21 But now the righteouſneſs of God without the law is manifeſted, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteouſneſs of God *which is* by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference: 23 For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God;

Our Apoſtle having proved Negatively, that by the Works of the Law, Righteouſneſs and Juſtification is not to be had for any Perſon, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*: He comes now to prove the Affirmative part of his Aſſertion; namely, that God hath manifeſted another way of Juſtification in the Goſpel, to wit, by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. For, ſaith he, now, that is, ſince the coming of Chriſt, ſince the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; *the righteouſneſs of God*, that is, the Righteouſneſs which God appoints, approves and accepts, for a Sinner's Juſtification, is *without the Law*, that is, without performing the Works of the Law, either Natural, Ceremonial or Moral: And is manifeſted to be the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith in Chriſt; which all that believe and obey the Goſpel, ſhall be admitted to the participation of, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, *for there is no difference*; that is, no difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*, as to the Way and Means of their Juſtification: And the reaſon aſſigned by the Apoſtle, why there is, and can be no other way of Juſtification but this, we have in the next Verſe, namely, *becauſe all have ſinned*, the whole race of Mankind, not one meer Man excepted, and ſo will *fall ſhort* of obtaining *the glory of God* and eternal Life, if they ſeek it not in this way. *Learn hence*, 1. That there is no ſtanding or appearing before God for any Creature in a Creatures-Righteouſneſs. There is much unrighteouſneſs in our Righteouſneſs, and therefore we cannot ſtand juſtified before God in it: Beſides, the Wiſdom of God has appointed another Righteouſneſs, or the Righteouſneſs of another, even the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, to ſtand before him in; *But now the Righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted, even the Righteouſneſs of God which is by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Learn* 2. The neceſſity and excellency of Faith; *The Righteouſneſs of God is unto all, and upon all that Believe*: Faith is the Bond of Union, the Inſtrument of our Juſtification, the Spring of our Conſolation; *Being juſtified by Faith we have Peace with God*, Rom. 5. 1. Render we then unto Faith the things which are Faiths, as well as unto Chriſt the things that are Chriſt's. *Learn* 3. That in reference to, or in reſpect of our Juſtification before God, there is no difference among Believers, *v.* 22. *For there is no difference*: That is, no difference as to the way of Juſtification between *Jew* and *Gentile*, Male and Female, Bond and Free; but all, without the Righteouſneſs of Faith in Chriſt, muſt Die and be Damned to all Eternity. There is now a difference amongſt Believers, with reſpect to their Degrees of Sanctification, and with reſpect to their Meaſures of Conſolation, and will be hereafter with reſpect to the Degrees of Glorification. Some Saints have more Grace and Comfort on Earth, and ſhall have higher Degrees of Glory in Heaven than others: But the Juſtification of all Believers is alike; there is the ſame Sin in all, not for Meaſure and Degree, but in reſpect of Guilt and Obligation to Puniſhment; there is the ſame price paid by way of Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice for all: namely, the Death of Chriſt. There is the ſame Righteouſneſs imputed to all, and the ſame Spirit of Holineſs imparted amongſt all, and the ſame Manſions of Glory deſigned for all; *Thus there is no difference.* And there is difference amongſt Believers in reſpect of Truth of Grace, but much in reſpect of ſtrength of Grace: No difference amongſt them in reſpect of God's Promiſes, but much difference with reſpect to their Performances; no difference in reſpect of God's Covenant, but much difference in reſpect of God's Counſels, as alſo in reſpect of God's Diſpenſations; no difference in reſpect of God's Acceptation, but much in reſpect of their Application; no difference as they are a Body in reſpect of their Head, but much difference as they are Members of that Head. And if there be no difference amongſt Believers (as ſuch) before God, why ſhould there be ſo much difference amongſt themſelves, as there is oft-times here in this World; you are all dear, truly dear to God, why ſhould you not be ſo to one another? Why ſhould not one Church and one Communion hold you now, e'er long perhaps one Priſon may, one Heaven ſhall certainly hold you all.

24 Being juſtified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: 25 Whom God hath ſet forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs from the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, (*I ſay*) at this time his righteouſneſs: that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.

Obſerve here, 1. A glorious Privilege vouchſafed to Believers, which the Scripture calls Juſtification, whereby they are judicially acquitted and diſcharged from the Guilt and Puniſhment of all their Sins, and accounted Righteous before God.

Obſerve, 2. The efficient Cauſe of our Juſtification, it is *God that juſtifies*: Who can forgive the Crime but the Perſon againſt whom we have done the Wrong. *Obſerve*, 3. The moving or impulſive Cauſe, namely, the Free-Grace of God: *Being Juſtified freely by his Grace. Obſerve*, 4. The meritorious Cauſe, the Blood-ſhedding and death of Chriſt; *through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve*, 5. The final Cauſe; *to declare his Righteouſneſs*, not his Clemency and Mercy only, but his Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, eſpecially that attribute which diſpoſes and inclines him to puniſh Sin and Sinners. *Obſerve*, 6. The Inſtrumental Cauſe of Juſtification; Faith: *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his Blood*, &c. Some of the Papiſts, particularly *Cajetanas A. Lapide*, do call Faith *Cauſa Applicans* in our Juſtification: Verily, an unapplied Chriſt Juſtifies none, Saves none. *Learn thence*, 1. That in order to a Sinners being ſaved, he muſt be Juſtified, that is, diſcharged of, abſolved from the Guilt of all Sin upon the account of a compleat Satisfaction given to Divine Juſtice for Sin. *Learn*, 2. That not all and every Sinner, but only repenting and believing Sinners are juſtified by God. *Learn*, 3. That when the Lord juſtifies a believing Sinner, he doth it freely; *being juſtified freely by his Grace.* It is an act of meer Grace; there is nothing in the Creature that can merit or deſerve it! Then it would be Debt and not Grace. *Learn*, 4. That God's Free Grace and Chriſt's full Satisfaction were conſiſtent, and both concurring in the Believers Juſtification; we are juſtified freely by God's Grace; yet through the Redemption, that is in Chriſt

Jeſus, Him, *God having ſet forth to be a propitiation.* The word Propitiation, is an Alluſion to the Mercy-Seat, which covered the Ark wherein the Law was; this typified Chriſt, who fully covers our Sins, the Tranſgreſſions of the Law out of God's ſight. When therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, that God hath ſet forth Chriſt to be a Mercy-Seat to us, *through Faith in his Blood*; we have reaſon to believe the Blood of Chriſt, as our Sin-offering doth make an Attonement for us, and renders God propitious to us. *Learn*, 5. That Almighty God, in the Juſtification of a believing Sinner, is not only Gracious and Merciful, but Juſt and Righteous in the moſt exalted Degree; *To declare his Righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of Sin.* *Where Note*, That the Deſign and End of God in exacting Satisfaction from Chriſt, it was to declare his Righteouſneſs in the Remiſſion of Sin; but the Apoſtle would have us take notice, that our Juſtification is an Act of Juſtice as well as Mercy, and that God as he is a juſt God, cannot condemn the Believer, ſince Chriſt has ſatisfied for his Sins. O bleſſed be God! that pardon of Sin is built upon that very Attribute, the (Juſtice of God) which is ſo affrighting and dreadful to the offended Sinner. This Attribute, which ſeemed to be the main Bar againſt Remiſſion, is now become the very Ground and Reaſon why God remits. Hence ſaith St. *John God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins.* Faithful with reſpect to his own Promiſe, and juſt with reſpect to his Sons Satisfaction: Who then can lay thing to the Charge of God's Elect, when Juſtice it ſelf doth juſtifie them. Behold here! The ſweet Harmony of the Divine Attributes in juſtifying and pardoning the Believer, one Attribute is not rob'd to pay another; neither is one Attribute rais'd upon the Ruine of another; but Juſtice and Mercy both Triumph: And well might the Juſtice of God Triumph, for never was it thus honoured before, to have ſuch a Perſon as the Son of God ſtand at its Bar, and ſuch a Sum as his Sons Blood pay'd down at once by way of Satisfaction to its due Demands. O Glorious and Allwiſe Contrivance! whereby God made ſufficient Proviſion for the Reparation of his Honour, for the Vindication of his Holineſs, and for the Manifeſtation of his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and for the preſent Conſolation and eternal Salvation of all repenting and believing Sinners, to the End of the World.

27 Where *is* boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

The Apoſtle having laid down in the foregoing Verſes, the Nature of Juſtification exactly in the ſeveral and reſpective Cauſes of it, declares in this Verſe, what is the Conſequent of this Doctrine, namely, the Excluding of all Self-confidence and boaſting in our ſelves, or in any Works done by our ſelves. *Where is boaſting now? Learn thence*, That Man is naturally a very proud Creature, prone to boaſt of and glory in any Excellency, either real or ſuppoſed, belonging to himſelf. *Learn*, 2. That God has taken care to give a Check to this inſolent Pride of Man, and to cut off all occaſion of Boaſting from him, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. *That no fleſh ſhould glory in his ſight.* Whilſt God intended to give Man Glory, he took a Courſe to cut off all Glorying from Man. *Learn*, 3. That the Courſe which the Wiſdom of God has taken to hide Pride from Man's Eyes, and to cut off all Occaſion of Boaſting from him, is by denying him Juſtification by his own Works, and ordaining, that the meritorious *Cauſe* of Juſtification ſhould not lie in himſelf but in another. Grace muſt have all the Glory; not the Law of Works, but the Law of Faith Juſtifieth and ſaveth all Believers.

28 Therefore we conclude, that a man, is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo: 30 Seeing *it is* one God, which ſhall juſtifie the circumciſion by faith, and the uncircumciſion through faith.

Obſerve here, 1. The Concluſion drawn by the Apoſtle, from all that he had been diſcourſing of in the foregoing Chapters, namely, that God's way of Juſtification of a Guilty Sinner is not by Works done by him, but by Faith in the Mediator, who hath ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for him; *Therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the Law. Learn thence*, That Juſtification from our paſt Sins, is by Faith alone, without reſpect to any Works of ours, done either before or ſince Converſion. *Obſerve*, 2. How the Apoſtle doth extend his Propoſition univerſally to all ſorts of Perſons, Jews and Gentiles, that is, the whole Race of Mankind, Affirming, that God will juſtifie Circumciſed Believers and uncircumciſed Believers, one and the ſame way, even by the way of Grace and Faith; *it is one God which juſtifieth the circumciſion by faith and uncircumciſion through faith. Where Note*, The Argument is drawn from the Unity or Oneneſs of God, which is not to be underſtood ſo much of the Unity of his Eſſence and Nature, as of his Will and Purpoſe, yet as God is one and the ſame unchangeable God in his Nature, ſo is he as Immutable in his Will and Purpoſe, having therefore determin'd and declared *His Way* of Juſtifying all Sinners to be one and the ſame to all Nations, both Jew and Gentile, even by Faith alone in his Son Chriſt Jeſus. No other way is to be expected from that God who is unchangeable in his Purpoſe. *Learn thence*, That God's Way and Method of Juſtifying all Sinners, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, great and ſmall, is and ever will be the ſame, namely, by Faith alone without Works. What falſe Notions ſoever Men may entertain in their Minds arraigned about it, and when the Pride of Men has arraigned the Wiſdom of God never ſo much, the Apoſtle's Concluſion will remain like a Rock unſhaked; *ver.* 28. *Therefore we conclude*: That a Man is juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: ye we eſtabliſh the law.

Obſerve here, The Wiſe and Holy Caution which our Apoſtle uſes to take away the Calumny and Reproach caſt upon him by the Adverſaries of the Doctrine of Free Juſtification by Faith; as if this would render the Law of God void and altogether uſeleſs: *Do we then make void the Law of God.* As if he had ſaid, there may be thoſe that will ſay ſo, but untruly; for we eſtabliſh the Law; becauſe we acknowledge, that without exact Obedience and Conformity to the Law both in our Natures and in our Lives, as a Rule of Living, there can be no Salvation. *Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone, doth not overthrow but eſtabliſh the Law. *Here Note*, That it is the Moral, not Ceremonial Law which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of. The Ceremonial Law is utterly aboliſhed by the Goſpel; but the Moral Law is not Aboliſhed, but Eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel; or if aboliſhed, it is only as a Covenant, not as a Rule. Chriſt has relaxt the Law in point of Danger, but not in point of Duty: For the Law is Holy, and Juſt, and Good, and is not diſannul'd, but eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel: Becauſe by the Goſpel we obtain Grace in ſome meaſure to fulfil the Law, and yield a ſincere Obedience to it; which for the ſake of Chriſt's perfect and ſpotleſs Obedience, ſhall find a gracious Acceptance with God. Therefore with the higheſt Elevation of Soul let us bleſs God for Jeſus Chriſt, and for the Goſpel Revelation, which has ſo fully Diſcovered, and clearly Revealed to us the only way of Juſtification by Faith in the Son of God, who hath Loved us, and Waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood. To whom be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. IV.

In the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter our Apoſtle laid down a Poſitive and Peremptory Concluſion, that a Man is Juſtified by Faith, without the Works of the Law. *In this Chapter he undertakes to confirm the Truth of that Concluſion, by inſtancing in the Patriarch* Abraham, *the Father of the Faithful, who did not find Juſtification and Acceptance with God, by vertue of his Circumciſion in the Fleſh, or any other Works of Obedience perform'd by him to the Law, but by vertue of his Faith, which was Imputed and Accounted to him for Righteouſneſs: From which Inſtance of* Abraham's *Juſtification by Faith, the Apoſtle infers the Juſtification of all Believers with him. For who doubts, but that the Children are juſtified after the ſame manner that their Father was. This being the Deſign and Scope of the Chapter, let us obſerve the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument. Verſe the firſt.*

1 WHat ſhall we ſay then? that Abraham our Father, as pertaining to the Fleſh hath found. 2 For if Abraham were juſtified by Works, he hath, whereof to Glory, but not before God.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, What ſhall we ſay? Shall any one affirm, that *Abraham* our Father found or obtained Righteouſneſs by, or according to the Fleſh; that is, by being Circumciſed in the Fleſh, or by any Works of Righteouſneſs which he had done: Surely no: For if *Abraham* were Juſtified by Circumciſion, or any other Works of his own, he hath whereof to Glory; that is, ground of Boaſting in theſe Works, by which he was thus Juſtified. But manifeſt it is, that he had not whereof to Boaſt and Glory before God; therefore he was not Juſtified by Circumciſion, nor any Works of his own. *Learn hence*, That no Righteouſneſs of our own, no Services we can perform, are ſufficient to procure our Juſtification in the Sight of God: For if we be Juſtified by our Works, it muſt be by Works either before Faith or after Faith; not before Faith, for the Corruption of Nature, and Man's impotent Condition thereby, will give Check to any ſuch Thought. Surely, Unrighteouſneſs cannot make us Righteous, no more then Impurity can make us clean. Nor do Works after Faith Juſtifie; for then a Believer is not Juſtified upon his Believing, but by his Works after his Believing, and Faith is not the juſtifying Grace, but only a Preparation to thoſe Works which juſtifie; which is contrary to the whole Strain of the Apoſtle throughtout the Epiſtles, who aſcribes Juſtification to Faith, in the Blood of Chriſt, without Works. In ſhort, No Righteouſneſs of Man is Perfect, therefore no Righteouſneſs of Man can be Juſtifying: There is nothing that a Man doth, but is defective, and conſequently has matter of Condemnation in it: Now that which is Condemning, cannot be Juſtifying; that which falls ſhort of the Holineſs of the Law, can never free us from the Condemnatory Sentence and Curſe of the Law. Now all Works after Faith fall ſhort of that Perfection which the Law requireth. *Learn*, 2. That the Deſign of God was to juſtifie us in ſuch a way, as to ſtrip us of our own. *Not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt*, ſays the Apoſtle often. We are Juſtified by Faith, to exclude Boaſting, which would not have been excluded by the Law of Works.

3 For what ſaith the ſcripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteouſneſs. 4 Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted to him for righteouſneſs.

Obſerve here, 1. The Account, which the Scriptures gives of *Abraham*'s Juſtification, it was by Faith alone, *He believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteouſneſs*: That is, he firmly Believed the Promiſe of God, that he would give him a Son, in whom all the Families of the Earth ſhould be Bleſſed. And by means of this Faith he was reckoned or eſteemed Righteous before God, and not by means of his Works. *Obſerve*, 2. The Apoſtle's Argument to prove that *Abraham* was Juſtified by Faith, and not by Works; had he Works of perfect Holineſs, then in ſtrict Juſtice a Reward might have been expected by him as a due Debt, and not given him in a way of Grace and Favour. For *to him that worketh*: That is, with a Deſign and Intent to obtain Juſtification by his Works, *is the Reward reckoned not of Grace, but of Debt*, he having performed all that was required, in order to his being Righeous before God. *But to him that worketh not*: That is, who worketh not to the Intent and End forementioned; namely, to procure Juſtification by working, but ſeeks *that* in a way of Believing, *his Faith is counted for Righteouſneſs. To him that worketh not, but believeth*, &c. We muſt not underſtand it abſolutely, for he that Believeth, Worketh: But, *ſecundum quid*, after a ſort, he is ſaid not to Work; becauſe he worketh not with a deſign to ſtand Righteous before God, by his Works. Again, By him *that worketh not*, we are not to underſtand an Idle, Lazy Believer, that takes no care of the Duties of Obedience: No, an idle Faith is an ineffectual Faith, and can never be a ſaving Faith; but the meaning is, he worketh not in a Law Senſe, to the Ends and Intentions of the firſt Covenant, to make up a Righteouſneſs to cover himſelf by his own Working. Being convinced of his utter Inability to work out his own Righteouſneſs by the Law; and ſeeing all his Endeavours to obey the Law, fall ſhort of Righteouſneſs, he is therefore ſaid in a Law Senſe not to Work, becauſe he doth not Work ſo, as to Anſwer the Purpoſe and End of the Law, which accepts of nothing ſhort of perfect and compleat Obedience. And whereas it is here ſaid, *That God juſtifieth the Ungodly*: The meaning is, ſuch as have been Ungodly, not ſuch as continue ſo. The Apoſtle deſcribes the Temper and Frame of their Hearts and Lives before Juſtification, and not after it, as it found them, not as it leaves them. True! Chriſt juſtifies the Ungodly; yet ſuch as continue Ungodly are not Juſtified by him; We muſt bring Credentials from our Sanctification, to bear Witneſs to the Truth of our Juſtification.

6 Even as David alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works. 7 *Saying*, Bleſſed *are* they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered. 8 Bleſſed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin.

Obſerve here, That to the Example of *Abraham*, the Apoſtle ſubjoins the Teſtimony of *David*, *Pſal.* 32. who deſcribes the Bleſſedneſs of that Man to whom God imputeth Righteouſneſs; to wit, the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, without any Works brought before God to be juſtified, by ſaying, *Bleſſed is the Man, whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered, and Iniquity not imputed.* Sin, in reſpect of the Offence, is remitted; in reſpect of the Filth or Turpitude of it, is covered; in reſpect of the Puniſhment not imputed. This Heap of words ſerves only to Amplifie and ſet forth the abundant Grace of God, in the Act of pardoning Sin. *Learn hence*, 1. That to pardon Sin is God's Prerogative; he forgiveth Iniquity, and covereth Tranſgreſſion. 2. That Pardon of Sin is a covering of Sin; not ſuch a covering as that God cannot ſee it in a juſtified Perſon, to chaſtiſe him for it, but ſo covered, as not to puniſh him with Wrath and Condemnation for it. *Learn*, 3. That God's Act in pardoning and covering Sin, is Extenſive and Perfect, Full, and Final: Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin, is Forgiven, Covered, and not Imputed. *Learn*, 4. That Tranſcendent is the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe whole Iniquity is pardoned, and their Tranſgreſſion covered. Bleſſedneſs (ſays the Original) belong to the Man whoſe Iniquity is Forgiven, and whoſe Sin is Covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute Tranſgreſſion.

9 *Cometh* this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion *only*, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? For we ſay that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion.

Here the Apoſtle moves a Queſtion, namely, Whether the forementioned Bleſſedneſs of Pardon of Sin, and Juſtification by Faith, belongs to the Circumciſed *Jews* only, or to the Uncircumciſed *Gentiles* alſo; which Queſtion carrieth with it the Force of a ſtrong Affirmation, that ſeeing Faith was imputed to *Abraham* for Righteouſneſs many Years before he was Circumciſed: Therefore the Uncircumciſed *Gentiles*, as well as the Circumciſed *Jews*, ſhall by Faith be made Partakers of the ſame Bleſſedneſs, unto which *Abraham* was Intituled before he was Circumciſed. *Learn hence*, That God has appointed one and the ſame Way and Method for the Juſtification and Salvation of all Perſons, Circumciſed and Uncircumciſed, *Jew* and *Gentile*, Honourable and Ignoble; namely, Juſtification by Faith in the Blood of his Son, without which no Church Privileges, or Spiritual Prerogatives whatſoever will intitle them to real Bleſſedneſs. *Cometh this Bleſſedneſs on the Circumciſion only, or upon the Uncircumciſion alſo? Abraham* Believed unto Righteouſneſs before he was Circumciſed; therefore the *Gentiles* by Faith ſhall be accounted Righteous, tho' they be never Circumciſed.

11 And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith, which *he had yet* being uncircumciſed? that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed; that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo? 12 And the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumciſed.

Here the Apoſtle declares the Reaſon why, and the end for which *Abraham* was Circumciſed, ſeeing he was Juſtified by Faith in the promiſed Meſſiah, long before Circumciſion. He tells us that *Abraham* received Circumciſion *as a Sign and Seal of the Covenant* made with him, and to his Seed, *Gen.* 17. and as an Obligation that the Righteouſneſs of Faith was the true way for a Sinner to become Righteous, which Righteouſneſs *Abraham* had obtained whilſt he was Uncircumciſed, that ſo he might be the Father in a Spiritual Senſe of all Believers both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who imitated him in his Faith, and in the Holineſs and Obedience of his Life. *Note here*, 1. The Perſon inſtituting the Sacrament of Circumciſion. God, and not *Abraham*; *he received Circumciſion*; that is, by the Appointment of God he was Circumciſed; Sacraments muſt be of Divine Inſtitution, not of Humane Invention. The Church can make no Sacraments, Her Duty is with Care and Caution to Adminiſter them. There is a fourfold Word requiſite to a Sacrament. A Word of Inſtitution; a Word of Command; a Word of Promiſe; a Word of Bleſſing. The Elements are Cyphers: 'Tis the Inſtitution makes them Figures. Divine Inſtitution is as neceſſary to a Sacrament, as the Royal Inſcription is to current Money. *Note*, 2. The Nature of Sacraments in General, and of Circumciſion in Particular. They are Signs and Seals: *He received the Sign of Circumciſion. A Seal of the Righteouſneſs by Faith.* The Circumciſion, 1. Was a Sign and Token of the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* and the *Jews*. It was a Commemorative Sign of God's Covenant with *Abraham*, a Repreſentative Sign of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience towards God. A Demonſtrative Sign of Original Sin, and the Depravity of Humane Nature. A Diſcriminating and Diſtinguiſhing Sign of the True Church and People of God from all the reſt of the World. An intimating Sign, by which all Strangers that we received into the Common-wealth of *Iſrael* were admitted into the *Jewiſh* Church. And laſtly, It was a Prefigurative Sign of Baptiſm, which in the Chriſtian Church was to ſucceed in the room of Circumciſion. 2. Circumciſion was not a Sign only, but a Seal alſo. *A Seal of the Righteouſneſs by Faith*; it was a Seal both on God's part, and on *Abraham*'s alſo. A Seal on God's part to confirm all the Promiſes made to *Abraham* and his Seed. 3. A Seal on his and their parts, to bind them to renounce the Service of all other Gods, and to oblige them to the Obſervation of the whole Law. *Note Laſtly*, The Character and Deſcription here given of True Believers, they are ſuch as *walk in the ſteps of faithful* Abraham. They have not only *Abraham* to their Father, but they walk in the Foot-ſteps of their Fathers Faith. As *Abraham* readily obeyed the Call of God, ſo do they. As *Abraham* left his Idolatrous Country and Kindred, and though he had Opportunity of returning, yet never returned more: So do the faithful Sons and Daughters of *Abraham* leave all known Sins, and no Temptations can prevail with them to return to the delightful Practice of them. Did *Abraham* break through all Impediments, Difficulties, and Diſcouragements whatſoever, ſo do and will all thoſe that Trade in the Faith of their Father *Abraham*, ſurmount all Difficulties, bid Defiance to all Dangers, that they may yield a ready, chearful, and perſevering Obedience to the Commands of the God of *Abraham:* Few of the Children of *Abraham*'s Fleſh, but all the Children of his Faith do thus walk in the Steps of their Renowned Father.

13 For the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his ſeed through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith.

That is, The great Promiſe which God made to *Abraham* and his Seed, that they ſhould poſſeſs that Rich and Pleaſant part of the World, the Land of *Canaan*, (under which alſo Heaven it ſelf was Typically promiſed and comprehended) was not made upon Condition of their performing perfect Obedience to the Law, but they were to obtain it by Faith: That is, by truſting to, and depending upon the gracious Promiſe of a faithful God. *Note here*, The Argument couched for Juſtification by Faith, without Works, which is the Apoſtle's grand Scope, Sign and Drift, it runs thus; If the Promiſe made to the Father of the Faithful was accompliſhed, not by legal Obedience, but by the Righteouſneſs of Faith, then it follows, that all his Children are juſtified by Faith, as *Abraham* their Father was. But the Promiſe of the Earthly Inheritance, and under it of the Heavenly one was Accompliſh'd, not by the Law, but by the Righteouſneſs of *Abraham*'s Faith: Therefore Juſtification is not to be expected by the Work of Law, but by Faith alone.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* Heirs, Faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect.

That is, if they which ſeek to be be juſtified by the Works of the Law, be Heirs of this promiſed Inheritance, then *Faith*; that is, the way of Juſtification by Faith, preſcribed by God, is to no purpoſe; for to what end ſhould we by Faith, ſeek Righteouſneſs in another, if by our Legal Obedience we can find it in our ſelves. Here then lies couch'd another Argument, to confirm the Apoſtle's Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith. Thus, That only juſtifies, unto which a Gracious Promiſe of Juſtification is made; but no ſuch Promiſe is made to any Man for his weak and imperfect keeping of the Law, but for his Believing there is: therefore by the Law there can be no Juſtification, but by Faith only.

15 Becauſe the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no tranſgreſſion.

Here the Apoſtle ſuggeſts another Reaſon, why no Juſtification can be expected by the Law, becauſe it condemns rather than juſtifies. *The Law worketh Wrath:* That is, It diſcovers the Wrath of God due to our Tranſgreſſion, and then pronounces Condemnation upon the Trangreſſor; *for were there no Law*, either Natural or Revealed, *there would be no Trangreſſion*, and conſequently no Condemnation. *Here Obſerve*, 1. The uſe of the Law; it diſcovers Sin, it convinces of Sin, it condemns for Sin, it denounces the Wrath of God due unto Sin. *And note*, 2. The Apoſtle's Argument for the uſe of the Law; he infers an utter impoſſibility of being Juſtified by the Law. That which condemns cannot juſtify; but the Law of God condemns the Sinner for his Tranſgreſſion; therefore it can never be the Inſtrument and Means of his Juſtification.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed. not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham who is the Father of us all.

The Apoſtle here aſſigns a double Cauſe, why the Wiſdom of God has appointed Juſtification and Salvation to be obtained in the way of Faith: *Namely*, 1. That it might be of free and undeſerved Grace and Favour; for to be Juſtified by Faith, and by Grace, are all one with the Apoſtle. And, 2. *That the Promiſe might be ſure to all the Seed:* That is, That God's Promiſe might ſtand Firm and Sure to all the Believing Seed of *Abraham*, not only to all the Children of the Fleſh, to whom the Law was given, but to all the Children of his Faith, even *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; he being the Father of all that Believe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles. Learn hence*, That if our Juſtification, and Salvation, did depend upon our performing perfect Obedience to the Law, it would never be ſure, but always uncertain, becauſe of our Impotency and Weakneſs to keep and obſerve it. The Apoſtle, *Chap.* 8. 3. tells us, That the Law is weak through the Fleſh; though the truth is, the Law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that; the Law has the ſame Authority for commanding, that ever it had, but we have not the ſame Ability for obeying. 'Tis our Wickedneſs that is the ſole cauſe of the Laws weakneſs: Had Man the ſame Integrity, the Law would have the ſame Ability that ever it had, both to juſtify and ſave us.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, *even*, God who quickned the dead, and calleth thoſe things which be not as though they were:

Our Apoſtle in this, and the following Verſes, enters upon an high Commendation of *Abraham*'s Faith; magnifying and extolling the ſame for, and upon Account of ſundry Excellencies which were found upon it. And here, 1. He takes notice how *Abraham*'s Faith was ſtrongly acted and exerciſed on the Almighty Power of God; *He believeth in God who quickned the dead and calleth thoſe things which are not as tho' they were.* That is, the Lord having promiſed to make *Abraham* the Father of many Nations, when he had no Seed, nor ever likely to have any: He believed the thing to be both Credible and Poſſible, becauſe God had ſpoken it, how improbable ſoever. And although, with reſpect to Generation, he looked upon *Sarah*'s Body, and his own as good as dead, for ſhe was barren and paſt bearing, and he was an hundred Years Old, and paſt all hopes of having a Child, yet he exerciſed his Faith on the Promiſe and Power of God *who quickeneth the Dead*, That is, his own dead Body and *Sarah*'s Barren Womb. *And calleth thoſe things which be not:* That is, the *Gentiles*, which were not then a People; *as if they were. Learn hence*, That it is a Noble Act and Exerciſe of Faith to believe God upon his bare Word, and to aſſent to Truth, tho' never ſo improbable: As whatever God doth is good, becauſe he does it, ſo whatever God ſays is true, becauſe he ſpeaks it; and accordingly Faith, which is an aſſent of the underſtanding to what God reveals, depends upon the veracity of God for making good his own Word, and fulfilling his own Promiſe. Faith has a threefold Excellency: It aſſents to the Truths of God, tho' never ſo improbable;

it puts Men upon Duties, tho' ſeemingly unreaſonable, (witneſs *Abraham's offering up of Iſaac*) and it enables to Sufferings, be they never ſo afflictive. But from believing plain Contradictions and Impoſſibilities, (as the Church of *Rome* would have her in the point of Tranſubſtantiation) Faith deſires there to be excuſed. *Obſerve here*, 2. That as *Abraham*'s Faith exceedingly honoured God, ſo God highly Honours *Abraham*'s Faith, making him like himſelf, *a Father of many Nations.* As God is an univerſal Father, not of one but of all Nations, ſo was *Abraham*; as God is their Spiritual Father, not by carnal Generation, ſo was *Abraham:* God made Faithful *Abraham* like himſelf, a Father, not of this or that Nation only, but univerſally of all Believers, among all Nations, believing after his Example. Thus *Abraham*'s Faith Honours God, and God Honours *Abraham*'s Faith, ſtiling him the Father of the Faithful throughout all Generations.

18 Who againſt hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was ſpoken, ſo ſhall thy ſeed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred year old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. 20 He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God: 21 And being fully perſwaded, that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform

Here St. *Paul* farther Expatiates in the Commendation of *Abraham*'s Faith, telling us, *That againſt hope he believed in hope*; that is, he had a ſtrong Hope, a firm Faith and truſt in the Promiſe and Power of God, againſt all natural grounds of Hope; namely that he ſhould certainly have a Son, and a Seed like the Stars of Heaven for multitude. He farther adds, *That he conſidered not either the deadneſs of his own body, nor the barrenneſs of Sarah*'s *Womb*; *neither ſtaggered at the promiſe through unbelief:* that is, He regarded not any Difficulties which lay in the way of his Faith, he admitted no Doubts or Queſtions touching the Promiſe or Power of God; but without all diſputing, depended fully upon God for the Performance of his own Promiſe, and ſo gave God the Glory of his Omnipotency and Faithfulneſs. *Obſerve here*, 1. What was the ground of *Abraham*'s Faith, namely, the ſpecial Promiſe, yea the abſolute promiſe of God, that he ſhould have a Son. *Obſerve*, 2. The heighth and meaſure of his Faith; *He was ſtrong in faith, and ſtaggered not through unbelief*, he was *fully perſwaded* of God's All-ſufficiency; it is a Metaphor taken from Ships that come into the Harbour with full Sail. Thus was it with *Abraham*, there was not any Sail of his Soul but what was filled with the Wind of Aſſurances. As a Ship with full Gale and ſtrong Sail is carried to the Haven againſt Winds and Waves, ſo *Abraham*, by the ſtrength of his Faith, overcame all Waves of Doubts and Difficulties beating upon his Mind. *Obſerve*, 3. What was the Fruit and Iſſue, the End and Event of *Abraham*'s Faith, it brought Glory to God; *He was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God.* All Faith glorifies God truly, but ſtrong Faith glorifies him abundantly: It gives him the glory of his Power and Faithfulneſs, Goodneſs and Truth. *Queſtion*, 1. But how could *Abraham*'s Body be ſaid to be dead, when he had ſeveral Children afterwards by *Keturah?* even ſix Sons forty Years after *Sarah*'s Death. *Anſw. Abraham* and *Sarah*'s Bodies received now a Bleſſing, or new generative Faculty from God, which rendred them capable of begetting and bearing Children, when by Nature they were not ſo. *Queſtion*, 2. Was *Abraham*'s Faith ſo ſtrong as to exclude all Doubting? Did not he diſtruſt when he ſaid, *Shall a Child be born to Abraham that is an hundred Years old*; *and Sarah, that is ninety years old bear?* Gen. 21. *Anſwer.* Theſe Words are not Words of doubting but inquiring, they proceeded from a deſire to be farther informed how theſe things could be. But *Abraham* laughed, and *Sarah* alſo, at the mention of a Son. True, they did both laugh, but not both alike; *Abraham*'s laughter proceeded from Admiration and Joy, but *Sarah*'s from Diffidence and Diſtruſt: And accordingly, we find *Sarah* reprimanded, but not *Abraham* reprehended for laughing. *Abraham ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving glory to God.*

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. 23 Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead.

Our Apoſtle having in the former part of this Chapter declared the manner of our Juſtification from an inſtance of *Abraham*, which having at large peruſed, leſt we ſhould think that was *Abraham*'s Perſonal Priviledge, and did not concern us, he applies in the Verſes before us, *Abraham*'s Example unto us; aſſuring us, that as *Abraham*'s *Faith was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs:* Becauſe he depended upon the Almighty Power of God in the Promiſe; and alſo looked by Faith to the Meſſias promiſed, who was to come of his Seed; ſo ſays the Apoſtle was this written for our ſakes as well as *Abraham*'s, for our Comfort and Encouragement, to aſſure us, that Faith ſhall be imputed to us alſo for Righteouſneſs, if we firmly truſt in God, through the Merits and Mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Where obſerve*, The Apoſtle's Argument fully overthrows the *Socinian* Doctrine, which teaches, that the Godly, under the Old Teſtament, were not juſtified in the ſame way with us under the New; whereas the Apoſtle fully proves, that *Abraham* and all the Children of *Abraham*, who walk in the Steps of him their Father, are juſtified alike: And accordingly it was not thus written of him for his ſake alone; that *his Faith was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*, but for the benefit of us alſo; to whom the like Faith ſhall be imputed, to us alſo; for Juſtification, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead. *Learn hence*, That the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, thro' the imputed Righteouſneſs of the Mediator is no New Doctrine, but as old as *Abraham*. Some are much offended at this word *imputed*; But as the Pious Biſhops, *Downham* and *Davenant*, on Juſtification well obſerve, it is no leſs than Ten times mentioned (either in the Term or in the Signification of it) in this Chapter: Their Arguments for, and Anſwers to *Bellarmin*'s Objections againſt the imputed Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, runs thus; If Chriſt's Righteouſneſs be not imputed it is not accepted; if it be not accepted it is not performed, and ſo there will be no Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; without this we ſhall make Chriſt little, very little in the juſtifying of Sinners: And why is Chriſt called the Lord of our Righteouſneſs, and how are we ſaid to be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him? And why is Faith ſo infinitely pleaſing to God, but becauſe Faith brings to God a Righteouſneſs which is highly pleaſing to him, even that of the Mediator; for there is no ſtanding before God for any Creature in a Creature-Righteouſneſs. The Popiſh Objections run thus. 1. *Obj.* If Chriſt's Righteouſneſs be imputed to us, then may we be reputed Redeemers of the World as well as he was. *Anſwer*, It may as well be ſaid, the Debtor may be accounted the Surety, becauſe the Sureties payment is accepted for the Debtor. *Object.* 2. If Chriſt's Righteouſneſs be imputed to us as ours, then we ought to be accounted as Righteous as himſelf. *Anſwer*, It may as well be argued and concluded, that the Debtor is as rich a Man as the Surety, becauſe the Surety pays the Debtor's Debts. *Obj.* 3. If Chriſt's Righteouſneſs be properly imputed to us, then our Unrighteouſneſs was properly imputed to him, and he may be ſtrictly and truly called a Sinner? *Anſw.* Juſt as if we ſhould ſay; if the acceptance of the Sureties Payment acquits the Debtor, then the Surety is as bad an Husband and as much a Bankrupt as the Debtor himſelf. *Object.* 4. But if Chriſt's Righteouſneſs be ours, no need of any Righteouſneſs of our own. *Anſ.* We plead the meritorious Righteouſneſs of Chriſt to anſwer the Demands of the Law, and for a perſonal Righteouſneſs of our own to anſwer the commands of the Goſpel: Let us then render to all their Due; let us render unto Chriſt the things which are Chriſt's, to Faith the things which are Faith's, and to good Works the things which are theirs. Let us awfully adore the Wiſdom of God, who has made Chriſt unto us *Wiſdom*, *Righteouſneſs*, *Sanctification* and *Redemption.* To relieve our Ignorance and Folly, he is *our Wiſdom* to diſcharge us from Guilt and free us from Condemnation; he is *our Righteouſneſs*, to relieve us againſt the Filth and Pollution, the Power and Dominion of Sin, he is *our Sanctification*; and to Reſcue us from our miſerable Captivity of Satan, he is *our Redemption.* Bleſſed be God for the Benefit of imputed Righteouſneſs to ſuch as live in the Practice and Power of inherent Holineſs. True, our Sanctification and Holineſs when moſt perfect cannot juſtifie us before God; but it will evidence our Juſtification before Men, and be a Witneſs to our own Conſciences that we are accepted in the Beloved.

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification.

In this one Verſe we have an Abridgment of the whole Goſpel. The Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt declared, and the Benefit and Advantages of both aſſigned. 1. For his Death; *he was delivered for our Offences. Here Note*, 1. The Perſon delivered; He, that is, Chriſt Jeſus the Righteous; the Lord our Righteouſneſs. *Note*, 2. The Perſons delivering, not expreſſed but neceſſarily implied and underſtood. *Judas* delivered him, the *Jews* delivered him, God the Father delivered him; and Chriſt himſelf delivered himſelf. All theſe did one and the ſame Act, but not for one and the ſame End: *Judas* delivered him for Gain, the *Jews* for Envy, the Father delivered him out of Love, and Chriſt delivered himſelf in great Compaſſion to a loſt World. *Note*, 3. Unto what he was delivered, namely, unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. This in God was an Act of higheſt Juſtice, in Chriſt an Act of wonderful Obedience, in the *Jews* an Act of the higheſt Wickedneſs. *Note*, 4. For whom, and for what he was delivered; for us and *for our Offences*: It notes the Vicegerency of his Sufferings, not barely for our Good as the final Cauſe, and for our Sins as the meritorious Cauſe; but for us, in our Room, Place and Stead, dying under an imputation of Guilt, and dying as the ſacrificed Beaſt for the expiation of that Guilt: The Original Word here for Offences, ſignifies great Falls, grievous Offences, and heinous Crimes. This ſacrificed Lamb was delivered and dyed to expiate the Guilt of great Sins, and to make Attonement for the greateſt Sinners. *Note*, 5. It is here ſaid, that Chriſt *was delivered* rather than died *for our Offences*, to lead us to the Conſideration of the firſt Cauſe of his Suffering for us; namely, the determinate Counſel of God, purſuant to which there was a Conceſſion or Permiſſion given to wicked Inſtruments to ſhed his Blood; his own Father delivering him up to Death for Offences. *Learn hence*, That our Sins were not the only occaſions, but the moving and impulſive Cauſe of Chriſt's Sufferings: He died as a Sacrifice to attone an offended Deity, as the Sacrifices of Old were brought to the Altar and there ſlain, ſo Chriſt ſubſtituting himſelf in our room and ſtead, was brought to the Altar of his Croſs, and there died as a Victim or expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. Thus *He was delivered for our Offences. Obſerve next*, Our Lord's Reſurrection aſſerted, *He was raiſed again*, and its End aſſigned; *for our Juſtification.* Chriſt as our Surety was under the Arreſt of Death; but having given Satisfaction by his Sufferings, our Diſcharge was publiſhed to the World by his Reſurrection, as by a dying in our ſtead he bare the Cauſe of the Law; ſo by riſing again as a common Perſon, we receive our acquital from the hand of the Judge. His Death was our Payment, his Reſurrection our Diſcharge; *He was raiſed again for our Juſtification. Learn thence*, That Chriſt's Reſurrection was the Cauſe of our Juſtification, not the meritorious Cauſe, for that was his Death and Bloodſhed, but the declarative and perfective Cauſe of our Juſtification. His Reſurrection was a Declaration of our Juſtification; the Juſtice of God thereby declaring it ſelf ſatisfied by its Priſoner beiug releaſed. His Reſurrection is alſo the perfective Cauſe of our Juſtiction. The Work of Redemption wrought us by his Death, is perfected and made effectual by his Reſurrection, This makes our Redemption compleat, which otherwiſe had been partial and imperfect; nay, none at all! 'Tis upon Chriſt as raiſed, that our Faith muſt be ſettled: Had he not been raiſed from the Dead, Faith in his Death had no Foundation, for it had been an unaccountable thing to believe in one that lay under the Power of Death. By Chriſt's Reſurrection, the Efficacy of his Death was declared to all the World; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, Chap. 8. *Who ſhall condemn us, when Chriſt hath died for us*; yea, rather is riſen again. As our Redemption was not in its Glory till Chriſt's Reſurrection, ſo neither is our Faith in its full ſtrength and vigour till it Eyes him, *who was delivered for our Offences, and raiſed again for our Juſtification.*

CHAP. V.

The Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapters aſſerted, and by many Arguments demonſtrated the Neceſſities of a Sinners Juſtification by Faith alone, in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; whom God the Father in Infinite Mercy and Compaſſion to us, ſet forth to be a Propitiation for us, delivering him to Death for our Offences, and raiſe him again for our Juſtification. *In this Chapter he declares the ſweet Fruits and Benefits, the bleſſed Effects and Advantages which flow from the foregoing Privilege, and redound to all ſuch as are in a juſtified Condition: namely, Peace with God, Perſeverance in Grace, Patience under Affliction, Joy in Tribulation, Hope of Glory,* &c. *But let us conſider them diſtinctly.*

1 **THerefore being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.**

The firſt bleſſed Effect and ſweet Fruit of our Juſtification by Faith, is Peace and Reconciliation with God. Pardon and Peace go together, and accompany one another; a Sinner being diſcharged from Guilt, and thereby from his Obnoxiouſneſs to God's Wrath, is inſtantly brought into a State of Friendſhip and Reconciliation with God, for there is no middle State betwixt his Favour and his Wrath. *Learn hence*, 1. That Peace is proclaimed in Heaven betwixt God and every juſtified Perſon whatſoever; the Enmity betwixt God and ſuch a Soul being taken away: Peace, I ſay is proclaimed in the Sinner's Conſcience: A Perſon may be in a State of Peace and yet want the Senſe of Peace. Again, There is a twofold Peace with God; one which is oppoſite to God's hatred as an Enemy; the other oppoſed to God's paternal Anger as a Father. Now the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of the former, *Being juſtified by Faith, we have peace with God*; that is, God has no more hoſtile Enmity againſt us, and will not ſatisfie his Juſtice upon us by puniſhing of us; but if we offend him we ſhall certainly fall under his Frowns and Chaſtiſements, and feel the Effects of his heavy Diſpleaſure as an angry Father: With this agrees that of the Learned and Pious Biſhop *Davenant*; *Deus abſolvit Juſtificatum ab omni pœna ſatisfactoria, ſed non ab omni pœna medicinali & caſtigatoria. Learn*, 2. That our Reconciliation with God is ſettled upon a ſure Foundation by Jeſus Chriſt; *We have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus*; that is, through him as a Mediator betwixt God and us; he made Peace by the Blood of his Croſs, *Col.* 1. 20. that is, by his Blood ſhed upon the Croſs, his meritorious Satisfaction brought us into a State of Peace and Reconciliation, and his prevailing Interceſſion keeps us in it; *Being juſtified by Faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

2 **By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

A ſecond Benefit which flows from Juſtification by Faith, is our Admiſſion to *Grace* and Favour with God: This is a Privilege beyond the former; a Traytor may be pardoned by his Prince, and yet not admitted into the preſence of his Prince; as *Abſalom*'s Crime was forgiven, but he muſt not ſee his Father's Face: But by Chriſt's Mediation every juſtified Perſon meets with Divine Acceptance, yea, he is not only brought into a State of Grace and Favour, but he *ſtands* and abides in it. No Sufferings from God, no Sufferings from Man for God's ſake, no Temptations, no Tribulations nor Perſecutions, can cauſe God to caſt him out of his Grace and Favours, having *acceſs by Faith into it*, they ſhall ſtand and abide in it. True, they may fall under their Father's Rod, but they ſhall never fall from their Father's Love; *Through Chriſt we have acceſs by Faith into his Grace wherein we ſtand.* A third Benefit follows, *We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God. Here obſerve*, 1. The happy Union and Connexion between Grace and Glory; Grace is Glory begun, and Glory is Grace conſummated; Grace is Glory in the Bud, Glory is Grace in the Fruits; Grace is the loweſt degree of Glory, and Glory the higheſt degree of Grace. Happy Soul that is partaker of the firſt Fruits of Grace, thou ſhalt e'er long reap the full Crop of Glory! *Obſerve*, 2. A juſtified Perſon has the hope of future Glory, and always may, and ſometimes can rejoice in that Hope, *We rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God*; he hopes for the Glory of God, and well he may, for 'tis purchaſed for him: 'Tis promiſed to him he has it already in the firſt Fruits and earneſt of it: It is prepared for him, and he is preparing for that; and he rejoyces in this Hope, of this Glory, believing it to be Great and Glorious, Sure and Certain, never Decaying, Everlaſting.

3 And not only *ſo*, but we glory in tribulations alſo, knowing that tribulation worketh patience. 4 And patience experience, and experience hope. 5 And hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt, which is given unto us.

Here the Apoſtle mentioned a fourth Benefit flowing from Juſtification by Faith; and that is glorying in their preſent Sufferings; he told us before, that the juſtified Perſon being at Peace with God, rejoyced in hopes of future Glory; but ſays he, this is not all, they glory in their preſent Tribulations alſo. *Here note*, 1. What ſort of Sufferings they are which the Saints glory in; they are Tribulations, that is, ſuch Tryals and Perſecution as did beſal them for the Profeſſion of the Goſpel: In theſe a Child of God may rejoyce, yea, boaſt and glory, as a Soldier doth of his Marks, Wounds and Scars received in the Wars; but not in thoſe Sufferings, Afflictions and Tryals, which we bring upon our ſelves as Puniſhments for our Sins; theſe we have no more reaſon to glory in than a corrected Child has to glory in his Whipping; *what glory is it when we are buffeted for our Faults? Note*, 2. To what a height and heroick pitch the Spirit of a juſtified Believer may be raiſed under Sufferings for Chriſt; *He may glory in Tribulation*: It is an high ſtrain of Spiritualneſs in bearing afflictions, when a Chriſtian can ſay, *I love to bear*: tho I love not that which I ſuffer, and that which I bear, yet I love to bear what I ſuffer. But it is an higher pitch than this, to ſay with the Apoſtle, *I rejoyce in my Sufferings*, Col. 1. 24. For Joy is a Degree beyond Love; yet is it a degree higher ſtill to *take pleaſure* in Reproaches and Diſtreſs for Chriſt's ſake, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. for Pleaſure is a degree beyond Joy; but *to glory in Tribulations* is beyond them all; 'tis more than to love, more than to rejoyce, more than to take Pleaſure in them. O the Power of Faith in Chriſt and Love unto him, to ſupport and uphold the Soul! yea cauſe it to glory under the ſharpeſt Sufferings and Tribulations for him! *Note*, 3. That it is not in the Tribulations themſelves that Believers glory, but in the *ſweet Iſſue, happy Fruits*, and *gracious Effects* of them, finding that by the ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit, *Tribulation worketh Patience*, that is, exerciſeth and increaſeth Patience, *and Patience* begetteth and giveth *Experience* of God's gracious Preſence with us, of his Aſſiſtance of us, and of his Faithfulneſs towards us, in, and under all our Afflictions; *and Experience* of theſe things *worketh in us Hope* of Reward. *Here obſerve*, How one Grace generates and begets another; Graces have a generation one from another, tho they all have but one generation from the Spirit of Chriſt. *Obſerve alſo*, That it is not Tribulation in its own Nature, but when ſanctified by the bleſſed Spirit, that by a happy Gradation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope. For when Affliction is not Sanctified, but meets with a ſtubborn Spirit, Lord what dreadful Effects doth it produce! Then Tribulation excites Impatience, Impatience cauſeth Perplexity, Perplexity Deſpair, and Deſpair Confuſion. *Note*, 4, The Effect and Property of the Believer's Hope, *It maketh not aſhamed*; his Hope will not make him aſhamed, neither will he be ever aſhamed of his Hope; fruſtrated Hopes fill Men with Confuſion and Shame; the juſtified Perſon ſhall not find his hopes of Glory fruſtrated but exceeded, and the reaſon is added, why the Chriſtian Hope will not deceive or ſhame him, namely, *Becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in the Heart by the Holy Ghoſt*: that is, the Holy Spirit doth in time of Tribulation teſtifie his Love to the Hearts of the People, which cauſes them to glory in Tribulation. *Learn hence*, that in a time of Affliction, eſpecially of Perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt. Good Men have a more ſenſible feeling of God's Love ſhed abroad in their Hearts by the bleſſed Spirit, both to prepare them for Tryals, and to ſupport them under them. St. *Peter* calls this a Joy unſpeakable, it has the very ſcent and taſte of Heaven in it, and there is but a gradual difference betwixt it and the Joys of Heaven; no ſooner doth the Holy Spirit ſhed forth the Love of God into the Believers Heart, by clearing up his Intereſt in the Promiſe and his Title to eternal Glory, but the Soul is prepared to rejoyce in Affliction, yea, to glory in Tribulation, and it will be as impoſſible to hinder it, as it is to hinder a Man from Satisfaction when he is moſt delighted and pleaſed; *We glory in Tribulation, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghoſt.*

6 For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died fo the ungodly.

In this Verſe, the Apoſtle ſets forth the Efficacy of Chriſt's Love towards us before Juſtification: he had a love towards us when we were Sinners, which prevailed with him to die for Sinners; *When we were yet without ſtrength, Chriſt died for the ungodly. Note here*, 1. Man's Condition by Nature deſcribed a ſtate of Enmity, (Ungodly) and a ſtate of Impotency, (without ſtrength) We were *without ſtrength*, and ſo wanted help, and ungodly and ſo refuſed help. Man is but an impotent and an obſtinate Creature; without Power to reſiſt Juſtice, and without Affection to deſire Mercy: So weak that he trembles at the appearance of a Worm, and yet ſo wicked that he lifts up his Head againſt Heaven. The State of Unregeneracy is both a State of Enmity and a State of Impotency. *Note*, 2. The way and means found out for our Recovery, the Death of Chriſt; *When we were yet without ſtrength, Chriſt died for us*: Tho' he found the whole Race of Mankind buried in the Ruins of their lapſed State, yet he did not leave them ſo, but died for them. *Note*, 3. The ſeaſonableneſs of the means interpoſed for our Recovery; it was *in due time*, that Chriſt died: That is, in the fulneſs of time appointed by God the Father, and determined in his Decree and Purpoſe. *Here we may remark*, That Chriſt came not in the beginning of Time, in the infancy and morning of the World, (tho' it was then promiſed that he ſhould come) nor yet did he ſtay till the laſt Period and End of Time, but came as it were in the middle of time, which is called *the fulneſs of time*, Gal. 4. 4. and here *due time*: Chriſt came not for our Recovery as ſoon as ever we were fallen, that Mankind might be the more ſenſible of the Sadneſs of their Condition; had we been inſtantly cured as ſoon as we complained, we ſhould neither have apprehended the danger of our Diſeaſe, nor eſteemed the kindneſs of our Phyſician; neither did he ſtay till the laſt Period and end of Time before he came, that the Faith and expectation of his Church might not be put upon too long and ſevere an Exerciſe: The Patriarchs believed in Chriſt that was to come; the Apoſtles in Chriſt that was then preſent, and Chriſtians now believe in him that long ſince did come, and is gone again: ſo that the Apoſtle might well ſay here, that *in due time Chriſt died.*

7 For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.

Here the Apoſtle amplifies, extols and magnifies the Love of Chriſt in dying for us when we were Enemies to him; by comparing his Love to us, without our Love to one another: He intimates to us, that amongſt Men, it is very rare and ſeldom known, that one Man will lay down his Life to ſave anothers; but is ſo, it muſt be for a very extraordinary Friend, for a Perſon of uncommon Goodneſs, and of eminent Worth; for, ſays he, *Scarcely for a righteous Man will one die*: As if he ſaid, ſuch a thing may be, but it is ſcarcely ever known, that a Perſon will lay down his Life for another, tho' he be a very righteous, innocent and truly honeſt Man. Perhaps for a good Man, that is, for a very kind and bountiful Benefactor: For ſome Perſon of rare Charity, and extraordinary Goodneſs, for a Man that is a publick Bleſſing and common Good to the whole Community; ſome Perſon from a ſenſe of ſtrong Obligations, would even dare to dye for ſuch a one. The Scope of the Apoſtle is this, to ſet forth the tranſcendency of Chriſt's Love in dying for the Ungodly, to ſhew that it is beyond all Humane Example, and that there can be no Reſemblance, much leſs any Parallel of it; *He loved us, and gave himſelf for us*: Had he only as an Advocate ſpake and pleaded for us, his Condeſcenſion had been admirable, and his Life unſpeakable. But to dye, yea, to dye for us, to be not only our Mediator but Redeemer, not only our Redeemer but our Ranſom: Here is Love beyond compare; Bleſſed Jeſus, was ever Love like thine!

8 But God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.

Obſerve here, How the Scripture diſtinctly repreſents the love of God in giving Chriſt to dye for us, as well as Chriſt's Love in dying for us, *God commendeth his Love*; declared, expreſſed and made manifeſt his Love to us: Chriſt's Death is often repreſented in Scripture as an Inſtance of the great Love of the Father towards us; becauſe his Wiſdom did contrive this way for our Redemption:

And he has graciouſly accepted of his Son's Sufferings in our ſtead. Verily, the giving Heaven it ſelf, with all its Joys and Glory, is not ſo full and perfect a Demonſtration of the Love of God, as the giving of his Son to dye for us, eſpecially if we conſider one endearing Circumſtance of this love of God, which *he commended towards us*, namely, that it warmed the Heart of God from all Eternity, and was never interrupted in that vaſt duration. Our Salvation by Chriſt is the Product of God's eternal Counſel, *Act.* 2. 23. that is, the Fruit of his everlaſting Love; before the World began we were in the Eyes, yea, in and upon the Heart of God. In a Word, well might the Apoſtle ſay, that *God commended his love towards us*; foraſmuch as in common eſteem, he expreſt greater Love to us than to Chriſt himſelf: For God in giving him to dye for us, declared to us, that our Salvation was more dear to him than the Life of his own Son. God repented that he made Man, but never that he gave his Son to redeem Man. *Learn hence*, That the Death of Chriſt for Sinners is an evident Demonſtration of the Love of God the Father, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Chriſt died for us.*

9 Much more then, being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him. 10 For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, he that loved us when we were Enemies, will not damn us now we are his Children. He that reconciled us to himſelf, by his Son's Death, that is, for the ſake of his Son's Sufferings and Satiſfaction, will certainly ſave us from Wrath to come by his Life, or for the ſake of his prevailing Interceſſion: *If when Enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. Here Note*, That this Word (*if*) is not a Word doubting, but of Argumentation. The Apoſtle ſuppoſes it a known Truth, or a Principle yielded by all Chriſtians, that the Death of Chriſt was to Reconcile Sinners unto God. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt has reconciled God and us, by the Satiſfaction which his Death has made to the Juſtice of God for our Sins, and Reparation being made, the Enmity ceaſes on God's part, if the Terms of Reconciliation be accepted on our part. Our Reconciliation with God, when Enemies are thus affected; 1. By the Sacrifice of the Death of Chriſt, which was the price that purchaſed it. 2. By the Application of that Benefit to us through Faith: And, 3. By Chriſt's potent and eternal Interceſſion, whereby our State of Reconciliation is confirmed, and all future Breaches prevented: For if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate, even Chriſt the Righteous. 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. We dare not ſay, that God could not have Reconciled us any other way but this; but we may ſafely ſay, that no way like this was ſo expreſſive of his Love to us; it was the moſt obliging and endearing way imaginable to reconcile us to himſelf by the Death of his Son.

11 And not only *ſo*, but we alſo joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, and moreover we are not only Reconciled to, but we Glory and Rejoyce in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have received the Atonement or Reconciliation. *Here Note*, The Chriſtian's great Duty to rejoyce, the cauſe of that his Joy; his Reconciliation with God, *through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, through the Death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and through Faith in his Death. *Hence Learn*, That our rejoicing as to Reconciliation with God depends upon our Believing; it is none if our Faith be none, little if our Faith be little, great if our Faith be great. No Man can rejoyce in an unknown Good; let us therefore give all Diligence to clear up to our ſelves our Intereſt in this Atonement: Chriſt thought it worth his Blood to purchaſe it, ſurely then it is worth our Pains to clear it, in order to our rejoycing in it. He that ſeeks not Reconciliation with God is an Enemy to his Soul; and he that rejoyces not in that Reconciliation is an Enemy to his own Comfort.

12 Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.

The Doctrine of Original Sin is not more difficult to be underſtood than it is neceſſary to be know; the Apoſtle here declares the manner how Sin and Death entred the World, namely, by the Fall of *Adam* the firſt Man: *By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin. Note here*, 1. An unhappy Parent; namely, *Adam*: By him Sin entred the World. 2. An unhappy Poſterity, namely, the whole World, proceeding from, and coming out of the Loyns of *Adam in whom all have ſinned*. 3. An unhappy Portion; Sin and Death: Sin entred by *Adam*, and Death entered by Sin. This was the Legacy which *Adam* left to all his Poſterity; now the ſad and mournful Truth, which this Scripture contains, is this: That our firſt Parent by his Tranſgreſſion hath intailed a miſerable Inheritance, an unhappy Portion of Sin and Death upon all his Poſterity. *Adam's Sins* becomes ours. 1. By meritorious Imputation; God treated with him not as a private Perſon, but as *caput gentis*, as the Root and Parent of all Mankind. Hence a compariſon is often made between the firſt and ſecond *Adam*; the Grace of the one, with the Sin of the other, the Life conveyed by the one, and the Death tranſmitted by the other. By *Adam* we were caſt, by Chriſt we were cleared; Curſed in *Adam*, Crowned in Chriſt: Now this Compariſon would be wholly inſignificant, if *Adam* had not been looked upon as the Repreſentative of us all. 2. The Sin of *Adam* is derived to us by way of inheſion: We have received from him a depravity of Nature, an evil Diſpoſition, a propenſion to all Miſchief, an averſion to all Good. The Sin of *Adam* tranſmitted to us, doth not only caſt Guilt upon our Perſons, but Filth upon our Natures, not only lays a Charge to us, but throws a Stain upon us. 3. We make *Adam's* Sin our own by Imitation, by treading in the ſteps of his Diſobedience. Every Sin we commit in defiance of the Threatnings of God, is a juſtifying of *Adam's* Rebellion againſt God, and accordingly we dye by our own Folly as well as by his Fall; our Deſtruction is of our ſelves by our actual Rebellions, and we ſhall at the great Day charge our Sin and Miſery upon our ſelves, not on God, not on Satan: not on Inſtruments, not on our firſt Parents.

13 For until the law ſin was in the world: but ſin is not imputed when there is no law.

The Apoſtle having aſſerted the Doctrine of Original Sin in the former Verſe, he proſecutes and purſues it in this and the following Verſes; aſſerting that is evident all have ſinned, becauſe Sin was always in the World: not only after the Law was given by *Moſes*, but alſo before, even from the beginning of the World to that time. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, there was certainly a Law given before there was a Law written, a Law given to *Adam*, before a Law written by *Moſes*; now this Law was either the Law of Nature written in *Adam's* Heart, or the poſitive Law of God given to *Adam*, againſt which Law Men were capable of offending before the Law of *Moſes* was written; otherwiſe Sin would not have been imputed to them, for Sin is not imputed where there is no Law. *Learn hence*, That God having created Man a Rational Creature, capable of Moral Government, is by immediate reſultancy his King and Governour, and has ruled him from the beginning by a Law, yet not barely by a Law, but by Covenant with Promiſes and Threatnings annext, rewarding him for his Obedience, and puniſhing him for his Rebellions.

14 Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adams tranſgreſſion

The Apoſtle had aſſerted, that Sin was in the World before the written Law of *Moſes*; here he proves it thus; Death, the Wages of Sin, did reign in the World, and had power over all Mankind from *Adam* to *Moſes*; therefore Sin was in the World from *Adam* to *Moſes*: By *them that have not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's Tranſgreſſion*, Infants are generally underſtood; the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin is imputed to them, elſe Death could have no Power over them. The Argument runs thus; Death is a puniſhment of Sin, but Infants die who never ſinned actually, therefore they died for *Adam's* Sin: Sin brought Mortality into their Nature, and the Wages of Sin is Death; they brought a ſinful Nature into the World with them, which God gave the *Jews* of Old an Intimation of, by appointing the Sacrament of Circumciſion, ſignifying that Infants brought ſomething into the World with them which was early to be cut off; he alſo ſignifies the ſame to us Chriſtians, by appointing the Ordinance of Baptiſm for Children, which he calls the Laver of Regeneration: Now a Laver ſuppoſes Uncleanneſs; what is pure needs no Laver. *Learn hence*, That Infants as ſoon as they live, have in them the Seeds of Death: Sin is the Seed of Death, the Principle of Corruption. God doth Infants no wrong when they die, their death is of themſelves, for they have the Seeds of Death in themſelves. All Death is the Wages of *Sin*, and therefore can be no injuſtice to the Sinner; thus *Death reigned from Adam to Moſes*, yea even to this day, and like an inſatiable Tyrant will continue to reign and ſlay univerſally and beyond number, from the Infant to the Aged, from the Dunghil to the Throne, ſparing neither Age nor Sex, neither great nor ſmall, neither ſacred nor prophane.

14 Adam——who is the figure of him that was to come.

From hence to the end of the Chapter, the Apoſtle enters upon a Compariſon betwixt *Adam* and Chriſt, whom he here calls a Figure, or Reſemblance of him that was to come, that is, of Chriſt. As *Adam* was the Root of Sin and Death to all his natural Seed, ſo Chriſt is the Root of Holineſs, and Life to all his ſpiritual Seed. As by the firſt *Adam*, *Sin*, and by *Sin* Death came over all Men, ſo by the ſecond *Adam* came Righteouſneſs, and by Righteouſneſs Life on all Believers. As the firſt *Adam* merited Death, ſo the ſecond *Adam* Life for all his Off-ſpring: *Thus Adam was the figure of him that was to come.*

15 But not as the offence, ſo alſo *is* the free gift. For if through the offence on one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jeſus Chriſt, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as *it was* by one that ſinned, *ſo is* the gift; for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation; but the free gift *is* of many offences unto juſtification. 17 For if by one mans offence, death reigned by one: much more they which receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.

The Apoſtle having noted the Parity and Reſemblance between Chriſt and *Adam* in the foregoing Verſes: Here he obſerves the Diſparity and Difference betwixt them, and that in ſeveral advantagious Particulars. 1. He compares the Sin of *Adam* with the Obedience of Chriſt, and ſhews, that the Sin of the one was not ſo pernicious, as the Obedience of the other was beneficial; Chriſt's Obedience being more powerful to Juſtification and Salvation than *Adam's Sin* was to Death and Condemnation; for if the Tranſgreſſion of *Adam*, who was but a meer Man, was able to pull down Death and Wrath upon all his natural Seed: Then the Obedience of Chriſt, who is God as well as Man, will be much more available to procure Pardon and Life for all his ſpiritual Seed. 2. There is a further obſervable Difference betwixt *Adam* and Chriſt, as in reſpect of their Perſons, ſo in reſpect of their Acts, and extent of their Acts. Thus *Adam* by one Act of *Sin* brought Death; that is, the Sentence of Death upon the whole World; (all Mankind becoming ſubject to Mortality for that one Sin of his) But it is many Sins of many Men, which Chriſt doth deliver from in the free Gift of our Juſtification; abſolving us, not only from that one Fault, but from all other Faults and Offences whatſoever. *Learn thence*, That the Obedience of Chriſt extends it ſelf not only to the Pardon of Original *Sin* in *Adam*, but to all Perſonal and Actual Sins whatſoever. 3. The Apoſtle ſhews the difference betwixt them two; that is, the firſt and ſecond *Adam*, as in reſpect of the Effects and Conſequences of their Acts; if by Means of one Man, and by one Offence of that Man the whole Race of Mankind became ſubject to Death, then much more ſhall they who are redeemed and juſtified by Jeſus Chriſt, be made partakers of Everlaſting Life, wherein they ſhall reign with him in Glory. *From the whole Note*, The infinite Wiſdom, tranſcendant Grace, and rich Mercy of Grace to a miſerable World, in providing a Salve as large as the Sore, a Remedy as extenſive as the Malady, a Sovereign Antidote in the Blood of the ſecond *Adam*, to expel the Poyſon and Malignity of the *Sin* of the firſt *Adam*. O happy they! who having received from the firſt *Adam* Corruption for Corruption, have received from the ſecond *Adam* Grace for Grace.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation: even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto juſtification of life. 19 For as by one mans diſobedience many were made ſinners: ſo by the obedience of one, ſhall be many made righteous.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle informs us of a Truth, which all the Writings of *Philoſophers* never acquainted us with, namely, the meritorious Imputation of *Adam*'s Sin to all his Poſterity: That all Mankind ſinned in *Adam*, and became obnoxious to Death, and all other Calamities and Miſeries as a puniſhment for his *Sin*, yea, the Writings of *Moſes* himſelf, tho' they declare to us the Sin of *Adam*, and that his *Sin* was puniſhed with Death; yet that by his Diſobedience all his Race and Poſterity were involved, and became miſerable, is a Truth which we are peculiarly beholden to the Goſpel, and particularly to this Text and Context, for the more full diſcovery of. And the Account of that Matter ſeems to ſtand thus: The Rebellion of the firſt Man againſt the great Creator, was a *Sin* of Univerſal Efficacy, that derives a Guilt and Stain to Mankind in all Ages of the World. And the Account which the Scripture gives of it, is grounded on the Relation which we have to *Adam* as being the Natural and Moral Principle of all Mankind: As the whole Race of Mankind was virtually in *Adam*'s Loyns, ſo it was preſumed to give virtual Conſent to what he did: When he broke, all his Poſterity became Bankrupts; there being a Conſpiracy of all the Sons of *Adam* in that Rebellion, and not one Subject left in his Obedience. Add to this, that *Adam* is to be conſidered as the Moral as well as the Natural Principle of Mankind. In the firſt Covenant made betwixt God and him, *Adam* was conſidered, not as a ſingle Perſon, but as a *Caput Gentis*, and contracted not for himſelf only, but for all his Deſcendants by ordinary Generation: His Perſon was the Root and Fountain of theirs, and his Will the Repreſentative of theirs: From hence his numerous Iſſue became a Party in the Covenant, and had a Title to the Benefits contained in it upon his Obedience, and was liable to the Curſe upon his Violation of it: Upon this Ground it is, that the Apoſtle here in this Text and Context inſtitutes a Parallel betwixt *Adam* and Chriſt; *That as by the diſobedience of the former, many were made ſinners*; *ſo by the obedience of* the latter, *many were made Righteous.* As Chriſt in his Death did not ſuffer as a private Perſon, but as a *Surety* and *Sponſor* repreſenting the whole Church; in like manner *Adam* in his Diſobedience was eſteemed a publick Perſon, repreſenting the whole Race of Mankind: And by a juſt Law it was not reſtrained to himſelf, but is the *Sin* of the common Nature.

But Adored, for ever Adored, be the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Almighty God, in providing a Remedy which bears proportion to the cauſe of our Ruine, that as we fell in *Adam* our Repreſentative, ſo we are raiſed by Chriſt the Head of our Recovery, which two Perſons are conſidered as Cauſes of contrary Effects; the Effects are Sin and Righteouſneſs, Condemnation and Juſtification: For as the Diſobedience of the firſt *Adam*, is meritoriouſly imputed to all his Natural Poſterity, and brings Death upon all; ſo the Righteouſneſneſs of the ſecond *Adam*, is meritoriouſly imputed to all his Spiritual Progeny, to obtain Life for them: As the Carnal *Adam* having loſt Original Righteouſneſs derives a corrupt Nature to all that deſcend from him: So the Spiritual *Adam*, having by his Obedience purchaſed Grace for us, conveys a vital Efficacy unto us. The ſame Spirit of Holineſs which anointed our Redeemer, doth quicken all his Race, that as they have born the Image of the Earthly, they may bear the Image of the Heavenly *Adam*.

20 Moreover, the law entred, that the offence might abound. But where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound. 21 That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The Law entred that ſin might abound: That is, before the Law was written, we became Obnoxious to Death by one Man's Diſobedience, without much ſenſe of it; but after the Law was given by *Moſes*, *Sin* did more clearly and conſpicuouſly appear to be *Sin*: Its Odiouſneſs and Uglineſs was more manifeſt to the Conſcience of the Sinner; as the Sinner has abounded in *Sin*, in a way of Commiſſion, ſo *Sin* doth by the diſcovery of the Law abound in the *Sinners* Apprehenſion, in the ſight and ſenſe of it upon the Conſcience of the *Sinner*. Nevertheleſs, *As Sin abound, Grace doth much more abound.* As the exceeding ſinfulneſs of *Sin* is manifeſted by the Law, ſo the ſuper-abounding Grace and pardoning Mercy of God is rendered Glorioully Conſpicuous in and by the Goſpel. That as the Power of *Sin* appeared in making us liable to temporal and eternal Death; ſo might the Power of Grace appear in beginning in us a ſpiritual Life here; and bringing us to an Eternal Life in Glory hereafter. In ſhort, when the Apoſtle ſays, *That the Law entred that Sin might abound*, he doth not mean to make it abound, by encouraging the *Sinner* to the Commiſſion of it, but by impreſſing the Conviction of it upon the Conſcience of the *Sinner:* A Man without the Law, looks upon himſelf as a ſmall *Sinner*; but after he has viewed his *Sins* in the Glaſs of the Law, he ſees himſelf a great and mountainous *Sinner:* As a Star which a Child thinks to be no bigger than a ſpark; but a Man that views it through an Inſtrument, computes it to be bigger than the Globe of the Earth, Lord! Help us to ſee our *Sins* in the Glaſs of thy Law: Yea in the Glaſs of thy Son's Blood, and then we ſhall be ſenſible what an infinite and immenſe Evil *Sin* is; namely, the *Stain* and *Blemiſh* of our Natures, the Diſeaſe and Deformity of our Minds; the higheſt Infelicity of the Creature, and the boldeſt Affront that can be given to the Majeſty of the Great and Glorious God. *Learn from the whole*, That the Riches, the abounding Riches, the ſuper-abounding Riches of God's pardoning Grace, are manifeſted in the Remiſſion of our *Sins*, and in the Juſtification of our Perſons: *As Sin abounded, Grace doth much more abound.* Now the ſuper-abounding Riches of pardoning Grace do thus ſhine forth. 1. In the Nature of the Mercy, which is the richeſt and ſweeteſt of all Mercies. No Mercy ſweeter than a Pardon to a condemned *Sinner*, no Pardon like God's Pardon to a *Sinner* condemned at his Bar. 2. In the peculiarity of the Mercy; Remiſſion is not a common but a crowning Favour; it never was, never ſhall be extended to the fallen Angels: And it is to be feared that the far greater part of Mankind refuſe the Terms and Conditions, upon which pardoning Grace and Mercy is offered and tendered to them. 3. In the Method in which pardoning Mercy is diſpenſed, namely, through the Blood of Chriſt, that All-ſufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction; by which Method, God *has more commended his love to us*, than if he had pardoned us without a Satisfaction: for then he had only diſplayed his Mercy, but now he has declared his Juſtice, yea cauſed Mercy and Juſtice to meet and kiſs each other, to meet and triumph together. 4. The Super abounding Riches of pardoning Mercy appear in the Latitude and Extent of that Act of Grace. Lord, who can underſtand his Errors, yet the Blood of thy Son cleanſeth from all *Sin*, ſmall and great, ſecret and open, old and new, original and actual; all pardoned without Exception. O how well might the *Pſalmiſt* ſay, *With the Lord there is Mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption*, Pſal. 130. *Laſtly*, The Riches of pardoning Grace do ſhine forth as in the Peculiarity, ſo in the Perpetuity of Remiſſion. As Grace pardons all *Sin* without Exception, ſo the Pardons it beſtows are without Revocation: The pardoned Soul ſhall never come into Condemnation; *As far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, ſo far hath he removed our Tranſgreſſions from us*, Pſal. 103. 10. As the Eaſt and Weſt are the two oppoſite Points of Heaven, which can never come together: So neither ſhall the pardoned *Sinner*, and his *Sins*, ever meet any more, God is ſaid *to caſt them behind his back*; that is, he will never behold them more, ſo as to charge them upon the pardoned *Sinner*, in order to his Condemnation. May our Faith then, both in Life and Death, triumph in the Aſſurance of this bleſſed Truth; *That where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound, and as Sin hath reigned unto death, even ſo hath Grace reigned through righteouſneſs unto eternal Life, by Jeſu Chriſt our Lord*, who lives for ever in Heaven, to apply by his prevailing Interceſſion, what he impetrated and obtained for us here on Earth by his meritorious Satisfaction. To this Jeſus, who is the faithful Witneſs, and the firſt begotten of the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, who hath loved us and waſhed us from our *Sins* in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God: To whom be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is, to ſhew that the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, which he had ſo ſtrenuouſly aſſerted in the foregoing Chapters, is ſo far from being a Doctrine leading to Licentiouſneſs, that it greatly tendeth to promote Holineſs; and obligeth all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity to the greateſt ſtrictneſs in Converſation, anſwerable to the Dignity and Obligations of their Chriſtian Name.

1 WHat ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin,
that grace may abound: 2 God forbid: How
ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein?

The Apoſtle begins this Chapter with an Objection which ſome licentious Perſons might be ready to make againſt what he had delivered in the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter; namely, that where *Sin* abounded, pardoning Grace and Mercy did much more abound. If, ſay they, the Riches of Grace be thus manifeſted in the pardon of *Sin*, let us then take the more liberty to *Sin*, becauſe Grace ſo exceedingly abounds in the Pardon of it. The Apoſtle rejects ſuch an Inference with the greateſt Deteſtation and Abhorrence, ſaying, God forbid, *&c.* As if he had ſaid, O vile abuſe of the moſt excellent thing in the World; What, did Chriſt ſhed his Blood to expiate our Guilt? and ſhall we make that a Plea to extenuate our Guilt? God forbid! ſurely there is forgiveneſs with God, that he may be feared, not that he may be the more abuſed. *In the Words Obſerve*, 1. An Objection ſuppoſed, as if the Doctrine of the Goſpel did countenance Licentiouſneſs, and encourage any to *Sin*, or to continue in *Sin*. 2. Obſerve with what Abhorrency and Indignation, ſuch a Doctrine and Propoſition is rejected by our Apoſtle. What, ſhall we continue in *Sin* becauſe pardoning Mercy doth abound? God forbid, that ſuch a direct Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Doctrine of our Saviour ſhould be maintained by any Profeſſor. *Obſerve*, 3. The Confutation which he gives of this bold and impudent Aſſertion; *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein.* Dead to Sin, that is, by our Baptiſmal Engagement, Vow, and Obligation; every Chriſtian at his firſt entrance upon the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity does take upon himſelf a Vow of ſolemn Obligation to die to *Sin*, and to live no longer therein. *From the whole Learn*, That to take any Encouragement to live in *Sin* from the Conſideration of God's rich Mercy and free Grace towards Sinners, is an abſurd, abominable, and Blaſphemous Impiety, contrary to all Ingenuity, Gratitude, and Love, both to God the Father and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt his Son.

3 Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death?

To be baptized into Chriſt, is by Baptiſm to take the name of Chriſt upon us, to be incorporated, ingrafted, and implanted into the Church of Chriſt, being made viſible Members of his Myſtical Body by Baptiſm; *To be baptized into Chriſt's Death*, imports our being conformed to him in the likeneſs of his Death: Our being engaged to die unto *Sin*, as Chriſt died for *Sin*. *Learn hence*, That the Death of Chriſt was a lively Repreſentation of the Death of *Sin*; and Believers are to imitate his Death in their dying daily unto Sin. Did Chriſt die for us a painful, ſhameful, and accurſed Death, ſuch a Death muſt *Sin* die in us; was his Death for *Sin* free and voluntary, ſo muſt we die to *Sin:* was his Death an univerſal Crucifixion, did no Life, Senſe, or Motion remain with him, Thus muſt we imitate the Likeneſs of his Death, by an univerſal Mortification of every known *Sin*, which occaſioned his dying. In a word, Did Chriſt die and riſe again, never to die more, ſo muſt we die unto *Sin*, and and walk in Newneſs of Life; How ſhall we that are dead unto *Sin* live any longer therein. Thus it appears the indiſpenſable Duty of all Chriſtians, to tranſcribe the Copy of Chriſt's Death in their Hearts and Lives.

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death: that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.

To urge Chriſtians to farther Meaſures and Degrees of Mortification of Sin and living unto Holineſs, the Apoſtle uſes here a double Argument, one from our Baptiſm, the other from the Reſurrection of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, 1. The Argument to move us to die unto Sin, drawn from our Baptiſm; *We are buried with him by Baptiſm unto Death.* The Apoſtle alludes, no doubt, to the ancient manner and ways of Baptizing Perſons in thoſe hot Countries, which was by Immerſion, or putting them under Water for a time, and then raiſing them up again out of the Water; which Rite had alſo a myſtical Signification, repreſenting the Burial of our Old Man *Sin* in us, and our Reſurrection to the Newneſs of Life. *Learn hence*, That the Ordinance of Baptiſm lays every baptized Perſon under the ſtrongeſt Engagements and higheſt Obligations to die unto Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life. The Metaphors of burying and riſing again, do imply and intimate thus much: Burial implies a continuing under Death; thus is Mortification a continued Act, a daily dying unto Sin: and riſing again ſuppoſes a Perſon never more to be under the power of Death. *Obſ.* 2. Another forcible Argument to encourage us to die to Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life, is drawn from the Reſurrection of Chriſt; *As he was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, ſo ſhould we alſo walk in newneſs of life. Here note*, 1. The Propoſal of a Pattern and Exemplar to us; *Chriſt was raiſed from the dead*: 2. The Author and efficient Cauſe of Chriſt's Reſurrection; *he was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father*: that is, by the glorious Power of the Father; yet not without his own Power as God: So Chriſt told the *Jews*, *Joh.* 2. *Deſtroy this Temple* of my Body, *and in three days I will raiſe it up again. Note*, 3. The Conformity or Similitude on our part; as Chriſt aroſe, ſo ſhould we ariſe out of the Grave of Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt's Reſurrection is a powerful Motive, and lays a Chriſtian under ſtrong Obligations and Engagements to ariſe from Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life. Chriſt's Reſurrection is both a Pattern and a Pledge of our Reſurrection; a Pattern after which we are to Conform in our riſing from the Grave of Sin: Did Chriſt riſe early and ſpeedily, ſo ſhould we; he roſe early in the Morning of the Day, we in the Morning of our Youth: He roſe voluntarily and chearfully, ſo ſhould we, rejoycing at our ſpiritual Liberty, and freedom from Sins, Bondage, and Thraldom: He roſe with a Reſolution never to die more; ſo we ariſe with Deſires and Endeavours that ſpiritual Death may never more have Dominion over us. And if Chriſt's Reſurrection be thus a Pattern of our Reſurrection now, it will be a Pledge of a bleſſed Reſurrection at the laſt day. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Duty which every Baptized Perſon lies under an obligation to perform, in conformity to Chriſt, into whoſe Death they are Baptized; and that is, *to walk in newneſs of Life. Where Note*, for our Encouragement, the Account which the Scripture gives of the Properties of the new Life, which ſuch as are buried and riſen with Chriſt, do aſſuredly live: And here we find it is the moſt Noble Life, the moſt delectable Life, the moſt profitable Life, the moſt Holy and Heavenly Life; Holy in its Principle and Motive, Holy in its Aim and End, Holy in its Rule and Actings: In a word, Newneſs of life is a Preparation for, and an Introduction into Eternal Life, and muſt needs be the moſt excellent Life; for it is a Life from God, it is a Life laid out for God, yea it is the Life which God himſelf lives; and none muſt expect to live with him in Heaven hereafter, that do not walk in Newneſs of life here; but if we have our Fruit unto Holineſs, our End will be Everlaſting Life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death: we ſhall be alſo *in the likeneſs* of *his* Reſurrection.

Obſerve here, 1. A Suppoſition, *If we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death*; namely, by dying unto Sin: If as Chriſt died, we die, he a Natural, we a Spiritual Death; he for *Sin*, and we to *Sin*; he by way of Expiation, ſuffering and ſatisfying for Sin, we by way of Mortification, killing and crucifying of Sin. *Learn thence*, That all Baptized Perſons ought to labour for, and endeavour after a Conformity to the Death of Chriſt, in their dying daily unto Sin. As he died a painful and ſhameful Death for us, ſuch a Death ſhould Sin die in us; living a dying Life, and dying a lingering, but a certain Death. *Obſerve*, 2. The Apoſtle's Inference drawn from the foregoing Suppoſition, *If planted together in the likeneſs of his Death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his Reſurrection*; that is, we are under an Obligation to imitate his Reſurrection, by riſing from the Death of Sin unto Newneſs of Life. Did he riſe early out of his natural Grave? ſo muſt we out of our Spiritual. Did he ariſe to a new Life? ſo muſt we ariſe and walk in Newneſs of Life. Did he ariſe never to die more? ſo muſt we that are dead to Sin live no longer therein. *Obſerve*, 3. How the Power enabling us thus to die unto Sin, and to live unto Holineſs, is derived from Chriſt by vertue of our Implantation into him by Faith, *If we have been planted together*, &c. As the Graft liveth, groweth and fructifieth by the Juice drawn from the Stock, into which it is planted; ſo Chriſtians being taken out of the old rotten Stock (Degenerate *Adam*) and planted into the noble Stock (Chriſt Jeſus) are by a Vertue derived from him, raiſed to Newneſs of Life, into whom they are ingrafted. *Learn hence*, That we experience the Power of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection, in enabling us to die to Sin, and live unto God, only by vertue of a real Implantation into Chriſt, by an operative and lively Faith. *If we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his Death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his Reſurrection.*

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.

By the Old-man we are to underſtand, our corrupt and depraved Nature, ſo called becauſe it is as old as *Adam*, and derived from *Adam*; born and bred with us. This Old-man, or our corrupt and vicious Nature, muſt be Crucified, to ſhew our Conformity and Likeneſs to Chriſt in his Crucifixion. The Croſs bringeth Pain, Shame, and Death; the like muſt Sin undergo in the work of Mortification. By the *Body of Sin* we are to underſtand the whole Stock and Maſs of Corruption, compacted as it were, into one monſtrous Body, prepared with all its Members to commit actual Sins. Called a *Body*, becauſe compoſed of many ſinful Paſſions and Luſts, as the Body is of many Members, and alſo becauſe they are executed by the Body. And farther, becauſe Sin has as real a Subſiſtence in us, as if it were a Body; not that Sin is a Subſtance, but the pravity of a Subſtance. Now this Body of Sin muſt *be deſtroyed*, not as to Actions only, but as to Affections and Inclinations alſo; 'tis not enough that we ſcratch this Old-man's Face, but muſt ſtab his Heart, in Deſire, in Purpoſe, in Endeavours: we muſt ſeek the Death and Deſtruction of all Sin. *That henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin*; That is, from henceforward we ſhould renounce the Service of, and all Relation to Sin. *Where Note*, 1. That before Regeneration, we are all Servants of, yea Slaves to Sin: ſo many Luſts, ſo many Lords reigning in us, and tyrannizing over us. *Note*, 2. That it is one thing to Sin, and another thing to ſerve Sin: To ſerve Sin, is to yield willing Obedience, to indulge our ſelves in any preſumptuous Affair or Courſe of Sin. 'Tis not the Preſence, but Prevalency of Sin, that deſtroys and damns the Sinner; 'tis not the Fleſh being in us, but our being in the Fleſh, that diſpleaſeth God. Oh! Happy for us, if Sins Dominion be taken away, tho' its Life be prolonged for a ſeaſon.

7 For he that is dead, is freed from ſin. 8 Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.

He that is dead; That is, ſpiritually dead unto Sin, in Conformity to the Death of Chriſt, he *is freed from Sin*; that is, not only from the Guilt, but from the Dominion and Slavery of Sin. *Learn hence*, That Freedom from the Bondage and Tyranny, from the Dominion and Slavery of Sin, is the Privilege of all thoſe that are crucified with Chriſt, and dead to Sin. Freedom from Sin conſiſts in two things: 1. In diſpoſſeſſing the Soul of every evil Habit and Diſpoſition. 2. In renouncing a ſinful courſe of Life and Converſation. If *Sin* be weakned in the Heart, the Fruit of that will appear in the Life: the ſtrength of *Sin* lies in the love of *Sin*; if that be broken, the Power of *Sin* is ſhaken.

8-----Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.

Obſerve here, 1. A Suppoſition, or preſuppoſed Condition; the thing ſuppoſed, is the Baptized Perſons being dead with Chriſt: *If we be dead with him*, that is, by the exerciſe of daily Mortification: If we have Fellowſhip and Communion with him in his Death, that as he died for *Sin*, we daily die unto *Sin*. Then followeth, 2. The Inference or Concluſion. *We ſhall alſo live with him*; that is, We that have had Fellowſhip with him in his Death, ſhall have Communion with him in his Reſurrection: we ſhall live with him a Life of Grace and Glory, of Regeneration and Glorification, the one to Newneſs of Life, the other to everlaſting Life. *Hence learn*, That all thoſe that are dead with Chriſt, have no reaſon to doubt but that they ſhall alſo live with him. But who are the Perſons that may be ſaid to be dead with Chriſt? *Anſw.* 1. All ſuch as own the Obligation which their Baptiſmal Vow and Chriſtian Profeſſion puts upon them, and ſolemnly lays them under; namely, to keep the whole Goſpel, even as they who were circumciſed were obliged to keep the whole Law. 2. Such as make Conſcience of it, daily endeavour to perform it, and obtain the ſucceſs of their Endeavours in ſuch a degree, that the rein of *Sin* is broken, though *Sin* it ſelf be not totally deſtroyed. Theſe may be ſaid to be dead and crucified with Chriſt, having by the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit, in ſome meaſure, crucified the Fleſh with its inordinate Affections and Luſts; and as they here live with him, ſo they ſhall alſo live with him. *Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.*

9 Knowing that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto ſin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Here the Apoſtle declares both the Death which Chriſt once died, and the Life which now he liveth. *Obſerve*, 1. The Death which Chriſt died, *He died unto Sin once*; that is, Either 1. He died for Sin once, namely, to expiate the Guilt of Sin, and to make Attonment for Sinners; or elſe, 2. He died unto Sin; that is, to deſtroy, to conquer, and ſubdue Sin in the Hearts and Lives of his Children and People, by the Aids and Aſſiſtances of his Holy Spirit. *Obſerve*, 2. The Life which Chriſt now lives after his Reſurrection; He liveth unto God, and dieth no more. *Here Note*, 1. The Perpetuity and Immortality of his Life, *he dieth no more*. Chriſt has done his Work, in taking away the Guilt and Power of Sin; let us look to it, that we do ours. *Note*, 2. The Perfection and Bleſſedneſs of his Life, *he liveth unto God*, or liveth for ever with God; by which Phraſe is expreſt that eternal and indiſſoluble Union which the Son hath with the Father; he is one with him, and lives for ever in the Enjoyment of him. *Learn hence*, That the due Conſideration of Chriſt's Reſurrection from the Dead, will mightily promote the ſpiritual Life in us. This it doth theſe three ways, 1. As it evidences the Truth and Verity of the Chriſtian Religion, That Chriſt was no Impoſtor or Deceiver. In the Judgment of the World, Chriſt died as a Malefactor; but God juſtified him, acquitted, and freed him from that Imputation, by raiſing him from the Dead. 2. Chriſt's Reſurrection ſhews the Perfection of his Sacrifice and Satisfaction, that nothing more is needful to take away Sin; when the Surety is let out of Priſon, the Debtor may be aſſured that his Debt is paid. 3. Chriſt's ariſing is a Pledge and Aſſurance of our Reſurrection, and ſo promotes Holineſs in us, by obliging us to live as the Candidates of Heaven, as the Children of the Reſurrection, as becomes the Heirs of ſuch glorious Hopes.

11 Likewiſe reckon ye alſo your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin; but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Here we have the two parts of our Sanctification deſcribed, namely, Mortification and Vivification, dying unto Sin and living unto God. 1. Mortification, or dying unto Sin *Reckon your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin*; that is, look upon the Death of Chriſt, and your Death with Chriſt, as a ſtrong Argument againſt the Reign and Power of Sin; account your ſelves *Dead unto Sin*. Now Deadneſs argues three things: 1. Diſability. Such as are dead are diſabled for working: Proportionable to the meaſure of our Death unto Sin, will be our Diſability to fulfil the Luſts of it: Sin, in a regenerate Man, is no more able to do all its Will, than a crucified Man is able to do what he will. 1 *John* 3. 9. *He that is born of God cannot commit Sin*. Not as others do, and as he himſelf formerly has done. 2. Deadneſs to Sin argues Diſaffection towards Sin, as well as Diſability: When we die to Sin, our Love to Sin dieth. 3. Deadneſs argues Liberty and Unſubjection; he that is dead is freed from Sin, as the Woman by Death is free from her Husband, and the Chriſtian that is dead with Chriſt unto Sin, *ſtands faſt in that liberty wherewith Chriſt has made him free*. *Obſerve*, 2. The other part of our Sanctification here declared, and that is, *Living unto God*. This likewiſe conſiſts in three things: 1. In having but ſenſitive Appetites in Subjection, and under the Subjection and Dominion of Reaſon, when we are governed like Men, by Reaſon and Conſcience, not like Beaſts, by Senſe and ſenſual Inclinations. 2. In having Reaſon illuminated by Faith, guided and directed by Divine Revelation. And, 3. When this Faith inclines and enables us to live unto God, when Faith begets in us a Reſolution to obey God, and to perſevere in our Duty to him. This is to be dead unto Sin, and alive unto God. *Obſerve laſtly*, Chriſtians are ſaid to be dead unto Sin, and alive unto God, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. Which Phraſe imports, That Chriſt is the Root and Principle of our ſpiritual Life, by Faith in whom we are enabled to live unto God; as the Cyons ingrafted into the Stock, lives by the Juice and Nouriſhment it receives from the Stock: So Chriſtians are alive unto God, in, by, and through Jeſus Chriſt, receiving from him that Virtue, whereby their ſpiritual Life is begun, carried on, and maintained, and ſhall in due time be perfected and compleated. *From whence we learn*, That Chriſt is not only an Head of Authority, but an Head of Influence to his Church and Members. *He ſtrengthning them they can do all things*, but without him they can do nothing; that is, without Intereſt in him, and Influences of Grace derived from him.

12 Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof.

Obſerve here, The Duty which the Apoſtle exhorts the Chriſtian to, and that is, to prevent the Regency and Dominion of Sin; *Let not Sin reign in your mortal Bodies*. But, when is Sin ſaid to reign? *Anſw*. When the bent and tendency of the Heart is towards Sin, and all the Faculties of the Soul are on Sin's ſide, and wholly takes its part; when Sin is not oppoſed, or but ſlightly oppoſed; when Sin is committed induſtriouſly, and Temptations to Sin prevail eaſily; when Perſons ſin without any ſenſe of Sin, with ſmall remorſe and check for Sin; then Sin is in its Throne, and reigns imperiouſly. But why doth the Apoſtle ſay, Let not Sin reign in your Body, rather than in your Soul? *Anſw*. Becauſe Sin and Luſts do gratify the Body exceedingly; that is, the ſenſual Appetite, the bruitiſh part of Man; and farther, becauſe they are acted and executed by the Body or outward Man, called therefore *the Deeds of the Body*. But why doth the Apoſtle here call it *a mortal Body*? *Let not ſin reign in your mortal Body*. *Anſw*. 1. To put us in mind that the Mortality of our Bodies is the Fruit and Puniſhment of our Sins; that that Sin brought in Death upon us, our Bodies muſt die for Sin. 2. To ſhew the Vanity and Tranſitorineſs of the Delights and Pleaſures of Sin, which do gratifie a mortal Body, which after all its Pamperings muſt periſh. 3. The Apoſtle may probably call it a mortal Body, to ſhew that our Conflict with Sin ſhall endure but a little while, ere long this Mortal ſhall put on Immortality. It may encourage us to be violent in the Conflict, ere long we ſhall be victorious in the Conqueſt. *From the whole Note*, 1. That Sin is a great and mighty King, which has a regal Power over the inſlaved Sinner. Sin has the Love of an Husband, the Power of a King, and the Worſhip of God in the Sinner's Heart. Sin, as a raging and commanding King, has the Sinner's heart for its Throne, the Members of the Body for its Servants, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, for its grand Council, Luſts and Temptations for its Weapons and Armory, and its chief Fortifications are Ignorance and Senſuality, and fleſhly Reaſonings. Oh deplorable Degradation! That Man who was created God's Subject, is, by his ſhameful Apoſtacy, become the Vaſſal and Slave of Sin and Satan. *Learn*, 2. That all Baptized Perſons, who are dead with Chriſt unto Sin, are ſtrongly obliged to take Care that Sin reigns not in them, nor get any Dominion over them, by the Deſires and Intereſts of this mortal Body. And the Obligations which Chriſtianity lays upon us, not to ſuffer Sin to reign over us, are many and great: Namely, The Precepts, Promiſes, and Threatnings of the Goſpel, the Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, the Senſe of Baptiſmal and Sacramental Engagements. Happy we! if by the help of all theſe, Sin is dethroned, its Empire diſſolved, and it no longer *reigns in our mortal Bodies, that we ſhould obey it in the Luſts thereof*.

13 Neither yield ye your members *as* inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin: but yield your ſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead; and your members *as* inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Sin, which has ſuch a kingly and commanding Power, will be calling upon you to give up the Members of your Bodies, and the Faculties of your Souls, as Inſtruments or Weapons for its Service. But yield not your Conſent thereto, turn a deaf Ear to the voice of Sin, and hearken to the Call of God, who commands you to yield your ſelves unto him, and your Members as Inſtruments for his Service. *Here note*, 1. A Negative Exhortation, *Yield not your Members as Inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto Sin*. Let not Sin or Satan have an Eye, an Ear, a Tongue, a Foot, an Hand, nay not ſo much as a little Finger, devoted to their Service; how ſtrongly ſoever they may ſollicite and move for it. *Note*, 2. A poſitive Injunction, *but yield your members as inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto God*. *Learn hence*, That Chriſtians ought not to ſuffer any Members of their Body to be imployed in the ſervice of Sin, but to yield them all up unto God in Obedience to his Will: Here are two oppoſite Maſters, God and Sin; the one a Tyrant and Uſurper, the other a Rightful Lord and Maſter: And here alſo are two oppoſite Imployments, *Unrighteouſneſs*, by which is meant all *Sin*, whereby we deal unrighteouſly with God, our Neighbour and our Selves; and *Righteouſneſs*, whereby we give to God, to others and our ſelves, their Reſpective Dues. Now the Apoſtle calls loudly upon us, to render unto God the things that are God's; to yield every Member of the Body to him, and imploy it for him, for the Members of the Body were all created by him, and redeemed for him, and ſhall be Glorified with him. O let us then take heed of abuſing any Members of our Body, let us not employ ſo much as a little Finger or Hair of our Heads in the ſervice of *Sin*, for it is the Lord's; And let every one take heed of diſhonouring God with his bodily Members, leſt he provokes God to deny him the comfortable uſe of the Members of his Body: When *Jereboam* ſtretched out his hand againſt the Prophet of God, he preſently loſt the uſe of his Hand. O how ſuddenly can God wither an Hand or an Arm, that is ſtretched out to do Miſchief, 'tis a Righteous thing for God, to ſmite an abuſed Eye with Blindneſs, an abuſed Ear with Deafneſs, an abuſed Foot with Lameneſs, a Swearing or Forſwearing Tongue with Paralytick Deadneſs. Lord, how juſtly mayſt thou recal thy Favours when we fight againſt thee with them, *Yielding the Members of our bodies as Weapons of unrighteouſneſs unto Sin.*

14 For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under Grace.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes exhorted them to take care that *Sin* get not any Dominion over them by obeying its Motions, yielding to its Inclinations, and employing the Faculties of the Soul, and any of the Members of the Body in the ſervice of *Sin*. In this Verſe he gives them an encouraging Promiſe, that tho' *Sin* may rebel, yet it ſhall reign no more in a Regenerate Perſon, and that if they did pray and watch againſt it, ſtrive and contend with it, tho' it would have a Being and Exiſtence in them, yet it ſhould not have a Regency and Dominion over them; becauſe they were not under the Law, or Covenant of Works, which gave the Knowledge of *Sin*, and required exact and perfect Obedience, but gave no ſtrength to perform it: But under Grace, under a Goſpel Covenant which Adminiſters ſtrength to reſiſt *Sin*, and to overcome it: *Sin ſhall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace. Here obſerve*, 1. The Privilege of every Regenerate and Gracious Perſon; *Sin ſhall not have Dominion over them. Learn hence*, That *Sin* ſhould not and ſhall not reign over thoſe who are in a ſtate of Grace, and under the powerful Influences of the Holy Spirit of Chriſt: *De jure* it ſhould not, *de facto* it ſhall not reign. *Sin* ſhould not reign in us, or have Dominion over us. 1. Becauſe of the miſchievous Influences of it, both with reference to God, and in relation to our ſelves; it plucks the Scepter out of God's Hand, and puts it into *Satan's*: The Throne of the Heart is never empty, 'tis the Deſign of *Sin* to dethrone God, and ſet up its ſelf. And no leſs miſchievous is *Sin* to our ſelves, for its Servitude is baſe and burthenſome, painful and ſhameful, the Devil is a ſure but a ſad Paymaſter, he plagues them moſt who have done him moſt Service. 2. Becauſe of the unſuitableneſs of *Sin* to our renewed State, we are not our own but Chriſts: His by Purchaſe, His by Conqueſt, His by Covenant; now if after ſuch Engagements we ſuffer *Sin* to reign and have Dominion over us, we reſcind our Baptiſmal Vow ratified by our Perſonal Conſent. 2. The reaſon of the foregoing Privilege, why *Sin* ſhall not have Dominion over us, becauſe *we are not under the Law, but under Grace. Queſtion*, 1. But are not Believers now under the Law, tho' they live under the Goſpel? *Anſwer*, Yes, They are under the Rule and Direction of the Law, but not under the Curſe and Malediction of the Law, they are not under the Law as a Covenant of Life, but they are under it as an Eternal Rule of Living. The Law of God now binds the Believer to the Obſervation of it, as ſtrictly as it did *Adam* in Paradiſe; but upon the unwilling Violation of it he doth not incur the Curſe, Chriſt having redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, by being made a Curſe for us. *Queſt.* 2. But were not thoſe that lived under the Law of Old in a ſort under Grace as well as we? *Anſw.* Yes, they were, but not in the ſame degree; good Men then had Help and Aſſiſtance in the courſe of Holineſs and Obedience when they lived under the Law, but they had it not by the Law, but by the Goſpel, which was Preached unto them as well as unto us, *Heb*, 4. 2. This adminiſters Strength to ſubdue *Sin*, and Power to overcome it. *Learn hence*, That the Goſpel is a Manifeſtation of the Spirit, and furniſhes Believers with ſufficient Helps againſt the Power of *Sin*, and with well grounded Hopes of obtaining Victory over it. The Grace of the Goſpel gives Hopes of Victory over *Sin* ſeveral ways. 1. Becauſe it was the end of Chriſt's Death to ſlay *Sin*. 2. Becauſe of the new Nature put into us, which is to help us againſt *Sin*. 3. By aſſuring us of the Spirit's Help, which is to aſſiſt us in the mortifying and ſubduing of *Sin*; it is through the Spirit's Operation that we begin, carry on, and accompliſh the Work of Mortification. 4. Becauſe the Goſpel furniſhes us with Promiſes, and thereby gives us aſſurances of Succeſs; ſo then if from all theſe Encouragements we bid a confident Defiance unto, and make a couragious Reſiſtance againſt *Sin*, it ſhall never have a final and full Dominion over us, becauſe *we are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

15 What then? ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law, but under Grace? God forbid.

Here the Apoſtle ſtarts an Objection, which ſome Licentious Perſons might be ready to make, if we are not under the Law, which condemns *Sin*, but under the Covenant of Grace, which allows the Pardon, and promiſes the Forgiveneſs of Sin, why may we not then go on in *Sin* and continue in *Sin* forbidden by the Law, ſeeing we are not under the Law? The Apoſtle rejects ſuch a Suggeſtion with his uſual Note of Deteſtation, God forbid. *From whence we may learn*, That it is an high abuſe of the Covenant of Grace, to ſuppoſe or imagine that it countenances any Licentiouſneſs, or allows any liberty to *Sin*. The Deſign of the New Covenant is to recover from *Sin*, not to encourage any to continue in *Sin*. *Learn*, 2. That ſuch Doctrines and Inferences are to be abhorred, which from the Grace of God, in mitigating the Law, would infer an utter Abrogation of the Law, denying that it hath a directive regulating Power over a Believer. True, we are delivered from the Curſe and Condemnatory Sentence of the Law, from the Severity and rigorous Exactions of the Law; but to refuſe Obedience to the Law, under pretence of Chriſtian Liberty, to ſin becauſe we are not under the Law, but under Grace, is a turning the Grace of God into Wantonneſs, and to uſe our Chriſtian Liberty as an occaſion to the Fleſh.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your ſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs.

Two things are here intimated by the Apoſtle, 1. That all Men really are, and ought to be reputed, Servants to that Maſter whoſe Work they do, and whoſe Commands they obey: *Whom ye obey, his ſervants you are. Learn thence*, That we may infallibly know whoſe Servants we are, and what Maſter we ſerve, (Chriſt or Satan) by examining and enquiring whoſe Commands they are which we execute and obey. 2. The Apoſtle intimates. that every Perſon or Servant ſhall receive a Reward ſuitable to the Maſter he ſerves, and proportionable to the Work he does. If Satan be our Maſter, *Sin* is our Work, and Death our Wages; if we be the Servants of God, Obedience is our Work, and Eternal Life will be our Reward, *there is a Reward* for the Righteous, and Wages for the workers of Iniquity: The Devil's Drudges ſhall have full Pay, but no Content; the Wages of *Sin* is Death, there's Pay, ſuch as it is, woful Pay, a black Penny. God's Servants, tho' they do not work for Wages, yet they ſhall not work for nothing; *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous*: A Reward of Mercy, not of Merit, a Reward of Grace, not of Debt; and accordingly the Apoſtle ſays here, *His Servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or Obedience unto Righteouſneſs.* But why doth he not ſay of Obedience unto Life, as well as of *Sin* unto Death, then the Antitheſis had been more plain and full. *Anſw.* Becauſe, tho' *Sin* be the cauſe of Death, yet Obedience is not the cauſe of Life, but only the way to it: *Via ad Regnum non cauſa Regnandi.*

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the ſervants of ſin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of Doctrine which was delivered you.

We muſt not underſtand theſe Words, as if the Apoſtle bleſſed God becauſe they were once Slaves to Sin and Satan, but thanks God that the time of that Bondage was paſt and over; as if he had ſaid, God be thanked, that tho' formerly we were the Servants of *Sin*, yet ſince your Converſion you have become obedient to the Precepts of Chriſtianity, having obeyed from the Heart that form of Doctrine, or (according to the Original) being caſt into that Mould of that Doctrine, which was delivered you. *Learn hence*, That to be turned from the Service of *Sin*, to the ſincere Obedience of the Goſpel, is a Mercy that we can never be ſufficiently ſenſible of and bleſs God for. God be thanked, that altho' ye were the Servants of Sin, ye are no longer ſo. *Learn*, 2. That the Doctrine of the Goſpel has a Divine Efficacy, attending and accompanying it on the Hearts of Believers, it has a transforming Power, to change and faſhion Mens Minds into the likeneſs of it, as the Mould doth the Metal that is caſt into it: The

Doctrine of the Goſpel is the Mould, and the Heart is the Metal, which when melted and caſt into the Mould receive its Form and Figure. O happy they! who having all their Days ſet under the Diſpenſations of the Goſpel, are able at laſt to ſay, we are transformed and changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

18 Being then made free from ſin, ye become the ſervants of righteouſneſs. 19 I ſpeak after the manner of men, becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh: for as ye have yielded your members ſervants to Uncleanneſs, and to iniquity, unto iniquity, even ſo now, yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs.

Our Apoſtle goes on to put the *Romans* in mind of their paſt State by Nature, and of their preſent State by Grace; they were one the Servonts of *Sin*, but now free from *Sin*, and made by Chriſt Servants of Righteouſneſs: All Believers are made free by Chriſt for Service, not one freed from ſerving; to be free to ſerve is infinitely better than to be free from Service; ſuch as are by Chriſt freed from ſinful Servitude are beſt fitted for and moſt obliged to ſpiritual Service. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as are recovered from Sin to God ſhould ſhew the reality of their Change, by being as zealous in the ways of Holineſs as before they were earneſt in the ways of Sin; ſhall we not do as much for God as for Sin and Satan, is not he a better Maſter, his Work better Service, and his Wages a better Reward? Lord, ſhall we not with as much Zeal and Vigour ſerve thee as ever we ſerved our Luſts, thoſe imperious exacters of our Time and Strength? O had we the Faculties and Powers of Angels, yet would our Service, for thee fall infinitely ſhort of our Obligations to thee. *Obſerve next*, How the Apoſtle doth not barely urge the Neceſſity of ſerving Chriſt in our regenerate State, but does enforce the proportion which our Service now ought to bear to the Diſſervice formerly done in our Carnal State: *As you have yielded your Members Servants to Iniquity, even ſo now, yield your Member Servants to Righteouſneſs. Obſerve laſtly*, The great Dignation and gracious Condeſcenſion of Chriſt, that he ſhould accept thoſe Members of ours as Inſtruments of his Service, which have been employed in the Devil's Service. O Bleſſed Jeſus! wilt thou come into that vile Heart of mine, which was once the Seat of Satan, where he has ruled, and every unclean Luſt been harboured? O Holy Spirit! ſhall that Body be thy Temple to dwell in now, which has been ſo often defiled with Luſt and Vomit heretofore? Shall that Tongue ever praiſe him in Heaven, which has Blaſphemed him by Oaths and horrid Imprecations here on Earth? One would have expected that Chriſt ſhould rather have ſaid, Vile Wretch! Satan has had the Uſe and Service of thy Body and all its Members from thy Childhood and Youth unto this Day; thy Will has been his Throne, thy Memory his Store-houſe, and all thy Members his Tools and Inſtruments to ſin againſt me; thou didſt indeed dedicate all theſe to my Service and Glory in thy Baptiſm, but thou haſt employed all theſe in *Satan's* Service for many Years paſt; however, if now thou art willing to yield thoſe very Members unto Righteouſneſs and to Holineſs which formerly were Servants unto Uncleanneſs, I will both accept them and reward thee for them.

20 For when ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs.

That is, you were free *de facto*, not *de jure*, when you were *Sins Servants*, you were void of Righteouſneſs, that had no part of your Service then, therefore *Sin* ſhould not have one jot of your Service now; as Righteouſneſs had no part of your Service in your Carnal State, ſo there is no reaſon why *Sin* ſhould have any Service from you in your Gracious State. *Learn*, that ſuch *Sinners* as are now become Servants to God, ought to be as free from *Sin* as before they were free from Righteouſneſs, it will evidently appear ſo, if we conſider the Great and Good Maſter which we ſerve, the Nature of our preſent Work, the Certainty and Tranſcendency of our Future Reward, the Obligatious we lie under; as Creatures, as new Creatures, by the Law of Creation, by the Favour of Redemption, by the Promiſe and Hopes of Glorification; all this ſhould engage us to the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs.

21 What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the end of thoſe things *is* death.

Here the Apoſtle puts them in mind of the ſeveral Miſchiefs and Inconveniences which did attend their former vicious courſe of Life, namely, Unprofitableneſs; *What fruit had you*, Diſhonourableneſs, *whereof ye are now aſhamed*; Pernicioufneſs, *the end of thoſe things is Death*. Behold the Complexion of *Sins* Face in this Glaſs, it being for the time paſt unprofitable, for the time preſent ſhameful, for time to come deadly; moſt Men conſult their Profit, their Honour, their Pleaſure, their Safety, but *Sin* diſappoints us in them all. *Obſerve*, 1. The Unprofitableneſs of *Sin* for time paſt; *What fruit had ye then*, are ye any thing the better for it, verily not at all; that there is no ſolid Benefit, no real Profit to be got by *Sin*; thoſe *Sins* which we think to be advantageous to us, when all Accounts are caſt up, will be found to be quite otherwiſe; all the Gain of Sin will turn to Loſs at laſt. *Obſerve*, 2. The Diſhonourableneſs and Diſparagement which Sin brings along with it at preſent, *Whereof ye are now aſhamed. Learn thence*, That Sin is really matter of Shame and Bluſhing, rendring us odious to God, infamous to others, loathſome to our ſelves; it is a Diſhonour to our Natures, a Reproach to our Reaſon and Underſtanding; it doth therefore debaſe and degrade us, becauſe it pollutes and defiles us, and is a Reproach which we voluntarily bring upon our ſelves. *Obſ.* 3. The Pernicioufneſs of Sin, or the Fatal Conſequence of it: *The end of thoſe things is death*; Natural, Spiritual, and Eternal: The latter is principally meant, which conſiſts in lively Apprehenſions of the Happineſs invaluable which they have loſt, and in a quick Senſe of the Pains intolerable which they lie under, and this accompanied with deſpair of all Future Relief, now when Miſery and Deſpair meet together they make a Man compleatly Miſerable. Good God! Make Sinners, all Sinners throughly ſenſible of the manifeſt Inconveniencies of a Wicked Life; that it brings no preſent Profit or Advantage to them, that it will not bear Reflection, but cauſeth Shame, and that it is Fatal in its Event and Iſſue. O then! Let no Profit tempt us, no Pleaſure intice us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to enter into any ſinful way, or adventure upon any wicked Work; for what Fruit can we expect to have of thoſe things whereof we are now aſhamed, the end of which things is Death.

22 But now being made free from ſin, and become come ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs and the end everlaſting life.

As the former Verſe repreſented to us the manifold Inconveniencies of a Wicked Life, ſo this Verſe acquaints us with the manifeſt Advantages of a Holy and Religious Courſe of Life, and this firſt, as to the preſent Benefit and Advantage of it, *ye have your Fruit unto Holineſs*: Secondly, In reſpect of the Future Reward of it, *and the end Everlaſting Life. Here, obſerve*, 1. The Deſcription which the Apoſtle makes of the Change from a State to Sin to a State of Holineſs, ye are *made free from ſin and become the Servants of God*, intimating, that a ſtate of Sin in a ſtate of Servitude and Slavery, and indeed it is the vileſt and hardeſt Slavery in the World, it being the Slavery of the Soul, which is the beſt and nobleſt part of our ſelves; 'tis the Subjection of our Reaſon to our Senſual Appetites and Brutiſh Paſſions, which is as uncomly a ſight as to ſee Beggars ride on a Horſeback, and Princes walk on Foot. Farther, 'Tis a voluntary Slavery, the Sinner chuſeth this Servitude, and willingly puts his Neck under this Yoke. *Again*, The Sinner makes himſelf a Slave to his own Servants, to thoſe who were born to be ſubject to him, I mean his own Appetites and Paſſions, chuſing rather a Life of Senſe, and to gratifie his Luſts, than to obey his Reaſon. *Obſerve*, 2. The preſent Benefit of an Holy and Religious Life, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs*. What Fruit? *Anſw.* Inward Peace and Contentment of Mind at preſent, length of Days, Health and Proſperity in this World, ſolid Joy and Comfort at the Hour of Death, a good Name and Reputation among Men after Death, and it derives a Bleſſing upon our Poſterity which we leave behind us. *Obſerve*, 3. The Future Reward and Recompence of an Holy Life in the World to come, *the end everlaſting Life*. By which the Apoſtle expreſſes both the Happineſs of our Future State, and the way and means by which we are prepared and made meet to be partakers of it. 1. The Happineſs of our Future State is expreſſed by the Name of Everlaſting Life, which imports both the Excellency of this State, it is a State of Life; and the Eternity or endleſs Duration of it, it is a State of Everlaſting Life. 2. The way and means by which we are prepared and made meet to be partakers of this Happineſs, and that is, by the conſtant and ſincere Endeavours of a holy and good Life; Holineſs in this Life is the certain way, yea, the only way to Happineſs in the Life to come: This appears from the Will of God, who has connected the end and the means together from the Juſtice of God, who will reward every Man according to his Work; from the indecency and unſuitableneſs of the contrary, without meetneſs and fitneſs for Heaven, there could be no Happineſs in Heaven, Heaven would not be a Paradiſe, but a Purgatory, not a place of Happineſs, but the greateſt Uneaſineſs to a Wicked Man; therefore let us have *our preſent fruit unto holineſs, that our end may be everlaſting Life.*

23 For the wages of ſin *is* death: but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

The Apoſtle having all along throughout the Chapter exhorted us to die daily unto Sin, and to live unto God, concludes with a Motive drawn from the different Rewards and Puniſhments in another World; Eternal Death will be the Puniſhment of Sin and Sinners, and Eternal Life the Reward of Holineſs and Holy Perſons. *Obſerve*, 1. The Puniſhment of Sin and Sinners, *the wages of Sin is death. Where note*, The Offence committed, *Sin*; the Puniſhment inflicted, *Death*; the Juſtice and Proportion between the Sin and the Puniſhment, it is a Stipend, or *Wages*, a Metaphor taken from Soldiers, who at the end of their Service receive their Pay and Stipend. *Learn hence*, That Death is the Puniſhment of Sin, it is *finis Operis*, tho' not *Operantis*, the end of the Worker. *Queſt.* What Death is that which is the Puniſhment of Sin? *Anſw.* Both Temporal and Eternal: the former conſiſts in the ſeparation of the Soul from the Body, the latter in an everlaſting ſeparation of Soul and Body from the Preſence of God, and in an Impriſonment with Devils and Damned to all Eternity. *Queſt.* What Sin is that which is puniſhed with Death? *Anſw.* Conſider Sin in it's Demerit and Deſert, and ſo Death is the Puniſhment of every Sin; conſider it in its Iſſue and Event, and ſo it is the Puniſhment only of that Sin which is aggravated with Impenitency; all Sins are Venial with reſpect to the Mercy of God and the Repentance of a Sinner, but the Wages of every Sin that reigns in us, and is not forſaken by us, is Eternal Death. *Obſerve*, 2, The Reward promiſed to Holineſs, and inſured to Holy Perſons, *the gift of God is eternal Life. Here Note*, The Happineſs of Holy Perſons. 1. In the Lord or Maſter, whom they ſerve, God or Chriſt Jeſus. 2. Happy in the Reward of their Services, *Eternal Life*. 3. Happy in the manner of their Reward, it is a *free Gift*, not Wages, a Metaphor taken from Kings, who beſtow upon ſuch Soldiers as have ſignalized themſelves, over and above their Stipend, Coronets and Laurels. as Badges of their Favour, unto which our Apoſtle alludes, calling Eternal Life a Donative, a freely diſpenſed Favour, which may be conſidered in our Eternal Deſtination thereunto before all Time, in our Converſion and Sanctification in Time, which we may call the Embryo of Eternal Life, and in our Coronation and Glorification when at the end of Time full poſſeſſion of Eternal Life ſhall be given to us; in all which Inſtances Heaven appears to be a free Gift, not procured by any Merit of ours, but by the Mediation of Chriſt our Lord: *The gift of God is eternal Life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

CHAP. VII.

The Apoſtle having, in the foregoing Chapter, declared how Believers, are freed from the Power and Dominion of Sin, he proceeds in this Chapter, to declare that they alſo are free from the yoke of the Moſaick Law, that being dead to them, and they to it; and the Apoſtle's Argument runs thus: Dead Men are not held under the Law, but they that are freed and delivered from it. But as many as truly believe in Chriſt are dead to the Law, and therefore are freed and deliver'd from it: That is, they are freed from the rigorous Exactions of the Law, and from the Curſe and Malediction of the Law, not from the Guidance and Direction of it, as a Rule of it, as a Rule of Life.

1 KNow ye not, Brethren, (for I ſpeak to them that know the Law) how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, You Jews, who ſtudy the Law, and are well acquainted with it, cannot but know that the Law of God hath Power over a Man, to require of him exact, perfect, and perpetual Obedience, and to accuſe, condemn, and bind him over to the Curſe for the leaſt breach and violation of it; and all this as long as he liveth under the Law, and is not freed from the Malediction of it by Faith in Chriſt. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Law of God, in the force and ſtrength of it, and as conſidered in it ſelf, is a very hard Lord and Maſter, exacting perfect, perſonal, and perpetual Obedience to its Commands, and binding the Sinner over to the Curſe for the leaſt Tranſgreſſion and Violation of it. *Learn*, (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt has freed all Believers from the Rigor of the Law, from the Curſe of the Law, and from the Irritation of the Law; that is, from the Power which is in the Law, to ſtir them up to Sin through the Corruption of their own Hearts and Natures. Bleſſed be God we are by Chriſt freed from, and dead to the Law as a Covenant of Life; but we are under it, and may we all our Days ſet under the ſhadow of it with great delight, as an *Eternal Rule of holy living.*

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to *her* husband ſo long as ſhe liveth: but if the husband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then, if while *her* husband liveth ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs; but if her husband be dead, ſhe is free from that law, ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, *even* to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.

Here the Apoſtle doth exemplifie and illuſtrate the foregoing Aſſertion; namely, that Believers are freed from the Law by a Similitude taken from the Law of Marriage; as Death freeth Husband and Wife from the Law which bound them each to other, and impowereth the Survivor to marry to another Perſon. In like manner the Death of Chriſt was the Death of the Law as a Covenant of Works, holding us under the Bond of the Curſe of it, and ſo his dying gave us a Manumiſſion or Freedom from that Bond, and a Capacity of Eſpouſal unto Chriſt. That ſo living in Conjugal Affection and Obedience to him, we may be made fruitful by his Spirit, doing ſuch things as are agreeable to the Will of God, and tending to the Glory of God. *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt:* That is, through the offering up of Chriſt's Body upon the Croſs. *Learn hence*, (1.) That he that is under the Law, is as ſtrictly bound to the Rigor and Curſe of the Law, as a married Woman is bound to her Husband during his Life. *Learn*, (2.) That one great End of Chriſt's Death was to purchaſe our Freedom from the Law, that we might be capable of being eſpouſed to himſelf. For whilſt we were under the Curſe of the Law, we were not in a capacity of being married unto Chriſt. He or ſhe that is a Slave to another, is not capable of being diſpoſed in Marriage until made free. In like manner we were in bondage to the Law as well as in ſlavery unto Sin and Satan, but Chriſt has bought out our Liberty, and thereby puts us into a capacity of being eſpouſed unto himſelf. Behold what manner of Love the Redeemer hath ſhewed unto us, that we ſhould be called his Spouſe, and he our Husband. He loved us, but not for any Advantage he could have by us, for we had nothing but Sin and Shame to preſent him with. Nay, he muſt purchaſe us, and that with his own Blood, before he could be united to us. O incomparable Love! O fervent Deſires! *Learn*, (3.) That tho Believers are free from the Rigour and Curſe of the Law by the Death of Chriſt, yet have they not an undoubted Liberty, but are ſtill under Government, under an Head and Guide. As a Wife is under the Government of her Husband, ſo are Believers under the Guidance and Government of Jeſus Chriſt, who in a ſpecial manner guideth them by his Word and Spirit, and their being ſaid to be dead to the Law, ſignifies no more than the Laws not having Dominion over them, in regard of the Curſe and Condemnation of it.

5 For when we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſin which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we are held, that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not *in* the oldneſs of the letter.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, When we lived under the diſpenſation of the Law, and were married to the Law, we brought forth fruit ſuitable to that State and Condition. But now being freed from the Law, and married unto Chriſt, it is meet and right, equal and fit, that we ſhould bring forth fruit anſwerable to our moſt excellent State and Condition. That now we ſerve God with new Hearts and Lives by the Spirit of Chriſt, according to the Law of Grace, and not carnally in the Bondage and Terror of the old Law, called here, *the Oldneſs of the Letter. Learn hence*, (1.) That all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians, who are dead to the Law, and eſpouſed unto Chriſt, ought to bring forth fruit unto God, ſuitable to their noble Eſtate and moſt honourable Condition. Freedom and Deliverance from the Rigor and Curſe of the Law, ought to bind us the more ſtrongly to God, to love and ſerve him, to glorifie and obey him. *Learn*, (2.) That all true Believers, who are freed from the Rigor and Curſe of the Law, ought to ſerve the Lord in true Holineſs both of Heart and Life, and to yield a new and univerſal Obedience to him. This the Apoſtle here calls *the newneſs of the Spirit*, to intimate to us, that new Obedience is the Work of the Holy Spirit in us, as the Author of all Grace and Sanctification. And whereas the *newneſs of the ſpirit* is oppoſed to *the oldneſs of the letter*; that is, the Miniſtry of the Law, which of it ſelf is a dead Letter, diſcovering Sin, but not diſcovering how Sin may be either pardoned or ſubdued, we may gather, That the Law of God, and indeed the whole Word of God, without the Spirit, is but a dead Letter, unable to work Grace and Holineſs in us, or to excite and quicken us unto newneſs of life. Whenever then we place our ſelves under the Word, let us pray with *David*, *Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous things of thy Law.*

7 What ſhall we ſay then? *is* the law ſin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known ſin, but by the law: for I had not known luſts, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Objection (which the Apoſtle anſwers) that ſome were ready to make againſt the Holineſs of the Law, he had affirmed at *ver.* 5. that *the Motions of Sin were ſtirred up by the Law.* If ſo, ſay ſome, then the Law may ſeem to be the cauſe of Sin. *God forbid*, ſaith the Apoſtle. The thought of ſuch a Concluſion ought to be abhorred. *Hence learn*, That the holieſt Doctrines and Truths of God are ſubject to be perverted and abuſed, and to have abſurd Inferences and Concluſions drawn from them. (2.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt be able and careful, not only to propound the Truth ſoundly, but to defend it ſolidly, againſt all Cavils and wicked Objections whatſoever, and to declare their utter Deteſtation and utmoſt Abhorrency of any ſuch Opinion as reflects Diſhonour upon the Holy Law of God. *Obſ.* (2.) The Apoſtle's Argument to confute this wicked Notion of the Law's being the Cauſe of Sin: *I had not known ſin but by the Law.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, that which forbids Sin, diſcovers and condemns Sin, cannot be the cauſe of Sin, but ſo doth the holy Law of God, it makes Sin manifeſt in and to the Conſcience of the Sinner; therefore the Law is not Sin, no Exciter to it, or Cauſe of it. *Learn hence*, That the Law of God is ſo far from being the Cauſe of Sin, that by it men come to a more clear, full, diſtinct, and effectual Knowledge of Sin; *I had not known ſin but by the law*: that is, not ſo clearly and effectually, ſo as to be duly humbled for it, and turned from it. The Light of Nature ſhews a difference between Good and Evil, but the Law of God repreſents Sin as the Evil of Evils in it; as in a Glaſs we behold the foul Face of Sin, and are convinced by it of the monſtrous Evil that is in it. *Obſ.* (3.) How the Apoſtle produces his own Experience in this Matter, and gives a particular Inſtance in himſelf, that he *had not known Luſt except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not Covet*; that is, he ſhould not have underſtood that the firſt irregular Motions of the Heart, the firſt Inclinations and Deſires of the Soul towards Sin, (tho' not conſented to by the Will) were evil, had he not by a more attentive Conſideration of the Tenth Commandment found that they were ſo. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Luſt or Concupiſcence is Sin; that is, Original Luſt, the firſt Motions of corrupt and rebellious Nature, whereby our Inclinations are towards Evil, tho' our Wills do not fully conſent to Evil. *Learn*, (2.) That ſo Holy and Spiritual is the Law of God, that it diſcovers the Sin of Nature, and condemns the firſt Motions and Inclinations of the Soul to Sin, even to the Pit of Hell. All the Wiſdom of the Heathen, yea, of the Wiſeſt and moſt Learned Perſons in the World, was never able to diſcover the firſt Motions ariſing from our rebellious Natures to be Sin, only the Holy Law of God makes them known, and diſcovers them to be Sins. *I had not known Luſt except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.* Such is the Holineſs of the Law of God, that it requires not only the Purity of our Actions, but alſo the Integrity of all our Faculties.

8 But ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence. For without the law ſin *was* dead.

Obſerve here, A Conceſſion or Grant made by the Apoſtle, that although the Law was not the formal Cauſe of Sin, that yet Sin was an accidental Event of the Law, through the depravity and corruption of our Natures. Luſt or Concupiſcence in us being ſtirred up more ſtrongly, and breaking forth more violently in us, by being prohibited and reſtrained by the Law. As things forbidden us are the more deſired by us, the more the Law would reſtrain Sin through our Corruption, the more it enrages Sin. As the more you would dam up a Torrent, the higher it ſwells. Thus *Sin takes occaſion by the Commandment to work all manner of concupiſcence in us. Learn thence*, That ſuch is the depravity and perverſeneſs of our preſent Natures, that there is found with us a propenſity and inclination to all Sin; and although the Law of God doth not give the leaſt countenance to Sin, yet Sin takes occaſion, from the reſtraints of the Law, to grow more impetuous, and is the more irritated by being prohibited; and conſequently it is not from our ſelves, but from God's reſtraining Grace, that thoſe evil Inclinations which are in our Hearts do not break forth in our Lives. The Apoſtle adds, *Without the Law ſin was dead*; that is, without the Knowledge and due Conſideration of the Law Sin is comparatively dead; that is, the Corruption of Nature lies hid, and is not ſo much known to be Sin; nor had it ſo much power to terrifie the Conſcience, and to ſtir up inordinate Affections, as after the Law is known and duly conſidered. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as either know not that Word and Law of God, or do not duly conſider it, have very little ſence of inward Pollution: But their Corruption lies, as it were, dead in them, and they in that, without touching the Conſcience, or laying the Soul under ſenſible apprehenſions of its Sin and Danger. *Without the law ſin is dead.* Sin in the Conſciences is like a Lion aſleep in his Den, it awakes not, ſtirs not, terrifies and accuſes not, till the Law of God rouzes it, and then the Sinner ſees himſelf under the Curſe, and liable to Perdition.

9 For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, formerly when I lived a Phariſee, and had the Law in my hand, but did not conſider in my heart what exactneſs and perfection it required in my life, I contented my ſelf with an outward Obſervation of it, and concluded my ſtate to be very good and ſafe: But when I came to a right underſtanding of the Word and Law of God, and to be convinced by it, that the inward Luſtings and inordinate Deſires of the heart were Sins, then I found my ſelf a guilty Creature, obnoxious to Wrath, and in a ſtate of Death. *Here note*, (1.) The good Opinion the Apoſtle had, and all unregenerate Men have, of themſelves before Converſion, *I was alive once.* By Life underſtand Livelineſs, Confidence and Aſſurance of his good Eſtate and Condition; he was full of vain Hope, falſe Joy, and preſumptuous Confidence. *Learn thence*, That natural and unregenerate Perſons are uſually very full of groundleſs Confidence and Chearfulneſs, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of their bad Eſtate and ſad Condition, *I was alive without the law once. Note* (2.) The Apprehenſion and Opinion which St. *Paul* had, and others will have, of themſelves, when they come under the regenerating work of the Spirit by the Miniſtry of the Word and Law of God, *When the commandment came I died. Death* here ſtands oppoſed to *Life* before, and denotes the Sorrows, Fears and Tremblings which ſeized upon his Soul when he was convinced of the badneſs of his Condition; it ſtabb'd all his carnal Mirth, Joy and Jollity, at the very heart, *I died. Note* (3.) The Cauſe and Reaſon of this wonderful Alteration and Change of Judgment in the Apoſtle, it was the Commandment or Law of God, *When the commandment came*, that is, cloſe and home to my Heart and Conſcience with a divine Efficacy. The Commandment was come before to him by way of Promulgation, and he had the literal Knowledge of it; but now it came in the convincing power, and ſpiritual application of it. Accordingly *Sin Revived*, that is, the ſenſe of Sin was more lively imprinted upon his Soul, and now he died, all his vain hopes gave up the Ghoſt now, and his Sin and Guilt ſtared in the face of his Conſcience. *Learn hence*, That there is a mighty efficacy in the Word or Law of God to kill vain Confidence, and quench carnal Mirth in the hearts of Men, when God ſets it home upon their Conſciences, *I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived and I died.*

10 And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

Obſerve here, (1.) The natural End and Uſe of the Commandment or Law of God, *It was ordained unto life*; that is, it was given for a Rule of Life, and promiſed eternal Salvation to the perfect fulfilling of it. But no Man ſince the Fall being able perfectly to fulfil the Law in his own Perſon, can be juſtified by the Law in the ſight of God. However, the proper end for which the Law was ordained, was to give Life to them that ſhould perfectly keep it. *Obſerve* (2.) The contrary Uſe which the Apoſtle found the Law to be of with reference unto himſelf. What *was ordained to life he found to be unto death*; that is, through his own Corruption and Tranſgreſſion it became an occaſion of Death to him, by binding him over to Puniſhment, and rendring him obnoxious to the Wrath of God. Thus the Word of God, the ſweet and ſaving Word of God, that Word which God hath ordained to bring Men to Life and Salvation, is found to ſome the ſavour of Death unto Death; but the fault is not in the Word, but in themſelves.

11 For ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Sin, or the Corruption of my Heart and Nature, being ſtirred up by the Commandment which forbids Luſt, and condemns it, enticed me, and perſwaded me, and prevailed over me, to yield to the Luſts of my own Heart, and then condemned me, and ſlew me for yielding to them. See here the true and genuine Nature of Sin; it firſt deceives, and then deſtroys: It deceived me, ſaith the Apoſtle, and then ſlew me. Sin doth perfectly beſot the Creature, and renders it injudicious: It befools and deceives us, it pollutes and defiles us, it doth debaſe and degrade us, and without Repentance damns and deſtroys us. God keep us from being hardened in ſinning thro' the deceitfulneſs of Sin; let no Profit tempt us, no Pleaſure entice us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to adventure upon any known Sin; for its Embraces are deadly, it leads to Death, and ends in Death: after it have deceived us, it certainly deſtroys us: *Sin taking occaſion deceived me and ſlew me*.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.

Obſerve here, What Care and holy Caution the Apoſtle uſes to vindicate and clear the holy Law of God from all fault and blame, charging his Guilt not upon the Commandment, but upon the Corruption of his own Heart, which took occaſion to be ſtirring in him, and by the Commandment ſlew him; affirming nevertheleſs, that the Law of God in it ſelf, and in its own nature, is holy, juſt, and good. *Here note*, That the Apoſtle adorns the Law with the moſt excellent Elogy and Commendation. 'Tis holy, (1.) As it enjoins all Acts of Piety towards God; namely, Adoration of his Majeſty, Imitation of his Purity, Reſignation to his Providence, Obedience to his Commands. (2.) 'Tis juſt as it directs us in our Duty to others in every Capacity and Relation wherein we ſtand, and obliges us to walk by that Rule of Equity, to do to others as we would they ſhould do unto us. (3.) 'Tis good to the Man that keeps it, commanding nothing but what is influential upon his well-being both here and hereafter; could we ſet aſide the Authority of the Law-giver, yet all the Precepts of the Law for their moral Goodneſs deſerve our Eſteem, and Choice, and entire Obſervation, nothing being required of us but what is our Duty and Intereſt as Men, and which tends to the perfecting and enobling of our Natures: Well then might our Apoſtle determine that *the law is holy, the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.*

13 Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But ſin, that it might appear ſin, working Death in me by that which is good: that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful.

From what the Apoſtle had ſaid in the former Verſe, he moves an Objection in this Verſe, ſeeing the Law was holy, and juſt, and good, how comes it to be unto Death? *Was that which was good made death unto me?* To this he replies, both by way of Negation, God forbid; for to find fault with the Law, is to find fault with God himſelf; and alſo by way of Affirmation, aſſerting that Sin is the true Cauſe of Death. The Commandment indeed condemns or is Death to the Sinner, yet not of it ſelf, but becauſe of Sin; as we ſay of a condemned Malefactor, it is not the Judge but the Law that condemns him; or ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is not the Law but his own Guilt that condemns him: the Judge is but the Mouth of the Law to denounce the Sentence that Guilt deſerves. And hereby Sin appears to be what really it is, Sin, Sinful, exceeding Sinful, maſculinely and vigorouſly Sinful, exceſſively and out of meaſure Sinful, extreamly and beyond all Expreſſion, nay, beyond our Comprehenſion Sinful. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Law of God in whole, and in every part thereof, is holy and good, both in it ſelf and its own nature, and relatively in its Inſtitution with reſpect to Man, for it was ordained unto life. *v.* 10. *Learn* (2.) That this good and holy Law violated and tranſgreſſed, condemns and kills, and aſſigns a Perſon over unto Death. *Learn* (3) That tho' the Law condemns Man's Sin, and Man for his Sin, yet ſtill the Law is good, and not to be blamed; the Law is to be juſtified by Man, even when it condemns Man: as Man had no reaſon to break the Law, ſo he has no cauſe to find fault with the Law, tho' it binds him over to Death for the breaking of it. *Learn* (4) That 'tis not the Law, but Sin that worketh Man's Death and Ruin. Sin aims at no leſs, and will end in no leſs, for the Wages of Sin is Death. Yet (5) Sin certainly worketh Man's Death and Deſtruction by that which is good, to wit the Law; for when Sin hath uſed Man to break the Law, it then makes uſe of the Law to break Man; that is to undo him by Condemnation and Death for breaking of it. *Laſtly*, From hence it follows, that Sin is therefore exceedingly, yea, unmeaſurably ſinful, poiſonous and pernicious, becauſe it kills Men, and not only ſo, but it kills Men by that which is good, to wit, the Law: That which was appointed for Life, becomes the occaſion of Death; conſequently Sin is the moſt villainous, virulent, and deadly thing that ever was in the World. Ah! ſinful Sin, hyperbolically and out of meaſure ſinful, thou art a Contempt of God's Sovereign Authority, a Contrariety to his infinite Holineſs, a Violation of his royal and righteous Law, and the higheſt Affront that can be offered to the Majeſty of the great and glorious God. Thou haſt made Man like a Beaſt, like the worſt of Beaſts, worſe than the worſt of Beaſts; yea, Sin is worſe than the Devil himſelf, than Hell it ſelf. Sin made the Devil what he is: a Devil and Hell never had an Exiſtence till Sin had one: God was never angry till Sin made him angry. O Sin! 'Tis thou that makeſt Hell to be Hell; and the more Sin the more Hell. Well might the Apoſtle then ſay here, *Sin, that it might appear ſin, worketh death in me, and is become exceeding ſinful.*

14 For we know that the law is ſpiritual:

Still obſerve how the Apoſtle goes on to aſſert the Purity and Spirituality of the Law of God: *The Law is ſpiritual*; Spiritual in its Author of it. God, who is an holy Spirit, Spiritual in the Matter of it, requiring Spiritual Obedience to be paid unto it, requiring perfect Purity both of Heart and Life. *Learn hence*, That the Moral Law of God is in the Nature of it purely ſpiritual, perfectly holy, being breathed forth by the holy Spirit of God, and requireth perfect Purity both of Heart and Life, and perfect Conformity to it both in the inward and outward Man. Hence ſome derive the Word which we tranſlate Law, from a Root which ſignifies to Behold and Conſider, to Contemplate and Look about; intimating thereby, that the holy and ſpiritual Law of God is diligently to be obſerved and conſidered, looked into, and meditated upon; it being ſo perfectly pure and holy, that it requires not only the Purity of our Actions, but alſo the Integrity of our very Faculties, our Hearts and Natures.

But I am Carnal.

So may (1) every unregenerate Man truly ſay, *I am Carnal*, having not only Fleſh in me, but prevailing in me: Sin having a Regency and Dominion over me, he fights under the Banner of corrupt Nature, acting in a willing, ready, and full ſubjection to Sin, and Compliance with it; he is carnal, being under the Power and unbroken Strength of carnal Luſts and ſenſual Propenſions, and following them in the daily courſe of his Life. (2) *I am Carnal*, may a regenerate Perſon truly ſay, (1) With reſpect to that exact Purity and Spirituality both of Heart and Life which the holy Law of God requires; the Law is ſpiritual, but I am, alas! compared with that ſpiritual Law, am but a Lump of Corruption, coming infinitely ſhort, God knows, of that Uprightneſs and Spirituality which the Law of God requires. (2) A regenerate Perſon may truly ſay he is carnal, that is, in part ſo, having much too much Carnality in his carnal Affections found with him, and carnal Infirmities cleaving to him: Such as are truly acquainted with the Spirituality of the Word and Law of God, and alſo well acquainted with their own Hearts, do ſee ſufficient cauſe to complain of carnal Corruption abiding in them, and cleaving to them. *I am Carnal*, have ſaid, and may ſay, the holieſt of Saints, with reſpect to the perfect Meaſures and Degrees of Holineſs. Thus that holy and Bleſſed Martyr, Mr. *Bradford* complains, ſtiling himſelf the Hard-hearted, Unbelieving, Earthly-minded *Bradford*; yet was a Man of a very tender Spirit, full of Faith, fruitful in good Works, and exceedingly mortified to the World. Doſt thou groan under the Burthen of indwelling Corruption? know, that the whole *ſpiritual* Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together with thee until now. But bleſſed be God for the Hopes of a Deliverer and a Deliverance.

Sold under ſin.

This Phraſe is borrowed from Bondmen or Captives, ſome of which are ſold, others ſell themſelves into Captivity. The unregenerate Man, with *Ahab*, ſells himſelf to work Wickedneſs. This denotes Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy; ſuch a perſon doth voluntarily proſtrate himſelf to the Luſt of Satan: a regenerate Perſon doth not, with *Ahab*, ſell himſelf, but is ſold, like *Joſeph*, by his Brethren, and *Sampſon* by his Wife; being rather paſſive than active; he is ſometimes Sin's Captive, but never Sin's Slave; he is never Sin's willing Servant, but ſometimes its unwilling Priſoner. The holieſt and beſt of Saints, though not held in wilful Slavery, Thraldom and Bondage unto Sin, yet Corruption holds them too much, though in part unwillingly, under the Tyranny of Sin; they do not yield to Sin, as good Subjects yield to their lawful Prince, voluntary Obedience, but as Captives yield to a Tyrant, paying him involuntary Subjection. His Soul is betrayed (ſays one) by Corruption to Temptation, and by Temptation to Corruption.

15 For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; and what I hate that do I.

Theſe Words are an Argument to prove what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing Verſe, namely, that he was held under the Power of Sin unwillingly, becauſe he did not allow or approve of any Evil which he did contrary to the holy Law of God, but did hate and abominate it, was diſpleaſed with it, and with himſelf for it. An unregenerate Man's Judgment and Conſcience is ſometimes againſt Sin, which makes him afraid to commit it; but a gracious Perſon's Will, Heart and Affections, are all ſet againſt Sin: indeed there is a regenerate and an unregenerate part in the Chriſtian's Will, (he is ſanctified *Totus*, but not *Totaliter*) ſo far as the Will is renewed it hates all Sin, and meditates the Ruin and Deſtruction of it; and obſerve, it was not this or that particular Evil, but all Evil, which the Apoſtle hated: a wicked Man may hate a particular Evil, as *Abſolom* hated *Ammon*'s Uncleanneſs; but to hate all Sin, is the Character of none but a regenerate Perſon. *Obſerve laſtly*, That a good Man ſometimes, through the Power of Corruption, and the Prevalency of Temptation, doth that Evil which is diſallowed and diſapproved by him, yea, which is very odious and hateful to him: he loaths in part what he doth, and afterwards loaths himſelf for the doing of it; and when he doth Evil, allows not of the Evil that he doth.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law, that *it is* good. 17 Now then, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

Note, (1.) How readily the Apoſtle conſented to the Equity and Holineſs of God's Law; he did love the law of God which made Holineſs his Duty; *I conſent*, ſays he, *to the law, that it is good*; he aſſented to it in his Judgment, he complied with it in his will, he clave to it in his inward Affections. So far as a Perſon is regenerate, his Heart doth correſpond with God's Law: but may not an unregenerate Perſon conſent in his Judgment to the Law of God, own it to be good, approve it to be Holy? Did not *Herod* hear the Word with Gladneſs, and the ſtony Ground receive the Word with Joy? *Anſw.* They may in their Judgments approve, yet not in their Hearts like and love the law of God: at the ſame time that they commend it with their Mouths, they caſt it behind their Backs. *Note*, (2.) How the Apoſtle diſclaims, though not diſowns, the Evil done by him: *It is no more I but Sin that dwelleth in me.* As if he had ſaid, my corrupt Affections ſometimes over power me againſt the Approbation of my Judgment, and the Inclination of my Will: *But it is not I*, (according to my better part from which I am denominated) *but ſin in dwelling in me. Learn hence*, That if we can truly diſclaim the Evil done by us, as being contrary to us, contrary to the habitual Frame and Diſpoſition of our Hearts, contrary to the deliberate Purpoſe and ſettled Reſolution of our Wills, Almighty God will not charge our Failings upon us to our Condemnation, but mercifully diſtinguiſh between the Weakneſs of the Fleſh and the Willingneſs of the Spirit; between us, and Sin that dwelleth in us. Sin will remain and dwell, but it muſt not reign and rule: 'tis a buſie Inmate in a gracious Heart, but it is a Lordly Maſter; yea an imperious Tyrant in a Sinner's Heart. Happy he that can in Truth and Sincerity ſay, *It is not I, but ſin that dwelleth in me.*

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing. For to will is preſent with me: but *how* to perform that which is good, I find not.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's Propoſition, *I know that in me, that is, in my fleſh, dwelleth no good thing:* That is, in my corrupt and unregenerate Nature there is nothing truly and ſpiritually good: and this I my ſelf am ſenſible of, and privy to, and very well acquainted with. *Learn thence*, That good Men are intimately acquainted with themſelves, privy to their own Corruptions, ſenſible of the indwelling Preſence of Sin in themſelves, which calls upon them to be humble, and excites them to be watchful: *I know that in me dwelleth no good thing. Obſerve*, (2.) The Confirmation of the foregoing Propoſition, for *to will is preſent with me*; that is, to will what is good, to purpoſe good, and to deſire that which is good, *is preſent with me*; but I want Ability to perform that Good I purpoſe. *Learn hence*, that though to will that which is good is ready and at hand with God's regenerated Children, yet through that Corruption which ſtill abides in them, they are ſometimes diſabled for doing that good which they purpoſe, deſign, and deſire to do; and that little good they do, is very brokenly and imperfectly done. A mortal Father may as ſoon beget an immortal Child, as an imperfect Saint can perform any thing perfectly good: there can never be more in the Effect than there is in the Cauſe: a weak Grape cannot make ſtrong Wine: whilſt we are Saints on earth, though we may and ought to aſpire after, yet we ſhall not be able to attain unto the ſinleſs Perfection of the Saints in Heaven: a real Chriſtian is one that is continually labouring after the Attainment of that which he knows in this Life he ſhall never attain unto, namely, Perfection in Grace: in Heaven we ſhall have no occaſion to complain, That how to *perform that which is good we find not.*

19 For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me.

Here the Apoſtle repeats what he had before aſſerted; namely, that he did not always do that Good which he deſired to do, but ſometimes, being overpower'd by the Fleſh, did what the Law prohibits, and what he would not do. And farther adds, that it was longer himſelf, (chuſing and approving the Action in his Mind) that did this; but Sin dwelling in him, which ſometimes hurried him to the Commiſſion of it againſt the Inclination and Law of his Mind. *Here note*, (1.) That the Corruption of Nature in the Soul of Man is a real, but diſtinct, thing from the Soul it ſelf. A Dweller in an Houſe is really diſtinguiſhed from the Houſe he dwells in. Sin is not a Subſtance, but the Pravity and Depravity of our Faculties. *Note*, (2.) That the Corruption of our own Hearts and Natures is the Root and Cauſe of all that Evil that is done by us. *Note*, (3.) That the habitual Bent, the ſettled Purpoſe, and determinate Reſolution of a Chriſtian's Will, is againſt all Sin; and he doth not ſin with the full conſent of his Will. Altho' there is not two diſtinct Perſons, yet there are two diſtinct Principles in a regenerate Man. Sin and he are diſtinguiſhed. In a good Man there is a Conflict between Sin and Grace, but in an unregenerate Man there is no Combat between the Fleſh and the Spirit; for he is all Fleſh; the Fleſh and he are one; the Combat is not between Grace and Sin, but between one Sin and another, and between one Faculty and another. Light in the Underſtanding oppoſes Luſt in the Will: whereas the Conflict in a gracious Perſon is not between his Judgment and his Will, but betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate part in his Will. Sin, like a preternatural Biaſs, clapt upon the Soul, ſometimes carries it away from the Mark which the Chriſtian aims at: however, though a good Man be overcome in *Prælio*, yet not in *Bello*, though Grace is ſometimes foiled in the Combat, yet it keeps the Field, maintains and recovers its ground. The Saint will not throw down his Weapon till he lays down his Life, and Grace ſhall at length be finally victorious.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I verily find Sin, having an impelling Power and impulſive Virtue in it, like a Law in my Members, thwarting and contradicting the Inclinations of my Mind, and the Reſolutions of my Will, that *when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* It follows me, as if he had ſaid, and is as inſeparable from me as my ſhadow; this he calls a Law, becauſe of its mighty Power and Efficacy, and becauſe of its conſtant reſidence in his Nature. (2.) Of the Operation of it, eſpecially at ſome particular and ſpecial Times and Seaſons, *When I would do good*, then *evil is preſent with me.* As if he had ſaid, When I addreſs my ſelf to any holy Duty, and heavenly Employment, when I deſire and deſign to draw near to God, and would hope for the ſweeteſt Fellowſhip and Communion with him, then, alas! then, to my great ſorrow, is *evil preſent with me.* Ah, when I promiſe my ſelf moſt Comfort and Communion in the Enjoyment of my God, how do I then find a bad Heart in the beſt Seaſon, a dead and drowſie Spirit when I would be the moſt ſpiritual in the Duties I perform. From whence *Learn*, that the holieſt and beſt of Saints in this their imperfect State, do ſenſibly feel, and ſadly bewail, the Working of Sin and Corruption in them; and that in the very Seaſons and Opportunities of their Communion with God; *When I would do good*, then *evil is preſent with me.*

22 For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.

If by the inward Man we underſtand the Mind and Underſtanding of a Man only, then the unregenerate Perſon may be ſaid to delight in the Law of God with *Ezekiel*'s Hearers, *Ezek.* 33. 32. with *Herod*, *Mark* 6. 20. with the ſtony Ground, *Mat.* 13. 20. That is, they delight and ſatisfie themſelves with the bare hearing of the Word, and with a notional and ſpeculative Knowledge of their Duty; either the Eloquence of the Preacher whom they hear, or the Pleaſingneſs of ſome Truths which they hear, affect them with a ſudden Joy; they delight to hear the Word, but they take no delight to do it. It is neither a ſpiritual Delight, nor an abiding Delight, that ſuch Men take in the Law of God. If by the inward Man we underſtand that which St. *Peter* calls the hidden Man of the Heart, the new Man, or the regenerate part in Man, as being ſeated in the inward Powers and Faculties of the Soul; then to delight in the Law of God, is to love it for its Purity and Spirituality, becauſe it makes Holineſs our Duty; to take pleaſure in the Knowledge of the Law, in meditating upon it, and in practiſing every good Duty contained in it, and enjoined by it. Thus *David* did delight to do the Will of God, becauſe the Law of God was within his Heart. Where there is *Lex in Corde*, there will be *Cor in Lege*; where the Law of God is in the Heart, there the Heart will be engaged in that Obedience which is by the Law required, and by the Chriſtian performed. He delights in the Law, and the Law is delighted by him.

23 But I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members.

Here Obſerve, that in this and the foregoing Verſes mention is made of four Laws contending one againſt another, whereof two are on one ſide, and two on the other; namely, the Law of God, and the Law of the Mind; the Law of the Members, and the Law of Sin. By the Law of God is underſtood the Word of God; by the Law of the Mind is underſtood in the regenerate Grace in the Heart, in the unregenerate Light in the Conſcience; by the Law of the Members underſtand original Luſt and Concupiſcence. By the Law of Sin thoſe corrupt Principles according to which Luſt governs. *Learn hence*, that there is a Conflict or Combat between the Law of the Mind, and the Law of the Members, and this both in regenerate and unregenerate Perſons. This appears, (1.) By the Teſtimony of Nature, ſpeaking in the Heathen. Thus *Medea*, *video meliora proboque deteriore ſequor*; their rational Appetite diſplaceth Reaſon, and leads it captive. (2.) By the Teſtimony of Scripture, and that (1.) As to the Unregenerate; witneſs *Herod*, *Mark* 6. 26. who had a Conflict between Luſt and Conſcience; as had alſo *Pilate* upon the Occaſion of our Saviour's Death: Conſcience bid him ſpare, Popularity bid him kill. (2.) As to the Regenerate, *Gal.* 5. 17. the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, *&c.* (3.) By the Teſtimony of Experience, who finds not every day within himſelf a Conteſt of contrary Motions and Inclinations? A Chriſtian's Boſom is like *Rebecca*'s Womb, it has Twins of two contrary Names. A ſmooth *Jacob* and a rough *Eſau*, Fleſh and Spirit. But wherein conſiſts the Difference between that Conflict which is found in the natural and ſpiritual, the regenerate and unregenerate Man? *Anſw.* (1.) The Conflict in an unregenerate Perſon is not between Grace and Sin, but betwixt one Luſt and another: the Struggle is, which Luſt ſhall be in the Throne, as Rebels in a Kingdom, having caſt off the Authority of their lawful Prince, every one ſnatches at the Scepter, and would command and rule. Thus every Luſt is ambitious of Superiority, and uſurps a Regency in the Soul: ſo that though the Sinner oft changes his Maſter, yet not his Servitude, he is a Slave ſtill. Now from this contrariety of Luſts rebelling in a carnal Heart, he is neceſſitated to oppoſe the Luſt which he favours leſs, to gratifie another which he favours more. Thus the Conflict is between *Sin* and *Sin*, not betwixt Grace and Sin. (2.) As an unregenerate Man's Combat with *Sin* is betwixt one Luſt and another, ſo it is only between one Faculty and another. Thus Light in the Underſtanding, oppoſes Luſt in the Will. The Judgment and Conſcience of a Sinner ſays, O do not that abominable thing which the Soul of God hates. But then Luſt in the Will votes for it, and is angry with Conſcience for being ſo bold as to oppoſe it. Whereas the Conflict in a regenerate Perſon is betwixt Grace and Sin, not betwixt Sin and Sin; and not betwixt the Underſtanding and the Will, but betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate part in the ſame Will. And although Grace be foil'd in a particular Combat, yet it keeps the Field, and the Chriſtian will not throw down his Weapon, till he lays down his Life.

24 O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death.

Theſe Words are a ſad and ſorrowful Complaint of the preſent and too great Prevalency of indwelling Sin and unſubdued Corruption; and in them *Obſerve* (1.) The Perſon complaining, St. *Paul* (2.) The Matter of the Complaint, not of Affliction, but of Sin; not of a Death, but of a Body of Sin and Death which he carried about with him. (3.) The manner of the Complaint, 'tis with Vehemence and Affection, it is *Vox anhelantis*, the Voice of one that pants and breaths after Deliverance; not of one that doubted, much leſs deſponded, of a Deliverer and a Deliverance. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, O how am I tired and wearied with continual Conflicts and Strivings with indwelling Sin? How do the remains of unſubdued Sin, and (as yet) unmortified Corruption, affect and afflict me! Who will deliver me? and when ſhall Deliverance be enjoyed by me? *Learn hence*, That there are ſaid remains of indwelling Sin, and unſubdued Corruption, in the very beſt and holieſt of God's Children and Servants in this Life, which they ſadly complain of, ſenſibly groan under, daily watch againſt, continually conflict with, and ſhall in God's time be fully and finally delivered from.

25 I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Here the Apoſtle eſpies a Deliverer, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; One that had delivered him from the condemning and reigning Power of Sin, and would e'er long deliver him from the Preſence as well as Prevalency of Sin. And whereas the Apoſtle ſtiles Chriſt Jeſus not his Lord, but *our Lord*; that is, the Lord of all Believers; it gives us this Conſolation and joyful Aſſurance, that the happy hour is at hand when we ſhall be everlaſtingly freed from the indwelling Preſence of Sin, from all Temptations to Sin, from all Inclinations to offend, yea, from all Poſſibility of ſinning. When ſhall we obey God with Vigour, praiſe him with Chearfulneſs, love him without meaſure, fear him with Torment, truſt him without Deſpondency, ſerve him without Wearineſs, without Interruption or Diſtraction, being perfectly like unto God, as well in Holineſs, as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality. Lord ſtrengthen our Faith in the Belief of this deſirable Happineſs (when and where nothing ſhall corrupt our Purity, nothing ſhall diſturb our Peace) and ſet our Souls a longing for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of it.

So then with the mind I my ſelf ſerve the Law of God: but with the fleſh the law of ſin.

Here the Apoſtle acknowledges two Principles in himſelf, Grace and Sin, a ſweet and bitter Fountain, from whence did flow ſuitable Streams. The Law of the mind inclined to ſerve the Law of God, but the Law in his Members diſpoſed him to obey the Law of Sin. The habitual Bent of a good Man's heart is to ſerve the Law of God; he loves it, and delights to obey it. Yet ſometimes, contrary to his firmeſt Reſolutions, through the Power of Temptation and indwelling Corruption, he is carried aſide contrary to his Covenant and his Conſcience; but he laments it; it is his Grief, his Shame, the Sorrow of his Heart, the Burthen of his Soul, that ever he ſhould be ſo falſe and unworthy. In fine, if a good Man, at a particular time, does the Evil that he hates, he always hates the Evil which he does. Bleſſed be God Sin ſhall never hurt us, if it doth not pleaſe us. As God will not finally judge us, ſo we ought not cenſoriouſly to judge one another, or injuriouſly to judge our ſelves by a ſingle Act, by a particular Action, but by the habitual and conſtant Bent of our Reſolutions, and the general Courſe and Tenour of our Converſations. Bleſſed be God for the Covenant of Grace.

CHAP. VIII.

This Chapter is a Summary of Evangelical Duty, and a Magazine of Chriſtian Comfort: We cannot wiſh to be more holy than to do what is here enjoined, nor more happy than to poſſeſs what is here promiſed. For Sublimity of Matter, for Variety of Evangelical Truths, for admirable Support and Comfort to Believers, this Chapter is not inferior to any part whatſoever of the Holy Scriptures. Here the Believers Union with Chriſt, and Exemption from Condemnation, the Spirit's Agency in freeing from the Dominion of Sin, the Law's Inability to juſtifie and ſave, the Incarnation and Satisfaction of Chriſt, are ſet forth and declared. In ſhort, the whole Chapter is conſolatory; there is a Vein of heavenly Comfort running through the whole Body of it. With this it begins, and with this it ends. It begins with no Condemnation to Believers, ver. 1. *it ends with no Separation from the love of God,* ve. 38, 39. *Let the ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian ſtudy, weigh, digeſt, believe and apply what is laid down in this Chapter, and let him walk dejectedly if he can. This Chapter before us may be divided into three parts. The firſt contains powerful Supports for ſuch as groan under the burthen of indwelling Sin. The ſecond contains Conſolation under Sufferings and Afflictions. The third abounds with high and holy Triumphs over both Sin and Sufferings, to the end of the Chapter.*

1 **T*Here is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.**

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle doth not ſay there is no Corruption in them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, but there is no Condemnation to them. Perfection in Holineſs is a Saint's Aim in this Life, his Attainment only in the next. (2.) He doth not ſay there is no Correction belongs to them, but no Condemnation; corrected they may be, condemned they never ſhall be; yea, they are therefore corrected, that they may never be condemned. (3) The Apoſtle doth not ſay there is nothing that deſerves Condemnation, nothing damnable in them, but no actual Condemnation belonging to them. (4.) He doth not ſay there is no Condemnation to this or that particular Believer, to himſelf, and ſuch as had attained to the like meaſures and degrees of Grace with himſelf; but he extends the Privilege to all Believers indefinitely, there is *no Condemnation to them*: that is, to any of them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. (5.) He ſays not, there *ſhall* be no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, but there is *now* none; he hath everlaſting Life, and is already paſſed from Death to Life. (6.) Our Apoſtle doth not ſay there are not many Condemnations belonging to them, but not any ȣ̓δὲ ἓν not one, either from Law or Goſpel; for the Goſpel has its condemnatory Sentence as well as the Law; yea, the higheſt and soreſt Condemnation is that which the Goſpel denounces, *John* 3. 19. This is *the* Condemnation, *&c. Learn hence,* (1.) That it is a great Felicity and Happineſs not to be obnoxious to Condemnation. (2.) That this Felicity and Happineſs is the Portion of all thoſe, and only thoſe, that are in Chriſt Jeſus; not by external Fœderation, and viſible Profeſſion only, but by vertue of a perſonal Implantation into him by Faith. *Learn,* (3.) That ſuch as are *thus* in Jeſus Chriſt, they obey not the Inclinations of corrupt Nature, but the holy Motions of the bleſſed Spirit of God. (*Learn,* 4.) That an uniform and conſtant courſe of holy walking in the paths of ſincere Obedience, is both the indubitable Mark and Character, and alſo the indiſpenſable Duty and Obligation of all ſuch as are freed by Chriſt from Condemnation.

2 **For the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.**

If by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus be meant the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is called a Miniſtration of the Spirit, then the Note is, that the Goſpel or new Covenant is a Law, that it is the Law of the Spirit in Chriſt Jeſus, and that it ſets the ſincere Chriſtian at liberty from the Slavery of Sin, and the condemning Power of the Law. If by the Law of the Spirit of Life be underſtood a real and vital Principle of regenerating Grace, working a new and heavenly Life in the Soul with great Power and Efficacy; then we *learn* (1.) That the holy and bleſſed Spirit of God is a Spirit of Life. (1) Eſſentially and formally in himſelf; as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo the *Spirit* hath Life in himſelf alſo. And (2) effectively or caſually with reſpect to us. He is a quickning, or Life giving Spirit, being the original Spring and fontal Cauſe of that ſpiritual Life which is in a gracious Soul. *Learn* (2) That every Perſon, before the Spirit of Life takes hold of him, is under the Law of Sin and Death. *Learn* (3.) That ſuch as are truly regenerate are made free from the Law of Sin and Death. (4.) That it is by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, that any Soul is made free from the Law of Sin and Death.

3 **For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh:**

That is, when Mankind could by no means be freed from Sin and Death, God ſent his own and only Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin, that our Liberty might be fully accompliſhed. *Obſerve here,* (1) The Impotency and Weakneſs of the Law declared; there is ſomething which the Law cannot do, it cannot juſtifie, it cannot ſave, becauſe it requires that which the fallen Creature can never perform, and cannot make Reparation for what the fallen Creature has done. *Learn hence,* That the Moral Law of God, though an holy and excellent Law, and deſigned by God for holy and excellent Ends; yet having now to do with fallen Man, it is become weak, and altogether unable to juſtifie and ſave. *Obſerve* (2) The Reaſon of the Law's Impotency and Weakneſs aſſigned; *It is weak through the fleſh*: That is, through our corrupt and depraved Natures. Its weakneſs doth not ariſe from it ſelf, but from us; the Law properly is not weak to us, but we are weak to that. The Law retains its Authority of commanding, but we have loſt our Power of obeying. No meer Man ſince the Fall was able perfectly to obſerve the Law of God: none ever could keep the Law of God perfectly, but the firſt *Adam*, none ever could and did keep it perfectly, but the ſecond *Adam*. *Obſerve* (3.) The way and means which the Wiſdom of God found out for relieving the Law's Impotency, and for the fallen Sinner's Recovery: *He ſent his own ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh. Learn hence,* (1) That Jeſus Chriſt was God's own Son, the Son of himſelf, his natural Son, co-equal, co-eſſential, and co-eternal with the Father, partaking of his Father's Eſſence by an eternal and ineffable Generation. *Learn* (2) That Jeſus Chriſt was ſent, and ſent by God the Father; he was ſent, therefore he had a Being before his Incarnation; for that which was not, could not be ſent; he was ſent by the Father, therefore he was and is a Perſon, and a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father; the one ſends, and the other is ſent. But what doth God's ſending Chriſt imply? *Anſw.* His appointing and ordaining of him before all time to the Work and Office of a Mediator; his qualifying and fitting of him in time for that great Work and Office; and his authoritative Injunction of him to take upon him our Nature, and in that Nature to make Satisfaction for our Sin. *Learn* (3) That Chriſt, God's own Son, was ſent in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh; not in the Likeneſs of Fleſh; it was real Fleſh that Chriſt aſſumed, but like unto ſinful Fleſh; he was dealt with and handled, treated and uſed, juſt as guilty and ſinful Men are; accuſed of Gluttony, Wine-bibbing, Sorcery, Blaſphemy, and what not; arraigned, condemned, executed for an Impoſtor, Deceiver; Blaſphemer, and Breaker of the Law. Thus tho no Sinner, yet was he a reputed Sinner, and appeared in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh. *Learn* (4) That the End for which Chriſt was ſent by God, was through the Sacrifice of his Death to condemn Sin, that is, to expiate and take away the Guilt of Sin, ſo as that it ſhall never be charged upon Believers to their eternal Condemnation. For Sin he condemned Sin in the Fleſh. Bleſſed be God, condemning Sin is condemned by a condemned Saviour.

4 That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

Our Apoſtle here aſſigns another End and Cauſe for which God ſent his Son into the World; namely, to do what the Law commanded, as well as to ſuffer what the Law threatened, perfectly to fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Law for us. which it was impoſſible for us to do for our ſelves; for the ſake of which we are accounted righteous in the ſight of God. *Learn hence*, (1) That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt being made under the Law, fulfilled the Law; whatſoever the Law did or could demand, is fully ſatisfied and fulfilled by Chriſt. *Learn* (2) That Chriſt having fulfilled the Law on our behalf, whatever can be required of us by way of puniſhment is diſcharged likewiſe. *Learn* (3) That tho' the Righteouſneſs of the Law be fulfilled for us by Chriſt, yet the Goſpel-Righteouſneſs muſt be performed by us our ſelves. Chriſt has anſwered the Demands of the Law for us, but will never fulfil the Conditions of the Goſpel for us. We muſt repent our ſelves, obey our ſelves, or Chriſt's Obedience will profit us nothing; none can ſafely or comfortably pretend to an Intereſt in Chriſt's Obedience, either active or paſſive, but only ſuch who in their courſe are acted and influenced by the Spirit, and not by the Fleſh. *That righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.*

5 For they that are after the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh: but they that are after the ſpirit, the things of the ſpirit.

Obſerve here, (1) A difference of Perſons mentioned. Thoſe that are after the Fleſh, and them that are after the Spirit. (2) A Difference of Properties belonging to theſe Perſons; the one minds the things of the Fleſh, the other the things of the Spirit. They *mind them*, that is, they reliſh and ſavour them, they lay out their thoughts about them, and let out their Endeavours after them. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there are but two ſorts of Men in the World; ſome after the Fleſh, and ſome after the Spirit. (2.) That theſe two different ſorts of Men have two different Objects, which they ſavour and reliſh; namely, the things of the Fleſh, and the things of the Spirit. (3) That all Men diſcover the true Temper of their Minds, and the Complexion and Diſpoſition of their Souls, by their Reſpect which they give to either of theſe Objects, by minding the things of the Fleſh, and the things of the Spirit; that is, by minding them willingly and chearfully, reſolvedly and conſtantly.

6 For to be carnally minded, *is* death; but to be ſpiritually minded, *is* life and peace.

In the former Verſe we had a Deſcription of thoſe that are Carnal, and them that are ſpiritual. In this Verſe we have the End of the one and the Iſſue of the other; the End of the one is Death, the Iſſue of the other is ſpiritual Life, Joy and Peace. *Obſerve* (1) The End and Condition of all carnally minded Perſons, ſo remaining, and ſtill continuing, it is Death; always demeritoriouſly, that which deſerves Death; and ſometimes actually, it procures and haſtens the Sinner's Death; but eſpecially it expoſeth to an endleſs and eternal Death. *Obſerve* (2) The ſweet Fruit and joyful Iſſue of ſpiritual mindedneſs, it is *Life and Peace*. (1) It is Life: it is eternal Life initially, and it leads to eternal Life ultimately. Grace is the firſt degree of Glory, and Glory but the higheſt degree of Grace. (2) It is Peace: to be ſpiritually minded, lays the Foundation of Peace with God, with Conſcience, with the World; the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is Peace, Quietneſs and Aſſurance for ever.

7 Becauſe the carnal mind *is* enmity againſt God: for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

By the carnal Mind is meant the rational Powers corrupted by our ſenſitive Appetite, or a Mind enſlaved by ſenſual Luſts. Such a Temper of Mind is oppoſite to, yea, Enmity againſt God and Goodneſs. *Learn hence* (1) That carnal Perſons are no better than Enemies unto God: there is a perfect Contrariety in their Affections, Inclinations, and Actions to the Will of God. They are called Haters of God: not that the hate him as a Creator, but as a Lawgiver; they hate his Holineſs, not his Goodneſs. *Learn* (2) That whilſt Men remain carnally minded, there is no breaking off this Enmity betwixt God and them; *the carnal mind*, whilſt ſuch, *is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*: not that this Impotency and Inability will excuſe from Guilt, becauſe it is not a created, but a ſelf-contracted, Impotency; not a natural, but a moral Impotency; which ariſes from a perverſe diſpoſition of Will, is joined with a delight in Sin, and a ſtrong Averſion from the holy Commands of God. Man muſt thank himſelf, and not God, for his lame hand: *that he cannot be ſubject to the Law of God*, is occaſioned by his natural Enmity and contracted hardneſs of heart againſt God.

8 So then they that are in the fleſh, cannot pleaſe God.

To be in the Fleſh, is not barely to have the Fleſh in us, but prevailing in us; to be wholly poſſeſt by the Fleſh, to be drench'd and drowned in Sin; inſtead of fighting under Chriſt's Banner againſt Sin, to fight under the Banner of corrupt Nature againſt Chriſt. Such *cannot pleaſe God*; nay, they cannot but diſpleaſe him, both in their Perſons and in their Actions; for none can pleaſe him that are unſuitable and unlike unto him, becauſe all liking is founded in Likeneſs, and all Complacency in Correſpondency. *Learn hence*, That carnal Men neither do nor can pleaſe God, becauſe not renewed by God, nor reconciled to him: *Such as are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.*

9 But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit, if ſo be that the ſpirit of God dwell in you.

Obſerve, He doth not ſay, the Fleſh is not in you, but ye are not in the fleſh, ſo as to be acted and influenced, guided and governed, miſled and carried away by it. Sincere and ſerious Chriſtians, although they live in the Fleſh, yet do they not live after the Fleſh: *But ye are in the ſpirit*, that is, illuminated, inclined and enabled by the Spirit to do the Will of God: *And the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, as a Spirit of Truth to enlighten your Underſtandings, as a Spirit of Holineſs to renew your Will and Affection, as a Spirit of Love to inſpire the Soul with Divine and unutterable Deſires after the Favour and Grace of God; and the Phraſe *Dwelling* imports Preſence and Propriety, Fellowſhip and Intimacy, Operation and Activity, Reſidence and Conſtancy of Abode.

9 Now if any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.

Obſerve here, (1) That the Holy Ghoſt is called the Spirit of Chriſt paſſively, and by way of Reception, as being beſtowed upon him, and received by him; alſo Actively, and by way of Collation, as being beſtowed by him, and conveyed from him. *Obſ.* (2) That all ſincere Chriſtians have the Spirit of Chriſt, they have him for the Bleſſing of Converſion, they have him for the Benefit of Communion, he dwells in them by his ſanctifying Impreſſions, powerful Aſſiſtances, quickning and comforting Influences, he pours in both the Oil of Grace, and alſo the Oil of Joy and Gladneſs into their Hearts. *Obſ.* (3) There are ſome that have not the Spirit of Chriſt; ſuch as are Carnal and Senſual have not the Spirit, ſuch as are Cenſorious and Envious have not the Spirit, ſuch as are Malicious and Revengeful have not the Spirit, ſuch as are Implacable, and of an irreconcileable Temper of Spirit, have not the Spirit of Chriſt. *Obſ.* (4) That all ſuch as have not the Spirit of Chriſt, they are none of Chriſt's, they have no Spiritual Relation to him, they have no ſpecial Intereſt in him, and can expect no preſent Conſolation or future Happineſs and Salvation from him; the Propoſition is indefinite, and without Exception, *If any Man*, Prince or Peaſant, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free, *have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of Chriſt's.*

And if Chriſt *be* in you, the body *is* dead, becauſe of ſin; but the ſpirit is life, becauſe of righteouſnneſs.

If Chriſt be in you, that is, by his Holy Spirit, *the Body is dead*, that is, ſtill ſubject to Death, *becauſe of Sin*, which will never ceaſe to be in us till we die; *but the ſpirit is life*, that is, will give Life to it again, *becauſe of righteouſneſs*, or of that Juſtification which is unto Life. *Learn hence*, That Chriſt in Believers is a ſure Pledge and Earneſt to them of Eternal Life, both in Body and Soul; Chriſt is in Believers two ways, (1) Objectively, as the Object is in the Faculty, or the things we think of, love and delight in, are in our Hearts and Minds: thus Chriſt is ſaid to dwell in our Hearts by Faith. (2) Effectively, ſo Chriſt is in Believers by his Spirit, whoſe gracious Influences produces Life in them and likeneſs unto him. *Learn*, (2) That the Bodies of Believers (in whom Chriſt dwells) are ſubject to Death as well as other Mens, and that becauſe of Sin both Original and Actual; Sin brought Mortality into their Natures, Death enter'd the World by Sin, and Sin goes out of the World by Death; true, they are by Chriſt delivered from the Sting, but not from the Stroke of Death; *Their Bodies are dead becauſe of ſin*. *Learn*, (3) That Believers, tho' Mortal, and ſubject to Death, in regard of their Bodies, yet they live, and are in a State of Immortality, in regard of their Souls; *The ſpirit is liſe*, that is, the Spirit of the Believer is Immortal, yet not Excluſively, but Emphatically, not as if other Mens Souls did not live after Death, but it is a Life worſe than Death, 'tis a ſpecial Immortality that the Believer is partaker of. *Learn*, (4) *The ſpirit it liſe becauſe of righteouſneſs*. If we underſtand it of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, that gives us a Right and Title to Salvation, if of our own inherent Righteouſneſs, that is, a Qualification to fit and prepare us for Eternal Life and Salvation, take it in either Senſe it teaches us, that without Righteouſneſs there can be no hope of Eternal Life and Happineſs, we can be neither fit for the Employment of Heaven, nor for the Enjoyments of Heaven without it, *Coloſ.* 1. *v.* 12.

11 But if the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his ſpirit that dwelleth in you.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, altho' your Body muſt die, yet it ſhall live again in the Morning of the Reſurrection, and that by Virtue of the Spirit of Chriſt which dwelleth in you, and is the Bond of Union with him your Head; others ſhall be raiſed by Virtue of your Union with him as your Head: They are raiſed *Officio Judicis*, you *Beneficio Mediatoris*. *Obſerve here*, an Happy Reſurrection promiſed, and the Condition upon which that Promiſe is made and inſured. (1) An Happy Reſurrection promiſed, the ſame Holy Spirit of God that raiſed Chriſt ſhall raiſe you, becauſe the ſame Spirit dwelleth in you. *Learn thence*, That the Bodies of the Saints are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, his Dwelling Place, living, dying, and dead; if the Holy Spirit dwells in us here, Sanctifying our Berſons, the ſame Spirit will not forſake our Bodies in the Grave, but raiſe them up to Glory and Happineſs. Death diſſolves all other Unions, except that betwixt the Believer and the Spirit of Chriſt, but the Grave it ſelf cannot ſeparate them. *Obſ.* (2) The Condition upon which this Promiſe is made and inſured, *If the ſpririt of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you*. *Where note*, (1) A Bleſſed Relation: the Holy Ghoſt is called the Spirit of the Father, becauſe the Father is the Fountain and Original of the Deity, and doth communicate it both to the Son and to the Spirit, and to teach us to ſeek unto the Father for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, he being the Donor and Diſpenſer of it. *Note*, (2) A Glorious Operation, the Spirit raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead. *Where obſerve*, that the Holy Scriptures aſcribe Chriſt's Reſurrection to all the Three Perſons in the Glorious Trinity: the Father raiſed him, *Acts* 10. 40. Him God raiſed up the Third Day; Chriſt raiſed himſelf, *John* 10. 18. I have Power to lay down my Life, and to take it up again; the Holy Ghoſt raiſed up Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. He was put to Death in the Fleſh, but Quickened by the Spirit. *Note*, (3) A gracious Poſſeſſion and ſpecial Inhabitation, *He dwelleth in us*, in our Hearts by his Gifts and Graces, in our Bodies as his living Temples, which proves him to be really God, for none but a God poſſeſſes a Temple, and alſo to be a diſtinct Perſon, not an Energy or Operation, for none but a Perſon can be ſaid to inhabit or dwell, and ſhould teach us to take heed of defiling our Bodies by any Uncleanneſs, which are or ought to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt: *For if any man defile the Temple of God, him will God deſtroy.*

12 Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh.

That is, ſeeing the Holy Spirit dwelleth in us, quickning our Souls for the preſent, and raiſing our Bodies for time to come, furniſhing the one with Grace here, and fitting the other for Glory hereafter, therefore we ought to live unto God, and not to the Fleſh; we are not Debtors to the Fleſh, to live after the Fleſh. *Where note*, That the Word Fleſh is not to be taken in a Phyſical, but in a Moral Senſe, not in a Phyſical Senſe for the Body of Man; every one is a Debtor to his own Body, he owes it Food and Cloathing, Nouriſhment and Proviſion; the Beaſt muſt be fed, tho' not pamper'd, leſt it kick and throw its Rider. But Fleſh is here to be taken in a Moral Senſe for Sin, for the Unregenerate and Unſanctified part in Man, and then the Senſe is, that no Man owes any thing to the Service and Satisfaction of his ſinful Luſts and inordinate Deſires, none of us owe Sin, Satan, or the World, an Hours Service, theſe are not warrantable Creditors for any of us to be indebted to. *Learn hence*, That Believers are not indebted, or owe any thing to the Fleſh, but all to the Spirit; the Fleſh is a Cheater, an Uſurper, an Oppreſſor, what it calls for it has no right to demand; but the Spirit is a juſt Creditor, and we are greatly indebted to him, as the Author and Producer of Grace in us, and as he is the Preſerver and Encreaſer of that Grace in us which he has begun. O Bleſſed Spirit! we owe all that we are and all that we have to thee, all that we have in Hand, and all that we have in Hope, thou haſt a Right to all, yea, more than all that we can pay thee, ſo infinitely are we indebted to thee: But for Sin and the Fleſh, we never promiſed any thing to it, we never got any thing by it, nothing but Shame and Sorrow from it, and therefore we are not indebted to it. Lord, keep us from being Debtors to the moſt cruel and ſevere Creditors in the World, Sin and Satan, for the more we pay to them, the more we run in Arrears with thee, to whoſe Juſtice we muſt pay the uttermoſt Farthing.

13 For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the ſpirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.

Our Apoſtle here adds a farther Reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould not live after the Fleſh; before an Argument was drawn. *A Debito*, now *a Damno*, he told us in the former Verſe we owed nothing to the Fleſh, here he acquaints us what Loſers we ſhall be by living to the Fleſh, *If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die*; which Words are a dreadful Commination and ſevere Threatning. In which *Obſerve*, (1) The Perſons threatned, ye, the believing *Romans*, called to be Saints, *Chap.* 1. 7. even they are threatned with Hell who were Candidates of Heaven; he threatens them with Death to keep them from Death. *Learn thence*, That the Miniſters of God may uſe Arguments drawn from Hell Torments to diſſwade the holieſt and beſt of Saints from Sin, and to perſwade them to Duty. *If ye live after the fleſh*, &c. *Obſ.* (2) The Threatning it ſelf, *Ye ſhall die*. *Learn thence*, That Almighty God threatneth all thoſe that live after the Fleſh with nothing leſs than Eternal Death and Damnation; to live after the Fleſh, is to have the Fleſh our governing Principle, our Work and Trade, our Scope and End; and to die for living after the Fleſh, is to undergo a Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Death, an Everlaſting Baniſhment from the Bleſſed Preſence of him in whoſe Preſence is fulneſs of Joy. *But if ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live*. The former Words were a Threatning to excite our Induſtry, theſe are a Promiſe to prevent our Dejection. In which *Obſerve*, (1) The Act ſpecified, or Duty enjoined, and that is Mortification; *if ye mortifie*, that is, kill every Sin; 'tis not enough to oppoſe Sin, but we muſt deſtroy Sin, nothing but the Deſtruction of Sin muſt content us. *Note*, Alſo the Continuance of the Act, *If ye do mortifie*; tho' they had already mortified Sin, yet they are called upon to proceed in the Work; the Ax muſt be daily laid to the Root, and the Knife muſt ſtill ſtick in the Throat of Sin till it drop down dead; Mortification muſt be continual, and it muſt neceſſarily be painful; nothing that has Life will be put to Death without pain and ſtruggling; the longer we delay to mortifie Sin, the more painful ſhall we make it to our ſelves. *Obſ.* (2) The proper Object of this Duty, *The deeds of the body*, by which all Sin is to be underſtood relating both to the inward and outward Man, tho' the latter only be mentioned, becauſe the Body is that which is *Manifeſtativum peccati*, it is that wherein Sin doth eſpecially ſhew and diſcover it ſelf. *Learn hence*, Mortification muſt be univerſal as well as continual, not one Deed, but Deeds, not the Deeds of the Body only, but of the Soul alſo muſt be mortified; all evil Diſpoſitions, depraved Habits, corrupt Affections, as well as irregular Actions, muſt be watched againſt, and the whole Body of Sin become the Object of Mortification. *Obſ.* (3) The Agents in this Work, and they are two. (1) The more principal Agent is the Holy Spirit. (2) The leſs principal is the Chriſtian himſelf, *If ye through the Spirit*; we can do nothing without him, he will do nothing without us. *Learn hence*, That in mortifying Sin the Spirit's Aſſiſtance and our Endeavours muſt concur: Mortification indeed is not in the Work of Nature, yet Man muſt be an Agent in it, not in his own, but in God's Strength; we have brought Sin (that Rebel) into our own Souls, and we muſt uſe our own Endeavours to caſt it out; true, it cannot be done alone by our ſelves, but it will never be done without our ſelves; we can ſin of our ſelves, but cannot overcome Sin by our ſelves; we know how to be Slaves, but are unable of our ſelves to be Conquerors. The Believer is *Principium Activum*, but the Spirit is *Principium Effectivum*. *Obſ.* (4) The Reward promiſed to the Performers and Performance of this Duty, *Ye ſhall live*, namely, a Life of Grace and Holineſs, a Life of Joy and Comfort, a Life of Glory and Happineſs. Our Life of Grace is an Evidence and an Earneſt of the Life of Glory: Grace is Glory in the Bud, and Glory is Grace in the Fruit. *Learn*, That a Life of Grace and Comfort on Earth, together with a Life of Glory and Happineſs in Heaven, is and ſhall be the aſſured Portion and Priviledge of all thoſe, who by the Spirit's Aſſiſtance and their own concurring Endeavours do mortifie Sin, and crucifie the Deeds of the Body; *If ye mortifie*, &c. *ye ſhall live*, that is, Holily, Comfortably and Eternally; ye ſhall live a Life of exemplary Graciouſneſs, a Life of higheſt Delight and Pleaſure on Earth, and of Eternal Bleſſedneſs and Glory in Heaven.

14 For as many as are led by the ſpirit of God, they are the ſons of God.

Obſerve here, (1) A Glorious Privilege proclaimed, the being *the Sons of God*. (2.) A Deſcription of the Perſons to whom that Privilege doth belong, they are ſuch *as are led by the ſpirit of God*. *Learn*, (1) That the Holy Spirit of God doth perform the Office of a Guide and Leader to all the Children of God, he gives Life and Motion to them, by infuſing Gracious Habits, (*Ezek.* 36. 26) by exciting the Soul to act ſuitably thereunto, and by aſſiſting it in acting; he gives Direction and Guidance to them he directs their Actions, by enlightning their Underſtanding, by guiding their Inclinations, by influencing and inclining their Wills; and where he guides he governs. A General that leads an Army orders its Motions and Marches; as Chriſt was, ſo the Holy Spirit is, a Leader and Commander to the People. *Learn*, (2) That ſuch as are thus led by the Spirit of God, may know and conclude themſelves to be the Sons of God, becauſe Holineſs is a certain Evidence of Adoption. Such as are led by God's Spirit are undoubtedly God's Children, and ſuch as are not his Children refuſe to be led by his Spirit, but live under the uncontrouled Activity of their own.

15 For ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Obſerve, (1) That there is a Spirit of Bondage, which the Children of God do for ſome time receive, working fear in them. By the Spirit of Bondage underſtand thoſe Convictions and Terrors of Conſcience which awakened Perſons labour under, when the Law of God charges them home with the Guilt of Sin, and lays them under direful Apprehenſions of the Wrath of God. This Spirit of Bondage is neither to be ſlighted, nor yet to be reſted in, not to be ſlighted, becauſe it is preparatory to Converſion, and not to be reſted in, becauſe it is like a Spark of Hell kindled in the Conſcience, it is as a bearded Arrow ſhot into the Conſcience, which only the Hand of God can pluck out. *Obſ.* (2) That the Spirit of Bondage to God's Children is ſucceeded by, and ends in a Spirit of Adoption; the Signs of ſuch a Spirit are a Child-like Love to God, a Child-like Fear and Hope, a Child-like Truſt and Dependance, and a Child-like Obedience to his Commands. *Obſ.* (3) That God's Holy Spirit, after he has once been a Spirit of Adoption, never again becomes a Spirit of Bondage to the ſame Soul; *Ye have not received the ſpirit of Bondage again to fear*. *Obſ.* (4) That one principal Work of the Spirit of Adoption is to enliven and embolden the Soul in Prayer, *whereby we cry*, Abba, *Father*.

16 The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.

Obſerve here, (1) That our Adoption into God's Family is evidenced by the Teſtimony of the Spirit, bearing witneſs to and with our Spirits; here are two Witneſſes produced to teſtifie the Truth of a Believer's Adoption, namely, God's Spirit and his own, the Spirit teſtifies by laying down Marks of Trial in the Holy Scriptures, by working ſuch Graces in us as are peculiar to God's Children, and by helping us to diſcover this Work in our own Souls more clearly and evidently; our own Spirits teſtifie by reflecting upon our Primitive Converſion, upon our Habitual Diſpoſition, upon our General Converſation; the Spirit teſtifies our Adoption by evidencing to us our Sanctification: And all this is done not by ſudden Impulſes, and immediate Inſpirations, which is the witneſſing of the Spirit that Enthuſiaſts pretend to, but the Spirit witneſſes in a way of Argumentation. Thus whoever repents, believes and obeys the Goſpel, ſays the Scripture, ſhall be ſaved; but the Spirit helps us to ſee that we do ſo, and accordingly enables us to infer and conclude that we ſhall be ſaved. *Obſ.* (2) That a Chriſtian may in this Life, without a Divine Revelation, attain a well-grounded Aſſurance of his Adoption and Salvation; for the Spirit of God both bears Witneſs to him, and bears witneſs with him, as touching the Sincerity of his Heart and Life. *Obſerve laſtly*, That there is no ſafe and ſecure way to prove our Adoption, but by Teſtimonials brought of our Sanctification; the Privy Seal of our Adoption muſt be thus atteſted under the Broad Seal of our Sanctification; the Goodneſs of our State and Condition muſt be evidenced by the Holineſs of our Lives and Converſation.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted and inſured the Believer's Adoption in the foregoing Verſe, doth in this Verſe infer the Certainty of his Inheritance; *if Children, then heirs*. *Learn thence*, That all God's Children, by ſpecial Grace and Adoption, are undoubted Heirs of a Bleſſed and Glorions Inheritance. He next declares who they are Heirs of, and who they are Heirs with; they are *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*. (1) They are Heirs of God, they do inherit God himſelf, their Father is their Portion; Man leaves his Heirs what he has, God gives his Heirs what he is; he which gives them the Inheritance, is the Inheritance it ſelf which he gives them, by being not only Heirs to him, but Heirs of him; they have an Intereſt in all his Attributes; his Wiſdom is theirs to guide and direct them, his Power is theirs to ſuſtain and preſerve them, his Mercy and Pity is theirs to relieve and ſuccour them. O Happy and Bleſſed Privilege of God's Adopted ones! They are not only Heirs of Heaven, but Heirs of God himſelf; they have him for their Portion and exceeding great Reward. (2) They are Heirs with Chriſt; as Chriſt is God's Heir, ſo are they Heirs with Chriſt; Chriſt is God's Heir by Nature, as he is the Son of God by Nature; whatever is God's is his, and they are Heirs with Chriſt; they are Members of him, and ſhall be Heirs with him, 1 *Cor.* 3. *ult.* All is yours, and ye are Chriſt's, *Eph.* 1. 11. In him we have obtained the Inheritance, we are Heirs in his Right. O Bleſſed Jeſus! How endearing are our Obligations to thee? All that we have is from thee, by thee, and in thee: we are choſen in thee, juſtified by thee, ſanctified through thee, and ſhall be glorified with thee; *For if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*; It follows,

If ſo be that we ſuffer with *him*, that we may be be alſo glorified together.

Here we ſee what accompanieth our Adoption, namely, preſent Affliction we are now to ſuffer, but not alone, we ſuffer with Chriſt. *If ſo be that we ſuffer with him.* This *if* is not a Word of Ambiguity and Doubting, but a Word of Certainty and Aſſurance, and ſignifies as much as ſeeing that we ſuffer with him. *Learn hence*, (1) That a State of Suffering and Affliction on Earth is one Condition of obtaining our Glorious Inheritance in Heaven; we muſt ſuffer that God may be glorified, our Graces improved, our Love to the World mortified, our Longings for Heaven encreaſed. *Learn*, (2) That the Sufferings of Believers are the Sufferings of Chriſt, they ſuffer with him and he with them, they ſuffer with him in a way of Conformity, he with them in a way of tender Sympathy; they are ſenſible of any Indignity offered to him, and he is ſenſible of any Injury offered to them; the ſuffering Saint pledges Chriſt in his own Cup; farther, they ſuffer with him when they ſuffer for him, when they ſuffer in his Cauſe, and for his Sake, that is, for doing their Duty; finally, they ſuffer with him when they ſuffer by an Aſſiſtance derived from him, when by his Enablement, and by a Power communicated from him, they ſuffer hard things for his Name and Truth. *Learn*, (3) That as Sufferings go before Glory, ſo Glory ſhall certainly follow Sufferings: *If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall be alſo glorified together*. Suffering is the beaten Path to Glory, and that which makes it ſo much the more Glorious; Suffering fits us for Glory, and diſpoſes us for the Reception and Fruition of it; by the Croſs we are fitted for the Crown. *Learn*, (4) That ſuffering Members ſhall not only be glorified, but be conformable to their glorified Head in Glory; as they have here *ſuffered with him*, they ſhall hereafter *be glorified together*, not with equal Glory, but with the ſame kind of Glory. Three things are implied in our being glorified together with Chriſt. (1) Conformity; we ſhall be like him in Glory. (2) Concomitancy; we ſhall accompany him, and be preſent with him in Glory. (3) Conveyance or Derivation, we ſhall be glorified with him, that is, our Glory ſhall be derived from him ; his Glory ſhall be reflected upon us, and we ſhall ſhine in his Beams. O Happy Condition of God's Adopted and Afflicted Children! The Supports which you have under Suffering, the Comfort which you have in Suffering, the Benefits which you have by Suffering, and the Glory which will follow after Suffering, renders it not only tolerable, but deſirable ; well may they glory in Tribulation which expect ſuch a Glory after it.

18 For I reckon, that the ſufferings of this preſent time, *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us.

Obſerve here, (1) The Nature and Property of the Saints preſent Sufferings, they are ſhort, and momentary ; *the ſufferings of this preſent time.* If ſharp, they ſhall yet be ſhort ; tho' great, they cannot be long ; for their Afflictions cannot laſt longer than their Lives ; the one ſhall end when the other ends. O Bleſſed Condition of the Righteous, your Afflictions are only for this preſent time, the Grave will ſet you beyond the reach of Trouble. Ah! Wretched Condition of the Wicked, your Sufferings are not only *for this preſent time*, but for Eternal Ages ; your Worm will never die your Fire never be quenched, but you ſhall be puniſhed with Everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord. *Obſerve.* (1) The Nature and Property of the Saints future Glory, 'tis hidden , 'tis *a glory that ſhall be revealed. Learn thence*, That the Glory which God has prepared for his ſuffering Saints and Children, it is an hidden Glory, it is hidden from the Eye of the World, and lyes altogether out of their ſight and view, and it is in a great meaſure hidden from the Saints themſelves, it is now the Object of their Faith, but e're long it ſhall be the Object of their Sight. *Obſerve*, (3) The vaſt Diſproportion between the Chriſtian's preſent Suffering and his future Glory and Happineſs ; the one is not worthy to be compared with the other ; *the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed. Learn thence*, That the Weight of the Saints Croſs is not comparable with the Glory of their Crown ; the Happineſs of their future glorified State doth infinitely outweigh the Miſery of their preſent afflicted State, they are not to be named in the ſame Day. *Obſerve*, (4) The Apoſtle's Judgment or Determination about this Matter, *I reckon* I have caſt up the Matter ; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, and have had my ſhare of Sufferings, but I make light of them, they are not worth ſpeaking of, compared with the Glory I ſhall receive as the Reward of my Sufferings. *Learn hence*, That ſuch of the Saints of God as have been exerciſed and tried with the heavieſt Sufferings, they make lighteſt of them, having the higheſt Account of Heavens Glory. *I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory*, &c.

19 For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. 20 For the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of him who hath ſubjected *the ſame* in hope: 21 Becauſe the creature it ſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now :

Obſerve here, (1) That there is a time indeed a coming when all the Sons of God, all his Adopted Children, ſhall be made manifeſt? How manifeſt. (1) In their Perſons, it ſhall then appear who are God's Sons, and who are Satan's Servants ; they ſhall then be made manifeſt to themſelves, to one another, yea, to the very Conſciences of the Wicked. (2) In their Actions, 1 *Cor.* 3. 13. every Man's Work ſhall be made manifeſt of what nature it is, what they have done, whoſe Intereſt they were in. (3) In their Condition their Glory and Happineſs ſhall be made manifeſt ; *When Chriſt their life ſhall appear, they ſhall appear with him in glory. Obſerve*, (2) That the Creature, or whole Creation, expecteth, waiteth, and longeth for the time of this Manifeſtation. Some by the Creature and the whole Creation here underſtand the *Gentile* World, and then the ſenſe is, That the Heathens ſhall, by the Preaching of the Goſpel, be reſcued from their Idolatry, unto which they have been long enſlaved, and be brought into the Glorious Condition of Chriſt's Redeemed Ones, to whom the Glorious Inheritance of Heaven doth belong. But others by the Creature and the whole Creation underſtand this viſible World, Senſitive and Rational, Animate and Inanimate, and then the Senſe is, That the whole Frame and Courſe of the Creation is ſo ordered and diſpoſed of by God, as that it carries in it a vehement Deſire, and earneſt Longing for the full Manifeſtation of God's Glory in and towards his Children. *Obſerve*, (3) The preſent Condition which the Creature is ſubjected to thro' the Sin of Man, *it is made ſubject to vanity*, that is, to Corruption and Mortality, to Servitude and Servility ; the Sin of Man did not only ſtain the Glory of Man, but marr'd and ſpoil'd the Beauty of the whole Creation ; all Creatures are fallen from their firſt Perfection by the Fall of our firſt Parents. *Obſerve*, (4) The Reſtleſneſs and Uneaſineſs of the Creature under this Vanity and Servility, it groans like a Man under a Burthen, or like a traviling Woman in Labour. *Learn hence*, That the Sin of Man is burthenſome to the ſenſleſs Creature, it is in continual Labour to ſerve Man's Neceſſity, it is oft-times puniſhed together with Man for the Sin of Man, witneſs the Old World, and *Sodom*, and as they are oft-times conſtrained and compelled by Men to ſerve the Luſts of Men ; thus the whole Creation groaneth under the Bruthen of Man's Sin, when he himſelf groans not, and accordingly the Groans of the Creature they are ubraiding Groans, they upbraid our Stupidity and Unthankfulneſs, they are accuſing Groans, they will witneſs againſt us at the Bar of God, they are awakening Groans, to excite and ſtir us up to ſigh and long for a better State, and they are inſtructive Groans, to teach us our own Sin and their Vanity. *Obſerve*, (5) The Expectation which the Creature is under of a State of Liberty and Freedom from that Vanity and Corruption which they are now ſubject to for our Sin, it has *an earneſt Expectation* of being delivered from this Bondage. But how can the ſenſleſs and inanimate part of the Creation be ſaid to have *an earneſt Expectation*? Not properly, as if the Creature were able to put forth ſuch an Act directly, for then it muſt be ſuppoſed to have not only Life and Senſe, but Reaſon and Grace ; but the meaning is, That there is a vehement Inclination in the Creature to be reſtored to that firſt Condition which it was in before the Fall ; and accordingly it is ſaid to *wait for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God*, that is, for that Liberty and Freedom from Servility and Corruption, which according to their Capacity the Creatures hope for and expect, when the full Privileges and Dignities of the Sons of God ſhall be manifeſted. *Obſerve laſtly*, That the Liberty which God's Children are reſerved for and appointed to is a Glorious Liberty, that is, a Liberty which ſhall be attended with unſpeakable Glory. *The Creature ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

23 And not only *they*, but our ſelves alſo, which have the firſt fruits of the ſpirit, even we our ſelves groan within our ſelves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

And not only they, that is, all the Creatures in the viſible Creation, join in this, they groan together, they do not ſome groan, and others ſing, ſome travil in Pain, and others in Pleaſure, but they all groan and travil together in Pain until now ; this is, until the glorious Manifeſtation of the Sons of God ; but not only they do groan, but our ſelves alſo, who have the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, *&c. Obſerve here*, (1) A ſpecial Deſcription of God's Adopted Children, they have the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, that is, they have the Holy Spirit in its Sanctifying Gifts, and Graces, and Comforts, in ſome meaſure called here firſt Fruits, becauſe of the ſmalneſs of their quantity ; the firſt Fruits were but an handful, a little Portion in compariſon of the whole Crop, yet was it an Evidence and Pledge that God would give them the full Crop ; thus Grace is an Earneſt of Glory, it is a Pledge of Everlaſting Life, the beginnings of Grace here are certain foreruners of the Accompliſhments of Glory hereafter. *Obſerve*, (2) The Actions attributed to the forementioned Perſons, they groan, they wait. (1) They groan, *We who have the firſt fruits of the ſpirit do groan* ; they groan under the Burthen of Sin and Affliction, the Guilt of Sin, the Pollution of Sin, the ſad Remains of indwelling Sin, makes them groan ; their Proneneſs and Inclination to Evil, their Backwardneſs and Indiſpoſition to Good, makes them groan ; their too frequent Backſlidings, their daily Infirmities, make them groan ; their Sufferings alſo from God and from Man for God's ſake, cauſe them to groan ; but it is added, *they groan with themſelves*, that is, ſecretly to our ſelves, undiſcerned by the World, and in a manner peculiar to our ſelves, as Perſons influenced by Religion and Grace ; As Chriſtians have Joys and Comforts, ſo have they Griefs and Groans peculiar to themſelves. (2)

They wait, but for what? (1) For the Adoption, that is, for the compleating of their Adoption for the laſt finiſhing Stroke in their Sanctification, and for their perfect Glorification. (2) For the Redemption of their Bodies, that is, for their Reſurrection, for their Redemption from Mortality and Corruption, for the Redemption of their whole Man, Soul and Body, do Believers wait; their Bodies were Members of Chriſt, Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, Inſtruments of and Companions with the Soul in Holy Duties; and accordingly the Hour is a coming when the compleat Redemption both of Soul and Body ſhall be fully and finally perfected, in the mean time they groan and wait for it. *Learn from the whole*, That all Sanctified Chriſtians who have received the firſt Fruits of the Spirit, do groan and wait for a much better State than what they do at preſent enjoy.

24 For we are ſaved by hope: but hope that is ſeen, is not hope: for what a man ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we ſee not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

We are ſaved by hope, That is, we are at preſent ſupported by Hope, our preſent Expectation of our Future Glorious Condition beareth up our Spirits under all Sufferings, and carrieth us joyfully thro' all Difficulties; or *we are ſaved by hope*, that is, all the Salvation which we have at preſent is in Hope, not in Hand, in Expectation, not in Poſſeſſion; Heaven in Hope is more worth than the whole World in Hands; and ſeeing their is a Certainty of Hope, there is a Certainty of Salvation. *We are ſaved by hope.* *Obſerve*, next the Nature of Hope declared, 'tis an Expectation of good things promiſed, but not enjoyed; Viſion and Fruition puts an end to Hope; no Hopes for that he already enjoys; Hope is converſant about things unſeen, as well as Faith: Faith is the Evidence of things not ſeen, and Hope is the Expectation of thoſe things; the Object of Hope is a future Good, a poſſible Good, a promiſed Good, a Good promiſed by God, and believed by us. *Obſerve laſtly*, The neceſſary Adjunct, and the inſeparable Companion of Hope, and that is Patience, and waiting for the Good hoped for; *If we hope*, &c. *than do we with patience wait*, &c. *Learn hence*, That they only hope for Eternal Life aright, who continue in the purſuit of it with Patience and Perſeverance; there muſt be found with us a waiting Patience, a working Patience, a bearing and forbearing Patience, with a perſevering Continuance in well doing, if we hope for Glory, and Immortality, and Eternal Life.

26 Likewiſe the ſpirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but the ſpirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Learn hence, (1) That the holieſt and beſt of Saints labour oft-times under great Infirmities in the Work and Duty of Prayer, not knowing what to Pray for, or how to manage that important Affair as they ought; hence it was that the Apoſtles themſelves, being ſenſible of their own Diſability in this kind, they made their Addreſſes to Chriſt himſelf to teach and inſtruct them how to Pray, *Luke* 11. 1. *Learn*, (2) That it is the Work and Office of the Holy Spirit of God to help our Infirmities in Prayer, or as the Word ſignifies, to help together with us, to ſet his Shoulder to ours, and lift with us at the ſame Burthen; the Spirit of Chriſt and our own Spirit muſt both do their part in carrying on this Work; if ever we expect the Spirit's Aſſiſtance, we muſt exert our own Endeavours; more particularly the Spirit helps us in Prayer, by working in us a deep Senſe of our Spiritual Wants, by giving us an Inſight into the Promiſes, and enabling us to plead them at the Throne of Grace, by creating and ſtirring up Deſires in our Souls to have our Wants ſupplied, by encouraging and emboldening us to come to God in Prayer as to a Father, with an Humble Reverence and Child-like Confidence; but tho' the Holy Spirit be our Guide and Aſſiſtant in this Duty, yet not ſo as to give us occaſion to think that the Words of Prayer are immediately inſpired and dictated to us by the Holy Ghoſt; let us have a care that we miſtake not an idle fooliſh Loquacity, a frothy Eloquence, and affected Language, outward vehemency and boldneſs of Speech, a natural Fervency, or an acquired fluency of Expreſſion, for the Spirit's Help and Aſſiſtance in Prayer; implore the Spirit's Help, and he will help they Infirmities; he will ſhew thee thy Sins, to give the Matter of Confeſſion; he will ſhew thee thy Wants, to give thee Matter of Petition; he will ſhew thee Mercies and Bleſſings of God, to yeild thee Matter of Thinkſgiving; he will ſhew thee the Church's Miſeries and Neceſſities, to furniſh thee with Matter of Interceſſion. Thus the Spirit will aſſiſt thee, but never expect that he ſhould act without thee. *Learn* (3) What is the proper Work and Office of the holy Spirit in Prayer; it is to *make interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* But how is the Spirit our Interceſſor? Is not that Chriſt's Office? *Anſwer* Chriſt is an Interceſſor for us, the Holy Spirit is an Interceſſor in us. Chriſt, in reſpect of his meritorious Sufferings, is an Advocate, Mediator, and Interceſſor with the Father for us: the Holy Spirit intercedes in us, by enabling us for, and aſſiſting us in the Duty; by quickning our Affections, and enlarging our Deſires; by ſetting us a groaning after the Lord. Groaning notes the Strength and Ardency of Deſire, which through the Fervency of it puts the Soul to Pain, and an holy Impatiency, till it be heard. Lord, how flat and dead are our Hearts ſometimes in Prayer? How much are our Spirits ſtreightned? But if we want Words, let us not want Groans; let thy Spirit help us to groan out a Prayer when we want Ability to utter it; for ſilent Groans proceeding from thy Spirit ſhall be heard in thine Ears, when the loudeſt Cries ſhall not be heard without it.

27 And he that ſearcheth the hearts, knoweth what *is* the mind of the ſpirit, becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the Saints, according to *the will of* God.

Obſerve here, (1) The Title or Attribute given and appropriated unto God? *He ſearcheth* or knoweth *the heart.* He was the Maker of the Heart, and is the Diſpoſer of the Heart, and will judge every Man according to his Heart; and therefore he muſt know the Heart throughly and perfectly, certainly and infallibly; and it is the Joy of an upright Perſon, that God knoweth and ſearcheth the Heart. When the World condemns him for Inſincerity, he rejoyces that God knoweth his Integrity; and when he has it in the Purpoſe of his Heart to do Good, but wants Power in his Hand to accompliſh and effect it, this is his Conſolation, That God accepts it as done, what he did deſire and reſolve to do, 2 *Chorn.* 6. 8. *Obſerve* (2) The Action here attributed to the Heart-ſearching God; he *knoweth what is the mind of the ſpirit:* that is, he knoweth the Workings of the Holy Spirit, and of our own Spirits alſo, in the Duty of Prayer. It is a great Comfort to the Children of God, that the Lord knoweth what kind of Spirits is working in their Hearts when they are before him upon their Knees. Do we labour under difficulty of Utterance in Prayer? Are we attended with Diſtractions in Prayer? Do we at any time forget and leave out in Prayer what we intended to put into it? The Lord knoweth what is the Mind of our Spirits in that matter. God doth not only here his People's Prayers, but he hears their Deſires; and grants not only the Deſires of our Lips, but the Deſires of our Hearts, which have not been expreſſed by our Lips. *Obſerve* (3) Who the Perſons are whom the Holy Spirit intercedes for in Prayer: They are Saints; *he maketh interceſſion for the Saints*; for them excluſively, and none but them; for them incluſively, for all and every one of them; the Spirit ſanctifies all thoſe in whom and for whom he intercedes; he is firſt a Spirit of Regeneration before he is a Spirit of Interceſſion; he firſt puts gracious Diſpoſitions into us, and then ſtirs up holy Deſires in us. *Obſerve* (4) The Qualification neceſſary to render our Prayers acceptable to God, they muſt be *according to God*, that is, *according to the Will* and Mind of God. And that (1) In reſpect of the Matter of them, we muſt pray only for things lawful and warrantable. (2) In regard of the Manner of them, we muſt pray in Faith with Fervency, and in the Name of Chriſt. (3) In reſpect of the end of them, and what we propound to our ſelves in them, which is the Glory of God: notwithſtanding Chriſt's Meditation, and the Spirit's Interceſſion, we may aſk, and not receive, if we aſk amiſs; that is, for bad Ends, that we may conſume it upon our Luſts.

28 And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpoſe.

That is, all Diſpenſations of Providence whatſoever, whether they be ordinary Afflictions, or extraordinary Trials, which do befall the Children of God in this Life, ſhall certainly be directed by his Wiſdom, and over-ruled by his Power and goodneſs, for the Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Good of his children and People, *Obſ. here*, (1) What thoſe Things are which are eſpecially intended in that comprehenſive Term, *All things. Anſw.* By all things here we are to underſtand, *Omnia Triſtia non omnia Turpia*, all the Saints

Afflictions, not their Sins; for then they might rejoyce in their Sins and Wickedneſs, (which is a damnable Impiety) as well as in their Sufferings for Chriſt, ſeeing they may rejoyce in that which by God's Deſignation tendeth to their good, but by *All things* the Apoſtle means all providential Occurrences and Diſpenſations, all Stations and Conditions whatſoever, be it Proſperity or Adverſity, Health or Sickneſs, Liberty or Captivity, Life or Death, God's Glory and his Childrens Good ſhall be certainly furthered and advanced by it. *Obſerve* (2) In what Sence *All things* may be ſaid to *work for good* to good Men; namely, as they ſhall promote and farther the Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Welfare of the Children of God. If it be good for them to be Rich, to be in Honour, to be at Liberty, they ſhall be ſo: If it be better for their Souls, and more conducive to their eternal Welfare, to be low in the World, to be frequently under the Rod, to be harraſſed with Afflictions, and aſſaulted with Temptations, they ſhall have them: nothing that is needful ſhall be kept from them, only God muſt be Judge what is needful, and when 'tis needful. He that thinks he can cut better for himſelf than God can carve for him, makes himſelf wiſer than God, and has not only loſt his Faith, but his Wits too. *Obſerve* (3) That *all things* are ſaid *to work together* for Good; not ſingly, ſeparately, and apart, but as Co-adjutors and Adjuvant Cauſes, and Mutual Helps. Afflictions and Temptations ſeem to work againſt us; but being put into the Rank and Order of Cauſes, they work together, with other bleſſed Inſtruments, as the Word and Prayer, to an happy Iſſue. More particularly, they work together with God, they work together with us, and they work together one with another, for our Good, ſooner or later. *Obſerve* (4) How can *All Things* be ſaid to *work for good*; particularly evil Things? Sufferings from God, and Sufferings from Man for God's ſake. What! Muſt we call Evil Good? Pain Pleaſure? Torment Eaſe, and Loſs Gain? Muſt we disbelieve our Senſes, that we may believe the Scriptures? *Anſwer.* Though Affliction, which is evil in its own nature, cannot bring forth Good, yet ſurely God can bring forth Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkneſs, and make his Peoples Troubles the way to their Triumph, and every croſs Providence a ſtep to the Accompliſhment of his Promiſe. God ſuffers evil things to befal us to keep out worſe things, and cauſes evil things to prepare us for better things: the Croſs makes way for the Crown: For Affliction there is Glory; for light Affliction, a Weight of Glory; and for light Affliction, which is but for a moment, a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. *Obſerve,* (5) The Character of the Perſons to whom this Priviledge doth belong: they are deſcribed by their Chriſtian Affection, they *love God*, and by their effectual Vocation they are *called according to his purpoſe.* They love God, and evidence their Love to him, by an high Eſtimation of him, by their Delight in him, by their Deſires after him, by their Longings for the full Fruition, and final Enjoyment of him. And as they love God, ſo are they called of God; externally by the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, internally by the Operation of his holy Spirit; they are called out of Darkneſs into Light; out of Bondage into Liberty, and all this efficaciouſly and powerfully, yet ſweetly and freely; in a way congruous to the Will's Liberty. *Obſerve* (6) The Certainty and Evidence of this Propoſition and Aſſertion, *That all things work together for good.* It is not built upon Conjecture, or bare Probability, but upon certain Knowledge *we know:* partly by Divine Revelation God has told us ſo, partly by Experience we find it ſo. And when the Apoſtle ſpeaks it out, *We know*, it is a Word of Confidence and Aſſurance, it is a Word of Comfort and Encouragement; all the Saints of God to the end of the World, as well as the Apoſtle himſelf, may depend upon it, live in the Faith and Aſſurance of it, and draw all that Conſolation from it, which may render their Lives (in ſome ſort) an Heaven upon Earth. And now if this be an indubitable and undeniable Truth, That whatever Sufferings and Afflictions a Saint meets with ſhall work together for good, then we may infer, That a ſuffering Condition is not ſo bad a Condition as the World ſuppoſes it. The Lion of Affliction is not ſo fierce as he is painted. Times of Difficulty and Tryal bring ſerious Thoughts of God into our Minds, who are too prone to forget both him and our ſelves in Affluence and Quiet. Bleſſed be God the Time of Affliction is no unprofitable Time, nor uncomfortable Time neither: 'Tis a thinking Time, an awakening Time, a teaching Time, a repenting Time, a weaning Time; therefore bleſſed is the Man whom God correcteth and teacheth.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate *to be* conformed to the image of his ſon, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren. 30 Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called: and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

St. *Paul* in theſe Verſes lays before us a Chain of the Cauſes of Salvation inſeparably linked together, the firſt of which was before all time, namely, God's foreknowledge of us from all Eternity, and his predeſtinating or appointing of us to eternal Life: *Whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate.* But what were we predeſtinated unto? He tells us in the next words, *To be conformed to the Image of his Son:* that is to be made like unto our Lord Jeſus in Affection and Diſpoſition, in Life and Converſation, in the Temper of our Minds, and in the Actions of our Lives; like unto him in his Sufferings, in the Cauſe of his Sufferings, Righteouſneſs-ſake and well-doing, in the kind of his Sufferings, Reproach, Hatred, outward Violence and Death it ſelf, and in the manner of his Sufferings with Meekneſs and Patience, and like unto him in his Glory; Suffering with him we ſhall be glorified together. The ſecond Priviledge we are Partakers of is in Time, namely, effectual Vocation. *Whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called.* They are called out of a ſtate of Ignorance and Darkneſs, of Sin and Wickedneſs, of Slavery and Bondage, unto Knowledge, Grace and Holineſs; and the Holy Spirit of God inclines and enables them to obey this Call. The Third Privilege is Juſtification; *Whom he called, them he alſo juſtified.* That is, abſolved from Guilt, and freed from Condemnation; diſcharging them from their Obnoxiouſneſs to Wrath, and the Severity of Divine Diſpleaſure. The laſt Privilege we are Partakers of is after Time, namely, Glorification: *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.* They are already glorified in Chriſt their Head, they have already the earneſt and Firſt-fruits of Glory, namely, the holy Spirit dwelling in them, and they ſhall 'ere long partake of the ſame Glory which Chriſt himſelf is in the Poſſeſſion of, John 17. *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory.* But it may be ſaid, that one Link is wanting in this Golden Chain of Salvation; namely, Sanctification: no mention is here made of that. *Anſw.* Some conceive that Sanctification is couched in effectual Vocation; others, that it is included in Glorification: for Sanctification is *Gloria inchoata*, Glorification is *Gratia conſummata.* Grace is the loweſt degree of Glory, and Glory the higheſt degree of Grace. Others anſwer, That the Apoſtle makes no mention here of Sanctification for this Reaſon, becauſe he was ſetting down here the Cauſes of Salvation. Now Sanctification being the way to Salvation, but not the Cauſe of it, the Apoſtle mentions not that here; tho' elſewhere he ſufficiently ſhews, that none are now juſtified, or can be hereafter Glorified, that are not here ſanctified and renewed. From the whole learn (1) That there were certain Perſons before all Time choſen of God to poſſeſs and inherit eternal Life. (2) That God's Deſign in chuſing of them, was to render them conformable to Chriſt, in his Holineſs, in his Sufferings, and in his Glory. *Learn* (3) That thoſe whom God chuſeth before Time, he calleth, juſtifieth, and ſanctifieth in Time, and will finally glorifie when Time ſhall be no more.

31 What ſhall we then ſay to theſe things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* againſt us?

What ſhall we ſay to theſe things? That is to the forenamed Truths and Doctrines, to the forementioned Privileges and Benefits, what Comfort doth ariſe from them: How ſhall we live up anſwerable unto them? Neither the Tongue of Men nor Angels is ſufficient to declare the comprehenſive Fullneſs of the foregoing Favours of Vocation and Juſtification here, and Glorification in Heaven. Such Love and Goodneſs are beyond Expreſſion; it is as much as if the Apoſtle had thus ſaid, What boundleſs Love did our God move, no Tongue can it expreſs, no Angel can this Myſtery ſcan, nor tell our Happineſs. *What ſhall we ſay to theſe things?* It follows, *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* That is, ſeeing God is for us, who can ſafely and ſucceſsfully be againſt us. *Learn hence,* (1) That at all times, but eſpecially in times of Affliction and Diſtreſs, Danger and Difficulty, God ever has been, and will be on his Peoples ſide. (2) That thoſe whom God is for, and on whoſe ſide he is of, need not fear either how many or how mighty they be that are againſt them. God is for his People; that is, he approves and owns them, he aſſiſts and helps them, he will ſucceed and bleſs them, reward and crown them. Who then can be againſt them rationally, againſt them ſuccesfully, againſt them ſafely? How dangerous is it to be againſt thoſe whom God is for? If God be for us, who can be againſt us? And if God be againſt us, who can be for us?

32 He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?

Here we have, (1.) A Propoſition laid down, containing matter of higheſt Conſolation to us; namely, that God ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. *He ſpared not*; that is, he did not ſpare to give him, or part with him: with *Abraham*, he did not with-hold his Son, his only Son from us. Again, *He did not ſpare him*, that is, he did not ſpare to puniſh him; he did not abate him one Farthing, not ſpare him one Stroke, which Divine Juſtice did or could demand. It is farther added, that *God delivered him up for us all. Judas* delivered up Chriſt, *Pilate* delivered him up, and the Jews alſo; *Judas* for Money, *Pilate* for Fear, the Jews for Envy; but none of theſe delivered him up for us: but God the Father delivered up his Son, and God the Son delivered up himſelf. As a Priſoner by the Sentence of the Law is delivered up to Execution, and his being delivered up for us, denotes the Vicegerency of his Sufferings, not only for our Good, as the final Cauſe, but for our Sins, as the meritorious Cauſe, in our room, place, and ſtead. *Learn hence*, That the utmoſt Rigour and Severity of Divine Juſtice was inflicted and executed upon our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the Day of his Paſſion, and that by the Pleaſure and Appointment of God the Father: *He ſpared not, but delivered up his own ſon. Obſerve*, (2.) The comfortable Inference and Concluſion which the Apoſtle draws from the foregoing Propoſition; *How ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?* Intimating, that the greateſt Mercies, and beſt of Bleſſings, ſhall not be denied to us, or withheld from us. If Chriſt be ours, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. all things are yours, (that is, all Spiritual, Temporal, and Eternal Mercies) and ye are Chriſt's. For, (1.) No other Mercy can be ſo dear to God as his own Son: he was his Soul's Delight. If therefore he ſpared not the moſt excellent Mercy, he will not withhold any inferiour Mercy. 2. There is no other Mercy we want, but we are entitled to it by the Gift of Chriſt, and it is conveyed to us with Chriſt; all things (as to Right) are ours, if we be his. (3.) If God gave us his Son when we were Enemies, certainly he will deny us nothing that is good for us now we are reconciled and made Friends. It is our Apoſtle's Argument, *Rom.* 5. 9. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his ſon, much more, being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life.*

33 Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *it is* God that juſtifieth:

Obſereve here, (1.) The Apoſtles confident and daring Challenge. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Where note*, The Univerſality of the Challenge; it is Univerſal in a double reſpect. (1.) In reſpect of Perſons accuſing, *Who ſhall?* He excepts none in Heaven, none on Earth, nay, none in Hell; neither Sin, nor the Law, nor Satan, nor Conſcience, having any thing to lay to our Charge, in order to our Condemnation. (2.) In reſpect of Crimes he excepts no ſort of Sins, tho' never ſo heinouſly aggravated, and ſadly circumſtantiated; juſtifying Grace is their full Diſcharge. *Learn hence*, That it is impoſſible for any Charge or Accuſation to take place againſt thoſe whom God doth juſtifie, becauſe there is nothing to accuſe them of, none to accuſe them to, and no Body to frame or make the Accuſation againſt them. Well might the Apoſtle ſay, Who can, who ſhall, who may, who dare lay any thing to the juſtified Perſon's Charge? *Obſerve*, (2.) The Ground and Reaſon of this confident Challenge, it is God that juſtifieth; who ſhall condemn? *Here note*, (1.) That there is a very gracious Priviledge vouchſafed to Believers, which the Scriptures call Juſtification. (2.) That it is God that juſtifies the Believer's Perſon, and pardons his Sins, and none but God; he is the Perſon againſt whom the Offence is committed, and he alone it is that abſolves us from the Guilt contracted. When the Juſtice of God accuſes, when the Law of God accuſes, when our own Conſciences accuſe, when Satan and Wicked Men accuſe the Mercy and Goodneſs, the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God will for the ſake of his Son's Satisfaction acquit and diſcharge us, *for it is God that juſtifieth.*

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *it is* Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.

The Apoſtle here goes on with the Triumphant Challenge in the foregoing Verſe begun, Who ſhall Condemn the juſtified Believer? *And here obſerve*, (1) The Holy Challenges of Faith, it is ready for all Comers, and bids Defiance to all Accuſations. If the Law implead, Faith ſays, Chriſt in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh has condemned Sin in the Fleſh. If Death looks the Believer in the Face, Faith ſaith, Chriſt has aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light. If Satan roar, Faith can ſcorn, and tell him to his Teeth he is a conquered Enemy; that Chriſt by his Death has deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death. Yea, if God himſelf frown upon the Believer, Faith can bring to God a Righteouſneſs that is highly pleaſing to him, with reſpect to which *God may be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him that believeth on Jeſus. Obſ.* (2.) The Ground of this Triumphant Challenge which Faith enables the Believers to make, and that is the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt in the four Eminent Branches of it, his Death, Reſurrection, Exaltation, and Interceſſion. *Chriſt died*, is *reſen again*, is *even at God's Right hand, making continual Interceſſion for us. Thence learn*, That a Believer's Triumphs over Condemnation do eminently ariſe from the ſeveral Acts of Chriſt's Meditation; Chriſt died and roſe again; our Debt is therefore paid, becauſe our Surety is diſcharged; he ſits at God's Right Hand as a Teſtimony of the Compleatneſs of his Sacrifice and Satisfaction for us, and he continually intercedes; that is, preſents himſelf to his Father in both his Natures, and in our Names, as our Surety, our Advocate and Mediator; *Who then ſhall lay any thing to the Believer's charge, or who ſhall condemn him.*

35 Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? *ſhall* tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?

That is, none ſhall ſeparate, nothing ſhall ſeparate the Believer from the Love of Chriſt; either from the Love that Chriſt bears to him, or from that Love which he bears unto Chriſt; no Perſon ſhall, no Condition of Life can ſeparate them, neither outward Troubles, nor inward Diſtreſſes, no Evils either felt or fear'd; the Apoſtle defies and deſpiſes them all, becauſe neither of them alone, nor altogether, can unclaſp the Arms of Divine Love, in which Believers are ſafely enfolded. *Learn hence*, That no Troubles, Tribulations or Diſtreſſes whatſoever, can diſſolve the Union betwixt Chriſt and Believers, or ever ſeparate them from his Love.

36 (As it is written, for thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter.)

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The Saints of Old have endured all manner of Sufferings, and yet were not ſeparated from the Love of God; therefore the like or worſe Sufferings ſhall not be able to ſeparate us now. *Here note*, What may be the Lot and Portion of Believers in this Life, and that is, killing for the ſake of Chriſt; *For thy ſake we are killed all the day long.* The Words, *All the day long*, denote the Continuance of the Perſecution, the Unweariedneſs of the Enemy, and the Patience of the Saints. *Learn thence*, That ſuch as reſolve upon the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, muſt prepare for killing, if God requires, and be ready to lay down their Lives for their Religion, when God calls; *For thy ſake we are killed*; that is, ready to be ſacrificed; a readineſs of Diſpoſition, and a preparation of Mind, is found with us, to part with all that is dear unto us, even Life it ſelf, for the ſake of Chriſt.

37 Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, We are ſo far from being ſeparated from Chriſt by the Afflictions and Perſecutions which we undergo, that we are Conquerors by our Patience, nay, more than Conquerors; we do not only bear our Trials, but we glory in Tribulations; we Conquer by our Patience; we are more than Conquerors by our Chearfulneſs. But becauſe theſe Words, *More than Conquerors*, look big and ſound great, the Apoſtle inſtantly ſubjoyns, that is by Chriſt's Strength, and not by our own, that we Overcome and Conquer; *More than Conquerors* through him *that loved us*; which words are a *Periphraſis* of Chriſt; it is both a proper Deſcription of him, and a comprehenſive Deſcription; when the Apoſtle ſaid, he *that loved us*, he doth in Effect ſay every thing elſe; he that was born for us, that died for us, that redeemed and ſaved us; and theſe were the Effects and Fruits of his Love, and they are all comprehended in this Saying, *Him that loved us. Note laſtly*, How the Believer is ſaid to overcome by the help of this Perſon, *More than Conquerors thro' him that loved us. Whence learn*, That all a Chriſtian's Strength lies in Chriſt, and not in himſelf; all his Strength for Victory over Sin, all his Strength for Victory over Suffering, it is all received from Chriſt, it is all to be attributed and aſcribed to Chriſt; the Strength of every Saint, yea, of the whole Hoſt of Saints, lies in the Lord of Hoſts.

38 For I am perſwaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come: 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

Our Apoſtle concludes this Excellent Chapter with Triumphant Expreſſions, as he had begun it in the firſt Verſe; he proclaims that there is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus; here in the laſt Verſe he pronounces, that nothing ſhall ſeperate them from the Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus; *I am perſwaded*, &c. *Where obſerve*, (1) The Propoſition poſitively laid down, nothing ſhall ſeperate from the Love of Chriſt; his Love is like himſelf, unchangeable and everlaſting; he ever loves the ſame Perſon, and ever loves for the ſame Reaſon; Likeneſs is the Ground of Love, the Attractive and Loadſtone of it; now the Image of Chriſt, by the Spirit of Chriſt, is both preſerved and encreaſed in the Believer's Soul; this engages the Heart of Chriſt towards Chriſtians in ſuch a manner, that nothing ſhall ſeparate them from his Love. *Obſ.* (2) The Enumeration and Induction of Particulars which the Apoſtle makes uſe of for confirming this Propoſition, that nothing can ſeparate the Believer from the Love of Chriſt, nor diminiſh his Intereſt in him, *neither life nor death*; that is, neither the Hope of Life, nor the Fear of Death, *nor Angels*, neither good nor bad; not the good Angels, for they will not attempt it; not the bad Angels, for they can never effect it; *nor principalities, nor powers*; by them underſtand Earthly Power, the Great and Mighty Potentates of the World perſecuting us for Chriſt, yet ſhall never be able to Divorce us from him; *nor things preſent, nor things to come*; neither the Things which we enjoy at preſent, or endure at preſent, or may hereafter meet with, be it Proſperity or Adverſity; their preſent and future Condition of Life ſhall be Sanctified whatever comes; come what may come, come what will come, come what can come, nothing ſhall come amiſs unto them; whatever has happened, does happen, or may happen to them in this World, ſhall not fruſtrate their Hopes of future Happineſs in the World to come. *Nor height, nor depth*; that is neither height of Honour, nor depth of Ignominy; neither the top of Worldly Advancement, nor the bottom of Worldly Abaſement; neither the height of Spiritual Inlargement, nor the depth of Spiritual Deſertions. God can and will keeep his Saints in an Honourable, in a Comfortable, yet in a Safe State and Condition all at once; *nor any other Creature*; that is, if there be any other Creature comprehended or comprized in the foregoing Enumeration, whatever it be, it muſt fall under the Rank and Denomination of Creatures; and no Creature, either in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell, ſhall ſeparate Chriſt and us. *Learn hence*, That it is Matter of unutterable Conſolation, and inexpreſſible Triumph to Believers, that nothing tho' never ſo great and powerful, tho' never ſo amiable or terrible, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the Love of their Saviour. Bleſſed be God our ſtanding in Chriſt is not ſo lubricous and ſlippery as it was in *Adam*: He might ſtand or might fall; the Believer ſhall ſtand; the Root bears up the Branches; we ſhall be kept by the Mighty Power of God, with the Concurrance of our own careful and continual Endeavours thro' Faith unto Salvation. *Obſ.* (3) The full Aſſurance which the Apoſtle had of the Stability of a Believer's Eſtate, *I am perſwaded*, or I am fully aſſured; but how ſo? Not by Extraordinary and Special Revelation, not by his Rapture into Heaven, not by the Apparition of an Angel to him: But his Aſſurance is built on that which is common to all Believers; namely, the ſame Spirit of Faith, and the ſame Love of God ſhed abroad in the Hearts of all Believers. *Obſ.* (4) How the Apoſtle having ſpoken in his own Perſon in the former Verſe, ſaying, *I am perſwaded*, changes the number in the laſt Verſe: nothing ſhall ſeparate *Us*, not *Me*, *Where note*, How he aſſociates with himſelf all true Believers in the Participation of this Privilege. They have all an Intereſt in the ſame Love of God, the ſame Promiſes of Salvation, and have felt the Sanctifying Work of the ſame Spirit. It is impoſſible that God ſhould retract his Merciful Purpoſe to Save Believers; he that choſe them from Eternity, from before all Time, and gave his Son to ſuffer Death for them in the fulneſs of Time, will preſevere in his Purpoſe; namely, by Grace to bring them to Glory. He whoſe Grace prevented them when they were in their Pollutions, in a State of Enmity, yea, in a State of Obſtinacy, will he leave them after his Image is Engraven and Re-inſtampt upon them? He that united them to Chriſt when they were Strangers, will not caſt them out of his Love now they are his Members; their Interceſſor will preſerve them from falling, and preſent them faultleſs before the preſence of his Father's Glory with exceeding Joy. God's Love unto his Children is Everlaſting, and the Covenant that is built upon it is more firm than the Pillars of Heaven and the Foundation of the Earth; well might the Apoſtle then ſay, nothing ſhall ſeparate *Us* from the Love of God. *Obſ. fifthly and laſtly*, The Ground of this Loves Permanency and Duration towards Believers; it is the Love of God *in Chriſt Jeſus* that is vouchſafed to us for the Sake of Chriſt Jeſus: God looks upon Chriſt, and loves him, and them in him; he loves all that are Members of him, all that are like unto him. O Bleſſed Jeſus! It is for thy ſake that the Father ſmiles upon us; we are choſen in thee, juſtified through thee, *for neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor any creature whatſoever, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Eternal Thanks to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the Conſolation that flows from hence; may ſo high and glorious a Privilege oblige all that are intereſted in it to the Exerciſe of Univerſal Holineſs, remembering that as the Privilidges of the Goſpel are glorious and great, ſo the Duties it requires are exact and ſtrict; if we would enjoy the Conſolation in the laſt Verſe of this Chapter, (here dilated upon) we muſt perform the Duty in the firſt Verſe, (there inſiſted on) namely, to walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit, otherwiſe the Privilege of Non-Condemnation there, and of no Separation from the Love of God in Chriſt Jeſus here, will neither belong unto us, or ever be enjoyed and improved by us.

CHAP. IX.

Our Apoſtle in this and the two following Chapters labours mightily to convince his Countrymen, the Jews, *of their Obſtinacy againſt God in rejecting his Counſel concerning their Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt: And that this Obſtinacy of theirs was the certain Cauſe of their Rejection, or Caſting out of the Favour of God, and of the Calling of the* Gentiles; *that is, of inveſting the* Gentiles *with the Privileges of the Abdicated* Jews. *And becauſe he foreſaw that this Doctrine of the Rejection of the* Jews, *and Calling of the* Gentiles, *would be looked upon as an hard Saying, and be marvelouſly Offenſive and Diſpleaſing, he begins this Chapter with a moſt Solemn Proteſtation, That what he ſaid did not proceed from the leaſt Diſaffection towards them, much leſs from an Exulcerated Prejudice againſt them; but calls Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt to witneſs that he ſpake the Truth impartially, and did not lie. For thus he ſays.*

1 I Say the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt.

Obſerve here, (1) The Apoſtle's Solemn Aſſeveration or Oath, he calls Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt to witneſs for the Truth of what he ſays, which is the very Formality of an Oath. *Learn thence*, That it is not barely lawful, but in ſome Caſe expedient and neceſſary to aſſert and confirm by Oath the Truth and Certainty of what we ſpeak in Caſes of great Moment, which cannot otherwiſe be ſufficiently confirmed; a Chriſtian may eſtabliſh his Saying by an Oath. *Obſerve*, (2) The Perſons whom the Apoſtle Swears by, *Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt*; he calls them to be Witneſſes of the Sincerity of his Conſcience in what he doth aſſert: *I ſay the truth in Chriſt*, &c. But why doth the Apoſtle ſwear by the Name of Chriſt, and not rather by the Name of God, ſeeing the *Jews* did not believe his Divinity, and ſo were not like to give any whit the more Credit to what was atteſted by him? I Anſwer, Probably to aſſert the Godhead of Chriſt, which the *Jews* generally denied, and therefore wanted that Honour which was and is due unto it. None but God was to be ſworn by; the Apoſtle ſwearing by Chriſt, proves him to be truly and really God, as alſo the Holy Ghoſt: for an Oath being an Act of Religious Worſhip, and the Apoſtle ſwearing by Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, doth thereby acknowledge their Divinity, according to the Words of *Moſes* in *Deut.* 6. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* *Obſerve* (3) As the Apoſtle appeals to Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt, ſo alſo to his own Conſcience, as the Avoucher and Witneſs of the Truth of what he ſays, *My Conſcience alſo bearing me witneſ.* *Learn thence*, That God has placed a Conſcience in every Man, whoſe Office it is to bear Witneſs of all his Words and Actions; yea, of all his Thoughts and inward Affections. Conſcience is God's Regiſter, to record whatever we think, ſpeak, or act; and happy he whoſe Conſcience bears Witneſs for him, and doth not teſtifie againſt him; who can ſay with the Apoſtle here, *My Conſcience beareth we witneſs that I lie not, but ſay the truth in Chriſt.*

2 That I have great heavineſs, and continual ſorrow in my heart.

The Original World ſignifies ſuch Sorrow as is found with Women in Travail; a Sorrow continually affecting his Heart, and afflicting his Spirit for his Countrymen and Kinſmen the *Jews*, upon the account of their obſtinate Infidelity, Obduration of Heart, and Spirit of Slumber, which was fallen upon them, which had provoked God to reſolve to caſt them off, to reject their Nation, and to ſcatter them up and down throughout the World. Behold here firſt what are the diſmal Effects and dreadful Conſequences of obſtinate Unbelief, under the Offers of Chriſt tendred to Perſons in and by the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, without timely Repentance; the Iſſue will be final Rejection, inevitable and unutterable Condemnation. Behold (2) The true Spirit of Chriſtianity; it puts Men upon mourning for the Sins and Calamities of others in a very ſenſible and affectionate manner. Good men ever have been, and are Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions: a Stoical Apathy, an Indolency of Heart, or want of natural Affection, is ſo far from being a Virtue, or matter of juſt Commendation unto any Man, that the deepeſt Sorrow and Heavineſs of Soul in ſome caſes, well becomes Perſons of the greateſt Piety and Wiſdom. *Learn* (3) That great Sorrow and continual Heavineſs of Heart for the Miſeries of others, whether imminent or incumbent, but eſpecially for the Sins of others, is an undoubted Argument, ſign and evidence, of a ſtrong and vehement Love towards them. The Apoſtle's *great Heavineſs* and *continual Sorrow* for the Jews, his Brethren, was a great Inſtance and Evidence of his unfeigned Love and Affection to them.

3 For I could wiſh that my ſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren, my kinſman according to the fleſh:

That is, ſo great is my Concern for the Salvation of my Brethren the Jews, that I could undergo the greateſt Miſery and Evil that can befal my ſelf, to prevent their Deſtruction. This Wiſh of St. *Paul* is plainly an hyperbolical Expreſſion of his great Affection to his Country-men the Jews, and his Zeal for their Salvation, which was ſo intenſe and vehement, that were it a thing reaſonable and lawful, were it proper, and could avail to the procuring their Salvation, he could have wiſhed the greateſt Evil to himſelf; for their ſakes not only to be excommunicated from Communion with the Church of Chriſt, but to be ſeparated from Chriſt himſelf. If it be ſaid, that ſuch a Wiſh is ſinſul and unnatural, to deſire the Salvation of others with our own Damnation; I anſwer, true: And therefore the Apoſtle's Words are not an abſolute and poſitive Wiſh: He doth not ſay, *I wiſh*; but *I could wiſh*: Juſt as we are wont to ſay when we would expreſs a thing to the height, which is not fit nor intended to be done by us; *I could wiſh ſo or ſo*: I *could even be content to do this or that*: Which kind of Expreſſions no Man takes for a ſtrict and preciſe Declaration of our Minds, but for a figurative Expreſſion of a very great and vehement Paſſion. Thus here, the Apoſtle ſays not *I wiſh*, but *I could* even *wiſh*: were it proper to make ſuch a Wiſh, I could even wiſh ſo great a Bleſſing to my Brethren, tho' with loſs of my own Happineſs. *Hence Learn*, (1.) That it is neither lawful nor reaſonable for any Man to renounce his own eternal Salvation, and to be willing to be damned upon any account whatever, be it for the good of their Brethren, or for the Glory of God himſelf. The very Thought of ſuch a thing is enough to make Humane Nature tremble at its very Foundation; for the deſire of our own Happineſs is the deepeſt Principle that God has planted in our Nature: And to pretend a Reaſon from the Glory of God, is impoſſible; becauſe our Damnation cannot make for the Glory of God, unleſs by our own Impenitency and wilful Obſtinacy we have deſerved Damnation. *Learn*, (2) That ſuch may be the Ardency of a Saint's Affection toward others, and ſo fervent his Deſires for their Converſion and Salvation, that he may be willing to ſacrifice himſelf, and all that is dear unto him in this World, for the accompliſhing of that end: *I could wiſh I were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren*, &c.

4 Who are Iſraelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God and the promiſes;
5 Whoſe are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle, to vindicate himſelf for bearing ſuch a paſſionate Affection to the Jews, and for being ſo highly concerned for their eternal Welfare, doth in theſe two Verſes recount and ſum up the high Priviledges and Prerogatives belonging to the Jews above any other Nation under Heaven; namely theſe, they were *Iſraelites*, that is, the Seed and Poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, *to whom pertaineth the Adoption*; that is, National Adoption, not Perſonal; God adopting the Nation of the Jews to be an Holy People to himſelf, and calling them his Sons and his firſt born, *And the Glory*; that is, the glorious Preſence of God among them, the Temple, the Ark, but particularly the *Shechinah*, or Divine Preſence, from between the Cherubims: *And the Covenant*; that is, the Covenant made with *Abraham* and *Moſes*, the Old and New Covenant, *Jer.* 31. 32. *And the giving of Law*; it was the Prerogative of this People, that all their Laws, Ceremonial, Judicial and Moral, were compoſed and delivered to them by God himſelf: *And the ſervice of God*; that is, they only had the true Worſhip of God amongſt them, and no other Nation could have the like, but by being a Debtor unto them for it: *And the Promiſe*, that is, in general all the Bleſſings promiſed to them in the Land of *Canaan*, and in particular the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, or God's gracious Purpoſe and Intention to ſend his Son into the World to accompliſh its Redemption *Whoſe are the Fathers*; that is, the beloved Fathers, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, where their Anceſtors, and they their Off ſpring: *Of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came*; that is, of which *Iſraelites* Chriſt came; the promiſed Meſſias according to the Fleſh or Humane Nature was their Off-ſpring, even he, who according to his Divine Nature, *Was over all, God bleſſed for evermore.* *Note here*, (1) How the Apoſtle reſerves the greateſt Privilege for the laſt: Chriſt's being born one of their Nation, and according to the fleſh deſcended from the Jewiſh Stock, this was the topping Privilege. *Note* (2) That this reſtrictive Clauſe, *according to the Fleſh*, plainly ſuppoſeth another Nature in Chriſt, according to which he came not from the *Iſraelites*, which can be no other but the Divine Nature or Godhead, which in the following Words is attributed to him: *Who is over all, God bleſſed for evermore*: which glorious Title given to Chriſt, as it highly exalts the Prerogative of the Jews, as being a People of whom ſo bleſſed and great a Perſon deſcended, ſo on the other hand it aggravates their Sin and Condemnation, in rejecting a Perſon of ſuch infinite Worth and Dignity, notwithſtanding he deſcended from them. Now from the whole, *Learn* (1) That a fulneſs or richneſs of inſtituted means of Grace, for the true Knowledge and Worſhip of God, is matter of high Dignation and gracious Condeſcenſion from God to Man: here the *Glory*, the *Covenants*, the *Service of God*, &c. are numbred amongſt the great and gracious Reſpects vouchſafed by God to the Jews. *Learn* (2) That the higheſt Privileges and Vouchſafements from God may be conferred upon a People who are neither pleaſing to God, nor accepted with him: ſuch were the Jews to whom the forementioned Privileges did belong, a People rejected by God for their Obduracy and Unbelief. *Learn* (3) That it is no ſmall Honour to be of the Race or Kindred of ſuch as have been holy Saints and faithful Servants of the moſt high and holy God: the Jews here were very Honourable, as they were the Seed of *Abraham*; but much more ſo, had they trod in the Steps, and done the Works, of their Father *Abraham*. *Learn* (4) That Jeſus Chriſt, who was of the Seed of *Abraham* according to the fleſh, was yet, according to his Divine Nature, *Lord over all, God bleſſed for evermore:* He is over all, that is, over all Things, and over all Perſons, and he is bleſſed for evermore, which is the conſtant Title given to him that is God, and to none but him. The *Socinians*, to avoid the force of this Text, which fully proves the Divinity of Chriſt, turn the words into a Thankſgiving for Chriſt, and read them thus: Of whom Chriſt was according to the fleſh, *God, who is over all, be bleſſed for ever:* a manifeſt pervertion of the Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words, which was to ſhew, that according to the fleſh he deſcended from *Abraham*; but that he had another Nature which was not derived from *Abraham*, even a Divine Nature, according to which he was *over all, God bleſſed for evermore.*

6 Not as tho' the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Iſrael, which are not of Iſrael: 7 Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. 8 That is, they which are the children of the fleſh, theſe *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed. 9 For this *is* the word of promiſe, at this time will I come, and Sarah ſhall have a ſon.

Here the Apoſtle anſwers an Objection againſt the Rejection of the Jews; if they be caſt off by God, what will become of the Promſe of God made to *Abraham?* ſaying, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed.* He anſwers, by diſtinguiſhing a twofold Seed that *Abraham* had; ſome were only his carnal Seed, or the Children of his Fleſh; others were his ſpiritual Seed, or the Children of his Faith. Now the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, born according to the courſe of Nature, were not the Children of God to whom the Promiſe was made, but the Children repreſented by *Iſacc*, born by the ſupernatural Power of the Spirit of God: theſe are to be accounted the true Seed of *Abraham*, mentioned in the Covenant, when God ſays, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed.* So that the force of the Apoſtle's Argument lies thus: The Rejection of ſuch Jews, or ſuch of *Abraham*'s Seed only who were ſo according to the fleſh, cannot make the Word or Promiſe of God to *Abraham* and his Seed of no effect, becauſe he made no abſolute Promiſe to them as ſuch. But, ſays the Apoſtle, none of thoſe *Jews* whoſe Rejection I ſpeak of, have any ſuch Promiſe made to them; therefore the Rejection of ſome of *Abraham*'s natural Seed doth not, cannot, make void the Word and Promiſe of God. *Learn hence*, (1) That the Promiſes of God to his Children and People are firm and ſtable, they ſhall not be made void, but be accompliſhed and made good to thoſe that have a Title to them, an Intereſt in them, and fulfil the Conditions of them; *Not as though the Word* or Promiſe *of God had taken no effect. All are not Iſrael that are of Iſrael. Learn thence*, (2) That as all were not true *Iſraelites* of old that did bear the Name of *Iſraelites*, ſo all are not true Chriſtians at this day who take upon them the Name of Chriſt, and bear the Name of Chriſtians. *Learn* (3) That Men are very prone to bear up themſelves upon the Piety of their Anceſtors, tho' Strangers in Practice to their Piety; as the *Jews* boaſted they were the Seed of *Abraham*, but did not the Works of *Abraham*; whereas Men are ſo far from being God's Children, becauſe they had godly Parents, that Chriſt told the Jews, who came forth out of *Abraham*'s own Loins, that they were of their Father the Devil, *John* 8. 44.

10 And not only *this*, but when Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, *even* by our Father Iſaac. 11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that he purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth) 12 It was ſaid unto her, the elder ſhall ſerve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes proved, from what was done in *Abraham*'s Family, that it was the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of God to account only thoſe for *Abraham*'s Seed who were the Children of his Faith, and to reject the reſt for their unbelief; in theſe Verſes he proſecutes the ſame Argument, by inſiſting upon another ſpecial Diſpenſation of God in the Family of *Iſaac*, whoſe Wife *Rebecca* had Twins, namely, *Jacob* and *Eſau*, and had neither of them any thing in them to move God to love the one and diſlike the other: ſo that the Apoſtle's Argument runs thus: As *Jacob* and *Eſau*, were begotten of the ſame Father, born of the ſame Mother, lay together in the ſame Womb, and had neither of them done any thing at all to oblige or diſoblige Almighty God, yet he was pleaſed to make a difference between them, and their Poſterity after them, giving the beloved *Canaan* to *Jacob* and his Seed, which by Birthright belonged to *Eſau* and his Off-ſpring. So in like manner is the Will and Pleaſure of God, that the believing Gentiles ſhould become Heirs of the Promiſe by Faith in Chriſt, and that the unbelieving Jews ſhould be rejected and caſt off for their Infidelity. *Learn hence*, (1) That Almighty God chuſes Perſons to the Participation of Divine Favours. *Learn* (2) That the Choice which God makes of Men to the Enjoyment of that ſpecial favour of being his peculiar People, is not according to their external Privileges or Works, but according to his own free Pleaſure. *Learn* (3) That as *Jacob*'s and *Eſau*'s being *Unborn, and having done neither Good nor Evil*, is uſed as an Argument to prove that the Choice of the one before the other could not be of Works; ſo is it a ſtrong Argument againſt the Pre-exiſtence of Souls, and their being ſent into Bodies by way of Puniſhment for former Sins; for upon that Suppoſition it could not be true, that the Children had done neither Good nor Evil before they were born, ſeeing they might both have ſinned in that ſtate of Pre-exiſtence. *Learn* (4) and *Obſerve*, That the Apoſtle doth not ſay, that before the Children had done either Good or Evil, God ſaid, *Jacob* I have loved, and *Eſau* hated, but only *the Elder ſhall ſerve the Younger.* Hatred here may be taken two ways, either (1) For a leſs degree of Love, God preferring the Seed of *Jacob* before the Poſterity of *Eſau*, giving to the former the Good Land of *Canaan*, to the latter the barren Mountains of *Seir*. Or, (2) If Hatred be taken in the ſtricteſt ſence, then God is ſaid to hate *Eſau*; that is, the *Edomites* after their wicked and unnatural Behaviour towards their Brethren the *Iſraelites:* and upon that occaſion ſee *Obadiah*, ver. 10. *For thy violence againſt thy brother Jacob, ſhame ſhall cover thee, and thou ſhalt be cut off for ever.* Nothing renders a Perſon the Object of God's Hatred but Sin; he doth not hate the Devil himſelf as he is his Creature, but only as he is a Sinner. God adjudges none to eternal Perdition but with reſpect to Sin. *Obſ.* (5) That *Jacob* and *Eſau* here are not to be conſidered perſonally, but collectively, for the *Iſraelites* that deſcended from *Jacob*, and for the *Edomites* which ſprang from *Eſau*; for *Eſau* in his own Perſon did not ſerve *Jacob*, but the *Edomites* did ſerve the *Iſraelites*. Thus *the Elder did ſerve the Younger.* Again, it appears that *Job* and all his Friends were of the Poſterity of *Eſau*; God did not then hate the Perſon, or all the Poſterity of *Eſau*, but only thoſe of them who by their Violence and Wickedneſs rendred themſelves the Object of his Hatred.

14 What ſhall we ſay then? *Is there* unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. 15 For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.

The Apoſtle having by the two foregoing Inſtances aſſerted his Doctrine concerning the Purpoſe and Decree of God to juſtifie thoſe that ſhould believe in his Son, be they *Gentiles* or *Jews*; and conſequently made it good, that no Word or Promiſe of God falls to the ground by the Rejection of the Unbelieving *Jews:* proceeds in this Verſe to demonſtrate the Righteouſneſs of God in the Execution of this his Purpoſe. *Is there then*, ſays he, *Unrighteouſneſs or Injuſtice with God? God forbid.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Is there any Cauſe to ſay, that that God who preferred the Poſterity of *Iſaac* before that of *Iſrael*, and the Seed of *Jacob* before the numerous Off-ſpring of *Eſau*; is there any juſt reaſon to ſay, that this God is now unjuſt in calling the *Gentiles*, and upon their Faith owning them for his People, the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*, and rejecting the *Jews* becauſe of their Unbelief? God forbid that we ſhould accuſe him of unrighteous dealing upon this account. *Learn hence*, That God is Juſt, infallibly and inflexibly Juſt and Righteous in all his Dealings with, and Diſpenſations towards the Children of Men: *Is there unrighteouſneſs with God?* That is, there is none, there can be none. *Learn* (2) That all ſuch Tenents or Doctrines which reflect any matter of Unrighteouſneſs upon God, or charge him with hard Dealing, ought to be diſclaimed with utmoſt Abhorrency and Deteſtation. *Is there Unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. Obſerve next*, How the Apoſtle proves that there is no Unrighteouſneſs in this Diſpenſation of God, in rejecting the Jews, and calling the Gentiles, becauſe he had ſaid to *Moſes*, he would ſhew Mercy, where, when, and to whom, or to what People he pleaſed. If therefore upon the Infidelity of the Jews he will call the Idolatrous Gentiles, and receive them to be his People, who can accuſe him of any Injuſtice upon that Account? Shall not Almighty God diſpence his Favours where, and upon whom he pleaſes? May he not confer his Kindneſs upon ſome which he owes to none? *Learn hence*, That God is abſolutely and ultimately reſolved to follow the Counſel of his own Will in and about the Juſtification of Sinners; and whatſoever he doth, or reſolves to do, his Will being the Rule of Righteouſneſs, is for that Reaſon exactly juſt, and undeniably righteous.

16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The foregoing Inſtances abundantly ſhew, that *it is not of him that willeth*; for *Abraham* willed that *Iſhmael* might live to be Partaker of the Bleſſings promiſed to his Seed, when he ſaid, *Gen.* 17. 18. *Oh that Iſhmael might live before thee.* Nor is it of him that runneth; for when *Eſau* ran to fetch Veniſon for his Father, that he might receive the Bleſſing, *Gen.* 21. the Wiſdom of God ſaw it fit to have it otherwiſe, and to confer the Bleſſing upon *Jacob:* but it is of God that ſheweth Mercy, that any one is choſen to be the Seed to which the Promiſe made to *Abraham* belongs, and ſo to be his Church and People. *Learn hence*, That it is of God's meer Grace and Mercy, that any Sinners are called and admitted to the Privilege of Juſtification and Adoption upon any Terms and Conditions whatſoever. The Reaſon why the ſinful and unworthy Gentiles were called to be a People, who were not a People, while the Jews were left in, and caſt off for their obſtinate Unbelief, it was not becauſe the Gentiles were either more worthy, or more willing, but from God's diſcriminating Grace and Mercy, *It is not of him that willeth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.*

17 For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the Earth.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds to remove another Objection, namely, the ſeeming Injuſtice or Severity of rejecting the Jew, and reſerving them to Wrath, giving them up to an obdurate Heart, becauſe they would not accept of the Way which the Wiſdom of God had appointed for their Juſtification; namely, Faith in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This he clears by another Inſtance; to wit that of *Pharaoh*, who had ſo often hardned his own Heart obſtinately, and provoked God at laſt to harden him judicially. *For this cauſe*, ſays God, *have I raiſed thee up:* In the Original it is, I have made thee to ſtand; that is, I have ſuſtained thee, and kept thee alive, when thou deſerveſt, and might juſtly have expected to be cut off by the ſeveral Plagues inflicted on thee for thy obſtinate Hardneſs of Heart. *That I might ſhew my power in thee*, &c. or, I have patiently born with thy Stubborneſs for a long time, that my Power and Juſtice might more illuſtriouſly appear at laſt in that conſpicuous Judgment, which I will execute upon thee in the ſight of all the Nations of the Earth. *Learn hence*, That ſome Sinners, whom the Patience of God has long waited upon, are preſerved of him, and raiſed out of great and eminent Dangers by him, for this End; namely, to make them Examples of his juſt Indignation againſt ſtubborn and obdurate Rebels, and that in the moſt illuſtrious and ſignal manner. *For this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*: and whom he will, he hardeneth.

As if he had ſaid, From theſe Scripture Inſtances we may gather and conclude, that God may without the leaſt Injuſtice magnifie his Mercy, in ſparing and pardoning ſome Sinners, and renders his Juſtice glorious in puniſhing others, yea, in puniſhing Sin with Sin, hardning them judicially, who had hardned themſelves obſtinately. *Here obſerve*, that God did not harden *Pharaoh*'s Heart by any poſitive Act or Influx upon it, by infuſing any Evil into it, for this would make God the Author of Sin; but he was hardned by way of judiciary Tradition after he had long hardned himſelf. *Firſt*, he was delivered up into the hand of Satan, who deluded him by the Magicians counterfeiting the ſame Miracles that *Moſes* wrought; and this hardned him againſt the Belief of any thing that *Moſes* either did or ſaid. *Secondly*, He was delivered up to his own Luſts, particularly Idolatry, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, and theſe hardned *Pharaoh*'s Heart. As an Idolater, he was loth to receive a Meſſage from the God of *Iſrael*, whom he knew not: *Who is the Lord*, ſays he, *that I ſhould obey him? I know not the Lord.* As an ambitious Prince, it went to his very heart to hear ſo mean a Man as *Moſes* controul him in his own Dominions, ſaying, *Let the People go, that they may ſerve the Lord.* This enraged him, to hear of any Lord over that People but himſelf: and as a covetous Man, he was loth to hear of parting with a People, by whoſe Pains, in making Brick, he had ſo great an Income. Thus *Pharaoh*'s affected Hardneſs was followed with inflicted Hardneſs. *Learn hence*, That God doth juſtly deliver that Man up to Hardneſs of Heart by way of Puniſhment, who has often hardned his own Heart againſt God by repeated Acts of Sin.

Juſte Toties Cor ejus obduratur in pœnum,
Quoties ipſe Cor ſuum obduravit in culpam. Lightfoot.

19 Thou wilt ſay then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? ſhall the thing formed ſay to him that formed *it*, why haſt thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the ſame Lump to make one Veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour.

Here the Apoſtle brings in the unbelieving and rejected Jews making an Objection againſt God: If the Caſe be thus, that God doth ſometimes, and that juſtly, leave obdurate Sinners to harden themſelves, why is he offended at it, and complain of it? If God hardneth us becauſe he will, why doth he find fault with us for our Hardneſs of Heart, for who hath at any time reſiſted his Will? How is it in our Power to avoid being hardned, if it be his Will that we ſhould be hardned? *Learn hence*, That guilty Sinners are full of hard Thoughts of God, and very prone to think the Divine Diſpenſations unreaſonable, if not unrighteous, but upon falſe and miſtaken grounds: *Why doth he find fault? Who hath reſiſted his will?* To this Objection the Apoſtle returns a very ſmart Anſwer, ſaying, *Who art thou, O man, that replieſt againſt God? Shall*, &c. In which Anſwer, *Obſerve* (1) A vehement Objurgation or Reproof. (2) A ſubſtantial Vindication of the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of God in his Proceedings with Men. *Note* (1) The Objurgation or Reproof drawn up in an interrogative Form, which argues great Intenſment of Mind in the Perſon ſpeaking. *Nay but, O man who art thou?* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, what bold and unheard of Preſumption is this, that Man, blind and ignorant Man, guilty, ſinful Man, obnoxious to Wrath and eternal Death, that he ſhould undertake to reprove and cenſure, to judge and condemn the Actions and Diſpenſations of the moſt high and holy God. As if they were crooked and perverſe, defective either in Juſtice or Wiſdom. *Learn hence*, That it is no leſs than horrid and horrible Preſumption, for ſo weak, ſinful, and worthleſs a Creature as Man is, to conteſt or diſpute with the moſt high God about the Wiſdom or Righteouſneſs of any of his Ways. *O Man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Note* (2) How the Apoſtle vindicates the Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God in his Proceedings with Men in general, and againſt the Jews in particular; ſhewing, that there is no more Cauſe to make this Objection againſt God for rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and ſhewing Favour to the believing Gentiles, than for the Pitcher to contend with him that formed it, why he made it of ſuch a Shape, and not of another Figure; Or for the Clay, when it is marred and broken, to complain of the Potter for making of one part of it a Veſſel unto Honour, and the other unto Diſhonour. *Learn hence*, That Men who have made themſelves obnoxious to the Juſtice of God by a long-continued Courſe in Sin and Diſobedience againſt God (as the unbelieving Jews here ſpoken of evidently did) have no Cauſe to complain either of God's ſevere Proceedings againſt themſelves, or of his favourable Diſpenſations towards others. What juſt Cauſe had the Jews, rejected for their own Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart, to murmur againſt God for ſhewing Mercy to the Gentiles, who ſubmitted to the Terms of Mercy?

22 *What* if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long ſuffering the Veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory? even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, What though God doth not preſently puniſh the obſtinate and unbelieving Jews according to their Deſert, but beareth with them, and exerciſes Forbearance toward them, and they go on by their continual Rebellions to make themſelves fit Objects of his Wrath, but he is pleaſed ſtill with greater Gentleneſs and Patience to bear with them as he did with *Pharoah*; and if after all they be more hardned (as he was) by God's Forbearance, what Shew of Injuſtice I pray is it, if he puniſhes them at laſt with greater Severity, as God did him? If he ſwallow up their Nation, deſtroy their Temple, ruin their City, what Injuſtice is it to deſtroy thoſe, who by making themſelves Objects of God's Wrath are fitted for Deſtruction? *Here note*, That *the Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction* are ſuch as the Apoſtle ſaith, *God endured with much long ſuffering*; and therefore they were not made Veſſels of Wrath by God, but by themſelves; after they had filled up the meaſure of their Sins, and thereby fitted themſelves as Veſſels for Deſtruction. God endured them with much Long-ſuffering, though Judgment at laſt took hold upon them to the uttermoſt. *Learn hence*, That Almighty God may, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of Injuſtice or Unrighteouſneſs, puniſh with the utmoſt Severity ſuch a Perſon or a People whom he hath long endured, with much forbearance, to go on in a courſe of ſinning, if at laſt they repent not. This was the manner of God's dealing with the Jews here. His Lenity towards the Gentiles is next expreſs'd, ver. 22. *That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Veſſels of Mercy*, &c. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Can God be taxed with Unrighteouſneſs, in ſhewing the Riches of his glorious Grace and Mercy towards the deſpiſed Gentiles, whom he hath called to the Faith of Chriſt, and thereby fitted and prepared them to be Veſſels of Mercy? Hath he not juſt Right to ſhew his Mercy to ſuch Perſons who have ſubmitted to the Terms upon which he has promiſed Favour and Acceptance, and to own them as his peculiar People, although they be not the natural Seed of *Abraham*, ſeeing they are his ſpiritual. *Note here*, That as the unbelieving Jews were called in the former Verſe Veſſels of Wrath, ſo the believing Gentiles are called in this Verſe Veſſels of Mercy; becauſe as Veſſels are fitted and formed by the Hand of the Artificer for the Uſe to which they are deſigned, in like manner are Believers wrought by God, and framed by his holy Spirit, and made meet to receive the Mercy of God, that is, the Fruits and Effects of his Mercy, eſpecially Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God. Concerning the Veſſels of Wrath the Apoſtle ſpeaks paſſively, they are fitted for Deſtruction: Concerning the Veſſels of Mercy he ſpeaks actively, that God has prepared them unto Glory; that is, made them meet and fit by Grace here for Glory hereafter. *Learn thence*, That the new Creation of the Saints, and all the ſpiritual Workmanſhip that is found upon them, is to be aſcribed unto God, and to the effectual working of his Grace: *He hath afore prepared them unto Glory. Learn* (2.) That the fulleſt Meaſures of Glory hereafter ſhall be the Portion of ſuch, and only ſuch, as are firſt prepared by Grace and Holineſs, to receive them here. *Learn* (3.) That thoſe only are Veſſels of Mercy, prepared by God unto Glory, who upon the Evangelical Call have been prevailed with, by Faith and Repentance, to anſwer the Command and Call of God: *That he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mecry, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called.*

25 As he ſaith alſo in Oſee, I will call them my people which are not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved. 26 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in the place where it was ſaid unto them, ye *are* not my people: there ſhall they be called the children of the living God.

Our Apoſtle having hitherto vindicated the Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God in the Rejection of the Jews and Calling of the Gentiles; leſt the Jews ſhould ſtumble and take offence at it, in theſe and the following Verſes he proves, that the Calling of the Gentiles was long before foretold both by the Prophet *Hoſea* and the Prophet *Iſaiah*: By the Prophet *Hoſea*, chap. 2. 22. *I will call them my people which were not my people.* And Chap. 1. 10. *Inſtead of ye are not my people, it ſhall be ſaid, Ye are the ſons of the living God.* Which Expreſſions ſignifie and import God's receiving the Gentiles into the Church as an Act of free and undeſerved Mercy, whom the Jews look'd upon as Caſtaways, as Strangers, as Dogs; accounting themſelves only to be of his Family and Houſhold. Next he produces the Teſtimony of *Iſaiah*.

27 Eſaiah alſo crieth concerning Iſrael, tho' the number of the Children of Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant ſhall be ſaved. 28 For he will finiſh the work, and cut *it* ſhort in righteouſneſs; becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Eſaias ſaid before, Except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a Seed, we had been as *Sodome*, and been made like unto *Gomorrah*.

Here the Apoſtle ſhews how the Rejection of the Obdurate Jews was foretold by *Iſaiah* as well as *Hoſea*: That although the Number of the Jews, according to the Fleſh, were as the Sand of the Sea, yet the greateſt Number of them would be paſſed by for their Unbelief, and a Remnant only ſaved. This the Prophet ſpeaks of thoſe Jews who eſcaped the Hand of *Senaccherib*; and the Apoſtle makes the Deliverance of thoſe few, a Type of them that ſhould believe in Chriſt and be ſaved by him. And the Prophet farther adds, That God would finiſh his Work, and cut it in ſhort in Righteouſneſs; that is, God will make quick work with that incorrigible and unreclaimable People: ſuch ſwift Deſtruction ſhall come upon the multitude of evil Doers in the Land of *Iſrael*, as ſhall bring them very low, cut them ſhort, lop them off, ſo that they ſhall be left as a Tree, of which only the Stump remaineth. They ſhall be reduced to a ſmall Remnant, and a Remnant only of that Remnant ſhall be converted. Now *Firſt*, from the literal Import of thoſe Words; *Though Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant only ſhall be ſaved*, we *Learn*, That a numerous People or Nation, amongſt whom God hath been truly worſhipped, and this for a long Seaſon, may notwithſtanding, for their Wickedneſs, be deſtroyed, and reduced by God to a very ſmall number. *Secondly*, From the Typical Imports of theſe Words, together with the Apoſtle's Scope in citing of them, we gather, That amongſt thoſe Multitudes who are called by the Goſpel to believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who make a Profeſſion of his Name and Truth, the Number of thoſe who will be at laſt eternally ſaved, will be but comparatively ſmall and little; *A Remnant ſhall be ſaved.*

30 What ſhall we ſay then? that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs, even as the righteouſneſs which is of faith: 31 But Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, have not attained to the law of righteouſneſs 32 Wherefore? Becauſe *they ſought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Lord, what ſhall we ſay to this great Myſtery of Grace, the calling of the Gentile World, and the cutting off and caſting away of moſt of the preſent Jewiſh Nation? That the Gentiles who lived in Ignorance and Blindneſs, in Sin and Unrighteouſneſs, ſhould attain to Righteouſneſs by Faith in Chriſt? And that the Iſraelites, who had God's own righteous Law amongſt them, and truſted to be juſtified by the Obſervation of it, yet ſhould not attain to that Righteouſneſs which God accepteth? And wherefore have they not attained it? But becauſe they ſought not Juſtification by that Faith which God preſcribeth for that end; namely, Faith in the Mediator; but thought it muſt be attained by the Works of the Law, keeping all the Ceremonial Precepts, by which no fleſh can be juſtified. And the Reaſon why they ſought it not by Faith was this, *They ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone*; that is, at the Lord Jeſus

Chriſt, taking Offence at his Poverty and mean Condition in the World, and at the Spirituality of his Kingdom. *Learn hence*, That the great Humiliation of Chriſt in the days of his Fleſh did prove a Snare and Occaſion to many Perſons to deſpiſe and reject him, to ſtumble at him, and fall foul upon him. But in what Reſpects is Chriſt called a Stone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of Offence? *Anſwer*, Negatively; not becauſe he was by God deſigned, either Intentionally or Accidentally, to be ſuch. All Stumbling and Offence-taking at Chriſt, are accidental, proceeding from the Depravity of Man, not from the Deſign of God; much leſs were the Jews foreappointed and ordained by God to ſtumble at his Son; for God appoints no Man to do that which he prohibits all Men from doing. And as no Man is neceſſitated by the Decree of God, ſo neither is he conſtrained or neceſſitated by Satan, by his own Corruption, or any other Inſtrument, to ſtumble or take Offence at Chriſt; for Actions neceſſitated upon Men are neither demeritorious nor puniſhable. But poſitively Chriſt is called a Stone of Stumbling, becauſe Men willingly ignorant, and wilfully perverſe, do take Offence at him. Though God never deſigned or deſired any Man's ſtumbling at Chriſt, yet he knew and foreſaw that many, very many, would ſtumble at him; and accordingly expreſs'd him by a Prophetical Character anſwering the Event, and predicting that which in time came to paſs: *Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-block.*

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-ſtone, and rock of offence: and whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.

Obſerve here, (1.) What Uſe and Office our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is of to his Church: he is a Stone, a Corner-ſtone, the chief Corner-ſtone; a Corner-ſtone for Strength, the chief Corner-ſtone for Ornament and Beauty; as the Corner-ſtone bears the weight of the Building, ſo doth Chriſt bear the weight of his Church, and ſupports all the Pillars and Supporters of it; yet this precious Corner-ſtone is accidentally and eventually a *ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence:* Some are offended at the Poverty of his Perſon, and the Meanneſs of his Condition, others at the Sublimity and Sanctity of his Doctrine; ſome are offended at his Croſs, others are offended at his Free Grace; but ſuch as inſtead of being offended at him, do believe on him, ſhall never be aſhamed of, or confounded by him. *Learn hence*, That thoſe who according to the Direction of the Goſpel do believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall never have cauſe to be aſhamed. *Here Note*, What they ſhall not be aſhamed of, when and why they ſhall not be aſhamed. (1.) What the ſincere Believer ſhall not be aſhamed of. *Anſwer*, He ſhall never be aſhamed of his Choice; he ſhall not be aſhamed of his Profeſſion; he ſhall never be aſhamed of the Cauſe and Intereſt of Chriſt, which he has owned and vindicated in the World; he ſhall never be aſhamed of the Work and Service of Chriſt, nor of any Time ſincerely ſpent in that Work and Service; he ſhall never be aſhamed of his Reproaches and Sufferings, Tribulation and Perſecutions, for the ſake of Chriſt. In a word, he ſhall never be aſhamed hereafter, that he never was aſhamed here, either of Chriſt and his Goſpel, his Work and Service, his Cauſe and Intereſt. *Note*, (2.) When the Believer ſhall not be aſhamed; namely, when he is called forth to hear his Teſtimony for Chriſt before the World, at the Hour at Death, and at the Day of Judgment; neither the Dreadfulneſs of the Day, nor the the Impartiality of the Sentence, nor the Separation that ſhall then be made, will in the leaſt cauſe him to be aſhamed. *Note*, (3.) Why the Believer ſhall never be aſhamed. *Anſwer*, The Cauſe of Shame is removed and taken away, namely, Sin, thoſe only from whom he can reaſonably fear Shame, will never be aſhamed on him; he can look God and Chriſt, his own Conſcience and the whole World in the Face, without Shame and Bluſhing. Oh! that Sinners would now be aſhamed of their Unbelief, which otherwiſe will put them to eternal Shame, and bring them upon everlaſting Confuſion into the Day of the Lord. *Whoſoever believeth on him ſhall never be aſhamed, but he that believeth not on him, ſhame and the wrath of God abideth on him.*

CHAP. X.

Our Apoſtle proſecutes in this the Argument which he had begun in the former Chapter, viz. *The Temporary Rejection of his Countrymen, the* Jews, *for their obſtinate Refuſal of that Way of Juſtification which the Wiſdom of God had preſcribed, namely, by Faith in his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and well knowing that he was about to ſay upon that Argument would ſound very harſh in their Ears, who were ſo addicted to ſeek Juſtification only by the Works of the Law, he begins this Chapter, as he did the former, with a moſt Solemn Proteſtation of his unfeigned Love unto them, and moſt fervent Deſire for their Salvation: for thus he ſpeaks,*

1 BRethren, my hearts deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved.

Where obſerve, (1.) The mighty Concern which the Apoſtle had for the Eternal Salvation of his Countrymen, the *Jews*, who ſought his Deſtruction; their Salvation lay very near his Heart, and he was afraid they ſhould miſs it by taking the wrong way for the obtaining of it, by Building all their Hopes of Salvation upon ſuch a Bottom as would never bear the Fabrick, but utterly fail them, namely, Juſtification by Works. *Obſerve*, (2.) What it was that made the Apoſtle ſo concern'd for the *Jews*. It was not upon the Account of their wicked Lives, and ſcandalous Immoralities, but for their bad Principles, and Fundamental Errors. They oppoſed the Honour of God to the Son of God, and the Obſervation of the Law to the Faith of Chriſt. *From whence learn*, That we ought to be concerned for thoſe who lye under damnable Errors, although they be Men of good Carriage, and commendable Converſation. Not only the vicious and ungodly, but the erroneous and unſound, are to be the Objects of our Pity and Prayer; for Error is as damnable as Vice; the one is an open Road, the other a By-path, to Hell and Deſtruction; and accordingly he that has a due Care of his Soul's Salvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous Principles as of debauched Practices.

2 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I can bear them Witneſs that many, very many of the *Jews*, have a zealous Deſire in their way to pleaſe God, and do what is acceptable in his Sight; but tho' it be a warm, it is but a blind Zeal, and not according to the right Knowledge. *Here obſerve*, (1.) The Apoſtle is deſirous to ſay the beſt he could of his Countrymen the *Jews*; he commends the good Meaning of their Zeal, but blames the ill Conduct of it. It was a miſguided and miſtaken Zeal, and not erected as it ought. Zeal is either one of the beſt or worſt Things in the World. It is a good thing when it is right in its Object, right in the Meaſure and Degree, and purſued by right Means. As to the Object of our Zeal, it muſt be that which is certainly good, and conſiderably good. Certainly good, or elſe we are zealous for we know not what; and conſiderably good, or elſe it doth not deſerve our Zeal. To be zealous and hot beyond all due Meaſure for the Obſervation of a Ceremony or Cuſtom, as ſome in the Chriſtian Church were of Old about the Obſervation of *Eaſter*, is certainly a Zeal not according to Knowledge. Again, Zeal muſt be proſecuted by lawful and warrantable Means; we muſt not from a Principle of Zeal do any Evil that Good may come. But there is a Zeal amongſt the Church of *Rome*, which I am ſure cannot be according to Knowledge, and that is a Zeal for Ignorance. This is a Zeal peculiar to themſelves; they will not allow the People to underſtand what they do in the Service of God; they require them to Pray, but will not let them know what they Pray for, and all this under a Pretence that Ignorance (which makes a Man a Block) is the Mother of Devotion. As if the leſs Men underſtand the Service of God, the better he was pleaſed with it, and the more they were edified by it.

3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own

righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.

That is, the *Jews* being ignorant of God's Way of Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt diſcovered in the Goſpel, and relying upon and truſting to their own Works, their Obedience to the Ceremonial and Moral Law, to juſtifie and ſave them, they have not ſubmitted themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God; that is, to the Way and Method which the Wiſdom of God has diſcovered for the Juſtification of a Sinner by the Blood of his Son. *Obſerve here*, (1.) That by God's Righteouſneſs we are to underſtand that Righteouſneſs which Chriſt has wrought for us, which God beſtows upon us, and the Goſpel reveals unto us: By eſtabliſhing their own Righteouſneſs, is to be underſtood their Reſolution and Endeavour to depend upon their own Works; their Obedience to the Law for their Juſtification before God, in Oppoſition againſt and in Contradiction to that way of Juſtification which God had declared, namely, by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, the one and only Mediator. *Obſerve* (2.) That upon the firſt opening of the Goſpel, no Evangelical Doctrine was more diſreliſhed by the *Jews* than Juſtification by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt. They were poſſeſs'd with this Principle then, That Eternal Life was attainable only by the Works of the Law, and according to the Example of the *Jews*, at the beginning. Perſons ever ſince, even to this very day, are fond of that way of Juſtification. The natural Man is a proud Man, he loves to live upon his own Stock, he cannot ſtoop to a ſincere and univerſal Renunciation of his Righteouſneſs, and to depend wholly upon the Righteouſneſs of another. 'Tis natural to a Man to chuſe rather to eat a brown Cruſt, or wear a coarſe Garment, which he can call his own, than to feed upon the richeſt Dainties, or wear the coſtlieſt Robes, which they muſt receive as an Alms from another. Lord! How hard is it to ſubdue this Pride of Spirit, and to be throughly convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of another and a better Righteouſneſs than our own to conſtitute us Righteous in the Sight of God. *From the whole learn*, (1.) How dark ſighted the wiſeſt Men are by Nature in God's Way of juſtifying and ſaving Sinners; *ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*; that is, of the Way which the Wiſdom of God has diſcovered for juſtifying guilty Sinners by Faith in his Son. This is known only by Divine Revelation, *Rom.* 1. 17. *The righteouſneſs of God is revealed from faith to faith:* It is purely an Object of Righteouſneſs it ſelf, and the manner of imparting it. *Learn*, (2.) How abſurd is the Attempt, and how injurious the Deſign, to ſet up and eſtabliſh a Righteouſneſs of our own, either in Oppoſition to or Conjunction with the Righteouſneſs of God. Alas! We fulfil the Law only in Sincerity, we cannot fulfil it to Perfection; and if it be not to Perfection, it cannot be Juſtification. Therefore to truſt to any Righteouſneſs of our own for Juſtification before God, which is imperfect and polluted, is both ſinful and unſafe. Sinful, becauſe it is confronting the plain Declarations of the Goſpel; and unſafe, becauſe it evacuates Chriſt: For Chriſt is of no Effect unto us; whoſoever are juſtified by the Law, they are fallen from Grace, *Gal.* 5. 4. *Learn*, (3.) What an Hindrance is Pride to the Salvation of Man; it ſtiffens the Will that it won't ſtoop to God's Terms; they will not have Juſtification in God's Way, and they ſhall not have it in their own. Here it ſtuck with the *Jews*; they would not ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God; and here it ſticks with too many at this day. *Learn*, (4.) Not to count a Righteouſneſs of your own needleſs to be poſſeſſed of becauſe you want the Righteouſneſs of another to confide and truſt in; we plead the Meritorious Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to anſwer the Demands of the Law; but contend for a Perſonal Righteouſneſs of our own, to anſwer the Commands of the Goſpel. Chriſt doth indeed eaſe us of the Load of our Sins, but not diſcharge us from the Care of our Duty. Our Being in Chriſt frees us indeed from Condemnation, but then that Inbeing muſt be proved by our Holy Walking; not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Learn*, (5.) To ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God as ever you would enjoy Peace with God. The more Holy we are, and the more Sanctified we grow, the meaner Opinion we ſhall have of our ſelves, and the more need of a Saviour, and of Juſtification by him, and ſhall bleſs God for the Goſpel, in which the Righteouſneſs of God is revealed from Faith to Faith; and ſhall dread it as Hell to be found amongſt the number of thoſe, who tho' they be not ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, yet will go about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, refuſing to ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God.

4 For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

There was a threefold Law of God which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the end of, namely, Judicial, Ceremonial, and Moral. (1) The Judicial Law was that which God by *Moſes* delivered to the *Jews*, containing Directions for the Adminiſtration of their Civil Government. Now Chriſt was the End of this Law, as he hath aboliſhed it: For the *Jewiſh* Polity was to continue till the coming of the Meſſiah, and not longer, *Gen.* 49. *Dan.* 9. (2) The Ceremonial Law was that which did preſcribe certain Sacred Rites and Ceremonies to be obſerved in the External Worſhip of God by the People of *Iſrael*. The former Law had Relation to them as they were a Nation, this as they were a Church. Now Chriſt is the End of this Law, as he has abrogated it. All the Ceremonies of that Law were Shadows and Types of Chriſt; now the Shadows were to ceaſe when once the Subſtance was come. (3) The Moral Law is that Holy and Eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs given by God to Men for the right ordering of their Thoughts, Words and Actions towards God, their Neighbour, and themſelves. This Law is ſummarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, and is called the Law of Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 9. 31. The Royal Law by St. *James*, Jam. 2. 8. Now Chriſt may be ſaid to be the End of this Law. (1) As he is the Scope of it. (2) As he is the Acompliſhment of it. The Precepts of the Law point at Chriſt, as he by whom they are accompliſhed; the Promiſes of the Law point at him, as he by whom they are ratified; and the Threatnings of the Law may be ſaid to point at him, as he by whom they are eſcaped. Chriſt was the Sum of the Law as well as the Subſtance of the Goſpel. In a word, Chriſt is the End of the Law, in as much as he is to a Believer what the Law would have been unto him, if he could have perfectly kept it, namely, Righteouſneſs and Life, Juſtification and Salvation. For Chriſt is the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs to be imputed to every one that believeth in him, the Law being our School-Maſter to bring us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by Faith, *Gal.* 3. 25.

5 For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man which doeth thoſe things ſhall live by them.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Righteouſneſs by Faith can never be obtained by the Works of the Law, becauſe *Moſes* deſcribeth the Righteouſneſs of the Law thus; that the Man that doth theſe things ſhall live by them: That is, a Proſperous and Happy Life in the Land of *Canaan* ſay ſome, an Eternal Life in Heaven ſay others. But then by the Law muſt be underſtood the Moral, and not the Ceremonial Law, according to that of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments:* That is, the Moral Law. *This do, and thou ſhalt live. Where note*, That ſuch as ſeek Juſtification and Salvation by the Works, of the Law, muſt keep the Moral Law perfectly and exactly; which being impoſſible to Man in his fallen Eſtate, Chriſt has obtained of his Father that for the ſake of his Righteouſneſs, our ſincere, tho' imperfect Obedience, ſhould find Acceptance with God, and be available to Salvation.

6 But the righteouſneſs which is of faith, ſpeaketh on this wiſe; ſay not in thine heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down from above.) 7 Or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.) 8 But what ſaith it? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.

In which Words the Apoſtle ſeems to ſet forth the great Anxiety and Trouble of Mind which is found with an awakened Sinner. He is at a Loſs to find out a Way how he ſhall ſtand juſtified in the Sight of God. The Law propounds to him Life, but it is upon an impoſſible Condition; but the Goſpel clearly reveals to him, that Chriſt has performed what is neceſſary for his Juſtification, and that by a practical and lively Faith, he ſhall have an Intereſt in it. We need not therefore ſay, *Who ſhall aſcend into heaven for us?* For Chriſt being aſcended, hath given us a convincing Proof that the Propitiation for our Sins is perfect, for otherwiſe our Surety had not been received into God's Sanctuary: Therefore to be under Perplexities how we may be juſtified, is to deny the Value of his Righteouſneſs, and the Truth of his Aſcenſion; and ſay not, *Who ſhall deſcend into the deep?* That is, to bear the Torments of Hell, and expiate Sin; for this is to deny the Vertue of his Death, whereby he appeaſed God, and redeemed us from Wrath to come. In the Law, the condemning Righteouſneſs of God is made viſible; in the Goſpel, his juſtifying Righteouſneſs is revealed from Faith to Faith. Eternally magnified be Omnipotent Love, that the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has graciouſly diſcovered how God may ſhew Mercy to repenting and returning Sinners, without any Prejudice or Injury done to his Juſtice. Hereby the Soul is at once freed from the Fear of God's Wrath and Anger, and has a lively Hope of his Love and Favour. Lord! What Sins are there which ſo entire a Satisfaction doth not expiate? What Torments can they deſerve which his Wounds and Stripes have not removed. God is juſt as well as merciful, in juſtifying him that believeth on Jeſus. *From the whole note*, That the way of Acceptance with God is ſo clearly ſtated and diſcovered in the Goſpel, that we need not be in any doubtful Suſpence where to find it, or ſeek other Satisfaction than God has given us in his Word. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that word of faith which we preach.*

9 That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.

Obſerve here the Two great and principal Things which the Goſpel requires in order to our Juſtification and Salvation. The firſt is *confeſſion of Chriſt with our mouth:* That is, in all Times of Danger, particularly in a Time of Perſecution, to own Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, and to declare that we will ſerve him, and adhere to him, be ruled of him, and expect only to be ſaved by him. The ſecond is, *To believe in our hearts, that God hath raiſed Chriſt from the dead.* But why is the Articles of Chriſt's Reſurrection only named, ſeeing Faith reſpects his Birth, Life and Death, *&c.* *Anſw.* Becauſe this Article of the Reſurrection preſuppoſeth all the reſt of the Antecedents to it, and Conſequents of it: as namely, his Incarnation, Death and Paſſion, Aſcention and Interceſſion. This Article therefore of the Reſurrection is put for all the reſt, and includes all the reſt; for as he could not have riſen, had he not firſt died; ſo his Death had availed us nothing, unleſs he had riſen again. *Learn hence* (1.) That all thoſe who would be accepted with God unto Righteouſneſs and Life, muſt be ſuch as do believe in Chriſt with the Heart, and openly confeſs with the Mouth that he is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World. *If thou confeſs, and believe, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* *Learn* (2) That the principal Seat and Subject of Faith is not the Underſtanding barely, but the Will, called here the Head. *With the heart man believeth to righteouſneſs:* Not with the Head, altho' Knowledge is ſo neceſſary to Faith, that it is ſometimes put for Faith, as in *Iſa.* 53. *By his knowledge, or by the knowledge of him, ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtifie many*; yet there may be much Light in the Underſtanding, where there is no Life in the Will; much Knowledge in the Head, where there is no Faith in Heart, nor Obedience in the Life. Therefore ſays the Apoſtle here, *With the heart man believeth*, &c.

11 For the ſcripture ſaith, Whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall not be aſhamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the ſame Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. 13. For whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.

Obſerve here, how the Apoſtle proclaims Jeſus Chriſt a common and univerſal Saviour of all Mankind who believed in him, without any Diſcrimination or Difference between *Jew* and *Gentile.* *Whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not be aſhamed; and whoſoever ſhall call upon his name, ſhall be ſaved.* Where by believing in him, and calling upon him, muſt be underſtood ſuch a Faith in him, as is the Parent and Principle of Obedience to him. For the Devil himſelf may as well paſs for a Believer as a diſobedient Soul. If our Works be no better than Devils, our Faith is no better than theirs, neither in the Account of God. He believes, ſo as not to be aſhamed, who lives as he doth believe. In vain it is to expect Salvation by Chriſt, if we do not yield Subjection to him. Lord! how many are there that deſire thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer for their Sins, ſo they may have the Satisfaction to commit them? Content that thou ſhouldſt bear the Blame, ſo they may have the Liberty to commit the Faults? If they may but live in their Sins, they take it kindly that Chriſt will die for them; but the Deſign of Chriſt's Death was to deliver us not only from the Danger, but from the Dominion of our Sins; to free us not only from the Wrath of God, but from the Rage of our Luſts.

14. How then ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

The Scope of the Apoſtle in theſe Words is to prove that there was a neceſſity of Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*, in order to their believing on Chriſt; and his Way of arguing is very forcible, demonſtrative and convincing. Thus God has by the Prophets promiſed Salvation to the *Gentiles*; but without calling on him there is no Salvation; and without Faith there is no calling upon him by Prayer; and without hearing there is no Faith; and without a Preacher there is no hearing; and without ſolemn Miſſion or ſending by Chriſt and his Miniſters there can be no Preacher. And the Apoſtle's manner of ſpeaking is by way of Interrogation, which is equivalent to a Negation; *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* That is, it is impoſſible to do it, and it would be impious and wicked to do it. None muſt be the Object of our Prayers but he that is the Object of our Faith and Truſt, therefore he alone muſt be Prayed unto. And if ſo, then the Practice of the Papiſts in Praying to Angels and Saints departed is very blame-worthy and abominable in the Sight of God. How can they Pray unto them, unleſs they believe in them, and truſt in them? And if they truſt in them, that Curſe falls upon them; *Curſed is that man that truſteth in man*; that is, in any Creature. The Truth is, if Chriſt himſelf were a meer Man, and not God as well as Man, we ſhould ſin by worſhipping of him: But it is one good Argument to prove the Divinity of Chriſt, that the Scripture repreſents him as the Object of Faith and Religious Invocation. *From the whole obſerve*, that the only Way to Heaven is by Chriſt, the only way to Chriſt is by Faith, the only way to Faith is by the Word, it cometh by hearing. The only Way, that is, the only ordinary Way; what becomes of thoſe that never heard of Chriſt in the Preaching of the Goſpel, God only is fit to judge. This is certain, that all Men at the Great Day ſhall be judged according to the Law that they were under, and obliged by, and no other. Now Promulgation being of the Eſſence of a Law, the Goſpel cannot be a Law to them to whom it was not promulged, and made known: But a practical Belief of the Goſpel is indiſpenſably neceſſary to the Salvation of them to whom it is revealed. *Obſerve farther*, The great Reverence and high Eſteem which is due and payable to the Preachers of the Goſpel, and that by the Approbation of God himſelf. He commands us to admire the very Feet of them that Preach the Goſpel of his Son unto us, and bring glad Tidings of good Things; *How beautiful are the Feet of them*, &c. And for great Reaſon ſhould it be thus, becauſe the Miniſters of the Goſpel are the Meſſengers of Chriſt; they receive both their Miſſion and Commiſſion from him, they are inſtructed by him, they negotiate for him, they ſpeak in his Name, they act in his ſtead; and whatſoever they either promiſe or threaten in God's Name, he ſtands ready and reſolved to perform it, *Iſa.* 44. 26. He confirmeth the Word of his Servants, and performeth the Counſel of his Meſſengers. Lord! how beautiful and bleſſed are the Feet of thy Meſſengers and Miniſters in thy Account? Let them be ſo in thy People's Eſtimation alſo. *Learn hence*, That nothing ought to be ſo welcome to us, and ſo joyfully entertained by us, as the Preaching and Preachers of the Goſpel. *How beautiful are the feet of them?* &c.

16 But they have not all obeyed the Goſpel: for Eſaias ſaith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Here an Objection is tacitly implied and anſwered. Some might ſay, if the Goſpel be thus excellent, and the Feet of them that Preach it ſo beautiful, whence was it that the

Jews, to whom it was firſt Preached, did not receive it, and yield Obedience to it? The Apoſtle anſwers, that this Infidelity and Obſtinacy of the *Jews* was foretold by the Prophets of Old, particularly by *Iſaiah*, who complains, *Chap 53. 1. Lord! who hath believed our report. Learn hence,* (1) That the Faith of the Goſpel is not common to all that hear the Goſpel. True, the hearing of the Word is neceſſary unto Faith, but Faith doth not neceſſarily follow the hearing of the Word. *Learn*, (2) That the Prophets of God did foreſee, and by a Spirit of Propheſie foretel, what ſmall Succeſs the Preaching of the Goſpel would have to and amongſt the *Jews*. *Learn*, (3) That yet the Prophet's Prediction was not the Cauſe, but the Conſequence of the *Jews* Rejection of the Goſpel, It was not becauſe the Prophet ſaid ſo, that they did not believe, but becauſe they believed not, therefore the Prophet ſaid ſo; *They have not obeyed the Goſpel*; for ſo *Iſaiah* ſaith of them.

17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, it is very evident, and theſe Teſtimonies ſhew, that Faith come by hearing, and hearing by the Preaching of the Word of God. The Grace of Faith is wrought by the Spirit in the Act of hearing, and the Matter heard by which this Faith is wrought is the Word of God Preach'd. Perſons muſt hear, that they may believe, and God's word muſt be preached that they may hear. A Non-preaching Miniſter then is no Miniſter; he is like a Bell without a Clapper, or a Crier without a Voice; he neither anſwers the Deſign of his Commiſſion, nor the End of the Goſpel's Inſtitution, which was to be the inſtrumental Means of Faith. *Faith cometh by hearing.*

18 But I ſay, have they not heard? yes verily, their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

It was no leſs than a Miracle, that the Goſpel, in the ſpace of a few Years, ſhould be Preached to all Nations, and planted in the remoteſt parts of the World; yet thus it was, which makes St. *Paul* here apply that to the Preaching of the Apoſtles, which *David* applies to the Preaching of the Heavens, *Pſ.* 19. 4. The Goſpel of Chriſt, like the Sun in the Firmament, caſts its beautiful and glorious Beams all the World over. For upon the Commiſſion given out by Chriſt to his Apoſtles to go into all the World, and Preach the Goſpel to every Creature, the Apoſtles divided themſelves into the ſeveral Quarters of the World for the ſpeedy Performance of this Service, namely, the carrying of the Light of the Goſpel, as the Sun doth his Light, unto all the Nations of the Earth. As if St. *Paul* had here ſaid, Like as the Voice of the Heavens are gone through the World, ſo is the Voice of Chriſt, and the Light of his Goſpel, which doth much more declare the Glory of God than the Sun and the Moon in the Heavens can do. Some obſerve, That there was hardly any one conſiderable Nation in the World, but within Forty Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion had the glad Tidings of the Goſpel preached to it. Hence the Apoſtle tells us, *Tit. 2. 11. That the Grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation, had appeared unto all men:* That is, the Goſpel without Reſtriction was tendred to all Nations, *Jew* and *Gentile*, to all Perſons, bond and free, honourable and ignoble. Behold! the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, in enlightning the dark Corners of the World, with this Glorious Light from Heaven. Behold! the great Power and Efficacy of the Word under the quickning Influences of the Holy Spirit. Behold! an Example of laborious Diligence and Induſtry in Miniſterial Service: What Pains did the Apoſtles take? What Hazards did they run? What Journeys did they undertake, to Preach Jeſus Chriſt, to plant and propagate the Everlaſting Goſpel? Shall not we attend our Flock, and travel from Houſe to Houſe to viſit our Charge which falls within the Compaſs of a few Miles? When the Apoſtles compaſs'd Sea and Land, travell'd far and near, labour'd Night and Day, to tranſmit the Goſpel to the Ends of the World. Lord! how does their indefatigable Diligence ſhame our ſupine Negligence?

19 But I ſay, Did not Iſrael know? Firſt, Moſes ſaith, I will provoke you to jealouſie by them *that are* no people, *and* by a fooliſh nation I will anger you. 20 But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not; I was made manifeſt unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Iſrael he ſaith, All day long I have ſtretched forth my hand unto a diſobedient and gainſaying People?

Did not *Iſrael* know, that is, of the Preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and of their own Infidelity in rejecting it. This they might have known, both from the Teſtimony of *Moſes* and *Eſaias*. Firſt, from *Moſes* his Teſtimony, who ſays, *Deut. 32. I will provoke you* (Jews refuſing to believe) *unto jealouſie by them that are* (yet) *no People* (of God) *and by a fooliſh nation*, (ſo the *Gentiles* were accounted by the conceited *Jews*) *I will anger you.* When God preferr'd the *Gentiles* before the *Jews*, the Hearts of the latter were vexed with Jealouſie and Anger, to behold all their Privileges taken from them, and given to the former, whom they accounted a People moſt vile and deſpicable. The ſecond Teſtimony is that of *Eſaias*, who the Apoſtle ſays was very bold; that is, very plain and expreſs, in foretelling God's calling of the *Gentiles*, and rejecting of the *Jews*; calling the *Gentiles* by his free Grace, ſeeking them that firſt ſought not him, and caſting off the *Jews*; who after all his Forbearance and Long-ſuffering, did continue obſtinately to reject the Offers of his Grace, and the Tenders of his Mercy. *Here note*, (1) The Holy Courage of this Evangelical Prophet *Iſaiah* in the Diſcharge of his Office: With great boldneſs and freedom he foretells the calling of the *Gentiles*, and caſting off the *Jews*, although it coſt him dear, even his Life; being ſawn aſunder with a wooden Sawe, as ſome affirm. There ought to meet in the Miniſters and Meſſengers of God both Courage and Impartiality, Courage in fearing no Faces, Impartiality in ſparing no Crimes. *Note*, (2) What little Cauſe or Reaſon the Miniſters of God have to ſet down in Deſpondency after ſo many unwearied Attempts made in vain to reclaim Sinners from their wicked Ways. When they conſider the infinite Patience of God towards them, *who ſtretches forth his hand all the day long to a diſobedient and gainſaying people:* That is, patiently contends with their Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs. Lord! why ſhould we that are Sinners our ſelves think much to bear with Sinners? Let us rather imitate thy Example in waiting upon them with the Offers of Grace and Mercy, and follow them with our melting Intreaties, and paſſionate Importunities, till we either overcome their Obſtinacy, or leave them totally inexcuſable.

CHAP. XI.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is twofold. (1) *To keep the* Jews *from Dejection and Deſpair.* (2) *To preſerve the* Gentiles *from Preſumption and Pride. To keep the* Jews *from Deſpair, he tells them, That tho' God had certainly rejected them for rejecting his Son, and the Goſpel of Salvation by him, yet this Rejection of theirs was neither Total nor Final; tho' many of them were blinded, yet not all; ſome believed then, and many more ſhould believe afterwards, before the End of the World. To preſerve the* Gentiles *from Pride and Preſumption, he preſcribes to them Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind, not* to be high-minded, but fear, *leſt being ingraffed into the good Olive, they ſhould for their Security and Unfruitfulneſs be broken off, as the* Jews *had been before them, whom were natural Branches. Thus he beſpeaks them both.*

1 I Say then, hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

Our Apoſtle having ſhewn in the end of the foregoing Chapter that the *Jews* would be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called, begins this Chapter, by anſwering a great and popular Objection. Some hereupon might be ready to ſay, If this be ſo, then God has caſt away his Covenant people, violated his Covenant-Promiſe, forgot the Seed of *Abraham* his Friend. He anſwers, by his accuſtomed Form of Denial, *God forbid*. And then proceeds to ſhew that the Rejection of the *Jews* was not total, God did not reject them all, but the unbelieving part of them only. And this he proves by producing himſelf as an Inſtance in the Caſe; *I my ſelf*, ſays he, *am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin*. As if he had ſaid, I am my ſelf a *Jew* by Nature and Nation, not a Proſelyte converted to the *Jewiſh* Faith, but a *Jew* by Lineal Deſcent, of the Seed of *Abraham*, according to the Fleſh, yet am not I caſt off by God; therefore God has not caſt away all his People. *Learn hence*, How many Unbelievers ſoever God rejects, he will not caſt away one Soul that ſincerely believes in his Son, and gives up himſelf to the Obedience of the Goſpel. Believers are God's Jewels, he will not caſt them away. They are his Children, his Portion, his Inheritance, he will never caſt them off. They are united to him by the Band of the Holy Spirit, and he has engaged himſelf to them by the Bond of an Everlaſting Covenant. Believers love God and his Truth for ever, and the God of Truth will love them for ever. *God has not caſt away his People.*

2. God has not caſt away his people which he foreknew.

Here we have a ſecond Argument to prove that God would not wholly caſt off the *Jewiſh* Church and People; namely, becauſe he had foreknown them; that is, had choſen the Body of them to be a ſpecial and peculiar People to himſelf above and before all the People of the Earth. And had alſo foreknown, that is, foreſeen that many of them would, thro' the Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, ſavingly believe on the promiſed Meſſias. God never did, never will caſt away ſuch, either amongſt *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

2. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias? how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael, ſaying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. 4 But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to my ſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the Image of* Baal.

Another Inſtance is here produced to prove that God had not ſuffered all the *Jews* to apoſtatize and fall away through Unbelief, and that is the Inſtance of *Elias*, in whoſe Days there was ſuch a general Revolt amongſt the *Jews* from the Worſhip of the true God, to *Jeroboam's* Idolatry, that he thought himſelf alone. But God aſſures him there was not ſuch a Dearth of Saints as he feared, he having reſerved to himſelf ſeven Thouſand true and faithful Worſhippers of himſelf, who had never bow'd Knee to the Image of *Baal*. *Learn hence*, That even in Times of Univerſal Apoſtacy and Epidemical Degeneracy, God has a Number to ſtand up for, and bear Witneſs to his Name and Truth, and that the Number of them is more than we either imagine or believe. God has ever had, and always will have a Seed to ſerve him, which ſhall be accounted to him for a Generation; and although the Number of Revolters be great, yet the Number of the Righteous is not ſmall.

5 Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then *it is* no more of works: otherwiſe grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwiſe work is no more work.

Here we have St. *Paul* making Application of the foregoing Exampel to the preſent Caſe. As *Elias* was not alone in the corrupt State of *Iſrael* then, ſo neither was the Apoſtle alone now in this Time of general Rejection on the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation. God had a Number then, he has *a remnant* now, which according to his free and gracious Purpoſe are brought to believe in his Son. Although the *Jews* which believed were few in Compariſon of them that were rejected, called therefore a *remnant*, which is but ſmall and little in reſpect of the whole piece; yet there were many Thouſands of them that did believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and obtained, no doubt, Salvation by him, *Act*. 21. 20. *Thou ſeeſt, Brother, how many thouſand Jews there are which do believe. Obſerve farther*, The Concluſion which the Apoſtle doth infer and draw from the forementioned Aſſertion; If a Remnant be ſaved according to the free Purpoſe and gracious Election of God, then 'tis not upon the Conſideration of the Merit of their own Works, they are not juſtified and accepted for the Works of the Law, otherwiſe *grace is no more grace*; for what need is there of Grace, where Men have continued in all things written in the Law to do them? for the Man that doth thoſe things ſhall live in them. But on the other Hand, if it be of Works that we are juſtified and accepted, then *is no more of grace, otherwiſe work is no more work*. *Learn hence*, (1) That ſuch as are choſen in Chriſt to be a People near unto God, are put into this State by meer Grace immerited Favours. *Learn*, (2) That Grace comes in to ſupply the Defect of our Works, and to procure Pardon for the Non-performance of them according to the Tenor of the Law. God was good to Man before his Fall, in making him his Creature; he is gracious to Man ſince his Fall, in recovering him to the Divine Favour, by reſtoring him to the Divine Likeneſs. The Fabrick of Grace in the Hearts of his People goes up as did the Building of the ſecond Temple, with Shouts and Acclamations, crying, *grace, grace*; and every Stone in the Building of our Salvation, from the Foundation to the Superſtructure, is all Free-Stone: *Otherwiſe grace is no more grace.*

7 What then? Iſrael hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded: 8 According as it is written, God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear, unto this day.

Obſerve here, (1) What the Apoſtle affirms concerning the main Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation, they obtained not what they ſought after; that is, Deliverance by the Meſſiah, Juſtification and Righteouſneſs by the Works of the Law. This they ſought, but found not; yet *the Election hath obtained it*: that is, the choſen Generation of Believers, ſeeking Righteouſneſs and Life in a Goſpel way; namely, by Faith in Chriſt the Mediator, have obtained it. *And the reſt were blinded*; but how, and by whom? *Anſw.* (1) By their own Sin and Perjudice; and then, (2) By the juſt Judgment of God, leaving them to their own Ignorance and Obſtinacy, for ſhutting their Eyes againſt the clear Light of the Goſpel, and by giving them over to Satan, the God of this World, who blindeth the Eyes of them that believe not, 2 *Cor*. 4. 4. *Obſerve*, (2) The direful Judgement which followed upon this dreadful Sin; they ſhut their Eyes, and ſaid they will not ſee; God cloſed their eyes, and ſaid they ſhall not ſee, becauſe they would not obey the Spirit of God which would have awakned and enlightned them. God gave them up to a Spirit of Slumber, Stupidity, and Blindneſs; that is, he permitted them to continue and lie under thoſe Prejudices againſt the true Meſſiah, which they had taken up, and entertained in their Minds. *Learn hence*, That no greater Judgment can befal a People, than a ſottiſh Stupidity of Mind, and Inſenſibility of Spirit, whereby they are drowſily careleſs of their Salvation, and know not the Things belonging to their Peace, although they be before their eyes. This was the caſe with the chief Body of the Jewiſh Nation, and continues to be ſtill their caſe: They have Eyes and ſee not, Ears but hear not, unto this day.

9 And David ſaith, Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence unto them. 10 Let their eyes be darkned, that they may not ſee, and bow down their back alway.

The Apoſtle proceeds here to declare unto us, that the general Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart which was found amongſt the rejected Jews, was not to be wondered at, becauſe it was prophetically foretold by holy *David*, in the Perſon of the Meſſiah, of whom he was a Type, that his own People the Jews ſhould extreamly injure and wrong him, oppreſs and vex him: For which Wickedneſs he foretels what dreadful and tremendous Judgments ſhould come upon the Jews; namely, *That their table ſhould be made to them a ſnare, a trap, and a ſtumbling-block*: that is, that all their pleaſant and delightful Things ſhould become the Inſtruments of their Deſtruction. *That their eyes be darkned, and they may not ſee.* The darkneſs of their Eyes, ſignifies the taking away of the Judgment and Underſtanding from a People. And *the bowing down of the back always* intimates and implies their grovelling upon this Earth, their reliſhing and ſavouring nothing but earthly things, lifting up either Head or Heart unto God. Now all this which *David* ſpake of the wicked Jews in his time, the Apoſtle applies and adapts to the incredulous and unblieving Jews in his Day, to whom the very preaching of the Goſpel was an occaſion of Obduration and Hardneſs of Heart. *Learn here*, (1) That to the obſtinate and obdurate Enemies of God the beſt things become baneful, and through their own Corruption become the Inſtrument and Means of their own Deſtruction. *Let their table be made a* *ſnare, a trap, and a ſtumbling-block. Learn,* (2.) That to be deprived of the Uſe of our Judgment and Underſtanding, eſpecially in Things pertaining unto God, is a very dreadful Judgment. *Let their eyes be darkned, that they may not ſee. Learn,* (3.) That Imprecations are to be uſed very warily, and only in weighty Matters. Theſe and other Expreſſions of *David* which look like Imprecations, may as well be accounted prophetical Predictions, foretelling what will come upon obſtinate Sinners, rather than praying that Evil may come: Great is the Sin and Danger of uſing Imprecations lightly, either upon our ſelves or others; ſome Perſons uſe them to gain Credit to what they ſay. But this will not do with wiſe Men, who frequently obſerve, that Perſons moſt guilty are moſt apt to call for Vengeance upon themſelves, that they may be thought guiltleſs. Lord! How do ſome Sinners wiſh and call for that at which the Devils tremble! I mean Damnation. Alas! it ſlumbereth not; within a moment or two thou ſhalt *Feel* what thou wilt not fear.

11 I ſay then, have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall? God forbid: but *rather*, through their fall ſalvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealouſie.

Our Apoſtle had in the preceding Verſes proved the Rejection of the Jews not to have been total; here he proves, That it ſhall not be final, but they ſhall be generally called before the End of the World. *Have they ſtumbled* (ſays he) *that they ſhould fall*; that is, have they ſo ſtumbled and fallen as never to riſe more; are they utterly forſaken and caſt off? No ſuch thing, but God in his juſt and righteous Judgment hath permitted them to fall, that they having obſtinately refuſed the Goſpel, it might be preached to the Gentiles; and their receiving of the Goſpel, God will in his infinite Wiſdom make uſe of, to provoke the Jews to Jealouſie and Emulation, ſeeing themſelves ſo far out-ſtript by thoſe whom they ſo contemned and deſpiſed; and in the cloſe make this Jealouſie and Emulation a means and occaſion of the Jews Converſion. *Learn hence*, That Emulation and Jealouſie doth heat and heighten the Mind of Man to an eager purſuit of the beſt things. *Obſerve* it, in the inſtance before us, the Salvation of the Gentiles bred Emulation in the Jews: What, ſay the Jews, ſhall the Gentiles go away with Heaven alone, whom we thought the vileſt People upon Earth, come, let us put in for a part and ſhare in Goſpel Mercies and Privileges with them. Thus they were provoked to Emulation, and this Emulation occaſion'd their Converſion.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullneſs?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If the caſting off the Jews was ſo profitable to the Gentile World; if the Gentiles have been ſuch great Gainers, by occaſion of the Sin and Fall of the Jews, how much more, when they ſhall become Chriſtians, will they add to the Fullneſs, the Glory, and Greatneſs of the Chriſtian Church? *Obſerve here*, The wonderful Wiſdom, the aſtoniſhing Goodneſs, the over-ruling Providence and Power of God, in cauſing the Fall of the Jews to be the Occaſion of God's manifeſting his abundant Grace in the Converſion of the Gentiles; and ſpreading the plentiful Knowledge of Chriſt over all the World. And alſo in cauſing the general Converſion of the Jews towards the end of the World to confirm the Faith of the believing Gentiles.

13 For I ſpeak to you Gentiles, in as much as I am the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnifie mine office:
14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them.
15 For if the caſting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world; what *ſhall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

Obſerve here, (1.) The honourable Office which St. *Paul* was called to; namely, to be an Apoſtle, and the Apoſtle of the Gentiles. (2.) The Honour which God put upon him in the faithful Execution of that Office. (1.) In making him inſtrumental, for calling many of the blind and ignorant Gentiles to the Obedience of the Faith: and (2.) In provoking the Jews (whom he calls his own fleſh, becauſe of his own Nation) not to ſuffer the Gentiles alone to go away with the Privileges of the Goſpel, but to put in for a ſhare with them; *If by any means I may provoke to emulation:* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Oh that I could once ſee an holy Emulation take hold of my Countrymen! that, rather than not believe at all and be ſaved, I might ſee them at laſt believe for Anger, or for very Shame, and go to Heaven in a holy Chaſe. *Obſ.* 3. What an Argument the Apoſtle makes uſe of, why all Perſons ſhould greatly deſire the general Converſion both of the Jews and Gentiles to the Faith of Chriſt. As *the caſting away the Jews* at preſent *will be the reconciling of the world*, that is, be an occaſion of ſending the Goſpel to the Gentiles all the World over, whereby they become reconciled unto God; what will the receiving of the Jews again into the Grace and Favour of God, and the Communion of the viſible Church be to you Gentiles, but even as Life, or Reſurrection from the Dead? *Learn hence*, That the Converſion of the Jews, and the Calling in the Fullneſs of the Gentiles, are Mercies much, very much, to be deſired and earneſtly prayed for. (2.) That ſuch will be the bleſſed ſtate of the Church, when the Fullneſs both of Jews and Gentiles are brought into it; that it will be look'd upon as a new Life, or Reſurrection from the Dead.

16 For if the firſt fruits *be* holy, the lump *is* alſo *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, ſo *are* the branches.

Here the Apoſtle produces another Argument to prove the univerſal Reſtauration of the Jews unto the Grace and Favour of God before the end of the World; and it is drawn from the Covenant of God made with *Abraham* (as the Root of the Jewiſh Nation) which ſaid, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.* Now the Argument runs thus: As the Branches follow the Nature of the Root, ſo do the Jews follow the Condition of *Abraham*, and the holy Patriarchs, with reſpect to the outward Privileges of the Covenant: Was the Root holy, ſo are the Branches holy, not inherently, but federally holy, being called, conſecrated, and ſeparated from the World unto the Service of God. If then Almighty God, by entring into Covenant with *Abraham*, hallowed to himſelf all his Poſterity, even as the Firſt-fruits hallowed the whole Lump; in like manner will God, in his own good time, be ſo mindful of the Jews, the Poſterity of *Abraham*, as to bring them again nigh unto himſelf in remembrance of his holy Covenant: ſo that they ſhall be his People, and he will be their God. *Learn hence*, That the Jews, tho' at preſent caſt off by God, are ſtill an holy People; they are under an hereditary Dedication to God, they have a federal Holineſs, as deſcending from holy Progenitors, with reſpect to whom the Love and Compaſſion of God towards them, and they that in his own time be called and converted by him: And therefore, in the mean time, the Jews are not to look upon themſelves with Deſperation, nor ſhould the Gentiles look upon them with Diſdain. *The firſt-fruits being holy, the lump is alſo holy: the root being holy, ſo are the branches alſo.*

17 And if ſome of the branches be broken off, and
thou being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in amongſt
them, partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-
tree; 18 Boaſt not againſt the branches: but if thou
boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee.
19 Thou wilt ſay then, the branches were broken off,
that I might be graffed in. 20 Well; becauſe of un-
belief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeth by Faith.
Be not high-minded, but fear. 21 For if God ſpared
not the natural branches, *take heed* leſt he alſo ſpare
not thee.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in theſe Words, is, to exhort the believing Gentiles not to deſpiſe and reproach the rejected and unbelieving Jews: and he draws an Argument from the Condition of the Gentiles, both paſt and preſent; their paſt Condition, they were like a wild Olive-tree; their preſent Condition, they were graffed into the true Olive. *Here note*, That by the Olive-Tree, we are to underſtand the viſible Church of God; by the Root, he means *Abraham*; he was the Root of the Olive-tree, the Jewiſh Church. But how ſo? *Anſw.* Not the Root by way of Communication, but in a way of Adminiſtration; not by way of Communication, as if either Jew or Gentle did receive any Sap of Spiritual Life from him, as Branches receive a Natural Life from their Root; for thus Chriſt alone is the Root of the Church. But *Abraham* was the Root of the Olive-tree in a way of Adminiſtration, the Lord calling him forth as the firſt Man with whom he was pleaſed to treat, and enter that Covenant with. Again by the Fatneſs of the Olive-tree we are to underſtand all outward Privileges and Ordinances, all Spiritual Benefits and Bleſſings which belonged to the Jewiſh Church. By the Branches of the Olive-tree, we are to underſtand the Members of the Jewiſh Church. And by the wild Olive, the Gentile World. Now tho' the *Gentiles,* thro' rich Grace were inſtated in the Privileges of the *Jews*, yet the Apoſtle foreſaw, that inſtead of Thankfulneſs to God for the Favours received from him, they would be puffed up with Pride, and accordingly he adviſes them not to be high minded, but fear, as if he had ſaid, O ye Gentiles, your ſtate is high, let your Hearts be humble. The Jews are fallen, and unleſs you walk in Holy fear, you cannot ſtand: Unbelief ruined them, take heed that Pride does not ruin you; for the juſt and holy God is no Reſpecter Perſons. He that ſpared not the natural Branches, will no leſs ſpare thee. From the whole *Learn*, (1.) That a Man is naturally a very proud Creature: and altho' he has nothing but what he has freely received, yet is prone to boaſt. (2.) That Man is eſpecially apt to magnify himſelf, and to glory over thoſe who are fallen before him, either into Sin, or under Affliction. (3.) That the beſt Preſervative from falling is Humility and holy Fear. If ever we ſtand in the day of Trial, it is the fear of falling muſt enable us to ſtand. Take heed you do not fall, by thinking it impoſſible to fall. *Be not high minded, but fear*; *Timor tuus, Securitas tua.* Thy holy Fear will keep thee from falling, when others Security and Preſumption will lay them on the Ground. Let not a Man that ſtands on the top of a Tree boaſt of his Height, but look to his Hold.

22 Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God: on them which fell, ſeverity; but towards thee goodneſs, if thou continue in *his* goodneſs: otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. 23 And they alſo, if they abide not ſtill in unbelief, ſhall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more ſhall theſe which be the natural *branches* be graffed into their own olive-tree?

Our Apoſtle, in theſe and the following Verſes, proceeds in his Exhortation to the Gentiles, not to inſult over the rejected Jews, but to carry it towards them with great Modeſty and Chriſtian Humility; and he uſeth ſeveral Arguments by way of Motive to excite and quicken them thereunto; the two firſt are drawn from the ſeverity of God in cutting off the Jews, and the Goodneſs and Bounty of God in calling of the Gentiles. *Behold the goodneſs and ſeverity of God*, &c. Juſtice and Mercy, Goodneſs and Severity, are Attributes, or Qualities eminently found in God; and contrary, only in their Effects upon Men. The ſame God is merciful, and ſevere with reſpect to different Perſons, and differing Qualifications. All Mercy is not a Virtue, but that which is conſiſtent with other Perfections of Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs. The next Argument is taken from the Condition upon which the Gentiles hold their preſent ſtanding in the Favour and Grace of God; namely, *if they continue in his Goodneſs*; that is, if they walk worthy of this Favour from God, and ſuitably to ſuch a kind and gracious Diſpenſation; otherwiſe they, the Gentiles, ſhall be cut off and caſt away, as well as the ſtubborn and unbelieving Jews. The Lord is with a People *only* whilſt they are with him: if they ſerve and ſeek him, he will be found of them; but if they forſake him, he will caſt them off for ever. The next Argument to ſuppreſs Arrogancy and Pride in the Gentiles, and to prevent their inſulting over the fallen Jews, is taken from the hopes of the Jews Reſtoration: which the Apoſtle proves to he both Poſſible and Probable. *They that be graffed in, if they abide not in unbelief, for God is able to graff them in again.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The ſame God that rejected them is able to reſtore them, and re-ingraff them; the only Obſtacle is their Unbelief, and this God is alſo able to remove. *Laſtly*, He ſhews the Probability as well as the Poſſibility of the *Jew*'s Converſion; namely, becauſe God had done that which was more unlikely already, to wit, in graffing the *Gentiles*, who were wild Olives, into the true Olive, which was more difficult and unlikely then to graff in the *Jews* again, which were natural Branches. The Argument runs thus. If the *Gentiles*, which were a kind of wild Olive-Branches, were graffed into a good Olive-tree, (the Church of God) which is contrary to Nature, ſeeing Men uſe to graff a good Cion into a wild Stock, and not a wild Cion into a good Stock; how much more ſhall the *Jews*, which are the natural Branches of the good Olive be graffed again into their own Olive-tree, to which they formerly did belong? The one is acccording to the order of Nature, but the other is againſt and contrary to Nature. *Learn hence*, How improbable and unlikely, how difficult and impoſſible ſoever, the Converſion and Calling of the *Jews* to the Chriſtian Religion may ſeem to us, it is neither contrary to right Reaſon nor true Faith. The greateſt Obſtacle in the way of the Jews Converſion to Chriſtianity, it is to be feared, lyes in the wicked and ſcandalous Lives of thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery (leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits) that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſins.

Here the Apoſtle fully proves, That the Rejection of the Jews was neither Total nor Final; not Total, becauſe *blindneſs in part*, only *happened unto Iſrael*: That is, part of the Jews only are left in Unbelief, and under the Power of Spiritual Blindneſs; nor is their Rejection Final, but for a time only; namely, till the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* be come in; that is, till the Gentile Churches be advanced to an Honourable State and Fulneſs. And then all the *Iſrael* of God, the faithful Seed of *Abraham*, and the main Body of the Jews, ſhall make up the Catholick Church, and be ſaved from their Unbelief. According to that gracious Promiſe in *Iſa.* 59. 20, 21. *The Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, my ſpirit ſhall not depart from thy ſeed, nor thy ſeeds ſeed from hence forth and for ever.* *Learn hence*, That there ſhall be a general Calling of the *Jews* to the Faith of the Goſpel before Chriſt's ſecond coming, is not only poſſible and probable, but infallible, ſure and certain, and that from the Propheſies and Predictions of the Prophets of God; let us therefore believe it firmly, pray for it fervently, and live in the expectation of it continually.

28 As concerning the Goſpel, *they are* enemies for your ſake; but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers ſake. 29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

Here we have two farther Arguments to prove the general Converſion of the *Jews*. The firſt is taken from the Dignity of the *Jews*, they being the ancient People of God, whoſe Father *Abraham* he choſe, and made his firſt Covenant with him and his Seed; and therefore as to making the Election of that Nation to be an Holy People to himſelf, they are beloved by God for their Father's ſake; that is, for the ſake of *Abraham* their Holy Progenitor, who had the Honour to be called the Friend of God. Tho' Grace deſcends not from Parent to Child, yet many times the Children of Godly Parents are very large Sharers in outward Privileges and Bleſſings for their gracious Parent's ſake. The *Jews* here are ſaid to be loved of God for their Father *Abraham*'s ſake, whilſt for their Unbelief and Contempt of the Goſpel, they had render'd themſelves the deſerved Objects of God's Hatred. The ſecond Argument is drawn from the Immutability and unchangeable Nature of God; *his gifts and callings are without repentance*: That is, altho' the *Jews* have render'd themſelves unworthy of the Favour of God, yet the Covenant having been once made with their Fathers, and they having had the Honour to be his ſpecial and peculiar People, God will never repent of his Kindneſs to them, nor of his Covenant made with them, but will certainly reſtore them to their former Privileges and Happy State; *for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Take the Words relatively, and the Note is this, That the Gifts and Calling of God, whereby he was pleaſed to adopt the Poſterity of *Abraham*, and to engage himſelf by Covenant to them, are inviolable, and ſuch as ſhall never be reverſed or repented of. *Obſerve laſtly*, The ſad and deplorable Condition which the *Jews* are at preſent in and under, they are Enemies to the Goſpel. *As concerning the Goſpel, they are Enemies for your ſake:* That is becauſe you *Gentiles* receive the Goſpel; therefore the *Jews* reject it, and for that Reaſon are rejected by God. But this happened well to the poor *Gentiles*; for upon the *Jews* Refuſal, the Goſpel was brought the ſooner to the *Gentiles*, and they were converted by it.

30 For as ye in times paſt have not believed God, ye have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even ſo have theſe alſo now not believed, that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy.

Here we have the Concluſion of the Apoſtle's Arguments to prove the Converſion and Calling of the *Jews* towards the End of the World. The Argument is drawn from a Compariſon of Equals; If God, after a long time of Diſobedience, received the *Gentiles* to Mercy: He will alſo after a long time of Infidelity receive the *Jews* to Mercy. If God hath called the *Gentiles* to his Grace, after long Idolatry, tho' God never promiſed to be their God, how much more will he recal his Covenant People from their Infidelity in his own appointed time; So that the Argument is from the leſs to the greater. If the Infidelity of the *Jews* was an occaſion of Mercy to the *Gentiles*, much more ſhall the Mercy ſhewed to the *Gentiles* be an occaſion of Mercy to the *Jews*, and conſequently their preſent Infidelity ſhall be no Obſtacle to their Converſion afterward.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

That is, Almighty God hath in Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs ſuffered both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſucceſſively for ſome time to remain under the Power of Unbelief and Diſobedience, that ſo he might in his own time fulfil the great Counſel of his Goodneſs, in ſhewing undeſerved Mercy unto all, both *Jew* and *Gentile*. Now from all the foregoing Arguments for the Calling of the *Jews*, ſumm'd up together in this Chapter, we may collect and gather, That the Converſion of the *Jewiſh* Nation to the Chriſtian Faith, has good Foundation in the Holy Scriptures, and has been the received Doctrine of the Church of Chriſt in all Ages of the Church.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable *are* his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!

Here the Apoſtle concludes the Chapter with an awful Admiration at the Depth of the abundant Grace and Goodneſs of God in bearing with the Infidelity of the *Jews*, and the Obſtinacy of the *Gentiles*; as alſo of his unſearchable Wiſdom, in making firſt the Rejection of the *Jews* a Means of calling the *Gentiles*, and then working upon the obſtinate *Jews* by his Mercy ſhewn unto the *Gentiles*. By *Judgments* here ſome underſtand the Decrees and Determinations of God's Will; by *Ways* the Adminiſtration of his Providence, in order to the Execution of thoſe Decrees. Both which are ſecret, unſearchable and unfathomable. There are Myſteries of Providence, as well as Myſteries of Faith, and both of them tranſcend our Humane Underſtanding.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor? 35 Or who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, No Creature ever did, or ever can pierce into the Mind of God, nor was ever called to be of his Counſel. No Creature ever did or can adviſe him, nor can any Creature challenge God as if he were indebted to him. Who ever gave any thing to God that he did not firſt receive from him? Or who can merit any thing at his Hands ſeeing he owes us nothing? And if ſo, who hath Reaſon to complain that God deals hardly with the *Jews*, in rejecting them, and preferring the *Gentiles* before them? Surely Almighty God may diſperſe a Favour to ſome which he owes to none. *Learn hence*, That in thoſe diſcriminating Favours which God diſpenſes towards ſome of the Children of Men, no other Reaſon can be aſſign'd but his own good Will and Pleaſure. This particularly appears in his ordering Matters relating to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, recorded in the foregoing Chapter.

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

That is, all things are of God, as the Author and efficient Cauſe, all things are thro' him, as the providential Director, and preſerving Cauſe, and all things tend to him, as the ultimate End and final Cauſe; therefore to him all Praiſe, Honour and Glory ought for ever to be aſcribed. *Learn hence*, That God is the firſt Cauſe, and laſt End. He is the firſt Cauſe; that is, he is the Cauſe of all things beſides himſelf, the Fountain and Original of all created Beings; nothing was before him, but all things created by him, and dependant upon him: And as the firſt Cauſe, ſo he is the laſt End; that is, all things tend to him, as their ultimate End; their Deſign and Aim was the Illuſtration of God's Glory, and the Manifeſtations of his Divine Perfections. And if God be the firſt Cauſe, let us with Humility and Thankfulneſs acknowledge him, admire him, adore him, love and ſerve him, who is the Author of our Being, and the Cauſe of our Beings. And if he be the laſt End, let us refer all our Actions to his Glory; in all our Natural Actions, our Civil Actions, but eſpecially in all our Religious Actions, let the Glory of God be our Supream Aim and Ultimate End. For if we do not now live under him, we can never expect hereafter to live with him.

CHAP. XII.

Our Apoſtle having finiſh'd the Doctrinal part of his Diſcourſe, begins here to make Application of it. In the former part of his Epiſtle he had copiouſly handled Doctrinal Points of Faith, Juſtification, Sanctification, &c. *Now from hence to the end of the Epiſtle there is contained an Exhortation to Religious and Moral Duties, as an Argument of their Sincerity, and as an Ornament to their Profeſſion.*

1 I Beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your Bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reaſonable ſervice.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's loving and courteous Compellation, *Brethren*; ſo he calls the believing *Romans*. They were Brethren by Place and Nation, and Brethren by Religion and Profeſſion. *Eodem Sanguine Chriſti conglutinati*, cemented together by the Blood of Chriſt, and by the Bands of Love. *Obſerve*, (2.) The manner of the Apoſtle's Exhortation, it is by way of Obſecration and Entreaty; *I beſeech you, brethren.* It imports great Lenity and Meekneſs. The Apoſtle did not want Authority to command, but uſes ſuch Humility as to entreat. The Miniſter's Work and Office is not only to be a Teacher, but a Beſeecher. He muſt not barely propound and recommend the Doctrines of the Goſpel to his People's Underſtanding, but muſt endeavour to work upon their Wills and Affections to embrace and entertain them. The Underſtanding is the leading, but the Will the commanding Faculty. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Exhortation it ſelf. *Preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice.* Preſent your Bodies; that is, dedicate your Bodies, devote your ſelves, your whole Man, Soul and Body, to the Service of God and his Glory. Chriſtians are Prieſts, or a Royal Prieſthood; they offer up themſelves in Sacrifice unto God, as an whole Burnt-Offering. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Properties of the Chriſtian Sacrifice; it muſt be voluntary. *Preſent your ſelves.* It muſt be a living Sacrifice, an holy Sacrifice, a reaſonable Sacrifice, otherwiſe it will find no Acceptance with God. *Obſerve*, (5.) The Argument or Motive which the Apoſtle makes uſe of, to perſuade Perſons to preſent and give up themſelves to God and his Service, and that is drawn from the Mercies of God; *I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God. Learn thence*, That the Mercies of God revealed in the Goſpel is the moſt proper, powerful and effectual Argument to perſwade with, and prevail upon Sinners, that have not given up and devoted themſelves to God, to do it; and thoſe that have done it, to do it more and more. *I beſeech you by the mercies of God preſent*, &c.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's Dehortation. *Be not conformed to this world*: That is, do not faſhion or accommodate your ſelves to the corrupt Principles and Cuſtoms, to the ſinful Courſes and Practices of the Men of the World.

The Chriſtian is to walk ſingularly, and not after the World's Guiſe; he muſt not cut the Coat of his Profeſſion according to the Faſhion of the Times, or the Humour of the Company he falls into. *Obſerve*, (2.) An Apoſtolical Exhortation. *Be ye tranſformed by the renewing of your mind:* That is, be ye regenerated and changed in your whole Man, beginning at the Mind or Underſtanding, by which the Spirit of God worketh upon the inferiour Faculties of the Soul. Every converted Perſon is truly and really changed, throughly ſanctified and renewed, endowed with new Diſpoſitions and Affections; yet this Converſion and Renovation is not a ſubſtantial, but a qualitative Change. A Change not in the Subſtance of the Faculties of the Soul, but in the Quality of thoſe Faculties: And the renewed Chriſtian is ſanctified *Totus*, but not *Totaliter*; he is ſanctified throughly in all Faculties, but not perfectly in all Degrees. There is in a renewed Man's Underſtanding too much Blindneſs and Ignorance, in his Will too great Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs, in his Affections too much Irregularity and Senſuality. Yet ſuch is the Indulgence of the Goſpel, as to call him an holy Perſon, a Perſon transformed by the renewing of his Mind. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Reaſon of the Apoſtle's Exhortation, *Be ye tranſformed*, &c. *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God:* That is, that ye may diſcern and approve what the Will of God is, under the Goſpel, which requires not what is ritually, but what is ſubſtantially good, and conſequently always acceptable to him. *Note here*, That in Oppoſition to the Levitical Ceremonies and Ritual Injunctions, the Apoſtle ſtiles the Goſpel Inſtitution the good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God. And as ſuch may we love to embrace it, and be found in the delightful Practice of it.

3 For I ſay, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himſelf* more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.

The Apoſtle having exhorted to an holy Life in general, Verſe the firſt, and to a Spiritual Renovation of Mind, in order to it, Verſe the ſecond, comes now to a cloſe Exhortation to more particular Duties; the firſt of which is Modeſty and true Humility of Mind. This he recommends eſpecially to ſuch who bear any publick Office in the Church, and had received ſome peculiar and ſpecial Gifts to fit and furniſh them for the Diſcharge of that Office. St. *Paul* here particularly enjoins them by virtue of his Apoſtolick Office, to watch againſt Pride and Haughtineſs of Mind; not to think themſelves wiſer or better than they were, but to think ſoberly and modeſtly of themſelves, according to the Truth, and to the Degree of Faith and Wiſdom giveh unto them of God: Plainly intimating, That ſuch as are exalted to a degree of Eminency in the Church above others, are in great danger of the Sin of Pride, which it is their Duty to watch and pray againſt, and to be found in the Exerciſe of that Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind, which is ſo greatly ornamental to their Perſons and Profeſſion. *Let not any think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but let him think ſoberly.*

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office: 5 So we being many, are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another.

Here the Apoſtle lays before us a ſpecial Reaſon why the Officers of the Church ſhould exerciſe Humility towards, and employ their Gifts and Talents for the general Good and Benefit of the Church; the Argument is drawn from a Compariſon between the Natural Body and the Myſtical Body. As in the Natural Body there are many Members, and every Member has its diſtinct Office; the Eye to ſee, the Ear to hear, the Hand to work, the Foot to walk: In like manner, in the Myſtical Body, the Church of Chriſt, there are many Members, but each Member muſt keep his own Place, and not invade the Duty, or uſurp the Office of another, but every one employ his own proper Gift to the Benefit and Comfort of the whole, without diſdaining or envying one another. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Church of Chriſt is one Body. (2.) That tho' the Body of the Church be one, and the Head one, yet the Members are many, united to Chriſt their Head by Faith, and to one another by Love. (3.) That all Believers which are Members of this Body have every one his particular Gift, his ſeveral Function, his proper Office, which they are duly to execute and perform, without incroaching upon others by proud Curioſity or buſie meddling: But as all the Members of the Body labour jointly together for the Preſervation of the whole, ſo ought all the Officers and Members of the Church to keep their diſtinct Stations, and employ and improve regularly their ſeveral Talents for the mutual Edification and Benefit of each other, without Encroachment, or intruding upon the Offices of each other. God is a God of Order, and hates Diſorder in his Church.

6 Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us propheſie* according to the proportion of faith. 7 Or miniſtry, *let us wait* on *our* miniſtring; or he that teacheth, on teaching: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with ſimplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that ſheweth mercy, with cheerfulneſs.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, ſeeing it has pleaſed God to appoint diſtinct Officers in his Church, and to furniſh thoſe Officers with various degrees of Gifts, and not to make all equal either in Gifts or Office, let every one in general faithfully execute his Office, and keep within the Limits of his Calling, neither neglecting his own Duty, nor invading others; in particular, *let him that propheſieth*, that is, expoundeth the Scriptures in the Church, do it *according to the proportion of faith*, or according to what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, as the Rule of our Faith. We muſt not wrack nor wreſt the Scriptures, to make them ſpeak what we pleaſe, but what the Prophets and Apoſtles taught, whom we interpret; otherwiſe we do not expound according to the Analogy and Proportion of Faith. Let him that miniſtreth, teacheth, or exhorteth, attend upon that Work with all Diligence; and he that performs the Office of a Deacon, (who are called Helps, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28.) and is employed to relieve the Poor out of the Church's Stock, and to take care of Strangers, Orphans, Aged, Sick and Impotent Perſons, *let him do it with ſimplicity*, that is, without Partiality and Reſpect of Perſons: And *with cheerfulneſs*, that is, with Alacrity of Heart, with Gentleneſs in Words, with Pleaſantneſs in Countenance, bearing with the Infirmities of the Aged, with the Loathſomneſs of the Sick and Diſeaſed, and adminiſtring with Delight to the Neceſſities of all that want. *Now from the whole note*, (1.) That God of his free Bounty has beautified his Church with divers Offices and Gifts. *Note*, (2.) That thoſe whom God has beſtowed Miniſterial Gifts upon, ought humbly and faithfully to improve them to the Church's Benefit and Edification.

9 *Let* love *be* without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which good. 10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

The foregoing Exhortations reſpected Church Officers in particular. Theſe that now follow concern all Chriſtians in general, and acquaints them with their Duties in common Converſation. He begins with the Grace and Duty of Love, that being a radical Grace, the Root from which all other Graces and Duties ſpring and flow. This Love to another, the Holy Ghoſt requires that it be *without diſſimulation*, that is, ſincere and unfeigned, not in Word and in Tongue only, but in Deed and in Truth. Alſo that it be an affectionate and tender, as well as an unfeigned and ſincere Love. *Be kindly affectionate one to another*. The Word ſignifieth ſuch an affectionate Tenderneſs as the Mother bears to the Fruit of her Womb, and as Creatures bear to their Young: and no wonder that ſuch a fervent Love is required, when lying down our Lives for the Brethren is commanded, 1 *John* 3.16. Likewiſe that our Love to others do incline us to give Preference unto others; really conceiving others to be more worthy of Honours than our ſelves, and rejoicing to ſee them placed in a more uſeful and honourable Poſt before our ſelves. Yet *Obſerve*, Tho' our Love muſt be hot towards our Neighbour, it muſt not hinder us from abhorring that which is ſinful and evil in our Neighbour. *Love without diſſimulation, and abhor that which is evil.* When we love the Perſons, we muſt hate the Vices of Men. The Love of our Friends muſt not make us in Love with their Faults, nor muſt the Hatred of Mens Vices draw us off from delighting in, and cleaving to that which is good in any Man. *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.*

11 Not ſlothful in buſineſs: fervent in ſpirit; ſerving the Lord:

The next Duty exhorted to, is Diligence and Induſtry in all our Duties both to God and Man, but particularly in the Duties of our Calling. We muſt avoid the two Extremes, of Slothfulneſs on the one Hand, and exceſſive Drudgery on the other, in the Management of our Secular Affairs and worldly Buſineſs. But in the Service of God we muſt *be fervent*, as in the Service of the World we muſt not be ſlothful. What is done for the World, is beſt done with Indifferency; but what is done for God, muſt be done with Warmth and Fervency, or not done at all. Our moſt ardent Affections and active Powers muſt be employed in his Service; for, to be cold and careleſs therein, diſparages his Excellency, and will defeat our own Expectation. We muſt be fervent in Spirit ſerving the Lord, and we may not be ſlothful in Buſineſs, ſerving the World.

12 Rejoycing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing inſtant in prayer;

The Apoſtle next directs the converted *Romans* how they ſhould manage themſelves under Afflictions; namely, to endure them patiently, to rejoyce in hope of preſent Deliverance, or future Happineſs; and in order to do both, to be much in the Duty of Prayer. *Learn hence*, That Hope, Patience and Prayer, are powerful Supports under all Afflictions, and will render them not only tolerable, but joyous. By Patience we poſſeſs our ſelves; by Hope we poſſeſs God; by Prayer we are enabled unto both.

13 Diſtributing to the neceſſity of Saints; given to hoſpitality.

The next Duty exhorted to, is that of Charity and Almſgiving to the poor Members of Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially when under Perſecution. Shewing Hoſpitality towards them, and giving Entertainment to them, when they ſeek it of us. *Learn*, (1.) That Charity to all Perſons, but eſpecially to the perſecuted Members of Jeſus Chriſt, is a neceſſary and important Duty. *Learn*, (2.) That Hoſpitality is an eminent part of Chriſtian Charity. True Hoſpitality I mean, which is accompanied with Prudence and Sobriety. There is a wide Difference between riotous Houſe keeping and true Hoſpitality; the latter is always deſign'd for the Help of the Poor, and particularly for the godly Poor. There are great Houſe-keepers who are not good Houſe-keepers, becauſe their Houſe-keeping is for the Great rather than the Good, not for the Houſhold of Faith, eſpecially not for the Poor of that Houſhold. As to Spirituals, God fills the Hungry with good things, but ſends the Rich empty away; whereas moſt Men, as to Corporals, fill the Rich with their good things, with the fat and the ſweet, but ſend the Poor, If not empty away, yet relieved only with the ſweepings of their Table. This is not according to the Precept before us: *Diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints, and given to hoſpitality.*

14 Bleſs them which perſecute you; bleſs, and curſe not.

The Apoſtle having taught us our Duty to our Friends in the former Verſe, teacheth us our Duty here towards our Enemies. *Bleſs them that perſecute you*: That is, pray for them, and wiſh well to them, whatever Provocations you may have to the contrary. *Learn hence*, (1.) That good Men muſt make Account of, and prepare for Perſecution; either the Perſecution of the Tongue, or of the Hand, or both. *Learn*, (2.) That it is their Duty ever to Bleſs, never to Curſe their Perſecutors and Oppoſers. *Bleſs, but curſe not. Where note*, That the Apoſtle doubles the Exhortation, *Bleſs your perſecutors; bleſs, and curſe not.* This doubling the Exhortation, ſhews both the difficulty of the Duty, how contrary it is to corrupt Nature; and alſo the conſtancy of the Duty, we muſt ever Bleſs, and never Curſe; always wiſh Well, never any Ill to the worſt of Men. Take we great heed of giving way to ſecret wiſhes of Hurt to our Enemy. God forbid we ſhould hurt our ſelves by ſinful Paſſion, becauſe others hurt us by Slander and falſe Accuſation: We are naturally prone to ſpeak ill of others, and to wiſh ill to others with delight: This Sin, perſiſted in, ſhuts out of Heaven, as well as Murther.

15 Rejoyce with them that do rejoyce, and weep with them that weep

The next Duty required is Chriſtian Sympathy and Mutual Affection between Brethren, both in Proſperity and Adverſity, to rejoyce together in the one, and to mourn together in the other, as being Members of the ſame Body. Teaching us, That it is a Chriſtian's Duty to rejoyce in thoſe good things, whether inward or outward, which befal his Brethren, and alſo to mourn and lay to Heart all thoſe Afflictions and Sorrows, whether inward or outward, which come upon them. But Lord! how far are they from this Duty, who inſtead of Mourning for the Sufferings of others, are glad at Calamity, rejoyce at the Downful of others. Oh help us to lay the Troubles of others to Heart, when we our ſelves are freeſt and fartheſt from Trouble; let us *weep with them that weep, and rejoyce with*, &c. The Goſpel acquaints us with the Pity of God towards us, and preſſeth us to pity one another.

16 *Be* of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to Men of low eſtate. Be not wiſe in your own conceits.

Theſe Words, *Be of the ſame mind one towards another*, are an Exhortation to Unity among Chriſtians; this is threefold an Unity of the Head, or an Unity of Judgment and Opinion; an Unity of the Heart, or an Unity in Love and Affection, and an Unity of the Tongue, which is an Unity of Expreſſion. Happy we! when in all theſe Reſpects *we are of the ſame mind one towards another. Obſerve next*, The Hindrances of mutual Concord and Unity amongſt Chriſtians, and they are two. (1.) Pride, *Mind not high things.* (2.) Arrogancy, *Be not wiſe in your own conceit; mind not high things*; that is, mind not Preferment, nor Riches, nor vain Glory, but be content with and thankful for a middle State and Condition in the World; which is far more eligible and deſirable than a State of Riches, Plenty and Abundance, as being leſs liable to Temptations. And *be not wiſe in your own conceits*; that is, entertain humble Thoughts of your own Knowledge; think it not greater than it is; take heed of an over-weaning Opinion of your own Wiſdom, as if you wanted neither Divine Aſſiſtance and Guidance, nor yet the Advice and Counſel of your Brethren: Man is naturally a proud Creature, but more proud of the Endowments of his Mind, than of thoſe that adorn his Body.

17 Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.

By Evil here, we are to underſtand Wrongs and private Injuries; by not recompenſing them, is meant not revenging them. Corrupt Nature is very prone to return Wrong for Wrong, one ill turn for another; but Chriſtianity ſets a nobler Pattern before us, even the Example of him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffer'd, he threatned not.* 1 Pet. 2. 23. *Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.* Having exhorted them before to be careful of their Converſations towards God, he now preſſes them to be watchful over their Converſations before the World, that by Honeſty and Innocency of Life they may cut off all occaſion from the Enemies of Religion to ſpeak evil of them and their Holy Profeſſion: that all their Words and Actions be juſtifiable and unexceptionable to that degree, that the Heathens may be in love with Chriſtianity, by obſerving your Lives and Actions to be Holy and Honeſt. *Learn hence*, That a Chriſtian muſt carefully look not only to his Conſcience, but to his Converſation, that his Conſcience be holy and upright in the ſight of God, and his Converſation honeſt and unblamable before Men; the World cannot diſcern our Hearts, but they can ſoon diſcover the Errors of our Lives, and will throw the Dirt of our Sins upon Religion's Face, therefore we had need *provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.*

18 If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Obſerve here, Firſt the Duty directed and exhorted to, namely, Peaceableneſs; *live peaceable*, that is, be of a peaceable Temper, and follow thoſe things which make for Peace. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Extent and Latitude of this Duty, *with all men live peaceably*; not with Friends only, or with thoſe of your own Judgment and Perſwaſion, but with Men of diſagreeing Humours and Intereſts, with Men of different Principles and Apprehenſions from you. *Again obſerve*, (3.) A double Reſtriction and Limitation with which the Duty is bounded; firſt, *if it be poſſible*, implying, that there are a ſort of Men in the World who make Peace impoſſible; but for others, if it may be enjoyed upon honeſt Terms, tho' upon hard Terms, we muſt not ſtick at them, always remembring that Peace and Truth are two precious things, which can never be bought too dear, if they be not purchaſed with Sin and Baſeneſs. The ſecond Reſtriction follows, *as much as in you lieth*; now this reſpects our Endeavours, not our Succeſs; if we follow Peace with all Men, tho' we cannot overtake it, yet we ſhall not miſs of our Reward in purſuing of it. Peace is a moſt important Duty, a ſingular Benefit and Bleſſing, which every Chriſtian is bound to purſue and promote, and that with all Men. *If it be poſſible*, &c.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.

Obſerve here how the Apoſtle renews his Exhortation to all Chriſtians to watch againſt the Sin of private and perſonal Revenge; he urg'd it before, *ver.* 17. he reinforces it here, *ver.* 19. thereby ſhewing how prone our corrupt Natures are to commit this Sin, and how hard the contrary Duty is to Fleſh and Blood. The Heathens reckoned Revenge to be a part of Juſtice, and rank'd it amongſt the number of their Vertues; but the Scriptures require, that inſtead of revenging an Injury, we remit and forgive it. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves*, it follows, *rather give place unto wrath*: What Wrath? Or whoſe Wrath? *Adſw.* Give place to your own Wrath, ſay ſome Interpreters, give way a little, and turn aſide from the Perſon you are angry with, and do not ſuffer your Anger to hurry you away to Revenge; give place to the Wrath of thoſe that wrong you, ſay others, decline their Wrath, and give not Word for Word, which will but add Fewel to the Fire, and Oil to the Flame; but it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of God's Wrath, leave the Matter to God, he will right your Cauſe, do not take God's Work out of his Hand, but ſuffer him to come in with his Wrath upon your Enemies. who wrong and injure you, rather give place to the Wrath of God againſt them, for Vengeance is his, and he will repay it. *Learn hence*, That ſuch, who having ſuffered Wrong, do ſeek to revenge themſelves, they take revenging Work out of God's Hand, whereas if they leave the Matter with God, his Juſtice will right them fully.

20 Therefore if mine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his Head.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, inſtead of Revenge render Kindneſs, return Courteſies for injuries, Affability for Affronts; *if thine enemy hunger, feed him*; the Word, as ſome Criticks obſerve, ſignifies to feed chearfully and tenderly, as Birds feed their young ones, *ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head.* By Coals of Fire, (1.) Some underſtand an Heart-melting Fire; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, by thy Kindneſs thou wilt melt and mollifie his Spirit towards thee as hardeſt Metals are melted by Coals of Fire; it muſt be a very ſtony Heart indeed that this Fire will not melt, a very diſingenuous Nature that Meakneſs will not mollifie; Clemency will melt an Enemy, and even force him by a ſweet Compulſion to become a Friend, tho' of a rugged and rough Diſpoſition. (2.) By Coals of Fire heaped upon the Head, others underſtand a Sin-puniſhing Fire. *Thou ſhalt heap coals of Fire*, that is, the Fire of Divine Vengeance upon his Head, by making his Malice and Hatred againſt thee more inexcuſable. *Learn hence*, That to conquer and overcome an Enemy by Love and Kindneſs is a noble Conqueſt, and a glorious Victory, to melt him down by obliging Favours into a good Affection. *Learn*, (2.) That if an Enemy after ſuch Offices will perſevere in his Enmity againſt us, the Event will certainly be this, by our Patience towards him, and forbearance of him, we ſhall engage the Wrath of God againſt him, and heap Coals of Fire, that is, the Divine Vengeance upon him.

21 Become not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Learn hence, That every Chriſtian ſhould not only take heed that he *be not overcome of evil*, but alſo labour and endeavour what in him lieth *to overcome evil with good. Queſtion*, What are we to underſtand here by Evil? *Anſwer*, Any unkind or injurious Dealing from others, any Miſchief or ill Turn which our Neighbour has done us. *Queſt.* What is it to be overcome of Evil? *Anſw.* (1.) When we dwell in our Thoughts too much, too often, and too long upon the Injuries and Unkindneſſes we have met with: This is, as if a Man that was to take down a bitter Pill, ſhould be continually champing of it and rolling it under his Tongue. (2.) We are overcome of Evil when we are brought over to commit the ſame Evil, by ſtudying to make ſpiteful Returns in a way of Revenge for the Injuries we have received. *Queſt.* Wherein conſiſts the Duty and Excellency of *overcoming of evil with good? Anſw.* It renders us like to God, who does good to us daily, tho' we do Evil againſt him continually; hereby we imitate God in one of the choiceſt Perfections of his Divine Nature; hereby we overcome our ſelves; hereby we overcome our Enemies and make them become our Friends. *Queſt.* How ſhould we *overcome evil with good? Anſw.* By doing Good for Evil, by returning Courteſies for Injuries, ſpeaking well of others, altho' they ſpeak hardly, yea, very ill of us.

CHAP. XIII.

The Apoſtle having treated of Moral Duties in the former Chapter, treats of Political Duties in this, proving that Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, for the Good of Humane Society, and enforcing the Duty of Subjection unto Magiſtrates, in Obedience to the Commandment of God.

1 LET every Soul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to Magiſtrates, they are *powers, the higher powers*, that is, Perſons inveſted with Power, and placed in Supream Authority over us. All Mankind is not of one Rank, doth not ſtand upon an equal Levil. Magiſtracy is an Eminency or Superiority of ſome Perſons above others. *Obſerve* (2.) The Original Fountain from whence all Power is derived, and that is God himſelf; *there is no power but of God*; that is, all Power is derived from God, and is to be uſed for God; the Magiſtrate acts by his Authority, and conſequently is to act for his Intereſt, Honour and Glory; it is agreeable to the Will of God that there ſhould be ſuch a thing as Magiſtracy and Government in the World, and it is his Appointment that Men ſhould be governed by Men deriving the Power and Authority from him; *the powers that be, are ordained of God. Obſerve*, (3.) the Apoſtle's ſtrict Injunction for Subjection unto Magiſtracy, as a Divine Ordinance; *let every ſoul be ſubject*, that is, every Perſon, be he of what Rank, or in what Station he will, High or Low, Honourable or Ignoble, Rich or Poor, Clergy or Laity, he muſt be ſubject to God's Ordinance. *Where note*, That Chriſt is a Friend to *Cæſar*, and Chriſtianity no Enemy to Loyalty; the beſt Chriſtians are always the beſt Subjects, none ſo true to their Prince as they that are moſt faithful to their God; Obedience to Magiſtrates is both the Duty of Chriſtians and the Intereſt of Chriſtianity.

2 Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.

The forementioned Duty of Subjection unto Magiſtracy, inſiſted upon in the foregoing Verſe, the Apoſtles urges and enforces upon all Chriſtians, by ſundry Arguments in this and the following Verſes; as namely, (1.) From the ſinfulneſs of Reſiſtance, *They reſiſt the ordinance of God*; they make War upon God himſelf; he that rebelleth againſt his Prince is a Rebel alſo to his God. (2.) From the Danger of Reſiſtance, *They ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* That is, (1.) Temporal Judgment from the Hand of the Magiſtrate, to whom the Sword is commited, as *Korah, Abſolom*, and others did experience. (3.) Eternal Puniſhment from the Hand of God, who will plead the Cauſe and vindicate the Honour of his Vicegerents and Repreſentatives here upon Earth, and caſt thoſe into Hell who pour Contempt upon them, if ſincere Repentance by a timely interpoſure prevent it not.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame.

Here we have a farther Argument for Subjection to Rulers and Governors, drawn from the End of the Migiſtrate's Office, which is, to puniſh Vice, and to promote Vertue: *Rulers are not a terror to good works*; that is, they ought not, and they ordinarily are not; they were not ordained for that End, and it is not their Place ſo to be, namely, a Terror to the Good, but to the Bad only; for God giveth no Authority againſt himſelf, or his own Righteous Laws, which require the puniſhing of the Bad, and the rewarding of the Good. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Magiſtrates, by virtue of their Place, ought to be a Terror, or exceeding terrible to Evil Works, and Evil Workers. *Learn*, (2.) That Magiſtrates are not Terrible, but Amiable to good Men, they fear Rulers, but it is with a Fear of Reverence, not with a Tormenting Servile Fear. *Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt not be afraid of the power.*

4 For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he

beareth not the ſword in vain: for he is the miniſter of God, a revenger, to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Here our Apoſtle ſubjoins a Reaſon why Magiſtrates are not to be unduly dreaded and feared by their Subjects who live well, for *he is*, by his inſtitution, *the Miniſter of God to thee for good*, if thou beeſt a doer of that which is good. *Learn thence*, That the Magiſtrate is the Miniſter of God for the Good of them over whom he is ſet, eſpecially of them that are vertuous and good; he is a Shield to the Godly, a Husband to the Widow, a Father to the Orphan, a Patron to the Poor, and a Refuge to the Oppreſſed. *Obſerve farther*, How the Magiſtrate is ſet forth with the Enſign of Terror to Evil doers, he has a Sword put into his Hand by God himſelf, a Sword to wound, not a wooden Dagger to ſcare Offenders barely, and a Sword not ruſting in the Scabbard, but drawn and whetted, he muſt ſhew it, and ſtrike with it up on a juſt Occaſion, and make thoſe feel it who are not awed with the ſight of it; *he beareth not the ſword in vain. Obſerve again*, Tho' the Magiſtrate is ſaid to bear a Sword, yet is he never called a Sword, but a Shield often; a Shield is for Defence, a Sword for Deſtruction, intimating that the Magiſtrate's Power ſhould rather be executed in Protecting than in Puniſhing, rather in ſaving than deſtroying; the primary Deſign of the Magiſtrate's Power is Protection, not Deſtruction; Magiſtrates have Swords, but they are Shields, and not Swords; they have a Sword to cut off Evil doers; God help them to draw it upon Atheiſm and Blaſphemy, upon Vice and Immorality: one hearty Stroak of the Magiſtrate's Sword would ſtun Error and Vice more than a Thouſand Sermons. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Magiſtrate is ſaid not to ſnatch or take the Sword, but to bear the Sword: he doth not wreſt it out of the Hand of another, but it is put into his Hand by God himſelf, the Commiſſion to bear the Sword is from God; the Magiſtrate doth not hold his Authority by virtue of the Sword, but he holds the Sword by virtue of his Authority; when he draweth the Sword, it is not meerly back'd with an Arm of Fleſh, but with a Warrant and Commiſſion ſigned by God himſelf; *he beareth the ſword*.

5 Wherefore *ye* muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake.

Here the Apoſte doth again aſſert the neceſſity of Subjection to the Civil Magiſtrate, ſeeing that Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, for the good of Humane Society, ſeeing that the Sword in the Magiſtrate's Hand is backed and edged with God's Authority, therefore there is a neceſſity of Subjection unto Magiſtracy and Magiſtrates, and that for a double Reaſon, for fear of Wrath and Puniſhment from Man, and from a Principle of Conſcience in Obedience to the Command of God; *we muſt be ſubject, not only for wrath*, that is, not only for fear of Man's Wrath, but *for Conſcience ſake*; that is, with reſpect to the Command of God, which has made Subjection our indiſpenſible Duty.

6 For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo: for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing.

From the Duty of Subjection unto Magiſtrates the Apoſtle proceeds to urge and enforce the Duty and Neceſſity of paying Tribute to them, or allowing them an Honourable Maintenance, for and towards the Support of the Government which they ſuſtain and bear. The Payment of Taxes and Tribute to the Supream Magiſtrate, is neceſſary upon ſeveral Accounts. (1) As it is an acknowledgment of the Power which God hath ſet over us. (2) As it tends to the Support of the Government which we live under. (3) As it is a ſmall Recompenſe for the Governour's continual Care and Induſtry he *attending*, that is, watching perpetually, and taking pains continually for procuring and maintaining the Good and Happineſs of his Subjects, and therefore both Duty and Obligation, both Religion and Gratitude, do bind and engage us to aid and aſſiſt him, and ſo far as it is in our Power to requite and reward him for his Care of the Common Safety and Regard to the Publick Good.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

A twofold Duty towards Magiſtrates is here laid down by our Apoſtle, namely, Maintenance and Reverence. (1) There is due unto them Maintenance. Tribute and Cuſtom is payable to them for that purpoſe, and not without great Reaſon and Obligation, for he is the Miniſter of God for our Good, that is, an Inſtrument under God to preſerve our Bleſſings to us; and farther, becauſe ſuch Supplies are neceſſary, to defray thoſe vaſt Expences which they are conſtrained to be at for the Security and Welfare of their Subjects. Taxes, Tribute and Cuſtom are not ſo much Gifts as due Debts to Princes, which by the Command of God, are to be juſtly and chearfully paid unto them, and which cannot without Sin and Injury be denied to them, or purloined from them; to cheat [illegible] Prince is as great a Sin in the ſight of God, as to rob ou[illegible]her, tho' few think it ſo. *Render tribute to whom tribute is* [illegible] *Again*, (2) There is Reverence as well as Maintenance d[illegible] Magiſtrates; *render fear to whom fear*, and *honour to whom honour* is due. Fear denotes inward Reverence, and Honour [illegible]ward Reſpect; Fear is the Magiſtrate's due by reaſon of [illegible]thority, and Honour by reaſon of his Dignity. *Here note*, the Apoſtle is thus particular and expreſs in aſſerting [illegible] Rights of Princes, and aſſigning the proper Duties of Subjects towards them, becauſe the *Jews* held Opinions which were deſtructive of all Civil Government, as namely, th[illegible] being the only People of God, God alone was to be ow[illegible] as their Lord and Governour, and none under him, [illegible] ſuch as ſhould be immediately choſen by him, and as a Conſequent of this they refuſed to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*, looking upon that as a Token of Subjection to him; therefore the Apoſtle here preſſes the Chriſtians at *Rome* to ſhew their Freedom from and Oppoſition to all ſuch pernicious Principles, and to give the World a convincing Proof that Chriſtianity makes the beſt Men, the beſt Magiſtrates, the beſt Subjects of any Religion in the World.

8 Owe no man any thing, but love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.

Our Apoſtle having finiſhed his Exhortations to Duty towards our Superiors, comes now to enforce the Duties which we owe unto our Neighbours; the firſt of which is, to render and pay to every one what is due unto him. Moral Duties are mutual Debts which we owe one another; one of which, namely, that of Love, we can never fully diſcharge, but muſt be ever paying, yet always owing. *Owe nothing to any Man, but love*, implying that muſt be always owing. The Truth is, this Debt of Love is ſo far from a poſſibility of being paid on Earth, that it is due in Heaven to God, Angels, and Saints; *there abideth Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 13. All other Debts may be paid whilſt we live, but this of Love cannot be ſatisfied whilſt we live. *Obſerve next*, The Argument, Reaſon or Motive to excite unto this Duty, and that is drawn from the Excellency of this Grace of Love, *he that loveth, hath fulfilled the law*; that is, he that loveth his Neighbour as he ſhould, and ought to do, in Deed, and in Truth, out of a pure Heart fervently, he hath *fulfilled the law*, that is, the Law relating to his Neighbour, the Duties of the ſecond Table, are fulfilled by him.

9 For this, thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, thou ſhalt not covet; and if *there be* any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Two particulars are here obſervable, namely, a Propoſition aſſerted, that *love is the fulfilling of the law*, and this Propoſition proved by an Induction and Enumeration of particular Duties belonging to the ſecond Table. *Obſerve*, (1) The Propoſition aſſerted and maintained by the Apoſtle, *v*. 8. and 10. namely, That *love is the fulfilling of the law*. But can the Law be ſaid to be fulfilled by us? If ſo, in what ſenſe? *Anſw*. By the Law here we are certainly to underſtand that Branch of the Moral Law which reſpects our Duty to our Neighbour. All our Duty to Men is virtually comprehended in loving them as our ſelves; as no Man will hurt himſelf, ſo neither will he hurt his Neighbour, if he loveth him as himſelf; thus Love is the Complement or fulfilling of the Law relating to our Neighbour. The Church of *Rome* would infer from hence, That a Perſon may keep the Law of God perfectly, and without the leaſt Deficiency. But *obſerve*, He that loveth keepeth the Law, how keepeth? even as he loveth; if he loveth perfectly, he keepeth the Law perfectly; but if his Love be imperfect, (as is the beſt on this ſide Heaven) then is his fulfilling of the Law imperfect alſo; perfect fulfilling of the Law is what we ſhould labour after, but whilſt in an imperfect State we cannot attain unto; yet ſuch is the Grace of God in the Goſpel as to account Sincerity inſtead of Perfection, and to eſteem unfeigned Love to our Neighbour the fulfilling of the Law, or all the Duties of the ſecond Table. *Obſerve* (2.) This Propoſition is proved by an Induction and Enumeration of particular Duties belonging to the ſecond Table. *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, nor bear falſe witneſs, nor covet.* Where all Injury is forbidden to be done to our Neighbour in his Name, in his Eſtate, Marriage-Rights, *&c.* and this is called the fulfilling of the Law. But how can that be? Is the Law fulfilled by meer Negatives, by doing no Hurt to our Neighbours? Is not doing them all the Good we can required alſo? *Anſw.* Yes, no doubt, when the Apoſtle ſays, *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour,* it is implied, That Love doth all poſſible Good to his Neighbour, as well as worketh no Ill; tho' the Negatives only are mentioned, yet the Affirmatives alſo are included.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of ſleep; for now *is* our ſalvation nearer than when we believed.

Here begins the laſt part of the Chapter, which treats of our Duty towards our ſelves, namely, Sobriety, Temperance, Mortification of Sin, and all the Works of Darkneſs, ſuch as Rioting and Drunkenneſs, Chambering and Wantonneſs, and the like; and the Argument or Motive which the Apoſtle uſes in this Verſe to excite and quicken the converted *Romans* to the laſt mentioned Duties, is drawn from the Conſideration of their preſent State and Condition, they were Believers, the Goſpel Light was riſen upon them, and *they were nearer ſalvation now than when they firſt believed; now is your ſalvation nearer than when you believed.* This, by the way, is a Meditation full of Comfort to a gracious Perſon, every breath he draws draws him a degree nearer to perfect Happineſs, he is nearer Heaven, nearer his Reward than when in the Infancy of his Faith, therefore let him gird up the Loins of his Mind, and be more chearful and more laborious in his Lord's Work. Lord! how tranſporting is it to thy faithful Ones to conſider how ſmall a Matter is betwixt them and their compleat Salvation; no ſooner is their Breath gone, but the full deſire of their Souls is come; their Salvation is near, very near, much nearer than when they firſt believed. But oh! what a Meditation of Terror is it to a Wicked Perſon! his Damnation is nearer, and every Hour nearer and nearer, there is but a puff of Breath betwixt him and Hell, ere long his laſt Breath and his laſt Hope will expire together. Lord! give Sinners Hearts to conſider, that a Graceleſs Man ere long will be a Hopeleſs Man; the State he was born in was ſad, the State he is now in is worſe, but the State he will ſhortly be in, without Converſion, will be unſpeakably worſt of all; his Damnation is near, it ſlumbereth not.

12 The night is far ſpent, the day is at hand: let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honeſtly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle puts the *Romans* in mind of their former State before Converſion, when *the night* of Heatheniſh Ignorance and Darkneſs was upon them, when they ſpent their Time and Strength in *rioting* and *drunkenneſs,* in Laſciviouſneſs and *Wantonneſs. Where note,* The odious Character wherewith Sin is branded, it is *darkneſs, a work of darkneſs,* ſo ſtiled, becauſe Sin originally ſprings from Darkneſs, becauſe it naturally delights in Darkneſs, becauſe it ultimately leads to Eternal Darkneſs. *Obſerve* (2.) How he puts them in mind of their preſent State and Condition ſince the Day-Star of the Goſpel did dawn upon them; *The night is far ſpent, and the day is at hand;* that is, the Night of Heatheniſh Ignorance, Blindneſs and Darkneſs, is in great meaſure paſt and over, and the day of Grace and Salvation is come unto you; Goſpel Light is among you, illuminating Grace and ſaving Knowledge is now found with you. *Obſerve,* (3.) The Duties enjoyned anſwerable to the Privileges enjoyed, and that is, to walk as Children of the Day, Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly, abſtaining from all Intemperance and Exceſs in every kind, and being cloathed with all Chriſtian Vertues and Graces, which is called *armour of light:* Armour, becauſe they defend us againſt the Aſſaults of Sin, Satan, and the World, and all our Spiritual Enemies whatſoever; and Armour of Light, becauſe ſuch Chriſtian Graces are bright and ſhining in the Eyes of the World. *Learn hence,* That the Enjoyment of Goſpel-Light lays a Perſon or a People under ſpecial Obligations to caſt off the Works of Darkneſs. (2.) That ſuch as enjoy the Light and Liberty of the Goſpel ought to walk as becometh the Goſpel which they do enjoy, that is, according to the Precepts and Commands of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Privileges and Prerogatives of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords, and anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious Hopes which the Goſpel raiſes the Chriſtian up to the expectation of; *this is to caſt off works of darkneſs, and to put upon us the armour of light,* &c.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make not proviſion for the fleſh, to *fulfil* the luſts *thereof.*

Obſerve here, The Apoſtle doth not ſay as a moral Philoſopher would have ſaid, inſtead of Rioting and Drunkenneſs, Chambering and Wantonueſs, put on Temperance, put on Sobriety, put on Chaſtity, and ſo ſet a ſingle Vertue againſt a ſingle Vice; but put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſeek by Faith Union with him, that ſo you may derive Vertue from him, and enable you unto holy walking before him. Set the Doctrine and Life of Chriſt continually before you; follow every Inſtruction, and imitate all the parts of his Holy Converſation; even as the Garment is commenſurate to the Body. *Put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* May not the Expreſſion imply, (1.) That the Soul of Man, ſince the Fall, is in a naked ſtate, deſtitute of thoſe divine Graces of the Holy Spirit, which were its original Cloathing in the day of undefiled Innocency. (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt is our Spiritual Cloathing. (1.) In his Righteouſneſs to pardon and juſtifie us: he is our Cloathing to cover the guilt of Sin out of God's ſight. (2.) In his Graces to ſanctifie us, by which he cleanſes us from our Sins, Pollution, and Filthineſs. (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt, in order to our ſpiritual Cloathing, muſt be put on by Faith: an unapplied Chriſt juſtifies none, ſaves none. It was not ſufficient, under the Law, that the Blood of the Sacrifice was ſhed, but it was to be alſo ſprinkled, in order to the expiation of Guilt. The perſonal Application of Chriſt's Blood by Faith on our part is as abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, as is the ſhedding of his Blood on his part, in order to our Remiſſion and Salvation. *Put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* it follows, *And make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof. Obſerve,* The Apoſtle doth not ſay, *Make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil* the Neceſſities, and the neceſſary Deſires thereof; but, *to fulfil the luſts* or inordinate Deſires thereof. Then only is Proviſion for the Fleſh ſinful and unlawful, when it is ſought more to ſatisfie its Appetite, and to gratifie inordinate Deſires, than to ſtrengthen and fit us for our Duty to God and Man. In this latter ſenſe to make Proviſion for the Fleſh, is to furniſh our Enemy with Arms and Ammunition to fight againſt our ſelves. Interpretatively he makes Proviſion for his Luſts, that doth not provide againſt them; he feeds his Luſts that doth not ſtarve them, he nouriſhes and ſtrengthens his Luſts that doth not mortifie and kill them: Explicitely and directly, Men provide for their Luſts by entertaining ſuch Thoughts in their Minds, as do enkindle, excite and ſtir up Luſt, and when thoſe Thoughts are gratified with Deſires, and thoſe Deſires accompanied with Endeavours; but worſt and ſaddeſt of all it is, when Mens Deſires to gratifie their Luſts are turned into Prayers unto God Almighty, in order to that end. Thus the Apoſtle, *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your Luſts. Learn hence,* (1.) That a ſober and moderate Uſe of the Creatures which God has given us, not barely for Neceſſity, but Delight, is allowable, and a commanded Duty. *Learn,* (2.) That to make uſe of the Comforts of Life not to ſatisfie our Natures, but to gratifie our Luſts and inordinate Deſires, is a perverting of God's Intention, in beſtowing the Supports of Life upon us, and a very heinous Sin. Make we then no Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

The Apoſtle having laid down thoſe poſitive Duties in the foregoing Chapters, in which the Life and Spirit of Chriſtianity doth ſo eminently conſiſt; comes here, in this Chapter, to Treat of things of an indifferent Nature, neither commanded nor forbidden by any Divine Law; and to ſpeak of the right Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty. It ſeems ſome of the believing Jews *at* Rome, *apprehended that the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, as to Meats and Days, was yet to be continu'd. On the other-hand, the beliving* Gentiles, *being fully perſuaded of their Freedom by Chriſt, refus'd Communion with the* Jews *that liv'd after that manner. Hereupon a great Diſſention aroſe between them, the* Gentiles *looking upon the* Jews *as ſuperſtitious, and the* Jews *cenſuring the* Gentiles *as prophane. Now St.* Paul *comes with his Bucket to quench this Flame which burnt ſo vehemently in the Church, admoniſhing the believing* Jews *not to condemn the believing* Gentiles, *and exhorting the believing* Gentiles *not to refuſe Communion with the believing* Jews. *And thus by a mutual Forbearance of each other to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

HIM that is weak in the Faith receive you, *but* not to doubtful diſputations.

Obſerve here, (1. The Perſon deſcrib'd, whom the Apoſtle recommends to their Charity and Forbearance. *Him that is weak in the Faith:* Not him that is ſick unto Death through Fundamental Error, but one that is ſound in the Faith, tho' weak in Judgment: Men of honeſt Hearts, but weak Heads. *Obſerve,* (2.) Here is an Injunction of Charity and Chriſtian Forbearance towards theſe weak Ones; *Receive them,* take them into your Houſes, yea, into your Hearts; receive them into your Society, into your Communion, and let not difference in Judgment cauſe any diſtance in Affection. *Obſerve,* (3.) The Limitation of this Injunction; *Receive him, but not to doubtful Diſputations;* that is, Do not quarrel or contend with him about his Opinions, or fill his Head full of curious and intricate Queſtions, or trouble him with doubtful Diſputes. *Learn hence,* That Chriſtians are to receive ſuch as are weak in the Faith into their Hearts by Love, without troubling their Heads with perplexing Diſputes. Weak Chriſtians cannot well judge of Arguments: and practical Piety, and Chriſtian Love, will much ſooner rectify the Judgment of the Weak than fierce Argumentations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him.

Here the Apoſtle declares the ground of Difference that was between them; namely, the Difference of Meats. One thought all Meats to be lawful under the Goſpel; another, rather than eat any Meats forbidden by the Law, will eat only Herbs. *Where Obſerve,* How the Church of God, in all Ages, has been ſtrangely divided about little and indifferent Things. What Jars and Stirs were there between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches about the Obſervation of *Eaſter?* about celebrating the Lord's-Supper with leavened or unleavened Bread? And verily, the fatal Evils which our hot Contentions have occaſion'd amongſt ourſelves, only about indifferent Rites and Ceremonies, Tears of Blood are not ſufficient to bewail. *Obſerve next,* The Apoſtle's Exhortation to the two contending Parties, not to vilify or ſet at nought one another, condemning each other as humorous and ſcrupulous, much leſs as obſtinate and wilful; but eſpecially, not upon this Occaſion to ſeparate from, or break Communion with each other. Let not *him that eateth* all kinds of Meats, *deſpiſe him* that through Weakneſs durſt not eat of any. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, whilſt there is Error in our Underſtandings, Weakneſs in our Judgments, Narrowneſs in our Faculties, Differences will ariſe in the Church of God: but take care that where there is not Compliance, that yet there may be Peace: deſpiſe not, judge not one another. *Obſerve laſtly,* The Reaſon offered by the Apoſtle, why they ſhould receive their weak Brother, Becauſe *God hath received him.* God that is moſt Holy, and hateth Sin, receiveth ſuch; therefore ſo muſt you, if you pleaſe God. Why ſhould you refuſe to hold Communion with ſuch who hold Communion with God?

4 Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? To his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth; yea, he ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand.

Another Reaſon is here produc'd why we ſhould not raſhly cenſure or judge our Brother, differing in Judgment from us about leſſer things; namely, becauſe he is God's Servant, and it is God's Sentence, and not ours, which he muſt ſtand or fall by: And if theſe Differences ſhall not hinder God's Acceptance of him to Salvation, why ſhould they hinder us in accepting of him into our Communion? To Love is our Duty, to Judge is God's Prerogative: Let us be more in Charity, and leſs in Cenſure. *Learn hence,* That the Scripture forbids us to judge one another, as having no Grace, for the doing or not doing of thoſe things which are conſiſtent with a preſent State of Grace.

5 One man eſteemeth one day above another; another eſteemeth every day *alike.* Let every man be fully perſwaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it.* He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

The ſecond Caſe, as to indifferent things, is about the Obſervation of Days. Many of the believing *Jews* could not be taken off from ſolemnizing thoſe Feaſts which were of God's own founding and inſtituting amongſt the *Jews.* Another look'd upon them truly as abrogated by Chriſt. Now the Apoſtle adviſeth, that neither the one nor the other, neither he that regardeth, nor he that regardeth not thoſe Days, ſhould be judg'd, or hardly cenſur'd for ſo doing, becauſe he acts therein according to the Direction of his Conſcience. He that according to his Light doth either eat, or not eat ſuch Meats, keep or not keep ſuch Days, intends or deſigns it as an Act of Obedience to God; praying for, and giving Thanks unto Almighty God for his Acceptance. So then, if they both aim at the ſame End, they ought not to condemn one another for each others Act. *Learn hence,* That Perſons diſagreeing with us, and differing from us in leſſer things from a real Principle of Conſcience, firmly perſuaded that what they do, or refuſe to do, is for the Glory of God, and out of a ſincere deſire to pleaſe him, ought not to be judg'd by us, but left to the righteous Judgment of the Heart-ſearching God.

7 For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. 8 Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lords.

Here our Apoſtle proves what he had before aſſerted, that Chriſtians in their particular Actions, have a ſpecial regard to the Lord and his Honour, becauſe they devote themſelves, living and dying, to the Service of him and his Glory, *None of us,* Chriſtians, *live unto himſelf,* but we ſpend our Lives in his Service, neither do *we dye unto ourſelves,* not when we pleaſe, but when He appoints; therefore *living or dying* we are his. From the Words abſolutely conſider'd, we may *Learn,* That the beſt Evidence we can have that we are Chriſt's Servants is this, when we make it our Aim and Scope, our Deſign and Care, to live and to dye unto Chriſt our Lord, and not unto ourſelves. *Qu.* But when may we be ſaid to live unto the Lord, and to dye unto the Lord? *Anſ.* When we do not frame our Lives after our own Wills, but according to the Word and Will of God, making that the Rule and Ground of all our Actions: When the great End why we deſire Life, is, to do Service for Chriſt on Earth, and to be fitted by him for the Fruition of him in Heaven. Finally, Then we live and dye unto the Lord, when we are willing to be at the Diſpoſal of God, both for Life and Death; and this as to Time, Manner, and Means; yea, all Circumſtances whatſoever both of Life and Death. When a Man is willing to lay down his Life for the Lord, or at the Call of the Lord, it is a certain Evidence that he liveth and dieth to the Lord.

9 For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-

ſeat of Chriſt. 11 For it is written, *As* I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. 12 So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God.

Three Things are here obſervable, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt, by vertue of his meritorious Paſſion, and glorious Reſurrection, was conſtituted Lord of all Things, and has Power to judge all Perſons. *To this end Chriſt dy'd, roſe again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of Dead and Living*: That is, be the Judge and Rewarder of all Mankind. *Obſerve* (2.) That to this ſupreme and abſolute Lord every one of us muſt give an Account of our Actions, and from him receive our final Doom: *We ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. Obſerve*, (3.) The Argument which the Apoſtle draws from hence to diſſuade us from cenſuring and judging one another; and that is drawn from the Conſideration of the laſt and final Judgment, which we are all haſtning apace unto. *Why doſt thou judge thy Brother? we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Let there be a mutual Forbearanee amongſt Chriſtians: do not raſhly Judge, and uncharitably Cenſure one another, becauſe in ſome little things you differ from each other. What tho' your Brother cannot in Conſcience comply with your Opinion or Practice, muſt you preſently accuſe him of Stomach, and condemn him for Stubbornneſs, calling his Non-compliance Obſtinacy and Humour, Pride and Singularity, which he calls Conſcience towards GOD. Remember the Judge ſtandeth at the Door, and you muſt ſuddenly ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of CHRIST; *where every one of us muſt give an account of himſelf to God.* Where *note*, The Univerſality of the Subject rendring this Account. *Every one of us.* The Subject-matter of which the Account muſt be rendred; and that is, *of ourſelves*: As alſo the Deſignation and Deſcription of the Perſon unto whom this Account muſt be rendred; and that is, to the All-ſeeing and Heart-ſearching GOD; to GOD the Creator, but eſpecially to CHRIST the Lord, the Redeemer, who is ſuch a Judge as the Power of the Mightieſt cannot daunt; ſuch a Judge as the Riches of the Wealthieſt cannot bribe; ſuch a Judge as the Subtilty of the Wiſeſt cannot delude; ſuch a Judge as there is no Appealing from, no Repealing of his Sentence. *Therefore, judge nothing before the time, till the Lord cometh.*

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in *his* brothers way. 14 I know, and am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that *there is* nothing unclean of it ſelf: but to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkeſt thou not charitably. Deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died. 10 Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle adviſes Perſons to be very cautious in the Uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty: *Put not a Stumbling-block, or an occaſion of falling in your brothers way. Learn thence*, That to uſe our Chriſtian Liberty when it may be an occaſion of Sin, by laying a Stumbling-block before others, altho' we do not uſe it with an intent or purpoſe to make them ſtumble, is very ſinful. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Apoſtle's final Determination concerning thoſe Meats which ſome of the *Jews* ſcrupled as unclean. *I am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean of itſelf.* The Difference and Diſtinction of Meats, as clean and unclean, was taken away by our Lord JESUS CHRIST. *Obſerve*, (3.) That altho' the Apoſtle pronounces that there is no Meat unclean in itſelf, yet notwithſtanding this, to him that eſteemeth any thing unclean, to him, as to the Uſe of it, it is unclean. *Obſerve*, (4.) With what Tenderneſs the Apoſtle directs all Chriſtians to carry themſelves toward their weaker Brethren, even to the abridging of themſelves of their lawful Liberty in the uſe of indifferent Things, rather than give the Weak an occaſion of Offence. *If thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat* (tho' no Meat be unclean of itſelf) yet in eating thou doſt amiſs for three Reaſons. (1.) Becauſe it is againſt the Laws of Charity ſo to act in things indifferent. *If thy Brother be grieved, now walkeſt thou uncharitably.* (2.) Becauſe 'tis the way to occaſion him to ſin, and conſequently, to do what in us lies to bring Deſtruction upon him, for whom Chriſt dy'd. *Deſtroy not him with thy Meat for whom Chriſt dy'd.* (3.) Becauſe eating thus with Offence to the Weak, cauſeth Chriſtian Liberty, purchas'd by Chriſt, to be evil ſpoken of before the World. *Let not then your Good be evil ſpoken of.* The Sum of the whole is this, to ſhew how uncharitable, unſafe, and unchriſtian a thing it is to make ſuch an undue Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty, as may occaſion our weak Brother to fall or ſtumble.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

That is, the Spiritual Kingdom of God and Chriſt in the World conſiſteth not in theſe little things of Meat and Drink, but *in Righteouſneſs* toward God and our Neighbour, *in Peace*: that is, in Peaceableneſs of Diſpoſition, in Chriſtian Love, Concord and Unity, and in Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. That is, in the joyful Senſe of the Love of God, ſhed abroad in the Heart by the Holy Ghoſt. In theſe Things Chriſtianity conſiſts. *Learn hence*, That the Eſſence of Chriſtianity, and the Life of Religion, is far from conſiſting in little and indifferent things; and therefore for Perſons to lay a mighty ſtreſs upon them one way or t'other, is neither wiſe or ſafe. *Learn* (2.) That Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, Charity and Peaceableneſs, Love and Joy, and ſuch like Fruits of the Holy Spirit; theſe are the great Things wherein Chriſtianity or the Kingdom of Chriſt conſiſts, and in which the Life and Soul of Religion is found. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

18 For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

He that in theſe Things, that is, in Righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God*: That is, this ſhews and evidences that he is a Perſon accepted with God and approv'd of Men; of wiſe, charitable, and good Men; yea, the natural Conſciences of Men in general will applaud and approve what is done by him; notwithſtanding the fore-mention'd Difference in leſſer things concerning Meats and Days. *Learn hence*, That the Love and Practice of Religious Duties, ſuch as Righteouſneſs, and Peace, is a clear and ſtrong Argument of a Perſon's Acceptance with God. *Learn*, (2.) That ſuch as are for thoſe things accepted by God, ought by no means, for differing from us in leſſer things, to be diſown'd of us, and caſt out of Communion by us.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

This Verſe is an Inference drawn from the foregoing Diſcourſe. Seeing the Kingdom of God, or our common Chriſtianity, doth not conſiſt either in the doing or declining of theſe little indifferent things, let us by no means hazard the Peace of the Church, or break Communion with ſuch as in their Sentiments differ from us; much leſs let us deſpiſe and ſet at nought each other upon the account of theſe ſmall, yet unhappy Differences: But let us earneſtly purſue the things that make for the common Peace of all Chriſtians, and the things by which we may further each other's Edification and Salvation. *Learn hence*, That in caſe of any emergent Differences among Chriſtians, it ought to be the joyal Care and endeavour of all, and every one to purſue the Things which make for Peace, and that this Peace be ſuch as will conſiſt with, and greatly help forward the Good of the Church. *Let us follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edify one another.*

20 For meat deſtroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

That is, for Meat deſtroy not *Thou* the Work of God; do not *Thou* for ſo inconſiderable a matter as eating is, endanger the Chriſtianity of thy Brother, or hazard the Peace of the Church, and cauſe any thro' Scandal to fall off from their Chriſtian Profeſſion. If any of you ſay, that all Meats are clean, and therefore lawful; in anſwer, they are certainly ſo in themſelves, but yet it is your Sin if you uſe them to the Scandal and Offence of others that are not ſatisfy'd in the Lawfulneſs of them. It is moſt certainly the Duty of Chriſtians to deny themſelves the uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty in ſome things, when by making uſe of it they may endanger any of their Brethren, by cauſing them to fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs.

21 *It is* good neither to eat fleſh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

It is not good; that is, it is not charitable to make uſe of any part of our Chriſtian Liberty, when by ſo doing any weak Chriſtian is offended, diſcouraged, and driven from his Profeſſion, and brought to any kind of Sin: And if it be a Chriſtian's obliged Duty to forbear the uſe of indifferent things, when it is a Scandal to the Weak; how much more is it a Duty to avoid obtruding and impoſing ſuch things to the Scandal, Offence, and Hurt of others?

22 Haſt thou faith? have it to thy ſelf before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth.

Here the Apoſtle anſwers an Objection. Some might be ready to ſay, that they had Faith, that is, a firm and full Perſwaſion that it is lawful for them to eat thoſe Meats which others judged to be ſinful; and therefore it is neceſſary that they profeſs it, and own it, and aſſert their Liberty. The Apoſtle anſwers, Haſt thou more Knowledge than he to believe thoſe Things to be lawful which he apprehends to be ſinful? Keep thy Knowledge and Belief to thy ſelf, to juſtifie thy Action before God, but uſe it not to the hurt and prejudice of others; for he is a happy Man that when he knows a thing to be lawful, doth ſo uſe his Liberty about it, as not to offend others, or condemn himſelf; for that is a ſad kind of Knowledge which is uſed to deſtroy others, and condemn our ſelves. Such Chriſtians as have different Sentiments from their Brethren, as to the matters of indifferent things eſpecially, ought to keep their Judgment and Opinion to themſelves, and not to hazard the Peace of the Church by an imprudent Publication. Haſt thou Faith? have it to thy ſelf?

23 And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, becauſe *he eateth* not of faith: for whatſoever *is* not of faith, is ſin.

That is, he that doubteth whether he ſhould eat or no, and yet eats, he is condemned of himſelf, becauſe he doth a thing when he is not ſatisfied of its Lawfulneſs: for whatſoever is not done of Faith, that is, with a Perſwaſion that it is lawful, it is to him that does it undoubtedly ſinful. Whatever a Man does, believing it to be a Sin, is certainly a Sin in him. *Here obſerve*, That an erring Conſcience binds us to do nothing againſt it. A ſcrupulous Conſcience is a troubleſome one, but it is better than a preſumptuous Conſcience. As we muſt not nouriſh our Scruples and Doubtings, ſo neither muſt we act againſt our Scruples and Doubts. In ſhort, no Man is to act contrary to his Conſcience; but then it is as much his Duty to inform his Conſcience, as to follow his Conſcience. To act againſt Conſcience is a very great Sin; but a Man may act according to his Conſcience, and yet be a very great Sinner. St. *Paul*, when he was a bloody Perſecutor, tells us he acted according to his Conſcience; *Acts* 26. 9. *I verily thought my ſelf, that I ought to do many things againſt the Name of Jeſus of* Nazareth. Pray we then for a Conſcience rightly inform'd by the Word of God; and that we may ſo follow the Dictates and Directions of it whilſt we live, that it may neither reprove nor reproach us when we come to die. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

Our Apoſtle having ſpent the foregoing Chapter in a general Exhortation and Direction to ſtronger Chriſtians, how they ſhould carry themſelves towards their weak Brethren in the uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty about indifferent things, adviſing them neither to be Cenſorious in judging one another, nor yet to put a Stumbling-block in the way of one another to occaſion their falling; In the former part of this Chapter he proceeds upon the ſame Argument, and proſecutes the ſame Deſign, exhorting the ſtronger Chriſtians to bear with the Infirmities of their weaker Brethren; and this from the Example of Jeſus Chriſt. And accordingly he beſpeaks them thus, ver. 1.

1 WE then that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. 2 Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification. 3 For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf; but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.

Obſerve here, (1.) A great Doctrine aſſerted, and a ſpecial Duty declared, namely, that the Strong, that is, ſuch as do throughly underſtand their Chriſtian liberty, ſhould bear with the Infirmities, the Ignorance, Frowardneſs and Scrupulouſneſs of the Weak, and alſo forbear the doing of that which may Scandalize, and hurt the Souls of Men who have not the ſame Meaſures of Knowledge with our ſelves. *The ſtrong ought to bear the Infirmites of the weak. Obſ.* (2.) The Univerſality of the Duty, *we*, that is, not only all private Chriſtians, but all Church Governours, he puts himſelf into the number that he may propoſe himſelf as an Example of the following Duty; *we*, that are the Officers, the Paſtors, and Governours of the Church, like Parents who bear with Children in their Waywardneſs, ſo muſt we bear, tho' not with Hereſies in Doctrine, or Enormities in Practice, yet with ſuch Errors and Miſtakes in both as proceed from Ignorance, or common Infirmity. *Obſerve*, (3.) A futher Duty urged and enforced, namely, not to pleaſe our ſelves, but others, *let every one of us not pleaſe our ſelves, but our neighbours*; that is, not pleaſe our ſelves by inſiſting upon the Uſe of our Lawful Liberty, but rather, for the ſake of others depart a little from our own Right. *Yet Obſerve*, (4.) The Limitation and Reſtriction of this Duty, *for his good to edification*: It is not ſimply and abſolutely ſaid, let every one pleaſe his Neighbour; the Heretick, the Drunkard, and others, would like that well, to have every one ſpeak and act as they do, but the Rule is, to pleaſe every Man *for his good to edification*; thus far we may pleaſe them, but no farther; Edification is the Rule, the Scope and Boundary of all our Complacency in and Compliance with others. *Obſerve*, (5.) How the Apoſtle urges and enforces this Duty from the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, *he pleaſed not himſelf*; therefore ſuch as profeſs Faith in him muſt ſtudy to be as he was: nothing was more remote from Chriſt when here on Earth than ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-pleaſing, he did not conſult his own Eaſe or Satiſfaction, but rather reſpected others Benefit than his own, yea, he was ſo far from pleaſing of himſelf, that he did willingly expoſe himſelf to all the Reproaches and was ſo tender of God the Father's Honour, that all the Reproaches which fell upon the one affected and afflicted the other; *the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. Now from the whole we note*, That Chriſtians ought to be very tender towards one another in the uſe of their Lawful Liberty, they muſt not do whatever they pleaſe in things of an indifferent nature, without ſhewing any regard to others, much leſs ſhould they pleaſe themſelves in a proud reflecting upon their own Knowledge, and in contemning thoſe that have not ſo great a Latitude and Liberty as themſelves. *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities*, &c.

4 For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope.

The Apoſtle here informs us what is the general Uſe of the Holy Scriptures, and what is the particular Reaſon for which they were written, namely, (1.) For Inſtruction, *they were written for our learning*; all the Precepts, Promiſes, Threatnings, Rewards and Puniſhments recorded in the Scriptures are for our Information, Conviction, and Direction. (2.) They were written for our Comfort and Conſolation alſo, *that we through patience and comfort of them might have hope*; that is, that we through Patience in bearing the like Cenſures and Reproaches, which we find the Scripture Saints have born before us, might have hope of being rewarded, as they were for it. *Learn hence*, That the great End for which the Holy Scriptures were written was the informing of our Judgments, and the directing of our Practice, that by the Examples which we find there of the Patience of Holy Men under Sufferings, and of God's relieving and comforting them in their Diſtreſſes, we might have Hope, yea, Confidence and Aſſurance, that God will alſo comfort and relieve us under the like Preſſures and Burthens.

5 Now the God of patience and conſolation, grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus: 6 That ye may with one mind, and one mouth glorifie God, even the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle concludes his foregoing Exhortations, with votive Supplications, and fervent Prayer;

the Miniſters of God muſt follow the Word they deliver with Prayer; they muſt not only wreſtle with their People, but they muſt wreſtle with God for, and in behalf of their People, if they ever hope to overcome. *Obſ.* (2.) The Prayer and Supplication itſelf, and that is, for Concord and Unity among Chriſtians, *That they may with one Mind, and one Mouth glorify God*; that in their Chriſtian Aſſemblies they may all Worſhip God after the ſame manner, and not one this way, and another that; Unity among Chriſtians in common Converſation, but eſpecially in Church-Communion, is a very deſirable Mercy, and much to be pray'd for by the Miniſters of God. *Obſ.* (3.) How the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf in Prayer to God for this Mercy under a double Title, (1.) As a God of Patience, *The God of Patience grant you to be like minded*; intimating (1.) What great need there is of Patience, in order to the maintaining Love and Unity among Chriſtians: And (2.) That God muſt be apply'd unto in Prayer, who is the Author of it, to produce and work this Grace of Patience, in order unto Peace and Unity among Chriſtians: *The God of Patience grant you to be like minded.* The Unity of the Saints greatly depends upon the Exerciſe of Patience one towards another, and that they might attain it he begs the God of Patience to give it. (2.) Our Apoſtle joyns with this another Title, namely, *The God of Conſolation*, wherein he points them to that abundant Comfort, which would reſult to themſelves from ſuch a Bleſſed Unity, continued and maintained by the mutual Exerciſes of Patience and Forbearance one towards another. *The God of patience and conſolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another.* *Obſerve*, (4.) The Pattern and Example which he lays before them to excite and quicken them to this Duty, namely, the Example of Chriſt himſelf, *according to Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, according to the Example of Chriſt Jeſus; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, let us conſider how the Lord Jeſus bears with us, how many Thouſand Infirmities and Failings doth he find in the beſt of us, yet is he pleaſed to maintain Communion with us, and ſhall not we after his Example do the like, that thereby God may be eminently Glorified by us? *Obſerve*, (5.) How God is call'd the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *v.* 6. (1.) As he begat him by an Eternal and Ineffable Generation. (2.) As he was Man, ſo he created him, St. *Luke* 1. 35. (3.) As Mediator, ſo he appointed him to, and qualified him for that Office; and Eternally magnified be Omnipotent Love, that the Comfort of this Compellation redounds to us, for as he is the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo he is in him our Father alſo; our merciful, our gracious, and loving Father; may we ever demean our ſelves towards him as dutiful and obedient Children.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us to the glory of God.

Here our Apoſtle concludes the Argument which he had hitherto inſiſted upon in this and the former Chapter, namely, That all Chriſtians both ſtrong and weak, ſhould mutually forbear one another, and that both *Jew* and *Gentile* ſhould receive each other into Fellowſhip and Communion without Contention about things of an indifferent nature. *Wherefore receive ye one another.* And to enforce his Exhortation he propounds the Example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *receive one another, as Chriſt alſo received us*; that is, after the Example of Chriſt, who puts no difference betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, but receives both, and bears with the Infirmities of both: which Action in Chriſt, and the Imitation of it in us, will much redound *to the glory of God*, his declarative and manifeſtative Glory being much promoted by this Concord and Union with and among all his Members, of what Denomination ſoever they are, whether believing *Jews* or *Gentiles*. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has given full and ample Demonſtration of his great and wonderful Love unto his Church and People. (2.) That this Love of Chriſt towards all his Children and People ought to be improved by them, as an Argument to love one another; *receive one another, as Chriſt received us.* (3.) That Chriſtians receiving, embracing, and loving one another, and bearing with one anothers Weakneſſes and Infirmities, according to Chriſt's Example and Command, will contribute exceedingly to the Honour and Glory of Almighty God, and to the abundant Conſolation and Satisfaction of each other, *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Chriſt alſo received us to the glory of God.*

8 Now I ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to comfirm the promiſes made unto the fathers: 9 And that the Gentiles might glorifie God for his mercy; as it is written, for this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name. 10 And again he ſaith, rejoyce ye Gentiles with his people. 11 And again, praiſe the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people. 12 And again Eſaias ſaith, there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe; and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles, in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

The Apoſtle had in the foregeing Verſe propounded the Example of Chriſt, in receiving both *Jew* and *Gentile* to his Grace and Favour, as an Argument to perſwade all Chriſtians to receive one another: now in the Verſes before us he declares how and after what manner Chriſt received both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. As for the *Jews* firſt, whom he calls *the Circumciſion*, the Apoſtle telleth us, that *Jeſus* was their *Miniſter*, that is, he was circumciſed like them, converſed generally with them, and exerciſed his Miniſtry among them, according to the many Promiſes which God had made to the *Jewiſh* Patriarchs; and thus he ſhewed his Love and Mercy towards the *Jews* in the Days of his Fleſh. Then Secondly, As to the *Gentiles*, he affirms, that according to the ſeveral Propheſies and Promiſes in the Old Teſtament, they were called and received to Mercy by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Partition Wall being by him broken down, and *Jew* and *Gentile* become one Sheepfold under one Shepherd. Now from the Truth and Faithfulneſs of Chriſt towards the *Jews*, and from his Love and Tenderneſs, Mercy and Compaſſion towards the *Gentiles*, and from his Divine Indulgence towards both, the Apoſtle very fitly draws this Indulgence and Concluſion, That all Chriſtians, how differing ſoever from one another in their Judgments and Opinions as to leſſer things, ought to receive one another into Fellowſhip and Chriſtian Communion, and inſtead of biting and devouring one another, be once at length ſo Wiſe and Happy as to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy ghoſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle cloſes his Exhortation to brotherly Concord and Unity with a pithy and pathetick Prayer; his Example herein is inſtructive. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Title or Appellation which he gives unto God in Prayer, *The God of hope*; ſometimes he ſtiles him the God of Grace, ſometimes the God of Peace, ſometimes the God of Patience, here the God of Hope, he being ſo objectively, the only Object of our common Hope, and alſo effectually, as he is the Author and Producer of Hope in us. *Obſ.* (3.) The Mercies he Prays for, (1.) That they may *be filled with all joy and peace in believing*, that their Hearts may overflow with Peace from God, and one towards another, and with all that Joy which reſults from both. (2.) That *they may abound in hope through the power of the holy ghoſt*; where by Hope underſtand the Good hoped for, namely, Heaven and Eternal Life, a firm Expectation of which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. *Learn*, (1.) That God is the Object of a Chriſtian's Hope, and if ſo, the Sin of Deſpair is a moſt unreaſonable Sin; for why ſhould any deſpair of his Mercy, who is the God of Hope, who commands us to hope in his Mercy, and takes pleaſure in them that do ſo? *Pſal.* 147. 11. *Learn*, (2.) That the Grace of Hope, together with Joy and Peace in believing, wrought in the Chriſtian's Heart through the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, that is, through the ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Ghoſt, enlightning the Underſtanding, inclining the Will, rectifying the Affections, and reducing all the rebellious Powers and Faculties of the Soul (in concurrence with our Endeavours) under the Government and Dominion of Reaſon and Religion.

14 And I my ſelf alſo am perſwaded of you my brethren, that ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another. 15 Nevertheleſs, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in ſome ſort, as putting you in mind, becauſe of the grace that is given to me of God. 16 That I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring the goſpel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might

be acceptable, being ſanctified by the holy ghoſt. 17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt, in thoſe things which pertain to God.

Our Apoſtle being now about to conclude his Epiſtle to the Church at *Rome*, excuſes himſelf that he had written ſo largely and with ſuch freedom to them, believing that they abounded in Grace and Knowledge, and were very fit and able to inſtruct and direct one another; however, he thought fit to write unto them, having had the Honour confer'd upon him by Chriſt to be called to the Apoſtolical Office, and particularly to be the Ambaſſador of Chriſt to the *Gentiles*, moſt paſſionately deſiring that he might preſent and offer them up unto God as an acceptable Sacrifice through the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; and that his Succeſs in the Converſion of the *Gentiles* would be Matter of abundant Glorying to him. *Here Obſerve* (1.) How the Apoſtle in preparing the *Gentiles* for the Obedience of the Goſpel, compares himſelf to a Levitical Prieſt, converſant about his Sacrifice, and fitting it to be offered up to God. (2.) That the Gentiles dedicated by the Apoſtle's Miniſtry to the Service of God, were the Apoſtle's Sacrifice and Oblation. (3.) That the holy Spirit is a Libamen poured on this Sacrifice; by which it is ſanctified and rendred acceptable unto God. (4.) That ſuch an Oblation, or offering up of a People in this manner unto God; is matter of rejoycing, yea matter of glorying, to the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: *I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt.*

18 For I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed. 19 Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the ſpirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt. 20 Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel; not where Chriſt was named, leſt I ſhould build upon another mans foundation: 21 But as it is written, To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee: And they that have not heard ſhall underſtand.

Obſerve here, (1.) The indefatigable Induſtry and Pains of the Holy Apoſtle in order to the Converſion of the Gentiles, *From* Jeruſalem *round about unto* Illyricum, *be fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt.* This, according to *Pereus* his Computation, was little leſs than a thouſand Miles. The Induſtry of the Apoſtles in planting and propagating the Goſpel of Chriſt, was almoſt incredible. Lord! What Pains did they take? What Hazard did they run? What Difficulties did they conteſt and contend with in that great Work? *Obſ.* (2.) That although their induſtry was great, yet their Succeſs was greatter than their Induſtry, and beyond all humane expectation. This appears by the vaſt ſpreading of the Goſpel in ſo ſhort a ſpace: *From* Jeruſalem *round about to* Illyricum, within Thirty Years after our Saviour's Death, the Goſpel was not only diffuſed through the greateſt part of the *Roman* Empire, but had reached as far as *Parthia* and *India*. *Obſ.* (3.) That the Goſpel or Doctrine of Jeſus had likewiſe a wonderful Power and Efficacy upon the Lives and Manners of Men; the Apoſtle tells us, e'er that the Gentiles who were converted to Chriſtianity, *were obedient by word and deed,* upon the change of their Religion, followed the Change of their Converſation, and whole Courſe of Life. *Obſ.* (4.) The Reaſon of all this wonderful Succeſs which St. *Paul* and other Apoſtles had in Preaching the Goſpel; in inabling them to work Miracles for the Confirmation of the Goſpel, *v.* 19. *Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the ſpirit of God.* Such was the miraculous Power of healing Diſeaſes, of caſting out Devils, of inflicting corporal Puniſhment upon Scandalous Perſons; all which did ſerve in general for the Confirmation of the Goſpel, and did in particular ſupport the Honour and Authority of the Apoſtles, and ſupply the want of the Magiſtrates Power, which the Chriſtians could not expect whilſt the *Roman* Emperors continued Heathen: not that all theſe miraculous Powers were given to every one of the Apoſtles, or that they which had them could exerciſe them at all times, or whenever they pleaſed, but only as was moſt expedient for the Uſe and Benefit of the Church. *Obſ.* (5.) That the Apoſtle, in preaching the Goſpel, choſe to go to ſuch dark and blind Places as never heard of the Goſpel before; rather than amongſt them where Chriſt had been named, that ſo he might lay the Foundation of Chriſtianity himſelf, and not build upon another Man's Foundation. And likewiſe, that in his Miniſtry, the Prophecy of *Eſaias* might be fulfiled, chap. 52. 15. *To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee: And they that have not heard ſhall underſtand.*

22 For which cauſe alſo I have been much hindred from coming to you. 23 But now having no more place in theſe parts, and having a great deſire theſe many years to come unto you; 24 Whenſoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I truſt to ſee you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if firſt I be ſomewhat filled with your company.

The Apoſtle having, in the former Verſes, excuſed himſelf for dealing ſo plainly in his Writings with them, doth here apologize for his not coming amongſt them, affirming, that the true Reaſon why he did not viſit *Rome* was this; He look'd upon planting of Churches as more neceſſary than watering of them, and the preaching of Chriſt where he had never been named, to be the moſt needful Work. Now at *Rome* there had before been a Church planted, and Elders ordained to build upon that Foundation, for this Reaſon he had hitherto declined coming to *Rome*: but now, *having no more place in theſe parts,* that is, having no more Churches to plant hereabouts, he ſignifies both his Inclinations and fixed Reſolutions to viſit them at *Rome*, as he took his Journey unto *Spain*, and to ſtay ſome time with them, that they might be mutually filled and ſatisfied with, and refreſhed by, each other's Company. *Here note,* (1.) That the *Romans* were very early converted and called to the Chriſtian Faith, ſoon after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, for the twentieth Year after it, did *Paul* write this Epiſtle; but he had a deſire of ſeeing the *Romans* many Years before he wrote unto them; and therefore many Years before they were converted to the Faith. *Note* (2.) That our Journeying from one place to another is not according to our Purpoſe, but God's diſpoſal. The Apoſtle, no doubt, intended to go into *Spain* when he wrote this; but God over-ruled the matter beyond the Apoſtle's expectation. The Travels of the Apoſtles from place to place in order to the Planting and Propagating of the Chriſtian Faith, were under the ſpecial Influences and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 16. 7. *They aſſayed to go into Bithynia; but the ſpirit ſuffered them not.* *Note,* (3.) The great End why the Apoſtle was ſo deſirous of the Sight and Enjoyment of the Chriſtians at *Rome*; it was that he might be refreſhed, nay, *filled with their Company.* Lord! How deſirable is the Communion of Saints, and how beneficial the Society of ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians! Their Company is *Filling,* (not empty, vain, and frothy as the Company of moſt is, but) adminiſtring both Grace and Comfort to them that enjoy it; *I deſire to ſee you in my journey, that I may be filled with your Company.*

25 But now I go unto Jeruſalem to miniſter unto the ſaints. 26 For it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor ſaints which are at Jeruſalem: 27 It hath pleaſed them verily and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things, their duty is alſo to miniſter unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have ſealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am ſure that when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.

Here the Apoſtle acquaints them with his preſent intended journey to *Jeruſalem*, as alſo with the Occaſion of it; namely, to carry the charitable Contribution of the *Greek* Churches in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, into *Judea*, and up to the poor Saints at *Jeruſalem*, whoſe Neceſſities required it, and unto whom they were in a ſort indebted for it: *The Gentiles having been made partakers of their ſpiritual things,* (receiving the Goſpel from *Judea*) they are obliged in Gratitude to miniſter to them in carnal things. He farther aſſures them, that as ſoon as he had finiſhed his Journey, and performed this charitable Office, he would come to them, and that in the fullneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel-Peace. *Note here,* (1.) The Title given to the poor Chriſtians at *Jeruſalem*: they are call'd *Saints*; *I go to* Jeruſalem *to adminiſter to the Saints* Neceſſities. Saints they were by Baptiſmal Dedication, by viſible Profeſſion, and many, yea moſt of them it is to be hoped, by inward Sanctification alſo. *Note,* (2.) That Poverty and Sanctity are not inconſiſtent; the Saints at *Jeruſalem* are poor, but God provided a Purveyor for them; he ſtirs up the Apoſtle, and the Hearts of the *Macadonians,* to adminiſter to the Neceſſities of theſe poor Saints. *Note,* (3.) How the Saints in one Church did ſuccour and relieve the poor Chriſtians in another; thoſe in *Macedonia* and *Achaia* ſend Relief into *Judea,* and to the poor Saints which were at *Jeruſalem*: teaching us that it is our obliged Duty to extend our Charity to the Churches abroad and beyond the Seas, when their Wants and Neceſſities require it, and our Capacities enable us unto it. *Note,* (4.) The Nature of this Charity declared: it was a free and chearful Contribution performed with much pleaſure: *it pleaſed them* to make a Contribution; it was not extorted or ſqueezed from them, but given with Chearfulneſs by them: Contributions muſt not be Compulſions, by voluntary Obligations. *Note,* (5.) How this Charity is called Fruit; *when I have ſealed this Fruit*: becauſe it was the Fruit of their Faith, Liberty, and Love, becauſe as Fruit it would redound both to the Benefit of the Giver and Receiver. Charity and Alms are Fruit redounding to Account in the great Day of Account. *Note,* (6.) The great Integrity and Fidelity of the Apoſtle in ſecuring of this Charity; *when I have ſealed,* or ſecured *unto them this Fruit.* The Church's Charity is a ſealed Treaſure, not to be diminiſhed and imbezled, but applied to the Uſes to which it is devoted. *Note laſtly,* The Aſſurance which he gives them, that when he comes among them, he ſhall come in the fullneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Peace unto them; that is, with a full Impartment of ſpiritual Gifts and Goſpel Bleſſings, much Knowledge, Grace and Comfort.

30 Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſts ſake, and for the love of the ſpirit, that ye ſtrive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me: 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my ſervice which *I have* for Jeruſalem, may be accepted of the ſaints: 32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.

Here, in the cloſe of the Epiſtle, our Apoſtle moſt affectionately recommends himſelf to the Prayers of the Chriſtian *Romans* unto whom he wrote; *I beſeech you brethren ſtrive,* &c. *where obſerve,* (1.) The Apoſtles courteous Compellation, *Brethren.* There is a threefold Brotherhood, which the Scripture takes notice of, (1.) Betwixt Chriſt and Believers. *Heb.* 2. 11. *He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren.* (2.) Betwixt Believers themſelves, they are Brethren by Grace. 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. *Love the Brotherhood*; that is, the collective Body of Believers. (3.) Betwixt the Miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved People, there is alſo a Brotherhood, *Rev.* 1. 9. *I John your Brother*: teaching the Miniſters of the Goſpel to carry it towards their People with Love and Gentleneſs, and the People to make reciprocal Returns of Love and Affection. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Manner of the Apoſtle's Requeſt: it is by way of Supplication and Entreaty; *I beſeech you Brethren.* Tho' as an Apoſtle he might have enjoyn'd them, yet for Love ſake he rather entreats them. *Obſerve,* (3.) The Requeſt itſelf, that they ſtrive together in their Prayers for him. The Original Word ſignifies, to ſtrive together as Wreſtlers do, who exert all their Power and Might in that bodily Exerciſe. *Obſerve,* (4.) Our Apoſtle's Sincerity and holy Ingenuity in this Requeſt which he makes unto them; he deſires them *to ſtrive with him* in their Prayers to God for him: he doth not, with ſome, beg the Prayers of others, and neglect to pray for himſelf, but is willing to draw with them in the ſame Yoke. *Obſerve,* (5.) A double Argument which the Apoſtle makes uſe of to enforce his Supplication and Requeſt. (1.) For the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, for the ſake of him who is ſo dear both to you and me. (2.) For the Love of the Spirit; that is, if the Grace of Love be wrought in you by the holy Spirit of God, ſhew it by your fervent Prayer for all Saints in general, and for my ſelf a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt in particular. *Obſerve,* (6.) The particulars concerning which he deſires their Supplications. (1.) For Preſervation in his Journey to *Judea*; that the Unbelieving Jews, which were prejudiced againſt him, might have no power to hurt him. (2.) That his Perſon, and his Performance *for the poor Saints of Jeruſalem,* might find Acceptance with the Chriſtian Jews, to whom he was not over acceptable; he therefore begs their Prayers, that the believing Jews at *Jeruſalem* might be reconciled both to the believing Gentiles that ſent this Alms, and alſo to himſelf that brought it; *That my ſervice for Jeruſalem may be accepted of the Saints.* (3.) That he might have a proſperous Journey to them by the Will of God. *Where note,* How much it is our Duty always, and in all things, to refer our Selves, our Intentions and Actions, to the Pleaſure and Providence, to the Wiſdom and Will of God. And *Obſerve laſtly,* The ſpecial Reaſon why he was ſo deſirous to viſit and come unto them, that he might be refreſhed with them, and by them; that the Company and Converſation of each other, may be to their mutual Refreſhment and Satisfaction. *That I may come unto you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.*

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The Apoſtle had deſired their Prayers for him; here he concludes with a fervent Prayer for them: in which obſerve the Title or Attribute given unto God: *The God of Peace*; the Lover, the Author, and Giver of Peace, . The Apoſtle having exhorted the believing *Romans* to be at Peace among themſelves, and not to contend about indifferent things, implores the Diſpenſer of this Grace to be with them, to dwell among them, and to pour out the great and invaluable Bleſſings of Peace and Unity, of Love and Concord upon them: *The God of Peace be with you all. Amen.* As we honour the God of Peace whom we ſerve; as we love the Prince of Peace in whom we believe; as we hope for the Comfort of the Spirit of Peace; and as we tender the Succeſs of the Goſpel of Peace; let us preſerve it where it is, and purſue it where it flies from us.

CHAP. XVI.

This Chapter, which cloſes our Apoſtle's Epiſtle to the Romans, *is chiefly made up of charitable and friendly Salutations and Commendations of ſome particular Perſons; according to the earlineſs and ſtrength of their ſeveral Graces, and their Labour of Love for the Intereſt of Chriſt and his Church.*

1 I Commend unto you Phebe our ſiſter, which is a ſervant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh ſaints, and that ye aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſs ſhe hath need of you: for ſhe hath been a ſuccourer of many, and of my ſelf alſo.

The firſt Perſon here mentioned is *Phebe*; who going upon ſome occaſion to *Rome,* St. *Paul* is ſuppoſed to have ſent this Epiſtle to the *Romans* by her. *I commend,* ſays he, *to your care and affectionate regard* Phebe *our Siſter in the Faith, who ſerved the Church at* Cenchrea, *in the quality of a Deaconeſs,* as ſome think, or as others, who ſpent her time in receiving and harbouring poor Chriſtians that were driven out of their own Country, and who had been a Succourer and Supporter of the Apoſtle himſelf. He exhorts them to receive her in the Lord; that is, with Chriſtian Love for the Lord's ſake, and to be aſſiſtant and helpful to her in her outward Affairs and Buſineſs. *Learn hence,* What Honour God puts upon the Female Sex, in making uſe of ſome of them, to be Aſſiſtants to the Apoſtles, and taking care that their Offices of Love and Service for, and towards the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt, ſhould not be forgotten, but had and kept in everlaſting Remembrance. The Services which *Phebe* did, are here recorded, to Poſterity tranſmitted, and to our Imitation recommended.

3 Greet Priſcilla and Aquila my helpers in Chriſt Jeſus: 4 (Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but alſo all the Churches of the Gentiles.) 5 Likewiſe *greet* the church that is in their houſe.——

The firſt Perſons at *Rome,* who St. *Paul* ſaluteth by Name, are *Priſcilla* and *Aquilla.* The Woman is nam'd before her Husband, and ſhews that they were all one in Chriſt Jeſus, in whom is neither Male nor Female. Here by the way, it appears how weakly the Papiſts argue for St. *Peter*'s Primacy, becauſe plac'd firſt in the Catalogue of the Apoſtles. By the ſame Argument the Woman is the Head of the Man, becauſe here nam'd before the Man. *Obſerve,* (2.) The honourable Title which St. *Paul* puts upon theſe two Perſons, *Aquilla* and *Priſcilla*; he calls them his Helpers in Chriſt Jeſus. They were his Aſſiſtants in propagating the Goſpel by private Inſtruction, tho' not by publick Preaching, *Acts* 18.26. *Obſerve* (3.) The Chriſtian Courage which was found with this holy Woman *Priſcilla,* and her Husband *Aquila. They laid down their own Necks* for the Apoſtle; that is, expos'd themſelves to the hazard of their own Lives, for his Preſervation. *Obſerve,* (4.) The thankful Reſentment which the Apoſtle and all the Churches of the Gentiles had of this their great and noble Service, in hazarding their own Lives for his. *To whom I give thanks, and all the Churches of the Gentiles.* Becauſe St. *Paul* was the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, and his Preſervation redounded to the benefit of them all; therefore were the Churches of the Gentiles ſo ſenſible of, and thankful for the Apoſtle's Preſervation. *Obſerve laſtly,* The Salutation ſent *to the Church that was in their Houſe.* By which ſome underſtand their Houſhold, their Chriſtian Family, which he calls a Church, becauſe of the Pious Order, and religious Worſhip which was there obſerv'd. Oh happy Houſes! and thrice happy Houſholders! whoſe Families are little Churches for Piety and Devotion. Others underſtand by the Church in their Houſe, the Number of Chriſtians which uſed there to aſſemble for Religious Worſhip. Be it the one or other, our Apoſtle forgets not to ſend kind and Chriſtian Salutations to them.

5— Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the firſt-fruits of Achaia unto Chriſt. 6 Greet Mary, who beſtowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinſmen and my fellow priſoners, who are of note among the Apoſtles, who alſo were in Chriſt before me.

Three Perſons are here ſaluted by Name: the firſt *Epenetus,* whom he calls the Firſt-fruits of *Achaia*; that is, the firſt Perſon that imbrac'd Chriſtianity, or the Faith of Chriſt, in the Region of *Achaia*: the ſecond is *Mary,* a common Name, but the Perſon here intended was of ſpecial Note, having beſtow'd much Pains upon, and done many good Offices for the Preachers of the Goſpel: the third is *Andronicus,* noted for his Sufferings and Services among the Apoſtles, as alſo for his early imbracing the Chriſtian Faith. He was in Chriſt before me; that is, converted to Chriſtianity before myſelf. *Learn hence,* (1.) That Seniority in Grace, is a very great Honour, and to be in Chriſt before others is a tranſcendent Prerogative. *Learn* (2.) That God will have the Good-works of all his Saints, and the Services eſpecially which are done to his Miniſters and Ambaſſadors, by any of his People, to be applauded, valued, and recorded. *Mary*'s Labour beſtow'd on the Apoſtle, is here mention'd with Reſpect.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane our helper in Chriſt, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Chriſt. Salute them which are of Ariſtobulus *houſhold.* 11 Salute Herodion my kinſman. Greet them that be of the *houſhold* of Narciſſus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphoſa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Perſis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus choſen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Salute Aſyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his ſiſter, and Olympas and all the ſaints which are with them.

Here obſerve, (1.) How the Apoſtle ſalutes the Chriſtians at *Rome,* not in general, but particularly, and by Name, that they might be convinc'd how particularly mindful he was of them. And as he mentions them by Name in his Salutations, it is not improbable, but that he might mention them alſo by Name in his Supplications and private Addreſſes to God. No doubt he bore them, and all converted by him, upon his Heart, whenever he went in and out before the Lord. A ſpiritual Father can never be forgetful of his ſpiritual Children. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Perſons ſaluted by the Apoſtle are not Men of Fame in *Rome,* noted for their Dignity and Greatneſs, or for their Wealth and Riches, but for their Piety and Goodneſs, for labouring in the Lord, and for labouring much in the Lord, for being in Chriſt, approv'd in Chriſt, and Helpers in Chriſt; that is, Aſſiſtants in propagating the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſerviceable to thoſe whoſe Work and Office it was ſo to do. 'Tis Religion that renders Perſons renown'd, and no Perſons deſerve ſo well to be remembred by us, as thoſe that are moſt perſevering and laborious in their Services for God. *Obſ.* (3.) Here are ſeveral Women as well as Men remembred and ſaluted, and their Services for Chriſt and his Miniſters recorded. God will have none of his faithful Servants forgotten, nor any of their good Deeds bury'd in oblivion. *Obſ.* (4.) That in all this Roll of Salutations, there is no mention made of St. *Peter*'s Name. Had he now been at *Rome,* as the Papiſts will have him, and Biſhop of that See, it had been morally impoſſible for our Apoſtle to have forgotten him in his Salutations, when ſo many of his Inferiors were remembred by him.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiſs. The churches of Chriſt ſalute you.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle proceeds from greeting the Saints at *Rome* himſelf, to perſuade them to ſalute one another. There had been much Diſſention amongſt them about Meats and Days, he therefore craves of them for the future to imbrace each other with cordial Love, and affectionate Kindneſs; and as a Token and Symbol of it, to ſalute one another with an holy Kiſs, the uſual Expreſſion of Friendſhip in thoſe times. The Primitive Chriſtians, at the end of their Prayers before the Celebration of the Sacrament, did ſalute one another with a Kiſs, and then the Bread and Cup was brought forth; and ſome obſerve that it was done by the Men a-part, and the Women a-part. But this Cuſtom being afterwards abuſed, was gradually laid aſide. That which is lawful in its Uſe, and innocent in its own Nature, may, and ought to be laid aſide, when it becomes matter of Scandal and juſt Offence.

17 Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly, and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.

Obſerve here, (1) How our Apoſtle takes his Leave and Farewel of theſe *Romans,* with an admonition to them to take heed of Perſons that were erroneous in Doctrine, and ſcandalous in Practice. It's probable, he means either thoſe *Jews,* who pleaded the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Moſaick Rites, as neceſſary to the Salvation of the Gentiles; or the *Gnoſticks,* to whom the following Characters do well agree. Whoever they were, they were dangerous Seducers, and to be avoided. *Obſ.* (2.) The Character which our Apoſtle gives of theſe Perſons; *They ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly. Note,* That Seducers are always Self-ſeekers; they are deſigning Men: they aim at themſelves, under a Pretence of acting for Chriſt and his Glory. *They ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own bellies. Obſ.* (3.) The Arts and Methods which they uſe to delude and deceive. *By good Words and fair Speeches, they deceive the Hearts of the ſimple.* Seducers have ſmooth and gloſing Tongues; and innocent harmleſs Men are miſled by their fine Pretences and fair Speeches. And thus they impoſe upon the ſimple. *Obſerve* (4.) The double Advice which the Apoſtle gives, in order to their being preſerved and ſecured from the Poyſon and Contagion of theſe Seducers; namely, to mark them, and avoid them. (1.) To mark them: The Word ſignifies ſuch a marking as a Watchman uſeth when he ſtandeth upon a Tower to deſcry an Enemy, which is perform'd with great Accuracy. (2.) To avoid them, as a ſound Perſon would ſhun him that has the Plague upon him. *Where Note,* The Apoſtle adviſes to mark them, in order to the declining of them, not deſtroying of them;

to cut them off by Excommunication, not to cut their Throats, or burn their Bodies for Hereſy. *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions, and avoid them. Obſeive,* (5.) The Perſons whom this Exhortation concerns, who they are that ſhould judge of the Doctrines of Seducers: They are the Common People, the *Romans,* the Saints or Chriſtians at *Rome,* to whom he was now writing, to them the Apoſtle allows a Judgment of Diſcretion, a Power to try and examine the Doctrines delivered by Perſons pretending to infallible Inſpiration, *I beſeech you, Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions contrary to the Doctrines which ye have learned.* Chriſtians are by no means to be led by their Teachers blindfold, but ought to ſee with their own Eyes, to take nothing upon Truſt, but all upon Trial, to examine the Doctrines they are taught, and to obſerve and mark the Teachers of them. *I beſeech you* (ſays our Apoſtle) *mark them.*

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wiſe unto that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I do not accuſe you, but adviſe and warn you only: I acknowledge that you the Chriſtians at *Rome* are famous for your Obedience to the Apoſtolical Doctrine, and that you walk in Faith and Love, in Unity and Concord, to the Credit of the Goſpel, and the Honour of your holy Religion. But I would have you know, that you are not wholly out of danger of being infected by theſe Judaizers: I wiſh you therefore Wiſdom to eſcape their Snares; the Lord make you wiſe as well as zealous, that you may diſcern that which is good, and decline that which is evil. *Learn hence,* That the holieſt, beſt, and wiſeſt of Chriſtians muſt not look upon themſelves as ſecure from the Snares of Seducers, but ſtand in need of all the Cautions and Warnings, of all the Advice and Counſel of their Spiritual Guides, in order to their Preſervation from the Poyſon of their Principles, and the Contagion of their Example.

20 And the God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen.

Theſe Words may be conſider'd either relatively or abſolutely; if relatively, or with relation to the Context, then by Satan is to be underſtood Seducers and falſe Teachers, whom he had warn'd the *Romans* of in the preceeding Verſe: *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions,* &c. *Learn hence,* (1.) That all Corrupters of Divine Truths, and Troublers of the Church's Peace, are Satan's Inſtruments. *God ſhall bruiſe Satan*: That is, Satan in his Inſtruments, under your Feet. *Learn* (2.) That Divine Evangelical Truth ſhall be finally victorious; no Weapon form'd againſt it ſhall proſper; the Head of Error ſhall fall low at laſt at the Feet of Truth. Seducers may bluſter for a time, but ſhall be bruiſed at laſt; the God of Peace ſhall bruiſe Satan ſhortly. Conſider the Words abſolutely, and we have a Victory proclaimed; the Author of that Victory declared, the God of Peace; the Enemy conquered, Satan; the Conqueſt, or manner of conquering, by Bruiſing; the time of the Conqueſt, not preſently, but ſhortly. *The God of Peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your Feet ſhortly. Learn* (1.) That the Reconciler of the World ſhall be the Subduer of Satan; and in ſubduing Satan he conquers all his Inſtruments: He ſaith not, God ſhall bruiſe Seducers and Hereticks under your Feet; but Satan, and in him all that belong unto him; as the Fall of the General puts the whole Army to the Rout. *Learn* (2.) That Almighty God, in his own time, will make Believers compleat Conquerors over Satan, and all their ſpiritual Enemies. *Note,* (3.) That it is by Vertue of Chriſt's Conqueſt over Satan, that Believers become Conquerers; for the Promiſe here refers to the original Promiſe, *Gen.* 3. 15. That Chriſt, the Seed of the Woman, ſhall break the Serpent's Head: So then it is by Vertue of that Act of Jeſus Chriſt bruiſing the Serpent's Head, yea, breaking it, that Satan is bruiſed under our Feet. As Chriſt bruiſed him under his own Feet, ſo in his own time, will he bruiſe him under our Feet. The Perſonal, as well as the Repreſentative Seed of the Woman, ſhall break the Serpent's Head. Remember, poor tempted Chriſtian, for thy Comfort, the God of Peace will tread Satan under thy Feet ſhortly; thou ſhalt ſet thy Foot on the Neck of thy Enemy; and when once thy Foot is over the Threſhold of Glory, thou ſhalt caſt back a ſmiling Look, and ſay, Now Satan do thy worſt, thro' Grace I am where thou ſhalt never come.

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jaſon, and Soſipater, my kinſmen ſalute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epiſtle, ſalute you in the Lord. 23 Gaius mine hoſt, and of the whole church ſaluteth you. Eraſtus the chamberlain of the city ſaluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Our Apoſtle had, in the former part of the Chapter, ſaluted divers Perſons himſelf; here he ſends the Salutations of thoſe that were with him to the Saints or Chriſtians at *Rome*: thereby ſhewing that mutual Love and Amity, that happy Concord and Unity, which is and ought to be between all the ſincere Diſciples and Followers of Jeſus, when tho' not in Body yet in Mind, they ſhould be preſent with one another, and tho' diſtant in Place, yet undivided in Affection. The two principal Perſons here ſending joynt Salutations with the Apoſtle to theſe *Romans,* were *Timothy* and *Gaius.* The former St. *Paul* calls his Work-fellow, or Fellow-labourer. *Timotheus my work-fellow.* Where *Note,* The great Humility of the Apoſtle in dignifying ſo young a Man as *Timothy* then was, with this Title. What greater Dignity, then to be a Fellow-worker with the Apoſtle, in planting and propagating the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? The latter was *Gaius,* whom the Apoſtle calls *his Hoſt,* and *the Hoſt of the whole Church*; that is, a Perſon imploy'd by the Church of *Corinth* to entertain Chriſtian Strangers. To perform the meaneſt Offices of Love and Service for the perſecuted or diſtreſſed Saints and Servants of Jeſus Chriſt, to entertain them in our Houſes, yea, to waſh their Feet, is an honourable and acceptable Service.

24 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

Here again, our Apoſtle, from the abundance of his affectionate Heart towards them, repeats his Benediction of them, that the Mercy, Grace and Goodneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt may abide upon, and evermore continue with them. Where *Note,* The Fountain and original Spring from whence all Grace doth riſe and flow; namely, from Jeſus Chriſt. *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* It is ſo call'd, becauſe he purchas'd it for us, becauſe he applies it to us.

25 Now to him that is of power to ſtabliſh you according to my goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, (according to the revelation of the myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, 26 But now is made manifeſt, and by the ſcriptures of the Prophets according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of faith). 27 To God only wiſe *be* glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle here concludes his excellent Epiſtle with a ſolemn Doxology or Thankſgiving to God. In which he firſt deſcribes God, and then aſcribes eternal Glory to him. He deſcribes Him both by his Power, and by his Wiſdom. By his Power firſt, *To him that is able to eſtabliſh you according to my Goſpel*: That is, to eſtabliſh you in Grace and Truth, in Faith and Holineſs, and to keep you from falling into Sin and Error. Such is our Weakneſs, and Satan's Power, that unleſs God confirm and eſtabliſh us, we ſhall ſoon run into Sin and Danger. *Obſerve farther,* The inſtrumental Means which God makes uſe of for his Peoples Eſtabliſhment, and that is the Goſpel and the Preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, the Doctrine of the Goſpel which Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught and delivered. This is called a Myſtery, kept ſince the World began, and now made manifeſt, for the Obedience of the Faith; that is, that it may be believed and obeyed. The ſecond Attribute in the Deſcription of God, is, his Wiſdom; He is called the Wiſe, the only Wiſe God; not to exclude the Son and Holy Ghoſt, but the Wiſdom of the Creature only; He is only Wiſe originally, his Wiſdom is of himſelf; yea, his Wiſdom is himſelf: The Wiſdom of God is not a Quality ſeparable from himſelf, but is his very Eſſence and Nature. He is only Wiſe, becauſe He is incomparably Wiſe; there is none that for Wiſdom can compare with Him. He has Wiſdom in ſuch a degree and eminency, that the very Angels are chargeable with Folly before him. In a Word, He is only Wiſe, becauſe all Wiſdom is deriv'd from Him.

All the Wiſdom of Angels and Men is but a Ray from his Light, a Drop from his Ocean. And if ſo, then let the Wiſdom of God, in all his Dealings with us and ours, be admired and adored by us; for all his Works of Providence are as orderly and perfect as his Works of Creation, tho' we perceive it not.

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding joy; to the only Wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, now and ever. Amen.

The Firſt Epiſtle of St. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

That this Epiſtle was written by St. Paul *to the Church at* Corinth, *was never doubted by the Church of God.* Corinth *was the Eye of* Greece, *a very Opulent and Wealthy City, but Infamous for Pride and Luxury, for Wantonneſs and Uncleanneſs;* yet God had much People in this City, *in order to whoſe Converſion to Chriſtianity, this Apoſtle continued Preaching among them* a Year and Six Months; *and ſuch a ſpecial Bleſſing did accompany his Endeavours, that this new planted Church became one of the moſt Famous and Eminent Churches for all manner of Spiritual Gifts throughout the Chriſtian World.*

The Occaſion of writing this Epiſtle was an unhappy Schiſm that aroſe in the Church of Corinth *by the Peoples preferring one Preacher before another. Inſtead of being thankful to God for the Endowments of all his Miniſters, and endeavouring to reap the Benefit and Advantage of all their mutual Labours, they vainly* gloried in Men, *ſome crying up* Paul, *others* Apollos, *&c. Hereupon St.* Paul *ſent this Epiſtle as a Bucket to quench this Fire, which had threatned the Deſtruction of this flouriſhing Church.*

And obſervable it is, with what Freedom and Impartiality the Apoſtle proceeds in the Management of this Epiſtle: He ſharply reproves both their erroneous Opinions and vicious Practices, he wiſely rebukes them for their Schiſms and Diviſions, for their Confuſion and Diſorders in publick Aſſemblies, for their horrid Prophanation of the Lord's-Supper, for their Toleration of Inceſt, for going to Law before Heathen Magiſtrates: He aſſerts the Miniſters Maintenance, the Excellency of Spiritual Gifts, the Nature and Neceſſity of Charity; and by multiplied Arguments confirms the Doctrine of the Reſurrection.

CHAP. I.

1 PAul called *to be* an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, through the will of God, and Soſthenes *our* Brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called *to be* ſaints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours. 3 Grace be unto you, and peace from God our father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's aſſerting his Commiſſion for the Work of the Miniſtry to be from God; he was *called to be an Apoſtle by the will of God*, he did not thruſt himſelf into that High and Honourable Employment, but was choſen, called, and ſent by God. Such as enterprize the Sacred Function without a regular Call and Commiſſion, may expect a Blaſt inſtead of a Bleſſing. *Obſ.* (2.) The double Object of St. *Paul*'s Salutation in this Epiſtle: he firſt ſalutes the Church of *Corinth* in particular, and then all the Churches of Chriſt in general; *to all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Where note*, That they were not real Saints, no, nor all viſible Saints, (but called to be both) whom he calls the Church; many ſecretly vile and ſcandalouſly prophane Perſons were found amongſt them, yet the Apoſtle ſalutes them as the Church of God; *to the Church of God at Corinth. Learn thence*, That there may be a mixture of Prophane and Scandalous Perſons with real Saints in the Church of God here on Earth; there may be, I ſay, I mean, *de facto*, there have been, and there will be, not *de jure*, that there ought to be ſuch a mixture; yet if ſo, this doth not unchurch the Aſſembly in which they are, they are the Diſeaſe of the Church, but not its Death; ſuch Corruptions and Blemiſhes cannot conſiſt with the Well-being, but may conſiſt with the Being of particular Churches. *Obſ.* (3.) The Salutation it ſelf, *Grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where note*, (1.) A double Bleſſing deſired, *Grace and Peace*; Grace is of all Bleſſings the richeſt, and Peace is of all Comforts the ſweeteſt. *Note*, (2.) A double Spring diſcovered from whence this double Bleſſing flows, God and Chriſt; God, as the Original Source and Fountain of all Good in himſelf, and Chriſt as the Donor and Diſpenſer of all Good to us. *Note*, (3.) The order of the Words, firſt Grace, then Peace, there can be no Peace without Grace, and no Grace but there will be Peace; there can be no Peace but from God, no Peace from God but as a Father, no Peace from God as a Father, but as our Father, and he cannot comfortably be ſaid to be our Father, but through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Learn hence*, That all that Grace and Peace which Believers ſhare in, and are made partakers of, is derived from God the Father, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge: 6 Even as the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you. 7 So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 8 Who ſhall alſo confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9 God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowſhip of his ſon Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I am very thankful to God for his Grace and Favour beſtowed upon you through Jeſus Chriſt in and by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and particularly for the Gift of Tongues, and other miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit vouchſafed to you, whereby the Divinity of the Goſpel, (called here *the teſtimony of Chriſt*, becauſe it teſtifies of Chriſt) was atteſted and confirmed; he farther tells them, that he was firmly perſwaded that God would confirm them unto the end, cauſing them to perſevere unblameable in Holineſs till the coming of Chriſt to deliver his faithful Servants, and remarkably to deſtroy his Crucifiers; becauſe of the Faithfulneſs of God, who having *called them to the fellowſhip of his Son*, and to partake of his invaluable Benefits, will never leave them, but accompliſh the whole Pleaſure of his Will in them. *Obſerve here*, (1.) That the Apoſtle in the 3d. Verſe prayed affectionately for the Grace of God to be beſtowed upon the *Corinthians*, in the fourth Verſe he thanks God abundantly for the Grace they had already received, and no Man has ſuch Supplies of Grace but he ſtands in need of farther Influence, and there is no ſuch way to attain more Grace as to be thankful for what we have already received. *Obſerve*, (2.) To whom the Apoſtle returns his Thanks for all that Grace the *Corinthians* had received, even to the God of all Grace, *I thank my God for the grace which is given you.* All Grace depends upon God, as to its Being and Production, as to its Exerciſe and Operation, as to its Growth and Augmentation, as to its Evidence and Manifeſtation, as to its Perſeverance and Preſervation; he is both the Author and Finiſher of our Faith: Both Seed, Increment and Perfection, the beginnings, increaſings and finiſhings of Grace, are all from God the Father, but by and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who by his Blood purchaſed Grace for us, and by his Spirit produceth it in us. *Obſerve*, (3.) That Believers in the firſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church received not only ſanctifying Graces, but the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the Gift of Tongues and Miracles. *Obſerve*, (4.) that they obtained theſe Gifts by Jeſus Chriſt, and through Faith in him. *Obſerve*, (5.) That by theſe Gifts *the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed*, that is, the Doctrine of the Goſpel teſtifying that Jeſus was the true Meſſias, by his being raiſed from the Dead. *Obſerve*, (6.) That by theſe Gifts, and by this Earneſt of the Spirit, they had Encouragement to expect and wait for the Approach and Concern of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 7. *Ye came behind in no Gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

10 Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and *that* there be no Diviſions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

Theſe words are a Pathetical Exhortation to a moſt important Duty. *In which obſerve*, (1.) The Duty it ſelf directed and exhorted to, and that is Unity and Unanimity amongſt Chriſtians; this is threefold, the Unity of the Head, and of the Heart, and of the Tongue; the Unity of the Head, and that is an Unity in Judgment and Opinion; the Unity of the Heart is an Unity in Love and Affection, and the Unity of the Tongue is an Unity in Language and Expreſſion, when we all ſpeak the ſame things, and with one Mouth as well as with one Mind glorifie God. *Obſerve*, (2.) The powerful Arguments here enforcing this Duty: the firſt is an Apoſtolical Obſervation, *I beſeech you*: He that had Authority to Command has the Meekneſs to Entreat, and in a Supplicatory way to beſeech; the ſecond is, the nearneſs of the Relation; *I beſeech you brethren*, an endearing Expreſſion, and full of Affection, they were Brethren by Place and Nation, and Brethren by Faith and Profeſſion, owning the ſame God, profeſſing the ſame Religion, animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame Promiſes, Partakers of the ſame Hope, and Heirs of the ſame Glory; the third Argument is, the Name he beſeeches in, and that is Chriſt's, *I beſeech you by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, I adjure you for his Sake, and by his Authority, by all that he has done, ſuffered and purchaſed for you; if you have any Reverence for his Authority, as a Sovereign, if you have any Regard for his Undertaking, as a Saviour, look that there be no Diviſions amongſt you, but that *ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment. Obſerve*, (3.) That ſo exceedingly was the Apoſtle's Heart ſet upon this Duty that in both his Epiſtles to the *Corinthians* he preſſes them very earneſtly to the love and practice of it, here in this firſt Epiſtle and firſt Chapter, and in his ſecond Epiſtle and laſt Chapter, *Be in one mind, live in peace*, &c. *From whence note*, That the Apoſtle makes this Exhortation to Unity among Chriſtians the *Alpha* of his firſt Epiſtle, and the *Omega* of his laſt, 'tis the firſt Duty which he commends to their Conſideration in the former Epiſtle, and the laſt which he recommends to their Care and Practice in the latter Epiſtle, intimating thereby unto us, that this Unity in Judgment and Affection is the firſt and laſt thing to be reſpected among Chriſtians, as being both the Beginning and Perfection of Chriſtianity.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the houſe* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I ſay, that every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Chriſt. 13 Is Chriſt divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle declares a Reaſon why in the foregoing Verſe he preſſed his Exhortation to Love and Unity with ſo much Fervour and Vehemency, namely, becauſe he had received Information that there were Contentions and Sidings, Diviſions and Parties amongſt them, to the great Scandal of Chriſtianity, which was ſo newly planted amongſt them. *Whence learn*, That Diviſions and Factions do quickly creep into the beſt and pureſt Churches; this Church of *Corinth* was a Garden newly planted by St. *Paul*, yet notwithſtanding all his Care and Perſonal Inſpection, theſe ill Weeds of Diviſion and Diſſention grew apace; it was not while Men ſlept that theſe Tares were ſown, but whilſt the Officers of the Church were both awake and watchful. *Obſerve*, (2.) What was the Cauſe of theſe Diviſions and Diſſentions that were found amongſt them, it was having Mens Perſons in Admiration, factiouſly crying up one Miniſter above another, naming themſelves the Followers of this and that Man, ſetting up Teachers one againſt another, and even Chriſt againſt his Miniſters. *Learn hence*, That although it is the Peoples Duty to have a great and high Eſteem of the Miniſters of Chriſt, yet muſt not their Reſpect degenerate into a ſinful Admiration of their Perſons, for their factious affecting of one Miniſter above another is both ſinful and dangerous, it occaſions Enmity and Diſſention amongſt Miniſters themſelves, and their People alſo, when the Gifts and Abilities of one are cried up in Contempt of others. *Obſerve*, (3.) That theſe *Corinthians* did not only ſinfully admire the Perſons of their Teachers, but alſo ſet up their Teachers as heads of ſeveral Parties, ſinfully reſting upon them, and glorying in them. *Learn thence*, That it is not barely unlawful, but very dangerous and exceeding ſinful for Perſons to call themſelves by the Name of any Men, though never ſo Eminent, ſo as to build or pin their Faith upon them; we are not Believers in *Paul* or *Peter*, but in Chriſt; there is but one Head of the Church, and that is Chriſt, and he is not divided; his Diſciples we are in whoſe Name we are Baptized, and that is not into the Name of any Man, but the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; to build therefore our Faith upon any Man, is to make him our Saviour, and to put him in Chriſt's room and place.

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Criſpus and Gaius: 15 Leſt any ſhould ſay that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized alſo the Houſhold of Stephanas: beſides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Chriſt ſent me not to baptize but to preach the goſpel: not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect.

Obſerve here, (1.) That although Baptizing were God's Ordinance, and St. *Paul*, as Chriſt's Miniſtes, had a Commiſſion and ſufficient Authority to Baptize, yet the Providence of God ſo ordered, that he Baptized very few, leſt any ſhould ſay he Baptized in his own Name. *Obſerve*, (2.) That among thoſe few he Baptized here is an whole Houſhold mentioned, *the houſhold of Stephanas. Where learn*, That as *Abraham*, and others under the Old Teſtament, were to bring their Houſhold into Covenant with God by Circumciſion, ſo did thoſe that had Houſholds under the New Teſtament endeavour to bring their whole Families into God's Covenant by Baptiſm, the Jaylor and his Houſe, *Lydia* and her Houſe, *Stephanas* and his Houſhold, all Baptized. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Compariſon here made betwixt Baptizing and Preaching, and the Preference given to the one before the other, *Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach*, that is, rather to Preach than Baptize, this was his great Buſineſs, his principal Work; though Baptizing was within his Commiſſion, yet it was not that, but Preaching the Goſpel to convert Souls to Chriſt that he was called after ſuch a wonderful manner, and endued with ſuch extraordinary Gifts for the Performance of; it is neither wiſe nor ſafe to cry up one Ordinance of God above another, but to have them all in Eſtimation, and none more than the Preaching of the Goſpel, which is one principal part of our Commiſſion. *Obſerve*, (4.) The manner after which Chriſt ſent St. *Paul* to Preach the Goſpel, *not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of* *no effect*, that is, not attracting and drawing Men to the Faith by the Power of Human Eloquence, leſt the Doctrine of Chriſt ſhould be rendred ſuſpected by ſuch a pompous way of Preaching; plain Truths, without Art and Varniſh, may be conveyed with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience than all the Charms of Human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue; the way and manner of St. *Paul's* Preaching was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable; With what Brevity without Darkneſs? With what Gravity without Affectation? With what Eloquence without meretricious Ornament, were St. *Paul's* Diſcourſes? ſolidly inſtructing Men in the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and furniſhing them with Arguments and Motives to a good Life, and this in ſuch a plain and familiar manner, that the Succeſs and Prevalency of his Preaching appeared to be of God, and not of Man.

18 For the preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs: but unto us which are ſaved, it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent. 20 Where *is* the wiſe? where *is* the ſcribe? where *is* the diſputer of this world? hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?

Obſerve here, (1.) The Character and Deſcription given of the Preaching of the Goſpel, it is called *the Preaching of the croſs*, that is, of a crucified Saviour, it repreſents him who died upon the Croſs, as the proper Object of our Faith and Hope, of our Affiance and Truſt. *Obſerve*, (2.) The low and mean Eſteem which the Philoſophers and Wiſe Men among the Heathen had of the Doctrine of the Croſs, and of the Preaching of the Goſpel, they eſteemed it *fooliſhneſs*; *the preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh fooliſhneſs*; ſo eſteemed, (1.) In regard of the Subject of it, it is the Doctrine of the Croſs, that is, of a crucified and deſpiſed Saviour; it acquaints us that the *Eternal God* in the fulneſs of time became a *Mortal Man*, that Life became ſubject to Death, and Bleſſing ſubject to a Curſe, all which are ſuch appearing Contradictions, that Natural Reaſon is very prone to ſcorn and deride them. (2.) The Wiſdom of the World, or the Wiſe Men among the *Gentiles*, did eſteem the Preaching of the Goſpel Fooliſhneſs, in regard of the manner of it, becauſe the Goſpel doth nakedly and barely propound ſome Doctrines of Faith, and poſitively requires our Aſſent to them from the Evidence of the things themſelves, and from the Authority of the Principal Speaker, God himſelf; the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, though not contrary to Reaſon, yet are above our Comprehenſion, notwithſtanding which they do not only require our Aſſent, but alſo challenge the Obedience and Adoration of our Faith. Now the Wiſdom of the World is not ſatisfied with God's Αὐτὸς ἔφη with God's Authority in aſſerting, but requires that every Doctrine of Faith and every Myſtery of the Goſpel be made ſo plain and obvious, ſo clear and perſpicuous, that their ſhallow Reaſon may be able fully to comprehend it; for theſe Reaſons is *the preaching of the croſs to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs*. *Obſerve*, (3.) What Efficacy and Virtue the Goſpel is of unto Believers, *unto us which are ſaved*, ſays the Apoſtle, *it is the power of God*, that is, a powerful Inſtrument in God's Hand for Mens Converſion and Salvation; the Word Preached is the Organ or Inſtrument through which the Vital Power of the Spirit is conveyed into the Souls of Sinners, how much ſoever it is contemned and deſpiſed in the World. *Obſerve*, (4.) How the Apoſtle upbraids the Pride and Folly of the Learned Philoſophers and reputed Wiſe Men among the Heathen, who, though they excelled in Natural Wiſdom yet deſpiſed Evangelical Truths, making Reaſon their ſupream Rule, and Philoſophy their higheſt Principle; *where*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this World?* That is, where is the Wiſdom now of the wiſeſt Philiſophers among the *Gentiles*? Where is the Wiſdom of the *Scribe*? Or, the Interpreter of the Law among the *Jews*? *Where is the diſputer of this World*? Or, the curious Searcher into the Depths and Secrecy of Nature? Let them ſhew ſo many brought by all their Wiſdom, Learning and Eloquence to the knowledge of God, and to the practice of their Duty, as the Preaching of a crucified Chriſt hath done; yea, all their Natural Wiſdom is meer Folly in Compariſon of the glorious Effects which the Preaching of the Goſpel has produced.

21 For after that, in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.

Obſerve here, (1.) That the Frame of this World, or the Work of Creation, is here called *the wiſdom of God*; the Name of the Cauſe is given to the Effect, becauſe Divine Wiſdom ſhines ſo clearly forth in the Work of Creation; the beautiful Frame of Heaven and Earth doth diſcover the ſeveral Excellencies and Perfections which are in God, and amongſt the reſt his admirable and unerring Wiſdom. *Obſerve*, (2.) What is here affirmed concerning the moſt Wiſe and Learned Men among the Heathen, namely, that with all their *wiſdom they knew not God*, that is, they did not own and acknowledge him, ſerve and glorifie him as they ſhould and ought to have done: *the world by wiſdom knew not God*, that is, they knew him confuſedly, but not diſtinctly, they knew in general, that a God there was, but knew not particularly who the true God was; they knew him notionally, but not practically, their Knowledge had no influence upon their Hearts or Lives; they knew him as eſſentially conſidered in himſelf, but knew him not relatively, as conſidered in Chriſt; they knew not *Immanuel*, God with us, and becoming a Mediator for us, him they did not know. *Learn hence*, That the greateſt Wits of the World, having no more but the common Light of Nature, and the Advantage of Human Accompliſhments, are oft-times exceedingly to ſeek as to the Spiritual and Saving Knowledge of God and Chriſt; Human Wiſdom and Divine Knowlege as they are diſtinct in their Nature, ſo are they ſeparable in their Subject, let thoſe that have both bleſs God with Eternal Thankſgivings. *Obſerve*, (3.) God's gracious Supply of that Defect which the World laboured under, when by all their Wiſdom collected from the Book of the Creature they could not arrive at the right Knowledge of the true God, then *it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*. *Where note*, (1.) The Perſons deſcribed whom the Wiſdom of God thinks fit to ſave, *them that believe*, them excluſively, and none but them. *Note*, (2.) The great inſtrumental Means which the Wiſdom of God ordained in order to the Believer's Salvation, namely, the preaching of the Goſpel, *it pleaſed God by preaching to ſave them that believe*. *Note*, (3.) The mean and low Opinion, the vile and baſe Eſteem which the World have of this Venerable Ordinance of God, the Preaching of the Goſpel, they think fit to ſtile it Fooliſhneſs; *the fooliſhneſs of preaching*. *Note*, (4.) The moving impelling, and impulſive Cauſe of this gracious Diſpenſation, to wit, the preaching of the Goſpel in order to Mens Salvation, and that it is the good Will and Pleaſure of a gracious God; *it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe*.

22 For the Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom: 23 But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt, the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. 25 Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.

Obſerve here, (1.) How both *Jews* and *Gentiles* conſpired together in their Contempt and Rejection of the Goſpel; *the Jews require a ſign*, that is, beſides all the Miracles and Reſurrection of Chriſt, the *Jews* require ſome Sign from Heaven to prove that Chriſt was ſent from God; ſo unreaſonable and obſtinate was their Infidelity, that all the Miracles of our Saviour's Life, Death, and Reſurrection, could not remove it; *and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom*, that is, they look for profound Wiſdom, eminent Learning, and deep Philoſophy in the Goſpel, and ſcorn it becauſe they find not there what they expected. *The Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom*. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Apoſtle's peremptory Reſolution to Preach Chriſt crucified, tho' he were to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* fooliſhneſs. But how was *Chriſt a ſtumbling-block to the Jews?* *Anſwer*, In regard of his Poverty and Sufferings, the Meanneſs and Miſery of his Condition in the World; they expected that their Meſſias ſhould be a Victorious Prince, one that ſhould reſcue them from their Enemies, inſtead of which they find this Jeſus to be overcome by his Enemies, that he had no Power to defend himſelf, much leſs to deliver them; that he was deſerted by God, whom he called his Father, forſaken by his Followers, whom he ſtiled Diſciples, Scourged with Rods, Crowned with Thorns, Ignominiouſly Treated, Shamefully Crucified; this was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and continues ſo to be. But how was *Chriſt to the Greeks fooliſhneſs?* *Anſwer*, The *Gentiles* deſpiſed the Goſpel of Chriſt, as an abſurd, ridiculous, and ill-contrived Fable; for what in appearance could be more unbecoming God, and injurious to his Perfections, than to take the frail Garment of Fleſh, to be torn and trampled upon? They concluded the Incarnation impoſſible, that a Being infinitely perfect ſhould unite with a Nature ſo inferior to itſelf; and the Doctrine of our Saviour's Death rejected, as an Impiety Contumelious to God; they could not reconcile Servitude with Sovereignty, Puniſhment with Innocence, the loweſt Human Miſeries with the higheſt of Divine Honours, and accordingly they eſteemed it Fooliſhneſs to expect Eternal Life from him that was put to Death, and that he ſhould bring them to the higheſt Glory who ſuffered himſelf in the loweſt Weakneſs; thus was the *preaching of Chriſt crucified to the generality of the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs. But obſerve*, (3.) It was not thus unto all, there was a number of both converted and ſaved by the Doctrine of the Croſs, unto whom *Chriſt was the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. Here note*, (1.) That Chriſt was the power of God; *Iſaiah* ſtiles him the Mighty God, *chap.* 9. 6. Works of Mighty Power were performed by him, as the Works of Creation, *Coloſ.* 1. 16. *By him were all things created in heaven, and in the earth.* The Work of Providence, *Heb.* 1. 3. *He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.* The Work of Redemption, *Gal.* 3. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* The Curſe and Wrath of God was a Burthen that would have broke the Back of Angels, none could ſtand under it but Chriſt, and not he neither as meer Man, but as ſupported by the Infinite Power of his Godhead. *Note*, (2.) Chriſt is the Wiſdom of God; alſo his Divine Nature had a fulneſs of infinite and uncreated Wiſdom found with it; alſo his Human Nature had a fulneſs of infuſed and created Wiſdom found in it; and the Redemption of Man by Jeſus Chriſt was a Deſign of admirable Wiſdom; he that turns his Back upon Chriſt, rejects the Wiſdom of God, and renders his Ruin both dreadful and certain; they muſt periſh Eternally by the Hand of ſtrict Juſtice, who will not be ſaved according to the Methods of Divine Wiſdom, which are to ſave us from Hell by ſaving us from our Sins. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Reaſon aſſigned why the Preaching of Chriſt Crucified became the Power of God unto Salvation, *becauſe the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men*; that is, the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of God, tho' they ſeem weak and fooliſh in the Eye of the World, yet are more efficacious and powerful than all the Wiſdom of Worldly Men. *Learn hence*, That the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of God, and particularly the Preaching of the Goſpel, tho' deſpiſed by the Men of the World, yet by the Power of God have glorious Operations, and produce wonderful Effects. *The weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men*, that is, the weakeſt Inſtruments which God uſes are ſtronger in their Effects than the ſtrongeſt which Men can uſe; *and the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men*; not that there is either Fooliſhneſs or Weakneſs in God, but that which Men account Fooliſhneſs and Weakneſs, and deride as ſuch, doth yet overcome all their admired Wiſdom and Strength; and if the Wiſdom of Man cannot match the Fooliſhneſs of God, how ſhall it vie and contend with the Wiſdom of God? No Wiſdom or Power of Man can ſtand before the Fooliſhneſs and Weakneſs, much leſs before the Wiſdom and Power of God. *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men.*

26 For ye ſee your calling brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called.* 27 But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty. 28 And baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſingular Favour which our Apoſtle calls upon the *Corinthians* to eye and view, namely, their effectual Vocation and Calling out of Heatheniſm to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; *you ſee your calling brethren*; ſuch as are exalted by God in any kind, ought to call to mind their former Meanneſs, but thoſe that are perſwaſively called by God out of a State of Nature, ought frequently to obſerve and conſider the worth and weight of that Mercy, and the freeneſs of that Divine Favour; *Brethren, ſee*, and take notice of *your calling*. *Obſerve*, (2.) That God has in all Ages called ſome of all Ranks and Degrees of Men, of the Wiſe and Great, the Rich and Noble, to the Knowledge of himſelf, and his Son; *not many wiſe, not many mighty, not many noble are called*; he doth not ſay not any, but not many, leſt the World ſhould think that Chriſtians were deceived through their Simplicity and Weakneſs, one Rich *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, one Honourable *Nicodemus*, one *Criſpus*, a Ruler of the Synagogue, but not many Men of Might and Power; Men of ſtrong Reaſon and ſharpneſs of Wit are too proud and ſtout to ſtoop to the Simplicity of the Goſpel, and the humbling Self-denying Terms of it, yet ſome of the Wiſe and Mighty are called, leſt any thing in Man ſhould ſeem too hard for the Grace of God, but not many, leſt Worth and Worthineſs in us ſhould be thought the Motive that rules God; Men of greateſt Fame and Renown in the World have been the fierceſt Enemies againſt Chriſt and Chriſtianity, *Galen*, the chief Phyſician, *Porphyry*, a chief Philoſopher, *Lucian*, a chief Orator, with many others, were all profeſſed Enemies of the Chriſtian Religion. *Therefore obſerve* (3.) That although God called ſome of the Wiſe, Rich and Noble amongſt the *Jews* and *Gentiles* to eſpouſe Chriſtianity, yet the far greater Number of thoſe which hear his Voice and obey his Call are poor and mean, and in the World's Eſteem weak and fooliſh, baſe and deſpicable; *God hath choſen fooliſh things to confound the wiſe, and weak things to confound the mighty.* This was verified in the Choice which God made of the Apoſtles, who firſt planted Chriſtianity in the World, and tho' illiterate Fiſhermen, confuted and confounded the Wiſeſt among the Philoſophers; and alſo in the Choice God made of the Primitive Chriſtians, which firſt entertained the Goſpel, who were a poor deſpiſed Company, *Jam.* 2. 5. *Hath not God choſen the poor of the World, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?* This Choice Chriſt thanks his Father for, *Mat.* 11. 25. and the Wiſdom of God therein deſerves our higheſt Admiration; becauſe hereby, (1.) God plainly ſhewed that Chriſtianity needed not Worldly Props to ſupport it, as it was firſt planted and propagated by weak and contemptible Means and Inſtruments, ſo is it ſtill upheld and ſupported without Human Policy or Riches; God can outwit Wiſe Men by Fools, and over-power Mighty Men by thoſe that are Weak, witneſs the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians. (2.) God by this Choice of the weak and fooliſh, of the baſe and deſpiſed, does pour Contempt upon thoſe things which are moſt admired among Men, namely, the internal Endowments of the Mind, ſtrong Reaſon, and ſharpneſs of Wit, and the external Gifts of Providence, Nobility of Birth, Riches and Honours. Lord! What Shame and Confuſion of Face will cover the Noble and Honourable, the Great and Mighty, the Rich and Wealthy, in the coming World, when they ſhall ſee thoſe Poor Chriſtians, whom they deſpiſed for their Poverty, ſcorned for their meanneſs of Parts as unworthy to come into their Preſence, highly exalted in the Favour of God, and proclaim'd the Heirs of his Kingdom; for as here God had more Rent, and better paid him, (as the great Landlord of the World) from many ſmoaky Cottages, than from divers great Palaces, where Perſons wallow in Plenty, and forget God, ſo will God own his faithful, though deſpiſed Servants, at the great Day, and make it evident to Angels and Men, that he *accepteth not the perſon of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor*, but every one that here feared him, and wrought Righteouſneſs, ſhall be accepted of him, and rewarded by him.

30 But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Our Apoſtle had in the foregoing Verſes acquainted the *Corinthians* how low and deſpicable their outward Condition was in this World; he tells them the World looked upon them as *weak* and *fooliſh*, and as ſuch deſpiſed and diſdained them, but as a ſuperabundant Recompence for the deſpicable meanneſs of their outward Condition, he tells them what they are in Chriſt Jeſus, how rich they are as Chriſtians, that Chriſt is made unto them *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification*, and *redemption*. *Obſerve here*, (1.) An Enumeration of the believing Chriſtian's Privileges, received by virtue of his Intereſt in Chriſt, and Union with him, and they are, *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification* and *redemption*; to relieve us againſt our Ignorance and Blindneſs, he is *our wiſdom*, the Fountain of Divine Illumination, enabling us to ſee both our Sin and Danger; to diſcharge us from the Burthen of our Guilt, and Obnoxiouſneſs to Divine Wrath, he is *our righteouſneſs*, the Author of Juſtification, procuring for us Remiſſion of Sin, and Acceptance with God; to free us from the Pollution and Power of Sin, he is *our ſanctification*, purging us by his Spirit, as well as pardoning by his Blood, coming both by Water and Blood into our Souls; and to ſet us at Liberty from Captivity, and Thraldom to Sin and Satan, and the Law, he is made *our redemption*, that is, the Bleſſed Author of a beloved Redemption, not from *Egyptian* Bondage, or *Babyloniſh* Captivity, but from the Dominion of Sin and Servitude of Satan, from the Wrath of God, from the Curſe of the Law, from the Danger and Dread of Death. *Learn hence*, That God hath ſtored up in Chriſt all that we want, a ſuitable and full Supply for every Need, and made it communicable to us; he is our Wiſdom, our Righteouſneſs, our Sanctification and Redemption, our All in All, our All in the want of All. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Method, Way, and Manner by and after which Believers come to be inveſted with, and made Partakers of theſe Glorious Privileges, *Chriſt of God is made unto us*; this denotes, (1.) That Chriſt with all his Benefits becomes ours by a ſpecial and effectual Application; he *is made unto us*. (2.) That this Application of Chriſt is the Work of God, and not of Man; of God he *is made unto us*. *Learn hence*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all the precious Fruits and invaluble Benefits of his Death, becomes ours by God's ſpecial and effectual Application. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Reaſon here aſſigned why the whole Oeconomy of Grace is put into the Hand of Chriſt, why all is communicated by him, and derived from him, namely, that all Saints Glorying may be in him, and not in themſelves; *That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence, but as it is written, let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord*, ver. 29. 31. Infinite Wiſdom and Sovereign Pleaſure has center'd all Grace in Chriſt, it has pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell, and the Fulneſs that is in him is a Miniſterial Fulneſs, it dwells in him on purpoſe to diſpenſe to us according as our Exigencies do require, and our Faith derive; for *of him are we in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, he that gloried may glory in the Lord.*

CHAP. II.

1 AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God.

Our Apoſtle had in the foregoing Chapter declared how Chriſt had ſent him to Preach the Goſpel in the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it, *not with the wiſdom of words*, ver. 17. that is, not in a pompous and flouriſhing way and manner of Preaching, mingling the Simplicity of the Goſpel with Human Wiſdom; accordingly in this Verſe he tells them, that when, purſuant to his Commiſſion, he came and preached to them at *Corinth*, he *came not with excellency of Speech*, that is, he ſtudied not to gratify their Curioſity with Rhetorical Strains, or Philoſophical Niceties, to pleaſe their wanton Wits, but ſolidly to inform their Judgments with the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and to furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt Arguments and Motives for a good Life. This is Preaching: but had he came with Human Wiſdom, this would have detracted, (1.) From the Excellency of the Goſpel, which, like the Sun, ſhines beſt with its own Beams; Scripture-Eloquence is moſt piercing and demonſtrative, and convinceth a Man by its own Evidence; Human Wiſdom charms the Ear, but this ſtrikes the Conſcience. (2.) It would have detracted from the Glory of God, which is more honoured by the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, than by the Luxuriances of Wit, or the moſt admired Oratory in the World; all Human Wiſdom muſt be denied when it comes in Competition with, or ſtands in Oppoſition to the Doctrine of the Goſpel. *Obſerve farther*, The Title given to the Goſpel which he Preached amongſt them in ſo much Plainneſs and Simplicity; he ſtiles it the *teſtimony of God*. *Where note*, That the Teſtimony of the Apoſtles concerning Chriſt his Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, is called the *teſtimony of God*, becauſe God teſtified and bore witneſs to the Truth of theſe Doctrines by Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Heb.* 2. 4.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.

That is, I determined not to diſcover to you, or diſplay before you the Eloquence and Wiſdom of the *Greeks*, or to give you any other Knowledge, but that of a crucified Saviour, which alas! is to them Fooliſhneſs; yet muſt not theſe Words be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively, not as if the Apoſtle did abſolutely deſpiſe or contemn all other Study and Knowledge, much leſs villifie true Philoſophy, Logick, or Oratory, for all Knowledge is uſeful to him that knows how to refer it to right Ends, and God has made nothing knowable in vain; but that all other Knowledge, without the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, is inſignificant and ineffectual. *Note here*, (1.) The Subject Matter of St. *Paul*'s Study and Preaching, it was *Jeſus Chriſt*; not *Jewiſh* Traditions, not the *Gentiles* Philoſophy, but him *in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*. *Note*, (2.) The ſpecial Relation in which our Apoſtle choſe to Study and Preach Jeſus Chriſt, and that was, as *crucified*; Chriſt above all other Subjects, and Chriſt crucified above all other Conſiderations, becauſe Chriſt crucified was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* Fooliſhneſs; Human Wiſdom deſpiſed the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, but the Apoſtle made them the Subject of his Study, and the Scope of his Preaching. *Learn hence*, (1.) That as all of Chriſt, ſo more eſpecially his Death in all the Myſteries of it, ought to be the principal Subject of a Chriſtian's Study and Knowledge. *Learn*, (2.) That as there is no Doctrine more excellent in itſelf, ſo none more neceſſary to be Preached than the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. Oh let Miniſters then preach, and by Preaching prepare their People to receive the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified; and let both Miniſters and People count all Things but Droſs in Compariſon of that Excellency which is in the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

3 And I was with you in weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle declares that his Perſon was ſuitable to his Preaching, both plain, neither pompous; 2 *Cor.* 10. he tells us, *That his bodily preſence was weak and mean, and his ſpeech contemptible.* Tradition tells us, that *Paul*, (according as his Name ſignifies) was a Man of a very little Stature, his Voice ſmall, and wanting that Preſence which ſome others had. *Obſerve*, (2.) Some Pain that the Apoſtle was in, fearing leſt the Infirmity of his Fleſh ſhould render him as a Miniſter deſpicable in the Eyes of any, or the Courſe of the Goſpel be hindered and obſtructed by his Bodily Infirmities; for this was he with them *in fear, and much trembling*. Nothing doth ſo much affect and afflict the Miniſters of Chriſt as an Apprehenſion and Fear leſt any thing in or from themſelves ſhould obſtruct or hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel which they Preach; it is ſad when our People take occaſion, either from our Poverty or mean Appearance, to deſpiſe our Meſſage, or from any natural Imperfections found with us, but much ſadder, when ſuch Moral Blemiſhes are found with us as do render us the Occaſion of our own Contempt, and the Cauſe of our Miniſtry's unſucceſsfulneſs.

4 And my ſpeech, and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of mans wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the ſpirit, and of power: 5 That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.

Here our Apoſtle goes on, declaring after what manner he did, and did not, Preach the Goſpel of Chriſt to the *Corinthians*. *Note*, (1.) How he did not Preach unto them; he tells us, that *his preaching was not with enticing words of Man's wiſdom*; that is, his Preaching was not garniſhed with Human Eloquence, did not conſiſt in Rhetorical Proofs, was not accompanied with the witty Inſinuations of Artificial Learning, which pleaſes the Ear, but affects not the Heart; thereſore the Apoſtles did, like Rhetoricians and Orators, polliſh their Diſcourſe with an affected Curioſity and Exactneſs of Language, but although they came in plainneſs, yet not in rudeneſs of Speech; our Apoſtle's Preaching at *Corinth* was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable: With what Brevity, without Darkneſs? With what Gravity, without Affectation? With what natural Eloquence, without meretricious Ornament, were St. *Paul's* Diſcourſes? A Miniſter's Words ought not to be *Inflantia*, but *Inflammantia*, not high-ſwelling, but Heart-inflaming Words. *Note.* (2.) How the Apoſtle did Preach unto the *Corinthians*, namely, *in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power*, that is, the Doctrine which he Preached was accompanied with, and confirmed by the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, to convince them that Jeſus was riſen from the Dead, and was made Lord of all, whom therefore they ought to believe and obey; he did not go about to bewitch Men with Eloquence, nor to entangle their Minds by ſubtil Reaſonings, but he offered to Men a ſenſible Proof and Demonſtration of the Truth of what he delivered in thoſe ſtrange and miraculous Operations, to which he was enabled by the Holy Ghoſt; this Demonſtration of the Spirit accompanying the Preaching of the Word we are not now to expect, but the Miniſtry of the Word is ſtill attended with a Divine Power of the Spirit, enlightning the Underſtanding, and perſwading the Conſcience, which may be called a Demonſtration of the Spirit, becauſe the Evidence of Truth is no longer diſputed or contradicted, but the Underſtanding aſſents to the Word as true, and the Will embraces it as good. *Note*, (3.) The Reaſon aſſigned by the Apoſtle why he Preached the Goſpel in and after this plain and inartificial manner, namely, *That their faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of Men, but in the power of God*; that is, that your Faith or Belief of the Goſpel ſhould not ſeem to be obtained by Human Wiſdom and Eloquence, but be aſcribed to a Divine Power, influencing ſuch weak Means as my plain Preaching was amongſt you; it is the Praiſe of Omnipotency to work by Improbabilities, God delights to do great things by weak and unlikely Means, knowing that the weakneſs of the Inſtrument redounds to the greater Honour of himſelf, the principal Agent. Human Faith is an Aſſent to any thing credible, as credible upon the infallible Teſtimony of the Man it is founded upon, and reſolved into the Authority of the Speaker: but Divine Faith is an Aſſent to any thing credible, as credible upon the infallible Teſtimony of God, and is grounded on and reſolved into the Evidence of Divine Revelation. Upon this Foot ſtood the *Corinthians* Faith, *not in the wiſdom of Men, but in the power of God.*

6 Howbeit we ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. 7 But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, *even* the hidden *wiſdom* which God had ordained before the world unto our glory.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds in diſcourſing to the *Corinthians* of the Excellency of his Miniſtry among them, to obviate the Contempt which ſome might caſt upon it for want of Human Eloquence, Sublimity of Learning, and Accurateneſs of Speech; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, tho' the Wiſe Men of the World accounted me a Fool, and my Preaching Fooliſhneſs, yet I ſpeak the higheſt *wiſdom among them that are perfect*, or fully inſtructed in the Principles of the Chriſtian Faith; although the Diſcourſe of the ableſt Miniſters of the Goſpel ſeem jejune and dry to Carnal Hearts, yet they have an excellency of Wiſdom and depth of Judgment in them, which Spiritual and Judicious Chriſtians do own and acknowledge. *Here obſerve*, (1.) The Title which the Apoſtle gives to the Goſpel of Chriſt, which he Preached: he ſtiles it *the wiſdom of God, the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world was*; *the wiſdom of God*, becauſe it makes Men truly wiſe, wiſe to Salvation, directing us to uſe the beſt Means in order to the beſt and higheſt End; *and the hidden myſterious wiſdom of God*, becauſe it lay hid in the ſecret Counſels of God from all Eternity, and afterwards lay hid under *Jewiſh* Types, but is now revealed by the Miniſtry of Chriſt and his Holy Apoſtles; revealed in due time *to our glory*, that is, to be the Means of our Happineſs and Glory: The gracious Purpoſe and Deſign of God in the Recovery of a loſt World to Happineſs and Glory by the Death and Sufferings of his dear and only Son, was ſo myſterious and ſurprizing, that it could never have entred the Thoughts of Men or Angels, had not God himſelf diſcovered it by the Revelation of the Goſpel. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Compariſon which the Apoſtle makes betwixt the Wiſdom of the Goſpel and the Wiſdom of this World; *the wiſdom of this world, and of the princes of the world, comes to nought.* By the Wiſdom of the World underſtand the Wiſdom of the Heathen *Gentile* World, the Learning of their admired Philoſophers, all which *comes to nought*; that is, it is of no ſignificancy at all in order to the beſt and higheſt End, the Salvation of the Soul; Chriſtianity, or the Knowledge of the Goſpel, is the beſt Knowledge, the trueſt and higheſt Wiſdom; 'tis the beſt Knowledge, becauſe it contains the Knowledge of God and our Duty, which is the moſt excellent, the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful Knowledge; and it is the trueſt Wiſdom, becauſe it is to be wiſe for our ſelves, and to be wiſe as to our chief Intereſt; it propounds to us the nobleſt End, to wit, the Glory of God, and our Souls Salvation; and it directs us to uſe the beſt, the ſureſt and wiſeſt Means for the certain obtaining of that End.

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

That is, which Divine Wiſdom, neither *Caiphas*, nor *Herod*, nor *Pontius Pilate*, nor any of the *Jewiſh* or *Gentile* Rulers, did underſtand. *Where note*, The Apoſtle calls the Learned Rabbies the admir'd Philoſophers among the Heathen, the Celebrated Doctors among the *Jews* he ſtiles them *Princes*, but preſently adds a diminutive Term, which darkens all their Glory, he ſtiles them *the princes of this world*, utterly unacquainted with the Wiſdom of the other World. *Obſerve farther*, What a clear and full Proof the Apoſtle gives of their Ignorance of this Divine Wiſdom which the Goſpel reveals, *had they known it*, that is, practically known it, ſo as to believe it, to be influenced and perſwaded by it, *they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* *Note here*, (1.) A Royal Title given to Chriſt, *The Lord of Glory.* There belongs to him, (1.) An Eſſential Glory, as God, which is unſpeakable, yea, inconceivable, Phil. 2. 6. *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; that is, to have a peerage or equality with his Father in Glory. (2.) A Mediatorial Glory, as Head of the Church, which conſiſts in that fulneſs of Grace which is inherent in him, and in that Dignity and Authority which is put upon him. (3.) A Paſſive Glory, (as ſome Divines call it) or a Glory which ſhall to all Eternity be given to him by his redeemed Ones, by Saints and Angels, upon the Account of his Mediatorial Work, *Rev.* 5. *Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory, and honour and worſhip*, for he hath redeemed us, &c. *Note*, (2.) The Indignity offered to this Glorious Perſon, *they crucified him*, they nailed him to an ignominious Croſs, and put him to Death, as the vileſt Criminal, as the greateſt Malefector. *Note*, (3.) The Cauſe of this Indignity, and that was Ignorance, *had they known they would not have crucified*; that is, had the Princes of this World known, either who Chriſt was, or the Work which he came about, they would not have crucified him, but adored him. But was their Ignorance of Chriſt a ſufficient Excuſe for crucifying of him? In no wiſe, becauſe it was not an invincible, but a wilful Ignorance; they had ſufficient Means of Inſtruction, by which they might have come to the Knowledge of him, and of their Duty to him, but they cloſed their Eyes, and would not ſee.

9 But as it is written, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God had prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his ſpirit: for the ſpirit ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? Even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the ſpirit of God.

Theſe Words, *Eye hath not ſeen*, &c. do not immediately reſpect the Happineſs of Heaven, and a future State, tho' very often they are ſo applied, but they are primarily ſpoken of the Goſpel State, and of the Bleſſings to be enjoyed by them that love God here: from whence a good Argument may be drawn to prove the inconceivable Happineſs of the Saints hereafter. Tho' they have felt and taſted Joys unſpeakable and full of of Glory in the Actings of their Faith and Love upon God at preſent, yet all that they have ſeen and heard, all that they have taſted and felt in the way of Heaven, falls infinitely ſhort of the Perfection and Bleſſedneſs of that Place and State. Lord! how will thy immediate Preſence, when we come into it, be a great Surprize to thoſe of us, that have now the greateſt Acquaintance with it? *Obſerve farther*, The Care and Kindneſs of God towards his Servants, in revealing to them by his Spirit thoſe great and good things prepared for them, which ſurpaſs Man's Underſtanding. Tho' *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet God has revealed them to us by his ſpirit.* There is a twofold Revelation of the Happineſs of a future State. *Revelatio fidei*, and *Revelatio Viſionis*, a Revelation of Faith, and a Revelation by Viſion and Sight; the former Believers have by the help of the Holy Spirit in this Life, as *Viatores*, the latter they ſhall e'er long enjoy in Heaven, as *Comprehenſores*, where they ſhall ſee as they are ſeen, and know as they are known. *Obſerve laſtly*, That the Holy Spirit, which thus revealeth hidden Counſels to Man, and ſearcheth the deep things of God, is Omniſcient, and really God. *Mark*, (1.) *He ſearcheth deep things*, he is not only acquainted with and privy to the ſurface and outſide of things, but ſearcheth things to the bottom. And, (2.) He ſearcheth not only the deep things of Man, as of Kings and Princes, whoſe Hearts are a great Deep, but the deep things of God: therefore the Spirit is God; for as the Apoſtle argues, *v.* 11. *No man knoweth of the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of a man, that is in him, even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the ſpirit of God*, or he that is with God, in God, yea, God himſelf, as intimate with him as the Soul is in the Body. If the Spirit that is in Man were not Man, it could never know the deep things of Man, and if the Spirit of God were not God, he could never ſearch and know the deepeſt things of God.

12 Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
13 Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the holy ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle declares what Spirit they had not received, namely, the Spirit of the World; *we have not received the ſpirit of the World*: that is, the Spirit which ſuggeſts wordly Wiſdom, and ſavours only worldly things, which acts and influences only worldly Men; in the whole Generation of worldly Men there is the ſame wordly Spirit, and this Spirit of the World is an Earthly Spirit, it is a low, a little and narrow Spirit; Earthly things, which are preſent and viſible, ſuch a Soul gapes after, and graſps hard, but future and inviſible things, which are far off, and out of ſight, are neither believed nor ſought after. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Apoſtle declares what Spirit they had received, namely, *the ſpirit which is of God*, and of what uſe that Holy Spirit is unto them, it teaches them *to know the things which are freely given them of God*; that is, the Holy Spirit ſheweth us both what God is, and what the things of God are; we are enlightned with the Knowledge of that Grace and Goodneſs of God which is diſcovered to us in the Goſpel, we know both Divine Myſteries and Divine Mercies, both what God hath done for us, and what he hath wrought in us, which are *the things that are freely given us of God*. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Apoſtle declares how he Preached of theſe Spiritual things after a Spiritual manner, *not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the holy ghoſt teacheth*; that is, not in the Words, and after the manner now counted by the *Gentile* Philoſophers to be Learned and Wiſe, but in the very Words and after the very Manner which the Spirit of God teacheth us. ***Where learn***, That the Holy Apoſtle ſpake and writ by the immediate Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as the Prophets of old Time, and delivered nothing as from God but what God revealed to them by his Holy Spirit; and accordingly ſome interpret thoſe Words, *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*; that is, ſay they, comparing the things which were writ by the Spirit in and under the Old Teſtament with what is now revealed to us under the New.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know *them*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Subject ſpoken of the Natural Man, not σαρκικὸς, the Senſual, but ψυχικὸς, the Animal Man, who acts only by Principles of Human Reaſon and Worldly Wiſdom, who, tho' well furniſhed with Intellectual and Moral Improvements, is yet deſtitute of the enlightning Spirit and the renewing Grace of God. *Obſerve*, (2.) What is here affirmed of the Natural Man, with reference to Spiritual things. (1.) That he receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. (2.) That he cannot know them. *Where note*, That it is not ſaid that he knoweth not the things of God, but *the things of the ſpirit of God*, for there are ſome things of God which a Natural Man may know, but *the things of the ſpirit of God*, as Truths purely Evangelical, theſe he receiveth not, neither in his Underſtanding, nor in his Will. *Note farther*, It is not barely ſaid that he doth not, but that he cannot know them; natural Reaſon alone, by what Helps ſoever aſſiſted and improved, is altogether inſufficient, without Spiritual Illumination, to apprehend Supernatural and Evangelical Truth, not but that the Spirit of God in the Work of Illumination and Converſion makes uſe of our Reaſon; that Flower of the Soul if not blaſted, but more opened by the blowing of the bleſſed Spirit; Chriſtianity doth not command us to throw away our Reaſon, but to ſubjugate it, not to deny or diſown our Reaſon, but to captivate it to the Obedience of Faith; but the Senſe of the Apoſtle is, that a Perſon of the moſt exquiſite natural Accompliſhments, and one that has improv'd his Reaſon to the higheſt pitch, cannot behold Evangelical Myſteries in their proper Light, or embrace them in their Verity and Beauty, without the ſuperadded Aids and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Reaſons declared why the Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit; *becauſe they are fooliſhneſs unto him*; that is, he accounts them Fooliſhneſs when propounded to him, becauſe he doth not ſee them proved from Principles of natural Reaſon, and by Philoſophical Deductions, which is the only Wiſdom that he ſeeks after; the Reaſon alſo is added why *he cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; that is, the Natural Man cannot know Divine things by that Wiſdom which he alone will be conducted by, and Spiritual things muſt be ſpiritually diſcerned, for being Myſteries they are not knowable by Human Reaſon, but by Spiritual Revelation; and if the Wiſdom of the World, that is, the learned and wiſeſt Men in the World, were thus unable by the ſharpeſt Light of Reaſon to diſcover Evangelical Myſteries, Lord! how endearing are our Obligations for the Benefit of Supernatural Revelation, whereby the hidden Wiſdom of God is made known unto us.

15 But he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Altho' *the natural Man*, who acteth only by Principles of Human Reaſon, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know them by any ſtudy of his own*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, yet *he that is ſpiritual*, that is, he who hath the Revelation and Illumination of the Spirit of God, judgeth, or diſcerneth, and trieth all things, that is, all Spiritual Matters, yet he himſelf is judged of no Man, that is, diſcerned by none who hath no higher Principle than that of Nature to diſcern things by. *Learn thence*, That ſuch Chriſtians as are enlightned and renewed with, guided and conducted by the Holy Spirit of God, are the only proper Judges of Spiritual Matters, able to underſtand their Duty, and to diſcern between Good and Evil. *He that is ſpiritual judgeth all things.*

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may inſtruct him? But we have the mind of Chriſt.

That is, what Man, without Divine Revelation and Spiritual Illumination, ever knew or underſtood the Mind of God ſo well as to be able to inſtruct, direct and inform the Spiritual Man about it; but we who are Spiritual have the Mind of Chriſt, and ſo are able to diſcern and direct, to guide and inſtruct others about it. *Learn hence*, That none are fit and ſufficient to interpret the Mind of God unto others who are not acquainted with it themſelves; *we have the mind of Chriſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle of himſelf and his Fellow-Labourers in the Goſpel, his meaning is not only this, that they had the Mind of Chriſt written in a Book, but that they had a clear Underſtanding of it, and ſo were fitted to interpret it to others. There is no ſuch Knowledge as the Knowledge of Experience, no Teaching like unto experimental Teaching.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle having, in the firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle, reproved the Corinthians *for their Contentions and Diviſions, for the Factions and Parties which were found amongſt them; in this Chapter he returns to his former Argument, and ſhews what a Scandal their Diſſentions were to Religion, and a Reproach unto themſelves.*

1 AND I brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Chriſt.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, My Brethren, Although I ſpeak the higheſt Wiſdom amongſt them that are perfect, yet could not I ſpeak to you as unto ſpiritual Perſons, but as unto carnal, becauſe the Works of the Fleſh, are found with you, and at the beſt you are but Babes in Chriſt. *Learn hence*, that even amongſt thoſe who are true and real Members of the viſible Church, ſome are ſpiritual, ſome are carnal, ſome are Men, ſome are Babes. The Apoſtle doth not call them abſolutely carnal, as if they were wholly given up to the Works of the Fleſh; but comparatively ſo, having to much Carnality and Corruption in them, and ſavouring too much of the Fleſh tho' for the main truly pious: and therefore he uſes the Word *As* for Mitigation ſake; I could not ſpeak unto you, but *As* unto carnal.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

With milk, that is, with eaſie and common Truths; not with the myſterious Parts of Goſpel-knowledge, with the firſt Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and not with the higher Doctrines of Chriſtianity, which neither then nor now are ye able to bear, *Learn hence*, That it is great Prudence and Wiſdom in the Miniſters of Chriſt to inſtruct People in the firſt Principles of Religion, in order to their regular advancing higher in Chriſtianity, Miniſters are ſpiritual Nurſes, they muſt firſt feed with Milk, then with Meat, otherwiſe they will not nouriſh, but deſttoy,

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying and ſtrife, and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

That is, ye are in a great meaſure carnal; for your Envy, Strife, and Diviſions, proves you to be ſo, and that you live according to the Corrupt Nature of Man: They had the Seed and Root of Grace abiding, and yet the Relicks of Corruption remaining in them: There is a vaſt difference between weak Grace and no Grace, between the Preſence of Sin and the Power of Sin. But how could the Apoſtle here call the *Corinthians* carnal, and Babes in Chriſt, when in Ch. 1. Ver. 5. he affirmed that they were *enriched with all knowledge and utterance*. *Anſw.* That might be true as to ſome particular Perſons amongſt them, who had thoſe extraordinary Gifts of Tongues and Miracles given them for the Confirmation of the Goſpel; and yet what is here ſaid to be true, as to the generality of them, that they had too much Carnality and unmortified Corruption remaining in them; *Ye are yet carnal.* *Obſerve next*, what Proof he gives of it, namely, occular Demonſtration; for, ſays he, there are among you *Envying, Strife, and Diviſions*. Envy, as the Root, bears Strife, and Strife breeds Diviſions and Faction. Envy is a peſtilent Luſt, yea a deviliſh Luſt; it makes another's Good our Grief. The Devil envies God and Man their Happineſs: he rejoyces at the Deſtruction of Sinners, though he has no advantage by it; nay, though it increaſeth his Torment, becauſe they were tempted by him to ſin. There is nothing ſo like the Devil as an envious Man, with his cloven Foot, to make diviſion wherever he comes. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Envy is the Cauſe and Companion of Strife. *Learn*, (2.) That Strife and Contention, Differences and Diviſion, are often found in the Churches of Chtiſt and among particular Chriſtians. *Learn*, (3.) That ſo far as theſe prevail in, and amongſt any, it evidences that they are carnal, and walk as Men.

4 For while one ſaith, I am of Paul, another I *am* of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

That is, one ſaith, in oppoſition to another, I am the Diſciple of *Paul*; and another, I follow *Apollos*: and thus, probably, they called themſelves after the Names of their admired Preachers, factiouſly crying up one Miniſter above another. *Hence Learn*, That although it be a Peoples Duty to have a great and high Eſteem of the Miniſters of Chriſt, yet muſt not their Reſpect degenerate into a ſinful Admiration of their Perſons; for the factious affecting of one Miniſter above another, is both ſinful and dangerous. When the Gifts and Abilities of one Miniſter are cryed up to the Contempt of others, it occaſions Enmity and Diſſention amongſt Miniſters themſelves, and their People alſo. *Are ye not carnal, when one ſaith I am of Paul, and another I am of Appollos?* It is added, *Chap.* 1. 12. *And I of Chriſt*. That is, they factiouſly ſaid, they were of or for Chriſt, in oppoſition to his Miniſters. They pretended to the immediate Teachings of Chriſt, and had no need of the Miniſtry either of *Paul* or *Apollos*. *Learn hence*, That although Chriſt only is to be relied upon as Head of his Church, yet it is not his Will we ſhould deſpiſe his Miniſtry, or contemn his Miniſters, under that pretence.

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Neither *Paul* nor *Apollos* were the Authors of your Faith, but only Miniſterial Helpers of it, as God is pleaſed to furniſh them with Gifts, and to give a Bleſſing to their Miniſterial Endeavours. Your Miniſters give out to you, as God gives in to them; and therefore you ought not factiouſly to boaſt of their Gifts, nor to make Parties upon that Account. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Miniſtry of the Word is the inſtituted Means and inſtrumental Cauſe which God has appointed for working Faith in the Hearts of men. (2.) That God has furniſhed his Miniſters with variety of Gifts and Abilities; all which he makes uſe of in order to that end. (3.) That therefore the Miniſters of Chriſt ought neither to be deified nor nullified, neither to be cried up, nor trodden down; We are not efficient Cauſes, but only inſtrumental Means of Faith. Render therefore unto God the Glory of the Author, and unto Miniſters the Honour of the Inſtrument. *Who is* Paul, *and what is* Apollos *but Miniſters?*

6 I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increaſe.

I planted: That is, I firſt preached the Goſpel among you, and firſt inſtructed you in the Principles of Chriſt. I converted you to Chriſt; after me came *Apollos*, and watered the Seed which I had ſown: but God it was, and God alone that cauſed the Seed which I ſowed, and *Apollos* watered, to fructifie and increaſe. *Learn*, (1.) That it is an act of diſcriminating Grace and Favour in God to ſend out his Miniſters to plant the Goſpel amongſt a People that never before heard of it. (2.) That it is an act of farther Favour and Grace in God, to follow a People with a Succeſſion of Miniſters, in order to the watering of the Seed formerly ſown amongſt them. *Learn*, (3.) That all that Miniſters can do, is but to Plant and Water; they cannot give Increaſe, nor procure the Succeſs of their Miniſterial Endeavours. Bleſſed be God that he doth not require the Succeſs of our Labours at our Hands: Woe unto us, ſhould he ſay, Either Reconcile my People to me, or I will never be Reconciled unto you. Diligence and Endeavour is Ours, the Bleſſing and Succeſs is God's: He will never blame us for not doing his Work.

7 So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaſe.

The Senſe is, neither he that Planteth is to be eſteemed as any thing, nor he that Watereth as any thing, but the Glory of all muſt be aſcribed to God that giveth the Increaſe; yet muſt we underſtand the Apoſtle ſpeaking thus not Abſolutely, but Comparatively, they are not any thing; that is, not any thing of themſelves alone, without the Concurrence of the Spirit; What excellent Gifts ſoever they have they cannot of themſelves make the Word they preach effectual. Lord! How many Souls do find both Miniſtry and Miniſters to be nothing as to them? If it be any thing to purpoſe to any Soul, 'tis God, and not his Miniſters, that make it ſo. The beſt and ableſt Miniſtry is nothing to any Saving-purpoſe, without God's Power giving the Increaſe.

8 Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one: And every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

He that Planteth, and he that Watereth, are one; that is, in their Deſign and Scope, in the Aim and End of their Miniſtry; therefore they ſhould not be factiouſly divided, either among themſelves, or by their Hearers. Although there is Variety and Diverſity in the Gifts of Chriſt's Miniſters, yet the Intent and Deſign of their Miniſtry being one, they all ought to agree as One. They ſhould be One in Doctrine, and One in Affection, aiming at one and the ſame Mark; namely, the Glory of God, and Men's Salvation, as they are One in their Office, Inſtitution and End. It follows, *Every Man ſhall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour.* *Thence Learn*, That every Man, eſpecially every Miniſter, is ſure to receive a proportionable Reward hereafter, according to his Labour and Working for God here. *Learn* (2.) The Appropriation and Diſtinction of this Reward; *He ſhall receive his own Reward*; implying, that there are Degrees of Reward and Glory in Heaven, according as Men have laboured more or leſs for God here on Earth: According to this gradual Diverſity ſhall be gradual Degrees of Glory. *Learn*, (3.) The Meaſure and Rule of this Reward, according to his Labour, not according to his Succeſs; according to his Induſtry, not according to the Fruit of his Miniſtry: If he labours faithfully, God will reward him proportionably, though few or none have believed his Report.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are Gods husbandry, *ye are* Gods building.

Obſerve here, (1.) The honourable Title put upon the Miniſters of God; they are Labourers or Workers together with God. But in what ſenſe are they ſo? *Anſw.* Not ſo as by any Power of their own to produce any Spiritual Effect, as if they without God could work Faith and Repentance in the Hearts of Sinners: But they work only by an external Application of the Miniſtry of the Word, and the Means of Grace to the Souls of Men. They are Under-labourers to God, and God honours them by working by them, and working with them, for the Converſion of Men. *Obſerve*, (2.) The honourable Relation in which the Church ſtands to God; the Church and People of God, they are his Husbandry, and his Building: *Ye are God's Husbandry, ye are God's Building*: which Phraſe implies, (1.) Power and Goodneſs in making them ſo: A Building is not of itſelf, nor is a Field clothed with goodly Corn of itſelf. (2.) It implies Dominion, and abſolute Sovereignty: The Maſter is the Orderer of the Houſe, and the Husbandman the Diſpoſer of his Ground. (3.) It denotes Propriety and Intereſt, that we are not our own, but God's. The Houſe is the Owner's, not its own. God is theirs, and all that God has is theirs alſo.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wiſe maſter builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildteh thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Character which St. *Paul* aſſumes to himſelf; namely, that of a *Maſter-builder*, yea, of *a wiſe Maſter-builder*. But was it not vain glorious in the Apoſtle thus to deſcribe himſelf? Is not Chriſt the great and wiſe Maſter-Builder of his Church? Yes, undoubtedly: But the Apoſtles were Inſtruments in his Hand, which he honour'd with Succeſs; for which reaſon St. *Paul* thus ſpeaks. *Learn hence*, That in ſome Caſes it is not Vain-glory, but a neceſſary Duty, for the Miniſters of Chriſt to magnify their Work and Office received from Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) The ſpecial Work perform'd by St. *Paul* the wiſe Maſter-builder, *he laid the Foundation*; that is, he firſt acquainted them with the Rudiments and Fundamental Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, which they had never heard of before, *Learn thence*, That it a ſpecial part of Divine Wiſdom in a Miniſter to lay at firſt a good Foundation of Scripture-knowledge in the Minds and Underſtandings of his People. Unleſs we have a knowing People, we are not like to have a gracious People. All our Sermons will be daſh'd to pieces upon the Rock of our Peoples Ignorance, if they be not well Chatechis'd and Inſtructed in the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity. *Obſ.* (3.) How very careful our Apoſtle is to aſcribe all his Strength, his Aſſiſtance and Succeſs, as a Maſter-builder, to the Grace of God, *According to the Grace of God given to me.* *Learn thence*, That it is the property of every godly Man, much more of every gracious Miniſter, to attribute all that Good which is either receiv'd or done by him, to the Grace of God. What Man ever receiv'd more Grace from God, or did more Service for God, than St. *Paul*? And ſo enlarg'd is he upon all Occaſions in magnifying the Grace of God, that he is never ſatisfy'd in exalting of it; *Not I, but the Grace of God that was with me*, &c. *Obſ.* (4.) The cautionary Direction given by St. *Paul* to all ſucceeding Miniſters of Chriſt, to take heed that they lay no other Foundation than what was laid by him; and that they build ſuitably upon that Foundation; *Let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereon.* *Learn thence*, That the Miniſters of Chriſt are to take eſpecial care that they preach no other Doctrine than what Chriſt and his Apoſtles preach'd, and laid the Foundation of Chriſtianity; and that they do not build upon that Foundtion any Doctrines which may endanger their own or their Peoples Salvation. *I have laid the Foundation, and let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

11 For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

That is, no other true Foundation can any Man lay, than that which is already laid by me; namely, the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and Faith in him. The Miniſters of Chriſt ought to lay no other Foundation than Chriſt: They are to lead their People to, and build them upon no other Rock but Chriſt. All Threatnings, Promiſes, Commands, Duties, Privileges, are to be preach'd, and preſs'd with reſpect to Jeſus Chriſt; He is to be laid as the only Foundation in reſpect of Knowledge, in reſpect of Faith, in reſpect of Juſtification, in reſpect of Interceſſion and Acceptation with God. The Miniſter's great Work is to ſet Chriſt forth in all his Glorious Fullneſs, to repreſent him in all his Offices, as a Glorious Object for the Eye of our Faith to look unto, and fix upon.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation,
gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, wood, hay, ſtubble:
13 Every mans work ſhall be made manifeſt. For
the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed
by fire, and the fire ſhall try every mans work of
what ſort it is. 14 If any mans work abide which
he hath built thereupon, he ſhall receive a reward.
15 If any mans work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer
loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved; yet ſo as by fire.

In theſe Words the Apoſtle ſpeaks of two ſorts of Preachers under the *Metaphor* of Builders. (1.) Some that are Sound and Orthodox, who hold the Foundation, and build upon it *Gold, Silver*, and *precious Stones*; that is, ſuch ſincere and wholſome Doctrine as will bear the Touchſtone and Tryal. (2.) Others that are unſound and erroneous, who hold indeed the Foundation of Chriſtianity, but build upon it ſuch Doctrines as will not bear the Tryal, expreſs'd by Wood, Hay, and Stubble, which are not proof againſt the Fire. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the Truths of the Goſpel, are very excellent, and exceeding precious: compar'd to Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, for their Uſefulneſs and Preciouſneſs. *Learn*, (2.) That all Errors and Falſhoods in Religion, all erroneous and falſe Doctrines, though not fundamental, are yet no better than Hay or Stubble, vain and unprofitable, vile and contemptible. *Obſerve*, (2.) As a two-fold Builder deſcrib'd, ſo a two-fold Event declared: Some Mens Works, that is, their Doctrines and Practices, will abide the Fire, others will be burnt up, and ſuffer Loſs: where, by the Fire, underſtand the Word and Spirit of God. A Probatory, not a Purgatory-Fire, is here intended; becauſe it is ſaid to burn not the Perſon but the Action, and every Action too of every Man. Now the Popiſh Purgatory-Fire tries not all Perſons, ſome are exempted as Martyrs; and not all Actions neither, but wicked ones only; whereas this Fire ſhall try every Man's Work. The meaning is, that the light of God's Word and Spirit will manifeſt the Verity or Vanity, the Soundneſs or Falſeneſs of Doctrines delivered by all Preachers. Sound Doctrine, that, like good Metal, will endure the Furnace, ſhall be rewarded; but ſuch Doctrines as will not endure the Tryal, ſhall miſs of the Reward. *Learn hence*, (1.) That all the ways and works of Wickedneſs in general, and all hidden and ſecret ways of falſe Doctrine in particular, God will one Day reveal and make manifeſt; *Every Man's Work ſhall be made manifeſt; for the Day ſhall declare it. Learn*, (2.) That the true and ſincere Doctrine of the Goſpel is firm and durable, and ſuch as will abide the cloſeſt Tryal; yea, and will grow more illuſtrious and glorious thereby. *Learn* (3.) That Men may hold the Foundation, and maintain the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, and yet may ſo ſuperſtruct upon it, and ſuperadd ſo many things unto it, whereby they may greatly endanger their own and others Salvation: *They ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by Fire*; that is, with great Difficulty, having expos'd themſelves to the utmoſt Hazard and Danger. The Speech is proverbial, and ſignifies both the greatneſs of the Danger, and the difficulty of eſcaping it; intimating, that Errors in Judgment endanger a Perſon's Salvation as well as Ungodlineſs in Practice. He that has a due care of his Soul's Salvation, will be as well afraid of erroneous Principles, as he is of debauch'd Practices: For Error is as damnable as Vice; the one is an open Road, the other a By-path to Hell and Deſtruction.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the ſpirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy: For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

Our Apoſtle here, in the Judgment of ſome Interpreters, makes uſe of a farther Argument to convince the *Corinthians* of the Evil of their Diviſions. They are the Church and Temple of God, therefore not to be prophan'd by Diviſions; *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, You *Corinthians*, by being Converted to Chriſtianity, are become a Chriſtian Church, an holy Temple, in which the Spirit of God doth dwell, and where the Spirit of Diviſion ought not to dwell; for if any Man defile the Temple of God, by dividing the Church into Factions and Parties, him will God deſtroy; for the Temple of the Lord is holy, and not to be prophan'd by your dividing Luſts, which Temple ye are. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the People of God met together to worſhip him, are the Church or Spiritual Temple of God. (2.) That the Spirit of God dwells in the Church or Temple of God; and this dwelling implies Propriety, Familiarity, Authority, Reſidency and Fixedneſs of abode. *Learn*, (3.) That ſuch as defile the holy Temple of God, either by factious Diviſions, or erroneous Doctrines, do provoke God to deſtroy them; that is, to puniſh them with temporal Deſtruction; and, without Repentance, with eternal Damnation: *If any Man defile the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy.*

18 Let no man deceive himſelf: if any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe. 19 For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God: for it is written, he taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs. 20 And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vain.

Obſerve here, (1.) A Word of Caution; *Let no Man deceive himſelf.* Self-deceit is the ground of all other Deceit. Whatever Deceit is abroad, it begins at home. A deceitful Heart will not ſo much as ſpare itſelf; although this Self-deceit be moſt unnatural and monſtrous, moſt fatal and pernicious. *Obſerve*, (2.) A Word of Exhortation. *If any Man ſeem to be wiſe, let him become a Fool, that he may be wiſe*: That is, If any Man ſeem to be wiſe in the Wiſdom and Learning of this World, let him embrace the Doctrine of Chriſt, which the World calls Fooliſhneſs, and ſo become a Fool to them, that he may be wiſe according to the Wiſdom of God. *Learn hence*, That all human and worldly Wiſdom cometh far ſhort of, and is but a meer Shadow and Appearance compar'd with the Wiſdom of God manifeſted in the Goſpel. *Obſerve*, (3.) A Word of Inforcement; *For the Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God.* 'Tis ſo in God's Opinion and Eſtimation; he accounts it ſo. If we compare Wit with Grace, Learning with Religion, a rational Head with a gracious Heart, the latter infinitely tranſcends the former in the Account of God. All the admir'd Wiſdom of worldly Men, is nothing but contemptible Folly in the Eſteem of God. The World's Wiſe Man is God's Fool. *Obſ.* (4.) A double Teſtimony which the Apoſtle produces out of the Old Teſtament to prove his Aſſertion, that the Wiſdom of the World is Fooliſhneſs with God. The firſt is out of *Job* 5. 13. *He taketh the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs. Learn thence*, That no Wiſdom or Craftineſs of Man can ſtand before the Wiſdom and Power of God. The ſecond Teſtimony is taken out of *Pſal.* 94. 11. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men, that they are vain*; that is, the choiceſt and beſt Thoughts of the wiſeſt Men are vain, yea, Vanity.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours; 23 And ye *are* Chriſts, and Chriſt *is* Gods.

Here the Apoſtle cloſes his Diſcourſe with an Inference, not to glory in any Teacher whatſoever, either in *Paul* or *Apollos* or *Cephas*, ſeeing they were all theirs; that is, all the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt, from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the greateſt to the leaſt, and all their Miniſterial Gifts and Labours, are all ordain'd and appointed by God for their Uſe and Service; *All things are yours, whether* Paul *or* Apollos, *or* Cephas. *Learn hence*, That all Miniſters, and Miniſterial Abilities, are wholly for the Church's Service, and Spiritual Advantage; all their Power is for the Church's Preſervation, all their Gifts are for the Church's Edification. Their Meſſage is for the Church's Comfort and Conſolation. Thus all Things in, and belonging to the Church, are ours; next he mentions the Things of the World as ours. *Or the World*; That is, all the good Things in the World are ours, Houſes, Lands, Honours, Friends, Relations, ſo far as God ſees them good for them. But are there not many that are Chriſt's, who want Houſes and Friends, and other Comforts, how then can they be ſaid to have them? *Anſw.* (1.) They have all Things eminently and tranſcendently in God and Chriſt, by whom they have a Title to all Things, *Rev.* 21. 7. (2.) They have all Things vertually in their Contentment and Satisfaction of Mind which they do enjoy. (3.) They have all Things eventually; they have the good of all Things, when they have not the actual Poſſeſſion of all Things; their very Wants in the Event work for Good. *Or Life*; This is ours two ways, The Comfort of Life is ours, and the End of Life is ours, with the true Uſe of it; for the ſincere Chriſtian only Lives to Purpoſe, by anſwering the great End of Life, which is the promoting God's Glory, and ſecuring his own Salvation. *Or Death*; That which is in itſelf ſo Terrible, is for the Believer's Advantage, their Friend, their Privilege, their Paſſage to Heaven, their Deliverer, from Sin, the Perfecter of their Grace; when we come at Heaven, and not till then, we ſhall fully underſtand what this meaneth, *Death is ours. Or Things preſent*; That is, all the Events of Providence which befal us, whether Proſperity or Adverſity, Health or Sickneſs, Riches or Poverty, they are all ſanctify'd to us, and are Inſtrumental for the Sanctifying of us. They are Covenant Bleſſings, and diſpens'd in Love to us. *Or Things to come*; That is, all future Things that may befal us in this World, and in the World to come, ſhall be to our abundant Advantage; whether they be merciful or good Things, or grievous and ſad Things; particularly, Death is to come, but to Dye is Gain, Chriſt's Death was the Death of Death; he has diſarm'd Death of its Sting; the Believer fears not its Dart; it is not a hurting, but an healing Serpent: there is no Venom or Malignity in it; but that which was before in the Number of Threatnings, is now brought within the Compaſs of the Goſpel Promiſes; all Things are ours, Life or Death, Things preſent, and Things to come. *And ye are Chriſt's*; that is; no *Paul*'s, or *Apollo*'s Diſciples or Servants, but only Chriſt's, therefore Glory only in him. Conſecrate all to the Service of Chriſt, and reſign up all to the Will of Chriſt; ye are Chriſt's by Donation, ye are Chriſt's by Redemption, ye are Chriſt's by Conqueſt; ye are therefore to glory in him, and in him only. *And Chriſt is God's*; that is, as you are Chriſt's, and for his Glory, ſo Chriſt, as Mediator, is God's, and for his Glory. He is God's Servant, to do his Will, to execute his Pleaſure. He was begotten of his Father before all time. He receiv'd his Doctrine from the Father in the fulneſs of time. He ſought not his own, but his Father's Glory, in the Doctrine which he Preach'd, in the Miracles which he wrought; but lived in an intire Reſignation of his Father's Pleaſure. Lord! How will it ſhame us thy Servants, to follow thy Servant Chriſt, and to be called by his Name; if we ſeek not his Glory, and exalt not his Will, and live not to his Praiſe, who died for us and roſe again.

CHAP. IV.

There are two Extreams which Perſons are very Apt to run into, with Reference to the Miniſters of Chriſt; namely, to Extol, Admire, and even Idolize ſome; and to Depreſs, Undervalue, and even Viliſie others; to Cure the former Evil was the great Deſign and Endeavour of St. Paul *in the foregoing Chapter; to prevent the latter, and to preſerve that due Honour, and keep up that juſt Eſteem which is payable to all Miniſters of Chriſt, is the Deſign and Scope of the Apoſtle in the Chapter before us; and accordingly thus he ſpeaks:*

1 LET a man ſo account of us, as of the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, although I warned you in the foregoing Chapter, againſt an undue Eſteem of your Paſtors, and againſt a factious Preference of ſome before others, to the great Scandal of Religion, and the Prejudice of the Goſpel; yet I ſpeak not this to draw you off from paying that due Honour and deſerved Reſpect which belongs to their Character: But I deſire you to account them all, neither more nor leſs, but *as Miniſters* of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God. *Here obſerve,* (1.) A double Character given of an Evangelical Paſtor. He is, (1.) *A Miniſter of Chriſt*; that is, a Perſon deputed by the command, and inveſted with the Authority of Chriſt to adminiſter in Holy Things, to Preach the Word, Adminiſter the Sacraments, Execute Church Cenſures; being in all things an Example to the Flock; and the People are to account the Office and Work of the Miniſtry as a Divine Inſtitution and Appointment of Chriſt in his Church; whoever ſlights or oppoſes the Miniſtry, flies in the Face of Chriſt himſelf. (2.) He is *a ſteward of the myſteries of God*; and that in a Twofold Reſpect. (1.) They are Stewards of the Truths of God. (2.) Of the Ordinances of God; of the Truths of God are they Stewards, to open and explain them for the Spiritual Edification of all Chriſtians, and to defend and maintain them againſt the Oppoſition of all Adverſaries; God's Stewards muſt not ſuffer Vermin to deſtroy the Proviſion of God's Houſhold; they are Stewards of the Ordinances of God alſo; which they are obliged to diſpenſe in all Faithfulneſs to their Congregations. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. *As every Man hath received the gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame, one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God. Obſerve,* (2.) As the Miniſters of Chriſt deſcribed, they are *Stewards*; ſo the Qualification of a Steward declared, and that is Faithfulneſs; *It is required in ſtewards that a Man be found faithful*; what Ground is there for Truſt, where there is no Truth? Now this Faithfulneſs in our Stewardſhip includes; (1.) Purity of Intention; a pure End in all our Services, will give us abundant of Comfort at the End of our Service. (2.) Sincerity and Integrity of Heart; a faithful Miniſter is a ſincere hearted Miniſter; who Preaches his Sermons firſt to himſelf, and then to his Hearers. (3.) Miniſterial Diligence; a ſlothful Miniſter can never be a faithful Steward; we muſt ſtudy the Truths of God in Paleneſs, Preach them to Faintneſs, maintain and defend them with Stedfaſtneſs; we look for Happineſs from God as long as he is in Heaven, and he expects Faithfulneſs from us as long as we are upon Earth. (4.) Faithfulneſs in Stewardſhip includes Impartiality in all the Adminiſtrations of Chriſt's Houſe; we muſt take the ſame Care of, manifeſt the ſame Love unto, attend with the ſame Diligence upon, the Pooreſt and Meaneſt in our Congregations, as we do the Rich, the Great, and the Honourable; for all our Souls are of one Price, and Rated at one Value in our Lord's Book. O let us take care we be Impartial Stewards, for we muſt ſhortly give an account of our Stewardſhip before an Impartial God.

3 But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment: Yea, I judge not mine own ſelf.

Not as if the Apoſtle was unconcerned, whether the *Corinthians* had a good Eſteem of him, or not; or were regardleſs of his Reputation among Men; but the meaning is, he did not much value himſelf, upon the Opinion and Judgment which any Perſons had of him; knowing that his Caſe would not be finally determined by any Man's Judgment, nor yet by his own; therefore, ſays he. *I judge not my ſelf*; that is, definitively ſo as to Acquieſce in that Judgment; for I may be deceived in my Judgment of my ſelf, therefore I leave my ſelf to the Judgment of God: It is a ſingular Support to all the Members, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; that they and their Actions have a more Righteous Judge to be Examined and tried by than either the World or themſelves; the World's Judgment may falſly condemn them, their own Judgment may flatter and deceive them; but the Judgment of God will deal impartially with them.

4 For I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified: But he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Theſe Words are not to be underſtood Abſolutely and Univerſally, but Relatively and Reſpectively; not as if the Apoſtle knew no Sin himſelf, (for he went Groaning under a Body of Sin to his Grave) but with Reſpect to his Miniſtry, his Conſcience cleared him of all Unfaithfulneſs and Neglect of Duty; *Though I know nothing of* Unfaithfulneſs *by my ſelf, yet am I not thereby juſtified* at God's Tribunal, *for he that judgeth me is the Lord. Note here,* (1.) St. *Paul's* Juſtification of himſelf before Men *he knew nothing of himſelf*; that is, in general; his Conſcience did not accuſe him of any groſs prevaricating with God, and in particular did not Charge him with any Negligence or Uufaithfulneſs, in reſpect of his Office; he had not been an unfaithful Steward of Divine Myſteries, nor guilty of any Crimes that his Adverſaries could Charge him with. *Note,* (2.) His diſclaiming all Juſtification thereby in the ſight of God; *yet am I not thereby juſtified*; his Sincerity did comfort him, but could not juſtifie him. The Righteouſneſs of the holieſt and beſt of Men, is not pleadable before the Righteous and Holy God for Juſtification. *Note,* (3.) The Reaſon given why the Apoſtle did not, durſt not, plead his own Righteouſneſs before God for Juſtification; *for he that judgeth me is the Lord*; as if he had ſaid, were I to appear at Man's Bar, I doubt not but to come off well enough, for none knows me ſo well as my ſelf; but I have to do with an Heart-ſearching God, who knows me better than my ſelf; and when God comes to look over my Work, he will ſpy that which the moſt Eagle-ey'd Perſon cannot ſpy. Therefore there is no ſtanding for me, a Creature, before God, in any Creature-purity; Angelical Perfection is imperfect in his ſight. Angels, tho' they have not the leaſt ſpot of Sin in their Natures, yet are they chargable with Folly; their Nature being potentially ſinful; and the Heavens themſelves are not clear in God's ſight.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts: And then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.

Our Apoſtle's deſign in theſe Words, is not to Condemn all Judgment of Perſons, Words or Actions, or to oblige us to ſuſpend our judging till the Day of Judgment; but only forbids raſh Cenſuring, unadviſed, and uncertain unſeaſonable judging of the Hearts, and final States of Men; we may judge what appeareth, but not what is hidden and unſeen; for the judging of hidden Things is referred to him from whom nothing is hidden, *Learn hence,* That to take upon us to judge the Heart, or to judge that which doth not appear, is to aſſume the Office, and to take upon us the Place of God; only he that is Inviſible can look in that which is Inviſible. *Obſerve* farther, The Perſon ſpoken of, *Who makes manifeſt the counſels of the heart, and brings to light the hidden things of Darkneſs,* it is Jeſus Chriſt; *Judge nothing till the Lord come,* the Lord Chriſt Jeſus. A ſtrong Argument to prove the Divinity of our Bleſſed Saviour; he that has Knowledge of the Heart, of the Secrets of the Hearts of all Men, and has all theſe ſubject to his Judgment, is undoubtedly God? but Chriſt aſcribes all this Knowledge to himſelf, *Rev.* 2. 33. *All the churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the hearts and reins, and give to every one according to his works*; therefore, he is eſſentially and really God. *Obſerve* laſtly, What will be the Iſſue and Conſequence of our Lord's Knowing and Judging the Secrets of Men; *Then ſhall every* *one have praiſe of God*; that is, every one ſhall have Praiſe that is Praiſe-worthy; every good Man, though now Diſpraiſed and Deſpiſed, though Cenſured and Condemned, though loaded with Scandals, and falſe Reports; yet then every Righteous Man ſhall have Praiſe from Chriſt the Righteous Judge.

6 And theſe things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to my ſelf, and to Apollos, for your ſakes: That ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another.

Here the Apoſtle Proſecutes his former Argument afreſh, that neither the *Corinthians*, nor any other Chriſtian, ſhould ſo over-value and magnifie ſome Miniſters of the Goſpel, as to undervalue and deſpiſe others, making Men of Eminency the Heads of Factions and Parties. But that they eſteem all Miniſters as Inſtruments only in Chriſt's Hand, doing nothing of themſelves, but aſſiſted by the Grace and Strength of God, to whom therefore the Succeſs, and intire Praiſe of all their Labours is due. This is to think of them according to what is written, *Chap.* 3. 6, 8. *Who then is* Paul, *and who is* Apollos, *but Miniſters*? *Learn hence,* That it is too uſual when People have a very great and high Eſteem of the Miniſters of Chriſt, to over-value themſelves by Reaſon of their Relation to them, and Dependance upon them: And whilſt they honour and magnifie ſome, to vilifie and diſ-eſteem others. This is the fault which all along our Apoſtle has been Condemning ſince he began this Epiſtle, and he has not yet done with it; for thus he proceeds.

7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? Now, if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received it.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, who is it that maketh one Miniſter to differ from and excel another? Is it not God? If ſo, then let thoſe Miniſters that have received the greateſt Gifts from God, whom the Inſpiration of the Almighty hath made moſt Wiſe and Underſtanding, be moſt humble themſelves; and let none take occaſion from thence to deſpiſe others who have received leſs. *Learn hence,* That Miniſters of great Abilities, Eminent for Gifts and Graces, are in great danger of being puft up themſelves, and their People alſo too prone to glory in them: There is a Temptation in good Things, yea, in the beſt Things, to Pride; the beſt Men on Earth may be over-heated by what they have received from Heaven; and Satan may take occaſion, even from our Raptures in Spirit to puff us up with Spiritual Pride; therefore our Apoſtle puts forth this Soul-humbling, and Pride-mortifying Expoſtulation. *What haſt thou that thou haſt not received? who made thee to differ?* There is nothing wherein one Miniſter, or indeed one Man, differeth, or is diſtinguiſhed from another, or wherein he excelleth another; but it is given him from God; it is God, and not himſelf, that makes him to differ; it is an high degree of Pride for any Man to ſay, *Ego diſcrevi meipſum*; I of my ſelf have made my ſelf to differ.

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: And I would to God ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you. 9 For I think that God hath ſent forth us the apoſtles laſt, as it were men appointed to death. For we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt: We are weak, but ye are ſtrong: Ye are honourable, but we are deſpiſed.

Theſe Words are looked upon by Interpreters as an Ironical Reproof given by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, in which with an holy Deriſion he rebukes the over-weaning and high Opinion which they had of their preſent Attainments, and Spiritual Perfections. *Now ye are full,* &c. As if he had ſaid, Now you think your ſelves ſo full and rich in all kinds of Knowledge, that you deſpiſe your Spiritual Fathers, my ſelf and *Apollos*, who firſt converted you to the Faith; we are looked upon as dull Fellows, not worthy to be named in the ſame Day with your new admired Teachers. You advance your ſelves as much above us, as a King is above his own Subjects. I wiſh with all my Heart your Happineſs were real, that we might be Sharers in it; but verily I fear that you are only puft up with Notions; I fear ye have little, except in Conceit, and there you have a great deal too much. *Learn hence,* That Spiritual Pride, that is, boaſting of and glorifying in the Gifts, Graces, or Privileges which are conferr'd upon us, is a Sin which the Devil ſtrongly attempts, and Profeſſors are extreamly prone to the Practice and Commiſſion of. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich. Obſerve next,* As the flouriſhing Condition of the *Corinthians* ironically deſcribed, ſo the afflicted and perſecuted Condition of the Apoſtles plainly declared. *We are a ſpectacle to the world, and appointed to death.* The original word is, We are ſet as upon a Theatre or Stage, in publick View; Heaven, Earth, and Hell, are Spectators; God, Angels, and Men, wait to ſee the Glorious Triumphs of our Faith and Fortitude. What a great Solemnity is there at the Sufferings of a Saint! Bloody Perſecutors are for making all the Members, eſpecially all the Miniſters of Chriſt, a Spectacle to the World, an Alluſion to the *Roman* Spectacles, who carried thoſe Perſons about for a Sight that were to fight with wild Beaſts; and if they eſcaped, were only reſerved for Slaughter againſt another Day. Thus the Apoſtles in their Martyrdom conflicted with all ſorts of Miſery, and with Death it ſelf at laſt. *Obſerve laſtly,* How the falſe Profeſſors of Chriſtianity branded the Apoſtles with Folly, for expoſing themſelves thus to Sufferings and Death for the ſake of Chriſt. *We are fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt.* That is, in your Account we are Fools, becauſe we run ſo many Hazards for the ſake of Chriſt; but you are Wiſe in your Profeſſion of Chriſt, becauſe you have an Art to profeſs him, and yet enjoy outward Proſperity with him. The Wiſdom of ſuffering Chriſtians, in hazarding all for Chriſt, and in laying down their Lives in the Cauſe of Chriſt, has been all accounted Weakneſs and Folly by the Men of the World. *We are fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt.*

11 Even unto this preſent hour we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffetted, and have no certain dwelling-place. 12 And labour working with our own hands: being reviled, we bleſs: being perſecuted, we ſuffer it: 13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſeveral Kinds of Sufferings which the Holy Apoſtles were expoſed to, and exerciſed with; namely, Hunger and Want, Poverty and Reproach, Perſecution and Death. They ſuffered in their Bodies by Hunger and Nakedneſs, and Stripes; in their Names, by Scandals and Reproaches, being accounted *the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things.* The Word, ſay ſome, ſignifies that Dirt and Filth which Scavengers do rake together in the Streets, and carry it to the Dunghil. Others think it an Alluſion to the Sacrifices which the Heathens uſed for the Luſtration of a City, who when their City was under any great Calamity, they choſe out ſome very baſe, vile, and naſty Perſon, and burnt him in a Ditch, and caſt his Aſhes into the Sea, as a Sacrifice unto *Neptune*, ſaying, Be thou a Purgation for us. Such a baſe and vile Eſteem had the World of the Holy Apoſtles and Meſſengers of Chriſt. Lord! to ſee ſuch a Man as St. *Paul* going up and down the World with a naked Back, and empty Belly, without an Houſe of ſettled Abode to hide his Head in; one that did more Service for God in a Day, than perhaps we have done him all our Days; can we, the Miniſters of Chriſt, complain of hard Uſage from the World, when we conſider what this great Apoſtle ſuffer'd in the World. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Duration and Continuance of the Apoſtles Sufferings, *even unto this day, and unto this preſent hour.* It was not only at their firſt Entrance upon the Apoſtolical Office, when all the World was ſet againſt Chriſtianity, that they meet with this Uſage, but all along, from the firſt Hour they began to preach the Goſpel, even unto this Hour, did they meet with Oppoſition and Perſecution. As long as there is a Devil in Hell, and wicked Men upon Earth, all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer Perſecution: But ſurely, the Dregs of this Cup has in all Ages been reſerved for the Miniſters of Chriſt Jeſus; as if to preach were nothing elſe but to ſtir up the Rage, and be blotted with the Obloquies of Men. *Obſerve* (3.) The holy and humble Behaviour, the meek and patient Carriage and Demeanour of the Apoſtle under all this Load and Burthen of Reproach and Scorn, Diſgrace and Shame, Perſecution and Ill-uſage. ***Being reviled, we bleſs.*** When we meet with opprobrious Words, we are ſo far from rendring Evil for Evil, or Railing for Reviling, that we ſpeak well of, and wiſh well to the Perſons that are thus injurious to us; *being perſecuted* by them, ***we ſuffer it*** patiently from them. ***Being defamed*** by any of them, ***we intreat*** God for them, to pity and pardon them, and we *intreat* them to pity themſelves. To publiſh Invectives againſt thoſe (though the worſt of Men) who reproach and perſecute us, is a modern piece of Zeal, which the Bleſſed Apoſtles and Holy Sufferers in the Primitive Times were little acquainted with, but perfect ſtrangers to.

14 I write not theſe things to ſhame you, but as my beloved ſons I warn you. For though you have ten thouſand inſtructers in Chriſt, yet have ye not many fathers: For in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the Goſpel. 16 Wherefore I beſeech you, be ye followers of me.

Obſerve here, (1.) The holy Ingenuity of the Apoſtle diſcover'd in the ſharp Reproofs given to the *Corinthians*, it was to warn them of their Duty, not to reproach them for their Crimes. *I write not theſe things to ſhame, but warn you.* The Miniſters of God take far greater pleaſure in exhorting People to be Good, than in complaining of their Badneſs. *Obſ.* (2.) The Relation which St. *Paul* ſtood in to the *Corinthians*; he was their Spiritual Father, and they his Children; he firſt converted them to Chriſtianity by his Miniſtry amongſt them. *In Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the Goſpel. In Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, by the gracious Influence of the Spirit of Chriſt, accompanying my Preaching, I have turn'd you from Idols to ſerve the Living and True God. Hence it is, that I have ſuch an endeared Affection for you, and challenge a deſerv'd Reſpect from you. ***Learn from hence,*** that Perſons may and ought to hava a great Value for, and bear a tender Reſpect towards thoſe Miniſters whom God hath honour'd, by making Inſtruments of their firſt Converſion, and bringing home to Chriſt. Theſe are in a proper Senſe their Spiritual Fathers; and verily there is no greater Love, no ſtronger Affection betwixt any Relations upon Earth, then between the Miniſters of Chriſt, and ſuch of their beloved People, as they have been happily inſtrumental to bring home to God. *Obſ.* (3.) The Apoſtle having aſſerted his relation to them, that of a Spiritual Father, challenges from them the Duty of obedient Children; namely, to follow him in the Steps of Holineſs, and ſincere Obedience; *Wherefore I beſeech you be ye Followers of me.* Lord, what holineſs of Life, and exactneſs of Converſation, ought to be found with the Miniſters of Chriſt, ſeeing they are to be ***Patterns*** as well as ***Preachers***; and their People not only to be their ***Hearers***, but their ***Followers.*** We are to tread out before them the Steps which they are to take towards Heaven; and it will be found at the Great Day as dangerous to have miſled them by our Example, as by our Doctrine. Happy thoſe Miniſters that can ſafely ſay to their People, ***Be ye Followers of us.***

17 For this cauſe I have ſent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved ſon, and faithful in the Lord, who ſhall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Chriſt, as I teach every where in every church.

No ſooner had St. *Paul* planted a Church in ***Corinth***, but by the Envy and Malice of Satan, moſt notorious Diſorders, and ſcandalous Abuſes were crept into it. To obviate which great and growing Miſchief, he writes them his Mind in this Epiſtle: But leſt this Method ſhould prove ineffectual, becauſe writing at a diſtance is not ſo moving as conferring Face to Face, he ſends *Timotheus* unto them, to excite and perſuade them to their Duty, by bringing to their Remembrance his Ways which were in Chriſt, both what he had formerly taught, and did yet continue to teach in every Church. *I have ſent unto you* Timotheus, *my beloved Son, and faithful in the Lord.* ***Here note,*** (1.) The Meſſenger ſent to them, deſcrib'd by his Name *Timotheus*, or *Timothy*; by his Relation, his *beloved Son*; that is, his Son in the Faith, his Spiritual Son, poſſibly converted, and undoubtedly inſtructed by him in the Principles of Chriſtianity. He is farther deſcrib'd by his Zeal and Diligence in the Work of the Goſpel, ***Faithful in the Lord***: That is, faithful in the Work of the Lord. A noble Character of a Goſpel Miniſter, faithful to God, faithful to Souls, faithful in his Intentions, faithful in his Endeavours, faithful in all the Adminiſtrations of Chriſt's Houſe, faithful and affectionate towards the Poor of the Flock, remembring that all Souls are rated at one Value in his Maſter's Book; faithful in publick Preaching, faithful in private Inſpection. Happy are the People who have ſuch faithful Perſons for their Spiritual Guides and Paſtors. *Note,* (2.) The Meſſage and Errand *Timothy* was ſent upon; namely, to acquaint the *Corinthians* with St. *Paul*'s Doctrine and Practice, and to excite and perſuade them to their Duty, by bringing his Ways to their Remembrance. *Where obſerve,* That St. *Paul* had led ſo Holy and Unblameable a Converſation in every Place where he had lived, that he is neither afraid nor aſham'd, that his Courſe of Life ſhould be diſcover'd and made known to all the World. A great Example for our imitation to walk before God and our People with ſuch Care and Caution, with ſuch Heedfulneſs and Circumſpection, that we need not bluſh, when either our Doctrine or Practice are publiſh'd before all the Churches of Jeſus Chriſt. *Timothy* ſhall acquaint you ***with my ways, and with what I teach every where in every Church.***

18 Now ſome are puffed up as though I would not come to you. 19 But I will come to you ſhortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Advantage which the Height and Haughtineſs of ſome envious Teachers took upon St. ***Paul***'s Abſence from ***Corinth***; they entertained low and contemptuous Thoughts of him, and vaunted that he durſt not come before them, nor ſtand amongſt them. *Obſ.* (2.) St. ***Paul***'s poſitive Reſolution to come again to ***Corinth*** with God's permiſſion, with the Reaſon for that Reſolution; ***I will come, and know not the ſpeech of them that are puffed up, but the power***: that is, I will certainly come, and try your boaſting envious Teachers, not by their plauſible Words, and fine Talk, diſcovering who hath the ſmotheſt Tongue: But I will examine the Power; that is, firſt their Authority to Preach; and next, what Power and Efficacy there is in their Preaching; and *laſtly*, what Power and Influence their Preaching has upon their own Practice; I will find out what real Good they have done among you, after all their oſtentatious Bragings. Behold here the true and great End of Epiſcopal Viſitation. ***For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power***: That is, Chriſtianity doth not conſiſt in talking, but in doing; not in vaunting, but performing great Things. But by Power, here may be underſtood, a Power of working Miracles, for confirming and propagating of the Goſpel which the Apoſtles had, but theſe Teachers at ***Corinth*** had not. To convince Men at firſt of the Truth of Chriſtianity, the Dead were raiſed, the Devils caſt out, and many mighty Wonders wrought by the Apoſtles; by all which the Goſpel Doctrine was Planted, Propagated, Eſtabliſhed and Confirmed. The Kingdom of God, or the Goſpel-Church, was not rais'd at firſt, or carry'd on ſince by the Wiſdom of Words, by the Charms of popular Eloquence, and Rhetorical Flouriſhes, but by a plain Way, and familiar Manner of Preaching the Doctrines of the Goſpel atteſted by Miracles, and accompany'd with Works of Divine Efficacy and Power. Thus ***the Kingdom of God was not in Word, but in Power.***

21 What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Come I will among you, to regulate Diſorders, and to rectify Abuſes; now chuſe you how I ſhall come; whether in the milder way of Kindneſs, Love and Meekneſs towards you, or exerciſing the Power God has given me, of inflicting Corporal Puniſhments on Offenders, by delivering them to Satan as God's Executioner upon their Bodies. ***Note here,*** (1.) A Power, which the Apoſtle intimates himſelf to have in the Chriſtian Church; namely, the Power of the Rod; that is, a Power of inflicting the ſevereſt of Corporal Puniſhments, even Death itſelf, upon notorious Offenders: Thus ***Elymas*** the Sorcerer was ſmitten with Blindneſs by St. ***Paul, Acts*** 13. ***Ananias*** and ***Saphira*** ſtruck Dead by St. ***Peter, Acts*** 5. ***Hymenaus*** and ***Philetus*** deliver'd unto

Satan, 1 *Tim.* 1.29 It was uſual with God, in the earlier Days of the Goſpel, to give Satan leave to ſeize the Bodies of ſuch as were, for their obſtinate Perſeverance in Sin, cut off from the Communion of the Church; who plagued them with Diſeaſes, and ſometimes with Death, which is call'd the Deſtruction of the Fleſh, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. *Note* (2.) The neceſſary Reaſon for inveſting ſuch a Power, ſo great a Power as this in the Apoſtles; becauſe then there being no Civil Power of the Magiſtrate on his ſide, had he been deſtitute of this extraordinary Power, to puniſh bold and hardned Tranſgreſſors, he could never have vindicated Chriſtianity from Contempt, much leſs have conciliated any tolerable Reſpect either to himſelf or it. People would have deſpis'd his Perſon, and made a mock of his new Religion; whereas finding him cloathed with this Power, great Fear fell upon the Church, yea, on as many as heard theſe things, and the Name of the Lord Jeſus was magnify'd, *Acts* 5. *Note*, (3.) How loth and unwilling the Apoſtle was to exerciſe this Power of his, *and to come unto them with a Rod*, deſiring rather to uſe fair and gentle Methods, and *to come unto them in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs.* His paternal Tenderneſs, and fatherly Affection, prompted him to menace and threaten Puniſhment, but only to the End that he might not execute and inflict it, provided they would be but oblig'd by Kindneſs, and reclaim'd by Candid Uſage. *Note*, (4.) That the Apoſtle was ſometimes forc'd out of mere Pity to take his Rod into his Hand, to uſe Sharpneſs, tho' with great Reluctancy; ſcourging them, to ſhew his Compaſſion to them. In like manner muſt Eccleſiaſtical Rulers, to the end of the World, in order to maintain the Church's Purity and Peace, by Church-Cenſures chaſtiſe that Vice which doth deface the one, and thoſe Diviſions that do diſturb the other.

CHAP. V.

The Apoſtle in this Chapter doth ſharply rebuke the Church of Corinth *for their great Negligence in puniſhing Scandalous Offenders, directing to Excommunication as the proper Remedy for redreſſing ſuch Offences, and declaring the End and Intention of that Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure to be the Deſtruction of Sin, and the Salvation of the Sinner. For thus he writes.*

1 IT is reported commonly, that there is Fornication among you, and ſuch as is not ſo much as named amongſt the Gentiles, that one ſhould have his Brothers Wiſe.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſons, or the People blam'd. The famous Church of *Corinth* has Fornication, nay, Inceſt charg'd upon her. Heinous Sins may creep into the beſt and pureſt Churches, yet doth not a Church preſently ceaſe to be a true Church; nor are Chriſtians preſently to ſeparate from the Communion of a Church, becauſe heinous Crimes and ſcandalous Offences are found in it. This Church of *Corinth* was a true Church, and it was Schiſmatical to ſeparate from her Communion, although erroneous Principles and ſcandalous Practices were found amongſt the Members of it. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Crime charg'd upon them; namely, that *Fornication* was found amongſt them, yea, the higheſt Degree of *Fornication*; to wit, Inceſt. By the general Name of Fornication, all Uncleanneſs is forbidden, all unlawful Conjunctions and ſinful Mixtures are condemn'd. By Inceſt is to be underſtood the Uncleanneſs of a Perſon with ſome near Relation, as a Mother, a Siſter, &c. *Obſ.* (3.) The Crime of Inceſt is not barely expreſs'd, but amplify'd and agravated by its Heinouſneſs, *ſuch as was not named amongſt the Gentiles.* Not but that many of the more brutiſh Gentiles were guilty of this Sin, but the more civilized amongſt the Gentiles did, by the Light of Nature, deteſt and abhor it, condemn and forbid it. Lord! how ſad is it, that what is not ſo much as named amongſt the Heathen, ſhould be practis'd amongſt Chriſtians? Whereas ſuch Sins ought not to be ſo much as nam'd amongſt the Heathen. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Notoriouſneſs of the Crime, *it is commonly reported*; the Fame, or rather the Infamy of the Fact, ſpread far and near; the Sin became ſo publick, that it could not be colour'd, much leſs conceal'd. All Sin is a Work of Darkneſs, Uncleanneſs particularly delights in Darkneſs; therefore the Notoriety of the Act beſpake the Impudence of the Agent. Ah ſad Day! when Men *declare their Sin like* Sodom, *they hide it not.* When both Shame and Fear are caſt off, Sin hath an hard Forehead, a brazen Brow.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you.

Here Note, (1.) The Fault charg'd upon the Church, they did not cenſure this Offender, therefore the Apoſtle cenſures them. The tolerating of ſcandalous Sins in particular Members of Churches, is a thing very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and offenſive to his Miniſters. *Note*, (2.) As they did not Cenſure the Offenders, ſo neither did they mourn for the Offence, as they ſhould and ought to have done. *Learn*, That the Falls of particular Members of Churches are a juſt Cauſe of mourning to the whole Church; as Members of the ſame Body we ſhould ſympathize with one another; what the Natural Members do, the myſtical Members ought to do. *Note*, (3.) The Cauſe of both, why they did neither cenſure the Offender, nor mourn for the Offence, *they were puffed up*; partly with Pride of their own Gifts, and partly with Vainglory, upon the Account of their admired Teachers. Now this Pride hindred their Sorrow; a proud Man is ſeldom a compaſſionate Man; true Humility will teach us to lament and bewail others Frailty. *Ye are puffed up, and have not mourned.* The original Word, *to mourn*, ſeems to refer to a Cuſtom in the Primitive Times, when Chriſtians put on ſolemnly Mourning Attire, and bewailed Excommunicate Perſons as thoſe that are Dead. Theſe *Corinthians* being puffed up with Pride, were ſo far from their compaſſionate Mourning over this inceſtuous Perſon, that they rather rejoiced at it, and inſulted over *that Party* to whom *this Perſon* belonged. So prone are Perſons to rejoice at the Downfal of others, either by Sin, or by Affliction.

3 For I verily as abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit, have judged already, as though I were preſent, *concerning* him that hath ſo done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ye are gathered together, and my ſpirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 5 To deliver ſuch an one unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Although I am abſent from you in Body, yet in Mind and Conſent I am preſent with you, and alſo by my diſcerning Spirit, by which I am enabled to diſcern things done at a diſtance; and accordingly by the Authority and Power given me by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I have already determin'd, that when you are ſolemnly gathered together in the Name of Chriſt, and have my Spirit concurring with you, and the Power of Chriſt confirming the Sentence pronounced by you, that you deliver this inceſtuous Perſon unto Satan, by caſting him out of the Church, and leaving him to God's Executioner to inflict deſtructive Puniſhment on his Body, to bring him to Rèpentance for the ſaving of his Soul. *Here note*, (1.) The Cenſure and Sentence pronounced, Excommunication, which conſiſteth of two Parts, (1.) The Privative, in a Separation from the Communion of Saints. (2.) Poſitive, which is here expreſſed by delivering unto Satan, who had then a Power over the excommunicated Perſon's Body, to torment it with Diſeaſes; which Power, tho' now ceaſed, yet the Chriſtian Church has at this Day a Power to exclude enormous Offenders from the ordinary Means of Grace and Salvation, and to expoſe them to the Malice and Temptations of their grand Adverſary the Devil, by depriving them of Church Communion, which is a more dreadful Puniſhment than Perſons are ſenſible of. *Note*, (2.) The Perſon inflicting this Cenſure, St. *Paul, I have judged already.* He pronounced it judicially, and requires the *Corinthians* to denounce it ſolemnly. *I have judged already*; implying, that he did not determine raſhly and ſuddenly, but adviſedly, as became a Judge; and mark they muſt denounce ſo ſolemnly what he had determined judicially, and this in the Face of the whole Church, *when ye are gathered together*: That is, in the Preſence of the chief Paſtor, and all his Flock at *Corinth.* A publick Crime muſt have a publick Doom, that others may hear and fear, yet remark the Congregation or Church were Witneſſes of the Cenſure, but they did not judge and determine it. The Apoſtle did that. The Power of the Keys is in the Hand of the Church, only *Quoad* χρῆσιν, not *Quoad* κτῆσιν;

κτῆσιν, that the Church may have the Benefit of them, not the managing of them, for that is committed to the Paſtors only, as appears, *Mat.* 16. *John* 20. *Note*, (3.) The ſolemn and awful Manner, in which the Cenſure and Excommunication was and ought to be pronounced, *In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: That is, having firſt in a ſolemn Manner called upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for his Direction and Benediction, or in the Name of our Lord Jeſus; that is, according to the Command of Chriſt, by the Power and Authority of Chriſt, with an Eye to the Glory of Chriſt: This ſhould be the Manner, and theſe ſhould be the Ends in denouncing Church Cenſures, and then Chriſt will be at the Conſiſtory, and his Co-operation will make good the Cenſure, as his Commiſſion was our Warrant to pronounce it; and then the Penitent may and ought to dread the Sentence, as coming out of Chriſt's own Mouth, and to be inflicted by Chriſt's own Hand. *Note*, (4.) The miſerable Caſe and State which the Perſon that is duly excommunicated is in. He was *then* delivered up to Satan as God's Executioner to inflict ſevere Puniſhments on the Perſon's Body *Now* caſt out of God's ſpecial Protection, deprived of the Church's Communion, and expoſed to the Temptations and Snares of our grand Adverſary, Satan: St. *Auſtin* in his Time declared, That it was then thought *Gravius quam gladio feriri*, much more grievous to be excommunicated than to be beheaded. But, Lord! where are the Perſons at this Day, who tremble when their Sins have brought them into this miſerable Caſe and State? *Note*, (5.) That Perſons ought not to be in this ſevere and ſolemn manner proceeded againſt, but for notorious ſcandalous Sins; to denounce this awful Cenſure upon every ſlight and trivial Occaſion, is to proſtitute one of the moſt venerable Ordinances of Chriſt to contempt and Scorn. *Note*, (6.) The greateſt and ſpecial End for which this Ordinance of Excommunication was inſtituted by Chriſt in his Church, and executed by his Apoſtles; namely, to recover the fallen Perſon by Repentance, and to be a Warning to others. The reforming, and not the ruining of Men, was the Intention of this Ordinance; the Cenſure is not mortal, but medicinal It is (1.) For the Deſtruction of the Fleſh; ſo laſcivient in him, for the mortifying his Luſts, by afflicting him with Grief and Sorrow. (2.) For the ſaving of his Spirit; that is, his Soul, that this may be recovered out of the Snare of the Devil. *Laſtly*, The time is expreſſed, when the penitent Perſon ſhall find the Benefit of this painful Ordinance; namely, *In the day of our Lord Jeſus*: Not but that a Penitent in this Life ſhall find ſome Eaſe in his Conſcience, and Satisfaction in his Spirit; but the full Benefit of Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure is reſerved to the Day of the Lord. The Day of Judgment, then will Chriſt manifeſt to the Church Triumphant, the good Effect of the Power of the Keys, which he hath committed to his Miniſters, to be exerciſed publickly in the Church Militant; he will then reveal how all ſtand bound in Heaven, whom his Church never looſed on Earth; and all whom his Church hath looſed on Earth, ſhall then appear to be looſed in Heaven.

6 Your glorying *is* not good: Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, You *Corinthians* are prone to Pride your ſelves, in the numbers of wiſe and wealthy Men that are found amongſt you; you; glory that *Corinth* is the Eye of *Greece*, and *Greece* the Eye of the World; but what do you glory in this for? When you have ſuch a ſcandalous Perſon amongſt you (the inceſtuous Man) who is a Blot and a Blemiſh to your whole Society, know ye not that as a little Leaven leaveneth and ſoureth the whole Lump; ſo ſuch a Member continued amongſt you, will defile the whole Body or Society of Chriſtians with you: Therefore *purge out this old leaven*, (caſt out this ſcandalous Perſon out of your Communion) *that ye may be a new leaven*, (your whole Church an Holy Society) *as ye are unleavened*. That is, foraſmuch as ye are by your Profeſſion of Chriſtianity obliged to be unleavened; that is, ſeparated from Sin and Sinners. *Learn hence*, (1.) That all Sin in general, but the Sin of Uncleanneſs in particular, is as Leaven in regard of its ſpreading and diffuſive Nature; old Leaven it is here called, becauſe the *Corinthians* had been long infamous for this Sin of Uncleanneſs, even to a Proverb. *Obſerve next*, That the Apoſtle having uſed this Similitude of Leaven, he purſues it in Alluſion to the Jewiſh Cuſtom, before the Celebration of the Paſſover, who were to caſt all Leaven out of their Houſes with Deteſtation and Curſing, upon Penalty of being cut off from the Congregation of *Iſrael*. Thus the Holy Profeſſion of Chriſtianity obliges every one of us to cut off every notorious Sinner from our Society, every Luſt from our Hearts, every Member of the old *Adam*, that we may be a new Lump, anſwering our Holy and Heavenly Calling.

7 ——For even Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feaſt, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs; but with the unleavened *bread* of ſincerity and truth.

Obſerve here, The Apoſtle's Reaſon, why the old Leaven of Uncleanneſs and malicious Wickedneſs ſhould be put away by us; namely, becauſe *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us*. We ſhould therefore be as careful to put away ſinful Leaven out of our Hearts, as the *Jews* were to caſt the material Leaven out of their Houſes, *Learn hence*, (1.) That Chriſt is our Paſſover, or Paſchal Lamb, in Alluſion to which, he is often call'd a Lamb in the New Teſtament: We do not find him expreſs'd in the New Teſtament by the Name of any other Animals which typified him, but ouly of this Lamb, this being more ſignificant of his Innoceney and Sufficiency than any other: St. *John* 1. 20, he is call'd God's Lamb: Here he is call'd our Paſſover, or Paſchal Lamb: God's in regard of the Author, ours in regard of the End: God's in regard of Deſignation, ours in regard of Acceptation. *Learn* (2.) That Chriſt is our Sacrifice. A Sacrifice was neceſſary for a ſinful Creature, to attone Divine Diſpleaſure; a Sacrifice for Sin muſt be pure and ſinleſs; no ſuch Sacrifice could be found but the Eternal Son of God; for whatever any Creature could do or ſuffer, had been but a Debt or Duty, and that could never have made Compenſation or Satisfaction for a Debt or Rebellion. *Learn* (3.) That Chriſt was a Sacrifice for us, not for himſelf, for being perfectly ſinleſs, he needed no Sacrifice. Now the Notion of all Sacrifices, both among *Jews* and Heathens, was this, That they were ſubſtituted in the Room and Place of the Offender, to appeaſe an offended Deity, and exempt the guilty Perſon from Puniſhment. Accordingly, our Sins were imputed to Chriſt, and he dy'd under the imputed Guilt of them, as a reputed Sinner; for we cannot conceive how Divine Juſtice ſhould inflict the Puniſhment upon Chriſt, had it not firſt conſider'd him under Guilt. The Weight of all our Sin was laid upon his Innocent Shoulders; our Guilt became his, by a voluntary Suſception of the Puniſhment, and conſequently the Sufferings of this Sacrifice are imputed to us. He took our Sins upon himſelf, as if he had actually ſinned, and gave us the Benefit of his Sufferings, as if he had actually ſuffered and ſatisfied. *Obſerve next*, The Inference drawn by the Apoſtle from Chriſt's dying a Sacrifice for us: *Therefore let us keep the Feaſt*; not an Anniverſary or Yearly, but a Daily Feaſt, even all the Days of our Chriſtian Life; let the whole of our Lives be as the Jewiſh Feaſt of Paſſover was, free from Leaven, from the Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs, and full of Sincerity and Uprightneſs, both towards God and Man. *Learn hence*, The Duty of every Particular and individual Chriſtian, ſeeing Chriſt has died as a Sacrifice for his Sin, his Duty is to live unto Chriſt; by living up to the Rule which Chriſt hath given him; abhorring all Malice, abandoning all Wickedneſs, acting all that Sincerity towards God, and exerciſing that Truth and Uprightneſs towards Man, which will be an Ornament to our Profeſſion whilſt we are here upon Earth, and will bring us at length to the Fruition of God in Heaven.

9 I wrote unto you in an epiſtle, not to company with fornicators. 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators; for then muſt ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no, not to eat.

Here our Apoſtle tells them, that he had writ to them in this, or ſome other Epiſtle, before he was fully acquainted with their Affairs; not to company with Fornicators; that is, to ſhun all Infamy and Familiarity with Infidels; but he did not mean or intend that they ſhould have no Converſe or Commerce with them, becauſe they lived among Unbelievers, and cannot go out of the World. But now ſince he heard of the Miſcarriage of this inceſtuous Perſon, who was certainly a Chriſtian, and probably a Doctor or Teacher amongſt them, he warns them to avoid all brotherly Intimacy and Familiarity with ſcandalous Chriſtians, leſt the Church be thought to favour ſuch; *With ſuch a one*, ſays he, *no not to eat*; admit not ſuch to your own Table, much leſs to Chriſt's. *Learn from hence*, That all unneceſſary Society, and intimate Familiarity, with ſcandalous Profeſſors, ought to be avoided, that Religion may not be thought to favour them, and the Church may not ſuffer by them. *Learn*, (2.) That as it ought to be the Churches care to purge out ſuch, and ſeparate them from her Communion, ſo is it every private Chriſtian's Duty to avoid that Familiarity with them which is in their Power, even that which lieth in friendly eating with them. *Learn*, (3.) If civil eating with ſcandalous Profeſſors of Religion be forbidden at our own Table; much leſs ought any Church to permit and ſuffer them a Religious Eating at the Lord's Table, which was never ſpread for ſuch Gueſts.

12 For what have I to do judge them alſo that
are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?
13 But them that are without God judgeth.
Therefore put away from among your ſelves that
wicked perſon.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, my Juriſdiction extendeth not to Heathens, I have nothing to do to Judge and Cenſure them that are without the Church; but ſuch as are within the Pale of the Church, your own Members, who own your Juriſdiction, theſe you have an undoubted Right and Power to Judge, leaving the other to the Judgment of God: Therefore I adviſe; nay, charge you, *To put away from your ſelves that wicked inceſtuous perſon*, by Excommunicating and Baniſhing him from your Communion. As Baniſhment is a civil Excommunication, ſo Excommunication is a ſpiritual Baniſhment; Magiſtrates muſt drive Malefactors out of civil Societies, and Church Officers muſt expel Enormous Offenders out of their Religious Societies; for they who are unfit for civil Converſe, are much more unfit for ſpiritual Communion. The laſt Words, *Therefore put away from your ſelves that wicked perſon*, help us clearly to underſtand the former Precept, *ver.* 7. *Purge out the old leaven, &c.* that they are not in their firſt and proper Senſe to be Interpreted of particular Perſons purging out their Luſts, and mortifying their Corruptions, though that be a very neceſſary Duty; but it is to be underſtood of every Chriſtian Church's Duty to purge out from among them all flagitious and enormous Offenders.

Cuncta prius Tentanda ſed immedicabile Vulnus.
Enſe Recidendum eſt, ne pars ſincera trahatur.

CHAP. VI.

The Holy Apoſtle having in the former Chapter taxed the Corinthians, *for their great Negligence in not Judging the inceſtuous Perſon in a Caſe Eccleſiaſtical; in this Chapter he blames them for their too great Forwardneſs in going to Judgment in a matter Civil and Political.*

Theſe Corinthians *who were Converted by the Apoſtle to the Chriſtian Faith, went to Law with, and Impleaded one another before* Heathen Judges, *whereas they ought to have ſubmitted their Differences to be heard before, and decided by the* Saints; *that is, their Brethren, and Fellow-Chriſtians.*

Now this mighty Scandal to Chriſtianity our Apoſtle upbraids them with, and ſharply Reproves them for in this Chapter, in which he thus beſpeaks them.

1 DAre any of you, having a matter againſt another, go to law before the unjuſt, and not
before the ſaints? 2 Do ye not know that the ſaints
ſhall judge the world? And if the world ſhall be
judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters? 3 Know ye not that we ſhall judge Angels? how much more things that pertain to this
Life?

Obſerve here, (1.) That it was not ſimply and abſolutely their going to Law which the Apoſtle condemns, but their impleading one another at Pagan Tribunals, and before Heathen Judges; *The Law is good, if uſed lawfully*, but the beſt thing may be abus'd; ſo is oft the Law itſelf; moſt evident it is, that the Apoſtle, who was offended at their uſing the Law before Infidels, allows it before Chriſtians, as the firſt Verſe implies. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Title given to the *Corinthian* Converts, they are all call'd *Saints*; becauſe they were all ſo by outward Profeſſion, and many of them ſo by inward Sanctification. *Whence Learn*, (1.) That all thoſe who take upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are oblig'd to be Saints, and may be ſo call'd, being ſuch by viſible Profeſſion. (2.) That the true and real Chriſtian, is a true and real Saint; his Heart is inwardly Renew'd and Sanctify'd, his Life thoroughly Reformed and Changed. *Obſerve*, (3.) The ſeveral Errors innumerated by our Apoſtle in the *Corinthians* going to Law. (1.) In regard of the Adverſary, *Brother goeth to Law with Brother*; not Infidel with Infidel, nor Infidel with Chriſtian; but Chriſtian with Chriſtian, Brother with Brother; which ſeems both Unnatural and Unchriſtian. (2.) In regard of the Judges choſen to Decide and Umpire their Controverſies, they were Infidels and Unbelievers, not Saints: If Brother will go to Law with Brother, let them make choice of Chriſtian Judges; but for Chriſtians to refuſe Chriſtians, and to chuſe to be judged by Infidels, was highly Scandalous! What will Heathens ſay, when Chriſtians are together by the Ears, and Infidels live in unity? *Obſ.* (4.) The great Argument us'd by the Apoſtle to diſſuade them from this Practice; he argues, *A majore ad minus*, from the greater to the leſs. The Saints ſhall judge the World, the wicked World; yea, the Apoſtate Angels in another World; are they not then fit to judge and determine frivolous and trivial Matters between Man and Man, between one Chriſtian and another, here in this World: *Learn hence*, That the Saints, as Aſſeſſors with Chriſt, and Approvers of his Righteous Judgment, ſhall at the Great Day Judge the wicked World, and Apoſtate Angels. Oh ye wicked World! You that now Revile and Scorn, that Injure and Wrong the Saints and Servants of the Moſt High God, know, that they ſhall one Day be your Judges. Oh ye Saints! Who ſhall be Judges of the World, know that your time of judging in this World, is not yet; do not anticipate your Work, nor antedate your Commiſſion; *Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord comes.*

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining
to this life, ſet them to judge whe are leaſt eſteemed
in the church. 5 I ſpeak to your ſhame. Is it ſo, that
there is not a wiſe man amongſt you? No, not one
that ſhall be able to judge between his brerhren?
6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that
before the unbelievers. 7 Now, therefore, there is
utterly a fault among you, becauſe you go to law
one with another: Why do you not rather take
wrong? Why do you not rather ſuffer your ſelves to
be defrauded? 8 Nay, you do wrong and defraud,
and that *your* brethren.

It muſt be ſtill *Obſerved*, That the Apoſtle doth not go about to aboliſh the uſe of Secular Judgments, or condemn going to Law; but only reproved the Abuſes that were found amonſt them therein. *Brother going to Law with Brother*: That is, one Chriſtian with another, and this not before a Chriſtian, but an Heathen Magiſtrate; by means whereof, the Gentiles became acquainted with the Covetouſneſs, Ambition and Revenge, which was among Chriſtians, to the diſhonour of God, and the diſcredit of the Goſpel; more particularly, the Apoſtle farther Cenſures and Reproves them; *Firſt*, For going to Law about Trifles, and ſmall Matters; *Are you unworthy to judge the leaſt Matters?* Should Chriſtians thus Implead one another before Infidels for meer Trifles? It ſeems it has been an ancient, and too common Fault, that every petty Difference has peſter'd the Tribunal. *Secondly*, For the manner of their Impleading and Proſecuting one another, it was with Heat and Paſſion, with much Impatience and impotent Anger; going to Law is one of thoſe Duties which is difficultly manag'd without Sin; it is an hard matter for a Man to Right his Eſtate, and not Wrong his Soul. *Thirdly*, He Reproves them, becauſe they did not chuſe rather to put up ſome Wrongs, than Right themſelves by going to Law; *Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not ſuffer your ſelves to be defrauded?* Teaching us, That ſomething ſhould not only to be hazarded, but parted with, for Peace ſake: Peace is a Jewel worth our buying at a dearer Rate than moſt Men are willing to give for it; and a peaceable Chriſtian will put up many Injuries patiently, rather than uſe Extremity, referring his Cauſe to him that judgeth Righteouſly; who very often in this Life repays us what we part with for Peace ſake twice over; bleſſed are the Meek, they ſhall inherit the Earth. *Fourthly*, The Apoſtle blames them for their Precipitation and haſte, going to Law one with another; the Law ſhould have been their laſt Refuge after trial of all other means; firſt they ſhould have referr'd it to their Brethren; if they could not end it, then the Law was open: But inſtead of this, as ſoon as any difference aroſe, they ſent preſently for a Writ to the Heatheniſh Courts of Judicature. *Fifthly*, He blames the Ignorance which was found amongſt them, that there was no wiſe Perſon found with them which would Comprimize and Compoſe Differences before they went too far; *ver. 5. I ſpeak it to your ſhame. Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe Man amongſt you that is able to judge between his brethren?* As if he had ſaid, What, will ye all ſtand and look on theſe unkind Bickerings, and is there not one among you that has ſo much Skill as to quiet and compoſe them? I am really aſhamed of it. *Sixthly*, He rebukes their Slothfulneſs, together with their Ignorance, that they were Lazy as well as Unskilful, and unwilling to Interpoſe for the compoſing of their Brethens Differences; a little Pains timely taken by us, may prevent abundance of Strife and Diſſention between contending Brethren. Theſe are the principal Faults which the Apoſtle condemns in theſe *Corinthians* going to Law; it is not the Action, or Thing itſelf, but the Circumſtances attending it, and the Miſmanagement of it, that is here condemned; which being Rectified, Law is no doubt lawful, whatever ſome erroneous Perſons have affirmed to the contrary.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind,
10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle's poſitive Aſſertion, and categorical Propoſition, *That the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*; where, by Unrighteouſneſs is meant Injuſtice and Injuriouſneſs towards our Neighbour, as appears by the Context, which ſpeaks of Defrauding; Unrighteouſneſs will as certainly ſhut out of Heaven as Ungodlineſs. *Obſerve next*, The large Catalogue of Sins which the Apoſtle reckons up, that will ſhut Perſons out of Heaven; Uncleanneſs, Idolatry, inordinate Love of this World, Drunkenneſs, &c. For the Confirmation of his Propoſition, he proceedeth to this Enumeration of the ſeveral Sins deſtructive of Salvation; which are not to be underſtood Copulatively, but Diſ-junctively; not as if he only who is guilty of all theſe ſhall miſs of Heaven, but he that lives in any one of theſe Unrepented of; if he doth not forſake his wicked Courſe of Life, he ſhall never ſee the Kingdom of God; whoever allows and tollerates himſelf in any one Sin, is certainly in a ſtate of Damnation. Lord, How many thouſand vain Hopes are laid in the Duſt? And how many thouſand of impenitently wicked Souls are ſentenced to Hell by this one Scripture? *Obſerve laſtly*, The Caution or Cautionary Direction given by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, not to deceive themſelves with a contrary Expectation; (tho' one would think Men could hardly be deceived in ſo plain a Caſe) as if their bare Profeſſion of Chriſtianity would ſave them, whilſt they allowed themſelves to live in the Practice of any of the fore-mentioned Wickedneſſes; *Be not deceived. Learn thence*, That Men are very prone to deceive themſelves in this, that though they live wickedly, yet they ſhall die happily, and go to Heaven glorioſly. They have ſuch unlimited Apprehenſions of the pardoning Grace and Mercy of God, that they bound it not to Faith and Repentance, and an Holy Life; never conſidering whether they are qualified Subjects, or no, for that Grace and Mercy. God is a merciful God, ſays the wicked Man, therefore I ſhall not go to Hell; God is a merciful God, ſaith the Devil, therefore I hope to come out of Hell: No, ſay you, that doth not follow, for God has decreed and declared the contrary; and has he not decreed and determined, has he not ſaid and ſworn, That the impenitent Sinner ſhall never enter into his Reſt? Be not then deceived, O Sinner, whilſt thou continueſt Unreformed, thou canſt nor *Inherit the Kingdom of God.*

11 And ſuch were ſome of you: But ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Here we have another Argument which our Apoſtle uſes to diſſuade them from all groſs Wickedneſs in general, and from ſuch unchriſtian Behaviour one towards another, as he had before reproved in particular; namely, that great and mighty Change which had been wrought upon ſeveral of them by means of their Converſion to the Chriſtian Religion or the Faith of Chriſt; *Such were ſome of you, but ye are now waſhed*; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, You are no longer Swine, but Sheep, and therefore muſt not wallow in the mire of Sin, as you formerly did. *Note here*, (1.) The black and filthy Condition of a Sinner before Converſion; the Apoſtle had reckoned up the vileſt and worſt of Sins that could be mentioned; and then ſays, *Such were ſome of you.* The Original Word is in the Neuter, not in the Maſculine Gender; not Τȣτοὶ, ſuch Perſons, but Ταῦτα ſuch Sins; emphatically demonſtrating their Wickedneſs, that were not ſo much *Peccatories*, Sinners, as *Ipſa peccata*, the very Sins themſelves. *Learn hence*, That the converting Grace of God is ſometimes vouchſafed to the vileſt and worſt of Men; and where it is vouchſafed, makes a very great and mighty Change. *Note*, (2.) The particular Expreſſions by which this Change is repreſented; *Ye are waſhed*, Sacramentally waſhed in Baptiſm; *Ye are ſanctified*, purified in your Hearts and Natures, by the ſanctifying Influences of Divine Grace; *Ye are ſanctified*; that is, acquitted from Guilt, and approved as Righteous. *Note*, (3.) The means by which this Change was wrought and effected, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of God; *In the Name of our Lord Jeſus*; that is, through the Merits, and for the Mediation of the Lord Jeſus, and by Faith therein, *and by the Spirit of our God*; that is, through the ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit: Here we have the defiling Nature of Sin ſuppoſed; all Men by Nature are polluted and defiled, and ſtand in need of Waſhing. (2.) Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will not diſdain or refuſe to juſtifie by his Blood, and ſanctifie by his Spirit, the greateſt Sinners, and the filthieſt Souls, that apply unto him by Faith, for pardoning Mercy, and ſanctifying Grace: *Such were you, but ye are waſhed.* (3.) Though Juſtification and Sanctification are diſtinct and different in their Nature, yet are they always inſeparable in their Subject; no Perſon is Juſtified, but he that is Sanctified; Chriſt juſtifies none by his Blood, whom he doth not ſanctifie by his Spirit; though Juſtification and Sanctification are not the ſame thing, yet are they always found in the ſame Perſon; by the former, there is a Relative Change in our Condition; by the latter, a real Change in our Converſation.

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.
13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: But God ſhall deſtroy both it and them.

Our Apoſtle ſtill proceeds in the Reprehenſory part of his Epiſtle, and begins here to reprove the growing Hereſy of the *Gnoſticks* and *Nicolaitans* among them, who allowed the eating of *things ſacrificed to idols and fornication* as *things indifferent.* The Apoſtle grants, that all indifferent things are lawful, and may be uſed, firſt, when they are expedient, that is, when they may be uſed without hurting ourſelves and others; and ſecondly, when they do not get ſuch a Dominion over us, as to enſlave us to an intemperate and immoderate uſe of them; he inſtances particularly in Meats, and grants, that it is lawful to uſe any kind of Meat, becauſe God hath ordained it for the good of Man's Nature; Meats are ordained for the Belly, and the Belly at preſent ordained for the Reception of Meats; but as God will deſtroy Meats, ſo will he deſtroy the Belly alſo, as to the uſe it now hath; for in the Reſurrection Men ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt any more. *Learn hence*, That Chriſtianity doth not barely reſtrain us from the doing of what is unlawful, but from doing what is inexpedient alſo; an Action in itſelf lawful may by Circumſtances become ſinful, and it is both wiſe and ſafe to forbear the uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty, when it becomes an Occaſion of Offence unto our Neighbour.

13 ——Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

From this Verſe to the end of the Chapter our Apoſtle labours by ſundry Arguments to convince the *Corinthians* of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of the Sin of Fornication, partly becauſe they reckon'd it amongſt the number of indifferent things, and alſo becauſe the *Corinthians*, before their Converſion to Chriſtianity, were ſo notoriouſly addicted to this Sin, that they conſecrated a Temple to *Venus*, at which a Multitude of Virgins proſtituted themſelves, for which Reaſon St. *Paul* makes uſe of a ſix-fold Argument here, to prevent the *Corinthians* relapſe into this Sin of Fornication after their Converſion, which they had been ſo notoriouſly guilty of before Converſion; the firſt Argument is in the Words before us, *Now the Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the Body*; as if he had ſaid, You put the Body to a Uſe for which it was never intended; the Belly was made for Meats, but the Body was not made for Fornication, but for the Lord; that is, for the Lord's Uſe and Service; and the Lord is for the Body, that is, for the Good and Salvation of the Body. *Whence Note*, That ſuch is the wonderful Goodneſs of God towards us his Creatures, that look in whatſoever we are for him he is for us; as our Bodies are for the Lord's Service as well as our Souls, and therefore our Bodies ought to be imploy'd for his Glory in every thing; this is the Apoſtle's firſt Argument againſt Fornication.

14 And God hath both raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo raiſe us up by his own power.

Here a ſecond Argument againſt Fornication is taken from the Body's Reſurrection; our Bodies are to be rais'd, therefore not to be defil'd; to be faſhion'd like unto Chriſt's Glorious Body in Heaven, therefore not to be defil'd with Luſt here on Earth; as if he had ſaid, Were your Bodies to be finally loſt in the Duſt, then were it no great matter how you us'd them, or abus'd them; but as God hath rais'd up Chriſt's Body, ſo he will raiſe up your Body; and ſeeing your Body is the Garment which your Soul is to wear to all Eternity in Heaven, keep it pure and undefiled here on Earth.

15 Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Chriſt? ſhall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

A third Argument here follows, our Bodies are the Members of Chriſt, as well as our Souls; that is, the Union is made between Chriſt and us, conſiſting of Soul and Body both; now ſhall we diſpoſe of our Bodies, the Members of Chriſt, to ſo baſe an Uſe? Shall our Bodies, which are join'd to Chriſt, ever condeſcend to ſuch a baſe Conjunction, as that of being joyn'd to an Harlot? God forbid that ſuch an Indignation be done by us.

16 What, know ye not that he which is joyned to an harlot is one body? for two (ſaith he) ſhall be one fleſh. 17 But he that is joyned unto the Lord is one ſpirit.

The Senſe is, That as Wedlock makes Man and Wife one Body lawfully, ſo Fornication makes the Man and the Harlot one Body ſinfully; all the difference is in the Morality of the Act, but the ſpecies or kind of Act is the ſame; thus the Fornicator and the Harlot are one Fleſh; but he that is joyned to the Lord, namely, by Faith and Love, he hath a nearer and more noble Union than that of Fleſh, for he is one Spirit with Chriſt, not eſſentially and ſubſtantially one, but myſtically and ſpiritually; Chriſt and the ſincere Believer are led and guided, acted and influenc'd by the ſame Spirit, therefore take heed what you do, for in making your Bodies the Members of an Harlot you diſſolve the Union betwixt Chriſt and them. *Learn from hence*, How cloſely and intimately Believers are united unto Jeſus Chriſt, they are nearer than one Fleſh, they are one Spirit with him, they have both one Father, one Houſe, one Home, one Heart, one Intereſt, one Acquaintance; happy they who are thus joyn'd to the Lord, for they are one Spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every ſin that a man doth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication ſinneth againſt his own body.

Flee Fornication. Note here, (1.) The Apoſtle's Advice to eſcape Fornication, and that is, to flee it, namely, by ſhunning all Occaſions of it, all Temptations leading to it, all Incentives and Provocations of it, not ſuffering our Eye to wander, or our Thoughts to muſe, much leſs to dwell upon any unlawful or inſnaring Object. *Flee Fornication, Note*, (2.) The Argument the Apoſtle uſes to *flee Fornication*, becauſe other Sins are without the Body, but this is againſt the Body. *Queſt*. But how is the Apoſtle to be underſtood when he ſays; All other Sins are without the Body? *Anſw*. Thus, tho' all other outward Sins, as Drunkenneſs, Murder, Theft, *&c.* have the Body as an Inſtrument for committing them, yet in this Sin of Uncleanneſs the Body is not only the Inſtrument, but the Object alſo, for the unclean Perſon doth not only ſin with his Body, but he ſins againſt his Body; Uncleanneſs leaves that Blot and Brand of Ignomy and Baſeneſs upon the Body which no other Sin doth, degrading it from that excellent Honour whereunto God advanc'd it in its natural Condition, by making it the Member of an Harlot.

19 What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy ghoſt *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Here we have the Apoſtle's fifth Argument againſt Fornication and Uncleanneſs, and it runs thus; Temples which are peculiarly conſecrated unto God and his Service ought not to be prophan'd or polluted; but the Bodies of Chriſtians are the Temples of God, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and therefore they ought to be kept pure and undefil'd; *Know ye not that your Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt* as well as your Souls; our Bodies are call'd Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe he hath ſanctify'd them for himſelf, for his Habitation, and for his Service, from whence the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt may be ſtrongly infer'd; a Temple always ſuppoſes ſome Deity to dwell in it; the Tabernacle and Temple are call'd *God's Habitation*; now if the Holy Ghoſt dwells in good Men as a Temple, he is truly and really God: In fine, ſince all Chriſtians are become the Temple of God, by virtue of his Holy Spirit ſent into their Hearts, conſecrating their Bodies to his Sacred Service, let us not deſecrate or pollute this Temple by defiling it with filthy Luſts, but make Chaſtity the Keeper of this Sacred Houſe, and ſuffer nothing that defileth to enter into it, leſt that God, who dwelleth in it, being offended, ſhould deſert his Houſe thus defiled.

19 —— And ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's.

Here we have the ſixth and laſt Argument which the Apoſtle makes uſe of to flee Fornication; our Bodies are not our own, but God's; they are his by Creation, his by Preſervation, his by Purchaſe and Redemption; we are bought out of our own Hands as well as out of the Hand of Divine Juſtice; therefore we ſacrilegiouſly rob and wrong God when we alienate any part of his own from him, and glorify him not, whoſe we wholly are, by the faithful Service both of our Souls and Bodies, which are his. *Learn*, (1.) That Chriſtians are not their own, but God's, not their own, and therefore not in their own Power, not at their own Diſpoſal, not to live after their own Will, or by their own Luſts, but according to the Will, and to the Ends and Uſes of their Principal Lord, whoſe they are. *Learn*, (2.) That as Chriſtians are not their own, ſo they muſt not act and live, and diſpoſe of themſelves, of their Souls and Bodies, as if they were their own, as if they had an original Propriety, a plenary Poſſeſſion, and a full Dominion over themſelves; a Chriſtian muſt not make his own Reaſon his ſupream Rule, nor his own Will his chief Law, nor his own Intereſt his ultimate End, for he was neither made by himſelf, nor made for himſelf. *Learn*, (3.) That all of us are God's, and therefore we cannot without great Sacriledge invade his Right, and give that Body to an Harlot which is conſecrated unto him. *Learn*, (4.) That though we are all God's, yet we have alienated ourſelves from God, and withdrawn ourſelves from his Diſpoſal. *Learn*, (5.) That being thus alienated from God, he has once more bought us, bought us with a Price, a great and full Price, the Blood of his Son; and we are now God's own again by Redemption and Purchaſe. *Learn*, (6.) That our Bodies and Spirits being thus the Lord's, we ſhould glorify him both in our Souls and Bodies, which are his; glorify him in our Bodies by external Purity and exemplary Sanctity, glorify him in our Spirits by internal Purity of Heart; thus if we glorify him in our Body, and in our Spirits, in a way of Obedience, he will at laſt faſhion our vile Bodies like unto his glorious Body, and make our Spirits as the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, in that great Day when he ſhall come to be glorify'd in his Saints, and admir'd in all them that believe.

CHAP. VII.

Our Apoſtle having finiſhed the Reprehenſory part of his Epiſtle in the foregoing Chapters, he comes in this Chapter to reſolve divers Caſes of Conſcience, about which the Corinthians *had written to him, particularly concerning Marriage, not about the Lawfulneſs of Marriage, for that was out of all diſpute, but about the Expediency of it at that time, whether it were adviſeable in that afflicted State of the Church.*

1 NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *it is* good for a man not to touch a woman.

The firſt Scruple or Caſe of Conſcience which the *Corinthians* wrote to the Apoſtle about was concerning Marriage. Amongſt many other wicked Opinions which the *Gnoſticks*, thoſe ancient Hereticks, maintain'd, this was one, That Marriage was from the Devil; our Apoſtle elſewhere, *Heb.* 13. 4. aſſerts Marriage to be Holy and Honourable; here he determines firſt in general, that ſuch as have the Gift of Continency, and can live Chaſte in a ſingle State, do well; and in particular, that a ſingle Life at that time was moſt adviſable and moſt agreeable to the calamitous and afflicted State of the Church; ſo that when the Apoſtle ſays in this Verſe *it is good for a Man not to touch a Woman*, his meaning is, it is more agreeable to the preſent Neceſſity, more convenient in regard of the perſecuted State of the Church, as being a Condition leſs diſtracted with Cares, and leſs troubled with Diſtraction; for Marriage plunges Men into an exceſs of worldly Cares, it multiplies their Buſineſs, and uſually their Wants, and thoſe Wants are hardlier ſupply'd than in a ſingle Life, and more difficultly born, it is much eaſier to bear Perſonal Wants than Family Wants; with reſpect to all which, ſays the Apoſtle, eſpecially as the preſent State of the Church ſtands, *it is good for a Man not to touch a Woman*, not that it is at any time ſimply unlawful, but as ſome times manifeſtly inexpedient.

2 Nevertheleſs to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Such are the Inclinations of Human Nature, that every Man cannot always do that which is moſt for his own Quiet and Eaſe, but Men find the ſtrength of Luſt and the power of Concupiſcence ſo ſtrong in themſelves, that Marriage, which is God's Ordinance for avoiding Fornication, and for the Propagation of Mankind, is of abſolute neceſſity to ſome Perſons; therefore for avoiding Fornication, and all ſorts of Uncleanneſs, (which was ſo common at *Corinth*) let every Man retain his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband. *Here obſerve*, (1.) The Apoſtle's Expreſſion, he ſays, *Quiſque & quæque*, not *quidam & quædam*, let every Man and every Woman Marry, not ſome Men and ſome Women only, he excepts none, neither Prieſt nor Nun, but every one is here permitted, yea, for avoiding Fornication, commanded to Marry. *Obſerve farther*, How the Apoſtle directs every Man to have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband, more than One is forbidden; and Polygamy; or the Sin of having either more Wives, or more Husbands at a time than One is here condemned; to bridle and reſtrain Mens extravagant Luſts, the Wiſdom of God has directed every Man to enjoy his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband. Let the Church of *Rome* conſider how ſhe will anſwer at the Bar of God, for ſpitting in the Face of this Ordinance of God, for denying the Lawfulneſs of Marriage to her Prieſts and Nuns, when God has told her, *Heb.* 13. 4. *That Marriage is honourable in all, and that all unclean Perſons God will judge*; and ſuch too often have their Prieſts and Nuns been one with another.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewiſe alſo the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewiſe alſo the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud you not one the other, except *it be* with conſent for a time that ye may give your ſelves to faſting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Obſerve here, (1.) That Matrimonial Converſation, or the Husband's and Wife's performing towards each other all the Duties of Marriage which they promiſed, is an Act of Juſtice which they owe to one another, this is intimated in the Word *render*, and conſequently to deny the ſame is Injuſtice and Fraud; *defraud not one another.* Marriage takes away from Perſons that Power which they had over themſelves and their own Bodies, and transfers it in ſome ſort to the Perſon they are marry'd to. *Yet obſerve*, (2.) That Perſons in a Marry'd State may, and in ſome Caſes ought, (namely, for Religious Ends and Purpoſes) by mutual Conſent to abſtain from a Conjugal Duty for ſome time. *Defraud not one another, except it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to Faſting and Prayer. Obſerve*, (3.) The Apoſtle lays no Obligation upon any ſingle Perſons to take upon them a Vow for a ſingle Life, nor doth he direct marry'd Perſons to thoſe perpetual Divorces from the Marriage-bed, which the Papiſts practice, under Pretence of Religion: For the Apoſtle admits of no perpetual Separation between Husband and Wife, upon any Pretence whatever; no, not that they may give themſelves to Prayer and Faſting, but only permits it for a time, upon Condition that they come together again. So far was this Holy Man from laying a Snare upon the Conſciences of any Perſons, either in a ſingle or marry'd State.

6 But I ſpeak this by permiſſion, *and* not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as my ſelf: But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I ſay therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: For it is better to marry than burn.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Miſtake me not, as if I impos'd Marriage upon all Perſons as a Duty: No, but declare it is permitted to all as a Remedy againſt Fornication; for ſo far am I from that, that I could wiſh all Men were unmarry'd, even as I myſelf am, and that they had the Gift of Continence with myſelf; but God, who will have the World yet farther continued and increaſed, hath not given this Gift to all, nor to all alike in the ſame meaſure: Therefore to the unmarry'd I ſay, that ſo many are the Advantages of a ſingle Life, that if they can abide chaſte and ſingle, as I do, it will be many Ways for their Advantage: But if they cannot, let them uſe God's Remedy, which is Marriage; for it is better to Marry, than to burn in Luſt, to be perpetually aſſaulted with unclean Deſires, and ſubject to the Ravings and Inſults of Luſt. *Learn hence*, (1.) That marrying or not marrying is according to ſeveral Circumſtances, Matter of Advice and Counſel, but neither of them abſolutely of Precepts. (2.) That Second Marriages are not only lawful, but an incumbent Duty, if Perſons cannot contain themſelves withih the Bounds and Rules of Chaſtity. *To the Widows I ſay, if they cannot contain, let them marry.*

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* huſband: 11 But and if ſhe depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: And let not the husband put away *his* wife.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Although it be no Sin to Marry, yet it is a Sin to depart when marry'd; herein I lay the Authority of God's Command upon you, that you agree together, and that no Difference which may ariſe between you, cauſe you to ſeparate and live aſunder. But to marry upon Departure is a double Sin. Therefore if any Diſagreements and Diſcontents between Husband and Wife cauſe you to live aſunder for a time, think not either of you of marrying to another Perſon, but be reconcil'd to each other, and live together in Love, as becometh Perſons profeſſing Godlineſs. A Civil War in Families is fatal as well as in the Commonwealth; Domeſtick Contentions, eſpecially betwixt Husband and Wife, are dangerous and deſtructive of Love and Peace. If at any time they ariſe to that heighth as to cauſe a Separation betwixt them Two, who are One Fleſh, yet nothing of that Nature can warrant their Divorce; nothing but Death or Adultery can untye the Marriage-knot, and releaſe them from their Obligation to each other.

12 But to the reſt ſpeak I, not the Lord, If any brother hath a wiſe that believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleaſed to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the husband: Elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

1. Here we have another Caſe of Conſcience put by the *Corinthians* to the Apoſtle; namely, Whether ſuch Husbands as had Heathen and Infidel Wives might put them away? And whether ſuch Wives as had Infidel Husbands, might not, and ought not to depart from them? The Apoſtle reſolves the Caſe. That they ought, according to the Intent and End of Marriage, to cohabit and dwell together; and he aſſigns the Reaſon for it, becauſe the Unbelieving or Infidel Wife is ſanctify'd to the Believing or Chriſtian Husband; how ſanctify'd? Not in her Nature, but in her Uſe; ſo that they might lawfully cohabit and converſe together, being by Marriage made one Fleſh with him or her that is Holy; and for your Children, ſays he, they are not ſeminally unclean like the Children of Heathens, but federally Holy. *Now are they holy:* Not with an inherent, internal, perſonal Holineſs; for the holieſt Man's Child is born in Sin, and by Nature a Child of Wrath; but with an external, relative, and federal Holineſs, they are not common and unclean, like the Children of Infidels, but fit to be Partakers of the Privileges of the Church, to be admitted into Covenant with God, as belonging to his Holy People; *Elſe were your Children unclean, but now are they holy.* *Obſerve*, He doth not ſay, Elſe were your Children Baſtards, but now they are Legitimate: As the Enemies of Infant-Baptiſm, thoſe *duri Infantum patres*, would make him ſpeak, but *elſe were they unclean*; that is, Heathen Children, not to be own'd as an Holy Seed, and therefore not to be admitted into Covenant with God, as belonging to his Holy People. If the Holineſs here, the Apoſtle means a Matrimonial Holineſs, as the *Anabaptiſts* dream, then according to their Interpretation of the Word *Holy*, the Apoſtle ſpeaks neither pertinently, nor truly. Not pertinently, (1.) For then the Anſwer had been nothing to the Purpoſe; the Caſe put was concerning Husbands and Wives, not concerning Men and Whores; and the Queſtion propounded by the *Corinthians*, was not whether a believing Husband, and an unbeleiving Wife, were lawful Man and Wife together? No body queſtion'd that; but whether the Chriſtian Husband might put away his Heathen Wife? The Apoſtle anſwers, He ought not, if ſhe were willing to dwell with him, for ſhe is ſanctify'd to him; not ſanctify'd in reſpect of her Perſonal Condition, but in reſpect of her Conjugal Relation, otherwiſe their Children would be look'd upon as unclean, like the Children of Heathens, but now are they Holy, thas is, to be accounted viſible Saints, and as ſuch, to be admitted to Church-Privileges. (2.) According to this Interpretation of the Word *Holy*, the Apoſtle had not ſpoken truly; for the Children of Heathens, born in lawful Wedlock, are no more Baſtards than the Children of Chriſtians; for their Parents Marriage frees *them* from the Charge of Illegitimacy as well as others. Add to this, that in all the New Teſtament, tho' the Word *Holy* be us'd above Five Hundred times, yet it never once ſignifies Legitimacy, but is always us'd for a State of Separation to God: Therefore to make it ſignify ſo here, is a bold practiſing upon Scripture, a racking and wreſting of the Word of God, to maintain a private Opinion, to make the Text ſpeak what they would have, and not what the Apoſtle intends: But the Argument for Infant-Baptiſm from this Text runs; If the Holy Seed amongſt the *Jews* were therefore to be Circumcis'd, and made federally Holy, by receiving the Sign of the Covenant, and being admitted into the Number of God's Holy People, becauſe they were ſeminally Holy; *for the Root being holy, the Branches were alſo holy*; then by like Reaſons, the Holy Seed of Chriſtians ought to be admitted to Baptiſm, and receive the Sign of the Chriſtian Covenant, the Laver of Regeneration, and ſo be entred into the Society of the Chriſtian Church.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a ſiſter is not under bondage in ſuch *caſes*: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* husband? Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* wife? 17 But as God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, ſo let him walk: and ſo ordain I in all churches.

Here another Doubt is reſolv'd by the Apoſtle's, in caſe the unbelieving Party, either Husband or Wife depart; that is, refuſe to cohabit and dwell with their believing Yoke-fellow, and ſo make void, as much as in him or her lieth, the Marriage-bond out of hatred to the Faith: In that Caſe, if they will go, let them go; you are not bound to leave your Family to follow them. However, let ever Chriſtian, Huſband or Wife, omit nothing, but endeavour every thing, to the utmoſt, to oblige and win, to incline and engage their unbelieving Yoke-fellows, to live quietly with them; for God hath called us to Peace; and therefore we muſt give no Occaſion of Quarrel with, or Separation from, ſo near a Relation: And beſides, by the peaceable dwelling together, there is Hope of, and a fair Opportunity for the gaining and bringing over the Unbeliever to the Faith of Chriſt, and of being the Inſtrument of his or her Salvation: But however that may be, let every Chriſtian diſcharge his Duty in every Relation in which God has ſet him. This Order I appoint in all Churches converted to Chriſtianity, knowing it to be agreeable to the Mind of God, *That no Chriſtian ſhould pretend his Profeſſion of Religion to excuſe him from the Duties of any Relation.*

18 Is any man called, being circumciſed? Let him not become uncircumciſed: Is any called in uncircumciſion? Let him not become circumciſed. 19 Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Here the Apoſtle proceeds to exhort the *Corinthians* to be content with the Lot and Condition which God had diſtributed unto them, and to frame themſelves to walk Chriſtianly in it. Particularly he ſhews, That if any Perſon amongſt them were a Native *Jew*, and ſo circumciſed, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity, he ſhould neither trouble himſelf to get off that Mark from his Fleſh, nor affect the State of him who being a Gentile, had never been circumciſed. On the other ſide, if any of them were Native Gentiles, and never circumciſed, but now converted to Chriſtianity, let him not affect the State of one who was a Native *Jew*, and circumciſed; *For Circumciſion is nothing, and Uncircumciſion is nothing*: that is, nothing now available to Salvation, nothing that renders Perſons more or leſs acceptable in the Sight of God; but the keeping the Commandments of God, this is all in all: For God regards not Mens outward Conditions, but Obedience to his Commands. Chriſtianity conſiſt not in a warm Zeal, either for or againſt outward Ceremonies, but in poſitive Holineſs, and a ſtrict Conformity to Divine Precepts.

20 Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called, *being* a ſervant? care not for it: but if thou mayſt be made free, uſe *it* rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a ſervant, is the Lords freeman: Likewiſe alſo he that is called, *being* free, is Chriſts ſervant. 23 Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the ſervants of men. 24 Brethren let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

The Apoſtle ſeems to intimate from theſe Words, that ſome Perſons converted to Chriſtianity in the Primitive Times, apprehended that thereupon they muſt leave their worldly Callings and Imployments, as if they were Snares to them, or unneceſſary Diverſions from better Things. No, ſays the Apoſtle, *Let every one in his Calling, wherein he is called, therein abide with God:* That is, look in what honeſt civil Calling they were found when they became Chriſtians; let them keep to that Calling ſtill: For God doth not call us from our worldly Imployments and Buſineſs, but calls us to be Holy in them; nor doth our ſerving God any whit acquit or diſcharge us from ſerving one another, But particularly it was the Opinion of ſome Servants, converted to Chriſtianity, that their ſpiritual Freedom by Chriſt exempted them from all Civil Service to their Maſters. The Apoſtle therefore tells them, they are indeed freed by Chriſt from ſinful Slavery, but not from civil Servitude and Subjection; from Jewiſh Bondage, but not from Chriſtian Obedience. *Learn thence*, That Chriſtianity doth not free Men from any civil Obligations which before they lay under. Our Advantages by Chriſt are ſpiritual, and not ſecular; no Man's outward Condition is changed by his becoming Chriſtian; though he be now the Lord's Freeman, yet he is a Servant ſtill, if he was ſo before; nay, their Chriſtianity did not exempt them from their ſecular Relation to their Heathen and Infidel Maſters: As Service to Man doth not exempt us from, and is inconſiſtent with the Service of God; ſo our Spiritual Calling doth not make void our Civil: *Therefore let every Man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called.*

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no command-
ment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one
that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.
26 I ſuppoſe therefore, that this is good for the
preſent diſtreſs; *I ſay*, that *it is* good for a man ſo to
be. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? ſeek not to
be looſed. Art thou looſed from a wife? ſeek not
a wife. 28 But if thou marry, thou haſt not ſin-
ned; and if a virgin marry, ſhe hath not ſinned:
Neverthełeſs, ſuch ſhall have trouble in the fleſh;
but I ſpare you.

The next Caſe which our Apoſtle comes to reſolve, is concerning Virgins; whether they, being at their own Diſpoſe, ſhould marry or keep themſelves ſingle; He tells them firſt, that he had no ſpecial Command whereby the State of Virginity was either enjoined or prohibited, but he would faithfully give his Advice according to the beſt of his Judgment: And this he doth in two Particulars; (1.) That by reaſon of the preſent Diſtreſs, and Danger of Perſecution, which threatned the Church, it was moſt convenient that ſuch as were ſingle ſhould continue ſo, if it might lawfully be done: Yet, *Secondly*, He declares, that if they marry, they do not Sin; only they will be expoſed to more Troubles, as the Church's Troubles do encreaſe. *Here note*, (1.) That the Apoſtle pronounces Marriage lawful in all Perſons, of both Sexes, and not ſinful at any time, or in any ſtate and condition whatſoever. *Note*, (2.) That he ſignifies to all Perſons, that the Troubles of a married Life are more than thoſe which attend a ſingle State: *Such ſhall have trouble in the fleſh.* Marriage plunges Men into an Exceſs of worldly Cares; it multiplies their Buſineſs, and uſually their Wants; and theſe Wants are far hardlier born than in a ſingle Life. *Note*, (3.) That beſides the ordinary Inconveniencies of a married Life, which all Perſons are to expect, ſuch as enter the married Condition, when the Church is under Perſecution, muſt prepare to meet with more than ordinary Troubles. *Such*, that is, in thoſe times of Perſecution, *ſhall have Trouble*, that is, more trouble *in the Fleſh. But I ſpare you*: that is, I forbear to ſpeak any more of that matter, leſt I ſhould ſeem to diſſuade you from Marriage, which is the Ordinance of God, more than is fit, and be thought by any, to lay the Yoke of Celibacy, or a ſingle Life, upon you. I only tell you, that when Chriſtians are under Perſecutiou and Diſtreſs, it is much more for their Eaſe and Quiet to be ſingle, than to have a Wife and Children to care for in Poverty or Flight.

29 But this I ſay, brethren, the time is ſhort.
It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as
though they had none; 30 And they that weep,
as though they wept not; and they that rejoyce,
as though they rejoyced not; and they that buy,
as though they poſſeſſed not; 31 And they that
uſe this world; as not abuſing it: for the faſhion
of this world paſſeth away.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Let all Perſons, both married and unmarried, conſider that the time of this Life is ſhort, and paſſing; it is but a point of Time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a Pin to chuſe, whether we had Wives or not, or Children or not; for before the expected Fruit of the Comforts be ripe, we our ſelves may be rotten: it's therefore true ſpiritual Wiſdom to look upon theſe Things now, as they will be ſhortly; to be very moderate in the Enjoyment of them, not to be too much affected when we have them, or too much afflicted when we want them. *Obſerve here*, (1.) The Apoſtle's Propoſition; *The time is ſhort.* This is true in all the Notions of it. Take it firſt for the whole Duration of this World, from the Day of its Creation, to the hour of its Diſſolution; compare it with what ſucceeds it, Eternity, and it is very ſhort, but a moment. *Secondly*, Take time for the whole Duration of any one Man's Life, ſo 'tis ſhorter; ſo ſhort, that it is nothing. *Thirdly*, Take time for the ſpecial Seaſon, either of doing or enjoying Good in this Life; ſo 'tis ſhorteſt of all. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Inference which the Apoſtle draws from this Propoſition, therefore *let them that have wives, be as if they had none*, &c. *Learn thence*, That the Conſideration of the great ſhortneſs of Time, and the Uncertainty of Human Life, ſhould keep our Hearts in a great deal of Moderation towards the beſt and ſweeteſt of outward Comforts and Enjoyments: That we neither love inordinately any Mercy when we enjoy it, nor mourn immoderately for any Contentment when we come to be deprived of it. *They that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not. Obſerve*, (3.) The Advice which the Apoſtle gives to ſuch as have great Poſſeſſions and Revenues in this World, (1.) To take heed, that though they poſſeſs theſe things, that they be not poſſeſſed by them. (2.) That they ſo uſe them as not to abuſe them, nor be abuſed by them. There is much Evil in the World, yet we may, we muſt uſe it, and it will be our Wiſdom to make a good uſe of this World, whilſt we are in it; otherwiſe we neither anſwer to the End of God, in ſending us into the World, nor the Deſign of God, in intruſting us with the good Things of this World. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Reaſon aſſigned why we ſhould uſe the World in the forementioned manner, becauſe *the faſhion of this world paſſeth away.* Here the Apoſtle compares the things of this World to a Scene which is preſently changed, and vaniſheth almoſt as ſoon as it appears. As Faſhions in this World alter, ſo doth the Faſhion of this World alter every day. There is a World to come, the Faſhion whereof ſhall never paſs away, but the Faſhion or Scheme of this World paſſeth away continually. This World is like a Stage, Perſons interchangeably act their Parts upon it, but they ſoon diſappear, and the Stage itſelf e'er long will be pulled down. *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away. Thence learn*, That this Conſideration, that all the Comforts and Conveniencies of this Life are fading and paſſing away from us, ſhould be a ſtrong Motive and Inducement to us not to ſet our Hearts upon them.

32 But I would have you without carefulneſs.
He that is unmarried, careth for the things that
belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord:
33 But he that is married careth for the things
that are of the world, how he may pleaſe *his* wife.
34 There is difference alſo between a wife and a
virgin: the unmarried woman careth for the things
of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in body
and in ſpirit: but ſhe that is married, careth for
the things of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe *her*
husband. 35 And this I ſpeak for your own pro-
fit, not that I may caſt a ſnare upon you, but for
that which is comely, and that you may attend
upon the Lord without diſtraction.

Here our Apoſtle ſubjoins another Reaſon why a ſingle Life is to be preferred before a married Life; namely, becauſe ſingle Perſons are comparatively more free from Cares and Diſtractions, and have commonly more Time and Leiſure to attend upon the Lord in Religious Duties; for the unmarried Man has but one Care upon him; namely, how he may ſerve and pleaſe God: But the married Man has another Care upon him; to wit, how he may oblige and pleaſe his Wife. In like manner a married Woman is incumbred with Houſhold Affairs, diſturbed with Domeſtick Cares, and concerned in lawful things to pleaſe her Husband, and conſequently has neither ſo much Time nor Freedom for holy Exerciſes: But the Virgin that has no Family to care for, no Husband to ſeek to pleaſe, has much more leiſure to attend upon God in holy Duties, and religious Exerciſes; therefore he adviſes them to chuſe that State of Life in which they *may attend upon the Lord without diſtraction. Learn hence,* (1.) That a married Condition is certainly and neceſſarily attended with many Diverſions and Diſtractions, from which a ſingle Life is free. (2.) That Perſons in a Conjugal Relation may and ought to ſeek the obliging and pleaſing one another with their utmoſt Endeavours, without violating their Duty to Almighty God. *Learn,* (3.) That Perſons in a ſingle State have great Advantages (may they improve them) of ſerving God above others, in regard of their Freedom from domeſtick Cares, Troubles and Temptations; they have Time and Leiſure for pious Performances, if the Heart be diſpoſed for them. *Learn,* (4.) That it is the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavour of all Perſons, both married and unmarried, not only to ſerve God in Religious Duties, but to attend upon him in them, as much as may be, without Diſtraction. Diſtractions are the Wanderings of the Heart, Mind and Thoughts, from God in Religious Duties: The Nature of God requires, that we watch and ſtrive againſt them; his Majeſty and Greatneſs, his Purity and Holineſs, his Omniſciency and All-ſeeing Eye upon us, and within us, do oblige us to this careful Endeavour, and the Nature of his Worſhip calls for it, which is a reaſonable Service, and a ſpiritual Service: and the Nature of Diſtractions ſhould make us dread them. They divide the Heart, they deaden the Duty, contract Guilt, and provoke Diſpleaſure. Lord help us in all the Services we perform unto thee, to attend upon thee without Diſtraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himſelf uncomely toward his virgin, if ſhe paſs the flower of *her* age, and need ſo require, let him do what he will, he ſinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheleſs, he that ſtandeth ſtedfaſt in his heart, having no neceſſity, but hath power over his own will, and hath ſo decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin, doth well. 38 So then, he that giveth *her* in marriage, doth well: but he that giveth *her* not in marriage, doth better.

The next Caſe which our Apoſtle ſpeaks to is concerning Virgins, who are under the Power of others, (and not at their own diſpoſe) as Parents and Guardians; namely, whether it be beſt and moſt adviſeable for them to diſpoſe of their Virgins in Marriage or not. The Apoſtle anſwers, that in this Caſe particular Reſpect muſt be had to particular Circumſtances: as namely, if ſhe be of marriagable Years, and beyond them; if ſhe has an Inclination to, and be deſirous of Marriage, then he adviſes that ſhe be ſo diſpoſed of; but if a Parent be fully ſatisfied in his own Mind that he wrongs not his Daughter in declining to marry her, if he has a perfect Freedom in his own Will, and his Will is not contradicted by his Daughter's Deſire, he doth well, yea, he doth beſt not to marry her; beſt, with reſpect to the diſtreſſed Condition of the Church; beſt, with reſpect to the Troubles of the World, which ſhe will be the more free from; and beſt, with reſpect to the Young-woman's Liberty and Freedom for the Service of God, and the Exerciſes of Religion. *Learn hence,* That although Children are to be diſpoſed of in Marriage by their Parents, yet Parents have no ſuch abſolute Power over their Children, as to hinder them from Marriage, or to compel them to it: To do either is very ſinful, very unnatural.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, ſhe is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will; only in the Lord. 40 But ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide, after my judgment: and I think alſo that I have the ſpirit of God.

The Apoſtle concludes the Chapter with a Reſolution of this Caſe of Conſcience; namely, Whether Second Marriages of Widows were lawful or not. He anſwers, They were. After the firſt Husband was dead, the Widow might marry again, provided that ſhe married in the Lord: That is, with a Believer, not an Infidel; with one of the ſame Faith with herſelf. It is very dangerous and ſinful for Perſons profeſſing the true Faith of Chriſt to match with Idolaters. There is far greater Grounds of Fear that they will pervert you, than there is ground of Hope that you ſhould convert them. But though the Apoſtle aſſerts it lawful for Widows to marry again, yet he declares, that in regard of the preſent Danger which the Church was in of Perſecution, they would be more happy in their Widowhood. So that the Determination of the Apoſtle, as to the Caſe of Marriage and Single Life, is concluded thus: That ordinarily, where there is no neceſſity, a ſingle Life is more for a Perſon's Peace, more free from Diſtractions in God's Service, and therefore beſt.

CHAP. VIII.

Our Apoſtle having, in the foregoing Chapter reſolved ſeveral Caſes of Conſcience concerning Marriage; in this Chapter he reſolves that grand Caſe touching the Lawfulneſs of eating things offered to Idols. The Occaſion of which Scruple was this: The Heathens uſed to ſacrifice to their Idols, Oxen, Sheep, and other Cattel, and to feaſt upon their Sacrifices. Part of the Oxen or Sheep the Prieſt burnt upon the Altar as a Sacrifice to the Idol, and the other part he either took to himſelf, and made a Feaſt in the Idol's Temple, and invited his Friends to it; or elſe the Prieſt reſtored it to the Offerer, who carried it home, and either feaſted his Neighbours with it, or elſe carried it into the Market, and ſold it in the Shambles as other Meat. Now the Queſtion which the Corinthians *put to the Apoſtle to reſolve was this, Whether Chriſtians, if invited to theſe Feaſts, might go and eat of theſe Meats, either in the Idol-Temples, or in the Pagan-Houſes, or might buy and eat of any ſuch Meat, if it were ſold in the Shambles? A Reſolution of which Queſtion we have in this and the Tenth Chapter. In which the Apoſtle thus beſpeaks them.*

1 NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

It was the Opinion of the *Gnoſticks* and *Nicolaitans*, (thoſe early erroneous Perſons in the Apoſtle's days) that from the Knowledge they had of their Chriſtian Liberty, they might either be preſent in the Idol-Temples, or eat of the Idol-Sacrifices as they pleaſed. The Apoſtle here tells them, that he knew many of them had a good Degree of Knowledge, but deſires they may not be puffed up with it, but that their Knowledge may be accompanied with Charity, which reſpects the Edification of others, and puts Men upon conſidering not only what is lawful to be done in it ſelf, and with reſpect to our ſelves, but what is expedient or inexpedient in Relation unto others. True Love or Chriſtian Charity will put us upon conſulting the Good of our Neighbour's Soul, as well as our own, and will not ſuffer us to do that Thing which may offend our weak Brother; that is, lay a ſtumbling-block before him to tempt him into Sin. *Knowledge puffeth up*; this is to be underſtood of a Notional, Literal, and Speculative Knowledge only; not of a Spiritual, Practical, and Experimental Knowledge. The more a gracious Man knows, the more humble he is, becauſe his Knowledge ſhews him his own Vileneſs and Emptineſs; but the more a carnal Man knows, the more proud he is, becauſe he knoweth not himſelf; his Knowledge is not only a Temptation to Pride, but the very Matter of his Pride. Such Knowledge doth not build up, but puff up, where as *Charity edifieth*; that is, applies itſelf to the Inſtruction of others, and accommodates itſelf to the Edification of others, and conſiders not only what may lawfully be done, but what is fit and expedient to be done; as in the Caſe here before us, eating things offered to Idols.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

That is, if a Man have never ſo much Knowledge, yet if it be not accompanied with Charity and Humility, if he improves not his Knowledge to the glory of God, and the good of others, he knows nothing to any ſaving purpoſe, or as he ought to know. *Learn,* That Chriſtians ſhould by no means content themſelves with an empty ſpeculative Knowledge, but labour to know as they ought to know. *Obſerve farther.* The Apoſtle ſays, *He that thinketh that he knows any thing*; that is, he that is conceited of his own Knowledge, that thinks of it with Inſolency and Pride, and ſpeaks of it with Affectation and Vain-glory; he who is thus conceited of his own Knowledge, he knows not himſelf; yea, he knows nothing as he ought to know. *Learn thence,* That it becomes us to have very humble Thoughts of ourſelves, and of our own Knowledge, how much ſoever we really know; that Man's Wiſdom is but Conceit, who is only wiſe in his own Conceit.

3 But if any man love God, the ſame is known of him.

Obſerve, The Apoſtle doth not ſay if any Man know God, *but if any Man love God,* the ſame is known, that is, allowed, accepted, and approved of him; a Man may know much of God in this World, and yet God may be aſhamed to know him in another World; but the Soul that ſincerely loves God, is certainly beloved of him, and ſhall be owned and acknowledged by him; now true Love to our Neighbour is a good Evidence of our ſincere Love to God, and if we love our Neighbour truly, we dare not ſcandalize our Neighbour ſinfully, nor offend our Fellow Brethren; only here we muſt take notice, that by offending the Weak, is not meant diſpleaſing them, but by offending them is meant, laying a Stumbling-block before them, which may occaſion their falling into Sin.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of thoſe things that are offered in ſacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there* is none other God but one.

One Argument which the *Gnoſticks* uſed to prove the lawfulneſs of eating things offered unto Idols was this, That an Idol was nothing in the World; but how nothing? It was not materially nothing, for it was Wood or Stone, but formally it was nothing, it was nothing of God's Creation, nothing that the Idolater took it to be, there was nothing of a Deity in it, and nothing of a Deity could be repreſented by it; an Idol is the vaineſt thing in the World, it is meer Vanity, a perfect Nothing, (called therefore the Vanities of the *Gentiles*) it is of no Worth or Value, it has no Power or Virtue. Some obſerve, that the ſame *Hebrew* Word ſignifies both an Idol, and Sorrow, and Labour, partly becauſe Idols are made and formed with much Labour, and great Exactneſs; the Wood or Stone, figuratively ſpeaking, is put to pain, you muſt cut it and carve it to make an Idol or Statue of it, partly becauſe Idols are ſerved and worſhipped with much Pain and Labour, falſe Worſhip is more painful than true, the Service of the true God is an Holy and Honourable Service, a noble and ingenious Service, an eaſie and delightful Service, but the Service of Idols is ſlaviſh, a Toil rather than Worſhip; Idols are troubleſome both in making and worſhipping, and after all the buſtle made about them, an Idol is nothing in the World, becauſe there is no God but One.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many) 6 But to us *there is but* one God, the father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

Here the Apoſtle tells them, that although the Heathen Idolaters acknowledged a Plurality of Gods, ſome in Heaven, as the Sun, Moon, and Stars, ſome on Earth, as Men, and Beaſts, they having their Celeſtial and Terreſtrial Gods and Lords, but theſe were only *called Gods,* that is, Gods in Name, not in Nature, not in reallity, yet (ſays he) we Chriſtians do own and acknowledge but one living and true God, one in Nature, not one in Perſon, to whom all our Prayers muſt be directed, and one Mediator, by whom all our Prayers are to be offered; *to us there is but one God, the Father.* This Text the *Arians, Socinians,* and *Unitarians,* exceedingly boaſt of, as if it expreſly confined the Deity to the Father, as diſtinct from Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt. Thus they argue, (1.) He who ſaith there is one Emperor, to wit, *Cæſar,* ſays in effect there is no other Emperor but *Cæſar*; ſo when St. *Paul* ſaith there is one God the Father, he doth (ſay they) in effect declare that there is no other God beſides the Father? To this the Orthodox anſwer, (1.) That God the Father is often put in Scripture for the whole Deity, comprehending the Three Perſons, he being *Fons Deitatis,* and *Fundamentum Trinitatis,* as the Schoolmen ſpeak, ſo that the Application of the Word *God* here unto the Father doth not exclude the Son from being God, but only from being the Fountain of the Deity, as the Father is; in *Rev.* 1. 17. Chriſt ſays, I am *Alpha* and *Omega,* the firſt and the laſt, will any conclude, thence that God the Father is not *Alpha* and *Omega*? Is not he the firſt and the laſt as well as Chriſt? *Again,* We call our Lord Jeſus the only Saviour, do we therefore exclude God the Father from being a Saviour, is he not ſtiled the Saviour of all Men? 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Again,* God the Father is called the Creator of all things, yet is it aſſerted that all things were created by Chriſt, the Word, *John* 1. 2. In ſhort, we aſſert as well as they the Unity of the Godhead, and that Chriſt is not another God, but only another Perſon from the Father. *We anſwer,* (2.) Their own Argument may be thus retorted upon themſelves; as the Apoſtle ſays here there is but One God the Father, ſo he adds in the next Words, there is but One Lord Jeſus Chriſt; now if the ſaying that there is but One God, doth exclude Chriſt from being God, then the ſaying that there is but One Lord, doth exclude God the Father from being Lord; and if it be Blaſphemy to exclude God the Father from being Lord, it is no leſs to exclude Chriſt the Son from being God. *Know then,* That as Chriſtians have in all Ages of the Church acknowledg'd One God only, even God the Father, ſo have they alſo own'd that Jeſus Chriſt was truly God, of the Subſtance of the Father, God of God, very God of very God, The Lord keep us ſtedfaſt in this Faith, ſeeing he that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father that hath ſent him; but he that denyeth the Son, denyeth the Father alſo.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for ſome with conſcience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conſcience being weak is defiled.

Theſe Words are brought in as a Reaſon by the Apoſtle, why ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould not eat Meat offer'd unto Idols with reſpect to thoſe that are weak; as if he had ſaid, Tho' many of you know that an Idol is nothing, and that Meat is neither ſanctify'd nor polluted which is ſet before it, and therefore you can eat or not eat without any ſcruple as to yourſelves, yet you ſhould conſider what is ſafeſt to be done with reſpect to others, for every Man has not this knowledge, that an Idol is nothing, but ſome Perſons having a conceit of the Idol's being ſomething, eat what is offer'd to it as a thing offer'd to an Idol, that is, not as common Meat, but as a ſacred Banquet in Honour of the Idol; and ſo his Conſcience being weak, that is, erroneous, is defil'd. *Learn hence,* That an Action which is lawful in reſpect of ourſelves, may yet be a Sin if done by us with reſpect to others; another, encouraged by our Example, may do the ſame Act, but not do it with the ſame intent, as in the Caſe before us; the ſight of one Chriſtian's eating things offer'd unto Idols, who knows that an Idol is nothing in the World, may harden, embolden, and encourage others to do the ſame, who really intend ſome Honour by it to the Idol; the outward Action is the ſame, but the Opinion and Intention wide and different.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worſe. 9 But take heed leſt by any means this liberty of yours become a ſtumbling-block to them that are weak.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, It is not the eating or not eating barely conſider'd, that makes a Man either better or worſe, more or leſs acceptable in the ſight of God, but we muſt take great heed leſt by our Example others take occaſion to worſhip the Idol; you therefore ought not ſo to eat as to give occaſion to the Fall of your weak Brother, ſtill the Apoſtle holds forth this Truth unto us, That ſuch a Man certainly ſins who uſes his Liberty ſo as that it becomes a Snare and a Stumbling-block to the weak Brother, by emboldning and encouraging him unto Sin.

10 For if any man ſee thee which haſt knowledge ſit at meat in the idols temple, ſhall not the conſcience of him which is weak be emboldned to eat thoſe things which are offered to idols? 11 And through thy knowledge ſhall thy weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died?

The meaning of the Apoſtle ſeems to be this; If any Man with an erroneous Conſcience goes to theſe Feaſts, and there ſees thee, who he thinks has more Knowledge than himſelf, ſet at Meat in the Idol's Temple, will not his Conſcience be the mae emboldned by thy Example to eat things offer'd to Idols in the Honour of the Idol, or, as thinking it no hurt, to worſhip the Idol? And thus by occaſion of thy Knowledge a weak Brother is in danger of periſhing, for whom Chriſt dy'd, an indiſcreet uſe of that Liberty which our ſuppos'd Knowledge teaches us to make uſe of doth that if we be not careful, which may be accounted a deſtroying of our weak Brother, by cauſing him to fall into Sin; by all which the Apoſtle lets us know the Obligation which lies upon every good Chriſtian not to uſe his Liberty to the Prejudice of others Souls, by doing any Action which may be let alone, but if done, may really become a Snare to others.

12 But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt.

The Apoſtle goes on to ſhew, that ſuch an uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty as doth embolden and encourage others to do that which is evil, is both an Act of Uncharitableneſs towards our Brother, and alſo an Act of Sin againſt our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in betraying a Soul to Ruin as much as in us lieth, and hindring his Salvation for the ſaving of whom Chriſt dy'd, wounding the Members of his Body, defeating the great End of his Death, and deſtroying them whom he deſign'd to ſave. *Learn,* (1.) That Chriſt in dying for the weakeſt Believers, hath ſhewn the higheſt degree of Love imaginable unto them. *Learn,* (2.) That ſuch as will not abate or abridge themſelves of their Chriſtian Liberty, when the uſe of it may probably be an occaſion of Sin, and the Ruin of their Brethrens Souls, they do at once wound their weak Brethren, and ſin againſt Chriſt.

13 Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

A twofold Senſe and Interpretation is given of theſe Words, ſome underſtand the Apoſtle ſpeaking thus; If my eating Meat offer'd to Idols be a ſtumbling-block to any Perſons, and confirms them in their ſinful Practice, or be an occaſion of Sin unto them, I will certainly deny myſelf the uſe of that Liberty which may prove of ſuch dangerous Conſequence to my Fellow-Chriſtians; others carry the thing higher, and underſtand it of all Fleſh in general, that rather than the Apoſtle would offend his weak Brother, he would not eat any Fleſh to his Dying-day; an Hyperbolical Expreſſion, by which the Apoſtle declares how far one Chriſtian ſhould condeſcend to another to prevent each other ſinning againſt God; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Verily I do not make ſo light of another's Sin, nor ſet ſo light by the Soul of my weak Brother, nor by the Blood of my Bleſſed Saviour, as for Fleſh, that is, for an unneceſſary thing, to make uſe of my Liberty, when it may prove a Temptation unto Sin. From the whole of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe in this Chapter, we learn, That it is the Duty of Chriſtians in Matters wherein they are at Liberty by the Law of God to do a thing, or not do it, to take that part which they ſee will give leaſt occaſion of Sin unto their Brethren, and to avoid that part which, if taken, will certainly give occaſion unto others to ſin, although we be ourſelves never ſo well ſatisfy'd as to the lawfulneſs of the Action, yet we ought to deny ourſelves in ſome things, rather than be an occaſion unto others to fall into Sin; he forfeits the Name of a Chriſtian, who will not abridge himſelf his Chriſtian Liberty to preſerve his Brother from Sin and Temptation.

CHAP. IX.

Otr Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chopter exhorted the Corinthians *to abridge themſelves in the lawful Uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty, when it will be prejudicial to weak Chriſtians; in this Chapter he propounds his own Example for their Encouragement and Imitation, who though he was an Apoſtle, and had as great a Freedom and Liberty as any Man in Things undetermined by the Law of God; yet reſtrain'd himſelf in ſeveral Caſes, which are recorded in this Chapter; in which the Holy Apoſtle thus expreſſes himſelf.*

1 AM I not an Apoſtle? am I not free? have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? are not you my work in the Lord?

The firſt Inſtance which the Apoſtle gives of his Freedom and Liberty was this, That when he preach'd the Goſpel amongſt them at *Corinth,* he had a Liberty either to live on the Goſpel, and take Maintainance of them for Preaching, or to live upon his Labour, following his Trade of Tent-making, according as he ſaw it beſt for the Furtherance of the Goſpel; *Am I not free?* As if he had ſaid, Have not I as good a Claim to Freedom and Chriſtian Liberty as any Man? For *Am not I an Apoſtle,* or an extraordinary Meſſenger of Jeſus Chriſt? And tho' I never ſaw the Face of Chriſt upon Earth, yet *have I not ſeen* him, and heard him ſpeaking to me from Heaven? And is not the Converſion of you the *Corinthians* to the Chriſtian Faith by my Miniſtry a Fruit and Seal of my Apoſtleſhip? Now if I be all this, certainly I have as great a Right and Claim to the Uſe of Chriſtian Liberty as any of you can pretend to have; yet will I only make uſe of it for the Benefit of others, and for the Furtherance of the Goſpel. *Learn* we from the Apoſtle's Example in abſtaining from that Liberty and Power which God had given him for receiving Maintenance from them to whom he preach'd the Goſpel, how much it is the Duty and Concern of all Chriſtians, to the end of the World, to abſtain from the Exerciſe of that Liberty, and rightful Power granted to them by Chriſt, for avoiding the Scandal of the Weak, and promoting Mens Spiritual Welfare.

2 If I be not an Apoſtle unto others, yet doubtleſs I am to you: for the ſeal of mine apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.

As if he had ſaid, whatever others do, you of all Men ſhould not queſtion my Apoſtleſhip, for you were Converted by it: You confirm and ratify my Miniſtry that it is of God, and that God is in it of a Truth: The Converſion of Sinners, and the Building up of Saints, is God's Seal to our Miniſtry. *Learn hence,* That there is no ſuch Argument to prove a Miniſter ſent of Chriſt, as the Succeſs of his Miniſtry in the Converſion of Souls unto God: This is God's Seal to his Office, that he is a Miniſter called of God, and ſent by God: Happy thoſe Miniſters who can ſay unto their People, *Ye are our Work, and the Seal of our Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.* Yet muſt it not be concluded from hence, that a Perſon is not a true Miniſter of Chriſt, becauſe he cannot produce this Seal; the Good of our Miniſtry is not always known to ourſelves, much leſs publiſh'd to the World; more Good is done many times by the Miniſtry of the Word than the Miniſter knows of; the Seed ſometimes lies long under the Clods before it fructifies; what is ſown in one Miniſter's time, come up in another's; ſo one Soweth and another Reapeth; but both he that Soweth, and he that Reapeth, ſhall Rejoice together. But where this Seal can be produced, it is a certain Sign that ſuch a Miniſter is ſent of God, and that God is with him, and owns him; yet it muſt be added, that tho' the Succeſs of our Miniſtry to others is a Seal of our Office, and aſſures us that we are true Miniſters, yet it is the Efficacy of the Word we Preach upon our own Hearts and Lives, that is the Witneſs of our Sanctification, and the Seal of our Salvation. Lord! How ſad will it be for any of us to have been Inſtruments for the helping others to Heaven by the Soundneſs of our Doctrine, and go to Hell ourſelves for the Badneſs of our Example, and the Wickedneſs of our Lives!

3 Mine anſwer to them that do examine me, is this, 4 Have we not power to eat and to

drink? 5 Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter, a wife, as well as other apoſtles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

Here the Apoſtle inſtances in another Branch of his Chriſtian Liberty, and that was Marriage; he could have taken a Wife, as *Peter*, and other Apoſtles did, had he pleaſed, and have put the Church to farther Charges in maintaining himſelf, a Wife and Family, as did others, without Blame; and he and *Barnabas* had Power to forbear working for their Living, and maintaining themſelves with their own Labour in Tent-making; they had Power to ask Maintenance of the *Corinthians*, if they pleaſed. But they conſidered the low Circumſtances which the Church was in and under at that Time, and continued both in a ſingle State, and wrought with their Hands to maintain themſelves, when they might have expected Maintenance from the Church. *Have we not Power to lead about a Siſter, a Wife?* That is, to Marry if we ſaw fit. *Hence Learn*, (1.) The Lawfulneſs of the Miniſters of the Goſpel marrying as well as other Men; neither the Prophets of the Old-Teſtament, nor the Apoſtles of the New, did abhor the Marriage-Bed, nor judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker; the Doctrine forbidding Marriage to any, (which the Apoſtle ſays is honourable in all) is called a Doctrine of Devils. *Learn*, (2.) That no Chriſtians, much leſs Miniſters, have Power, that is, any lawful Power, to Marry ſuch as are no Chriſtians; their Wives muſt be their Siſters in Chriſt; that is, Chriſtian Women, at leaſt by external and viſible Profeſſion. (3.) That Husbands and Wives ought to be undivided Companions one to another. *Have we not Power to lead about a Wife?* That is, to take her with us in our Travels and Journeyings from Place to Place for our Comfort and Aſſiſtance; Husbands and Wives are to be mutual Companions, Sharers in each other's Sorrows, and Partakers of one another's Comforts.

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, as Soldiers are paid by thoſe that imploy them, and as Husbandmen and Shepherds live upon the Fruit of their Labours, ſo may I, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpel with me. Where *Note*, (1.) That the Miniſterial Function is preſented here as a Warfare; the Miniſters of Chriſt are ſpiritual Soldiers, they have many Enemies to encounter with, and contend againſt. They are alſo Planters, Vine-dreſſers, Husbandmen, Shepherds: All which Titles given to them do intimate and ſignific what Care and Painfulneſs, what Diligence and Watchfulneſs, ſhould be found with them. *Note*, (2.) That Maintenance, a comfortable Maintenance, yea, and where it may be had, an honourable Maintenance, from the People, is a Debt due to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who labour in the Word and Doctrine amongſt them: *Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof?* This is the firſt Argument which our Apoſtle here makes uſe of to prove the Miniſter's Maintenance a Duty taken from the Law of Nations, Equity and Cuſtom, which do appoint and allow to Soldiers, Vine-dreſſers and Shepherds, yea, to all that Labour for the uſe of others in their reſpective Callings, a due Reward of Wages; what Soldier goes to War at his own Charges?

8 Say I theſe things as a man? or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo? 9 For it is written in the law of Moſes, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes no doubt, *this is* written; that he that ploweth ſhould plow in hope; and that he that threſheth in hope, ſhould be partaker of his hope.

A Second Argument produced by the Apoſtle for the Peoples chearful Maintenance of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, is taken from the Levitical Law; *Say I theſe things as a Man? Or ſaith not the Law the ſame alſo?* As if he had ſaid, I do not ſpeak this only rationally, as a thing very agreeable to the Light of Nature, and the Law of Nations, but the Levitical Law ſays the ſame; for when God in *Deut.* 25. 4. forbids to *muzzle the Mouth of the Ox*, who by hard Labour treadeth out the Corn with his Feet, his Deſign therein is more than the bare taking Care of the Ox, for thereby he ſhews in general what Equity ſhould be uſed in the juſt rewarding of all Men that Labour for us; and in particular, that ſpiritual Labourers, ſuch as Plow, and Sow, and Threſh, in the ſpiritual Husbandry, ſhould Labour in hope of a Livelihood and Subſiſtance, and eat their Bread when they have earnt it; if all Men are encouraged to work, by a juſt Expectation of the Fruit of their own juſt Labours, why ſhould not the Miniſters of the Word meet with the like Encouragement, which all Mankind look upon as their juſt Due?

11 If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?

A third Argument for the Miniſters Maintenance is here taken from common Juſtice; they *ſow ſpiritual things*; that is, they diſpence the Word and Sacraments, and endeavour to make Men Spiritual and holy here, and Happy hereafter; and therefore they ought to reap ſome of their Peoples *carnal Things*, things for the Support of their Lives, a Subſiſtance for themſelves and their Families: So that the Miniſters of God are not indebted to their People, but their People are indebted both to God and them; they give their People things of a much greater Value, and more excellent Uſe, for things of much leſſer Value, and more inferiour Uſe; for their Carnal Things, they give them Spiritual Things.

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? nevertheleſs, we have not uſed this power; but ſuffer all things, leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt.

Here we have a fourth Argument for the *Corinthians* allowing St. *Paul*, and other Apoſtles, a ſufficient Maintenance; namely, for their own Example to other Teachers at *Corinth*; as if he had ſaid, You maintain others, why not us? Do not you owe more to us, who firſt laid the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church amongſt you, and have begotten you through the Goſpel, than you do to others? Nevertheleſs he tells them, that himſelf and *Barnabas*, altho' they had this unqueſtionable Liberty, yet they never made uſe of it, but ſuffered Hunger and Thirſt, Wearineſs and Want, leſt it ſhould obſtruct the Courſe, and hinder the Progreſs, of the Goſpel; whilſt ſome might (tho' very unjuſtly) charge them with Covetouſneſs; and others, to ſave Charges, might decline hearing of them.

13 Do ye not know that they which miniſter about holy things, live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? 14 Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.

A fifth Argument is here produced for the Miniſter's Maintenance, which is taken from the Example of the Levites, who lived upon the Things that were offered in the Temple, and at the Altar, and had a conſiderable Part of the Sacrifices allowed them by God himſelf for their Miniſtration under the Law. In like manner, ſays the Apoſtle, it is the Lord's Pleaſure and Appointment now under the Goſpel, (St. *Matthew* 10. 10. St. *Luke* 10. 7.) that they who Preach the Word ſhould be maintained for it, and not diverted from their Work, by the Cares and Buſineſs of the World, but have a Livelihood from their Labour. Hence it clearly appears that a Maintenance for the Miniſtry under the Goſpel is of Divine Right; if it was ſo under the Law, it is likewiſe under the Goſpel, for *ſo*, ſays the Apoſtle, *has God ordained*. God's Will in this Matter is the ſame under the New-Teſtament as it was under the Old; and as a Maintenance in general is of Divine Right, ſo Tythes may make thus far a Claim to be of that Nature, that it is believed the Wiſdom of Man cannot find out any better Expedient, than by them to ſupport a Miniſterial Maintenance for the Preachers of the Goſpel to the end of the World.

15 But I have uſed none of theſe things. Neither have I written theſe things, that it ſhould be ſo done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die,

than that any man ſhould make my glorying void.

The Apoſtle having thus aſſerted his Liberty, now ſhews his great Moderation in the uſe of it; although he had a Liberty to Marry, and to demand Maintenance for his Miniſtry as well as others, yet he denied himſelf in both; the Apoſtle was charged by falſe Teachers, that he preached the Goſpel for his own Profit and Advantage; whereas he gloried in the contrary, that he made the Goſpel without Charge; looking upon it as his great Honour, that he could, and did, Preach the Goſpel freely, for ſincere Ends, and not out of ſiniſter Reſpects; and profeſſes he had rather die by ſtarving, than loſe his Advantage of glorying. Now the Inference which St. *Paul* draws from all this Diſcourſe of his declining the uſe of his lawful Liberty, is this, if I your Miniſter for your Profit, and the Advantage of the Goſpel, abate of my own juſt Right, and unqueſtionable Liberty, why ſhould not you abate of yours, in the caſe of eating Things offered unto Idols, to keep your weak Brethren from deſtroying their Souls by ſinning againſt God.

16 For though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: for neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the goſpel. 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if againſt my will, a diſpenſation *of the goſpel* is committed unto me.

That which the Apoſtle glories in, is not his bare preaching of the Goſpel, but his preaching of it freely and without maintenance; for, ſays he, though I preach the Goſpel, that has nothing ſingular in it, others do it as well as my ſelf; and I am bound to do it as well as others, for Neceſſity is laid upon Me, by ſpecial Call and Command from Chriſt ſo to do; yea, wo is unto me for my Diſobedience to Chriſt in the Heavenly Viſion, (*Act.* 26.) if I preach not the Goſpel. Now if I do this thing willingly; that is, freely, without demanding any thing of you for my Pains, which I might do, *I have a Reward*: That is, a ſpecial Reward from God, and may glory in it; but if I preach unwillingly, (demanding a Maintenance for my Pains, and refuſing to preach without it) all that can be ſaid is this, that a Diſpenſation of the Goſpel is committed to me; and ſo in preaching I only diſcharge a Truſt, of which I cannot boaſt or glory. The Strength of the Apoſtle's Argument lies here; no Man can reaſonably boaſt of, glory in, or expect an extraordinary Reward for, the doing of that which he is under a Command from his Superior to do, and that under a Penalty too. Now this was his Caſe: Neceſſity was laid upon him to preach the Goſpel, but no Neceſſity but what he laid upon himſelf, to preach it freely therefore for him to do it, without demanding any Reward from them for the doing of it, this made it Matter of glorying to him, which he declares he had rather die than any ſhould take from him. But was it the Apoſtle's own Glory that he was thus fond of, and concerned for, that he had rather loſe his Life than loſe it? No, it was the Glory of God, the Honour of the Goſpel, that was ſo inexpreſſibly dear unto him; this great Apoſtle did upon pure Principles of Faith and Love from his Heart and Soul deſign the Glory of God, purſuant to which he did chearfully and willingly apply himſelf to the preaching of the Goſpel, waiting upon God for his Acceptance and Reward without expecting any Wages (as he might) from them his *Corinthian* Converts; and this was the Matter of his boaſting and glorying in the Face of the falſe Apoſtles, who inſinuated that he preach'd the Goſpel for filthy Lucre-ſake.

18 What is my reward then? verily that when I preach the goſpel, I may make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge, that I abuſe not my power in the goſpel.

The Senſe is, this gives me Hopes of a Reward extraordinary from God; namely, that I have preached the Goſpel to you, without being chargeable to any of you; for had I received Maintenance from you, I found my Reproaches would have brought an ill Report upon me. To prevent which, I made uſe of my Chriſtian Liberty, and took nothing of you; which he calls *his not abuſing his Power in the Goſpel. Learn hence*, (1.) That Miniſters, generally ſpeaking, lawfully may expect, yea, require Maintenance from their People to whom they preach the Goſpel. *Learn*, (2.) That although they may expect and demand Maintenance for their Miniſtry, yet in caſe the People are ſo poor, that they cannot give it; or Enemies ſo malicious, as to open their Mouths againſt them for it; or if it will hinder the Progreſs of the Goſpel, by keeping People from coming under the preaching of it, fearing it ſhould be chargeable to them; under ſuch Circumſtances, if the Miniſter can ſubſiſt without it, 'tis his certain Duty to preach freely, and for ſuch extraordinary Services may expect a more than ordinary Reward. *Learn*, (3.) That the Liberty which God hath entruſted us with muſt never be abuſed by us, to the Prejudice of his Glory, or the Detriment of his Goſpel, or to the Diſadvantage of others. All ſuch Uſe of our Liberty in any thing is indeed an Abuſe of it; therefore, ſays the Apoſtle here, I abuſe not my Power in the Goſpel.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made my ſelf ſervant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means ſave ſome. 23 And this I do for the Goſpels ſake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

In theſe Verſes our Apoſtle proceeds to ſhew the *Corinthians* farther, how mightily he did abridge himſelf of his Chriſtian Liberty, which was the Argument he was inſiſting upon. For, ſays he, *though I be free from all Men*, as being a Servant to none, yet *have I made my ſelf as a Servant* to all, *that I might gain the more*, to embrace the Goſpel. *To the* unconverted *Jew he became as a Jew*, circumciſing *Timothy* for their Sakes, *Acts* 16. 3. *that he might gain the Jews. To them*, who in their Opinion *were yet under* the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law, he carried himſelf as a Perſon *under that Law*, though he knew himſelf free from it, to the end that *he might gain them that were under the Law*, and accordingly he purified himſelf in the Temple, *Acts* 21. *To them that were without Law*; that is, the Gentiles, who were without the Ceremonial Law, he became as a Perſon *without Law*, abſtaining from the Uſe of all Ceremonies as they did: But yet, *not being without Law to God, but under the Law to Chriſt*: That is, as to the Moral Law of God, which was not aboliſhed, but reinforced by Chriſt, he did never account himſelf free from that, nor durſt do any thing contrary to that Eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs; and all this, *that he might gain them that are without Law. To the weak* Converts, either among Jews or Gentiles, *he became as weak*, by abſtaining from what might hurt their weak Conſciences, *that ſo he might gain the weak*. Finally, *he became all Things to all Men*; by Compliance with them in all lawful and indifferent Things, *that he might gain* as many as poſſibly he could. *And all this he did for the Goſpel's ſake*, that the Goſpel might be the better eſteemed, and farther propagated, and he might himſelf partake of the Promiſes and Rewards of it, together with them to whom he preached it, and had effectually entertain'd it. Behold here the Humility and Charity of this great Apoſtle; his ready Condeſcenſion to the pitied Weakneſſes of all Men; his Compliance with them in all lawful and indifferent Things, for the Glory of God, and the Advantage of the Goſpel. A rare and ſingular Pattern for all Miniſters and private Chriſtians to imitate and follow. Now from this Example of St. *Paul*'s becoming all Things to all Men, and making himſelf a Servant unto all, we *Learn*, (1.) One great Duty of a Goſpel Miniſter is not to be a Slave to any, but a Servant to all; not a Servant to their Luſts, but to their Weakneſſes and Infirmities. Our Apoſtle did not turn, as the flattering and falſe Apoſtles did, with the Tide and Times, nor conform to them in what was ſinful. He did not ſymbolize with all Colours; nor was he a Man for all Hours or Humours; for, ſays he, *If I pleaſe Men*, he means in any thing that is ſinful, *I am no more the Servant of Chriſt*, Gal. 1. 10. But wiſely conſidering the Caſe and State of all Men, he did accommodate his Miniſtry for the gaining of as many as poſſibly he could. Some are all Things to all Men, that they might gain by all, a Spirit not only unworthy of a Miniſter, but a Man. But St. *Paul* complied with all Men, and made himſelf the Servant of all, that Chriſt might thereby gain, his Goſpel gain, yea, and they themſelves gain; which hints to us a ſecond Obſervation, the great End which the Holy Apoſtle aimed at in this his Compliance with, and Condeſcenſion towards the Weakneſs of his People. *This I do for the Goſpel's ſake.* As if he had ſaid, Though I thus ſtoop and yield to all Men, 'tis to ſerve my Maſter, not my ſelf. Think not that I thus put my ſelf into all Forms towards Men for my own Preferment in the World, but that Chriſt may be preferred in the Hearts and Acceptations of all Men. *I pleaſe all Men in all things, not ſeeking my own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they may be ſaved,* 1 Cor. 32. 10. Behold here the noble Mark which this Miniſter of Chriſt had in his Eye, *the ſaving of Souls.* That he might hit it, he wiſely obſerved the Temper and State of his People, ſtriving to render himſelf agreeable and acceptable unto all, that he might by all Means ſave ſome; yet had he alſo an Eye to himſelf in all this; he had Reſpect to the Recompence of Reward, as lawfully he might. *This I do for the Goſpel ſake, that I may be partaker thereof with you:* That is, that I may have a ſhare my ſelf in the promiſed Rewards of the Goſpel, which I have preached to you. Bleſſed be God it is lawful for all the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt to do Good out of hope of Reward; and that his Glory and our own Happineſs are ſo inſeparably connected and knit together, that by promoting the former, we ſecure the latter.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.

Our Apoſtle, according to his Cuſtom in ſundry Epiſtles, doth in the end of this Chapter fall upon the uſe of Terms Agoniſtical, borrowed from the Olympick, and other *Grecian* Games, celebrated near *Corinth*, in which the contending Parties did put forth all their Strength, to out-do one another. Theſe Games were Running, Cuffing and Wreſtling; all which the Apoſtle here alludes unto, and firſt to Running. *They which run in a Race, run all, but one receiveth the Prize. So run the Chriſtian Race, that ye may obtain* the Prize. *Learn hence,* That Chriſtianity is a Race which God hath ſet us, and it is our Duty faithfully and perſeveringly to run it. In a Race the Foundation of it is a Prize; in a Race there is a conſiderable Diſtance between one Goal and another; in a Race there is a Race-plat for the Racers to run in; there are certain Laws to run by, and there is a certain Judge to determine who wins the Crown fairly. Now this Race of Chriſtianity vaſtly differs from all other Races thus: This is a Spiritual Race, it ſtrains not Legs and Lungs, but Faith and Patience. Other Races are performed by natural Abilities, but this by a ſupernatural Power and Strength. Thoſe Races might be run without Diſturbance, but not this; their Reward but a Garland of Bays, ours a Crown of Immortality. But what is it to run this Race? *Anſwer,* It ſuppoſes a Motion, it imports a vehement and intenſe Motion, it implies Progreſs and Proficiency; every ſtep brings the Racer nearer the Goal; and it implies Perſeverance; the Racer muſt hold it to the laſt, or he loſes his Labour and Reward; every one that thus runs ſhall obtain the Prize, whereas in other Races but one receiveth the Prize.

25 And every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery, is temperate in all things: now, they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.

It was a Cuſtom amongſt thoſe that uſed at *Corinth* the forementioned Games of Running and Wreſtling, to tie themſelves to a ſtrict preſcribed Diet, both for Quality and Quantity, by way of Preparation. They did not indulge themſelves in Gluttony, or any ſort of Exceſs, but were temperate in all Things, that the Crown might be won by them, which alas! was nothing but a Garland of Leaves or Flowers. In Imitation of whom he adviſes the *Corinthians* to be very moderate in the uſe of all worldly Things, and to abſtain from whatſoever may hinder their running the Chriſtian Race, and their receiving the incorruptible Crown.

26 I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly: ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

That is, I run this Race of Chriſtianity my ſelf, which I adviſe you unto: But my Care is to run ſure, not at uncertainties; to make ſure of the Crown at the end of the Race; and I do not only run, but fight; I oppoſe whatever oppoſeth me. *Here obſerve,* the Apoſtle changes the Metaphor from that of Running, to the other Game of Cuffing; and ſays, he did not fight like one that beats the Air, but never hurts the Adverſary: No, he fought in good Earneſt with all his Spiritual Enemies, the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil: It is not every Running that will gain the Prize, nor every Fighting that will obtain the Victory: But it muſt be a Running with all Perſeverance, and a Fighting with our utmoſt Power, that will bring us to Heaven and Eternal Happineſs.

27 But I keep under my body.——

The Original Word may be fitly rendred, I give my ſelf blue Eyes, alluding to the *Olympick* Game of Cuffing, in which the Combetants were wont with their Blows to beat one another till they made each other livid, their Eyes black and blue. The Senſe is, that by Mortification he uſed great Severity upon himſelf; contending againſt, and combating with that Body of Sin and Death, which did obſtruct and hinder him in Running the Chriſtian Race which was ſet before him.

27——And bring it into ſubjection:——

This Word in the *Greek* is an Alluſion to the other Exerciſe of Wreſtling, wherein the Antagoniſts or Contenders do ſtrive to caſt each other to the Ground, and to keep them under. So he, the better to ſubdue his Body of Sin, was careful to keep down the Body of Fleſh, which if pamper'd, is apt to rebel. He concludes all with a Reaſon why he exerciſed all this Care and a Caution; namely,

27——Leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

That is, leſt when he had acquainted them with the Laws and Rules of Chriſtianity, and propoſed to them the Way of ſtriving and getting the Crown, he himſelf ſhould at laſt prove a Caſt-away, or one unworthy to be approved or rewarded by God. From whence *Obſerve,* That it is poſſible for him who has been all his Life preaching to others, and furthering them in their Way to Heaven, to be thrown himſelf into Hell at laſt. Many that have propheſied in Chriſt's Name ſhall yet periſh in his Wrath, and ſuch as have caſt Devils out of others, ſhall yet be caſt to the Devil themſelves. *Obſerve,* (2.) That ſuch Miniſters as indulge their unruly Appetites, giving the Fleſh whatever it craves, and can deny it nothing it deſires, pampering the Body, to the Prejudice of the Soul, they go not in St. *Paul*'s Road to Heaven, but the contrary, they gratifie what he mortified, they indulge what he ſubdued; he adminiſtred to the Wants, they to the Wantonneſs of the Fleſh; he knew that *Hagar* would quickly perk up, and domineer over *Sarah*; that the Body would quickly expect and command more Attendance than the Soul, except it were kept under; and for this Reaſon, ſays our Apoſtle here, *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection, leſt that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a Caſt-away.*

CHAP. X.

The Scope of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is the ſame with that which he had been purſuing in the two foregoing Chapters; namely, to diſſuade Chriſtians from eating of things offered unto Idols, either publickly in the Idols Temple, which was abſolutely Sinful, or privately in the Houſes of any to the Offence and Scandal of their weak Brethren: Which when there was no Scandal in the Caſe was lawful, but otherwiſe not. Of the former he diſcourſes from the firſt to the twenty-third Verſe, which he proves to be altogether unlawful. Of the latter he treats from v. 23. *to the end of the Chapter; and although he grants that eating of Meat offered to an Idol may lawfully be done in it ſelf in a private Houſe, (eſpecially when it is uncertain or unknown to be ſo offered) yet when Offence is thereby given to the weak Brethren, it ought to be forborn. And accordingly he diſſuades from it by many Arguments in the Chapter before us.*

1 MOreover, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea.

Amongſt other Arguments which the Apoſtle produces to diſſuade the *Corinthians* from eating Things offered to Idols in the Idol-Temples, and to prove it abſolutely unlawful for Chriſtians to have Communion with the *Gentiles* in their idolatrous Banquet, the firſt is drawn from the Danger of ſuch ſinful Communion; it would endanger their falling into ſuch kind of Sins as the *Iſraelites* on that Occaſion fell into, and conſequently expoſe them to ſuch Puniſhments as they ſuffered. But firſt of all, in the beginning of this Chapter he acquaints the *Corinthians* with the great Favours and Privileges which Almighty God vouchſafed to, and conſerr'd upon the *Iſraelites*, who came out of *Egypt* with *Moſes* into the Wilderneſs, who had a Pillar of Cloud to guide and protect them, the Manna from Heaven to ſuſtain and uphold them, and Water out of a Rock to refreſh and ſatisfie them. *All our Fathers were under the Cloud*: That is, under the Conduct and Protection of the Cloud; *and all paſſed through the Red-Sea*, as upon dry Ground. This Cloud which accompanied the *Iſraelites* in their Journeyings had a threefold Uſe, (1.) In reſpect of God it was a Sign and Symbol of the Preſence of God with them, and of his Care and Protection over them; for it encompaſſed their Camp as a Wall doth a City. Hence is that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſpread out a Cloud for a Covering to them, and Fire to give Light in the Night Seaſon*, Pſal. 105, 39. (2.) In reſpect of the *Iſraelites* the Cloud did guide and direct them in their Journeying. Pſal. 78. 14. *In the Day he led them with a Cloud, and all the Night with a Light of Fire.* And as the Cloud did guide and direct *Iſrael*, ſo did it cool and refreſh them in the Wilderneſs, reſerving them from the heat of the Sun: It was a covering Canopy over them in a ſcorching Deſert. (3.) In reſpect of their Enemies, it was Darkneſs to the *Egyptians*, and conſequently protected the *Iſraelites* from their Enemies, that they could not aſſault or fall upon them. It had a bright ſide to the *Iſraelites*, and a dark ſide to the *Egyptians*. Lord! How eaſily canſt thou make the ſame Creature a Comfort to thy Children, and a Terror to thine Enemies. Every outward Bleſſing is that, and no more, which thou art pleaſed to make it to us. A Cloud ſhall guide, a Cloud ſhall cover, a Cloud ſhall comfort *Iſrael*, and the ſame Cloud ſhall be Darkneſs, yea, at thy Command ſhall be Death to the *Egyptians*.

2 And were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea.

Obſerve, (1) The *Iſraelites* are here ſaid to be *baptized* in the Cloud, and in the Sea; that is, the Cloud which over-ſhadowed them did ſometimes bedew and ſprinkle them; and the *Red-Sea*, through which they paſſed, had its Waters gathered into two heaps, one on the Right Hand, and the other on the Left, betwixt which the *Iſraelites* paſſed, and in their Paſſage ſeemed to be buried in the Waters; as Perſons in that Age were put under the Water when they were baptized; and thus were *Iſrael* baptized in the Cloud, and in the Sea. *Obſerve*, (2.) They are ſaid to be baptized *unto Moſes* in the Cloud, and in the Sea: *Unto Moſes*; that is, into the Doctrine taught by *Moſes*; they believed him, and followed his Conduct through the Sea, and were confirmed in their Belief of *Moſes*, (the Typical Mediator) as a Perſon imployed by God, and were obliged under the Miniſtry and Guidance of *Moſes* to follow God whereſoever he led them. *Obſerve*, (3.) That all this was a Figure to which our Baptiſm anſwers; both the Cloud and the Sea had ſome reſemblance to our being covered with Water in Baptiſm, by which we are confirmed in the Faith of Chriſt, and obliged to profeſs and own him, to truſt in, and depend upon him, to ſerve and obey him, and this to the Death. Behold how much of Chriſt and his Goſpel was ſhadowed and held forth to the *Jews* under the Diſpenſation of the Ceremonial Law, they had Chriſt in their Sacrifices, and we have all their Sacrifices in Chriſt. The Cloud, the Sea, the Manna, the Rock, all typified Chriſt, and were Reſemblances, and Repreſentations of him. Chriſt was as truly repreſented to the *Jews* as unto us, as truly, tho' not ſo clearly.

3 And did all eat the ſame ſpiritual meat;
4 And did all drink the ſame ſpiritual drink: (for they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Chriſt.)

They, that is, the Fathers in the Wilderneſs, did all eat of the Manna which came down from Heaven, which is here called ſpiritual Meat; either becauſe it came down from Heaven, which is the Habitation of Spiritual Beings, or becauſe it was Food given out by the Miniſtry of Angels, thoſe Spiritual Agents; or elſe it is called Spiritual, that is, Sacramental Meat, becauſe it typified Chriſt, who is the Bread of Life, the true Bread which came down from Heaven. That Manna was a Type of Chriſt thus appears; was Manna provided by God for *Iſraelites* without their Labour and Induſtry? So is Chriſt given unto Men without any Merit or Work of theirs, but of the free Gift and Goodneſs of God. Did Manna come down from Heaven, beſides the ordinary Courſe of Nature? So was Chriſt's Birth wonderful, and not as the Birth of other Men; being not begotten of Mortal Seed, but by the Influence of the Holy Ghoſt. Was Manna diſtributed to all alike, one not having more, and another leſs, but all an equal Share? In like manner Chriſt communicates himſelf unto all alike, without Acceptance of Perſons. A Beggar may have as great a part in Chriſt as a Prince. Again, as Manna was Food, plentiful Food, ſweet and pleaſing Food, ſo is Chriſt, the Food of Life, very ſweet to ſuch a Soul as can truly reliſh him. Further, muſt the Manna, before fit for Food, be beaten in a Mortar, or broken in a Mill, and baked in an Oven? So Chriſt our Heavenly Manna was broken on the Croſs, ſcorch'd in the Fire of his Father's Wrath, that he might become the Spiritual Food wherewith our Souls are nouriſhed unto everlaſting Life. Finally, as Manna was given only in the Wilderneſs, and ceaſed when the *Iſraelites* came to *Canaan*, ſo is Chriſt our Spiritual Meat, our Sacramental Food, whilſt we are in the Wilderneſs of this World; but when we ſhall come to the Heavenly *Canaan*, we ſhall have no more any need of Sacramental Supports, but ſhall behold him Face to Face, and be ſatisfied with his Likeneſs. *And they did all drink of that Spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Chriſt.* Here the Water out of the Rock is alſo called Spiritual Drink, it being typically and ſacramentally ſo. *That Rock was Chriſt*: That is, it typified Chriſt. The Word *is* doth import as much as ſignifies or repreſents; ſo the *Rock is Chriſt*: That is, it ſignified, repreſented and typified Jeſus Chriſt. For as the Rock gave no Water before it was ſmitten with the Rod of *Moſes*; ſo was Chriſt ſmitten upon the Croſs, and out of his ſide came forth Water; and as it was the Rod in *Moſes* Hand that ſmote and broke the Rock, ſo was Chriſt ſmitten with the Curſe of the Law, in the Day when his Soul was made an Offering for Sin. In a word, as the Rock yielded Water not only to them that were preſent at the firſt broaching of it, but followed them with its Streams in their Stations through the Wilderneſs, in like manner the Water which guſhed out from our ſmitten Saviour, the ſweet Fruits and Benefits of his Death, did not only belong to them who were preſent at the Time and Place of his Sufferings, but it doth and will accompany all Believers to the end of this World. The Vertue and Efficacy of Chriſt's Blood is now as great, as efficacious and effectual, as it was the firſt Hour it was ſhed, the Divinity of his Perſon adds an Eternal Efficacy to his Paſſion.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleaſed: for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs.

Although the *Iſraelites* were made Partakers of the forementioned Privileges, and Spiritual Favours, though they were baptized unto *Moſes* in the Cloud, and in the Sea, and did eat Sacramental Meat, and drink Sacramental Drink, yet it did not ſet them out of danger of God's Diſpleaſure, for they were overthrown, their Carcaſſes fell in the Wilderneſs. *Learn thence*, That no External Privileges or Prerogatives whatſoever can exempt Perſons from God's Judgments, for they return not ſuitably to him for the Favours and Benefit received from him. The bare outward receiving of a Sacrament is not ſaving to the Soul of a Perſon; and the unworthy receiving of Sacraments, and unſuitable walking after them, do enkindle God's Anger, and provoke his heavy Diſpleaſure againſt Perſons, even to the cutting them off by untimely Death here in this World. *With many of them* God was diſpleaſed, and they *were overthrown in the Wilderneſs*.

6 Now theſe things were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Sin charged upon the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs. *They luſted*: That is, after the Fleſhpots of *Egypt*, and to return thither again. They had Manna for Forty Year together, but being tied to it, (tho' Angels Food, that is, moſt Excellent Food) they grew weary of it. Lord! how exceedingly indebted are we to thy Liberality and Bounty in that Plenty and Variety of Creature Refreſhments which thou affordeſt us? The Beaſts of the Field, the Fowls of the Air, and the Fiſhes in the Sea, are freely given us; not barely for Neceſſity, but Delight, and do all adminiſter to our Support and Comfort. *Obſerve,* (2.) How the Apoſtle calls upon us to improve Examples, that we may not be made Examples. *Theſe Things*; that is, their Sufferings, *were our Examples*; they were for our Caution to receive Warning by them, not to walk in thoſe Soul-defiling Ways in which they have walked, fallen, and periſhed. A wiſe Chriſtian may receive much Good, by obſerving the Dealings of God with them that are evil; for God is Unchangeable, Juſt and Holy, and will not favour that in one Perſon which he puniſhes in another. *Theſe Things were our Examples.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, O ye *Corinthians*, look upon the dead Bodies of the *Iſraelites* which are caſt upon the Shoar of the Scriptures for a Warning to you; follow not the ſame Courſe, leſt you meet in the ſame Curſe; if you tread the ſame Path, expect the ſame Puniſhment, for God is as Righteous now as he was then; he hates, and will puniſh Sin in you, as much as he did in them. *Theſe Things were your Example, to the intent we ſhould not luſt as they luſted.*

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* ſome of them; as it is written, The people ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as ſome of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thouſand.

Our Apoſtle being ſtill diſſuading the *Corinthians* from eating of things offer'd unto Idols, and thereby from holding Communion with the Gentiles in their idolatrous Banquets in their Idol Temples, he ſets before them the Idolatry of the *Jews*, who ſate down to eat and to drink of the Sacrifices offered to the Golden Calf, and roſe up to play; that is, to dance before the Golden Calf, after the manner of the Heathen, this being one of the Rites by which they honour'd their Gods. He farther adviſes them to take heed how they mix with Idolaters in their Feaſts, leſt they be given up to Fornication, as the *Iſraelites* were in the Wilderneſs with the Daughters of *Moab*, *Numb.* 25. of whom there fell in one Day Three and twenty thouſand by the immediate Hand of God. *Learn hence,* That Almighty God has left many Inſtances upon Record, in his Holy Word, of the Severity of his Juſtice upon Perſons guilty of Idolatry and Fornication, and all other Sins, on purpoſe to warn all of their Sin and Danger in the Perpetration and Commiſſion of them; to ſin againſt Example is an Aggravation of Sin.

9 Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.

Obſerve here a double Sin, which the *Corinthians* are warned againſt, Tempting and Murmuring. *Neither Tempt ye Chriſt,* by trying how long his Patience will laſt, as the *Iſraelites* did when (as the Angel of the Covenant) he went before them in the Wilderneſs, *Num.* 21. 5, 6. Here *Note,* The Object or Perſon whom the *Iſraelites* are ſaid to tempt, *Chriſt,* which proves, (1.) His Pre-exiſtence before his Incarnation; the *Iſraelites* could not have then tempted him, had he not been then exiſtent. (2.) His Divinity; He who is called here *Chriſt,* is by the Pſalmiſt call'd *God,* Pſ. 106. 14. *They tempted God in the Deſart.* Chriſt had not an Human Nature then to be tempted in, they tempted him therefore as he was God; a good Argument to prove the Divinity of our Saviour, made uſe of by the Ancients. The other Sin warned againſt is Murmuring; *Neither Murmur ye:* that is, Do not repine, becauſe you are forbidden to be preſent at the Idolatrous Feaſts of the Gentiles in the Idol-Temples; neither do ye murmur, by reaſon of the Perſecutions which you do or may endure for the ſake of Chriſtianity, and the Cauſe of Chriſt. *Learn hence,* That to murmur at, or be impatient under, any of the providential Diſpenſations of God, is both great Sin and Folly. 'Tis as high Preſumption and Wickedneſs to be diſſatisfy'd with God's Works of Providence, as with his Works of Creation, to quarrel at what God doth, is as Unchriſtian-like, yea, as Uncreatute-like, as to quarrel at what God has made. Therefore *murmur not, as the* Iſraelites *murmured. Obſerve Secondly*; A double Puniſhment inflicted on the *Iſraelites* for this double Sin committed; ſuch as tempted were deſtroy'd of fiery Serpents, *Num.* 21. 6, 7. The Lord ſent fiery Serpents among the People; the Sting and Venom of thoſe Serpents was inflaming, ſpreading, killing, much People of *Iſrael* dy'd. And ſuch as murmur'd were deſtroy'd of the Deſtroyer; that is, by the deſtroying Angel in that Plague mention'd *Numb.* 14. 37. Such variety of Judgments has Almighty God, with which to Puniſh and Plague an Incorrigible and Unreclaimable People.

11 Now all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

That is, the Hiſtory of the *Iſraelites* Sins and Puniſhments was written and recorded by God in the Holy Scriptures for the Uſe and Benefit of all ſucceeding Generations, and particularly for us, who live in the laſt Ages of the World, to warn us to avoid the like Sin, that we may eſcape the like Puniſhments. *Learn hence,* That the Fall of others, whether into Sin, or under Judgment for Sin, ſhould be Cautions and Warnings to us to take heed of Sinning; here the Apoſtle ſums up the moſt remarkable Judgments which fell upon the *Jews* in their Paſſage from *Egypt* to *Canaan,* and cloſes all with this Application to Chriſtians; *Theſe Things hapned to them as Enſamples*; in the Original it is as Types; they befel them Typically, that in them we may ſee how God will deal with us if we take their Courſe; thoſe Calamities which deſtroy ſome, ſhould inſtruct others; many will never ſee Sin in itſelf, ſome will ſee it in the Type and Enſample; that is, in the Judgment of God upon others; and thoſe that will not ſee Sin in the Laſhes of Severity upon others, ſhall certainly feel it upon their own Backs; ſuch as will not improve Examples, ſhall undoubtedly be made Examples.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

Theſe Words are an Inference which our Apoſtle draws from the foregoing Diſcourſe, ſeeing that ſo many who enjoy'd great Priviledges among the *Jews,* were yet puniſh'd greatly for their Sins; ſeeing that Sacraments are no Priviledges, either for Sin, or from Plagues; therefore *let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed,&c.* Where *Note,* (1.) A great Mutability to which Human Nature is ſubject; he that thinketh he ſtandeth, may fall; Man's Condition is according to his Place and Station; this is Threefold, the firſt Place is Heaven, this is fix'd and confirm'd, a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken; the Saints there are ſtanding Pillars free from all poſſibility of falling. The ſecond Place is Hell, where Sinners are bound Hand and Foot, and being fallen, are without any poſſibility of riſing. The third Place is this Earth on which we live, where Men both ſtand and fall; and the beſt are ſubject to falling, being Sons of *Adam,* as well as Sons of God; partly Fleſh, and partly Spirit. *Note,* (2.) The Vigilancy requir'd in order to our ſtanding, *Take heed:* How many Thouſands have fallen by a preſumptuous Confidence of their own Strength in ſtanding? They fall by thinking it impoſſible to fall. A Chriſtian's *Motto* is *Cavendo Tutus:* never ſafe, but when wary and watchful: Let a Chriſtian always keep a jealous Eye upon the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of his Nature, and with a believing Eye look up to the Promiſe and Power of God, and he ſhall be both preſerved from falling, and alſo be preſented faultleſs and unblamable in the Day of Chriſt; if ever we ſtand in the Day of Tryal, 'tis Fear and Faith muſt enable us to ſtand.

13 There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear *it.*

Here the Apoſtle anſwers a Plea which the *Corinthians* might probably make for their Compliance with their Fellow Citizens, in eating Things offer'd unto Idols in their Temples with them; namely, that thereby they ſhould avoid Perſecution; fear not that, ſays the Apoſtle, you have hitherto been preſerv'd, that *no Temptation has taken you, but ſuch as is Common to Man*; that is, you have not yet been exerciſed with any Tryal, but what is Human, what the Ordinary Strength and Reſolution of Human Nature is able to bear: But in Caſe you ſhould be Try'd with extremity of Suffering, and that you muſt either comply with the Heathen Idolatry, or endure Sufferings to extremity, yet you have the Promiſe of a Faithful God for your ſupport in that Caſe; *God is Faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be Tempted* at any time *above what* *you are able; but will with the Temptation alſo make a way* ſo far *to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it. Learn* hence, (1.) That it is a great addition to an Affliction not to ſee or diſcern a Way to eſcape, and get out of Affliction; God is exceeding Gracious in our Afflictions, in that he doth not hedge us in on every ſide, and hinder all poſſibility of eſcape out of our Troubles. *Learn,* (2.) That the conſideration of God's Strength to ſupport us in and under our Sufferings, is a mighty Encouragement to us to grapple with them Reſolutely, and to bear them Patiently and Submiſſively; if our Sufferings were intollerable, and humane Nature were not divinely aſſiſted to ſtand under them, we ſhould be forced to conſult our preſent Eaſe and Deliverance, and chuſe Sin rather than Affliction; but the Aſſiſtance of God makes Suffering Work eaſie.

14 Wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I ſpeak as to wiſe men: judge ye what I ſay.

Here our Apoſtle reaſſumes his Exhortation to the *Corinthians,* not to meddle with the Myſteries of Paganiſm, nor to eat of Things offered unto Idols; aſſuring them it was no leſs than Idolatry in the account of God to eat of thoſe Things which were taken from their execrable Altars, as part and remnant of thoſe Sacrifice to Idols which were performed in the City of *Corinth,* with all the pomp of an abominable Superſtition; this participation of Things offered to Idols, in the Idol-Temples, our Apoſtle calls Idolatry; *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, flee from Idolatry.* Here *Note,* That the Nature of Man is extreamly prone to Idolatry, and very ready to comply with Men in their Idolatrous Practices. *Note,* (2.) That the Idolatry of the Jews of old, and of Chriſtians ſince, who knew and owned the true God, and gloried in him, was and is far worſe than the Idolatry of Pagans, who knew him not, nor ever gloried in him. *Obſerve* farther, How our Apoſtles appeals to themſelves, and leaves it to them to judge whether they did not do very ill to be preſent at the Feaſts upon the Heathen Sacrifices, and eat of things offered unto Idols: He leaves it to themſelves to judge, *Judge ye what I ſay*; there is a Judgment of Diſcretion which Perſons ought to uſe in the Matters of Religion, and not to deliver up themſelve Blindfold to the Conduct of their Teachers: The Church of *Rome* by denying the People this Liberty makes them Slaves; they put out the Peoples Eyes to make them fit for a blind Obedience: Our Apoſtle was far from this Practice; let wiſe Men, ſays he, judge what I ſay.

16 The cup of Beſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?

Theſe Words are a ſpecial Argument made uſe of by the Apoſtle to diſſuade Chiſtians from joining with the Heathens in their impure Feaſts in the Idol-Temples; the Gentiles have Fellowſhip with the Idols in thoſe Feaſts, as Chriſtians have Communion with Chriſt at his Holy Table: So that the Argument runs thus, if Believers by communicating with Chriſt, at his Holy Table have real Communion with him, then alſo thoſe that do communicate with Idolaters do become partakers of Communion with them in their impure Feaſts; but Believers do the firſt, namely, at the Lord's-Table they Communicate with Chriſt: This he proves from the Words before us, *The Cup of Bleſſing,* &c. Where *Obſerve,* (1.) A Deſcription of the Lord's-Supper in both the Parts of it; namely, the External and Viſible Part, Bread and Wine; the Internal and Spiritual Part, the Body and Blood of Chriſt. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Miniſterial Actions performed in this ſolemn Ordinance, and they are the bleſſing of the Cup, and the breaking of the Bread. (3.) Here is the great End and Deſign of God in the Inſtitution of this Ordinance; namely, that Believers might thereby enjoy a ſpiritual Fellowſhip and Communion with Chriſt their Head; Is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? *Learn* hence, that one great End and Deſign of Chriſt in the Inſtitution of his Supper was this; that Believers might enjoy a ſweet Fellowſhip and Communion with himſelf therein.

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

The Apoſtle's Argumet lies thus, As Chriſtians, though many, yet by virtue of their Society in the ſame Worſhip, are compacted together, as it were into one Loaf or Lump; that is, into one Myſtical Body, in that they partake of one and the ſame Sacramental Bread; ſo thoſe that Communicate with Idolaters, in eating Things offered unto Idols, are compacted together as it were into one Body, for as much as they Communicate in one and the ſame Sacrifices: As many Grains of Corn moulded together make one Loaf, and the Juice of many Grapes make one Cup; ſo Chriſtians, though many, yet are one viſible Church, one myſtical Body, and declare themſelves ſo to be by their Fellowſhip together at the Lord's Table.

18 Behold Iſrael after the fleſh: are not they which eat of the ſacrifices, partakers of the altar? 19 What ſay I then? that the idol is any thing? or that which is offered in ſacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But *I ſay,* that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils.

Here another Argument againſt eating Things offered to Idols is produced by our Apoſtle, and it runs thus; as in the Jewiſh Church all Perſons that did eat of the Peace-Offerings, which were laid upon God's Altar, did by that Act declare themſelves Members of the Jewiſh Church, and that they owned the God of the Jews, to whom thoſe Sacrifices were offered; in like manner the converted *Corinthians* by eating Part of thoſe Beaſts which were ſacrificed in the Idols Temple, did by that Act declare their owning of that Idol and that Idolatrous Worſhip which had been there performed, and were really partakers of that Idolatrous Altar; not that an Idol is any thing, or that which is offered to the Idol any thing, that can of its own Nature pollute and defile: But the plain Truth was, the Heathens were ſeduced by the Devil to offer theſe Sacrifices, and they were Devils whom they worſhipped; though not in their own intention, yet in God's Eſtimation; and conſequently thoſe that did eat of thoſe Feaſts, and ſuppoſed to join in thoſe Sacrifices, and thereby to hold Communion with Devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

That is, ye cannot have Communion with Chriſt, and with Idolaters too; your communicating with Chriſt in the Lord's Supper is utterly Inconſiſtent with communicating with Devils in the Idol Feaſts; for this were to do Homage to two contrary Lords, God and Satan, and to profeſs Service to both. Here *Obſerve,* (1.) A Sacramental Table deſcribed, 'tis the Table of the Lord ſo called, becauſe he that is Lord of Lords did inſtitute it for the Remembrance of his own Death. *Obſerve,* (2.) An impoſſibility declared, that none can be worthy partakers at the Lord's Table that hold Communion with Sin; true Idolatry is the Sin here ſpecified, or ſacrificing unto Devils; but it holds true of all Sin in general, and of having Fellowſhip with Satan in any of the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs. *Learn* hence, That no Perſon can really enjoy any Fellowſhip and Communion with Chriſt at his holy Table, who maintains Correſpondence with Sin, and holds Communion with Satan.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie? are we ſtronger than he?

Obſerve here, (1.) That the Worſhip of God is that which he is very tender and jealous of; never was Husband ſo jealous of the Chaſtity of his ſuſpected Wife, as God is jealous in point of Worſhip; Idolatry is a provoking God to Jealouſie. *Obſerve,* (2.) That ſuch as worſhip Idols, or are guilty of Idolatrous Worſhip in any kind or degree, muſt expect God a jealous Avenger; and will find themſelves not ſtrong enough to contend with him; do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie, by joining Devils in Competition with him? Are we ſtronger than he? Who knows the Power of his Anger? The Strength of God ſhould make Sinners Tremble.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edifie not.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Part of this Chapter reſolved the Caſe concerning publick eating of Things offered unto Idols in the Idol-Temples, and by ſeveral Arguments proved it to be abſolutely unlawful; he comes now to reſolve another Caſe, concerning private buying and private eating of Things offered to Idols; for it ſeems to have been a Cuſtom to ſet a Sale in the Market, Fleſh that was ſacrificed, (the

Gain whereof went to the Prieſts) as well as other Fleſh: But firſt he anſwers an Objection; ſome might be ready to ſay, all Things are lawful for me; that is, all Meats may lawfully be eaten by me; if ſo, ſays the Apoſtle, yet all lawful things are not expedient to be done in reſpect of our weak Brother; *plainly intimating*, that there are many Things Lawful in themſelves, which conſidered under ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances, are very Inexpedient; and ſo far as they are Inexpedient, ſo far are they Unlawful.

24 Let no man ſeek his own: but every man anothers wealth.

Theſe Words may be underſtood Two Ways: (1.) Let no Man ſeek his own; that is only his own Wealth. (2.) Let no Man ſeek his own Wealth; that is, to the Prejudice of others, though never ſo much to his own Advantage; teaching us, that it is the Duty of every Chriſtian, not meerly to look at his own Profit or Pleaſure, but at the Benefit and Advantage of others, as that which Edifies, or Tends to promote Holineſs in others; and that in the Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty we muſt regard rather the Edification and Salvation of others, than the Gratification of ourſelves.

25 Whatſoever is ſold in the ſhambles, that eat, asking no queſtion for conſcience ſake, 26 For the earth is the Lords, and the fulneſs thereof.

Here the Apoſtle reſolves the Caſe, whether it were lawful to buy that Meat in the Market which had been offered to an Idol in the Temple. He determines, (1.) That it was; if it be ſold in the Shambles, it is to be looked upon as common Food, and they may freely buy it without any Scruple of Conſcience: But how came Meat to be ſold in the Shambles which was offered and Sacrificed in the Temples of the Gentiles? *Anſwer*, It is probable that the Prieſts who had a ſhare in the Beaſts that were offered unto Idols, or the People who had alſo a Share returned them out of their own Offerings, did bring ſuch Meat to be ſold in the Market; in this Caſe, ſays the Apoſtle, ask no Queſtions about it. *Obſerve*, (2.) He aſſigns the Reaſon for it, becauſe *the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulneſs thereof*; that is, thoſe things that are ſold for food in the Market, are to be look'd upon as the Creatures of God, made for, and ſanctified to the Uſe of Man; and therefore you may eat of any Creature which the Lord provideth for your Food without Scruple of Conſcience, when others are not Scandalized at it; 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. Every Creature of God is good, if received with Thankſgiving.

27 If any of them believe not, bid you *to a feaſt*, and ye be diſpoſed to go; whatever is ſet before you, eat, asking no queſtion for conſcience ſake. 28 But if any man ſay unto you, This is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience ſake. For the earth *is* the Lords, and the fulneſs thereof.

Our Apoſtle here puts another Caſe, Suppoſe an Unbeliever, an Infidel or Heathen, did invite a Believer, a Chriſtian, to a Feaſt of civil Friendſhip in their private Houſes, (not to a Feaſt upon a Sacrifice in the Idol-Temple, which was abſolutely unlawful) what was to be done in this Caſe? He declares they may warrantably go and eat whatever is ſet before them without Scruple, but would have them ask no Queſtions about the Lawfulneſs of it; nevertheleſs, if the Maſter of the Feaſt, or any preſent at the Feaſt, ſhall ſuggeſt that ſome Part of the Meat has been offered to an Idol, in that Caſe he would have them forbear, leſt they ſhould encourage any Man to Idolatry; adding his Reaſon as before; *For the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulneſs thereof*; that is, there is Plenty and Variety of other Meat to be had, which God the Creator of all Things, the Lord of the whole Earth, has allowed us the free Uſe of; ſo that we may well let the Idol Sacrifices alone: Here we ſee, that an Action Lawful in itſelf becomes Sinful, and is Condemned as ſuch, when there is a Breach of Charity in the doing of it.

29 Conſcience I ſay, not thine own, but of the others: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conſcience? 30 For, if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil ſpoken of for that for which I give thanks?

Here the Apoſtle tells them, that they ought to abſtain from that which was lawful and indifferent in itſelf, for the ſake of another Man's Conſcience; this Meat had not been unlawful to them, though offered to Idols, had they not been told that it was ſo offered; but being made acquainted therewith, for the ſake of him that ſhewed thee it was offered to Idols, forbear eating; for why ſhould our Liberty be ſo uſed by us, as to be judged of, and condemned by another Man's Conſcience? It is not enough that we do what is juſt and right in our own Sight, but we *muſt provide Things honeſt in the Sight of all Men. Whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good report; theſe we muſt practice, and none but theſe.* And obſervable is the Apoſtle's Reaſon, why he ſhould, for the ſake of another, abſtain from eating that Meat which was lawful in itſelf; *ver.* 30. namely, to prevent being evil ſpoken of; *Why am I evil ſpoken of?* That is, why ſhould I cauſe another to ſpeak Evil of me, for eating that Meat which I might without any Prejudice forbear? For in ſo doing I ſhall certainly abuſe my Liberty, grieve God, and offend the Weak.

31 Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Our Apoſtle concludes his whole Diſcourſe with Three excellent Rules to direct all Chriſtians how they ſhould govern themſelves in the Uſe of their lawful Liberty, as to Things that are of an indifferent Nature; that is, neither commanded, nor forbidden in the Word of God. The Firſt is this, To refer all our Actions in general, both Natural, Civil, and Religious, to the Glory of God; to make that our ſupream Aim, our ultimate End, in all we do, in all we deſign, in all we deſire; a Chriſtian is to perform his natural Actions to Spiritual Purpoſes; and whilſt he is feeding and refreſhing his Body at his own Table, muſt have an Eye at his ſerving God, both with Soul and Body; farther, not only in our natural Actions, but in our civil Imployments, in our lawful Recreations; but eſpecially, and above all, in our religious Duties, muſt we propound the Glory of God as our principal Aim, our chief Scope, our ſupream End: This Injunction, *Do all to the Glory of God*, is applicable to all the Actions of Humane Life.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

Here we have the Second Rule given, for ordering all the Affairs of Humane Life; give no Offence to any, neither to the unbelieving Jew, nor to the unconverted Gentile, nor to the weak Members of the Church of God; particularly, give no Offence to theſe, by eating Things offered to Idols at any Time, or in any Place, where any may be ſcandalized; for the Jew will conclude that you are Enemies to the Law, and the Prophets; the Gentiles will believe that your Abhorrence of Idols is not real, when they ſee you eat Things offered unto Idols before their Faces; and the weak Chriſtian will be tempted by your Example to revolt from the Chriſtian Faith; therefore do nothing that may tend to the Hurt, or juſt Offence, either of Jew, Gentile or Chriſtian.

23 Even as I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved.

The laſt Rule which the Apoſtle lays down in his own Practice and Example, who in indifferent Things accommodated himſelf to all Men; I pleaſe all Men; that is, I ſeek and endeavour to pleaſe all Men, and in all Things; that is, in all lawful Things, and in all other Things, wherein the Law of God has left me at Liberty; for neither in the Omiſſion of any thing which God commanded, nor in the Commiſſion of ought which he had forbidden, would St. *Paul* pleaſe any Man in the World: And when he did pleaſe all Men it was for their Profit and Advantage, not his own; to promote their Eternal Salvation, not his own Temporal Intereſt: *I pleaſe all Men, that they may be ſaved. Learn hence*, (1.) That no Men muſt be pleaſed by Sin, nor pleaſured in their Sins; the ſmalleſt Duty muſt be preferred before the pleaſing of all the Men in the World. *Learn*, (2.) We may and ought to ſeek the pleaſing of Men with Subſerviency, and in Subordination to the pleaſing of Almighty God. *Learn*, (3.) That inordinate Man-pleaſing is fruitleſs, needleſs and endleſs; when you have endeavoured to pleaſe moſt, how many will be diſpleaſed when you have done your beſt? God himſelf, Jeſus Chriſt, his Holy Prophets, Apoſtles, Saints and Servants, could never pleaſe the World; and can any of us expect to do it? St. *Paul*, though he became all Things to all Men, yet could ſave but ſome: The World hates Godlineſs, and godly Perſons, and will never be pleaſed with that which they hate: Let pleaſing of God be our great Buſineſs, and in Subordination to him, endeavour to pleaſe all Men for their Profit, that they may be ſaved.

CHAP. XI.

1 BE ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.

The Apoſtle had in the foregoing Chapters, by many cogent Arguments, exhorted the *Corinthians* to deny themſelves the lawful Uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty for the Benefit of their Brethren; to enforce which Arguments he propounds to them his own Example in this Verſe, *Be ye followers of me, even as I follow Chriſt.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Duty recommended to their Practice; namely, to follow their ſpiritual Guide, *Be ye followers of me*; it is the ſtanding Duty of a People whom God Honours with the Enjoyment of faithful ſpiritual Guides, to follow their Faith, and to imitate their exemplary Converſation: The Graces of all Chriſtians in general, but of the Miniſters of the Goſpel in particular, whether living or dead, they are Patterns ſet forth to the World for their careful Imitation; and for Omiſſion herein they muſt certainly become accountable to God. *Note*, (2.) With what great Modeſty and Caution, with what Reſtriction and Limitation, St. *Paul* propounds his own Example to the *Corinthians* view; *Be ye followers of me, as I alſo am of Chriſt*; as if he had ſaid, if at any time you find me your ſpiritual Guide ſtepping aſide, and walking unanſwerably to that uniform Pattern of holy and humble Obedience which the Lord Jeſus ſet before both you and me in his own exemplary Life, be ſure you decline my Example, and follow not my Footſteps. *Learn* hence, That the beſt of Miniſters, and the beſt of Men, being but Men, our Imitation of them muſt not be an univerſal, but a limited Imitation; we muſt follow Paſtors, Teachers, nay, Apoſtles themſelves, no farther than they follow Chriſt, their infallible Lord and Maſter. *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo follow Chriſt.*

2 Now I praiſe you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

This Commendation is to be reſtrained to the ſounder Part of the Curch at *Corinth*, who were mindful of his Precepts and Inſtructions which he had delivered to them concerning Matter appertaining to the publick Worſhip of God; which Precepts and Rules for the Worſhip of God he calls Traditions, becauſe they were immediately delivered to the Church, either from the Apoſtle's Mouth, or by Writing: This Place, though produced, yet makes nothing for the unwritten Traditions of the Romiſh Church: Let them prove by Authentick Teſtimony, that their Fardles of Traditions were delivered to the Church from the Mouth of the Apoſtles, and we will receive them; *Now I praiſe you, Brethren*: here it deſerves a Remark, that the Apoſtle being about to reprove certain Diſorders in the Church of *Corinth*, he uſhers in his Reproof for what was amiſs, with a Commendation of what was Praiſe-worthy amongſt them: *I praiſe you, Brethren*: like the Phyſician who wraps his bitter Pill in Honey or Sugar before he gives it into his Patient's Mouth; it is Wiſdom to intermix Commendations with our Reproofs, that the latter may take more Place, when accompanied with the former.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Chriſt; and the head of the woman, is the man; and the head of Chriſt, is God.

Here our Apoſtle anſwers the Query, and reſolves the Caſe which the *Corinthians* had put to him, and laid before him about Church-Order; and concerning the decent Behaviour of Men and Women in Church Aſſemblies; and firſt he reminds them, that a Subordination of Perſons in the Church of God ought to be obſerved and kept: That as Chriſt, as Mediator, is inferiour to God the Father; but is the Head and Lord of all Men, as Creator and Redeemer; ſo the Man is the Head of the Woman, and as ſuch muſt ſhew her Subjection unto the Man: As Chriſt, as Mediator, acts in Subordination to the Father, ſo muſt the Woman act in Subordination to the Man: The Socinians would wreſt this Text to confirm them in their Blaſphemous Denial of the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Here, ſay they, the Apoſtle declares that the Head of Chriſt is God: Now the Moſt High God can have no Head above him; therefore Chriſt, who hath an Head above him, cannot be the Moſt High God. The modern and general Anſwer is, that God is here call'd the Head of Chriſt as Mediator, in which Relation he receiv'd his Kingdom from him, and exerciſes it for him, and therefore is elſewhere ſtiled the Father's Servant, *Behold my Servant*, &c. becauſe he doth all Things according to his Father's Will, and with a fixed Eye at his Father's Glory. But the Ancients reply to this Objection thus, that God is ſaid to be the Head of Chriſt, as he is the Father of the Son, and ſo the Cauſe of him: And as the Woman is of the ſame Nature with the Man, who is her Head; ſo is Chriſt of the ſame Nature with God the Father, who is here ealled his Head; *The Head of Chriſt is God.*

4 Every man praying or prophecying, having his head covered, diſhonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth, or propheſieth with her head uncovered, diſhonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if ſhe were ſhaven.

By *the Man's praying and prophecying*, underſtand his performing any Divine Offices in the Church, as Prayer, and expounding the Scriptures, ſinging of Pſalms, and the like, By doing this *Cover'd*, underſtand not the natural Covering of the Hair, but an artificial Coveting by a Vail, after the manner of Women, which is a Token of Subjection: By *diſhonouring his Head*, underſtand either, (1.) *Chriſt*, who in the former Verſe was call'd, *the Head of every Man*: He that adminiſters to the Church in holy Things repreſents Chriſt, who is the Head of the Church; therefore by covering the Head he declares a Subjection to his Adminiſtration, and doth as it were make the Church the Head of Chriſt, inſtead of Chriſt's being the Head of the Church. Or elſe, (2.) By diſhonouring the Head, may be underſtood the Miniſter's own Head; he betrayeth his Superiority, and leſſeneth the Honour and Dignity of his Sex, by uſing ſuch a geſture in Divine Offices as is a Token of Inferiority and Subjection: For in that Country at that time it was a ſign of Subjection to have the Head cover'd, but a ſign of Power and Dominion to have the Head uncover'd. The contrary is found with us at this Day, for thoſe that have Power over others now keep their Heads cover'd, and thoſe that are Inferior to others keep their Heads uncover'd before them. *Verſe* 5. By the Woman's praying and prophecying, is underſtood either ptophecying extraordinarily, which we read the Women ſometimes did both in the Old and New Teſtament, and were call'd Propheteſſes, *Luke* 2. 36. *Acts* 21. 9. Or elſe, (2.) By the Woman's Prophecying, is to be underſtood praiſing God in Hymns and Pſalms, 1 *Chron.* 25. 1, 2, 3. *They prophecied with Harps, Pſalteries and Cymbals, giving Thanks, and Praiſing the Lord*; where prophecying and praiſing the Lord are the ſame thing. By the Woman's prophecying with her Head uncover'd, to the diſhonour of her Head or Husband, is to be underſtood her appearing unvail'd in the Church, open and bare-faced: In Publick, which was accounted, (1.) An immodeſt, unbecoming and unſeemly Guiſe. (2.) Arrogant; her being unvail'd and uncover'd was a Token of her uſurping an undue Authority over the Man, and of her caſting off that Subjection which ſhe was under by the Law of her Creation to him. (3.) Superſtitious; it being a phantaſtical Imitation of the She-Prieſts and Propheteſſes of the Gentile, when they ſerved their Idols, and particularly when they ſacrific'd to *Bacchus*, who uſed to have their Faces uncover'd, their Hair diſſhelv'd, hanging at its full length round about their Ears, now the Corinthian Women in imitation of theſe Heathen Women, (for the Female Sex is very fond of, and exceeding prone to follow the Faſhion) did caſt off their Vails, diſcover'd their Faces, diſhonour'd their Heads, even their natural Heads, (as well as their Oeconomical Head, their Husband) it being then and there accounted as immodeſt a thing for a Woman to appear in publick uncover'd, as to appear with her Head ſhaven. From the whole *Learn*, That God requires at the Hands of all Perſons, who either adminiſter unto him, or ſtand before him, a decent Behaviour, and comely Accommodation in his Houſe, eſpecially in the Acts and Exerciſes of his Worſhip and Service. For if in their Habit and Dreſs, ſurely much more in their Geſture and Deportment, doth he love nothing that is unſeemly and unbecoming in any Perſon. *Learn*; (2.) That it is eſpecially the Duty of Perſons imploy'd in Divine Adminiſtrations to demean themſelves as thoſe who repreſent our Lord Jeſus, managing themſelves with a due Authority, and decent Gravity, becoming the Ambaſſadors of God. So then it is a general Obſervation of Decency in our outward Behaviour, when worſhipping God before others, which our Apoſtle here recommends as a ſpecial Duty.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her alſo be ſhorn: but if it be a ſhame for a woman to be ſhorn or ſhaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds by many Arguments to evince and prove the Woman's Inferiority and Subjection to the Man, and that ſhe ought to have a Covering upon her Head as a Sign and Token of it. *Firſt*, Becauſe the Image of God; that is, the Image of his Majeſty, Dominion and Power, ſhineth forth moſt brightly in the Man, therefore he ought to have his Head uncover'd. *Man is the Image and Glory of God.* But is not the Woman ſo likewiſe? *Anſw.* Conſider the Woman according to her ſpecifical Nature, and ſo ſhe was created after the Image of God in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs, as well as the Man: But then conſider the Woman according to her perſonal Relation to her Husband, and in that regard the Woman is not the Image of God, becauſe Dominion, which is the Image of God, is the Man's Priviledge, and Subjection the Woman's Duty. *But ſhe is the Glory of the Man*: that is, It is the Glory and Honour of Man that God hath given him Superiority over ſo excellent a Creature as the Woman. For if his Dominion over the Irrational Creatures be his Glory and Honour, then what a Glory and Honour is it for a Man to have ſo excellent a Creature as the Woman? A Creature endow'd with Reaſon like himſelf, ſubject to him. But as in this Senſe the Woman is the Glory of the Man, ſo in another Senſe the Man is the Glory of the Woman: She communicates with him in all his Dignity, how great ſoever; whatever Natural or Civil Excellency is in him, reflects on her. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*; the Wife ſhines with the Rays of her Husband's Honour. And the Woman being thus in a State of Inferiority, ſhe ought to profeſs her Subjection to her Husband by wearing a Vail.

8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman: but the woman for the man.

Another Argument which the Apoſtle offers to prove the Inferiority of the Woman, is this, That originally the Man was not made of the Woman, or for the Woman, but the Woman was made of the Man, (his Rib) and for the Man, that is, for his Service and Comfort, to be an Help-meet for him, and to be in Subjection to him. Man had this Prerogative, to be immediately from God; but the Woman was from Man, and to be adminiſtring and ſubſervient to Man, and conſequently to cover her Head in Token of her Submiſſion to him.

10 For this cauſe ought the woman to have power on her head, becauſe of the angels.

Moreover, For this Cauſe ought the Woman *to have Power* (that is, as a Vail upon her Head, as a Sign, and in Token of her Husband's Power, and her own Subjection) becauſe of the Angels. That is, ſay ſome, (1.) Becauſe of the Law of Subjection given her by the Miniſtry of Angels. (2.) Becauſe of the Paſtors, Teachers and Miniſters of the Church, ſay others, who are often in Scripture ſtyl'd Angels. (3.) Becauſe of the evil Angels, as ſome interpret it; the Woman being tempted by Satan, the Prince of the evil Angels, to commit the firſt Sin, which is a perpetual Cauſe of Shame to her and her Poſterity, and which increas'd her and their Subjection to the Man; for which Reaſon the Woman ought to be vail'd and cover'd (in the Church-Aſſemblies particularly) as a Token of Shamefacedneſs and Subjection. (4.) The more general Interpretation, is, becauſe of the good Angels, who are preſent in the Aſſemblies of the Saints, and Eye-witneſſes of their Carriage there, therefore the Woman ought to do nothing indecent in the Preſence of thoſe Holy Spirits; and beſides, ſhe has the Angels for her Pattern and Preſident, who cover their Faces; and vail their Heads, in Token of Subjection to Almighty God. *Note here*, (1.) That it has been a general Opinion among Jews, Heathens and Chriſtians, that good Angels are more particularly preſent with us, in the Places, and at the Times of God's Publick Worſhip; yea, that they are not only preſent with us, but obſervant of us, and aſſiſting to us in the Performance of all Religious Exerciſe, eſpecially Prayer; and therefore the *Jews* ſpeak of a particular Angel, whom they call the Angel of Prayer. *Note*, (2.) That therefore all Perſons, both Men and Women, ought to demean themſelves with all Modeſty, Reverence and Decency in the Worſhip of God, out of regard to the Angels, who are there preſent, obſerving their Carriage and Behaviour. True, the Angels cannot penetrate into the inward Devotion of the Mind which God only obſerves; but they obſerve and take notice of the outward Decency of our Carriage, and the Reverence of our Deportment. But, Lord, how little is this conſider'd, and by how few among us, in our Religious Aſſemblies? With regard to God, who ſees our Hearts, we ſhould more particularly compoſe our Minds to the greateſt Seriouſneſs and Sincerity in our Devotions; and with a particular regard to the Holy Angels, who are there preſent, we ſhould be careful alſo of our outward Behaviour; but to our Shame be it ſpoken, there are multitudes amongſt us in our Chriſtian Aſſemblies, whom neither the Preſence of Angels, nor the obſerving Eye of him who is Lord of Angels, can influence to any tolerable Decency of Behaviour in the Houſe of Prayer, where the Eyes of God and Angels, of Miniſters and Men, are upon them. Such, without Repentance, muſt never expect to dwell hereafter with God and his Holy Angels in Heaven, but take up their Lodgings with the Devil and his Angels in an eternal Hell; for whom is reſerv'd blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever.

11 Nevertheleſs, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even ſo is the man alſo by the woman: but all things of God.

Becauſe the Apoſtle might ſeem to have been too harſh towards the Woman, and leſt the Man ſhould thereupon take occaſion to carry himſelf with Pride and Inſolence towards her, he prudently intimates the mutual Help and Need which both Man and Woman ſtand in of one another; for ſince the Creation of the firſt Man, all Men are by the Woman. And as Men have no being but by the Woman, ſo the Woman without the Man cannot Exiſt or Propagate. For as at the firſt Creation the Woman was taken out of the Man, ſo now in Generation the Man is of the Woman, and by the Woman; ſhe conceives them, brings them forth, ſuckles them, and brings them up, and all this by the wiſe Diſpoſal of God, who made the Woman out of the Man, and by his Benediction increaſeth Man by the Woman. From which Conſiderations our Apoſtle infers, that both Man and Woman ſhould look upon their diſtinct Prerogatives as given them by God, and carry it, not with Pride and Inſolence, but with Reſpect and Kindneſs each to other; and eſpecially that the Woman be in Subjection to the Man, and teſtify that Reſpect by all the Signs of it; particularly by her being vail'd and cover'd, which is the Argument our Apoſtle is here inſiſting upon.

13 Judge in your ſelves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered: 14 Doth not even nature it ſelf teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God.

Obſerve here; (1.) How our Apoſtle cloſes his Diſcourſe in which he had reprov'd the *Corinthians*; the Men for covering, the Women for uncovering their Heads, and laying aſide their Vails in Time of Religious Worſhip; by an Appeal to themſelves and their own Judgment concerning the Matter he is ſpeaking of and reproving them for; namely, Mens praying with their Heads covered, and Women with their Heads uncover'd. *Obſerve*, (2.) How the Apoſtle proceeds to blame both Sexes for another Diſorder; namely, That Men wore their Hair like Women, and that Women appear'd in the Guiſe of Men as to their Hair. Here he lets them know that both theſe kinds of Diſorders are repugnant to the Inſtitution of God, and the Dictates of Natural Reaſon, *Doth not Nature itſelf teach you?* that is, (1.) The general Dictates of Natural Reaſon. (2.) The particular Law of Nature, concerning the Diſtinction of Sexes. (3.) Uſage and common Cuſtom, which is a Second Nature. All theſe ſuggeſt, that for Men to wear their Hair at full length like the Women, is uncomely, and unnatural in the Manly Sex; but ſo to do is comely and natural in the Female. *Learn hence*, That God diſallows, and even Nature itſelf condemns every thing that tends to the confounding of the Sexes, which it is his Will and Pleaſure ſhould be viſibly diſtinguiſh'd; it is a great Offence to God, and contrary to one End for which Apparel was given, when either the Man or the Woman wear Apparel contrary to their Sex; and what is ſaid of Apparel, their artificial Covering, may be affirm'd of the Hair, which is their natural Covering. It is a Shame for either Sex to wear their Hair in an uncomely and indecent manner, diſagreeable to the natural Modeſty of either Sex. *Obſerve*, (3.) How the Apoſtle appeals to the Cuſtom and Practice of the Churches of God in the Caſe before us. The Cuſtom of all the Churches is againſt Womens being uncover'd, as an unſeemly thing. It is a known Rule, *Ubi nihil certi ſtatuit Scriptura, mos populi Dei, & inſtituta majorum pro lege Tenenda ſunt*: We ought not to diſſent and differ from the Cuſtom and Practice of the Church of Chriſt in Matters not poſitively determin'd, but the Cuſtom of the Church muſt ſway with us, with whoſe Practice it is our Duty to be as concordant as we can. *If any Man will be contentious, we have no ſuch Cuſtom, neither the Churches of God. Learn thence*, That in Things only reſpecting Decency, and in Compliance with which there is no Violation of the Command of Chriſt, the Cuſtom of the Church of Chriſt ſhould determine us, and be as a ſtanding Rule unto us. *Learn*, (2.) That it argues a contentious Spirit, and ſavours very much of Pride in Matters of little Moment, to be ſingular in our Practice, and to create Diſturbance to the Church of God. —*If any Man ſeem to be contentious*, &c.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe *you* not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worſe. 18 For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I here that there be diviſions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifeſt among you.

Our Apoſtle here enters upon a new Argument or Subject Matter of Diſcourſe; namely, to reprove the Abuſes which were crept in amongſt them in their Adminiſtration of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper. And the firſt Abuſe which he blames them for, was, The Diviſions and Factions which were found amongſt them. *I hear there are Schiſms* amongſt you; where we are to underſtand by Schiſms, not a Separation from the Unity of the Catholick Church, but of Sects and Diviſions in the Church; they did not ſeparate from the Church, but they eat the Lord's-Supper ſeparately in the Church, and the whole Congregation did not joyn together in the Celebration of that Ordinance. Tho' we do not ſeparate from the Communion of the Catholick Church, yet if we occaſion Diviſion and Diſſention groundleſly in the Church, we juſtly fall under the Imputation and Charge of Schiſm. *Obſerve next*, The Apoſtle argues a *Minori ad Majus*; he did eaſily believe there were Diviſions, becauſe *there muſt be alſo Hereſies amongſt them.* Hereſies are worſe than Schiſms, falſe Doctrines more dangerous than Diviſions. Hereſy is an Error in the Fundamentals of Religion, maintain'd with Obſtinacy. When the green Wound of an Error is let alone, it ſoon rankles, and quickly grows into the old Sore of an Hereſy: But how comes the Apoſtle to ſay, there *muſt* be Hereſies? What Neceſſity is there for them? *Anſw.* (1.) Negatively, there is not an abſolute Neceſſity for them on God's Part, or a Neceſſity of his making, but a conditional Neceſſity, or a Neceſſity *Ex Hypotheſi*, which muſt needs be, if ſuch a thing be granted before. As ſuppoſing the Sun be riſen, it muſt be Day. Thus here, upon Suppoſition of the Pride, Vain-glory, Envyings, Strife and Contentions, which are amongſt the Members of the Church; upon Suppoſition of the Craft and Subtilty, Malice and Malignity of Satan, the Church's grand Enemy; upon Suppoſition of God's Permiſſion, that Satan and wicked Men ſhould act according to their corrupt Affections and Inclinations, Hereſies muſt and will be. *Note*, farther, The reaſon here aſſign'd for the Neceſſity of Hereſy is not caſual, but eventual; not caſual, as if the Wiſdom of God did deſign there ſhould be Hereſies for this End, that they who are approved of him ſhould be made manifeſt; but rather eventual, as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Henee it will come to paſs that they who are approved will be made manifeſt.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lords ſupper.

As if he had ſaid, True, ye *Corinthians*, when ye come together to one Place, ye pretend to eat the Lord's Supper; but though you eat it, yet ye do not eat it; you perform the material part of the Action, but you do not partake of it ſolemnly and religiouſly, according to the Divine Inſtitution; this therefore is not to eat the Lord's Supper. *Learn thence*, That a Duty not done as it ought to be done, is not done at all in the Account of Chriſt. Sermons may be heard, and yet accounted no Sermons; Prayers made, yet not made; Sacraments received, yet not received; Alms given, yet not given; becauſe not done in Manner and Form as God required. A gracious Heart will look not barely at the Matter of the Duty, but alſo at the manner of Performance, and take care not only that he hears, but how he hears.

21 For in eating every one taketh before *other*, his own ſupper: and one is hungry and another is drunken.

Here our Apoſtle begins to reprove the *Corinthians* for the Abuſes found in their Love-Feaſts. Theſe Love-Feaſts were founded on no expreſs Command in Holy Writ, but only on the Cuſtom of the Church, who immediately before receiving the Sacrament uſed to have a great Feaſt, to which all the Poor were invited at the Charges of the Rich, as an Expreſſion of their perfect Love and Charity one towards another. Now in theſe Feaſts of Charity they did not obſerve due Order and Decency; for *every one*, that is, every Party and Faction, being come to the Place of the Aſſembly, did preſently ſet down to eat what they had brought in the Company of their own Party, not minding or regarding others; whereupon this Holy Feaſt of Charity was neither celebrated at the ſame Time by all, nor with that Unanimity and Concord which it was deſigned to repreſent; whilſt the Poor were excluded, and ſent home hungry, the Rich were feaſted, and drank to ſome Degrees of Exceſs, which is here called Drunkenneſs. *One is hungry, and another is drunken.* Behold what great Irregularities and Diſorders are here found in the Church of *Corinth!* Who can expect a Church without Spot in this imperfect State? God has left theſe Miſcarriages upon Record; not for Imitation, but for our Caution.

22 What, have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God, and ſhame them that have not? what ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this: I praiſe you not.

A twofold Senſe and Interpretation is given of theſe Words. Some paraphraſe them thus: What! muſt you make the Houſe of God the Place of your Feaſting? If you be diſpoſed for Mirth and Jollity, have you not Houſes wherein you may do it with more privacy, and leſs Offence? Or deſpiſe you the Church of God? Do you undervalue, and thus prophane and unhallow the Place ſet a-part for God's Worſhip and Service, by converting it into a common Banqueting-Houſe? Thus many expound it of the Material Church; and their Opinion is favoured by the Antitheſis and Oppoſition betwixt Church and Houſes. *Have ye not Houſes to eat and to drink in? Or deſpiſe you the Church of God? Learn*, That only Duties pious and publick are to be performed in the Church or Houſe of God. Duties pious, but not publick, better ſuit the Cloſet than the Church. Duties publick, but not pious, more befit a *Guild-Hall*, or Town-Houſe, than the Houſe of God. Others by the Church of God underſtand the Spiritual Church, the poor Members of

Jeſus Chriſt, and render the Words thus; *What, have ye not Houſes to eat and to drink in,* if Need be, before you come? Or *deſpiſe you* thoſe poor Chriſtians, who are Members of the *Church* of Chriſt as well as you, and put to *Shame them that have not* what you eat and drink, by excluding them out of your Company for their Poverty ſake? For ſince God adopts them into his Family, and admits them unto his Table, they ought not to exclude them from this Feaſt of Charity, which was originally deſign'd for the Poor's Relief. *Learn,* He that deſpiſeth the Poor, deſpiſeth the Church of God; yea, deſpiſeth Chriſt himſelf; as he that pincheth the little Toe, paineth the whole Body; ſo the diſgracing the poor Members of Chriſt, is a deſpiſing of the whole Church. In theſe Love-Feaſts the Poor were the moſt proper, and ſhould have been the moſt principal Gueſts; but alas! the Rich gorg'd themſelves plentifully, whilſt the Poor ſtood and look'd on hungry. Yet *obſerve* Laſtly, With what Lenity and Mildneſs the Apoſtle reproves theſe great Diſorders in the Church of *Corinth. Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.* It was the firſt time he had told them of their Faults, therefore doth it gently, in hopes of Amendment. *Learn thence,* That tho' Miniſters muſt not commend, but reprove People when they do ill, yet they muſt uſe Mildneſs, eſpecially at their firſt reproving of a Sin. Some obſerve, That God ſo bleſs'd the mild Severity of St. *Paul,* that the *Corinthians* upon the writing this firſt Epiſtle, reform'd all their Abuſes, which they gather from hence, becauſe no Fault is taxed in the ſecond Epiſtle, which was reprov'd in the firſt.

23 For I have received of the Lord, that which alſo I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the *ſame* night in which he was betrayed, took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks; he brake *it*, and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the ſame manner alſo *he took* the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the new teſtament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. 26 For as oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lords death till he come.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle for reforming thoſe Abuſes which were crept into the Church amongſt them relating to the Holy Sacrament, reduces them to the firſt Inſtitution of that Sacred Ordinance. *I have delivered to you what I have received of the Lord.* Mark, The Apoſtle did receive and deliver, but not inſtitute and appoint, this venerable Ordinance. Had he not received, he had wanted Authority, and had he not deliver'd what he receiv'd, he had wanted Integrity. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Author of this Inſtitution, *the Lord Jeſus.* To inſtitute Sacraments is an Act of Chriſt's Regal Power and Royal Authority. The Church has no Power to appoint, but only to execute and adminiſter what Chriſt appoints. *Obſerve* (3.) The time of the Inſtitution, the ſame Night in which he was betray'd. It is a Night much to be remember'd, in which he ſettles an Ordinance in the Church for the Confirmation and Conſolation of his People to the End of the World. Lord! What an Evidence was here of thy tender Care, and affectionate Concern for thy Church and People, in ſpending ſo much of that little, very little, Time thou hadſt left upon their Account. *Obſerve* (4.) The Sacramental Elements, or the memorative, ſignificative and inſtructive Signs, and they are Bread and Wine, ſhadowing forth the Body and Blood of the Crucify'd Jeſus. Where *Note,* St. *Paul* calls it Bread Five times over, which Chriſt calls his Body, becauſe it was a Sign and Repreſentation of his Body; not his real Body, for then Chriſt eat his own Body whilſt he was alive, his Diſciples devouring that Body over Night which hung upon the Croſs next Morning, with a Thouſand ſuch like Abſurdities, which the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation carries along with it. *Obſerve,* (5.) The miniſterial Actions, *the Breaking of the Bread, and Bleſſing of the Cup.* The Bread muſt be broken, to repreſent the breaking of Chriſt's Body upon the Croſs, which comprehended all the Sufferings of his Human Nature; all which were conſummated in his Crucifixion, and this broken Bread muſt be taken and eaten by us, to intimate that all his Breakings Bruiſings and Woundings, both in Soul and Body, were for our Sins, and for our Benefits, and that the ſole intention of all his Sufferings was for us. Wine alſo is pour'd forth, becauſe as no Liquor like Wine doth chear a ſad and drooping Spirit, in like manner nothing doth ſo glad and chear the Soul as Faith in a Crucify'd Saviour. That Spiritual Life which a Soul is rais'd to by the Death of Chriſt, is a Life of the greateſt Delight and Joy which we can conceive. *Obſ.* (6.) The great Deſign and End of this Inſtitution, *Do it in remembrance of me,* or for a Memorial of me: Chriſt knew how apt our baſe Hearts would be to forget him, amidſt ſuch a Throng of ſenſible Objects as we here converſe with; and how much our Forgetfulneſs of him and his Sufferings would tend to our Prejudice and Diſadvantage, and therefore doth he appoint this Ordinance to bring to Remembrance. *Obſerve* (7.) The ſtrict Mandate or Charge given for the frequent Celebration of this Ordinance, *Do this as oft as ye drink it:* that is, Do it often: We can no more live and thrive without our Spiritual, than we can without our Corporal Food; as the Body muſt be often fed, ſo the Soul muſt have its frequent Repaſt. *Obſ.* (8.) The Reaſon aſſign'd for the frequent Celebration of this Ordinance; *For as oft as ye do this, ye do ſhew the Lord's Death till he come:* That is, By frequenting this Ordinance we commemorate the Death of Chriſt during his Abſence from us. As the End of the Ordinance was to be a ſtanding Memorial, ſo the Obligation that lies upon all Chriſtians to obſerve it, is perpetual. Chriſtians are by this Ordinance to repreſent the ſacrificing of Chriſt for their Sins, till he come again in Glory. *Learn,* from the whole, (1.) That the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper was inſtituted by Chriſt as a ſtanding Memorial of his Death and Sufferings for us. Here we ought to remember the Painfulneſs of his Death, the Meritoriouſneſs of his Death, the Voluntarineſs of his Death, the Acceptableneſs of his Death to God, and the Advantageouſneſs of his Death to ourſelves; and the Manner how we ſhould remember Chriſt and his Death in the Sacrament is various; with Judgment and Underſtanding, with Reverence and Humility, with Sorrow and Grief of Heart for our Sins, yet with Joy and Thankfulneſs for the Sufferings of a Saviour; with Faith and Affiance, with Love and Affection, with Reſolutions for a new and better Obedience. *Learn,* (2.) That the Command of Chriſt lays it as a Law upon, and makes it the ſtanding Duty of all Chriſtians to commemorate his Death at his Holy Table. *Do this in remembrance of me.* Here it deſerves our notice what kind of Command this is; it is a ſoveraign and ſupream Command; 'tis a poſitive and expreſs Command; 'tis a permanent and laſting Command; 'tis the Command of a Saviour, yea, of a dying Saviour; 'tis a Command of Love; 'tis ſuch a Command, as if we duly obſerve, will be a bleſſed Means to enable us to obſerve all the Commands of God better. *Laſtly,* It is ſuch a Command, as whoever lives in the wilful neglect of, cannot be call'd a Chriſtian, but will be treated by Chriſt at the great Day as an Enemy, and Deſpiſer of his dying Love. *Learn,* (3.) That it is a Chriſtian's Duty not barely to do this, but to do it often; frequent Communicating is a great Duty. The Primitive Chriſtians receiv'd every Lord's-Day; yea, 'tis believ'd oftner than every Lord's-Day. This is agreeable to the Nature of the Ordinance, which is a Spiritual Repaſt, Banquet and Feaſt, and therefore to be receiv'd frequently. 'Tis alſo agreeable to the Author of the Ordinance; 'tis a Feaſt of God's own providing, therefore to neglect it is to fly in the Face of God; 'tis agreeable to the End of the Ordinance, which is, to renew our Covenant and that can't be done too often.

27 Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

The Apoſtle having in the fore-going Verſes declar'd the original Inſtitution of the Lord's-Supper, he comes now to inſtruct the *Corinthians* in the right Uſe of it, and to excite them to a due Regard in their Approaches to it; he acquaints them with the great Danger of an unworthy receiving of it; *Whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread,* &c. *unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Queſt.* (1.) What is it not to eat and drink unworthily? *Anſw.* (1.) To receive the Sacrament with many Doubts and Fears, with a weak Faith, with a trembling Hand, and fearful Heart, all this may be, and yet the Perſon not receive unworthily. (2.) The want of perfect Holineſs, and a compleat freedom from Sin, doth not denominate a Perſon an unworthy Receiver; for this Ordinance was not inſtituted for Angels, but for Men; to make ſinful Men good, and good Men better. (3.)

Backwardneſs to the Duty, Deadneſs and Dulneſs in the Duty, when involuntary and lamented, makes not a Perſon an unworthy Receiver. *Queſt.* (2.) What is it to eat and drink unworthily? *Anſ.* (1.) It is to receive out of Cuſtom, not out of Conſcience; for Company ſake, not for the Command's ſake; becauſe the Law of Man enjoins it, not becauſe the Laws of Chriſt require it. (2.) It is to receive without ſuch a Diſpoſition of Mind, ſuch a Preparation of Heart, ſuch Reverence and Devotion as ought therein to be exerciſed; to receive without Knowledge, without Repentance, without Faith, without Reſolutions for a ſincere Obedience, without ſincere Reconciliation to our Neighbour. *Queſt.* (3.) What is it to be guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord? *Anſ.* (1.) 'Tis an implicite Approbation of the *Jews* Act in crucifying Chriſt. (2.) 'Tis implicitely a Jeſting with the Body and Blood of Chriſt, a playing with the moſt tremendous Things in the World. (3.) 'Tis a crucifying the Son of God afreſh; 'tis to ſtab the Maſter of the Feaſt at his own Table, whilſt he is treating us with the richeſt Dainties.

28 But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

Obſerve here, the Duty required to prevent the Danger of unworthy receiving, and that is the great and neceſſary Duty of Examination. A Metaphor taken from Goldſmiths, who try the Truth of their Gold by the Touchſtone, the Purity of their Gold by the Fire, the Weight of it by the Scale. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Examinant, or Perſon performing this Duty of Examination. *Let a Man*: That is, let every Man, that ſtands in a double Oppoſition, (1.) To our examining of others. (2.) To our reſting in another's Examination of us. *Obſerve*, (3.) The frequency of this Act; as often as we partake of the Ordinance, ſo oft we ſhould, if we have Time, leſs or more, examine our ſelves. *Let him examine, and ſo let him eat*: Let him paſs through one Duty to another. *Learn hence*, That it is the ſpecial Duty, and ought to be the ſingular Care and Endeavour, of all thoſe that deſire ſafely and comfortably to approach the Table of the Lord, to examine themſelves before they come; to examine their Right unto it, and to examine their fitneſs for it.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.

What it is to eat and drink unworthily we find explained before at *Ver.* 27. *Note* here farther, That many Perſons of honeſt Hearts, but weak Heads, have ſadly miſunderſtood the Words of St. *Paul* about unworthy receiving, thinking that ſuch an exceſs of Reverence and Preparation is required, that either they dare not come at all, or they come with ſo much Dread and Fear upon their Minds, that they are more terrified than comforted. *Obſerve* farther, The unworthy Perſon eats and drinks Judgment; that is, Temporal Judgment will follow him in this Life, and, without Repenance, Eternal Damnation in the next. Yet *Note*, It is Judgment to himſelf that receives, not to another that receives with him. If a wicked Man's preſence at the Sacrament pollutes the Ordinance to a worthy Receiver, then Chriſt and his Eleven Apoſtles were defiled by the Company of *Judas* at the Paſſover; for at that he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's Supper alſo. *Learn* then, That unworthy Receivers of the Lord's Supper do contract great Guilt, and incur great Danger, to themſelves. The Deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe two laſt Verſes is this, that we ſhould not ſinfully omit the Duty, becauſe of the Command, nor careleſly undertake it, becauſe of the threatned Judgment.

30 For this cauſe many *are* weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.

For this Cauſe; that is, for prophaning the Sacrament, and not diſcerning the Lord's Body at the Lord's Table; for not approaching it as a Feaſt of Love, deſigned equally for the Benefit of all his Members, and to knit them in the cloſeſt Bonds of Unity and Friendſhip each to other, *therefore* it was that many were viſited with Sickneſs and Weakneſs, and ſome with Death; which being called *Sleep*, ſome have Charitably concluded from thence that they were pious Perſons in the main; for the Death of the wicked is hardly called Sleep any where in Scripture; and if ſo, then we learn that the Holineſs of an Ordinance, or the Habitual Holineſs of any Perſon which approaches an Ordinance, will not exempt from God's Diſpleaſure, and the infliction of Temporal Judgments here in this Life, if they do not by actual Preparation ſanctifie the Name of God in the Duties and Ordinances of his Worſhip; beſides an habitual, there is required an actual Preparation in all thoſe that will ſafely and comfortably approach to God in holy Duties; without it we ſhall meet with a Blow inſtead of a Bleſſing.

31 For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.

That is, if we would Examine, Try, Cenſure and Sentence our ſelves, and ſo come to the Lord's Table, as penitent Believers, with a purity of Aim, and a ſincere Intention, we ſhould thereby eſcape the caſtigatory Puniſhments, and condemnatory Sentence of God. *Learn hence*, That as it is our Duty often to Examine and Judge our ſelves, ſo Self-judging in particular, before we approach the Lord's Table, will preſerve us from the Judgmenr and Condemnation of God; we muſt firſt Summons, then Examine, then Convict and Try, then Sentence and Condemn ourſelves, and all this in hopes of being abſolved and acquitted by God, acting our Faith upon his free Mercy, and the Redeemer's Satisfaction.

32 But when we are judged we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Nature of thoſe Judgments, or efflictive Evils, which do befal the Children of God in this Life; they are *Chaſtenings*; *we are chaſtened of the Lord*; Chaſtening belongs properly to Children who are Wanton and Ungovernable; *to be Chaſtened* has a double Aſpect; firſt upon our Priviledge, it denotes our Relation as Children unto God our Father; Chaſtenings are a part of his Childrens Portion; yet in that we are Chaſtened, it Taxes us of Weakneſs; we are Fooliſh, Wanton, and Unruly Children, and therefore ſo long as we are here, muſt always go with a Rod at our Backs. Chriſt, who was alſo a Son, was Chaſtened; *The Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him*, but his were judiciary Chaſtiſements; God did not chaſtiſe him as a Child, but as an Enemy, as a Malefactor in our ſtead; as we muſt have been Chaſtened, who were Enemies and Malefactors; our Chaſtenings are Fatherly, Chriſt's Judiciary. *Obſerve*, (2.) The merciful Deſign of God in the Chaſtenings of his Children, it is to prevent their Condemnation; *We are Chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World*; when therefore at any time we are under Chaſtiſement, in all we ſay or do let us juſtifie God, and condemn our ſelves, ſeeing his Chaſtiſements are deſigned to prevent our Condemnation.

33 Wherefore my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.

Our Apoſtle here concludes his Diſcourſe with an Exhortation to the *Corinthians*, to take heed for time to come that all theſe forementioned Miſcarriages may be rectified; That when they came together to eat the Lord's-Supper, and the Love-Feaſts, they ſhould tarry one for another, that they may all Feed and Feaſt together: And if any Man pretend to be Hungry, let him eat at Home before he comes, leſt by theſe irreverent Actions he brings down the Judgments of God upon himſelf. *Laſtly*, He tells them, that as to other Points of Church-Order, he would determine them when he came among them; *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come*; ſuch Unchriſtian Diſorders may ariſe in the Church as will require the preſence and coming of an Apoſtle to Correct and Reform them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

1 NOW concerning ſpiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Our Apoſtle begins this Chapter with the reſolution of another Caſe concerning the Nature and right Uſe of Spiritual Gifts; ſome that excell'd in them, were proud of them, uſing them to vain Oſtentation, he therefore tells them, he would not have them ignorant as touching Spiritual Gifts; not ignorant either of their Author from whence they came, the Holy Spirit of God; nor of their End and Uſe, which is the Benefit and Edification of others: Gifts are for the good of others, but a Man ſhall have the Advantage and Comfort of his own Graces: Gifts are the Gold which adorns the Temple, but Grace is the Altar which ſanctifies the Gold. Lord! How many have gone laden with Gifts to Hell? How many have prophecy'd in thy Name, and yet periſh'd in thy Wrath? How many caſt Devils out of others, who yet were caſt to the Devil themſelves? How many wrought Miracles, and did many wonderful Works, who yet periſh'd for evil Workers? Lord! Let me never Build upon this Bottom (Gifts) for Eternity: theſe may make me glorious in the Eyes of Men, but Grace renders me precious in the Sight of God.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle reminds the *Corinthians* of what they were in their Heatheniſh State; namely, Idolatrous Gentiles, ſerving *dumb Idols*; for though the Devil ſometimes ſpake in and by the Idols, yet the Idols themſelves had Mouths, and ſpake not; and *they were carry'd away with theſe dumb Idols, as they were led*; that is, as they were led by their Idolatrous Prieſts, who had nothing of this Divine Spirit among them, which they ſince their Converſion from Gentiliſm to Chriſtianity had been made Partakers of; now from this Deſcription of Idolaters, that they ſerve and worſhip dumb Idols, we *Learn*, What an abſurd and unreaſonable Sin Idolatry is; the Worſhipper is better than the God he worſhips; reaſonable Men worſhip unreaſonable Creatures; ſenſible Men adore ſenſeleſs Stocks and Stones; and they who can ſpeak, invocate and call upon dumb Idols, that can neither ſpeak nor hear: And yet how prone is the Nature of Man to Idolatry and falſe Worſhip? Partly, becauſe it is a Worſhip of our own Invention, and we are fond of what is of our finding out, and ſetting up; and partly, becauſe it is External and Pompous, it courts the outward Senſes with glittering Appearances; and Men do naturally love and chuſe that for the Object of their Worſhip which may be ſeen, rather than that which is to be believ'd; as they walk by Sight, and not by Faith, ſo do they Worſhip too; an inviſible and unſeen Being, is neither the Object of their Adoration, nor Election and Choice.

3 Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus accurſed: and *that* no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghoſt.

The great Difference that was then in the World, was about Jeſus: Thoſe that were led away by dumb Idols, were taught by Satan to Blaſpheme, and ſay, upon the mention of our Saviour's Name, Jeſus *Anathema*, Jeſus *Anathema*; that is, let Jeſus be *Anathema*, accurſed, deteſted and deſtroyed, as the common Odium of their Gods. Now when the Apoſtle ſays, ſuch ſpeak not by the Spirit of God, his meaning is, that they did it by the Impulſe and Inſtinct of the Devil, by the Actings and Inſtigation of the evil Spirit, which ruled in thoſe Children of Diſobedience; on the other ſide, every One that believeth, calleth Jeſus Lord, and profeſſeth Faith in him; now none, ſays the Apoſtle, can do this but by the Holy Ghoſt; that is, by his Help and Aſſiſtance: But it may be ſaid, we read in Scripture of many who were acted by the Unclean Spirit, that yet call'd Jeſus Lord, *Mark* 1. 23. *Acts* 16. 17. *Anſwer*, (1.) Theſe Acknowledgments of Chriſt to be Lord were either wreſted from the Devil, and were a conſiderable part of his Torment, or were over-rul'd by God to advance the Glory of Chriſt. But (2.) The Apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſuch a calling Jeſus Lord, as is accompany'd with Faith in him, and Subjection to him: There is a double Saying that Jeſus is Lord; the one Verbal, *Ore Tenus*, with the Lip and Tongue only, without the Conſent of the Heart or Obedience of the Life; the other Actual, when we do with our whole Souls own and acknowledge him, love and embrace him, obey and ſerve him as Lord, and vote for his Government and Dominion over us; no Man thus calls Jeſus Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt renewing and ſanctifying him, aſſiſting and enabling him ſo to do.

4 Now there are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit. 5 And there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord. 6 And there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God, which worketh all in all.

That is, there is a great Variety and Diverſity of Spiritual Gifts, but it is the ſame Spirit from whence they all proceed and flow; and there are different Adminiſtrations and Offices in the Church, but it is the ſame Lord who hath appointed all theſe Offices: And there are diverſities of Operations perform'd by theſe Officers in the Church, but it is the ſame God who worketh in them All in All; here are Gifts deſcrib'd to the Holy Ghoſt, Adminiſtrations to the Lord Chriſt, and Operations to God the Father, but in all theſe there are great diverſities both of Kinds and Degrees. They differ in their Nature, Extent and Uſe; thus it is with reference to Spiritual Gifts, but in the Caſe of Sanctifying Graces it is far otherwiſe; theſe are all beſtow'd jointly, or not at all; God cannot give Humility to one, Purity to another, Charity alone to a third, becauſe there is ſuch an inſeparable Union and Alliance among the Graces of the Spirit, (a concatenation of Graces, as ſome call it) that where one really is, there all the reſt muſt be. Hence Probably it is, why the whole of Religion is ſometimes expreſs'd by one particular Duty of it, ſometimes by Faith, ſometimes by Hope, ſometimes by Repentance, ſometimes by Charity; becauſe the Combination of theſe Saving Graces is ſuch, that the mentioning of one implies and includes all the reſt.

7 But the manifeſtation of the Spirit, is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wiſdom; to another the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit; 9 To another faith by the ſame Spirit: to another the gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles: to another propheſie; to another diſcerning of ſpirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle enumerates and reckons up the ſeveral Sorts and Kinds of Spiritual Gifts, which were at that time plentifully pour'd forth upon the Miniſters and Members of the Church of Chriſt, which begat Aſtoniſhment and Admiration, and of theſe extraordinary Gifts our Apoſtle reckons up nine Sorts or Kinds which were found in the Primitive Church in his Day, as they here follow. (1.) One had *the Word of Wiſdom*; that is, the Revelation of the Goſpel, which is call'd the manifold Wiſdom of God, this was the Gift of the Apoſtles, to whom extraordinary Meaſures of Divine Wiſdom were firſt given to reveal the Myſteries of the Goſpel to the Pagan World. (2.) Another has *the Word of Knowledge*, that is, a ſpecial Ability to interpret the myſtical Sences and vail'd Meanings of the Scripture; and alſo to foretel remote and future Things. Thus St. *Paul* told the Centurion before the Shipwrack, that not a Man in the Ship ſhould be loſt, *Acts* 27. and *Agabus* foretold the Famine, and St. *Paul*'s Impriſonment, *Acts* 11. (3.) To another *Faith*, by which ſome underſtand ſupernatural Courage and Confidence with which God did endow them, whom he call'd to extraordinary Sufferings or Services; accordingly we read in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, with what invincible Courage and Reſolution poor Men appear'd before the Jewiſh and Heathen Tribunals, and with what aſtoniſhing Preſence both of Body and Mind they bore the Name of Jeſus before the Kings and People of the Earth; others by Faith here underſtand a miraculous Faith; that is, a ſupernatural Confidence, and firm Aſſurance, wrought by the Holy Spirit in the Minds of ſome in the Apoſtles time, by which they were certain that they could do ſuch and ſuch a Miracle before they undertook to do it; and the greateſt Apoſtle durſt never undertake to do a Miracle, but when he was aſſur'd by the Spirit that he could do it; and indeed it was requiſite for Almighty God, by ſome ſecret preceding Impreſſion of Mind, to let the Teachers of the Goſpel know when he would aſſiſt them in working Miracles, leſt they ſhould attempt to work them when they could not, and ſo diſcredit Chriſt's Doctrine, their own Authority, and diſhonour the Name of God: And therefore it is obſervable, that *the Gift of Faith* here is ſet immediately before the Gift of Healing, and working Miracles, becauſe it conſiſted in an Antecedent Impulſe to both. (4.) The next miraculous Gift, is the Gift of Healing; that is, a Power of curing all Diſeaſes both of Body and Mind, without the help of Phyſick, thro' the alone Name of Jeſus Chriſt. (5.) The Gift of Miracles, under which is comprehended the Power of ſilencing and caſting out Devils, inflicting Diſeaſes and Death on the Bodies of incorrigible Sinners, as on *Elymas* and *Annanias*; alſo the more wonderful Power in raiſing the Dead. (6.) The Gift of Prophecy; that is, (1.) The Prediction of Fore-knowledge of Things to come; thus *Agabus* foretold by the Spirit the Famine, *Acts* 11. And this Gift was ſometimes exercis'd by foretelling who would be fit Perſons to do God Service in the Church, thus, 1 *Tim.* 1.18. and ch.4.14. *According to the foregoing Propheſies concerning thee, neglect not the Gift that was given thee by Prophecy*; others by Prophecy underſtand Preaching and Expounding Scriptures by Divine Inſpiration, Praiſing God by inſpirid Hymns and Pſalms, and alſo praying unto him in publick Aſſemblies by inſpir'd Prayers; for in the Apoſtles Times there was a miraculous Gift of Preaching, Praying and Singing, in which the Spirit did in an extraordinary manner aſſiſt ſome Perſons, which with other extraordinary Gifts is long ſince ceas'd. (7.) The Gift of diſcerning of Spirits; that is, either Firſt, A Power of quick and ſure diſcerning, whether Men pretending to the Spirit ſpake from God, or not; or a ſupernatural Sagacity to diſcern between the Impulſes of Satanical Spirits, and Divinely inſpir'd Perſons; or Secondly, A Spirit of Diſcerning whether ſuch or ſuch Perſons be beſt qualify'd for ſuch an Office in the Church, and accordingly chuſing them out for that Work. Thus, *Acts* 13.2, 3. the Holy Spirit in the Prophet ſaid, Separte me *Barnabas* and *Saul* for the Work to which I have call'd them. Or, *Laſtly*, By this Power of Diſcerning Spirits the Apoſtles could tell very much of the inward Purpoſes of Mens Hearts and Thoughts; ſo *Peter* diſcern'd the Heart of *Annanias*, and the Thoughts of *Simon Magus*. (8.) The Gift of Tongues; that is, an Ability to ſpeak divers kinds of Languages unlearn'd and untaught. To which was added, (9.) The Gift of Interpreting thoſe Languages; for theſe Two Gifts did not always go together; ſome could ſpeak divers Languages, that cannot interpret them, others can interpret them that could not ſpeak them; for, ſay ſome, the Gift of ſtrange Tongues was uſually accompany'd with ſtrong Raptures, that the Perſon affected could not uſe his Underſtanding in an ordinary way, ſo as to Interpret and Explain his own Inſpirations in the Audience to which he ſpoke, which was the Reaſon why the Spirit did uſually reveal to others, who ſtood by and underſtood not the inſpir'd Languages, the Matter which was ſpoken; Thus are the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated by the Apoſtle, which were beſtow'd upon the Primitive Church, whoſe Infant State requir'd all this extraordinary Aſſiſtance; but as the Church grew up, Almighty God, like a wiſe Nurſe, wean'd her by degrees from theſe miraculous Gifts, till at laſt arriving at her full Stature, he left her, as Parents leave their Children when grown to be Men, to ſubſiſt without theſe extraordinary Helps and Supplies.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: ſo alſo *is* Chriſt. 13 For by one ſpirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one ſpirit.

Here our Apoſtle acquaints us, that the Intent and Deſign of God in giving theſe various Gifts, was the Profit and Edification of his Church, which he compares to a Body that has many Members; for tho' that one Spirit which diſtributes theſe Gifts, could have given them all to the ſame Perſon, yet to maintain a mutual Dependance, and a charitable Serviceableneſs of the Members, one among another, he gave to one one Gift, to another another; by which Means one Member of the Church would be oblig'd to take Care of the reſt: Behold here how the Wiſdom of God has order'd the State of the Church like that of the natural Body, to which the Apoſtle elegantly compares the Body of Chriſt, which is his Church: *As the Body has many Members, ſo alſo has Chriſt*; that is, the Church of Chriſt. Now having aſſur'd them, that they were indeed Members of one Body, he tells them what it was that made them ſo, Verſe 13. *For by one Spirit*; ſays he, *we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and have been made to drink into one Spirit*; that is, by being baptiz'd we are all made Members of the Body of Chriſt, and united one to another under him the Head; and this, whether we be Jews ar Gentiles, Bond or Free, we are all One in Chriſt, who by Baptiſm were admitted into his Church; and this Union of ours, one with another, is teſtify'd and declar'd by our Communion at the Lord's Table, which is here call'd a *drinking into one Spirit*, And whereas by Baptiſm we are ſaid by one Spirit to be Baptiz'd into one Body, and at the Lord's-Supper are ſaid to drink into one Spirit, we *Learn*, That the Grace of the Holy Spirit was given in Baptiſm, and in the Lord's-Supper, to all the Faithful, who do not receive unprofitable Signs, but the quickning Grace and Spirit of God, to make them living Members of that one Body.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the Foot ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where *were* the hearing? if the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the ſmelling?

Our Apoſtle here elegantly compares the State of the myſtical Body, (the Church) with that of the natural Body; as the natural Body is one, ſo is the myſtical Body; as the natural Body is inform'd and animated with one Spirit or Soul, ſo the myſtical Body, the Church, is animated by one and the ſame Spirit, receiv'd from our Spiritual Head Chriſt Jeſus, and communicated to all the Members of his Body to give them Life and Motion: As the Members of the natural Body are not alike, but ſome Superior, and others Inferior, in Excellency, yet all of indiſpenſable Uſe; for the Wiſe God hath created no Member of Man's Body in vain, but deſign'd all for the mutual Help and Benefit of one another. In like manner is it in the Church, the myſtical Body; there are different Gifts, different Offices; ſome are ſuperior, and more excelling in Gifts; others are of meaner Abilities, yet all conduce to the Good of the whole; One of inferior Gifts, muſt not account himſelf uſeleſs, (for every One that cannot be excellent may yet be uſeful) for if ſo, what would become of the Church? Therefore there muſt be different Gifts and Offices for different Uſes; but every One muſt employ his Gift, and perform his Office, according to the Nature of it, for the Service of the whole. *Learn hence*, (1.) That ſeveral Men have their ſeveral Gifts, as it pleaſeth the Gift-giving Spirit to give unto them. *Learn*, (2.) That ſuch as have the meaneſt Talent, either of Gifts or Graces, ought not to eſteem themſelves, or be eſteem'd by others, as uſeleſs or unſerviceable; but to employ their Talent, tho' never ſo ſmall, for the Service and Benefit of the whole Church.

18 But now hath God ſet the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleaſed him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more thoſe members of the body, which ſeem to be more feeble, are neceſſary.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Whereas our Wiſe Creator, who made the Body of Man, has appointed all the Members of that Body for divers Uſes and Offices, and alſo appointed the Order in which every Member ſhall ſtand, that the Head ſhall be uppermoſt to guide the Body, the Feet lowermoſt to bear the Body. In like manner our Gracious Redeemer has appointed to the ſeveral Members of his Church diſtinct Offices in his Church; and as the principal Members of the Body, the Eye and Hand, do need the leſs principal; ſo the Rulers, Paſtors, and wiſeſt Members of the Church, do need even thoſe weak and inferior Chriſtians whom the World makes ſmall Account of: The Eye, that is, the Man of great Underſtanding, cannot ſay to the Hand, the Perſon imployed in leſſer Services, I have no need of you; nor again the Head, that is, the Perſon placed in the higheſt Dignity in the Church, cannot ſay to the Feet, the Perſon imployed in the loweſt Offices of the Church. *I have no need of you.* Therefore the Superior Members of the Church muſt not pride it over the Inferior, nor the moſt knowing Chriſtians deſpiſe the leſs knowing as unuſeful and unprofitable, but as Fellow-Members, joyntly endeavour the mutual Benefit and Advantage of one another.

23 And thoſe *members* of the body, which we think to be leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abundant honour, and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comelineſs. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25 That there ſhould be no ſchiſm in the body; but *that* the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another. 26 And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in that elegant Compariſon betwixt the Members of that Body natural, and the Body myſtical; ſhewing, that as there are ſome Members in the natural Body that are leſs honourable, and ſome that are more honourable; and whereas we put more abundant Honour upon the leſs honourable Members by a decent Covering, and modeſt adorning of them; but upon our comely Parts, ſuch as the Face, we put no Covering, being comely enough of itſelf, and lacking no artificial Beauty; in like manner, all the Members of the myſtical Body ought to be inſtructed, that the meaneſt Offices in the Church, and the meaneſt Members of the Church, who have leaſt Gifts, are as well of that Spiritual Body, the Church, as thoſe that have more excellent Offices and Gifts; and as the meaner muſt not envy the more excellent, ſo neither muſt the more excellent deſpiſe the meaner, but put a due Value and Reſpect upon one another; for practiſing of which Duty a double Reaſon is here aſſigned, (1.) That there may be no Schiſm in the Body, but the Members have the ſame Care for, and Regard to, one another; if the Members of the natural Body ſhould ſtrive among themſelves, the whole Body would come to Ruin by Schiſm, ſo great Miſchief would ariſe to the Church, the Myſtical Body, by Diviſions and Diſſentions amongſt the particular Members of it. (2.) Becauſe there ought to be a Sympathy between the Members of the myſtical Body, as there is betwixt the Members of the natural Body; there is a Fellow-feeling with each other, both of Joy and Grief, in and among the natural Members; they all Rejoice and Mourn with one another; if one Member be pinch'd, the whole Body is pain'd: Thus all the myſtical Members of Chriſt's Body, the Church, ought to have the ſame common Intereſt, the ſame common Concern, the ſame common Care, and the ſame mutual Sympathy, with each other, both in Weal and Wo.

27 Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.

Our Apoſtle having thus finiſhed his elegant and excellent Compariſon between the Members of the natural, and thoſe of the myſtical Body; he comes now to make a particular and cloſe Application of it to the believing *Corinthians*, whom he acknowledges to be a part of the myſtical Body of Chriſt; and that it is their Duty to carry themſelves towards their Fellow-Members, as the Members of the Body natural do towards each other, who are evermore ſollicitous for the good of one another. Now, ſays he, *Ye are the Members of Chriſt*; as if he had ſaid, thus muſt it be with you who are the ſeveral Members of Chriſt's Church, which is his Body. From the whole of this Compariſon, with the Apoſtle's Application of it, we *Learn*, (1.) That as there can be no natural Body without divers Members, ſo no myſtical Body without diverſity of Gifts and Offices. (2.) That as the moſt inferior Members of the natural Body are as truly Members as the moſt noble, and as neceſſary and ſerviceable to the Body as the other; ſo are inferior Chriſtians as much the Members of Chriſt's Body, and in their place as uſeful and neceſſary as other Members of the Church, which are more excelling in ſpiritual Gifts. *Learn*, (3.) That as all the Members of the natural Body are placed and diſpoſed according to the Wiſdom and Pleaſure of Almighty God; in like manner the Members of Chriſt's myſtical Body are, by the unerring Wiſdom of God, placed in that Station and Condition in the Church in which he has ſet them; and accordingly they ought to be ſatisfied with it, and endeavour to be uſeful in it. *Learn*, (4.) That as there is no diviſion in the Members of the natural Body, but all the Members take care of, and are employed for the Good of the whole; ſo ought Matters to be managed in the Body myſtical, that there be no Diviſions, nor ſeparate Intereſts in it, but they ſhould mutually regard the common Intereſt of one another, ſympathizing, ſorrowing, and rejoicing together. Oh happy Day! when the Intereſt of all Parties, and private Concernments, ſhall give place to publick Intereſts.

28 And God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt apoſtles, ſecondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diverſities of tongues.

Our Apoſtle having in the beginning of the Chapter reckoned up the divers Gifts which God had variouſly beſtow'd upon the Church, here in the cloſe of the Chapter he reckons up the particular Officers that he thought fit to place in his Church. (1.) *Apoſtles*; Perſons ſent forth immediately by Chriſt to lay the Foundation of Chriſtian Churches, and upon whom the Care of all the Churches lay. (2.) *Prophets*; or Perſons immediately inſpired with the Knowledge of future Things. (3.) *Teachers*; ſuch as labour in the Word and Doctrine, either as itinerary Preachers, going from Place to Place, or as ſettled fixed Miniſters in the Church, expounding the Scriptures to the People. (4.) *Miracles*; that is, ſome Perſons endu'd with an extraordinary Power to work Miracles, for convincing Infidels, and confirming Believers. (5.) *Gifts of healing*; ſuch Perſons as had a Power conferred upon them to heal Diſeaſes, without the help of Phyſick in an extraordinary Way. (6.) *Helps*; Deacons, which took care of the Poor, and aſſiſted the Church in the Diſtribution of her Charity; and alſo aſſiſteth in holy Things, particularly in Baptizing and adminiſtring the Lord's-Supper. (7.) *Governments*; the Rulers of the Church, and ſpiritual Guides. (8.) *Diverſities of Tongues*; that is, Perſons enabled to ſpeak divers Languages, in order to the farther ſpreading of the Goſpel, without the help of Study: Behold here the Wiſdom of God in this various Diſtribution of Gifts and Offices in his Church, all which as they are deſigned by him; ſo ought they to be managed by her for the general good of the whole, without either Pride or Haughtineſs on the one Hand, or Envy and Emulation on the other.

29 *Are* all apoſtles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret?

The force of the Apoſtle's Argument lies thus, as the natural Body (to which he had before alluded) cannot be all Eye, nor all Ear, nor all Hand, nor Foot; in like manner in the myſtical Body, the Church, all cannot govern, propheſie, teach, work Miracles, heal Diſeaſes; but one has this Gift, and another that; one has this Office in the Church, and another that; all which are to be employ'd and improv'd for the common Good of the Church, and mutual Benefit of each other.

31 But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts: and yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.

He concludes the Chapter with this Advice, that they covet and deſire *the Beſt*; that is, the moſt uſeful and excellent Gifts, the moſt beneficial and edifying Gifts, ſuch as are moſt advantageous to the Church; yet withal intimating to them, that though there be an Excellency in Gifts, yet there is a greater Excellency in Grace, particularly in the Grace of Love. Charity or Love to God and our Neighbour, is more excelling than a Load of Gifts, though very extraordinary, though ſupernatural and miraculous. *Yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way*: That is, a more excellent Way of miniſtring to the Welfare of the Church, and of edifying your own Souls, even by true Chriſtian Love one towards another. *Learn* hence, That as the ſanctifying Graces of the holy Spirit are far more excelling than the miraculous and extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, ſo it is the Chriſtian's Duty to be much more covetous and deſirous of them; for, when Gifts vaniſh away, the Habits of Grace ſhall never fail, but abide for ever, particularly the Grace of Love, which ſhall not only accompany us to Heaven, but in Heaven; where from a ſmall and little Spark; it ſhall be improved into a Seraphick and Never-failing Flame.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Apoſtle had in the foregoing Chapter very copiouſly ſet forth the Nature, the Excellency and Uſefulneſs, of thoſe Gifts which were found amongſt the Miniſters and Members of the Church at Corinth *in his Time. Now leſt they ſhould truſt too much to any of the fore-mentioned Gifts, either of Tongues or Miracles, which alas! a Man may have, and periſh eternally; he proceeds in this Chapter to ſet forth the tranſcendent Excellency of the Graces of the Holy Spirit above the moſt exalted and admired Gifts; and in particular, the ſuperlative Excellency of the Grace of Charity; that is, the unfeigned Love of God and our Neighbour, which is the Noble Subject of the Chapter now before us.*

1 THough I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.

Here our Apoſtle begins a Compariſon between Gifts and Grace, and ſhews how much more excelling and deſirable the ſaving Graces of the Spirit are, than all thoſe pompous and miraculous Gifts, in which there is no real Excellency, and nothing for which we ſhould deſire them, but only upon the Score of Uſefulneſs and Serviceableneſs to the Church: And he inſtances firſt in the Gift of Tongues. *Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*; that is, tho' I had the Gift of Tongues, or ſpeaking divers Languages in the higheſt Meaſure, and moſt exalted Degree; could I preach and pray like an Angel, diſcourſe and talk beyond the rate of any mortal Man, and have not the Grace of Love and Charity, alas! what is all this to God, who is not taken with a noiſie Sound, as Children are with a muſical Inſtrument. Behold here, that the Tongue of Men or Angels could have ſaid nothing more plain or emphatical, to ſhew how much more excellent the ſaving Graces of the Spirit are than miraculous Gifts, which commend us not to God, render us not like God, nor any ways qualifie us for the Enjoyment of him, giving us no intrinſick Worth, or inherent Excellency. They only proclaim God's Goodneſs towards us, but are no ways evidential of any Goodneſs in us towards him. Gifts are like the Gold which adorns the Temple, but Grace is like the Altar which ſanctifies the Gold.

2 And though I have the *gift of* prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.

Farther, ſuppoſe I had the Spirit of Prophecy, and could ſpeak by Inſpiration of Things preſent, and Things to come, and could underſtand deep and difficult Points in God's Word and Works, what is this more than *Balaam* had? And ſuppoſe I have all Faith; that is, the higheſt degree of miraculous Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, yet this ſevered from Charity, or the predominant Love of God and our Neighbour, is all nothing. And *I am nothing*: That is, nothing worth in the Sight of God. *Obſerve* here, That miraculous Faith may be ſevered from Charity, but juſtifying Faith cannot, which always worketh by Love; and whereever that Grace is found, it gives Value and Acceptance to all other Gifts and Graces. Faith without Charity is but a dead Aſſent, Hope without Charity is but like a Timpany, the bigger it grows, the more dangerous it proves; and the moſt diffuſive Alms-giving without Love is but a Sacrifice to Vanity.

3 And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned; and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Obſerve here, (1.) That Alms may be given without true Love to God, or our Neighbour, for God's ſake; they may be given out of meer natural pity to the Poor, out of a Deſire to be well thought of, and well ſpoken of by Men, out of an Opinion of Merit, and obliging God, or from ſome other Cauſe, which includes not Love either to God or Man; and whereever they are thus given, they profit nothing to Salvation. The *Greek* Word for feeding the Poor here, ſignifies to divide Victuals in ſeveral Pieces, and ſo diſtribute it amongſt the Poor. Lord! what a Conſideration is this, that a Man may do all the external Works of Mercy, even the higheſt and moſt tranſcendent Works, and yet want true Love to God and his Neighbour. *Obſerve,* (2.) That as Alms may be given, ſo Martyrdom may be undergone without Charity. *If I give my Body to be burned*: That is, if I have ſo much Fortitude and Courage as to lay down my Life for Chriſt and his Truth, which is ſuch an high Expreſſion of my Obedience to him as Angels are not capable of performing, yet without Charity, burning is but a vain-glorious Blaze; and inſtead of ſealing the Truth with our Blood, we ſeal but our own Shame and Folly. *Obſerve,* (3.) The Apoſtle ſays not, if I be burnt, perſecuted, and put to Death by others; but if I give myſelf to be burned, if I voluntarily and freely offer up myſelf; not to Impriſonment only, but to Death itſelf, yea, to the moſt terrible kind of Death, *Burning*, yet if all this be not from a right Principle and ſincere End, if all this be without true Love to God and his Glory, Church and Truth, it will avail nothing to Salvation. *Learn hence,* That no kind of external Sufferings, though never ſo grievous, either for the Truth of Chriſt indeed, or for that which a Man's Conſcience judges to be the Truth of Chriſt, is a ſure and infallible Sign of a gracious State; a Man may ſuffer for Truth, but not for Truth's ſake, only for Intereſt ſake; he may ſuffer from a natural Strength, and ſtoutneſs of Spirit, and not from a ſpiritual Fortitude wrought in him by the Spirit of God: Ah, Lord, how miſerable is it to be burnt with Fire here for Chriſt? And to hear him ſay afterward, *Depart ye Curſed into everlaſting Fire.* It is indeed a great Matter to ſuffer for Chriſt; but it is much greater to ſuffer with ſuch a diſpoſition of Heart as Chriſt requires.

4 Charity ſuffereth long, *and* is kind: charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up,

Here the Apoſtle enters upon the Deſcription and Commendation of the Grace and Duty of Charity, and declares ſeveral excellent Effects and Properties of it; namely, *It ſuffereth long, and is kind*; that is, the charitable Man is kind to All, patient towards All, he can bear Injuries and Reproaches very long, without either deſiring or endeavouring to Revenge them. *It envieth not*; that is, he envieth neither the Power, nor Profit, nor Preferment, nor Applauſe, nor Precedency of any Man; but is well pleaſed with the Happineſs of every Man, and laments their Misfortunes, *Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not lifted up*; that is, it ſuppreſſes all Self-applauding and Admiring Thoughts; all Arrogancy in aſſuming to our ſelves, and undervaluing of others.

5 Doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil.

That is, Charity, or true Love to our Neighbour, will reſtrain us from all uncomely Deportment towards him; it will not ſuffer us to do an ill or indecent thing to any one; it breaks not forth into violent and ungovernable Paſſions upon any Provocations, how juſt ſoever, how great ſoever. *Seeketh not her own*; that is, her own Praiſe, Profit or Pleaſure; it ſeeketh not it inordinately, it ſeeketh not it injuriouſly, either in the neglect of others, or to the hurt of others; Charity is not ſelfiſh but generous. *Is not eaſily provoked*; that is, Charity is not provoked readily to think, ſpeak or act, unduly, by ſmall Iujuries or Occaſions, but beareth, forbeareth and forgiveth. *Thinketh no Evil*; that is, of any Perſon groundleſly, but conſtrues and interprets every thing in the beſt Senſe; for lightly to take up an evil Report of our Neighbour, to think or ſuſpect, much more to believe and report any Evil of him, without ſufficient Evidence againſt him, is a Violation of the Royal Law of Charity.

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth:

Charity rejoices not in any Evil done, either (1.) by our ſelves in the Commiſſion, or after Contemplation of it; or, (2.) By others, Lord! How ſad is it when it becomes Matter of Mirth and Sport to ſee another ſtab at once the Chriſtian Name, and his own Soul! Or, (3.) It rejoices not in any Evil done to others; Charity ſuffers no Man to be pleas'd or delighted with any Deceit or Falſhood ſpoken of or done to others, or with any ill Stories, or malicious Inſinnuations concerning them, or in any Calamity befalling them. *But rejoices in the Truth*; that is, Charity is ſo far from rejoicing either in the Falls or Misfortunes of others, that it rejoices when the Truth and Innocency, the Righteouſneſs and Equity of any Perſon or Cauſe is made evident and manifeſt; a good Man rejoices when he ſees any ſuſpected for, or charg'd with Iniquity, upon due Examination clear'd and acquitted. Or, (2.) *Rejoiceth in the Truth*; that is, in Mens loving Truth, doing Juſtly, and living Righteouſly, according to the Rule of Truth, the Goſpel. Oh! What a Complacency and inward Pleaſure doth it beget in a good Man's Mind, when he beholds Truth and Righteouſneſs, Piety and Goodneſs, prevailing in the World?

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity or Love has ſtrong Shoulders to bear Wrongs and Injuries with Patience, though very hard and grievous to be born, without returning Evil for Evil; it will enable us to forbear one another in Love, and not ceaſe to be kind notwithſtanding Provocations. *Believeth all Things*; that is, Charity inclines a Man to believe the beſt of his Neighbour till the contrary appear; it interprets every thing in the beſt Senſe, and makes the faireſt Conſtruction of every Man's Caſe and Condition; not that a charitable Man is a credulous Man, and can believe whatever he pleaſe; but he believeth all Things ſo far as either Reality or Probability, ſo far as Truth, or appearauce of Truth, will encourage him to do it. A charitable Man is very willing to believe that Things are meant as they are ſpoken, and intended as they are done. Oh! How uncharitable then, and unjuſt are they who believe all is Ill, when they know nothing Ill; and think and ſpeak Ill of them in whom they never ſaw any thing but what was Good? It is not ſufficient that we do not judge our Neighbour maliciouſly, but we muſt not judge him ignorantly; it is an injurious and unworthy Jealouſy, when a Perſon's Actions are fair, to ſuſpect his Intentions. *Hopeth all things*; that is, It is the Genius of Charity, and the Character of Love, to hope the beſt of Perſons and Things ſo far as there is any ground of Hope; yea, though they carry in them ſome cauſe and colour of Suſpicion; it enclines us ſtill to hope the beſt concerning Mens Intentions and Actions; and if our Brother be bold at preſent, not to deſpair of his Amendment, but endeavour his Reformation by all proper Means. *Endureth all Things*; that is, It puts up Wrongs and Injuries, without deſiring, much leſs endeavouring, to revenge them; it cauſes us to endure Provocation with much Patience, and extinguiſhes all Inclinations to Revenge; ſome will conceal their Anger, but ſeek Revenge; their Malice is like ſlow Poyſon, that does not diſcover violent Symptoms, but deſtroys Life inſenſibly; others have ſuch fierce Paſſions that they ſtrike Fire out of the leaſt Provocations; they inflame their Reſentments, by conſidering every Circumſtance that will exaſperate their Spirits; but *Charity beareth all Thing, endureth all Things.*

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether *there be* knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away. 9 For we know in part, and we propheſy in part.

Charity never faileth; holy Love is an everlaſting Quality and Imployment; it ſhall not fail at Death, as other Graces do, but be perfected at Death; Repentance ſhould accompany us to the Gates of Heaven, but Repentances ceaſes for ever in Heaven; for no need of Repentanee where there is intire Innocence: Faith is ſwallow'd up in Viſion, and Hope in Fruition; but Love is then and there in its Exaltation: Thus *Charity never faileth*, but all other Gifts will fail; Prophecying, Languages, Sciences, and all artificial Knowledge, will ceaſe for ever; Knowledge itſelf in Heaven ſhall vaniſh away: But how vaniſh? The meaning is, that ſuch Knowledge as we have now ſhall vaniſh then; that imperfect Knowledge we have now will ceaſe, and be uſeleſs then; our preſent Knowledge is attain'd with much Labour and Study; but it ſhall be no more difficult to know in Heaven, than it is for the Eye to open and ſee: The beautiful Face of Truth ſhall in a Moment be unvail'd to us in Heaven, and the Curtain drawn away by the Hand of God which interpos'd between us and the Light. Again, Knowledge of ſo imperfect a degree as now it is of ſhall vaniſh away: Here we know what we know by Divine Revelation, but in part, and we Prophecy by Inſpiration but in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.

As the imperfect Twilight is done away by the opening of the perfect Day; ſo at Death, when that which is perfect takes place, then that which was imperfect ſhall be done away; bleſſed be God for the hopes of that bleſſed Place and State where all Imperfection ſhall ceaſe, eſpecially the Imperfection of our Knowledge: Alas! Here all that we know, either of the Word or Works of God, is but a Part, a little Part; and bleſſed be God that this perfect State doth not ſucceed the imperfect one after a long Interval, (at the Reſurrectiou and Re-union of the Body) but the imperfect State of the Soul immediately is done away by the coming of the perfect one; the Glaſs is laid by as uſeleſs when we come to ſee Face to Face, and Eye to Eye; oh happy and vaſt Difference between the Chriſtian's preſent and future State! True, he now begins to know, he knows in Part here; but verily what he here knows is little of that he ſhould know, little of that he might know, little of that others know, little of that he deſires to know, and little of that he ſhall know, when he comes to Heaven; then all Imperfections *ſhall be done away, when that which is perfect is come.*

11 When I was a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.

Here the Apoſtle compares the Chriſtian's imperfect State of Knowledge and Holineſs in this Life to a State of Childhood, his perfect State of Holineſs and Happineſs in Heaven to a State of Manhood; as a Child conceives, thinks and ſpeaks of Things ſuitably to his Childiſh State; but when he comes to Manly Perfection, and to the full uſe and exerciſe of his Reaſon, he then puts away childiſh Conceptions and Things; thus is it with the beſt of us in this Life, like Children we conceive and think, we diſcourſe and ſpeak of Spiritual Things in a confus'd and imperfect manner; but when we arrive at our State of manly Perfection in Heaven, we ſhall have Knowledge and all other Graces perfected. *Learn hence*, That Chriſtians muſt ſtay for perfect Knowledge till they come to maturity and ripeneſs of Age; Children muſt not expect to know what Men know; *Solomon's* Knowledge on Earth, ſo famouſly celebrated, will be but Ignorance, compar'd with the Knowledge and Inlargements which the Saints have in Heaven; there in Natural Things they ſhall be exact Philoſophers, in Spiritual Things compleat Divines; all dark Scriptures ſhall be clear to them, all the knotty Intrigues of Providence wiſely reſolv'd; in a Word, there they ſhall know God himſelf perfectly, though they can never know him to Perfection.

12 For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I ſhall know even as alſo I am known.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Now in our Minority we ſee Divine Revelations, as the Prophets did of Old, in a dark enigmatical Manner, and by Symbolical Repreſentations of Things upon the Fancy, as in a Glaſs; but then in the adult State of the Church we ſhall ſee them after the Moſaical Manner, in a Way more accommodate to Human Nature, and as it were Face to Face; we ſhall ſee clearly, immediately; not by Reflection, but by Intuition: Theſe Adverbs *Now* and *Then* diſtinguiſh the Twofold State of Gracious Souls; and ſhew what they are whilſt confin'd to the Body, and what they ſhall be when emancipated and freed from the Body; that clog of Mortality which now hangs upon them. *Obſerve here*, (1.) That our imperfect Knowledge of God is ſet forth by ſeeing in a Glaſs, becauſe it is a weak and imperfect Viſion; a Glaſs gives but a weak and languid Repreſentation of the Face that is ſeen in it; and becauſe it is a vaniſhing and tranſient Viſion, a Man having look'd in a Glaſs preſently forgets what he ſaw there; and becauſe it is no immediate Sight, but *mediante Speculo*; by the Glaſs of his Word and Ordinances we ſee and underſtand ſomething of God's Nature and Will; though after all our ſearchings here to find out what God is, we rather know what He is not, than are able to declare what He is. *Obſerve,* (2.) That ſuch as have ſeen God here, as in a Glaſs, in the Glaſs of his Ordinances and Providences, in the Glaſs of his Word and Works, ſhall ſee him Face to Face, and fix their Eye upon him in Heaven to all Eternity; when once the pious Soul is unſheathed from the Body, it gliſters gloriouſly; as ſoon as the Cage is open, this Bird ſoars aloft, and ſings melodiouſly; its Death's Office to beat down the Partition-Wall, a groſs earthy Body, and then the glorify'd Soul ſhall have a clear and perfect Viſion, an immediate and poſſeſſive Viſion, a ſatisfying and Soul-transforming Viſion, a permanent and eternal Viſion of the Holy and Bleſſed God, which the Apoſtle here calls ſeeing Face to Face. *Obſerve,* (3.) How St. *Paul* in the latter Words of the Verſe gives us a plainer Expreſſion of that which before he had ſpoken more darkly and obſcurely. *Now I know in part, but then I ſhall know even as I am known.* Where *Note,* How the Apoſtle changes the Perſon; before it was, *we ſee through a Glaſs darkly*; here it is, *I know in part*; he had included himſelf before in the Word *We*, but he doth it more apparently in ſaying *I, Now I know in part*: When ſo great an Apoſtle acknowledges the imperfection of his Knowledge, who can, who dare, boaſt of the largeneſs of his Underſtanding? *Note* farther, The Apoſtle ſaying, Now I know, intimates, that he had begun his Acquaintance with God here, which he expected ſhould be improved and perfected in Heaven; he that knows not God in part here, ſhall never know him Face to Face in Glory; Heaven is a Place of Perfection indeed; but nothing is perfected there, that was not begun here; no Knowledge, no Holineſs, will be conſummated there, which did not commence and begin here. *Obſerve,* (4.) When the Apoſtle ſays, We ſhall know even as we are known; he means, that we ſhall know God as really and truly, though not ſo fully and comprehenſibly, as he knows us; we ſhall know him in his Nature and Attributes; then and there will his wonderful Clemency be ſweetly diſplay'd, his exact Juſtice be viſibly demonſtrated, his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded, all the knotty Intrigues of Providence wiſely reſolved, all the myſterious Depth of Divine Counſels fully diſcover'd, to the delightful Satisfaction of the admiring and adoring Soul, who ſhall then ſee as it is ſeen; and know, as it is known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe *is* charity.

The Deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe Words, is, (1.) To inform the *Corinthians*, that the Sanctifying Graces of Faith, Hope and Charity, are far to be preferred before all the fore-mention'd extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy, Miracles, Tongues; Healing the Sick, and Raiſing the Dead, not excepted; the leaſt degree of ſanctifying Grace from the Holy Spirit is to be preferred, (with reſpect to ourſelves) before the largeſt meaſure of extraordinary Gifts, which are wholly for the Good and Benefit of others. (2.) As our Apoſtle had compar'd Gifts and Graces together before, ſo he compares Graces amongſt themſelves now; Faith, Hope and Charity, are ſet in Competition, and the preference given to the laſt; partly, with reſpect to its preſent Excellency, for Charity is the End to which Faith and Hope are but the Means; and partly with reſpect to its future Duration; Faith and Hope will vaniſh with this Life; Faith will end in Sight, and Hope in Enjoyment, but Charity will never be out-dated, but laſt and flouriſh when we come to Heaven, and be a ſpecial Ingredient in, and a conſiderable Part of our Happineſs there, which conſiſts in the rapturous Contemplation of Divine Love, in Loving, Praiſing, Admiring, and Adoring God our Great Creator, and in Loving all whom he Loves, and that Eternally. *Learn,* (1.) That Faith, Hope and Love, are abiding Graces; they do and muſt keep Houſe, not only in the Church-Militant in general, but in the Soul of every Member of the Church-Militant in particular. *Learn,* (2.) That of all theſe Graces Charity is the greateſt and moſt Excellent. (1.) In regard of its Extent, reaching to God, Angels and Men. (2.) In regard of its Uſe, extending to the good of others; whereas Faith and Hope are particular and private Graces. (3.) In regard of Perfection, as rendring us more like to God. (4.) In regard of Duration; farewel Faith and Hope when we come to Heaven; but welcome Love: Therefore *the greateſt of theſe is Charity.*

CHAP. XIV.

Our Apoſtle having in the Twelfth Chapter acquainted the Corinthians *with the wonderful Diverſity and Diſparity of Spiritual Gifts; which the Wiſdom of God ſaw* then *fit to be beſtow'd upon the Church for the Propagation and Confirmation of Chriſtianity, and farther declar'd, that the Intent and Deſign of them was no other than the common and univerſal Good; in the Thirteenth Chapter he Recommends to them, and admirably Deciphers before them that great and noble Grace of Charity, which will render us Eminent and Uſeful in the World, which ſets off all other Gifts and Endowments whatſoever, and directs us how to manage them to the beſt Advantages: And here he begins this Fourteenth Chapter now before us with a Perſuaſive to follow and purſue ſo incomparable a Grace and Virtue, with the utmoſt Eagerneſs and Vigour, and not to give over till we have perfectly attained it; for thus he ſpeaks.*

1 FOllow after charity, and deſire ſpiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may propheſie.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle propounds to the *Corinthians* a Threefold Object, *Charity, Spiritual Gifts,* and *Propheſy*; Charity has the Precedency and Preheminency; the Apoſtle not only prefers it before all other Gifts, but before the moſt uſeful and excellent Graces, (even Faith and Hope) for Service and Benefit to the Church of God it exceeds them all; next he mentions *Spiritual Gifts,* ſuch were the Gift of Tongues, the Gift of Miracles, the Gift of Healing; and *Laſtly, Propheſy*; by which we are to underſtand an ordinary ſet Courſe of Preaching, Interpreting and Opening the Holy Scriptures, which contain'd a Revelation of God's Mind and Will. *Obſerve,* (2.) A Threefold Act recommended anſwerable to a Threefold Object propounded; An Act of Proſecution, Διώκετε, perſecute and *follow after* Charity as cloſe as your Perſecutors purſue and follow after you; it imports a moſt earneſt, vigorous and vehement Purſuit: An Act of Emulation, Ζηλοῦτε, *Deſire earneſtly Spiritual Gifts*: An Act of Election and Choice, *Chuſe rather that ye may Prophecy,* or clearly underſtand the Mind of God yourſelves, and have an Ability to Expound and Explain it to others; this will bring moſt Glory to God, moſt Profit to his Church, moſt Comfort to yourſelves.

2 For he that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man underſtandeth *him*; howbeit in the ſpirit he ſpeaketh myſteries. 3 But he that propheſieth, ſpeaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Here Obſerve, (1.) That the Gift of Tongues, or ſpeaking divers Languages, was greatly valu'd, and much deſir'd, by ſome in the Church at that time; probably for this Reaſon, becauſe the Apoſtles were very eminently endow'd with this Gift, the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon them in the ſhape of Cloven Tongues: But yet the Gift of Prophecy, that is, of underſtanding and interpreting God's Will, was clearly the more valuable and deſirable Accompliſhment; for though ſpeaking with Tongues created more Admiration, and conciliated greater Veneration to the Speaker, yet Prophecying was by far the more excellent Gift, and tended moſt to the Edification of the Church; it is far better to *do Good,* than to appear *Great*; that is moſt Valuable and Excelling, which is moſt Advantageous and Edifying. *Obſerve,* (2.) How the Apoſtle enters upon a Compariſon between the Gift of Speaking in an unkgown Tongue, and Prophecying or Speaking plainly to the Church's Benefit and Comfort, *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue,* that is, *in a Language not underſtood,* not explained or interpreted, he ſpeaketh not unto Men; that is, not to the Underſtanding of Men, for none underſtands him; but to God only, he alone underſtands him; and though in the Spirit he ſpeaks Myſteries, or the deep Things of God, yet all this is not to Edification, becauſe not underſtood by the Church: Whereas *he that Propheſieth,* that is, he that intelligibly openeth and applieth the Word of God to his Auditors in the Congregation, what he ſpeaks conduces exceedingly to their Edification and Conſolation. *Here Note,* That the Apoſtle not only diſlikes, but plainly forbids Preaching, Praying, and all other Offices, being performed in the Church in a Language not underſtood; ſo that the Practice of the Church of *Rome* in their *Latine* Prayers is a flat Contradiction to this whole Chapter; to the Practice of the Primitive Church, *Acts* 4. 24. who lift up their Voice with one Accord, and offered up a Reaſonable Service to God; the Prayers of the Jewiſh Church were made in the *Hebrew* Tongue; and God gave the Gift of Tongues to the Chriſtian Church, that the Apoſtles might eſtabliſh the Worſhip of God in every Nation in their own Language.

4 He that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, edifieth himſelf: but he that propheſieth, edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all ſpake with tongues, but rather that ye propheſied: for greater *is* he that propheſieth than he that ſpeaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. 6 Now brethren, if I come unto you ſpeaking with tongues, what ſhall I profit you, except I ſhall ſpeak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophecying, or by doctrine?

Obſerve here, (1.) Another Argument uſed by the Apoſtle to prove the Gift of Prophecying, that is, of interpreting the Holy Scriptures, to be far more excellent than the Gift of Tongues ſeparated from the Gift of Interpretation; he that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, edifies none but himſelf; becauſe none but himſelf underſtands it; but he that teacheth, inſtructeth, and exhorteth others, edifieth the Church, or the whole Aſſembly that he ſpeaks in. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Apoſtle wiſhes they had all the Gift of Tongues, becauſe they were ſo very covetous and deſirous of them; though Alas! Rather for their own Oſtentation, than the Church's Edification; yet he rather deſires with *Moſes, That all the Lord's People were Prophets;* that is directed and aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, to deliver plainly and perſuaſively the Will of God to Men; for he is the *Greateſt in the Church* who is moſt edifying; and he that Propheſieth, edifieth more than he that ſpeaketh all Languages uninterpreted. *Obſerve, (3.)* He amplifies this by inſtancing in his own Perſon: *If I come to you ſpeaking with Tongues;* as if he had ſaid, I wonder whether *What* you ſo admire in others would pleaſe you in me; ſuppoſe that I whom God has eminently endow'd with the Gift of Tongues, ſhould come and ſpeak to you in the *Arabian* Language, what good would it do you? What would you be the wiſer or better for me ſhould I make known to you ſome Revelation which I immediately receiv'd from God, or open to you ſome Truth which you knew not before, or urge you to ſome needful Duty, or doctrinally expound to you the Matters of Faith and Obedience recorded in the Goſpel, if either myſelf or ſome Interpreter did not make what I ſay intelligible to you, what will it profit it you? To deliver the Mind and Will of God plainly and perſuaſively to the Church's Benefit and Edification, is much more acceptable to God, profitable to Man, and comfortable to ourſelves, than to ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and Angels in a Language not underſtood, or not heard.

7 And even things without life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a diſtinction in the ſounds, how ſhall it be known what is piped or harped; 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battel? 9 So likewiſe you, except ye utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for ye ſhall ſpeak into the air.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds to illuſtrate his former Argument by a Similitude taken from Muſical Inſtruments, the one us'd in Peace, to wit, the Harp; the other in War, to wit, the Trumpet; as they are uſeleſs, if by diſtinction their Signification is not perceiv'd; for if a Man hears not, or underſtands not the ſound of rhe Harp or Trumpet, he cannot prepare himſelf either for the Dance, or the Battle; ſo if Perſons in the Church do not ſpeak intelligibly, they will nothing edify; 'tis like beating the Air, all in vain, and to no purpoſe,

10 There are, it may be, ſo many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without ſignification. 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a barbarian; and he that ſpeaketh *ſhall be* a barbarian unto me. 12 Even ſo ye, for as much as ye are zealous of ſpiritual *gifts,* ſeek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Here the Apoſtle tells them, That there may probably be as many Voices or Languages in the World as there are Nations; and every Nation underſtands its own Language, and commonly no other: Now, ſays the Apoſtle, if he that has the Gift of Tongues ſpeaks to you in a Language which ye underſtand not, will he not be a Barbarian unto you? And if you talk to him in a Language he underſtands not, will you not be a Barbarian unto him? Verily, it will be juſt as if two Men of two different Countries ſhould talk to one another, and neither underſtand a Word of each other; he further adds, That ſeeing they were ſo very deſirous of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, they ſhould ſeek thoſe Gifts eſpecially by which the Church may receive Edification and Advantage; *Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.* Here *Note,* (1.) The Noble End which St. *Paul* directs them to propound in what they Deſire and Deſign, namely, the *The edifying of the Church;* the Church's Edification, ſhould be the Scope of all her Members, eſpecially of all her Miniſters Wiſhes and Prayers, Enterprizes and Endeavours; our firſt Care ſhould be to lay a right Foundation, namely, The Doctrine of Redemption and Salvation, by the meritorious Undertaking of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, the Eternal Son of the Father; our next Care that our Superſtructure be anſwerable to our Foundation; this being Solid and Subſtantial, that muſt be ſo too; acquainting Perſons with the whole Will of God, and the whole Duty of Man, *Note,* (2.) The Operation to be perform'd, and the Means to be us'd, in order to this Noble End; *Seek that ye may excel;* that is, paſſionately deſire and endeavour that you may, by the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, be eminently qualify'd for edifying and building the Church of God; *Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church. Learn hence,* (2.) That the edifying of the Church, and the improvement of its Members in Knowledge, Faith and Holineſs, is, and ought to be the great End which the Miniſters of God propound to themſelves in the uſe of their Gifts, and diſcharge of their Office. *Learn,* (2.) That the edifying of the Church being the proper Office of the Miniſters of Chriſt, they ſhould ſtudy *to excel* in all Gifts and Graces conducing thereunto, by ſuch Means and Methods as are proper for that End; namely, by fervent Prayer to God for Divine Illumination and Knowledge, by reading the Scriptures with great Attention and Application of Mind, by ſtudying other Authors in order to that End, by deep Meditation, by judicious, zealous and laborious Preaching, but eſpecially by holy Living; there ought to be a Conſecration of our Lives, as well as of our Perſons, to the Service of God and his Church; in this manner, eſpecially the meaneſt of her Miniſters, may *ſeek that they may excel to the edifying of the Church.*

13 Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, pray that he may interpret, 14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my ſpirit, prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo: I will ſing with the

ſpirit, and I will ſing with the underſtanding alſo.

Obſerve here, How ſtrongly the Apoſtle pleads the Neceſſity for all publick Worſhip, particularly Preaching or Prophecying, Praying and Singing, to be perform'd in a Language known and underſtood by all the Congregation; *Let him that Speaketh,* Preacheth or Teacheth in an unknown Tongue, in which he cannot edify others, let him pray for the edifying Gift of Interpretation, that others may be edify'd as well as himſelf; otherwiſe when we pray in an unknown Tongue, our Spirit prayeth, that is, our own Gifts are exercilèd, but our Underſtanding is unfruitful, that is, unto others, if we ſatisfy ourſelves we cannot edify them; he reſolves therefore to Pray with the Spirit, and to Sing with the Spirit, that is, with a ſtrange Tongue miniſter to him by the Spirit, yet to Pray with Underſtanding alſo; that is, to Pray ſo as others may underſtand him, and joyn with him, and be edify'd by him. *Learn from hence,* Both the Impiety and Abſurdity of the Church of *Rome* in appointing their publick Offices to be perform'd in *Latine,* a Language which the Common People in *France, Spain, Germany,* yea, in *Italy* itſelf, do not underſtand; for the *Latine* Tongue is not now the Mother-Tongue of any Nation under Heaven; and the Council of *Trent* thunders out an *Anathema* againſt thoſe that ſay the Maſs ought to be celebrated only in the Vulgar Tongue; Lord! What is, if this be not, to offer the Sacrifice of Fools? How can this be a Reaſonable Service, which is no better than a ſinful taking God's Name in vain? How can their Hearts and Tongues go along together, who underſtand nothing which their Tongues utter? They neither know the God they Pray to, nor yet the Mercies which they Pray for; Lord, pity the miſerable Souls in their Communion, who erect an Altar, and offer up *unknown Prayers* to an *unknown God.*

16 Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt? 17 For thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God, I ſpeak with tongues more than you all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an *nnknown* tongue.

Our Apoſtle ſtill goes on, Arguing that Publick Prayer ought to be made in a Language underſtood by them that Pray; his Argument is this, The Heart ought to conſent and agree with the Supplications and Prayers preſented unto God, and to teſtify its Conſent by ſaying *Amen*; but ſays the Apoſtle, no Man can ſay *Amen* to that whieh he doth not underſtand, nor be edify'd by that which cannot be underſtood. For a cloſe he tells them, That Almighty God hath given him the Gift of ſpeaking more Languages than all of them put together, that ſo as an Apoſtle he might Plant and Propagate the Chriſtian Faith in and throughout all Nations; yet he declares, he had rather ſpeak a few Words to the Inſtruction and Edification of his Hearers, than a multitude in a Language not underſtood: The faithful Miniſters of Chriſt have ſuch a Regard to the End of their Miniſtry, which is the communicating of Divine Knowledge to the Underſtandings of their People, that they had much rather *they* ſhould be edify'd and profited, than their own Parts and Gifts applauded and admired.

20 Brethren, be not children in underſtanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in underſtanding be men.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, My brethren, be not like Children in Underſtanding, who prefer gay and gaudy Things, which make a fine Shew, (as the Gift of Tongues does) before Things more uſeful; thus do not you chuſe what beſt pleaſeth you, but what moſt profits others; I would have you indeed in ſome reſpects to be as Children, namely, in Innocency and Harmleſneſs, in Freedom from Malice, and all kind of Wickedneſs; but in Underſtanding be and act as Men, as Perſons of mature Judgment, who know what is fitteſt to be ſpoken, and beſt to be done. To be like Children in the Innocency of our Actions is a Virtue, but to be like them in the Impotency and Weakneſs of our Underſtandings is a Reproach; *In Underſtanding be Men.*

21 In the law it is written, With *men* of other tongues and other lips, will I ſpeak unto this People: and yet for all that will they not hear me, ſaith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a ſign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophecying *ſerveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Obſerve here, How our Apoſtle, to take the *Corinthians* off from their fond Admiration of the Gift of Tongues, tells them, *That in the Law*; that is, in the Writings of the Old Teſtament, particularly in *Iſaiah* 28. 11. it is declar'd, that becauſe the People of *Judah* would not be inſtructed by the plain Preaching of the Lord's Prophets, therefore he would cauſe them to be ſpoken to in an unknown Language; namely, by Outlandiſh Enemies and Armies, whoſe Language they ſhould not underſtand; from whence he inferrs, that ſtrange Tongues were not given for a Sign of any good to Believers, but they were given as a Token rather of God's Diſpleaſure to Unbelievers; in ſo much that by the juſt Judgment of God their Ignorance by this Means would be the more increas'd; but the Gift of Prophecy ſerveth not only for the Converſion of Unbelievers, but for the Edification of Believers alſo; therefore Prophecy or Preaching intelligibly is to be preferred in the Church before ſpeaking with Tongues.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues, and there come in thoſe that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not ſay that ye are mad? 24 But if all propheſie, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt; and ſo falling down on *his* face, he will worſhip God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

To convince the *Corinthians* that Prophecy was far more excellent than the Gift of Tongues, the Apoſtle here Argues from the Abſurdity of Speaking in the Congregation with a ſtrange Tongue Uninterpreted; *Will they not ſay you are mad?* And from the Utility and Advantage of Speaking in a Language underſtood, it convinces and converteth Sinners, *He is Convinced of all, he is Judged of all*: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, When the Church meets together, if all that Speak ſhould Speak in a ſtrange Tongue, what will an Ignorant or Unbelieving Perſon coming into the Congregation think or ſay? Will he not apprehend you to be Mad-Men? Whereas if all that Speak do Prophecy and Interpret Scripture to the Edification of the Church, in ſuch a Caſe if an Unbeliever comes in, he is Convinced, Diſcovered, Judged by all them that Prophecy, and the Secrets of his Heart are made manifeſt to himſelf, and ſo falling down he will adore God, the Searcher of the Heart, and report from his own Experience, that God is in or among you of a Truth. *Where Note,* Whence Prophecying or Preaching of the Word has its convincing Power, and converting Efficacy, namely, from that God who is preſent in and with his own Word; *God is in,* or with, *you of a Truth*: when Almighty God quickens the Word with his own Spirit, and cloaths it with his own Power, when he bids it go in his Might, and prevail in his Strength, the ſtrongeſt Holds of Ignorance and Unbelief, of Obſtinacy and Rebellion, fall to the Ground like the Firſt-ripe Figs ſhaken with the Wind; when the Unlearned or Idiot comes into the Aſſembly of the Saints, *He is Convinced of all, he is Judged of all, he falls down and worſhips*: What is it that works this ſudden Change? Not the Preaching of Men, but the Power of God; *He will report that God is in you of a Truth*; the Arm of Grace in the Miniſtry of the Word is Victorious and Invincible, the Efficacy and Succeſs of the Word depends not on the Parts of a Man, but the Power of God.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a pſalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

From this Verſe to the End of the Chapter the Apoſtle lays down particular Precepts for the Preſervation of Decency and good Order in the Church of God; and Firſt he adviſes when they come together into the publick Aſſemblies, that *if any of them had a Pſalm* or Hymn ſuggeſted to them by the Spirit of God, to his Glory, and the Church's Edification, or *had a Doctrine*, either for Inſtruction or Conſolation, or had a ſtrange *Tongue*, or the Gift of *Interpreting Tongues*, let it be how it will, he exhorts that all be done ſo as may moſt and beſt tend to the Benefit and Edification of the Church, which is the true End of Church-Aſſemblies; the great End, Deſign and Aim, which thoſe who adminiſter in holy Things ought to propound to themſelves in all their publick Adminiſtrations, is, The Church's Edification, the Peoples Growth and Improvement in Knowledge, Faith and Holineſs; *Let all Things be done to edifying*; that is, let all your publick Offices be ſo performed, and in ſuch a manner, as may beſt conduce to the End for which they were deſigned.

27 If any man ſpeak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the moſt *by* three, and that by courſe; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the church; and let him ſpeak to himſelf and to God. 29. Let the Prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the other judge 30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace. 31 For ye may all propheſie one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets. 33 For God is not *the author* of confuſion, but of peace, as in all churches of the ſaints.

Our Apoſtle's next Advice for the Church's Edification is this, That ſuch as had the Gift of Tongues ſhould not ſpeak all together, but two or three ſucceſſively one after another, and that one interpret what was ſo ſpoken, to the Benefit and Edifying of the Church. But if there were no Interpreter preſent, let him, ſays the Apoſtle, that only ſpeaks with Tongues, keep Silence in the Church; and let him only ſpeak mentally to himſelf, and to God in Prayer and Thankſgiving. The ſame Advice he gives to them that *propheſied*; to wit, that only two or three of them ſhould *propheſie* ſucceſſively, in order to the Church's Edification, and that the reſt of the *Prophets* ſhould ſit ſtill and judge, examining their Doctrine by the Rule of the Word: For, ſays he, *the Spirits of the Prophets is ſubject to the Prophets*: That is, the Doctrines which the Prophets deliver are apt to be judged and examined by other Prophets, whether they be agreeable to the Word of God or not; or the Inſtinct by which the Prophets pretend to be moved at that time to propheſie, is ſubject to the Judgment and Cenſure of other Prophets who are endowed with the ſame Gift. And thus he declares, that all that are Prophets, and prophetically inſpired, may propheſie, provided it be done orderly and ſucceſſively, without occaſioning Diſorder and Confuſion in the Church; and ſo managed, as to anſwer the great End of the Inſtitution; namely, the Inſtruction, Edification, and Conſolation of the Church. *For God is not the Author of Confuſion, but of Peace.* Confuſion is ſo far from being of Divine Inſpiration, that it is hateful to God, who requires that Peace and Order ſhould be kept and maintain'd not only in the Church of *Corinth*, but in all the Churches of the Saints. That which breaks Order, breaks Peace; for there can be no true Peace without Order; and God is not the Author of Diſorder and Confuſion in the Churches, but of Peace. Here by the way let us obſerve and note, that ſpeaking and preaching in the publick Aſſemblies is limited all along by the Apoſtle to the *Prophets*; *Let the Prophets ſpeak*; not the common People, they were to ſit by; it was no Part of their Buſineſs to ſpeak, but to examine what was ſpoken by the Rule of the Word. The authoritative preaching of the gifted Brethren at the Call of a private Congregation was no more permitted by St. *Paul*, than his ſuffering of Women to ſpeak in the Church. None but Prophets, or Perſons in Office appointed for the Work of Preaching, were ever ſuffered to undertake it in the Primitive Times, and downwards, till very lately. Let ſuch as firſt gave, and ſtill give, Encouragement to the contrary, conſider how they will anſwer it at the Bar of God, who is not the Author of ſuch Confuſion and Diſorder, but of Peace.

34 Let your women keep ſilence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as alſo ſaith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a ſhame for women to ſpeak in the church.

A farther Rule is here given by the Apoſtle for maintaining Decency and Order in the publick Aſſemblies; namely, that the Women ſhould never preſume to ſpeak or utter any thing as publick Teachers in the Congregation; no, nor ſo much as ask any Queſtion publickly. Almighty God having by his Law made Subjection (not publick Inſtruction) their Duty, of which Silence is a Token. Here *Obſerve*, That it is not the Womens ſpeaking in the publick Aſſemblies when they join with the Congregation in ſinging of Pſalms and Prayer, but their ſpeaking by way of teaching and propheſying that is here forbidden. *Note* farther, That the Means of Inſtruction were not denied the Women, at home they might put forth Queſtions to their Husbands for their own Information and Satisfaction; but to do any thing like this publickly, was a Shame, or indecent Thing, both to the Church, the Husband, and herſelf. Still *Obſerve*, How the God of Order calls for Order, and delights in Decency, eſpecially in Places where his Religious Worſhip is celebrated. He has unworthy Thoughts of God, that thinks him either a Patron of, or pleaſed with, any Diſorder, either in Civil Affairs, or Religious Services.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himſelf to be a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Theſe Words are look'd upon by Interpreters as a ſmart Reflexion upon ſome of the Miniſters and Members of the Church of *Corinth*, who from an high Opinion which they had of themſelves and their own Management, would not ſubmit to the foregoing Precepts, Canons, and Rules, for Order and Decency in the Church of God. What! ſays the Apoſtle, do you think that you have all the Word and Will of God? Doth all Knowledge of Scripture, and Reſolution of Doubts, reſt in your Breaſts, and flow out of your Lips? Conſider you are not the firſt Church that was planted, (*Jeruſalem* was before you) the Goſpel was ſent to you, it did not firſt come out from you. Whence *Learn*, That all kind of Scorn is not always uncomely; Men are apt to over-rate themſelves, and to over-value their own Abilities, as if they had engroſs'd all Knowledge, that all muſt borrow from their Store, and light their Candle at their Torch. Now in that Caſe we may, without Breach of Charity, or Blemiſh of Holineſs, check Pride with Deriſion, and ſpeak them below Men, who ſet up themſelves above Men. *Obſerve next*, The Apoſtle affirms, That theſe Rules for Order and Decency which he had given them, were from the Lord; and he expected and required that thoſe who eſteemed themſelves Prophets, ſhould obſerve and obey them as ſuch; but if Men will be ignorant, and obſtinate in their Ignorance, be it at their Peril, and let them look to it; do not you regard them. *If any be ignorant, let them be ignorant.*

39 Wherefore brethren, covet to propheſie, and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues 40 Let all things be done decently, and in order.

For a Cloſe of the whole, he exhorts them earneſtly to endeavour after the Gift of propheſying, and not to forbid the Uſe of the Gift of Tongues, provided the forementioned Rules and Directions before given be obſerved; that ſo in their publick Aſſemblies all Things relating to Religious

Worſhip be performed with that becoming Gravity and Decency which may moſt and beſt conduce to the Glory of God, and the Church's Edification. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the whole Church in general, and every individual Member of it in particular, ought to perform all the Duties of God's Worſhip in a decent and orderly manner. *Learn*, (2.) That it is the Duty of Church Governours to take Care that Order and Decency be enjoined and obſerved in the Church of God to the Edification of all the Members of it. *Learn*, (3.) That they only have Authority to make Church-Orders, whom the Lord hath made Church-Governours. *Learn*, (4.) That ſuch Orders as relate to real Decency in the Worſhip of God, made and confirmed by the Governours of the Church, ought to be obeyed and conformed to by the Members of the Church for Conſcience-ſake, that all Things may be done decently and in order.

CHAP. XV.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this excellent Chapter now before us, is to eſtabliſh the Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Body, which ſome in the Church of Corinth *at that time deny'd. This grand Article of the Chriſtian Faith is here by ſeveral Arguments defended, the Abſurdity of the contrary declared, the Objections made againſt it fully anſwered, and Chriſtian Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, and laborious Diligence in the Work of Chriſt, urged and enforced to the end of the Chapter.*

1 MOreover brethren, I declare unto you the goſpel which I preached unto you, which
alſo you have received, and wherein ye ſtand. 2 By
which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in memory what
I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Subject Matter of St. *Paul*'s preaching to the *Corinthians*, it was the Goſpel; *I declare unto you the Goſpel which I preached*; and particularly the Doctrine of the Body's Reſurrection, which was a great Point of that Goſpel which he had preached and delivered to them. *Obſ.* (2.) The Obedience which many, if not moſt, of the *Corinthians* had given to the Doctrine of the Goſpel; they heard it, believed it, and embraced it as the Truth of God. *Which* Goſpel *ye received, and wherein ye ſtand*; that is, the beſt and greateſt part of you are firm to your former Profeſſion, tho' ſome are fallen away. *Obſerve*, (3.) The bleſſed Effect which the Goſpel had upon thoſe that did believe and receive it; *By it they were ſaved*; that is, put into a ſaveable State, brought into the right and only Way that leads to Salvation; the Goſpel reveals the Object, *Salvation*; it directs loſt Man which way to arrive at it, aſſures him that it is attainable, and enclines and encourages him ſeriouſly to endeavour after the Attainment of it. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Condition annexed and required on our part, in order to the obtaining that Salvation which the Goſpel diſcovers unto us, and that is Perſeverance; for that is implied in *our keeping in Memory what we have received. Ye are ſaved if ye keep in Memory*, If we do not ſtedfaſtly cleave to the Goſpel, and to this grand Doctrine of it, the *Reſurrection*, our hearing is vain, our believing is vain, our Hopes of Salvation are vain; *By the Goſpel we are ſav'd, if we keep it in Memory*, and practice it, otherwiſe we *have believed it in vain.*

3 For I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which
I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according
to the ſcriptures: 4 And that he was buried,
and that he roſe again the third day according to
the ſcriptures: 5 And that he was ſeen of Cephas,
then of the twelve. 6 After that he was ſeen of above
five hundred brethren at once: of whom the
greater part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are
fallen aſleep. 7 After that he was ſeen of James;
then of all the apoſtles.

Obſerve here the Apoſtle's Fidelity, (1.) In delivering nothing to the Church but what he had received; *I delivered to you firſt of all that which I alſo received*; either immediately by *Annanias*, or by immediate Revelation from Chriſt himſelf. *Obſerve*, (2.) The principal and fundamental Doctrines or Articles of Faith, which the Apoſtle in his preaching had inſiſted upon amongſt them, namely, the Death, the Burial, and the Reſurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *That he died for our Sins*: That is, a voluntary Sacrifice for our Sins; to make an Atonement for Sin, as the Prophets *Iſaiah* and *Daniel* had long foretold. *And that he was buried.* The dead Body of our dear Redeemer was decently buried by a ſmall Number of his own Diſciples, and continued in the State of the Dead, and under the Power of Death, for a Time; that he was buried is a Demonſtration of the certainty that he died. *And that he roſe again the third Day according to the Scriptures.* Chriſt, tho' *laid*, was not *loſt*, in the Grave, but by the Omnipotent Power of his Godhead revived, and roſe again from the Dead the Third Day, to the Conſternation of his Enemies, and the Conſolation of all Believers. *Obſerve (4.)* How the Apoſtle proves the Truth and Verity of Chriſt's Reſurrection by Ocular Demonſtration; He is riſen, becauſe he was ſeen alive after his Paſſion. Firſt of *Peter*, next of the whole College of the Apoſtles, which formerly conſiſted of Twelve; then of Five Hundred Brethren at once in *Galilee*, whereof ſome were then alive to teſtifie it; after which he was ſeen of *James*, and then of all the Apoſtles. Theſe were all Holy Perſons who durſt not deceive, and who confirmed their Teſtimony with their Blood: So that no Article of Faith, no Point of Religion, is of more confeſſed Truth, and infallible Certainty than this of our Lord's Reſurrection; and bleſſed be God it is ſo, ſeeing the whole Weight of our Faith, Hope and Salvation, depends upon Chriſt as riſen from the Dead. Behold how great a Weight the Scripture hangs upon this Nail; Thanks be to God it is a Nail faſt'n'd in a ſure Place; our Lord's Reſurrection is his Church's Conſolation.

8 And laſt of all he has ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due time.

As Chriſt was ſeen by St. *Paul*, laſt of all the Apoſtles, ſo it is probable he was ſeen laſt by him of all Perſons; we read not of any that ſaw Chriſt after St. *Stephen* and St. *Paul*, who here reckons himſelf amongſt thoſe who were Eye-witneſſes of the riſen Jeſus, *Laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo. Obſerve* farther, the great Humility of St. *Paul* in ſtyling himſelf an untimely Birth, or a Perſon *born out of due Time.* But in what Senſe does he mean that he was born out of due Time? *Anſ.* (1.) Negatively; not that he was as to his Spiritual Birth born too ſoon, but rather too late. Alas! he had been too long a proud Phariſee, a formal Profeſſor, a fiery Perſecutor. In this Senſe he was no Abortive, or born out of due Time, but rather born too late than too ſoon: But poſitively he calls himſelf an Abortive, or untimely Birth, (1.) Becauſe he was the laſt of the Apoſtles that was called; the reſt were called by Chriſt whilſt here on Earth; *Paul* was called by Chriſt from Heaven after his Departure from the Earth to Heaven. (2.) Becauſe of the Suddenneſs and Violence of his Converſion; an Abortion is occaſioned by ſome ſudden Surprize, ſome Strain or violent Motion. St. *Paul*'s Converſion was a wonderful violent Converſion, out of the ordinary Way and Courſe. He was ſmitten from his Horſe to the Ground, and lay as one dead in his Paſſage to his new Life. (3.) Becauſe abortive Children are leſſer, weaker, and more imperfect Children than thoſe of full Growth. As an abortive Child is the leaſt of Children, ſo he reckons himſelf the leaſt of the Apoſtles, and ſtyles himſelf ſo in the next Verſe, where he thus ſpeaks,---*I was as one born out of due Time.*

9. For I am the leaſt of the apoſtles, that am not
meet to be called an apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted
the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I
am what I am: and his grace, which *was beſtowed* upon
me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly
than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God
which was with me. 11 Therefore whether it *were*
I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed.

Obſerve here, (1.) The profound Humility of this great Apoſtle, and how low he was in his own Thoughts; he calls himſelf the leaſt of the Apoſtles, nay, not meet or worthy to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe he had perſecuted the Church of Chriſt with ſo much Fury and Fierceneſs; elſewhere he ſtyles himſelf *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Not that any Thing can be leſs than the leaſt; but the Original being a double Diminitive, his Meaning is, that he was as little as could be. Oh admirable Humility! The more we know of God and ourſelves, the more humble Apprehenſions we ſhall have of ourſelves; a good Man's Thoughts are always loweſt of himſelf: The more Holineſs any Man has, the more Humility he has. Humility is a great Evidence of our Holineſs, it being indeed a great Part of our Holineſs. *Obſerve*, (2.) How the Apoſtle aſcribes all that he was wherein he differed from others, to the Grace of God; *By the Grace of God I am what I am.* As we receive our natural Being from the Power of God, ſo we derive our ſpiritual Being from the Grace of God; if I forbear what is Evil, it is from reſtraining Grace; if I follow what is ſpiritually Good, it is from ſanctifying Grace; therefore *not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Grace, be the Praiſe.* *Obſerve*, (3.) The bleſſed Fruit which the Grace of God produced in St. *Paul*; it cauſed him to labour, (Grace is an active Principle) to labour abundantly, to labour more abundantly than all the Apoſtles; not more than all of them put together, but more than any one of them that were his Fellow-Apoſtles, ſeparately conſidered; ſuch as receive moſt Grace and Favour from God, are holily ambitious to do the utmoſt Services for God. *Obſerve*, (4.) Leſt he ſhould ſeem to be too aſſuming, and to arrogate any thing to himſelf, he adds, *Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* Behold how the holy Apoſtle aſcribes the Fruit of all his Endeavours to the Grace of God, to the Influences and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit of Grace, exciting him, aſſiſting him, working in him, and with him, and ſucceeding of him in all his Enterprizes and Undertakings for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls; *I laboured, yet not I*, but the Divine Grace that went along with me. *Obſerve* (5.) The Inference which the Apoſtle draws from the whole; *Therefore whether it were I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed*: That is, whether it were I, or any other of the Apoſtles who laboured moſt in the preaching of the Goſpel, the Doctrine is the ſame; namely, That Chriſt died for our Sins, roſe again, and will raiſe us. This is the Doctrine which we Apoſtles preached, and which you *Corinthians* believed and received; therefore why ſhould any of you now ſtagger in the Faith, and disbelieve the Reſurrection of the Body, which is a Blow made at the Root of Chriſtianity. Alas! What have we to carry our Spirits through all the rugged Paſſages and croſs Diſpenſations of this Life, but only *our Hopes in Reverſion, only our Hopes of a glorious Reſurrection, and bleſſed Immortality*:

12 Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you, that there is no reſurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen. 14 And if Chriſt be not riſen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* alſo vain. 15 Yea, and we are found falſe Witneſſes of God; becauſe we have teſtified of God, that he raiſed up Chriſt: whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not. 16 For if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed: 17 And if Chriſt be not raiſed, your Faith is vain; ye are yet in your Sins. 18 Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt, are periſhed. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all Men moſt miſerable.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted and proved the Reſurrection of Chriſt by ocular Demonſtration, by a plentiful Teſtimony of thoſe who ſaw him after he was riſen, and withal, inform'd them that this was the Doctrine of the Goſpel which both he and the reſt of the Apoſtles had with one Conſent preach'd to them, he from hence infers the Certainty and Neceſſity of our Reſurrection. And becauſe ſome in the Church of *Corinth* were tainted with the wicked Opinion of the *Sadduces*, who ſaid there was no Reſurrection, therefore to ſtrangle this monſtrous Opinion amongſt the *Corinthians* in the Birth, he ſhews the Abſurdity of it in theſe Verſes before us. His firſt Argument runs thus: If there be no Reſurrection of the Dead, then Chriſt the Head is not riſen; for if the Head be riſen, he will certainly raiſe up his Members. Chriſt's Reſurrection is the Cauſe, the Pattern and Argument of ours: He did not only raiſe his Body from the Grave, but his Church with him, For indeed Chriſt is not perfectly riſen till all his Members are riſen with him, and raiſed like him. True it is, that Chriſt's perſonal Reſurrection was perfect when he aroſe; and it is as true, that all Believers aroſe repreſentatively when Chriſt aroſe. But till all Believers ariſe perſonally, the Reſurrection of Chriſt has not received its utmoſt Perfection. His next Work is to prove the Certainty of Chriſt's Reſurrection from the manifold Abſurdities which would follow upon the Denial of it, as namely, *Firſt*, If Chriſt be not riſen, then the Apoſtles Preaching was vain, and their Belief of it was vain alſo. *Our preaching is vain*: That is, we who in our Preaching have ſo ſtrongly aſſerted Chriſt's Reſurrection as an infallible Argument of the Divinity of his Perſon and Doctrine, have taught you a vain and idle Dream; *and your Faith in Chriſt* as riſen from the Dead, is no better than a Fancy. *Vain alſo*; ſeeing the Object of it faileth, Chriſt, as riſen from the Dead. (2.) If Chriſt be not riſen, then *we are found falſe Witneſſes of God*: That is, then St. *Paul* himſelf, and the other Apoſtles had given a falſe Teſtimony of God to the World, in affirming that God the Father had raiſed up Chriſt the Son from the Dead; which he did not do, if there be no Reſurrection of the Dead; to be falſe Witneſſes for Men is a Sin of no common Guilt; but to belie God, and be falſe Witneſſes for God, is a Sin of an aggravated Guilt, which the holy Apoſtles could not be ſuppoſed to be guilty of. Again, (3.) If Chriſt be not raiſed from the Dead, *then are we in our Sins*; that is under the Guilt of our Sins, and liable to Condemnation for our Sins; we are not juſtified and abſolved from them, unleſs Chriſt has expiated the Guilt of them; and this he has not done, if he be not riſen, but remains himſelf under the Power of Death; for he was raiſed again for our Juſtification. Farther, (4.) If Chriſt be not riſen, then *they which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt, are periſhed*: That is the dead Saints in general, and the holy Martyrs and Sufferers for Chriſt in particular, *who are fallen aſleep, are periſhed* utterly, and loſt finally, if there be no Reſurrection; Martyrs will then be great Loſers, and Martyrdom great Folly. *Laſtly*, Then Chriſtians *are of all Men moſt miſerable*. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, As thoſe Martyrs were errant Fools, and periſhed as ſuch, who laid down their Lives for Chriſt, if they have no Hopes of a Reſurrection, when they ſhall take them up again: So we Chriſtians that ſurvive are the wretchedeſt Creatures upon Earth, who undergo all the Sufferings and Hardſhips of this Life, and deny our ſelves many Comforts and Advantages which we might enjoy. If after this mortal Life we have no Hope, who would care to do well, or who would fear to do ill? Were this believed, none would live ſo fleſhly and ſenſual a Life as thoſe that do not believe the Reſurrection of the Fleſh, and none would be ſo miſerable in this Life as the holy ſelf-denying Chriſtian, had he not an Hope after Death of a glorious Reſurrection. *Learn* hence, That true Chriſtians would be more unhappy than any other Men, if their Happineſs were confined to this Life only; we are of all Men moſt miſerable; we Apoſtles and Miniſters more miſerable than other Chriſtians; who, like Beacons upon the Top of Mountains, ſtand open continually to all Storms and Tempeſts raiſed againſt us by Men and Devils.

20. But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Reſurrection of Chriſt declared; *Now is Chriſt riſen from the dead.* (2.) Our Reſurrection from his inferred and inſured; he aroſe *as the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*: The Term of Firſt-fruits is metaphorical, alluding to the Oblation of the Friſt-fruits in the Levitical Law; *(Lev. 23. 9.)* theſe were offered both as an Acknowledgement that the whole Crop was God's, and as a Pledge and Aſſurance of their enjoying the whole Crop from God, and as a Means by which the whole Crop was conſecrated and ſanctified to their Uſe: As ſure as the whole Harveſt follows the Firſt-fruits, ſo ſhall the Saints Reſurrection follow the Reſurrection of Chriſt, as an Effect follows its proper Cauſe; for Chriſt's Reſurrection is the meritorious Cauſe, the efficient Cauſe, and the exemplary Cauſe of our Reſurrection; and as it is the Cauſe, ſo it is the Pledge, the Earneſt, and the full Aſſurance of ours. *Obſerve* (3.) Chriſt is called the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept; that is, the firſt Fruits from the Dead of them that ſlept; not as if Chriſt were abſolutely the firſt that was raiſed from the Dead, for we read of one raiſed by *Elijah*, and another by *Eliſha*, and of *Lazarus* raiſed by Chriſt: But theſe were ſo raiſed as to die again; they were not raiſed to a Life of Immortality: But now Chriſt was the firſt that roſe never to die more; the firſt that roſe by his own Power, the firſt that roſe to give others a Pledge and Aſſurance of their riſing after him, and of their riſing like unto him; Chriſt's Reſurrection is the Cauſe, the Pattern, the Pledge, the Aſſurance of the Believer's Reſurrection. *Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and become the Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.*

21 For ſince by man *came* death, by man *came* alſo the reſurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

Here *Obſerve*, That our Apoſtle, to prove Chriſt's Reſurrection to be the Cauſe of our Reſurrection, makes a Compariſon betwixt *Adam* and Chriſt, whom he repreſents as Two Originals and Fountains, the one of Death, the other of Life: As by *Adam*'s Sin all that are Partakers of his Human Nature die a natural Death, ſo all that are Partakers of Chriſt's Divine Nature, all that are his Spiritual Seed and Off-ſpring, ſhall be raiſed and made alive by him; for the Expreſſions in *Adam*, and in *Chriſt*, do denote a Caſuality in both, the one of *Death*, and the other of *Life*: As the Death of all Mankind came by *Adam*, ſo the Reſurrection of all Men came by Chriſt; the wicked ſhall be raiſed by him *Officio Judicis*, by the Power of Chriſt as their Lord and Judge; the Righteous ſhall be raiſed *Beneficio Mediatoris*, by Virtue of their Union with him as their Head.

23 But every man in his own order: Chriſt the firſt-fruits, afterwards they that are Chriſt's, at his coming. 24 Then *cometh* the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the father, when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. 35 For he muſt reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Here our Apoſtle anſwers an Objection, ſome might ſay, If Chriſt's Reſurrection be the Cauſe of the Believer's Reſurrection, then why did not all Believers riſe when he roſe? The Head being riſen, Why did not all the Members riſe with him? He *Anſwers*, No, God had appointed an Order which muſt be obſerved; and this Order was, that Chriſt ſhould be the Firſt-fruits of the Harveſt; that he ſhould riſe firſt from the Dead, and then they that are Chriſt's at his coming to Judgment ſhould riſe after him, and *then cometh the End*; that is, the End of the World, when Chriſt *will deliver up his Kingdom to God the Father*; What Kingdom? His mediatory Kingdom, which, as Mediator, he received from his Father; not his natural and eſſential Kingdom, which, as God, he had with his Father from Eternity, this ſhall never be delivered up, for of *this his* Kingdom there ſhall be no End; but at the End of the World Chriſt having ſubdued all his and his Church's Enemies, and put down all Rule, Authority and Power, both in the World and in the Church, he ſhall deliver up his mediatorial Kingdom to his Father, and reign no longer as Mediator, and as deputed by his Father; but he ſhall ſtill reign, eternally reign, as God equal with the Father; for his Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth to eternal Ages. Here *Note*, That when our Apoſtle is ſetting forth the Order in which the Saints ſhall ariſe, he ſays nothing of a firſt and ſecond Reſurrection, nothing of a firſt and ſecond coming of Chriſt to Judgment; one to reign on Earth a Thouſand Years, and a ſecond to judge all the World; mention is here made of a general Reſurrection, when all the Saints ſhall be raiſed together, but not a Word of ſome being raiſed before the reſt to reign with Chriſt a Thouſand Years.

26 The laſt enemy *that* ſhall be deſtroyed, *is* death.

Obſerve here, (1.) What Sin has ſubjected the Human Nature to, and that is Death; Sin brought Mortality into our Natures, and the Wages of Sin is Death. (2.) That Death is an Enemy to Humanity, an Enemy to the whole Race of Mankind, both to Body and Soul, to the Righteous and the Wicked; to the Body, by turning *that* which is the Glory of the Creation in a Moment into Rottenneſs and Putrefaction, to the Soul, by occaſioning its Separation from the Body, towards which it has ſo ſtrong and affectionate an Inclination and Deſire, as its old Companion. Death is alſo an Enemy to the Righteous, as it blunts the Edge of his Deſires after Heaven, and abates that Joy which he ſhould have in the believing Thoughts and Apprehenſions of Heaven; and it is an Enemy to the Wicked, as it is a Paſſage to everlaſting Miſery; by their falling immediately into the Hands of the Living God, from whoſe Mouth they receive a final Sentence, to depart accurſed into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. *Obſerve*, (3.) That this Enemy is the laſt Enemy; 'tis ſo to the Children of God; when they have overcome Death, they have overcome all their Enemies at once; and eſpecially their worſt Enemy, Sin, which they could never overcome before fully: Bleſſed be God, tho' Death came into the World by Sin, yet Sin ſhall go out of the World by Death. *Obſerve*, (4.) This laſt Enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, by loſing its Sting that it cannot annoy, by loſing its Terror that it cannot amaze, by loſing its Power that it cannot deſtroy, and by loſing its very Being, it ſhall be finally aboliſhed and deſtroyed by a Reſurrection from the Dead. *Obſerve*, (5.) The Deſtroyer of Death, this laſt Enemy, is Chriſt, *Hoſ.* 13. 14. I will ranſom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death; Chriſt has conquered Death meritoriouſly by his Satisfaction, victoriouſly by his Reſurrection. *Obſerve*, (6.) The Scope and Drift of the Apoſtle's Argument in this Aſſertion, and that is, to prove the Neceſſity of the Reſurrection; the Argument lies thus, Chriſt muſt reign till all his Enemies are deſtroyed, but Death is one of theſe Enemies, the laſt of them which keeps the Believers Body from Union with his Soul, and from Communion with Chriſt, therefore Death muſt be deſtroyed; and there is no other way to deſtroy Death but by a Reſurrection from the Dead; which is the Truth our Apoſtle ſtrongly proves throughout this whole Chapter.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet: But when he ſaith, all things are put under *him, it is* manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds in the Argument which he begun at the 24th and 25th Verſes, that Chriſt muſt continue as Mediator to reign till all Things are ſubject to him, and all Enemies ſubdued by him: This the Apoſtle here proves, becauſe God the Father has put all Things, and all Perſons, under his Son's Feet, as Mediator, himſelf only excepted; God the Father having reſerved to himſelf his own Sovereign Empire, and Supreme Authority; he being excepted from this Subjection himſelf, who gave it to his Son; and when all Things ſhall be thus ſubdued to Chriſt, then his mediatorial Kingdom ſhall be delivered up to his Father, from whom he did receive it, yea the Son himſelf, as Mediator and Head of the Church, ſhall be ſubject to the Deity, that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, may be All in All, by a full Communication to, and intimate Union with all the Saints. ***Learn*** hence, (1.) That the Mediatorial Kingdom of Chriſt was given to him by God the Father, as a Reward of his Sufferings, *Phil.* 2. 8, 9. *He became obedient to the Death, wherefore God hath highly exalted him.* ***Learn***, (2.) That this mediatorial Kingdom was given to Chriſt only according to his Human Nature; ſeeing the Human Nature only ſuffered, and the Divine Nature is capable of no ſuch Exaltation or new Dominion, he was thus exalted, *Becauſe he was the Son of Man*, Joh. 5. 27. ***Learn***, (3.) That during the Continuance of this mediatorial Kingdom of Chriſt the Father judges no Man, but commits all Judgment unto his Son, giving him full Power and Authority to puniſh and reward according to his own Wiſdom, Will, and Pleaſure; and as the Lord of all, he gives Laws to All. ***Learn***, (4.) That this mediatorial Kingdom Chriſt ſhall certainly lay down; when all Things are ſubdued unto him, the Exerciſe of his Kingly Power ſhall ceaſe then; and as Chriſt is now All in All with Relation to his Church, the Godhead then will be All in All; and Chriſt himſelf, *as Man*, will be ſubject to his Father, as well as Saints and Angels are ſubject to him; from thoſe Words, *God ſhall be All in All*, as applied to his Saints, we ***Learn***, That all the Saints ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied in Heaven with the Fruition of the Deity alone; there is enough in God alone eternally to fill and ſatisfie all the bleſſed Souls in Heaven, without the Addition of any Creature-Comfort. God is compleat Satisfaction to his Children in the Abſence (I muſt not ſay Want) of all other Enjoyments; we want theſe Comforts in our Way; we ſhall want none of them at our Journey's End; for there God will be All in All; as in Heaven we ſhall ſee God, ſo we ſhall there eye nothing but God.

29 Elſe what ſhall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

Expoſitors do vary exceedingly in the Senſe and interpretation of this difficult Text; ſome underſtand it of a Sacramental, ſome of a Funeral, and ſome of a Metaphorical Baptiſm, or Waſhing; thoſe who underſtand it of a Sacramental Baptizing, ſay, That the Baptiz'd for the Dead are thoſe who were Baptiz'd upon the Article of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and conſequently in hope of the Reſurrection; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, As for thoſe among you in the Church of *Corinth* who are Baptiz'd Perſons, and yet deny the Reſurrection of the Dead, I would demand of them why they have in their Baptiſm made a Profeſſion of believing the Article of the Reſurrection? Why were they Baptiz'd in this Faith, if they now Renounce it? To be a Baptiz'd Chriſtian, and yet deny the Reſurrection, is a flat and plain Contradiction; others underſtand it of a Funeral Waſhing of the Dead Corps in order to Burial; and they ſay this was done in the Belief and Expectation of the dead Bodies riſing again; as if he had ſaid, If the dead Corps ſhall never riſe more, to what Purpoſe do you waſh them? Do Men give Reſpect where there is no Hope: Others will have a Metaphorical and Allegorical Baptiſm here intended; namely, Afflictions, Perſecutions and Martyrdom; as if he had ſaid, If there be no Reſurrection of the Dead, what Benefit will accrue to thoſe that ſuffer Perſecution and Death itſelf for profeſſing and defending the Reſurrection of ſome that are dead, namely, Chriſt Jeſus, whoſe Reſurrection is paſt, and of the Saints, whoſe Reſurrection is to come? Some laſt of all render the Words thus, Moreover, what ſhall they do that are Baptiz'd for the ſake of the Dead? If the Dead are not raiſed at all, why are they therefore Baptiz'd for the ſake of the Dead; As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, What ſhall they do which are Baptiz'd for the ſake of the holy Saints and Martyrs deceas'd? Is it not by Reaſon of them that they take up the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity? Yes ſurely, the Sight of the Holineſs of their Lives, and of their Courage and Conſtancy at their Deaths, has ſtirr'd up many to eſpouſe the ſame Holy Religion, and to admit themſelves into it by the Sacrament of Baptiſm: The Death of an eminent Saint made a great number of Diſciples in thoſe Days, and the Blood of an Holy Martyr Baptiz'd whole Cities; now to what Purpoſe is all this, *if the Dead riſe not at all?*

30 And why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I proteſt by your rejoycing, which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I die daily.

Our Apoſtle is ſtill arguing for the Belief of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and ſeems to ſpeak here after this manner; what Folly would it be in us Chriſtians to chuſe a Religion that expoſes us continually to Death and Danger? Why ſhould we run the hazard of the Loſs of Eſtate, Liberty, and Life itſelf, if there be no Reſurrection in order to a Retribution? When our Courage and Conſtancy for Chriſt, and his Holy Religion, ſhall be acknowledg'd and rewarded, *Why ſtand we in jeopardy every Hour?* Intimating, that it would be the greateſt Folly and Madneſs to ſuffer the worſt of Evils for the Sake of Chriſtianity if all our Hopes periſh in the Grave, He adds farther, that as to himſelf, *He dy'd daily*; that is, was continually expos'd to Death, in Danger of it, in Expectation of it, and in a Preparation for it; which he would never have been, if he had not an Expectation of a glorious Reſurrection, when all his Sufferings and Services ſhould be rewarded; and to confirm the Truth of what he ſaid, he binds it with a moſt ſolemn Proteſtation? *I proteſt by your rejoycing, which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I dye daily*; that is, either I proteſt by all that Joy which I have in your Converſation to Chriſtianity, and by all that Rejoycing which is found with me for the Succeſs of my Miniſtry among you; or elſe, I proteſt by all that rejoycing which I have in common with you, and all Chriſtians, under the heavieſt Suffering for the Sake of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, that I live continually a dying Life, perpetually in Expectation of Death, and Preparation for it.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? let us eat and drink for to morrow we die.

The Apoſtle had mention'd his Sufferings in general in the former Verſes, to teſtify his Belief and Hope of a future Reſurrection. Here he relates one particular Kind and Manner of Sufferings, namely, *his fighting with Beaſts at Epheſus*: To what purpoſe had he that mighty ſtruggle there, and run ſuch an hazard of his Life as that was, if he had no Hope of a better Life after this, no Expectation of a bleſſed Reſurrection *If I have fought with Beaſts at* Epheſus, &c. A twofold Interpretation is given of theſe Words, ſome underſtand them Literally and Properly, that he did really combate with wild Beaſts; it being uſual in thoſe Times of Perſecution, under Heatheniſh Powers, to caſt Chriſtians to wild Beaſts; the common Cry then was, *Chriſtianos ad Leones*, Away with the Chriſtians to the Lions: But ſome object againſt this Interpretation, That the Apoſtle being a Freeman of *Rome* had no ſuch Indignity offered to him; that in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles St. *Luke* gives no Relation of it; and that the Apoſtle himſelf in the Catalogue he gives of his Sufferings, 2 *Cor.* 11. makes no mention of it, unleſs it be comprehended under thoſe general Words, *In Deaths often*; others therefore underſtand the Words in a Metaphorical Senſe, *I have fought with Beaſts*; that is, with Savage Men, with Men like Beaſts in their Manners and Conditions; and thus ſome refer this Conflict to *Acts* 19. where we read of his Conteſt with *Demetrius*, and the Silver-ſmiths, about *Diana*'s Temple at *Epheſus*; others refer it to *Acts* 14. when he was ſton'd at *Lyſtra*, and left for dead: But whether we underſtand it Literally or Figuratively, the Force of the Argument lies thus; If I have undergone ſuch Deaths and Dangers at *Epheſus* as I have done, and expos'd my Life to the utmoſt Hazard, in Hopes of an happy Reſurrection, what Profit is all this to me if there be no Reſurrection; What got I by ſuch Hazards and Hardſhips if there be no Life to come? Nay, if Matters be ſo, it will be more reaſonable to ſay, *Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we ſhall dye*; verily then, ſenſual Fools are the wiſeſt Men; and they have the beſt of it that gratify their Appetites and brutiſh Deſires, expecting they ſhall ſhortly dye, and there will be an end of them. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Faith in the Reſurrection to a future Life encourages us againſt all the Troubles and Afflictions of this preſent Life; the Hope of future Good is a powerful Support under the Preſſure and Burthen of preſent Evil. *Learn*, (2.) That upon Suppoſition that there is no Happineſs beyond the Grave, a Life of Senſual Pleaſure is not abſurd; the *Epicure*'s Song, (*Ede, Bibe, Lude, poſt mortem nulla Voluptas*; Eat, Drink and Play, while it is Day, for after Death no Man ſhall breathe) ſeems not unreaſonable.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 34 Awake to righteouſneſs and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak this to your ſhame.

Here the Apoſtle adviſes them to take heed of being corrupted in their Manners by ſuch wicked Principles as *Epicures* would be ready to inſtil into them; ill Words draw Perſons on to ill Deeds; therefore ſays he, look to your Communication and Diſcourſe, take heed of debauching your Morals by evil Communications; and he backs this Exhortation with a forcible Motive, becauſe that ſuch ſenſual Principles and lewd Opinions ſhew that Mens Conſciences and Reaſon are in a deep Sleep, and that a ſottiſh Stupidity has benumb'd them; ſo much is imply'd in the next Words, *Awake to Righteouſneſs, and ſin not.* Here *Note*, (1.) That Sin is frequently in Scripture compar'd to Sleep, and very fitly, becauſe Sinners apprehend Things no better than Men aſleep; all their Apprehenſions of God and Chriſt, of Heaven and Hell, of Eternity, and a Life to come, are ſlight and hovering Notions, wild and uncertain Gueſſes; and the moſt ſubſtantial Realities are with them but meer Fancies; again, he that is aſleep is void of all Care and Fear, full of Forgetfulneſs, unapprehenſive of Dangers; ſuch is the Sinner, whilſt he continues aſleep in Sin, ſecure, but not ſafe. *Note*, (2.) That Repentance is the Soul's awaking out of the Sleep of Sin; the Soul rouzes up, apprehends and conſiders its Danger whilſt there is a Poſſibility to eſcape it, and accordingly by Repentance flies from the Wrath to come. *Note*, (3.) That it is not enough that we awake from Sin, but we muſt awake to Righteouſneſs; we muſt not only eſchew Evil, but do Good, for a negative Holineſs ſaves none; the poſitive Fruits of Holineſs towards God, and Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbour, muſt be brought forth by us, and the Duties of both Tables be obſerv'd of us; this will be an Argument of our Sincerity and an Ornament to our Profeſſion; the want of this the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* here, argu'd them not to have the true Knowledge of God, which was really matter of Shame to them, conſidering the Means and Advantages enjoy'd by them; *Some have not the Knowledge of God: I ſpeak it to your Shame.*

35 And ſome will ſay, How are the dead raiſed up? and with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickened except it die. 37 And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of ſome other grain. 38 But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleaſed him, and to every ſeed his own body.

Our Apoſtle having fully prov'd the Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Body in the fore-going part of the Chapter, comes next to anſwer the Objections that might be made againſt the Body's Reſurrection; and Firſt, That it ſeems impoſſible that the Dead ſhould riſe; to this he anſwers, That it is as poſſible for the Dead to riſe, as it is for Corn ſown in the Earth to be quickned after it dies in the Earth; Corn ſoon rots and dies, yet doth not periſh by dying, but riſes up green and freſh. Thus the Body ſown in the Grave is not loſt; though the Parts of the Body by Death are diſſolved, yet they are not annihilated; they are ſcatter'd, but they are not periſh'd; they loſe not their Entity when they part with their Relation to Humanity; whatſoever we loſe at Death is not loſt to God; his Knowledge is Infinite, and his Power unlimmitted; it is as eaſy for God to raiſe our Bodies out of the Duſt, as to make them at firſt out of nothing; therefore Chriſt told the Phariſees who deny'd the Reſurrection, That they *erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*, Matth. 22. 29. The next Objection againſt the Body's Reſurrection, is this; Who, ſays the Objectors, can deſcribe with what Bodies the Dead ſhall ariſe? Our Apoſtle's Anſwer is to this effect, That our Bodies ſhall ariſe the ſame in Subſtance, though not in Qualities, as Corn ſown is rais'd in Subſtance and Kind the ſame, but diverſe in Qualities, coming up with blade and Ear, and Corn in it; it does not riſe in the ſame Figure in which it was ſown, but it riſes in the ſame Nature in which it was ſown; that that was ſown Wheat, riſes Wheat. Thus our Bodies ſown in the Grave ſhall ariſe ſubſtantially the ſame, but different in Qualities. Here *Note*, That thoſe who did not believe the Reſurrection of the Body, judg'd it not only an impoſſible Thing, but an unworthy Thing, for God to raiſe the Dead; they look'd upon the Body as the Sepulchre and Priſon of the Soul, and account it the Soul's chiefeſt Happineſs to be deliver'd from the Body, eſteeming it a real Puniſhment to the Soul to be again re-united to ſo great a Clog as the Body is; therefore to this Objection the Apoſtle returns a ſatisfactory Anſwer, by ſhewing the happy Change which ſhall paſs upon the rais'd Body; declaring, That though it ſhall ariſe the ſame Body in Subſtance, yet vaſtly different in Qualities; of a mortal Body ſown, it ſhall riſe a ſpiritual Body; of a vile Body, be made a glorious Body.

39 All fleſh is not the ſame fleſh: but there is one kind of fleſh of men, another fleſh of beaſts, another of fiſhes, and another of birds. 40 There are alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial: but the glory of the celeſtial is one, and the glory of the terreſtrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars; for one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory. 42 So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead.———

St. *Paul* here proceeds farther to anſwer the Queſtion which the Philoſophers at *Corinth* put, namely, With what Bodies do Perſons come forth out of the Grave? He tells they ſhall be vaſtly different in Qualities from what they are at preſent; and this he illuſtrates by a Similitudes. As (ſays he) there is difference in Bodies here below, ſome more excellent, as the Fleſh of Men, others leſs excellent, as the Fleſh of Beaſts and Birds. And as there is a Difference between Celeſtial and Terreſtrial Bodies, yea, a difference between Celeſtial Bodies among themſelves; one excelling another in Glory, as the Sun excells the Moon, and one Star excells another; ſo will it be in the Reſurrection, the Bodies that riſe will vaſtly differ from thoſe that dy'd. Here *Note*, That all this is to be underſtood of the Reſurrection of the Righteous, ſince it is their Bodies alone that ſhall undergo this happy Change, which in the next Words the Apoſtle deſcribes.

42——It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption: 43 It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power: 44 It is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body.———

Here the Apoſtle gives a fourfold Inſtance of the Body's differing Qualities in the Reſurrection, *It is ſown in Corruption*; that is, it is here a frail, mortal Body, ſubject to Putrefaction; but when rais'd, ſhall be *incorruptible*; that is, never more ſubject to Death or Diſſolution. It is here a vile Body, ſubject to Deformity and Diſhonour, and when ſown or laid in the Grave, is loathſome and unlovely; but ſhall be *raiſed in Glory*, a bright and beautiful Body, ſhining like the Sun in the Firmament of the Heaven: It is thought we ſhall ariſe in a full and perfect Age, in full Strength, Activity and Vigor; and whereas our Bodies now move heavily, they ſhall then aſcend and deſcend like Angels. Again, *It is ſown in Weakneſs*; that is, it is ſubject to Weakneſs by Labour, to Decays by Age, to Impotency and Waſtings by Diſeaſes; and when it dies it appears an impotent Piece of Clay. But it ſhall be *raiſed in Power* by God's Power; it ſhall be rais'd a powerful Body; no more impotent, weak or feeble; but ſtrong and active, vigorous and nimble; never ſubject more either to Wearineſs or Weakneſs. Laſtly, *It is ſown a Natural Body*, an Animal Body, a Body ſuited to this lower ſenſible State, in which we live at preſent; and when it dies, it is ſown in the Grave, like the Body of a Beaſt. But it ſhall be *raiſed a Spiritual Body. Mark*, He doth not ſay it ſhall be changed into a Spirit, but into a Spiritual Body; a Body it ſhall remain ſtill, but ſpiritualiz'd. 'Tis probable that our Bodies will then be aerial, and thin, and light, more ſuited to the Nature of the Soul, as active as Fire, as fine and thin as the Air. More particularly *Note* here, That the raiſed Body will be a Spiritual Body in a Threefold Reſpect. (1.) As it ſhall always be ſubject and ſerviceable to the Spirit. Here the Soul is ſubject to the Body; the Soul muſt go the Body's Pace; but at the Reſurrection the Body ſhall be everlaſtingly ſubject to the Soul or Spirit, and for that Reaſon it is call'd a Spiritual Body. (2.) It may be call'd a Spiritual Body in regard of the great Strength and Activity with which the Body ſhall be then endow'd; Spirits are ſtrong, and ſo is every thing that is Spiritual. The Devil is call'd a Spiritual Enemy, becauſe he is a powerful Enemy. Thus our Spiritual Bodies will be ſtrong Bodies; and ſtrong had they need to be, that they may be able to bear *that exceeding Weight of Glory*, as the Apoſtle calls it, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. which would cruſh our Bodies under it, they were not made ſtrong to bear it. (3.) It is call'd Spiritual, becauſe it will then need no Natural Helps to ſupport it, as Meat, Drink, Sleep and Cloathing. We ſhall want theſe no more than the Angels want them, being immediately ſupported by the Power of God, as they are. Thus it is ſown a Natural Body but rais'd a Spiritual Body. Not attenuated into a Spirit; but ſtill a Body; a Real, but Spiritual Body. The Body after the Reſurrection ſhall be true Fleſh, but ſpiritualized, rarified and refined; it ſhall not loſe any Perfection which it had, but gain many Perfections which it had not. Hail, happy Day, when Soul and Body ſhall be re-united, and the Happineſs of both compleated; how will the Soul then bleſs God for that Body which was here its Inſtrument and Aſſiſtant in the Service of God? And how will the Body then bleſs God for ſuch a Soul which was ſo careful to ſecure an Intereſt in that Happineſs which it was created for, and made capable of? Then will full Glory be poured into the Soul; and when it is a ſecond time marry'd to the Body it ſhall have a greater degree of Glory than ever it had.

44——There is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body. 45 And ſo it is written, The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam was made a quickning ſpirit. 46 Howbeit that was not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural and afterward that which is ſpiritual. 47 The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, ſuch are they that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly. 49 And as we have born the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle draws a Parallel between the Two *Adams,* the firſt Man and Chriſt, they were Two Roots, and diſtinct Fountains, from whence all Life did ſpring and flow; all natural Life from the firſt *Adam,* all Spiritual Life from Chriſt the ſecond *Adam. The firſt* Adam *was made a living Soul, the laſt* Adam *was made a quickning Spirit. Obſerve,* (2.) The Apoſtle compares the Animal Life we live by the Union of our Souls and Bodies, with the Spiritual Life, we live by the Union of our Souls with Chriſt. In Point of Dignity, and real Excellency, the Spiritual Life is far before the Natural; but in Point of Priority the Natural Life is before the Spiritual. Firſt, *That which is natural, and afterwards that which is ſpiritual. Obſerve* (3.) What the Pedigree and Original of Man was and is; *He is of the Earth, earthy.* Earth is the Original of Man; the Matter out of which his Form was produced. Hence the Earth is called *his Earth.* Pſal. 146. 4. *His Breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his Earth. Obſerve* (4.) As Believers have born in their Bodies here on Earth the Image of the firſt *Adam,* ſo in the Reſurrection their Bodies ſhall bear the Image of the Heavenly *Adam*; that is, be changed into the Likeneſs of Chriſt's Glorious Body. This is the higheſt Degree of Dignity and Honour that an Humane Body is capable of. Theſe Bodies which in their firſt Formation were of Duſt and Clay, and which in their Diſſolution are no better then a Lump of Corruption, when the Grave delivers them back again, ſhall be ſhining and excellent Fabricks, *bearing the Image of* Chriſt *the Heavenly* Adam. Then will the Saints Bodies be abſolutely and everlaſtingly freed from all Natural Infirmities, from all accidental Deformities from all Wants and Neceſſities, and ſhall Never more be ſubject to Death, that formidable Adverſary of Humane Nature, Oh Bleſſed Hour! When both Soul and Body ſhall live immediately upon God, and act freely and delightfully for God, and be for ever ſatisfied in the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of God.

50 Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

By fleſh and Blood here we are to underſtand our Bodies in their preſent, natural, corruptible, and mortal State. Such fleſh and Blood as ours is at preſent, unchanged and uncloathed with its Heavenly Body, *cannot inherit the Kingdom of God;* that is, cannot poſſibly enter into Heaven, and bear the Weight of that Glory which will there be put upon it. *Corruption,* or Nature ſubject to Corruption, *cannot inherit Incorruption*; that is, our corruptible Bodies cannot enter into an Incorruptible Heaven. *Note* here another Argument produced by the Apoſtle, to prove the Neceſſity of the Reſurrection, or of Raiſing and new-moulding the Body into a Spiritual Condition: Becauſe our Natural Body, till it be made Spiritual, cannot bear the Preſence of God in Heaven, it muſt be fitted for that glorious Place and State, before it be brought into it; by a change of Qualities it muſt be ſpiritualized, purified and immortalized, or it can never bear that Weight of Glory, which is prepared for the Saints in that Glorious Kingdom.

51 Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump, (for the trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.

Here our Apoſtle anſwers a Third Objection; ſome might ſay, What ſhall become of thoſe who ſhall be found alive at Chriſt's Coming? He anſwers, they ſhall not die or ſleep, but yet ſhall undergo a Change as well as thoſe that riſe from the Dead; theſe ſhall have Fleſh and blood changed into Spiritual Bodies as well as they; and of Mortal be made Immortal, of Corruptible become Incorruptible, and all this in a moment of Time; Chriſt's powerful Voice will be like a Trumpet, calling Men together, and the Dead ſhall be raiſed, and living Saints changed into an Incorruptible State.

53 For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality.

Obſerve here the Indentical Expreſſions uſed by the Apoſtle; he doth not ſay Corruptible, muſt put on Incorruption, and Mortal muſt put on Immortality; but *this* Corruptible, and *this* Mortal, to ſhew the Indentity and Sameneſs of it. I believe the Reſurrection of *this* Body, ſaid the Primitive Chriſtians; every Man at the Reſurrection ſhall receive the ſame body that now he hath, and be the ſame Perſon that now he is; tho' he be not in every Conſideration what he was, yet he ſhall be who he was; if the ſame Body that falls be not raiſed, it is not a Reſurrection, but a new Creation. Indeed it is both unreaſonable and unjuſt that a Perſon ſhould ſin in one Body, and ſuffer in another; or ſerve God in one Body, and be glorified in another. *Job* was clear in the Belief of this, *Ch.* 19. 26, 27. *In my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, and mine Eyes ſhall behold him.* I ſhall ſee God, this points out the Reallity of the Reſurrection; and *with theſe Eyes behold* him, this denotes the Identity of the Reſurrection, that the ſame Body ſhall riſe again; the Reſurrection is not a Creation of new Bodies, but only a Reſtitution of the old ones.

54 So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, death is ſwallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Here obſerve, (1.) The happy Condition of Believers in the glorious Morning of the Reſurrection, when their Corruptible Bodies ſhall be made by the Power of Chriſt Incorruptible and Immortal; *then ſhall Death be ſwallowed up in victory*; that is, be overcome for ever, never to deſtroy or hurt any more, or to have the leaſt Power over the Body for ever. The Conqueror of all Fleſh is now fully conquered, and the Spoiler of Mankind finally ſpoiled. O Death? Thou wert once a victorious Conqueror, an univerſal Conqueror, ſlaying not thy Thouſands and Ten Thouſands only, but beyond Number; from the Infant to the Aged, from the Dunghil to the Throne, ſparing neither Age nor Sex, neither great nor Small, neither Sacred nor Prophane: But the Captain of our Salvation having entred into the Grave, the Territories of Death, the King of Terrors, has there encounter'd, diſarm'd and deſtroy'd, this victorious Conqueror. *Death is ſwallowed up in victory.* Some read it, Death is ſwallowed down, Death is drunk up at a Draught. Chriſt called his Sufferings, by which he obtain'd Victory over Death. *A Cup*; and as Death is drunk up, ſo Mortality is ſwallowed up, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. Bleſſed be God, beyond the Grave there is neither Death, nor any thing like Death, neither Death nor Mortality. The one is aboliſhed, the other *ſwallowed up of Life. Obſerve* (2.) How the Apoſtle, in the Name of all Believers, triumphs, and holily inſults over Death the laſt Conquer'd Enemy. He laughs at it to the very Face with a pious Scorn and holy Deriſion. *O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave, where is thy victory.* As if a Man having diſarm'd his Enemy, ſhould ſay, Now, Sir, where's your Sword? Where's your Piſtol? Thus the Believer, O Death? Thou thoughteſt to pierce, to pain, to poiſon us with thy Sting, but *where is now thy Sting?* Thou thoughteſt thy ſelf a Conqueror, but behold thou art conquered; where is now thy Victory? Bleſſed be God for theſe Songs of Victory and Triumph which the Captain of our Salvation has put into the Mouths of all thoſe that fight under his exalted Banner.

56 The ſting of death is ſin? and the ſtrength of ſin is the law.

Obſerve here, (1.) Death has its Sting; a Sting has a Threefold Property, to pierce, to pain, and to poiſon; all which are applicable unto Death. *Obſerve* (2.) Death's Sting is Sin, or Death has its Sting upon the Account of Sin. Sin like a Sting, it pierces; it pierced us in its Guilt, it pierced Chriſt in its Puniſhment; the Soul, which no Weapon can reach, Sin can wound. As a Sting it paineth as well as pierceth; *Judas* was ſo pained with it, that in the height of Horror he hang'd himſelf in hopes of Eaſe. And as a

Sting it poiſoneth. Sin is a deadly Poiſon, pleaſant in the Mouth, bitter in the Belly, baneful in the End; ſo ſtrong a Poiſon is Sin, that nothing could expel it but the Blood of Chriſt. *Obſerve*, (3.) Death comes to a Believer without a Sting; behold, Chriſt became obedient unto Death, that he might unſting Death. Death ſhut its Sting into our Saviour's Side, there left it, and there loſt it; it is not now unto any of his Members an hurting, but an healing, Serpent; there is now no Venom, no Malignity, in it. *Obſerve* (4.) That as Sin is the Sting of Death, ſo the Strength of Sin is the Law. Not as if the Law did encourage a Man to Sin, or ſtrengthen him in ſinning; for it prohibits Sin under the ſevereſt Penalties, and condemns the Sinner to the Pit of Hell; but the Law gives Life, or adds Strength to Sin. (1.) By the Curſe and Obligation of it, binding the Sinner under the Guilt of Sin, to the Judgment of the great Day. Thus the Law ſtrengthens Sin, by putting into it a condemning Power. (2.) By the Irritation of the Law, Sin takes Occaſion by the Law, and by the commandment becomes exceeding ſinful; when Luſt finds itſelf reſtrain'd, then, like a River that is ſtopt, it riſes, and foams, and rebels, againſt the Law of the Mind, and fetches in all its Force to reſcue itſelf from that Sword which heweth it in pieces. (3.) By the Conviction and Manifeſtation of the Law, laying open Sin to the Conſcience of the Sinner, and ſhewing him that God is all Eye to ſee, and all Fire to conſume every unclean thing. Thus the Law gives Sin its Strength, and Death its Warrant, to arreſt and execute us. Ah! Wretched miſerable Sinner! Upon whom, together with Death, the Weight of Sin, and the Curſe of the Law, fall together; which woundeth deep, and preſſeth low, even to the loweſt Hell, unleſs thou canſt ſay truly what the Apoſtle doth triumphantly in the next Verſe.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory,———

Over Sin, Death, and the Law.

57 ——Through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

That is, through the Death and Reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve here*, (1.) An Enemy encountered. Death; Death armed by Sin, and ſtrengthened by the Law. This is often a ſurprizing Enemy, an amazing Enemy, a ſpoiling and deſtroying Enemy, an inevitable and unavoidable Enemy. *Obſerve*, (2.) Victory over this Enemy declared; the Deſtruction of Death, as to its Terror and Power. Death is overcome, but how? Not *ut ne ſit*, but *ut non obſit*; not that it ſhould not be, but that it ſhould not hurt. Death has loſt its Sting, that it cannot annoy; it has loſt its Terror, that it cannot amaze; it has loſt its Power, that it cannot deſtroy. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Victors or Conquerors over this Enemy, who are firſt Chriſt, and then all that are Chriſt's; all that Harveſt of which Chriſt is the Firſt-fruits. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Triumph proclaim'd, Thanks be to God that giveth us the Victory. Form the whole *Learn*, That all Believers are victorious over Death through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they may triumph over Death through Chriſt, becauſe he has diſarm'd it by his Death and Satisfaction, he has deſtroyed it by his Reſurrection, and Chriſt's Victories become the Believers, by Participation and Communion with him. As they communicate with him in the Value of his Satisfaction, ſo they communicate with him in the Vertue of his Reſurrection; let us therefore triumph with the Apoſtle, and ſay, *Thanks be to God*; with the Prophet, awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the Duſt. Thus Victory was won by Chriſt, 'tis won by us; it was dear to Chriſt, it is cheap to us; we overcome, but 'tis by the Blood of the Lamb. Let us therefore, living and dying, ſay, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

58 Therefore my beloved brethren; be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Here our Apoſtle concludes this Chapter, and cloſes his Diſcourſe on this great Subject, the Doctrine of the Body's Reſurrection, with an Exhortation to Duty. *Be ye ſtedfaſt*: That is, in the Faith of the Goſpel in general, and in the Belief of this particular Article of our Chriſtian Faith, the Reſurrection of the Dead. *Unmoveable*; that is, be not moved by any Temptations or Tribulations, either from the Faith and Hope of the Goſpel, or from Obedience to the Goſpel. Let not Fear of the Croſs of Chriſt make you weary of the Yoke of Chriſt, *Always abounding in the Work of the Lord.* Here *Note*, That the more ſteady and ſtedfaſt any Man is in the Belief of a bleſſed Reſurrection, the more forward and zealous, the more active and induſtrious, will he be in the Service and Work of God. *Foraſmuch as your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*: That is your Painfulneſs in the Service of God ſhall be plentifully recompenced by him at the Reſurrection of the Juſt. Where *Note*, (1.) The Nature and Quality of the Service or Work of God declared, it is a *Labour*; the vaſt Circumference of a Chriſtian's Duty makes it ſo; the curious and exact Manner in and after which every Duty muſt be performed makes it ſo; the great Oppoſition that he meets with in this Duty makes it ſo; but the greater their Labour is on Earth, the ſweeter will their Reſt be in Heaven. *Note*, (2.) The Reward that ſweetens this Labour; *It ſhall not be in vain*: There's the Trancendency of the Reward. *Foraſmuch as ye know*, there's the Certainty of it. The Chriſtian's Services for Chriſt ſhall be certainly and tranſcendently rewarded by Chriſt in another World. His Labour is finite, his Reward is infinite. There is no more Proportion between a Chriſtian's Labour and Reward, than betwixt Time and Eternity. Oh infinite Glory, the Reward of our poor Labour!

CHAP. XVI.

Our Apoſtle in this concluding Chapter of his excellent Epiſtle gives the Corinthians *ſeveral uſeful Directions for their acceptable Performance of ſome needful Duties, and then ſhuts up the whole with particular Salutations to them, and with his hearty Wiſhes for a multiplied Encreaſe of all Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings upon them.*

1 NOW concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye. 2 Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomſoever you ſhall approve by your letters, them will I ſend to bring your liberality unto Jeruſalem, 4 And if it be meet that I go alſo, they ſhall go with me.

The firſt Duty which the Apoſtle here directs the *Corinthians* to, is the making a Collection for the Poor; and particularly for them at *Jeruſalem*, who were now in great Straits, by reaſon of a Famine which was then and there amongſt them, as ſome Expoſitors affirm. He adviſes that on the Lord's Day every one ſhould lay ſomething by, as God had proſpered him, that there might be no need of further Collections when he came; and that the Charity might be diſtributed according to their pious Intentions, he tells them they ſhall ſend it by Meſſengers of their own; and that if they judg'd it meet and needful, he would accompany the Bearers of their Charity, and aſſiſt in the Diſtribution of it. Here *Note*, (1.) The great Duty which the Apoſtle directs unto, *Care of*, and *Proviſion for*, the poor Saints at *Jeruſalem*. To relieve the poor Members of Chriſt, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffer for his Name and Sake, is a neceſſary, yea, important Duty. We evidence our Love and Affection to the *Head*, by our Pity and Compaſſion to the Members. The charitable Contributions of ſuch Churches as are in, and under better Circumſtances, towards thoſe that are in worſe, eſpecially if in Want, *is an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God.* Phil. 4. 18. *Note* (2.) The Time which he adviſes them to make this charitable Collection for the Poor, *Upon the firſt Day of the Week*, which was the Day of their publick Aſſemblies; the Day upon which our Lord roſe again from the Dead. Divines, both ancient and modern, do from hence argue for the Change of the Sabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt Day of the Week: It is evident that this was the Day on which the Chriſtian Churches conſtantly aſſembled to perform their Religious Worſhip, to read the Scriptures, to preach the Word, and celebrate the Lord's-Supper; and it was called by them the Lord's Day. Upon this Day the Apoſtle orders the Collections to be made for the Poor; and all Chriſtians, in Compliance with this Precept, did offer their Alms upon that Day. *Learn hence*, That Works of Charity and Mercy, tho' needful and acceptable every Day, yet are the proper Duties of the Lord's Day, that being a Day ſeparated and ſet a-part for Sacred Works, of which Charity is a ſpecial Part. Add to this, that the Day itſelf doth contain a ſpecial Motive in it to excite and enlarge our Charity, it being the Day in which we were begotten to a lively Hope, through the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead, of an Inheritance incorruptible, and the Day upon which we partake of our Lord's moſt precious Body and Blood. We having therefore receiv'd Spiritual Things ſo plentifully from Chriſt, ought to be the more ready to impart of our Temporal Things to diſtreſs'd Chriſtians. *Note*, (3.) The Apoſtle bidding every One to lay by ſomething of his Store for the Relief of others, intimates to us, That God has given unto every One of us a ſpecial, proper, and perſonal Right to what we do enjoy; to have all Things common, would run all Things into Confuſion. The Apoſtle directing the *Corinthians* here to a conſtant Uſe of their Charity every Lord's Day, in making Collections for the Poor, doth ſuppoſe that they had ſomething of their own to give. Almighty God doth keep up the Eighth Commandment in full Force and Strength, as a Fence and Hedge about the worldly Eſtates of Men; and he that goes about to break this Hedge, a Serpent ſhall bite him. If there be no ſuch thing as Property, how ſhall we exerciſe Charity? *Note*, (4.) The Rule which St. *Paul* directs the *Corinthians* to obſerve and follow in the Diſtribution of their Charity, namely, to lay by in Proportion for others, as God had bleſs'd and proſper'd them. The Good which we do muſt be proportionable to what we receive. God will not accept of a little, when he has given us Ability to do much; we muſt always relieve the Wants of others as we are able, and ſometimes above what we are able. Such as have Ability ought to abound in all Kinds of Charity; they are to add Charity to Charity; one Way of Charity to another, and one Work of Charity to another; otherwiſe tho' they may do a Good-work, yet they are not rich in Good-works. Let every One lay by in ſtore *as God hath proſpered them*. *Note*, (5.) How deſirous the Apoſtle was that the *Corinthians* ſhould receive all poſſible Satisfaction in the prudent Diſtribution of their Collected Charity. He propoſes to them to chuſe Meſſengers of their own to carry their Contributions; he proffers to give them Letters of Recommendation to the Saints at *Jeruſalem*; nay, if need require, and they deſire it, he is ready to go himſelf upon this charitable Errand. So ready are the Miniſters of God upon all Occaſions to contribute their utmoſt Endeavours to promote the charitable Relief of the poor Members of Jeſus Chriſt. *If need be I will go alſo.*

5 Now I will come unto you, when I ſhall paſs through Macedonia: (for I do paſs through Macedonia) 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey, whitherſoever I go. 7 For I will not ſee you now by the way, but I truſt to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Epheſus until Pentecoſt. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adverſaries.

Obſerve here, St. *Paul* acquaints them how he had laid his Buſineſs, order'd his Stay and Station, where he was, and deſign'd afterwards to come and winter with them, and not to ſee them in Paſſage only. From whence we *Learn*, That a wiſe Contrivance of our own Buſineſs, of our Courſe of Labour, and of what we deſign to do, is very lawful, provided it be done with Submiſſion to the Will of God. The Apoſtle declares what he had in his Intentions contriv'd; whither to go, where to ſtay, how long to continue; but adds, *If the Lord permit*. All was with Submiſſion to the Wiſdom and Will of God. Farther, he informs them of his preſent Intention to ſtay at *Epheſus* till *Pentecoſt*, becauſe God had open'd there unto him a great Door for the Propagation of the Goſpel, and had abundantly bleſs'd his Labours to the Good of many. But there were *many Adverſaries* of the Truth there, which made his Stay longer at *Epheſus* both neceſſary and unavoidable. *Learn thence*, That the great Succeſs of the Goſpel is uſually attended with many Adverſaries and great Oppoſition. The Devil ſtirs up all the Rage and Fury he can againſt the Profeſſors, but eſpecially the Preachers of the Goſpel: but where the Devil is moſt angry, we may hope we have done moſt good; and that ought to encourage us to ſtay in our Place, tho' our Difficulties are many, and our Diſcouragements great, *I will tarry at* Epheſus, *where a great Door is opened to me, tho' there are many Adverſaries.*

10 Now if Timotheus come, ſee that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I alſo do. 11 Let no man therefore deſpiſe him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

Obſerve here, (1.) Tho' *Timothy* was a young Miniſter, and St. *Paul* an aged Apoſtle, yet doth he beſpeak the Church to pay Reſpect unto him as to himſelf, he being a Miniſter of the Goſpel as well as himſelf, tho' far inferior to him in Years and Abilities. None of the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt are ambitious to engroſs all Reſpect from the People to themſelves, but content, yea, deſirous that all their Fellow-Brethren ſhould ſhare with them therein; for all Men pretend to a Share in Reputation, and do not love to ſee it monopoliz'd by any ſingle Perſon; and every wiſe and good Man rejoices when that Reſpect is given to others, which is juſtly due to their Worth and Merit. *Obſerve*, (2.) How affectionately this aged Apoſtle recommends *Timothy* to the Church's tender Care, as well as their deſerved Reſpect, *See that he may be without Fear*: that is, without fear of Diſturbance from the Factions that were amongſt them at *Corinth*; ſee that he be not expoſed to any Trouble or Danger from any Party whatſoever. *Let no man deſpiſe him*; either becauſe of his Youth, or his bodily Weakneſſes and Infirmities or for any other Cauſe whatſoever: *But conduct him forth in Peace*, bring him on his Way towards me, and provide for the Neceſſities of his Journey. Oh! How happy is it when the Miniſters of Chriſt are thus careful of, and ſolicitous for, the Welfare of each other, as St. *Paul* here was for *Timothy*?

12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly deſired him to come unto you, with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time.

Here again *Obſerve*, (1.) How reſpectfully this great Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Apollos*, an inferior Miniſter in the Church of *Corinth*, *Our Brother* Apollos; nothing better becomes the Governors and Paſtors of the Church than Humility and Condeſcention, ſincere Love and Affection, a due Deference and Regard towards thoſe who are Under-Labourers in our Lord's Vineyard, to own and treat them as *Brethren*; Co-Workers and Fellow-Helpers with them. God has not made his Miniſters Lions to tear one another, nor Bulls to gore each other, but Shepherds to watch over, and Nurſes to cheriſh one another; *Our Brother* Apollos. *Obſerve*, (2.) How St. *Paul*, tho' a dignify'd Perſon, a great Apoſtle, left *Apollos*, an inferior Miniſter of the Goſpel, to judge for himſelf, whether he had beſt go to *Corinth* or forbear; *I deſir'd him to come to you, but his Will was not to come*: He did not ſuſpend him, or ſilence him for not obeying the Voice of an Apoſtle, but lets him take his Choice; there may be, and ſometimes are, particular Caſes and Circumſtances relating to ourſelves and our People, (as about going from them, or continuing with them) which none can adjuſt and determine ſo well as ourſelves. Perhaps *Apollos* here had greater and ſtronger Reaſons for his refuſing, than St. *Paul* had for his requeſting him to go to *Corinth*; however, the great Apoſtle only deſir'd him to go; not cenſuring him for his Denial, but leaving him to the Determination of himſelf, whoſe *Will was not at all to come to them at that time*. *Obſerve*, (3.) What might probably be the Reaſon why *Apollos* had no Inclination to go to *Corinth* at this time; no, not at the Solicitation of St. *Paul* himſelf; perhaps it was becauſe he would not encourage or give the leaſt Countenance to a Faction which was there begun under the Authority of his Name, 1 *Cor.* 1. 12. Some ſaid, *I am of* Apollos. A pious and prudent Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt ſeeks not his own Applauſe, or his Peoples Admiration, but what he does is with a ſpecial Reſpect to their Edification in Holineſs, for preſerving Unity, and promoting Love amongſt each other: Afterwards, when St. *Paul* had by his

Epiſtle allay'd thoſe Heats, and heal'd theſe Diviſions which prevail'd amongſt them, we find *Apollos* did return to *Corinth*, and was no doubt very acceptable to them, and ſerviceable amongſt them.

13 Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong.

Three Duties are here exhorted to; namely, Watchfulneſs, Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, and holy Fortitude and Courage, (1.) Watchfulneſs, a neceſſary and daily Duty; we cannot be ſafe one Moment without it, ſomething we muſt Watch over, ſomething we muſt Watch againſt, and ſomething we muſt Watch for; we muſt Watch over our Thoughts, our Words, our Actions; we muſt Watch againſt all Sin, all Appearance of Sin, all Temptation to Sin, all Occaſions of Sinning; we muſt Watch for all Opportunities of Glorifying God, all Opportunities of doing Good to others, all Opportunities of receiving Good from others. (2.) Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, perſeverance in the Faith of Chriſt, and Stedfaſtneſs in his Holy Religion, is the great and indiſpenſable Duty of every Chriſtian that has a due Regard to his Soul's Salvation; *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the Faith.* (3.) Chriſtian Fortitude, and Holy Courage, *Quit your ſelves like Men, be ſtrong*; where we have the Chriſtian's Spiritual Enemies ſuppos'd and imply'd, Sin, Satan, and the World, and his Duty declar'd, and himſelf encourag'd to play the Man, in oppoſing or contending with, and ſtriving againſt them; verily a Chriſtian above all Men needs Courage and Reſolution; he can do nothing as a Chriſtian, but it is an Act of Valour; it requires much more Courage to be a Chriſtian, than to be a Captain; Alas! How many of the Valiant Sword-Men of the World have ſhew'd themſelves meer Cowards, who have come out of the Field with Victory, and Banners diſplay'd, but after all liv'd and dy'd Slaves at home, Slaves to their baſe Luſts? It requires more Proweſs, more Bravery and Greatneſs of Spirit, to Conquer ourſelves, than to Command an Army of Men; therefore quit ye like Men, be Strong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

Our Apoſtle having in the beginning of this Epiſtle reprov'd the *Corinthians* for their Uncharitable Schiſms, and Unchriſtian Diviſions; he concludes his Epiſtle with this Excellent Rule of Advice. To do all Things in Love, one for, and one towards another; where a true Principle of Chriſtian Charity prevails amongſt the Members of a Church, it will caſt out Selfiſhneſs, Pride, Envy and Diviſion, and keep them from Raſh Cenſuring, Deſpiſing, and Abuſing one another, and alſo from ſeparating from the Communion of each other: The Sum of all the Commandments, both towards God, and towards our Neighbour, is Love; it is not Praying, Hearing, or Receiving at the Lord's-Table, which is the fulfilling of the Commandment, but when theſe Duties are done in Love; and we may do many Things commanded towards Men, yet if we do them not in Love to Men, we do nothing as the Lord Commanded, therefore *let all things be done with Charity.*

15 I beſeech you, brethren, (ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that it is the firſt-fruits Achaia, and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the Saints) 16 That ye ſubmit your ſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

Obſerve here, (1.) The honourable Mention which St. *Paul* makes of *Stephanas*, and his Houſe, they were the Firſt-fruits of *Achaia*; that is, the firſt there Converted to Chriſtianity; it is a great Honour to be in Chriſt before others; happy they that come in at the Call of Chriſt, even at the laſt Hour; but thrice happy thoſe that come in at the firſt, who are as the firſt Ripe-Fruits unto God. *Obſerve*, (2.) What good Proof and Evidence *Stephanas* gave of the Sincerity of his early Converſion? *He addicted himſelf to the Miniſtry of the Saints*; that is, he was very forward to aſſiſt the poor Saints with his Eſtate and Labour; there is no better Evidence of our Intereſt in Chriſt, than an intire Affection, and operative Compaſſion to all our Fellow-Members in Chriſt for Graces ſake. *Obſerve*, (3.) The great Deference and Regard, the ſpecial Reſpect and Honour, which was due, and is here commanded to be paid, to *Stephanas*, for his Miniſtring to the poor Saints that were in want, *ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch*; that is, give Reverence and Honour to them, and to all ſuch as are like unto them, who laboured with the Apoſtle in the furthering of the Goſpel.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part, they have ſupplied. 18 For they have refreſhed my ſpirit, and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are ſuch.

'Tis very probable that the Faithful in the Church of *Corinth* did ſend theſe Three Perſons, namely, *Stephanas*, *Fortunatus*, and *Achaicus* to St. *Paul*, at this time at *Epheſus*, to acquaint him with the State of the Church, the Rents and Schiſms that were amongſt them, and to deſire the Interpoſure of his Authority, and the Exerciſe of his Apoſtolical Power, in order to the healing of thoſe unhappy Breaches: Now, ſays the Apoſtle, I was glad of the coming of theſe Men, whom you ſent with your Letters of Enquiry to me, for that Account of your Affairs which was lacking on your part in your Letter, they have ſupply'd; I am glad, I ſay for they have refreſh'd my Spirit with their Preſence and Diſcourſe, and will at their return refreſh yours alſo, therefore *acknowledge ye them that are ſuch*, own their Services, and honour them for the ſame; there is a Tribute of double, Honour, Reſpect, Reverence due, and payable to ſuch as Labour in the Church's Service, even unto Wearineſs, and are willing to ſpend, and be ſpent in ſuch Services as they are capable of for the Benefit of the Church in general, or any Member thereof in particular.

19 The churches of Aſia ſalute you. Aquilla and Priſcilla ſalute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their houſe. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with a holy kiſs. 21 The Salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

Here our Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with ſeveral Salutations to the *Corinthians*, from the Churches of *Aſia*, from *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, and from the Church in their Houſe; that is, from their Chriſtian Family, or from the Chriſtian Aſſembly which us'd to meet in their Houſe for the Worſhiping of God; happy that Family-Governour, who has a Church in his Houſe, with *Aquilla* and *Priſcilla*, who Worſhip God with all his Houſe, as did *Cornelius*; who with his Houſhold ſerves the Lord as did *Joſhua*; who Commands his Children and his Houſhold after him, as did Faithful *Abraham*. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Nature and Manner of this Salutation, *They ſalute you in the Lord*; that is with a Spiritual Affection, for the Grace of God that is in you, and wiſhing you an overflowing Stream of Spiritual Bleſſings from Chriſt the Fountain; next he wills them to Salute one another with an holy Kiſs, a Kiſs of Peace and Charity; with which Chriſtians in thoſe Times, and according to the Cuſtom of theſe Countries, us'd to Salute one another; this was not then a Wanton, but an Holy Kiſs, in which they had Chaſte and Holy Thoughts; yet afterwards the Piety and Purity of the Church degenerating and declining, it was thought fit and convenient to lay this Kiſs of Charity aſide, which was us'd in the publick Aſſemblies at the Celebration of the Holy Communion; that which is Innocent in itſelf, and Pious in its firſt Intendment, may in time fall under ſuch Abuſe as to cauſe it wholly to be laid aſide. *Laſtly*, He adds his own Salutation with his own Hand; it is generally believed that the Apoſtle imploy'd ſome Perſons to write his Epiſtles over, which he ſent abroad unto the Churches; yet that he might prevent Fraud and Forgery, and that they might know which were his own, he us'd to ſubſcribe his Salutation, and Apoſtolical Benediction with his own Hand, which was well known unto them.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anametha, Maran-atha.

That is, if any Man do either oppoſe Chriſt and his Goſpel, or Apoſtatize, and Backſlide from their Holy Profeſſion, and thereby diſcover they had no ſincere Love for Chriſt, let them be accurs'd till the Lord comes to Judgment, and when he comes to Judgment, let them without Repentance lie under a dreadful, yea, an eternal Curſe. *Obſerve here*, How that thoſe who do not ſincerely Love our Lord Jeſus, are under the heavieſt and bittereſt of Divine Curſes. *Note*, (1.) The Ground or Cauſe of this Curſe, the not loving of Jeſus Chriſt; he doth not ſay, if any Man Hate Chriſt, or Reproach and Blaſpheme him, or Perſecute and Injure him, but if he doth not Love him, the bare want of this Affection to Chriſt is enough eternally to ſeparate us from Chriſt. *Note*, (2.) The Nature of this Curſe, let him be *Anathema, Maran-atha*; the Apoſtle pronounces the Curſe in Two Languages, *Greek* and *Syriack*, to denote both the Vehemency of his own Spirit in ſpeaking, and the certainty of the thing ſpoken; or perhaps to ſhew that Men of all Nations and Languages, who Love not Chriſt, are under a Curſe, and that they are deſervedly curſed among all Nations: The *Greek* Word *Anathema*, ſignifies Execrable; the *Syriack* Word *Maran-atha*, is a compound of *Maran*, Lord, and *Atha*, he cometh; theſe Words were uſed anciently in the moſt dreadful Sentence of Excommunication; as if they had cited the Perſon to the Tribunal of Chriſt at his coming to judge the World, or left him Bound under the Curſe of that Sentence until the coming of Chriſt. *Note*, (3.) The Extent of this Curſe, *If any Man*; as if he had ſaid, let him be who he will that Loves not Chriſt, Jew or Gentile, Bond or Free, Male or Female, Rich or Poor, Young or Old, Prince or Peaſant, King or Beggar, who have Opportunities to Know Chriſt, and yet do not Love him, let him be accurſed by him to Eternal Ages; let him be fully ſeparated from the Society of Chriſtians here in this World, and from all Fellowſhip and Communion with Chriſt, finally in the World to come: The Sum is this, that thoſe who Love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, much more thoſe who willfully Hate and Oppoſe him and his Holy Laws, are Accurſed Perſons in this Life, and devoted to the Deſtruction here; but when our Lord ſhall come to judge the World at the laſt and great Day, they ſhall be accurſed more Openly and Solemnly; when they ſhall ſtand before that Impartial Judge of the World, they ſhall receive from his Mouth a final Malediction, an Irreverſible Execration, which ſhall be immediately ſucceeded with the Anguiſh and Torments of Eternity.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

Obſerve here our Apoſtle's Valediction, it is a Benediction, he takes his Farewel of them, with Prayer for them; *The Grace*, or gracious Favour of Chriſt, be with you, and multiply all Bleſſings, both Spiritual and Temporal, upon you; I am ſure I love you all in Chriſt Jeſus, and for his ſake; happy is it when Miniſters can take their Farewel of their Flocks in this manner, with fervent Supplications for them, and with ſolemn, yet ſerious, Proteſtations of the Fervour of their Love, and the Ardency of their Affection, towards them, *Amen.*

THE

THE

Second Epiſtle of St. *PAUL*

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

The Occaſion of St. Paul's *Writing this Second Epiſtle to the* Corinthians, *was to vindicate his Perſon from divers Imputations which were charged upon him by the falſe Apoſtles, and to defend his Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip againſt ſome that ſought to bring both* himſelf *and* that *into Diſgrace and Contempt: Such Miniſters as ſtudy,* and ſeek that they may excel to the edifying of the Church, *muſt expect to encounter with the violent Oppoſition, and virulent Imputations of Men of perverſe Minds, who either cannot, or will not, do ſo well themſelves.*

Our Great Apoſtle here was charged by the falſe Apoſtles with Inconſtancy, *in promiſing to come to* Corinth, *and not coming; with* Pride and Imperiouſneſs, *with* Vanity and Vain-glory, *in reference to the Inceſtuous Perſon; they repreſented him as Contemptible in his Perſon, as Deſpicable in his Miniſtry: He therefore Confutes, yea, Confounds his Adverſaries by a new and unuſual Way of Arguing; namely, by boaſting of his Sufferings, glorying in them, and giving a large Catalogue and long Inventory of them; he diſplays his Calamities, blazons his Croſſes, vindicates his Perſon and Authority from Contempt, clears himſelf from the Charge and Imputation of Levity and Vain-glory, by rehearſing the good Services he had done, and the great Sufferings he had undergone, for the ſake of* Christ, *and his Holy Religion. Whence we* Learn, *That it is neither unchriſtian nor unſeemly to enlarge upon our own Actions and Sufferings when there is a great and neceſſary Occaſion ſo to do; namely, when the Glory of* God, *the Credit of our Holy Religion, and a juſt Vindication of our own Integrity and Innocency, doth require it, and call for it.*

CHAP. I.

1 PAul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the ſaints which are in all Achaia: 2 Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Writer of this Epiſtle deſcribed by his Name, *Paul*, by his Office, *An Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; with the manner how he obtained this Office of an Apoſtle; namely, *By the Will of God*; it was not Man, but God, that called him to the *Apoſtleſhip*; it is of great Concern and Conſequence both to Miniſters and People to be fully informed, and throughly ſatisfied, of that Divine Call, which their Spiritual Guides have to come amongſt them; that the Miniſters may be able to ſay, we come to you in the Name of the Lord; and the People may be able to reply, we receive you as Ambaſſadors from the Lord unto us; Paul *an Apoſtle by the Will of God*. *Obſerve*, (2.) A Perſon conjoyned with St. *Paul* in the writing of this Epiſtle, and he is alſo deſcribed Two Ways, by his Name, *Timothy*, by his Relation *our Brother*. Where *Note*, The great Humility and Condeſcention of St. *Paul*, that though far Superior to *Timothy* in Years, and more Tranſcendent in Office, and more Eminent in Grace, yet he doth not Aſſume and Arrogate *All* to himſelf, but makes another Sit, at it were, upon the Throne with him, ſo humble and condeſcending was this Holy Man to one ſo far Inferior to him, both in Office and Grace. *Note* alſo, the happy Advantage of *Timothy* in being with St. *Paul*, and having the happy Priviledge of being inſtructed and directed by ſo great an Apoſtle; happy was it for young *Timothy* that ever he came into old *Paul*'s Family. *Learn* thence, that it is an happy Advantage to ſuch who in their younger Years are dedicated to, and deſigned to be ſet a-part for the Work of the Miniſtry, to be under the Inſpection and Care, the Guidance and Conduct of thoſe who are more aged, and better experienced than themſelves; Paul *an Apoſtle, and* Timothy *our Brother*. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Perſons to whom this Epiſtle is written and directed, *To the Church of God which is at* Corinth: *Corinth* was a City famous for Wealth and Riches, but moſt infamous for Lewdneſs and Uncleanneſs; here was a Temple dedicated to *Venus*, where were a Thouſand Virgins ſet a-part to be proſtituted by the Luſts of Men; ſo that, Κορινθιάζειν, to Corinthize, is as much as to be Laſcivious and Unchaſte; and after many of them were converted to Chriſtianty, yet did the Sin of Uncleanneſs ſo much abound amongſt them, that the Apoſtle doth induſtriouſly ſet himſelf againſt it, and warns them of the Sin and Danger of it, in both his Epiſtles wrote unto them; however, as bad as *Corinth* was, God told *Paul*, *Act.* 18. that he had much People in that

City, and accordingly he ſpent a Year and half amongſt them, in Preaching to them, in Converting and Confirming of them. *Learn thence*, That even amongſt the moſt Prophane and Unlikelieſt People upon Earth, God may, and ſometimes doth, gather a Church unto himſelf. See what Monſters of Men theſe *Corinthians* were, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. Whoremongers, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind; and tells them, not only ſuch Perſons, but (*Ταύτα*) ſuch Things, were ſome of them, but now waſhed, *&c.* Oh the Soveraignty, and wonderful Efficacy of the Grace of God in cleanſing Souls, more black than ever was *Ethiopian*'s Face! Tho' Man cannot, yet God can, and ſometimes does cauſe Figs to grow of Thorns, and Grapes of Thiſtles. *Obſerve*, (4.) Our Apoſtle's Salutation of, and Prayer for this Church at *Corinth*, *Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Mercies and Bleſſings prayed for, Grace and Peace, Spiritual Bleſſings, and Comprehenſive Bleſſings. *Note*, (2.) The Original Cauſe and Spring from whence thoſe Bleſſings flow, from God the Father, and from Jeſus Chriſt; from the Father as the Fontal Cauſe, and from Chriſt as the procuring Cauſe, the Diſpenſer of theſe Bleſſings: a good Argument to prove the Divinity of Chriſt; he that can diſpenſe Grace and Peace of, and from himſelf, is God; but Chriſt doth this, therefore he is God; *Grace be to you, and Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

3 Bleſſed be God, even the father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſeveral gracious and comfortable Titles which the Apoſtle gives to Almighty God; he ſtyles him, (1.) *The Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo he is by Nature; and Chriſt his Son by Eternal and Ineffable Generation; for as the Words, *our Lord*, aſcrib'd here to Chriſt, do not exclude the Father from being Lord; ſo the Word, *God*, aſcrib'd here to God the Father, excludes not Chriſt from being our God, and as God is the Father of Chriſt, ſo he is a Father in him to all that have Union with him. (2.) *The Father of Mercies*; a moſt amiable and comfortable Relation; not the Father of Mercy, or a merciful Father barely; but the Father of Mercies in the plural Number, to denote the Greatneſs and Multitude of his Mercies, and that all Mercy flows from him only and freely, as Streams from an overflowing and never-failing Fountain. (3.) *The God of all Comfort*; becauſe by giving his Holy Spirit the Comforter, he is the Author of all that Conſolation which is conferr'd upon us. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Duty here perform'd by the Apoſtle, that of Bleſſing God, or Thankſgiving; *Bleſſed be God*, &c. *Learn*, That Bleſſing and Praiſing God for all Mercies, but eſpecially for Spiritual Mercies, is a Duty which all the People of God ought eſpecially to be careful of, and abounding in; the more you bleſs God, the more you ſhall have cauſe to bleſs him; he will multiply Bleſſings upon you for your Thankfulneſs to him. *Obſerve*, (3.) The particular Favour which the Apoſtle bleſſes and praiſes God for; namely, for *Comforting* his Children *in all their Tribulations. Learn hence*, That as God is the only Comforter of his People at all Times, ſo he is their beſt Comforter in the worſt of Times; there is no Tribulation or Affliction that the People of God can fall into, but God can and will comfort them therein; *Bleſſed be God who comforteth us in all our Tribulation. Obſerve* (4.) The gracious End, and merciful Deſign of God in comforting his Saints and Servants in and under all their Preſſures, Tribulations and Afflictions; it is, *That they may be able to Comfort them which are in Trouble, by the Comforts wherewith they themſelves have been Comforted of God. Learn hence*, That God doth often exerciſe many of his Miniſters, and ſome of his particular Saints and Servants, in a very exemplary manner, with Trials and Afflictions, for this great End amongſt others, that they may be experimentally able to Inſtruct and Comfort ſuch who either are or may hereafter fall into the ſame diſconſolate Condition with themſelves; none ſo fit to Adviſe and Counſel, to Inſtruct and Comfort a ſuffering Saint, as an afflicted Miniſter, or Chriſtian, who have, together with their Afflictions, experienc'd the Favour of Divine Conſolations; *That we may comfort others, as we ourſelves have been comforted of God.*

5 For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.

Note here, (1.) That the Saints Sufferings are call'd the Sufferings of Chriſt; the Head ſuffers in the Members, becauſe the Members ſuffer for the Sake of the Head. *Note*, (2.) That the Saints Sufferings in the Cauſe, and for the Sake of Chriſt are ſometimes overflowing and exceſſive Sufferings; *The Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us. Note*, (3.) That as a Chriſtian's Sufferings are for Chriſt, ſo are their Comforts and Conſolations from him; yea, their Comforts do bear ſome proportion to their Sufferings: As our Sufferings abound, *ſo our Conſolations abound by Chriſt.*

6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: Or whether we be comforted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, What Sufferings ſoever I have met with in my Miniſterial Office, you have the Benefit of them, and ſpecial Advantage by them, and therefore you ought not to deſpiſe me upon the Account of my Sufferings, (as do the falſe Apoſtles, and would have you do) but you ought the more to honour me for them, and be encouraged yourſelves by them; and when I am comforted, it is beneficial for your Conſolation, inaſmuch as you may confidently expect the ſame Relief. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Sufferings and Afflictions which we endure for Chriſt, do not only turn to our own Good, but redound greatly to the Good and Benefit of the Church of God, and conſequently ſhould not diſanimate or diſhearten our Fellow-Chriſtians, but rather be Matter of Comfort or Conſolation to them; *If we be afflicted, it is for your Conſolation and Salvation*; he adds, *If we be comforted, it is for your Conſolation alſo*: Thereby plainly intimating to us, that Almighty God doth by all his Diſpenſations, both of Mercy and Correction, promote and carry on the Salvation of his own Children and People.

7 And our hope of you is ſtedfeſt, knowing that as you are partaker of the ſufferings, ſo ſhall you alſo be of the conſolation.

Here St. *Paul* tells the Body of the *Corinthians*, that he had a good Hope concerning them; that as they had endur'd Sufferings for Chriſt, ſo they would ſtill endure them; aſſuring them that they ſhould ſhare no leſs in Conſolations, than they did in Affliction. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as ſuffer for Chriſt, or own thoſe that ſuffer for him, ſhall be intereſted in all that Joy and Conſolation which ſuch Sufferings and Sufferers ſhall receive from God. *As you are Partakers of the Sufferings, ſo ſhall you be of the Conſolation alſo.*

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpair'd even of life:

Obſerve here, (1.) That it is of no ſmall Benefit and Advantage, but of excellent Uſe to us, to know what are the Troubles and Afflictions which do befal the Servants of God for Righteouſneſs ſake; *We would not have you ignorant of our Trouble. Obſerve*, (2.) How preſſing the Troubles and Afflictions were which this Apoſtle underwent; *They were out of Meaſure, above Strength, and even to deſpairing of Life. Thence Note*, That God may, and ſometimes does, exerciſe his Servants with ſuch extreme and preſſing Trials, that all their own natural Strength is unable to ſupport them under them, or carry them thorough them. *We were preſſed above Strength, and deſpair even of Life.*

9 But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead.

Obſerve here, The great and imminent Danger which the Apoſtle was in; his very Life was in hazard, nay, even deſpaired of; he look'd upon himſelf as a dead Man: But when he had thus ſentenc'd himſelf, a Divine Power, which wrought above all his Thoughts, and rational Conjectures, repriev'd him, and revived him. *Hence Learn*, That the Almighty Power of God ſometimes works beyond all Creature Expectations, beyond all Human Probabilities, beyond all Rational

Conjectures, to help and deliver his People in hopeleſs and helpleſs Troubles.

10 Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: In whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us:

Obſerve, here the Deliverer, God; the delivered, St. *Paul*, and the Saints that were in *Aſia* with him. The Deliverance itſelf, or the imminent and impending Evil delivered from Death, great Death, ſo great a Death. *Learn*, (1.) That in Times of great and imminent Danger, God, and God alone, is the immediate Deliverer of his Children and People. *Learn* (2.) That it is the Property of a gracious Heart to magnifie and inhance the Deliverances of a gracious God. *He hath delivered us from ſo great a Death*, &c. *Learn*, (3.) That paſt and preſent Experience of God's Power and Goodneſs towards his People, may and ought to encourage them to truſt in him for Time to come; former Experience ought to encourage us to future Dependance; when we can ſay, God hath delivered, and doth deliver, let our Faith add, in him we truſt that he will yet deliver.

11 You alſo helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift beſtowed upon us by the means of many perſons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Our Apoſtle having commemorated the Goodneſs and Power of God in former Deliverances, and expreſſed his Aſſurance of preſent and future Deliverances, doth in this Verſe excite and exhort the Faithful at *Corinth* to help and further him with their Prayers; *You alſo helping together by Prayer for us.* Where *Obſerve* the Humility of the Apoſtle, in deſiring the Peoples Prayer for himſelf. Such as are moſt eminent in Gifts and Office, yea, and in Grace too, do really want, and heartily deſire the Help and Benefit of their Prayers who are far inferiour to them in the Church of God. And verily the People do owe unto their ſpiritual Guides, as a Debt of Service, their earneſt Prayers for them, herein they are not only ſerviceable to them, but kind to themſelves. *Obſerve* farther, The great Reaſon why St. *Paul* was ſo deſirous of the *Corinthians* Prayers, that Deliverance and Mercy being obtained thereby *Praiſe and Thankſgiving* might be rendered to God on his Behalf. *Learn*, That when by Prayer Mercy is obtained by us, it is our Duty by Praiſe and Thankſgiving to acknowledge the ſame to God. What is obtained by Prayer ſhould be owned with Thankfulneſs; God forbid we ſhould be clamorous in asking Favours, and dumb and Tongue-tyed, in returning Thanks.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards.

Obſerve here, (1.) That tho' St. *Paul* did not put Confidence and Truſt in his Sincerity and Chriſtian Grace, yet he did rejoice and holily glory in the Evidence of his Grace, and in the Teſtimony of a ſincere and upright Conſcience; *Our rejoicing is this. Learn hence*, That an holy glorying and rejoicing in the Graces of God, which upon good and ſufficient Grounds, we find evident in ourſelves, is lawful and allowable. A Chriſtian may and ought to rejoyce not only in the Confidence of Chriſt's Merits, but alſo in the Conſcience of his own Sincerity. *Obſerve* (2.) The particular Grace evidenced, which the Apoſtle took Comfort in; *His Sincerity*, and *godly Simplicity*: That is, his Uprightneſs both of Heart and Life; his Freedom from Guile and Hypocriſie. Thence *Note*, That the Conſcience of Sincerity is ſuch a Crown of rejoicing, as will ſupport a Chriſtian's Spirit under and againſt the greateſt Difficulties which may ariſe in any Condition. This Sincerity diſcovers it ſelf in its acting by a right Rule, from a right Principle, and to a right End; and it ſupports a Man's Spirit in the Duty of Prayer, under the Burthen of Slander and Reproach in the dark Night of Affliction, in the diſconſolate Hour of Death, and at the dreadful Day of Judgment. *Obſerve*, (3.) That it is not a ſingle Act of Sincerity, but a conſtant Courſe of upright walking, that our Apoſtle rejoiced, and took Comfort in. *We have had our Converſation in the World in all Simplicity and godly Sincerity.* It is not a ſingle Action, but a Series of good Actions, that adminiſters Comfort; as God doth not judge of our State and Condition by a particular Action, no more ſhould we, but by the general Bent of our Reſolutions, and the conſtant Courſe and Tenor of our Converſations. *Our rejoicing is this, that by the Grace of God we have had our Converſation in the World.*

13 For we write none other things unto you, than what you read or acknowledge, and I truſt you ſhall acknowledge even to the end.

The Apoſtle having aſſerted his own Sincerity and upright Converſation in the former Verſe, he doth in this Verſe make his Appeal to the Conſciences of the *Corinthians* for his Juſtification; it is a good Demonſtration of our Uprightneſs, when we cannot only appeal to God as touching our Sincerity, but dare appeal to the Conſciences of Men; for if through Prejudice they will not with their Mouths vouch our Integrity, yet ſecretly with their Conſciences they cannot but bear Witneſs to it. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Apoſtles having declared that he had his Teſtimonials not only from his own Conſcience, but from theirs alſo; he adds, that he truſted this would hold and continue even to the End; that is, to the End both of his and their Lives. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, My Converſation hath hither been acknowledged by you to be ſincere and upright, and I hope, as you ſhall never ſee it otherwiſe by me, ſo will you perſevere and continue in your good Opinion and right Judgment concerning me to the end of your and my Life.

14 As alſo you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo are ours in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great Trial which St. *Paul* met with from the *Corinthians*, whoſe Spiritual Father he was, tho' he had ſerved them with great Faithfulneſs, yet they did *acknowledge him but in part.* There was a Time when he was high in their Eſteem; Who but *Paul?* None but he; but now a great Part leave him, and admire others. *Learn hence*, What great Levity, Fickleneſs and Inconſtancy may be found in good Men in the general, and what great Mutability and Changeableneſs of Affection in particular, to their Miniſters and Spiritual Guides, tho' never ſo ſincere and faithful. Altho' St. *Paul*, with a laborious Diligence, and divine Succeſs, had planted and propagated the Chriſtian Faith amongſt them, yet now not only his Perſon, but his very Office, falls under Contempt by many of them. None more than Miniſters do experience this Truth, that nothing is ſo mutable as the Mind of Man. Tho' Miniſters are the ſame, and their Meſſage the ſame; tho' they continue burning and ſhining Lights, tho' they burn out, and conſume Life, Health, and Eſtate, among and for their People, yet is it only for a Seaſon, for an Hour, for a ſhort time, at their firſt coming amongſt them, that they rejoice in their Light. *You have acknowledged us in Part.* *Obſerve*, (2.) That notwithſtanding the Contempt caſt upon St. *Paul* by ſome in the Church of *Corinth*, yet there were others amongſt them who did greatly rejoice in him, and bleſs God for him, and he for them. *We are your rejoicing, and ye are ours*, as being converted by us; and I truſt we ſhall be a farther Joy and mutual rejoicing each to other in the Day of the Lord Jeſus. *Learn hence*, What unſpeakable Rejoicings and joyful Congratulations there will be in the Day of Chriſt, between laborious faithful Miniſters and their believing obedient Hearers. Lord! will the Chriſtian ſay, this was the bleſſed Inſtrument, under God, of my happy Illumination and Converſion; by the Bleſſing of thy Spirit upon his Miniſtry, my Soul was begotten unto Chriſt: But on the other hand, if we be ignorant or lazy, unskilful or unfaithful, in our Office, our People will come in againſt us as ſwift Witneſſes in the Day of Chriſt: And, Lord, what an intolerable Aggravation will it be of our Miſery in Hell to have any of our People thus upbraiding us? O cruel Man! that ſaweſt my Soul in Danger, but never dealt faithfully and plainly with me; the ſame time that we ſpent together in Sin and Vanity, in ſenſual Mirth and Jolity, might have been inſtrumental to ſave us both from this Place of Torment. Let Miniſters conſider themſelves as Witneſſes for God, and their People as Witneſſes for or againſt them, and under that Conſideration ſo Study, Preach, and pray, ſo live, walk and act, that they may, with this great Apoſtle, take God to record, that they are free from the Blood of all Men.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a ſecond benefit.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's ſteady Purpoſe, and fix'd Reſolution to come and ſpend ſome Time amongſt the *Corinthinns; I was minded to come unto you.* Where a Faithful Miniſter has good Hopes and Confidence of doing Good amongſt a People, there is great Encouragement for coming to them, and abiding with them. When the Miniſters of Chriſt find that God has further Converting Work, or Edifying Work for them to do in a particular Place amongſt his People, they will not, they muſt not, yea, they durſt not forſake them for outward Advantages. *Obſ.* (2.) The End of St. *Paul*'s Purpoſe and Reſolution to come unto them, *That they might have a ſecond Benefit.* The firſt Benefit was their Converſion, the ſecond Benefit was their Confirmation; Confirmation in the Faith, and Reformation both in Life and Manners; it is not ſufficient that by our Miniſtry we Plant a Church, and gather a People out of the World by external and viſible Profeſſion, but there is farther Need of daily Induſtry, and continual Care to Water what we have Planted, to Cultivate and Dreſs that Corner of our Lord's Vineyard, what is under our particular Inſpection and Care. Oh, that our People had Hearts to cry out, and ſay, Lord, not the firſt Time only, but the ſecond, yea, all my Life, make me Partaker of this Benefit.

16 And to paſs by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way towards Judea.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Heart of this holy Apoſtle was carry'd forth in the Service of God and Souls, and how accordingly he orders all his Journeys from one Place to another, and determines his Continuance and Stay longer in one Place than another, as the Glory of God, the Advantage of the Goſpel, and the Church's Neceſſities did require. *I deſign to paſs by you into* Macedonia, *&c.* It is the Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt not only to lay out themſelves for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, but to project, forecaſt and contrive how they may do it in the beſt and moſt advantageous Manner for the Fuftherance of the Goſpel. Yet (2.) *Obſerve* the difference between this ordinary Apoſtle then, and extraordinary Paſtors of the Church now. The Apoſtles had an Univerſal Commiſſion to Plant Churches in all Places; they were to be in conſtant Travels up and down the World, Itinerary Preachers from Place to Place; but the Office of an ordinary Paſtor now is to watch over a particular Flock, and to keep conſtant Reſidence amongſt them. Yet tho' by actual Relation he is ty'd and bound to a particular Flock, yet he is by habitual and aptitudinal Diſpoſition a Miniſter of the Univerſal Church, and a Debtor to the publick Good thereof. He is firſt made a Miniſter in the Univerſal Church, and then a Paſtor of a particular Congregation; and accordingly, tho' he ſeeks to ſerve the Intereſt of his own Flock firſt, yet it is his Duty, by Prayer, by Study, by Preaching, by Writing, by all other edifying Ways and Methods, to promote the Univerſal Good and Benefit of the whole Church of Chriſt, according to his Power, both far and near.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I uſe lightneſs? or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh, that with me there ſhould be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

Here our Apoſtle begins to make his Apology and Defence for himſelf for changing his Purpoſe in coming to *Corinth* according to Promiſe, and to free himſelf from the Imputation of Levity, Inconſtancy and Falſhood, caſt upon him by his back Friends, the falſe Apoſtles, for promiſing to come to *Corinth*, and not performing it; for they aggravated the Matter ſo far, as if he were One that ſaid and unſaid; One that took no Care about keeping of his Word; and thence inferr'd, that no Regard was to be had to any thing that he deliver'd: He that is not to be rely'd upon (ſay the falſe Apoſtles in his ordinary Promiſes) how can you depend upon what he ſays to you in his Preaching? Hence *Learn,* That Lightneſs and Inconſtancy is a great Sin and Reproach in any, but eſpecially in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who yet are often charg'd with it, when they are in no degree guilty of it. *Obſerve,* (2.) As our Apoſtle frees himſelf from the Charge of Inconſtancy, ſo from the Suſpicion of acting for worldly Advantage; *The thing which I purpoſed, did I purpoſe according to the Fleſh*; that is, for carnal Ends, or ſecular Intereſt, that with me there ſhould be now Yea, Yea, and anon Nay, Nay. Behold here! what Truth and Steadineſs was found in and with our holy Apoſtle; how his Words and Intentions, his Tongue and his Heart, his Pen and his Purpoſe were one, namely, in Reality to come unto them, tho' he was providentially hinder'd and obſtructed. Here let us Remark and *Note,* what little Things the Men of the World will take Advantage from, to villify and leſſen the Reputation of God's Faithful Servants, eſpecially his Miniſters. How many Perſons might have promiſed to be in ſuch a Place, at ſuch a Time, and have failed, without being reproached for Breach of Promiſe; the World would have been ſo charitable to another Perſon, as to have excuſed it, by ſaying, The Man ſpake according to his preſent Intention and Reſolution, but was hinder'd by the Providence of God. But if *Paul* fails in a Tittle, he muſt be loaded preſently, upbraided for his Inconſtancy, or, which is worſe, charg'd with playing faſt and looſe for ſiniſter Ends, and worldly Advantages. Lord, give thy Servants, eſpecially thy Miniſters, Wiſdom to walk with Exactneſs and Circumſpection before the Men of the World, who are their watchful Obſervers, and bold Cenſurers, that they may cut off all Occaſion from them that ſeek Occaſion againſt them.

18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

By the *Word* here, ſome underſtand St. *Paul*'s Promiſe to come to *Corinth*, that he did very ſincerely intend to come unto them; as if he had ſaid, As God is true to his Promiſe, ſo has he taught me to be true to mine. Others underſtand by the *Word*, St. *Paul*'s Preaching, that his Doctrine was not mutable and changeable, but always the ſame. Here *Note,* How ready and forward the Adverſaries of Religion are from any real or ſuppoſed Imperfection in the Miniſters of God, preſently to blame and burthen their Miniſtry, to charge their private Errors and Miſtakes upon their Doctrine. There is a mighty Propenſity, and great Forwardneſs in bad Men, to caſt all the Imperfections of the Miniſters of the Goſpel upon their Miniſtry and Doctrine. The Devil is glad of an Opportunity, by the Failings of Preachers, to bring the Doctrines they preach either into Doubt or Diſ-eſteem. But tho' it be a great Reproach for a Miniſter to be mutable and contradictory in his Doctrine, yet the wicked World too often accuſe them of it, and charge them with it, when there is not the leaſt Occaſion for it; *Verily, as God is True, our Word is not Yea and Nay.*

19 For the ſon of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was was preached among you by us, even by me, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

This Verſe contains a new Argument for the Conſtancy and Immutability of St *Paul*'s Doctrine, drawn from the Subject Matter of his Preaching; namely, Jeſus Chriſt. As Chriſt is always one and the ſame whom himſelf and other Miniſters did Preach, ſo is our Doctrine one and the ſame alſo. *Note here,* (1.) The Subject Matter of St. *Paul*'s Preaching, what was the Sum of his own and his Companions Sermons, (*Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*) it was not his own Imaginations, or the Jewiſh Rites and Ceremonies, but Chriſt in his Nature and Offices. *The Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, was preached among you by us.* *Note,* (2.) The happy Unity and Accord which was found amongſt all theſe Miniſters, (St. *Paul*, *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*) in Preaching Chriſt. Oh bleſſed Agreement! when all the Miniſters of God with one Conſent conſpire and agree to advance and extol our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Note,* (3.) That the Courſe of St. *Paul*'s and his Aſſiſtants Preaching was like the great Subject of their Preaching Chriſt Jeſus, fixedly and unchangeably the ſame; not Yea at one time, and Nay at another. *Learn* thence, That it is a proper Note of God's Truth, and the true Preachers thereof, that they are always one and the ſame, always Yea, and not Yea and Nay; there is no Change or Contrariety in their Doctrines.

20 For all the promiſes of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Our Apoſtle had proved in the foregoing Verſe the Conſtancy of his own Doctrine, which he preached from the Immutability and Conſtancy of Chriſt, the Subject of it. Here he proveth Chriſt to be unchangeable, in that all the Promiſes which God had made to us, are fulfilled both in him, and by him. *All the Promiſes of God in him are Yea, and Amen*; that is, verified and fulfilled in him, and confirmed by him to us. *Learn*, (1.) That God has made Promiſes, many Promiſes to his People. (2.) That all the Promiſes which God has made to his People, are made in Chriſt, and ratified by him. Chriſt acts the Part and Office of a Surety; he undertakes and engages for God, that all which he hath promiſed ſhall be made good to us. *Learn*, (3.) That the Promiſes made by God, and ratified and confirmed in Chriſt, do all tend to the Glory of God. They ſhew the Sovereignty of his Grace, in making Promiſes to his Creatures of Mercy, who deſerved nothing but flaming Vengeance, and implacable Fury. They ſhew the Amplitude of his Grace; for if Grace did not flow abundantly from the Heart of God towards us, we could never have received ſo large a Stock of Promiſes from him. Let us then glorifie God, by ſetting a juſt Value upon his Promiſes, as the unchangeable Aſſurances of his Love and Grace.

21 Now he which ſtabliſhed us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, is God: 22 Who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts.

In theſe Two Verſes we have Four very great and noble Privileges, which the Apoſtle declares God had conferred upon the *Corinthians*; namely, his Eſtabliſhing, Anointing, and Sealing, of them, and giving the Earneſt of his Holy Spirit to them. *Firſt*, Their Eſtabliſhment; he which eſtabliſhed us with you is God. *Learn* thence, That a Peoples Eſtabliſhment in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and in the Faith of the Promiſes, is alone the Gracious Work of God. We are naturally like Reeds ſhaken with every Wind; it is the Eſtabliſhing Grace of God that makes us Pillars in the Church. Again, *Secondly*, Their Anointing, this is from God; the Sanctifying Grace of God is often in Scripture compared to Oil, in regard of its Effects. It refreſhes the Weary, it healeth the Wounded, it comforts the Heart, it beautifies the Face, it ſtrengthens the Limbs. Such internal Vertues and Excellencies hath the Sanctifying Grace of God in the Hearts of the People. *Thirdly*, Their Sealing, who hath alſo ſealed us: God's ſealing of his Children doth imply his high Valuation and Eſteem of them; what is ſealed and eſteemed very precious; it implies their Safety and Security; what is under Seal is not in Danger of being loſt. Again, Sealing doth imply Secrecy and Privacy; that which is ſealed is ſecret and hidden; it is the new Name, which none know but he that receiveth it. Finally, Sealing is for Confirmation; Contracts and Bargains among Men are confirmed by Hand and Seal. Thus the Graces of the Spirit, which ſanctifie us, do alſo witneſs and ſeal to us the Aſſurance of God's Love and ſpecial Favour in Jeſus Chriſt. The *Fourth* Privilege here conferr'd by God upon the *Corinthians*, is *his giving the Earneſt of this Spirit* in their Hearts, Grace wrought in the Heart here is a ſure Earneſt of Glory hereafter; there is a great deal of difference between a Shilling, a ſingle piece of Money, and a Shilling that is an Earneſt of a greater Sum. It is Joy to find Grace in the Soul as Grace, mortifying our Corruptions; but it rejoices much more to look upon Grace as an Earneſt of Glory, as the Firſt-fruits, which inſure the full Cup.

23 Moreover, I call God for a record upon my ſoul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle doth aſſure the *Corinthians* in a very Solemn Manner, that it was not any Inconſtancy or Carnal Reſpect in himſelf that made him delay his coming to them, but it was purely to ſpare them, as being unwilling to come with his Rod among them, and to uſe Severity upon them. Here obſerve the Apoſtle's Manner of Speech, it is by Way of Abjuration; *I call God to Record upon my Soul*. The Words are an aſſertory and execratory Oath, wherein God is called to Witneſs the Truth of what he ſaid. *Learn* hence, That it is lawful for Chriſtians under the Goſpel to ſwear upon a neceſſary and great Occaſion: But what great Occaſion was here for St. *Paul* to do it? *Anſ.* Very great; the falſe Apoſtles did accuſe him for a Vain-glorious and Inconſtant Man. This Accuſation did redound to the Diſcredit of his Miniſtry, the Diſhonor of the Goſpel, the Deſtruction of the Church; therefore he ſolemnly proteſts that no Inconſtancy or Worldly Motives did cauſe him to delay his Promiſe; but a Wiſe and Spiritual Conſideration of their Good, a Willingneſs to Spare them, and an Unwillingneſs to uſe Severity upon them. Hence *Learn*, That the Miniſterial Power which God giveth the Officers of the Church ought to be managed with much Holy Prudence, and Chriſtian Commiſeration, the End of their Power ſhould always be in their Mind, which is Edification, and not Deſtruction.

24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye ſtand.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Tho' we have a Miniſterial Power, yet we have not a Magiſterial Dominion over you, to treat as we pleaſe the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, or to puniſh thoſe that walk not according thereunto. *Learn* hence, That tho' Chriſt has inveſted the Officers of the Church with a Miniſterial Power, yet they have not thereby any Dominion over the Faith of Believers; *Not that we have dominion over your Faith*: He adds, *But are Helpers of your Joy*. He doth not ſay, We are Helpers of your Grace, Helpers of your Faith, Helpers of your Holineſs, tho' this is neceſſarily implied, but Helpers of your Joy and Comfort. *Note* thence, That a ſpecial Part of the Miniſter's Work conſiſteth in adminiſtring to the Comfort and Conſolation of ſuch as ſtand in need of it, and are qualified for it. Our firſt Work is to help the Graces, our next to help the Comforts of our People. The Spirit of God is a Sanctifier, and then a Comforter; Joy is not the firſt Stone in God's Building; Grace and Holineſs is firſt, Comfort and Conſolation next. *For by Faith ye ſtand*; ye have ſtood, and do ſtand, ſtedfaſt in the Faith; that is, the Generality and Body of you; tho' ſome among you denied the Reſurrection, yet the beſt and greateſt Part of you are ſound in the Faith, and ſtedfaſt in the Faith. Our Apoſtle doth not unchurch them, becauſe of ſome Diſorders amongſt them, nor becauſe of ſome Heretical Doctrines found with them; but endeavours to reform their Diſorders, that ſo when he came unto them, he might not come with his Rod, but in the Spirit of Meekneſs.

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Chapter vindicated himſelf from the Imputation of Levity and Inconſtancy charged upon him by the falſe Apoſtles, becauſe he reſolved to come to this Church at Corinth, *and promiſed ſo to do; but, contrary to his Intention, was providentially obſtructed in the Performance of his Promiſe. He comes in this Chapter to vindicate himſelf from the Aſperſion of too much Rigour, and too great Severity, towards the Inceſtuous Perſon. Aſſuring them that it was no Pleaſure to him to make them ſorrowful; and that no manner of Severity ſhould be exerciſed by him any farther than was abſolutely needful, in order to the reforming of Evil Manners, that were found amongſt them; accordingly he thus beſpeaks them*, Ver. 1.

1 BUT I determined this with my ſelf; that I would not come again to you in heavineſs: 2 For if I make you ſorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the ſame which is made ſorry by me?

The Occaſion of St. *Paul*'s writing again to the *Corinthians*, and deferring for the preſent to come unto them, is here intimated. There was an Inceſtuous Perſon in the Church of *Corinth*, who had Married his Father's Wife; if ſhe were his own Natural Mother, the Sin was moſt Prodigious and Unnatural, that the Child of her Womb ſhould be the Huſband of her Bed; if ſhe were his Mother-in-law, 'twas againſt

gainſt the Law of Reverence, and an heinous Sin for the Son to uncover the Father's Nakedneſs: And it was an Aggravation of the Sin, that the Perſon committing it was a Chriſtian, a Member, and as ſome think, a Miniſter of the Church of *Corinth*. St. *Paul* in his former Epiſtle, *Chap*. 5. commands them to Excommunicate this Inceſtuous Perſon, which accordingly they did, and this Spiritual Phyſick, apply'd to the Offender, had a good Effect upon him; for being puniſh'd by the Church, he puniſheth himſelf; and being caſt out of the Church, he caſts away his Sin. Happy is it, when the Church's Cenſures are ſo executed, as to bring Offenders to a Sight and Senſe of their Sins, in order to a deep Humiliation, and thorough Reformation. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, *I determined not to come to you in Heavineſs*: That is, one great Reaſon why I put off my Journey to you was this, that my coming amongſt you might neither occaſion Sorrow, nor create Heavineſs, either to you or myſelf; for I delight not in cenſuring and chiding, when I can otherwiſe avoid it: For *if I make you ſorry*, and myſelf with you, *who is it that can make me glad, but he that is made ſorry by me*; that is, Nothing can make me glad but the Reformation of the fallen Perſon. *Where Note*, That nothing adds ſo much to the Joy and Comfort of the Miniſters of Chriſt, as their Recovery of revolted Souls from under the Empire and Dominion of Sin and Satan. We joy with them, and rejoyce in God for them; we live as we ſee any of you ſtand faſt in the Lord; we dye as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their Sin.

3 And I wrote this ſame unto you, leſt when I came, I ſhould have ſorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I gave you a ſharp Reproof in my former Epiſtle; but it was in much Love, and upon a good Deſign; namely, to procure ſuch a Reformation of Life and Manners amongſt you, as might prevent my Sorrow when I come unto you? For as your Grief is my Grief; ſo my Joy is the Joy of you all; as the Miniſters of Chriſt and their beloved People are one, ſo their Griefs are one, and their Joys one; they Rejoyce together, and Mourn together; their Griefs and Sorrows are Mutual; and their Joys and Comforts are Reciprocal.

4 For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you ſhould be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Here our Compaſſionate Apoſtle tells them, That what he had wrote in his former Epiſtle, with ſome Severity and Sharpneſs, concerning the Inceſtuous Perſon, was ſo far from being written with any intention to grieve them, that it was a real Affliction to him, a very heavy Preſſure upon his Heart, which fetch'd abundance of Tears from his Eyes, and conſequently was an Effect of the greateſt Love imaginable. Hence *Note*, That when the Miniſters of Chriſt do execute Church-Cenſures, if they do not diſpenſe them with Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, ſo as to let the Offenders ſee that what is done out of abundant Love unto them, they will never be the Better for them, nor be Better'd or Reclaim'd by them; doth a Civil Judge Weep when he paſſes Sentence upon a Malefactor? Much more ſhould an Eccleſiaſtical Judge Mourn when he pronounces the Cenſures of the Church upon Notorious Offenders: Behold the Apoſtle here declaring with what Anguiſh of Spirit, and Grief of Heart, he wrote to have the Sentence of Excommunication Executed and Inflicted on the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*; *Out of much Affliction and Anguiſh of Heart, I wrote unto you with many Tears.*

5 But if any have cauſed grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, This Inceſtuous Perſon which hath cauſed ſo much Grief to me by his Sin, hath caus'd no litle Grief to you alſo, to the ſounder part of you, even to all, but thoſe who were Partakers with him in his Sin; he has griev'd me, but in part only; you, as well as myſelf, have been griev'd by him, and afflicted for him; not only the Miniſter, but Members of the Church, are affected with, and afflicted for, the Scandal of Profeſſor's Sins; St. *Paul* griev'd but in part for the Inceſtuous Perſon's Sin, the ſounder Part of the Church mourned with him: Or, Secondly, *He hath grieved me but in part, that I may not overcharge you*; it as much as if he had ſaid, The Grief and Sorrow which I have had for the Sin and Scandal of this Notorious Offender, I am far, very far, from charging upon the whole Church; I dare not load you all with that Imputation, as if you were involv'd in the Guilt of it, 'tis not only Injurious, but very Unjuſt, to caſt the Dirt of Profeſſors Sins upon the Face of their Profeſſion, or to charge the Guilt of a particular Perſon's Miſcarriages upon the whole Church, or Chriſtian Society, to which he does belong; as Religion juſtifies no Man's Faults, ſo no Man's Faults ſhould condemn Religion.

6 Sufficient to ſuch a man is this puniſhment, which was inflicted of many.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Nature of the Puniſhment which the holy Apoſtle thought, and adjudg'd to be ſufficient for the guilty Perſon's Sin, and that was Exciſion, not Deſtruction; Excommunication, not Death; the Rejection of ſuch a Sinner from the Communion of the Church, by Church-cenſure and Diſcipline, was the Puniſhment pronounced. *Obſerve*, (2.) By whom, and before whom, this Puniſhment of Excommunication was executed and inflicted, namely, by the Officers and Governors of the Church, (who had, and have, the Power of the Keys) in the Preſence, and with the Conſent, of the whole Church: In the Primitive Church we have Reaſon to believe when any Offender was to be Excommunicated, the People were acquainted with the Crime, the guilty Perſon pleaded in their Preſence, they judged as your Jury-men do of the Matter of Fact, they conſented to the Condemnation; but the Sentence was not pronounced by them, but by the Governors and Officers of the Church before them, and in their Preſence; and as the Church or Body of the People conſented to the Offender's Rejection; ſo likewiſe to his Re-admiſſion to the Communion of the Church; but their actual Admiſſion was by the Paſtor and Governor of the Church, and not by the People; contrary to this Primitive Practice is the Modern Practice of thoſe who have ſnatch'd the Keys out of the Hands of the Paſtors, (where Chriſt placed them) and put them into the Hands of the People.

7 So that contrariwiſe, ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, leſt perhaps ſuch an one ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow. 8 Wherefore I beſeech you, that you would confirm your love towards him.

Obſerve, the great Duty, (1.) Which the Apoſtle directs the *Corinthians* to the Performance of towards this ſorrowful Offender, to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirm him; that is, to abſolve him from the Sentence and Cenſure of the Church, no longer to continue their Averſion to him, but to Reſtore him to the Church's Communion, to Re-admit him to their Fellowſhip and Society, to Comfort him with the Notices of God's Pardoning Mercy, and to confirm their Love to him, by ſhewing, that their Excommunicating of him was with deſign to Reform, not to Ruin him, to Recover him by Repentance, and not to drive him to Deſpair: This is the importance of the Three ſeveral Words which are uſed here, *Forgive him, Comfort him, Confirm him.* From whence *Note*, That in Notorious Crimes, which give great Cauſe of Scandal to the Church, the Comfort of the Offender depends not only upon his Peace and Reconciliation with God, but alſo upon the Relaxation of the Cenſures of the Church, and his Re-admiſſion to the Church's Fellowſhip and Communion; Forgive him, and Confirm your Love towards him. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Reaſon offer'd by our Apoſtle why this Penitent Offender ſhould be forgiven and comforted; namely, *Leſt he ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much Sorrow*. *Learn hence*, That the Sorrow, even for Sin itſelf, may be exceſſive and over-much. (2.) That exceſſive and over-much Sorrow ſwalloweth up a Perſon; it may ſwallow him up in the Gulph of Deſpair, and as a conſequent of it, in the Gulph of Death; as worldly Sorrow cauſes Death, ſo may religious Sorrow alſo, even Sorrow for Sin; we may diſhonour God by an exceſſive Mourning, even for God's diſhonour: Sorrow is not of any worth in itſelf, but only as it ſerves to a Spiritual End and Purpoſe: and when it is exceſſive, not only the Comforts, but the Gifts and Uſefulneſs of the Perſon ſorrowing, are in danger to be ſwallowed up by it. *Queſtion,* But when is Sorrow for Sin exceſſive and overmuch? *Anſwer,* When it obſtructs the Exerciſe of our Graces, when it hinders the Performance of our Duties, when it hurts our Health, and overwhelmeth Nature, when it perverts Reaſon, ſwallows up Faith, hindereth our Hope, prejudiceth our Joy, and unfits us both for doing and ſuffering the Will of God; in a Word, that Sorrow for Sin which keeps the Soul from looking towards the Mercy-Seat, that keeps Chriſt and the Soul aſunder, and renders a Perſon unfit for the Service of God, and for the Communion of Saints, is a ſinful Sorrow.

9 For this end alſo did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive alſo: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your ſakes forgave I it, in the Perſon of Chriſt; 11 Leſt Satan ſhould get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle declares what was his End in writing his former Epiſtle to them, namely, this amongſt others, to exerciſe their Obedience, and to make Trial, what Regard they would ſhew to his Apoſtolical Authority: Whether they would be as obedient to his Directions in abſolving of Penitents, as they were before in inflicting Church-Cenſures upon bold Offenders; *For this end did I write, that I might have a Proof of you.* *Obſerve,* (2.) The Apoſtle declares his own Forwardneſs to forgive penitent Offenders himſelf, as well as make known his Deſires that they ſhould do it; *Whom ye forgive, I forgive alſo in the Perſon of Chriſt*; that is, as you forgive him, ſo do I; and I abſolve him by Chriſt's Authority, as I excommunicated him in Chriſt's Name. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. *In the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* &c. as he delivered the inceſtuous Perſon to Satan in the Name of Chriſt, ſo in the Name and Perſon of Chriſt he releaſes him, and relaxes the Sentence againſt him; the Power of Excommunication and Abſolution, of Binding and Looſing, of Caſting out, and Receiving into the Church, is by Chriſt committed to Church-Governours, who are to execute this Power *in the Perſon of Chriſt*; that is, in the Name, and by the Authority of Chriſt, *Obſerve,* (3.) The Arguments with which, and the Motive by which, he preſſes the Church at *Corinth* to forgive the inceſtuous Perſon, and to re-admit him into their Society, leſt Satan get an *Advantage of us*; what Advantage; *Anſwer,* An Advantage to lead them into Sin thus, by their abuſing that Power which God had given them for Edification, to the Deſtruction of a Perſon, by making them guilty of Spiritual Murther, by their over-rigorous proceeding againſt him; by driving him to Deſpair, by tempting him to Apoſtacy; ſeeks to lull Sinners aſleep in the Boſom of the Church; and ſometimes by too great Severity, endeavours to drive them to Deſpair; the Force of the Apoſtle's Words lies thus, I adviſe you to continue the Severity of Diſcipline no longer towards this penitent Offender, but receive him again into your Communion with all Tenderneſs and Speed, leſt Satan ſhould circumvent you, and overreach you, and make uſe of your Rigour to your own Ruin, by rendring your Doctrine hateful, and your Diſcipline deteſtable; *For we are not ignorant of his Devices,* his Contrivances, Plots, and Stratagems, laid againſt us. *Learn hence,* (1.) That Satan is a Maſter in the Art of deceiving Souls; he is full, very full of cunning Methods and Devices, to circumvent Perſons, and catch them in the Net of his Deceits. *Learn* (2.) That it concerns all Perſons, but eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to be well acquainted with, and not ignorant of any Devices or Plots of Satan; Satan has a Multitude of Devices, by which he undoes, intangles and deceives Souls; and no Chriſtian ought to be ignorant of them, leſt he be circumvented and undone by them; many are his Devices for drawing us into Sin, for drawing us off from Duty, for drawing us into Temptation, for drowning us in Deſpair; our Wiſdom will be not to diſpute but to reſiſt; for by reſiſting, our Temptations will be fewer, and our Strength greater, *Jam.* 4. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will fly.* Where *Note,* That the Promiſe of Conqueſt is made to reſiſting, not diſputing, with Satan; to parly with him, is the way to be overcome by him.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Chriſt's goſpel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no reſt in my Spirit, becauſe I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 14 Now thanks be unto God which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the favour of his knowledge by us in every place.

Obſerve here, (1.) The unwearied Diligence of this great Apoſtle in travelling from Place to Place, and carrying the Goſpel with him from one City and Nation to another; *I came to* Troas, *and from thence to* Macedonia. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Succeſs which the holy Apoſtle had in Preaching of the Goſpel with unwearied Diligence in thoſe Places. *A Door was opened unto him of the Lord.* This either ſignifies, (1.) The free Liberty which he had to preach the Goſpel in thoſe Places; the Door of his Mouth was not ſhut by Perſecutors, the Enemies and Oppoſers of the Goſpel, but the Word of the Lord had a free Courſe in the Labours of its Miniſters. Or, (2.) This opened Door may ſignifie and import the great and gracious Succeſs which God gave the Apoſtle in his Work; as God by his Providence opened the Apoſtle's Mouth to preach and publiſh the glad Tydings of the Goſpel; ſo by his Holy Spirit he opened the Peoples Hearts to receive and entertain the glad Tydings of Salvation which the Goſpel brought, *Act.* 16. 14. the Lord opened *Lydia*'s Heart, that ſhe attended to the Words which were ſpoken of *Paul.* *Obſerve,* (3.) How careful the Apoſtle is to aſcribe the intire Praiſe, and to return the whole Thanks to Almighty God, for all the gracious Aſſiſtance and Succeſs which he had received in this Miniſterial Service; *Thanks be to God which cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the Savour of his Knowledge by us in every Place*: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, bleſſed be God, although our Enemies have been many, and our Difficulties great, yet God has given me and my Fellow Apoſtles ſuch Reſolution of Mind, that we have not only encounter'd with them, but triumph'd over them, in a powerful Converſion of ſo many from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity; and has enabled us to ſpread the ſweet Odour of the Goſpel far and near by our laborious Preaching of it from Place to Place: Then is the Word, and God in the Word, glorified, when the Sword of the Spirit is taken into the Hand of the Spirit; when he girds this Sword upon his Thigh, as moſt Mighty, and rides on *triumphantly,* conquering, and to conquer, in the Hearts of his People, till he has conſummated his Victories in a glorious Triumph over all the Powers of Hell and Darkneſs; Thanks be to God that cauſeth *us* to *triumph* in Chriſt.

15 For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. 16 To the one we are the ſavour of death unto Death; and to the other the ſavour of life unto life:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to the Goſpel, and to the Preachers and Diſpenſers of it; they are a *Savour,* an Alluſion probably to the Ointment of ſweet Perfume, which the High-Prieſts under the Law were anointed with; the Breath of the Goſpel is a ſweet Odour or Smell, and God's faithful Miniſters are they that carry it, and blow it abroad, to perfume Sinners that lye ſtinking in their Sins. *Obſerve,* (2.) The contrary Effects which the Preaching of the Goſpel has upon thoſe that ſit under it; it is the Savour of Life unto ſome, of Death unto others; here it was ſo, the Apoſtles Miniſtry was a Savour of Life to the believing Gentiles, of Death to the unbelieving Jews; all Men are to be reckoned in a State of Life or Death, of periſhing, or being ſaved, according as they do, or do not receive the Savour, and reliſh the Doctrine, of the Goſpel; but how comes the Preaching of the Goſpel to be the Savour of Death unto ſome? *Anſwer,* Partly through Pride, in not enduring to be reproved by the Goſpel; partly, through Prejudice againſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel; partly through Slothfulneſs, neglecting to come under the Sound of the Goſpel; and partly through curſed Infidelity, in not believing the Meſſage which the Goſpel brings: Thus is the Goſpel which was ordained for Life, the Savour of Death unto Death. *Obſerve,* (3.) The ſweet Support which God gives his faithful Miniſters in the Diſcharge of their Duty though their Doctrine fails of deſired Succeſs; they are *a ſweet Savour* *unto God, as well in them that Periſh, as in them that are Saved;* Lord! How would thy Miniſters be of all Men moſt miſerable, ſhouldſt thou require the Succeſs of their Labours at their Hands; ſhouldſt thou ſay, Either reconcile my People unto me, or I will never be reconciled unto you; but we ſhall be rewarded by thee according to our Faithfulneſs, not according to our Peoples Fruitfulneſs; the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt are a ſweet ſmelling Savour in the Noſtrils of God, as well in them that Periſh, as in them that are Saved; though *Iſrael* (their People) be not Gathered, yet ſhall they be Glorious; God will Reward them *Secundum Laborem non Fructum*; the Nurſe ſhall be paid for her Care and Pains, though the Child dies at the Breaſt.

16 ——And who is ſufficient for theſe things?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, ſo great and weighty is the Work of Preaching the Everlaſting Goſpel to a loſt World, that neither myſelf, nor any of my Fellow Apoſtles, are ſufficient for it of our ſelves; *who is ſufficient?* That is, none are ſufficient, without proportionable Strength and Help from God, neither Man nor Angel; to Preach the Goſpel as it ought, is a mighty Work, a weighty Work; if any think otherwiſe, it is either their Ignorance or Inadvertency that makes them think ſo; what? Is it an eaſie Matter to ſearch into the deep Things of God, the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, which have an unfathomable Depth? Is it eaſie to inſtruct the Ignorant, to convince the Obſtinate, to reſolve the Doubting, to reduce the Wandring, to know the State of our Flock, to viſit the Sick as we ought, to ſpeak to them, and pray for them, as Perſons upon the Confines of Eternity? What is all this, and much more, a trivial Work, and common Performance? No verily, as there is no Service more honourable than that of the Miniſtry, ſo there is none more Arduous and Laborious; and therefore the greateſt Men that ever God employed in and about this Work, have been ready to ſink under the Apprehenſion of the inſuperable Difficulties that do attend it; if we conſider how a Goſpel-miniſter ought to excel in Knowledge, in Utterance, in Prudence and Conduct, in Exemplary Piety, in Patient Contending with a Peoples Frowardneſs and Perverſeneſs, we need not wonder at our Apoſtle's Exclamation, or Expoſtulatory Queſtion, in the Words before us; *Who is ſufficient for theſe Things.*

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Character which the Apoſtle gives the falſe Apoſtles which were crept in amongſt the *Corinthians*, they were *Corrupters of the Word of God*, they did Sophiſticate and Adulterate the ſincere Word of God; by intermixing their own Pride and Paſſions, their own Inventions and Imagination, with the Doctrine which they delivered; falſe Teachers deal with the Word, as ſome Vintners deal with their Wines, they embaſe them in their Nature, that they may advance them in their Price, and thereby encreaſe their own Profit; they deliver the Word of God in Subtilty, but not in Sincerity. *Obſerve,* (2.) The Declaration which the Apoſtle makes of his own Uprightneſs and Integrity in Preaching the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. *As of Sincerity, as of God, and in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt*; that is, we act as Men of Sincerity in what we do, as Men taught of God, and ſent by God, as Men acted by the Power, and guided by the Spirit of Chriſt, and all this as in the ſight of God; we ſpeak as from God, of God, in Obedience to his Command, and with an Eye at his Glory; he is a better Preacher that ſpeaks with an upright Heart, than he that ſpeaks with an Eloquent Tongue; he that acts from Religious Principles, for Holy Ends, as in the preſence of the All-ſeeing God, and with a fixed Eye at the Glory of God in what he Preaches, he is an Interpreter one of a Thouſand.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter intimates to us how much the Reputation of a Miniſter's Perſon is needful and neceſſary in order to the Succeſs of his Miniſtry; and becauſe the falſe Apoſtle did ſeek by all Artifices to leſſen St. Paul's *Eſteem among the* Corinthians, *he ſheweth that their Converſion to Chriſtianity was a full Evidence of God's Owning and Approving of him as his Ambaſſador, and a ſufficient Commendation of his Perſon and Miniſtry amongſt them; which Miniſtry he proves to be far more excellent than that of* Moſes, *as the Goſpel of Life and Liberty is more Glorious than the Law of Condemnation.*

1 DO we begin again to commend our ſelves? or need we, as ſome others, epiſtles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? 2 Ye are our epiſtles witten in our hearts, known and read of all men. 3 For as much as ye are manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt, miniſtred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly tables of the heart.

Our Apoſtle here Expoſtulates the Caſe with the *Corinthians*, why they would at any time hearken to the falſe Apoſtles, who by reflecting upon his Perſon and Miniſtry, made it needful for him to Vindicate both from Contempt and Scorn; as if he had ſaid, what do I need to begin again in this Second Epiſtle as I did in the Firſt, to commend my ſelf, and the Effects of my Miniſtry, among you, or need I, Commendatory-Letters either to you, or from you, as the falſe Teachers amongſt you have? No verily, you yourſelves by your Converſion to Chriſtianity, and embracing the Faith of the Goſpel, are a better Atteſtation and Teſtimonial to the World of the Succeſs of my Miniſtry, than any written Epiſtle is, or can be, for you are *an Epiſtle written in my Heart*; that is, your Converſion by my Miniſtry is the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart; there it is that I continually carry a thankful and honourable remembrance of you, and bear you upon my Heart, whenever I go in and out before the Lord; and as my Epiſtle, *you are known and read of all Men*; that is, all Chriſtians far and near take notice of you as a Church which God has eminently Bleſſed my Miniſtry to the Converſion and Edification of; but leſt the Apoſtle ſhould ſeem too aſſuming in calling the *Corinthians* his Epiſtle, in the next Words he calls them the Epiſtle of Chriſt; v. 3. *Ye are the Epiſtle of Chriſt miniſtred by us*; that is, your Faith and Converſion was the Work of Chriſt's Spirit, though wrought by my Miniſtry; he having wrote his Law in your Hearts after a more excellent Manner than any thing that can be written with Ink and Paper; not as the Ten Commandments of old were written, *in Tables of Stone, but in the fleſhly Tables of the Heart*; that is, in your Hearts made ſoft and pliable, and ready to obey the Word and Will of God, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, uſing my Miniſtry as the Pen or Inſtrument in his Hand in order thereunto. *Learn hence,* (1.) That it is a very great Favour from God when his Miniſters can ſee the Succeſs of their Labours in the Hearts and Lives of any of their People; when they can ſay, *Ye are our Epiſtle. Learn,* (2.) That nothing doth ſo highly commend our Miniſtry as our Peoples Proficiency; their Improvement in Knowledge, their Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, their Growth in Grace and Holineſs, is beyond all verbal Commendations and Acknowledgments whatſoever; Sermons fetch not Applauſe from Mens Renown, the Peoples Practice is the Preacher's Crown. *Learn,* (2.) That whatever Succeſs the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt meet with, either in Work of Converſion or Edification, among a People, they Attribute the whole Efficacy of it unto God, aſcribing nothing more than a bare Inſtrumentality to themſelves; *Ye are the Epiſtle of Chriſt,* ſays the Apoſtle, *Miniſtred by us*; Chriſt has written his Law in your Hearts by my Miniſtry; as if he had ſaid, Chriſt is the Writer, the Pen is the Miniſter, the Ink the Spirit, the Paper or Table that receive the Impreſſion is the Heart, and the Law of God the Writing writ therein and thereupon.

4 And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to Godward.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle encourages himſelf from the Experience he had of the preſent Succeſs of his Miniſtry, to hope for the Favour of farther and future Succeſs; *Such Truſt* or Confidence have we, through the Grace of Chriſt, of the conſtant Efficacy of our Miniſtry, that he will ſtill own and honour it, ſucceed and bleſs it; when God has rendred our Labours acceptable and ſucceſsful amongſt a People, either for Converſion or Edification, it ſhould encourage us to Truſt in God for the Efficacious Aſſiſtance of our Miniſtry, and rendring us yet more Succeſsful amongſt them, and a greater Bleſſing to them.

5 Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God. 6 Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the new teſtament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle having made an Apology and Defence for himſelf, and his Miniſtry, againſt thoſe that did Calumniate him in the former Verſes. In the Verſe before us he Acknowledges his great Inability for this Work, and that his whole ſufficiency for Service was from God; and this without doubt he mentions not only out of Humility, but out of Prudence alſo, in order to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe who might be apt to think he had too high an Eſteem of himſelf; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid. Far be it from me; to think that I could procure the Succeſs of my Miniſtry, that I have any ſuch ſufficiency of myſelf to convert Souls, no, no, my Sufficiency and Succeſs is all from God; for alas! There is no proportion between ſuch a Sublime and Supernatural Service as that of the Goſpel-miniſtry is, and the Impotency and Weakneſs of Man? *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God. Obſerve,* (2.) The free and full Acknowledgment which the Apoſtle makes of the great Things which God hath done for him, and by him; he did not find, but make him, a Miniſter, an able Miniſter; yea, an able Miniſter of the New Teſtament, or New Covenant; not a Preacher of the Law of *Moſes*; but of the Goſpel of Jeſus; *Who hath made us able Miniſters of the New Teſtament:* To be a ſufficient and ſucceſsful Goſpel-miniſter is a very great Favour from God to any Perſon; the Clay of the Goſpel is better than the Gold of the Temple; the Rags of the Evangelical, is more Rich than the Robes of the Levitical Prieſthood; it is a greater Honour to be, and a greater Favour to hear, the meaneſt Goſpel-preacher, than to hear all *Moſes*'s Lectures. *Obſerve,* (3.) How our Apoſtle here inſenſibly ſlides into a Compariſon which he makes between the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of Chriſt, in which he Magnifies and Preferrs the latter above the former, the Law he calls *the Letter*, the Goſpel the *Spirit*; that is, a Miniſtration of the Spirit; *the Letter killeth*; that is, the Law condemneth and curſeth the Sinner, the Tranſgreſſor of it; but the Spirit of Chriſt revealed in the Goſpel enableth, as well as directeth, to Obey, and ſo *giveth Life.* *Note,* here how falſe the Quakers and others Gloſs is upon theſe Words; they by the Letter will underſtand the whole written Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, the Law and Goſpel both; and by the Spirit will have to be meant the inward and immediate Teachings of the Light within them; others by the Letter underſtand the Litteral and Hiſtorical Senſe of Scripture in general; and by the Spirit giving Life, they underſtand the Myſtical and Spiritual Senſe of Scripture; but it is Evident from *Verſe* 3. That by the Letter he underſtands the Law Engraven in Stone, the Law as delivered by *Moſes* with an Appearance of the Glory of the Lord upon Mount *Sinai*; and by the Spirit is meant the bleſſed Spirit of Chriſt given to the Apoſtles to enable them to Preach the Goſpel, and conferr'd upon all Believers that did obediently Hear and Receive it.

But if the miniſtration of death written and engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſteadfaſtly behold the face of Moſes, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; 8 How ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious?

Our Apoſtle in this and the following Verſes goes on with his Compariſon betwixt the Law and the Goſpel, and ſhews the Tranſcendency of the latter above the former. Where *Note,* (1.) He calls the Law again a killing Law, or a Miniſtration of Death; becauſe it Condemns Men for the Breach of it to Temporal and Eternal Death, without opening to them any Door of Hope. *Note,* (2.) This Law (he ſpeaks of it by way of Dominion) was only written upon, and Engraven in Stone; whereas the Goſpel is written in the fleſhly Tables of Mens Hearts. *Note,* (3.) How the Apoſtle declares that this Miniſtration of the Law was *glorious*, glorious in the Miniſter of it, *Moſes*, who had ſuch a Luſtre upon his Face, that the Children of *Iſrael* could not bear the Sight of it; and *glorious* in the Manner of giving of it. There was a great deal of the Glory and Majeſty of God attended the giving of the Law to *Moſes*; the Miniſtration of the Law was glorious. *Note,* (4.) The Compariſon which the Apoſtle makes between the Law and the Goſpel, and the Preference which he gives to the one above the other. (1.) As the Glory of *Moſes* his Face ceaſed after a while, ſo the Glory of the Law ceaſed at the coming of the Goſpel. (2.) The Law was delivered by Angels to *Moſes*, but the Goſpel was delivered to the Apoſtles by the Son of God, who is the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon. (3.) Whereas the Glory of *Moſes* did more and more decreaſe, the Glory put upon the Apoſtles, and derived from Chriſt, was ſtill more and more encreaſing upon them. But (4.) The chief Glory of the Goſpel which the Apoſtle here inſiſts upon, is *the Miniſtration of the Spirit*, in the large Effuſions of it under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, giving Spiritual and Eternal Life to Believers, inſtead of Death Spiritual and Eternal Coming by the Law. Well therefore might our Apoſtle here ſay, the Miniſtration of the Spirit, or the Goſpel, is much more glorious, and conſequently a greater Reverence and Honour is due to it, and to the Miniſters of it.

9 For if the miniſtration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory. 10 For even that which is made glorious, had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Obſerve here, (1.) The different Titles given to the Law, and to the Goſpel; the former is called the Miniſtration of Condemnation, becauſe it condemns Men eternally for the Violation of it; the latter is called the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs or Juſtification, becauſe it diſcovers to us the only way for a Sinner's Juſtification before God; namely, by the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator. *Obſerve,* (2.) That the Apoſtle comparing the Law and the Goſpel together, acknowledges that there was a ſurpaſſing Glory in the latter above and beyond the former; indeed God's Inſtitution ſtampt an Excellency upou the Jewiſh Worſhip, and the Law given them had both an Intrinſick Glory in it, as it was a Revelation of the Will of God, and alſo an Accidental and Adventitious Glory, as it was attended with the Solemnity of Thunder and Lightning, Fire and Smoke, and a Voice like the Sound of a Trumpet, at the Promulgation of it; yet, ſays the Apoſtle, compared with the Goſpel, the Glory of the Law, or Jewiſh Worſhip, had no Glory in it at all, by reaſon of the Glory that doth excel. As the Moon compared with the Sun, is ſo outſhined by it, that its brightneſs is little taken Notice of. True indeed, the Law was a Revelation of God's Will as well as the Goſpel, but with this happy Advantage on the Goſpel's Side. The Law was a Revelation of God's Will, as to Duty and as to Condemnation, in caſe of Non-performance of that Duty. But the Goſpel, is a Revelation of God's Will, as to Grace and Mercy, as to Remiſſion of Sin and Eternal Life. *Obſerve,* (3.) Another Argument produced here by the Apoſtle, to prove the Miniſtration of the Goſpel to be much more Glorious than that of the Law; namely, becauſe it is much more durable and abiding; Verſe 11, *If that which is done away was Glorious, much more that which remaineth is Glorious.* The Force of the Argument lyes thus: That which is durable and permanent is far more excellent than that which is temporary aud tranſient. Now the Law or Jewiſh Diſpenſation is vaniſhed; its Miniſtration is ceaſed, and all the legal Ordinances are aboliſhed, but the Goſpel State remaineth to the end of the World. It is called a Kingdom that cannot be moved, *Heb.* 12. 28. therefore the Goſpel-miniſtration, which is eternal, fixed, and binding, muſt needs be more excellent, and more glorious than the Legal Diſpenſation, which was temporary, tranſient and vaniſhing.

12 Seeing then that we have ſuch hope, we uſe great plainneſs of Speech. 13 And not as Moſes, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Iſrael cou'd not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed. 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the ſame vail untaken away, in the reading of the old teſtament; which vail is done away in Chriſt. 15 But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheleſs, when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the vail ſhall be taken away.

Here the Apoſtle draws an Inference from the foregoing Diſcourſe; that ſeeing himſelf and the other Apoſtles had ſuch Hope, that their Miniſtry was thus Glorious, ſuch Confidence and Aſſurance of the Perfection and Perpetuity of their Miniſtry, they did now uſe great Plainneſs, Freedom and Boldneſs, of Speech, in Preaching and Publiſhing the Goſpel, and did not imitate *Moſes*, the Miniſter of the Law, who put a Vail over his Face, which was a Sign of the Obſcurity of the Legal Diſpenſation, and of the Blindneſs of the Jews, who could not ſee the End and Accompliſhment of that Ceremonial and Typical Adminiſtration which was to be aboliſhed by Chriſt and his Goſpel; but their Minds were then, and ſtill are, blinded by Prejudice and Unbelief; and the ſame Vail remaineth to this Day ſpread over *Moſes*'s Writings, and not taken away in the reading of the Old Teſtament, which Vail is now done away by the Doctrine of Chriſt contained in the New Teſtament; nevertheleſs, when the Hearts of the Jews ſhall be turned unto the Lord, and they own and acknowledge Jeſus Chriſt, then the Vail ſhall be taken away from the Jews, and they ſhall then clearly underſtand and ſee what is now concealed and hidden from their Eyes. *Learn* hence, (1.) That there is a natural Vail of Blindneſs and Ignorance upon the Minds of Men, which hinders their Diſcerning and Underſtanding Goſpel Myſteries. *Learn* (2.) That there is upon the Underſtandings of the Jews a Vail of Unbelief and rooted Prejudice againſt Chriſt and his Holy Religion; they wilfully ſhut their Eyes, and ſaid they would not ſee, and God has judicially cloſed their Eyes, and ſaid they ſhall not ſee. *Learn* (3.) That by Reaſon of this Vail upon their Hearts they cannot look to the End of that which was aboliſhed! That is, to Jeſus Chriſt, who was the End and Scope at which the whole Ceremonial Law did aim and tend. *Learn* (4.) That when the Jews ſhall be called home, and converted to Chriſtianity, the Vail ſhall be removed from their Hearts, and they ſhall then underſtand the Tendency and Meaning of the whole Ceremonial Law, and obſerve its Fulfilling and Accompliſhment in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *When they ſhall turn to the Lord the Vail ſhall be taken away.*

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

As if he had ſaid, Chriſt is that Quickning and Life-giving Spirit, who takes away the Vail from off our Hearts, and where that Spirit, that All-glorious and All-powerful Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; that is, Clearneſs, and no more Vail, Freedom from the Yoke of the Legal Adminiſtration, a Liberty and Freedom from Sin, a Liberty unto Righteouſneſs, a Freeneſs and Readineſs of Spirit to do Good, a Liberty of Addreſs and Approach to God, a Liberty of Speech in Prayer before God. Thus the Spirit of the Lord is a Free Spirit.

18 But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

That is, we who live under the Light, and enjoy the Liberty of the Goſpel, with open Face beholding as in a clear Glaſs the Glory of the Lord Jeſus, as *Moſes* did the Glory of God in the Mount, are by degrees changed into the ſame Image with him, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord working in us, and transforming us into his own Likeneſs. *Learn* hence, that the Word and Ordinances of God are the Glaſs wherein we have now a Sight of the Glory of God. *Learn* (2.) That the Sight of God in his Ordinances is transforming, as well as the Sight of him in Heaven; the Glory into which we are changed is our Conformity to that Holineſs which ſhineth in the World; Viſion, or the Sight of God here in his Ordinances, aſſimilates as well as in Heaven; perfect Viſion produceth perfect Aſſimilation, but the Soul's preſent Aſſimilation, or imperfect Conformity to God here, is gradually carried on by daily Communion with him. All Sorts of Communion among Men have an Aſſimilating Power and Efficacy: He that converſes with vain Company, grows more vain; and he that delights in holy and ſpiritual Company, grows more ſerious than he was before; but nothing ſo Transforms the Spirit of a Man as Communion with God in his Ordinances doth. None ſo like him as thoſe that converſe moſt frequently with him. *Learn* (3.) That if the Sight of God in the Glaſs of an Ordinance be ſo Aſſimilating, how Transforming will be the Sight of God in Heaven, when we ſhall there behold and ſee him Face to Face. If the Viſion of Chriſt here be ſo influential upon Believers, what an Illuſtrious and Infallible Efficacy will the immediate, clear and perfect, Sight of his Glory have in Heaven? 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. We ſhall be perfectly like him, when once we ſhall ſee him as he is.

CHAP. IV.

This Chapter, together with a conſiderable Part of this Epiſtle, is Apologetical or Excuſatory; in which the Apoſtle vindicates his Office and Dignity from the Prejudices which either his Sufferings which attended him in the Diſpenſation thereof, or the Suggeſtions of falſe Apoſtles and deceitful Workers might have raiſed up againſt him. With theſe Men he puts himſelf in the Ballance, and without either Vanity or Vainglory prefers himſelf before them in point of Fidelity and Sincerity in the Work of the Miniſtry; as alſo in point of Diligence in the Service whereunto he was in ſpecial Mercy called. And accordingly thus he ſpeaks.

1 THerefore ſeeing we have this miniſtry, as we have received mercy we faint not: 2 But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending our ſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

That is, ſeeing we have ſuch a Glorious Miniſtry, far more excelling than that of *Moſes*, mention'd in the Concluſion of the foregoing Chapter, as we have receiv'd Mercy or Special Favours from God in committing it to us, ſo we faint not under the Difficulties and Preſſures to which it doth expoſe us. *Having receiv'd Mercy we faint not: But have renounced the Hidden Things of Diſhoneſty*, all Fornication and Uncleanneſs, all Ambition and Covetouſneſs, which the Falſe Apoſtles allowed themſelves in; *not walking in* Guile *or Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully*, as they do, *but by Manifeſtation of the Truth commending our ſelves to every Man's Conſcience, as Perſons acting in the Sight of God.* *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Miniſtry of the Goſpel is a very Glorious Miniſtry, far excelling the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation. (2.) That it is a Special Favour from God to be judg'd Faithful, and put into this Miniſtry. 3. That no Troubles or Trials, no Difficulties, Dangers or Diſtreſſes, ſhould cauſe any of the Faithful Servants of God to faint who have receiv'd Mercy or Favour from God, to be put into the Miniſtry. *Seeing we have this Miniſtry, as we have receiv'd Mercy we faint not.* Obſerve next, how the Apoſtle, having vindicated and extoll'd his Miniſtry, does in the Second Verſe declare and aſſert his Fidelity in the Diſcharge of his Miniſtry; *not handling the World of God deceitfully, but commending our ſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God.* Hence learn, that the Apoſtles deliver'd the Goſpel in all Things neceſſary to be known, believ'd and practis'd, with great Plainneſs and ſufficient Perſpicuity, otherwiſe they could not be ſaid *to manifeſt the Truth to every Man's Conſcience.*

3 But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.

As if he had ſaid, we preach the Goſpel plainly; but if Men do not underſtand and believe it, will not embrace and obey it, it is not an Argument of the Goſpel's Obſcurity, but of our Hearers Incredulity. The Goſpel is not hid from

Men for want of Clearneſs, but only by Means of their own Voluntary and Wilful Blindneſs. *If our Goſpel be hid.* Here *Note*, (1.) St. *Paul*'s Claim and Intereſt in the Goſpel which he preach'd, he calls it *his* Goſpel; not as if he was the Author of it, but becauſe of his Inſtrumentality in the Promulgation and Publiſhing of it; it was a Divine Treaſure committed to his Care and Truſt; it was not his Goſpel by Way of Original Revelation, but by Way of Miniſterial Diſpenſation. *Note* (2.) The *Corinthians* Nonproficiency under the Goſpel ſpecified, or at leaſt ſuppoſed. *If our Goſpel be hid*; that is, if the Word which we preach with the greateſt Plainneſs, in the greateſt Simplicity and Sincerity, if it be hidden from the Minds and Underſtandings of Men, ſo as to miſs of its Convincing Power, and Converting Efficacy, the Fault is not in the Goſpel, but in them that ſit under it. *Note* (3.) The Heavy Doom and Judgment which the Apoſtle paſſes upon all ſuch Perſons as ſit under the External Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and yet are no Ways enlightned nor improv'd by it, but remain Blind and Ignorant, Obſtinate and Unreform'd. It is a Sad Symptom and Foreboding Deſign of a loſt People. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there are many, very many, who ſit under the External Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, unto whom the Goſpel is an Hidden Goſpel. *Learn* (2.) That the Goſpel's being hid from a People who have long enjoy'd the Light and Benefit of it, it is a Sad Symptom, yea, a Certain Sign of a Loſt People. Such Blindneſs under the Cleareſt Light, is like the covering of the Face, or tying the Handkerchief over the Eyes, in order to the turning off the Obſtinate Sinner into an Eternal Hell.

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them,

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to Satan, he is ſtil'd *the God of this World*; not properly, becauſe the Honour and Homage of a God is challenged by him, and by a Multitude of Sinners given to him. He is called by our Saviour the *Prince of this World*; and by the Apoſtle *the Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, becauſe he ruleth over a great Part of the World, and they are his Subjects, or rather his Slaves. *Obſerve* (2.) The Way and Courſe which Satan takes to ſecure his Subjects Obedience to himſelf, *he blinds their Eyes* that they may never know a better Prince, ſee a better Way, or underſtand a better State, than he hath drawn them into. Satan blinds the Underſtandings of Men by the Efficacy of divers Luſts, which are bred and nouriſhed in their Hearts. Now the Steamings of Senſual Luſts from a Corrupt Heart do blind the Underſtanding, and beſet the Judgment, that the Sinner can neither ſee nor know the Excellency of Spiritual Objects. O Bloody and Barbarous Prince, that puts out the Eyes of all his Subjects, darkens the Mind and Underſtanding, takes away the Thinking, Conſidering, and Reaſoning Power, of the Soul, that they neither ſee nor conſider Spiritual Things, nor have any Diſtinct and Effectual Apprehenſion of them! *Obſerve* (3.) The Character of the Perſons whom Satan the God of this World hath blinded, *ſuch as believe not*; that is, both ſuch as want the Means of Faith, and ſuch as enjoy the Means, but want the Grace of Faith; the former is the Caſe of the Pagan, the latter of the Chriſtian World. Lord! How many live under the Light of the Goſpel, that never had Heart to receive it, or Will to obey it? How great a Part of the Chriſtianiz'd World do reject Chriſt; tho' call'd by his Name, yet will not own his Authority, or ſubmit to his Government? The Nobles of the World think themſelves diſhonour'd by ſubmitting their Necks to Chriſt's Yoke. The Senſualiſts of the World will not lay down a Luſt for him that laid down his Life for them; the Worldlings of the Earth prefer their Dirt and Dunghil before the Pearl of great Price: Oh! How few amongſt them that profeſs Chriſtianity do love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity? *Obſerve* (4.) The great End and Deſign of the Devil's Agency, in blinding the Minds of Men with Ignorance and Error, with Paſſion and Prejudice, *leſt the Light of the Glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine into their Hearts*, to the Ruin of him and his Kingdom. As the Sun caſts its Beams upon Blind Men, but they receive not the Light in 'em; ſo tho' the Light of Chriſt's Glorious Goſpel ſhines before the Eyes of them whom the God of this World has blinded with Hopes and Deſires, with the Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments of this World, yet they receive it not. *Obſerve* (5.) The Glorious Title here given to Chriſt, *The Image of God*; that is, Firſt, His Subſtantial and Eſſential Image, being God of God, very God of very God. Chriſt conſider'd with reſpect to his Divine Nature is the Expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon. (2.) Chriſt is his Image as Mediator, and with reference to the Goſpel, in which he has given us Glorious Demonſtrations of the Power and Wiſdom, of the Grace and Holineſs, of the Mercy and Goodneſs, of God towards us; all which, as in a Glaſs, are repreſented to us, and preſented before us. In both theſe Reſpects Chriſt is called *The Image of God.*

5 For we preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and our ſelves your ſervants for Jeſus ſake.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle farther manifeſts his Fidelity and Integrity in preaching the Goſpel, by ſhewing that he ſought to advance Chriſt, and not himſelf, in preaching of it. Here *Note*, (1.) The Duty practis'd by St. *Paul*, *we preach.* How mean and ignoble ſoever his Office of Preaching is eſteem'd by ſome Men, who value not their own, or other Mens Souls, and therefore no wonder that they undervalue the Means of making them happy; yet with the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, magnifie this Part of their Office, not by Pomp and State, not by Scorn or Superciliouſneſs, as thinking it beneath them to preach, but by an Humble and Painful Attendance upon the Miniſtry, which they have receiv'd of the Lord; and will diſpence the Word with Evidence and Perſpicuity, with Faithfulneſs and Sincerity, with Power and Authority, with Courage and Boldneſs, and with Exemplarineſs of Converſation; not preaching Angelical Sermons, and leading Diabolical Lives. *Obſerve* (2.) The Subject Matter of the Apoſtles Preaching, *not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* But when may Perſons be ſaid to preach themſelves? *Anſw.* When they make themſelves the Authors of their own Miniſtry, running before they are ſent, and are Self-created Preachers; when they make themſelves the Matter of their Preaching, venting their own Paſſions, and Prejudices, and Private Opinions, inſtead of the Doctrine of Chriſt; and when they make themſelves the End of their Preaching; aiming rather at pleaſing others, and profiting themſelves, than at the Glory of God, and the Good of Mens Souls. But what is it to preach Chriſt? *We preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. Anſ.* When he is the Author of our Miniſtry, and we receive our Miſſion from him; when we make him the Object of our Preaching; when the Subject Matter and Subſtance of it is Jeſus Chriſt, either explicitely or reductively; and when we make him the End of our Preaching, deſigning to promote the Honour and Intereſt of Chriſt by our Miniſtry, that his People may be gather'd, his Body edified, his Saints perfected, his Enemies ſubdued, his Goſpel propagated, and he finally admired in all them that believe. *Obſerve* (3.) In what Capacity the Apoſtle look'd upon himſelf in the Church of Chriſt; not as a Lord, but as a Servant, *Our ſelves your Servants.* There is an Honour belonging to Chriſt's Miniſters; but verily that Honour conſiſts in Service which we owe to the Church of Chriſt: Servants we are to the Souls of Men, but not to the Humours of Men; at the ſame Time that we are Servants to them, we are to rule over them, and they are to obey and ſubmit unto us as thoſe who watch for their Souls; therefore it is added, *Servants for Jeſus Sake*; that is, Servants in order to the Promoting of his Honour, and his Churches Intereſt. *We preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and our ſelves your Servants, for Jeſus Sake.*

6 For God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, The Faithful and Humble Acknowledgment which the Apoſtle makes, how himſelf and his Fellow Apoſtles came to preach Jeſus Chriſt ſo convincingly to others; namely, That Almighty God, who at firſt by his Omnipotent Word produc'd Light out of Darkneſs, by no leſs Efficacy and Power brought him, a Loſt Sinner, out of the Darkneſs of Phariſaiſm and Sin, and ſhined into his and their Hearts with a Glorious Light, to the Intent that he and they ſhould communicate and impart this Divine Light of the Knowledge of God, which ſhineth in the Face of Chriſt, unto others. *Learn hence*, That Miniſters muſt know Chriſt themſelves, before they can make him known to others; Chriſt muſt be revealed in them, before he can be revealed by them; he muſt ſhine into their Hearts by his Holy Spirit, and give them an Experimental Acquaintance in their own Souls, with what they deliver and make known to others. Every Truth ought to be the Tranſcript of our own Experience, and be preached firſt to our Hearts, and then to our Hearers. Who can ſavingly enlighten others that is in the Darkneſs of Ignorance, or Sin, himſelf.

7 But we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

In the foregoing Verſes we find the Apoſtle magnifying his Office, extolling his Miniſtry, and vindicating his Fidelity in the Diſcharge of his Duty. In this Verſe *Obſerve*, (1.) He compares the Goſpel he preached to a Treaſure, *we have this Treaſure*; a Treaſure for the enriching and edifying of the Church. The Goſpel is a Treaſure for its Worth and Dignity, for its Abundance and Variety, for its Cloſeneſs and Secrecy. This Treaſure Chriſt keeps under Lock and Key, only intruſting thoſe with it whom he calls to it, and furniſhes for it. They are no better than Thieves and Sacrilegious Robbers, who without a mediate Call or Warrant from Chriſt do aſſume this Truſt, and break open this Treaſure. *Obſerve* (2.) The Repoſitory in which this Treaſure is laid up in Earthen Veſſels: So the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel are called. Where *Note*, The Word of Deſcription, they are Veſſels, and the Word of Diminution, they are Earthen Veſſels. (1.) The Preachers of the Goſpel are repreſented by a Word of Deſcription, they are Veſſels: Thus Veſſels are not Natural, but Artificial, Inſtruments. No Man is Born a Chriſtian, much leſs a Miniſter, but made ſuch. Veſſels are not of equal Capacity, ſome are leſs, others greater: Thus the Miniſters of the Goſpel have Gifts and Graces of different Degrees and Excellencies. Again, Veſſels are not for Reception only, but for Effuſion alſo; as they receive and retain, ſo they let out what is put into them: The Miniſters of Chriſt are not only to receive and lay up, but to lay out this Heavenly Treaſure, which is not impared by imparting. Finally, Veſſels are not the Originals of what they have, but all they contain is poured into them, and received by them. A Mine has Treaſure in its own Bowels, but it is put into the Cheſt. Thus the Preachers of the Goſpel are not the Authors, but the Receivers only, of thoſe Truths they publiſhed, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. *I have received of the Lord what I alſo delivered unto you. Note farther*, The Word of Diminution, they are Earthen Veſſels. The Preachers of the Goſpel are Divine in regard of the Sublimity of their Doctrine, but Humane and Earthen in regard of the Frailty of their Condition. Their being called *Earthen* Veſſels may denote the meanneſs of their Condition, which for the moſt part is little and low in the World: As the Poor receive the Goſpel, ſo are they very often Poor and Low that publiſh the Goſpel, Neceſſitous and Indigent, *Earthen Veſſels.* Again, it may denote the Frailty of their Perſons, and the Contemptibleneſs of them; Earthen Veſſels are little ſet by, ſtand in open Places, uſed by every Hand, and at every Turn, whilſt Plate, Gold and Silver Veſſels, are laid and locked up with much Charineſs. Thus is it often with the Preachers of the Goſpel, they are Objects baſe and vile, contemptible and deſpiſed in the Eyes of the World, Veſſels wherein there is no Pleaſure; yea, with ſome not only our Perſons are deſpicable, but our very Office and Function is contemptible. In a word, as our mean Condition and baſe Eſtimation, ſo our Bodily Conſtitution, proclaims us Earthen: Our Bodies are Earthen, becauſe formed of the Duſt of the Earth, becauſe ſubject to Flaws and Cracks, and to be broken in pieces; we that preach Eternal Life to others, are dying Men our ſelves; and whilſt the Word of Life is in our Mouths, many times Death is in our Faces. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Reaſon aſſigned why this Treaſure of the Goſpel is committed to earthen Veſſels, (Men,) not to Heavenly Veſſels, (Angels,) namely, *that the Excellency of the Power might be of God, and not of us*; from the Weakneſs of Man the Inſtrument, there redounds great Honour to God the Agent. This Precious Treaſure of the Goſpel is lodged in ſuch weak and worthleſs Veſſels, that as the Power is from God, namely, the awakening, convincing, quickning, heart-changing Power of the Word is from him; ſo the Glory, the entire Glory and compleat Praiſe, may be attributed and aſcribed to him. *We have this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of th Power might be of God, and not of us.*

8 We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed: we are perplexed, but not in deſpair. 9 Perſecuted, but not forſaken, caſt down, but not deſtroyed. 10 Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body. 11. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jeſus ſake, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh. 12 So then Death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 We having the ſame Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken: we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.

The falſe Apoſtles and ſome weak Chriſtians having taken Offence at the manifold and great Sufferings which St. *Paul*, with his Fellow Apoſtles, had met with in the Courſe of their Miniſtry; in theſe Verſes St. *Paul* ſhews the Church at *Corinth* that there was no Reaſon at all why any ſhould be offended at his Sufferings, or any Cauſe why the falſe Apoſtles ſhould object, that if he had preached the Goſpel ſincerely, Almighty God would never have ſuffered him to be perſecuted and afflicted ſo ſeverely; namely, becauſe all his Afflictions were ſo graciouſly moderated, and himſelf ſo powerfully upheld by God, that he ſunk not under the Weight and Burthen of them. We are troubled (ſays he) on every ſide, but not overwhelmed with our Troubles; we are often perplexed, but not ſo as to deſpair of God's Help and Succour; we are perſecuted by Men, but not forſaken of God; caſt down indeed, but not killed by the Fall. So that there is in our Sufferings a Reſemblance and Repreſentation of the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt Jeſus. We bear in our Bodies a Memorative Conformity to our dying Lord, that it may appear how mightily we are ſupported by the quickning Power of the Spirit of Chriſt, under all our Afflictions. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Behold and admire in us the Almighty Power of Chriſt exerted towards us, in upholding theſe Earthen Veſſels, (our frail Bodies,) notwithſtanding the many Thouſand Knocks they have met with in carrying about that Heavenly Treaſure, the Holy Goſpel, with which God has intruſted us. *Obſerve* next, He rejoices in the Cauſe of his Sufferings, *We are delivered unto Death for Jeſus Sake*; for our owning, preaching and practiſing, the Doctrine of Jeſus, bleſſed be God we ſuffer not as evil Doers, but for well doing; we ſuffer for the ſake of the beſt Perſon, and in the beſt Cauſe, that ever the World was acquainted with. He adds, *We are delivered unto Death, that the Life of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal Fleſh*; that is, the infinitely Wiſe God ſuffers us to be thus afflicted, that in and by the Sufferings which our mortal Fleſh do ſuſtain and undergo, he might make it evidently manifeſt that Chriſt is riſen from the Dead. And as a living Head conveys the neceſſary Influences of Strength, Support and Comfort, as to all his Members, ſo more particularly to us his Miniſters; by which we are enabled, without fainting, to ſuffer the hardeſt Things with Patience, Courage, and Conſtancy. *Obſerve laſtly*, He declares to them the great Advantages which they reaped by his Afflictions, *Death worketh in us, but Life in you*; that is, the preaching of the Goſpel expoſeth us to Death, but unto you it brings Eternal Life. Our Death is your Life, our Sufferings are your Advantage, we having the ſame faithful Spirit which was in the Saints under the Old Teſtament, and particularly in Holy *David*, Pſ. 116. 10. who ſays, *I believed, and therefore ſpake; I was ſore afflicted.* Now as he believed and truſted in God for Deliverance out of his many and great Troubles, ſo in like manner do we believe and truſt. From the whole, *Note*, (1.) That a perplexed, and perſecuted, and afflicted, and diſtreſſed Condition, was the Lot and Portion of the Members, but eſpecially of the Miniſters of Chriſt, in the firſt and future Ages of the Church. Chriſt eſpouſed his Church to himſelf upon the Bed of his Croſs, his Head begirt with a Pillow of Thorns, his Body drencht in a Bath of his own Blood: And if the Head was Crown'd with Thorns, it is unſuitable that the Feet ſhou'd tread on Roſes. *Note* (2.) Tho' all Chriſt's Followers have drank of the ſame Cup with himſelf, yet the Dregs of the Cup have uſually been put into the Hand of the Miniſters of the Word, *We that live are always delivered unto Death*; moſt of the Apoſtles were, by the

Rage of Tyrants, put to cruel Deaths, and offered up a Bloody Sacrifice. The Calling of Miniſters is Honourable, but their outward Condition is Deplorable; their Embaſſy is Glorious, but their Uſage is often Grievous; God ſends them forth with Renown, the World entertains them with Reproach. *Note* (3.) God doth not bring his People into a ſuffering Condition, and there leave them; when they ſuffer for him, they are not forſaken by him, the Voice of Deſpair is not heard in the dark Night of their Calamity; but God has either the Caſtle of Providence, or the Ark of a Promiſe, the All-ſufficiency of his Power, or the Abundance of his Grace. Theſe, every of theſe, and all theſe, are for his Peoples Retirement in the greateſt Storms and Tempeſts. *We are troubled, yet not diſtreſſed, perſecuted, but not forſaken.*

14 Knowing that he which raiſed up Jeſus ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent us with you. 15 For all things are for your ſakes, that the abundant grace might thro' the thankſgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.

A double Reaſon is here aſſigned why the Apoſtle bare his Sufferings with ſuch invincible Courage and Chriſtian Patience. The firſt is drawn from the Advantage which would redound to the Church by his Sufferings. *All things are for your Sakes*; that is, all the Straights we are put to, turn to your Advantage; if we die it is to confirm you by our Sufferings, if we be delivered it is for God's Glory and your Good, *that the abundant Grace might by the Thankſgiving of many redound to the Glory of God*; whatever we meet with tends to the confirming of your Faith, and the encreaſing your Thankfulneſs. A Second Reaſon is drawn from the joyful Iſſue of his Sufferings. He and his Fellow Apoſtles ſteadfaſtly believed, that Almighty God, who raiſed up Chriſt from the Dead, would in like manner raiſe them from the Grave of their Sufferings, yea, from the Grave of Death, and both Soul and Body ſhall be preſented with them, to be eternally glorified together. *Learn hence*, That how different ſoever the Lot and Portion of God's Children and Servants be in this Life, ſome more, others leſs, afflicted, yet having all the ſame time Faith in God, for a joyful Deliverance out of their Afflictions, they ſhall all meet in the Morning of the Reſurrection, and be by Chriſt preſented unto God as Perſons redeemed by him, and ſhall eternally be glorified with him. *He which raiſed up Jeſus, ſhall raiſe us up alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent us with you.*

16 For which cauſe we faint not, but tho' our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

The Original Word for *fainting* ſignifies to ſhrink back, as Cowards in War, or to ſink down as a Porter under the Preſſure of ſome heavy Burthen. *For this Cauſe we faint not*; for what Cauſe? Namely this, that tho' their Bodies were weakned by Affliction, and they were daily decaying as to the Strength and Vigour of the outward Man, yet as to their inward Man the Strength and Vigour of their Minds and Spirits was Day by Day renewed. Oh happy Apoſtle! The cold Blaſts of Perſecution beating upon thy outward Man, did by a Spiritual Antipariſtaſis encreaſe the Heat of Grace within; thy Soul is made fat with Blows upon thy Body, and Battles with pricking and beating; every Stone thrown at thee knocked thee nearer to Chriſt, the chief Corner-ſtone; under all the Storms and Billows of Affliction, thou, like *Noah*'s Ark, wert lift up near to Heaven, and after every Encounter thy Salvation is nearer than before; well therefore mighteſt thou declare and ſay, *for this Cauſe we faint not.*

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in aſſigning Reaſons why all the Afflictions which himſelf and others met with were not only tolerable, but joyous; namely, becauſe, (1.) His Afflictions were light. (2.) Becauſe they were ſhort. They were light, but how? Not conſidered in themſelves; ſo they were hard and heavy; Thrice was he beaten with Rods, Five Times he received Forty Stripes ſave One: But light compared with the Glory expected. Again, they were ſhort; but for a Moment compared with Eternity. Mark the Gradation: For Affliction there is Glory, for light Affliction a Weight of Glory, and for light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, an Eternal Weight of Glory. *Obſerve farther*, the Apoſtle doth not barely ſay that Glory will be the Conſequent of Affliction, but that Affliction will be the Cauſe of Glory; *it worketh for us*, but how? Not as a meritorious Cauſe, for, alas! How can our Afflictions deſerve his Happineſs? What proportion can there be betwixt Light and Momentary Afflictions, and an Eternal Weight of Glory? But they work for us as they are ſanctified by God to us. His Infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, his Covenant, Truth and Faithfulneſs, makes his Saints Afflictions a Whipping-poſt to their Corruptions; they purge out Iniquity, and take away our Sin, if we belong to God as his Covenant Children; but for the wicked and obdurate Sinner, alas! It is much otherwiſe: Inſtead of being refined from their Droſs, and purged from their Filth, by being in the Furnace of Affliction, it boils their Scum and Impurity more into them, and like Flint in the Fire, they fly in the very Face of God their Refiner.

18 Whilſt we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen, for the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal.

The laſt Reaſon is aſſigned here why the Apoſtle was kept from fainting in and under the Preſſure of the moſt heavy Afflictions: He look'd not at preſent, but future, Things; not at Things ſeen, but unſeen; not at Things temporal, but eternal. ——*Obſerve here*, (1.) What it was that the Apoſtle when on Earth made his main Scope, his chief Aim, grand Deſign, and great End. This is ſignified to us in the Original Word *σκοπȣ̃ντων*, which ſignifies to look as the Archer doth at the Mark he ſhoots at. There were ſome Things which he, his Fellow Apoſtles, and all ſerious Chriſtians with them, looked at. This is ſpecified firſt negatively, *We look not at Things ſeen*, at the Things of this Life, at ſenſible Objects, be they Bitter or Sweet, be they Comforts or Croſſes. Temporal Things are Temporary Things; and we mind them not as the Men of the World do, who make them their chief and principal Aim and Scope: No, we leave the World to the Men of the World; *We look not at Things which are ſeen.* But, *Secondly*, This is ſpecified affirmatively, *We look at the Things which are not ſeen*, the Things of another Life, Things which are Objects of Faith, and not viſible to Fleſhly Eyes; we look at theſe, we make theſe our Aim and Scope; and the Reaſon is ſubjoined why they made theſe Things the Matter of their Choice, the Objects of their Deſire and Endeavour: This is intimated in the Word (*for*,) for the Things which are ſeen *are Temporal*; that is, all the viſible Things of this Life, whether Comforts or Croſſes, whether Proſperous or Adverſe, be it Health or Sickneſs, Liberty or Reſtraint, Poverty or Riches, Honour or Diſgrace, Life or Death, they are all Πρόσκαιρα, for a while, only for a ſhort Seaſon, as the Word ſignifies; therefore we do not much eye them, we trouble not our Heads much about them, they are Things of an higher Nature we look at, ſuch as neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear heard, and theſe are the durable Things: *For the Things which are not ſeen are Eternal. Learn hence*, (1.) That Temporal Things, or Things that are ſeen, do take up the Heads and Hearts, the Mind and Thoughts, of the Men of the World, and are the Sum of their Deſires, and the Subſtance of their Endeavours. *We look not at the Things which are ſeen*; but there are thoſe that do; *we make* them not our Aim and Scope, but others look at them, wholly at them, can ſee nothing beyond them, and deſire nothing beſides them. *Learn* (2.) That Things unſeen, the Things of Eternity, and the inviſible Encouragements of another World, are the Mark and Scope which every real Chriſtian is aiming at, and contending for. *We look at the Things which are not ſeen*, and make them our Aim and Scope. *Learn* (3.) That the Things not ſeen, or the Things of another Life and World, are Eternal Things; that is, ſuch Things as admit of no Changes and Alterations, of no Gradations or Succeſſions, of no Decay or Conſumption, of no future Hopes and Expectations, of no Mixture or Moderation, of no Recovery or Revocation, of no Period or Concluſion, O Eternity! Eternity! That vaſt, that boundleſs, Ocean of Eternity! How does it ſwallow up our Thoughts with Wonder and Amazement? God help us daily to conſider of it, duly to prepare for it, and not to prefer the Trifles of Time before it, but make the wiſeſt Proviſion for the longeſt Duration. *Learn* (4.) That which puts the Weight upon Things not ſeen, renders them the proper Objects of a Chriſtian's Aim and Choice, is this, becauſe they are Eternal: That which chiefly caſt the Scale, and maketh Things not ſeen to preponderate, is becauſe they are Eternal Things. It is Eternity which tranſcendeth all Expreſſion, all Conception, much more all our Comprehenſion, that puts an infinite Weight upon unſeen Things. *The Things which are not ſeen are Eternal*: This Meditation well digeſted would work in us an Holy Indifferency towards all Temporal Things; it would moderate our Eſteem of them, our Deſires after them, our Delight in them, and our Grief for the want and loſs of them: And ſweeten all thoſe Troubles and Trials, all thoſe Sufferings and Afflictions, which we meet with in our Paſſage through Time unto Eternity. Lord, take off, and turn away, our Eyes from the Things which are ſeen, and help *us to look at the Things which are not ſeen; for the Things which are ſeen are Temporal, but the Things which are not ſeen are Eternal.*

CHAP. V.

Our Apoſtle having at the latter End of the foregoing Chapter Recorded the Sufferings of himſelf and other Believers for the Sake of Chriſt and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, he comes in this Chapter to give a Reaſon why he did ſo courageouſly and perſeveringly labour in the Work of the Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the many Difficulties and great Dangers which he met with on every ſide, for commending himſelf to every Man's Conſcience in the ſight of God. And he tells us it was the well-grounded Hopes of a future Immortality which did ſupport and bear up his Spirit under all the Preſſures of Humane Life; from whence we learn, that the Difficulties and Diſtreſſes of good Men in this Life, altho' they ſhould end in Death itſelf, are Matter of no great Terrour to thoſe who have a well-grounded Confidence and good Aſſurance of their Bleſſed Immortality. For thus our Apoſtle ſpeaks.

1 FOR we know that if our earthly Houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made hands eternal in the heavens.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle compares the Body of a Believer to an Houſe, to an earthly Houſe, and to an Houſe of Tabernacle; to an Houſe becauſe of its comely Fabrick and Compoſure, as alſo in regard of the Inhabitant that dwells in it, the never-dying Soul: To an earthly Houſe, in regard of the Matter whereof it is compoſed, and in regard of the Means by which it is ſuſtained; and to an Houſe of Tabernacle, becauſe ſuch Buildings conſiſt of ſlight and mean Materials; they are ſoon ſet up, and as ſoon taken down. *Obſerve* (2.) The neceſſity of this Earthly Tabernacle of the Body's Diſſolution by Death: It muſt down, and be diſſolved. (3.) The Believer's future Happineſs after the Body's preſent Diſſolution aſſerted and declared, they have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. Learn hence, (1.) That it is the Pleaſure and Will of God that his People ſhould for a ſhort Time remain in this Earthly Tabernacle of the Body. Learn (2.) That this earthly Tabernacle of the Believer's Body, ſooner or later, muſt by Death become diſſolved. Learn (3.) That after the Diſſolution of this Earthly Tabernacle of the Body all the Faithful have an Eternal Habitation, a Building of God, not made with Hands, in the higheſt Heavens. Learn (4.) That it is both the Duty and Intereſt of every Sinner and Serious Chriſtian to labour for the certain Knowledge and full Aſſurance of this happy Privilege, and be able to ſay, we know, *&c.*

2 For in this, that is, in this ruinous earthly tabernacle, we groan, earneſtly deſiring rather to be cloathed upon with that our houſe which is from heaven.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Strength and Vehemency of the Saints Affection, *we groan*; the Word ſignifies ſuch a groaning as a Man that hath a Load or Burthen lying upon him, which makes him fetch his Wind from his very Bowels: As there are Groans which proceed from Sorrow, ſo there are Groans which ariſe from Deſire and Hope. Thus here, *We groan, earneſtly deſiring*. *Obſerve* (2.) What is the Subject which is the Apoſtles groaning Deſires were carried out after; namely, to be cloathed with a Celeſtial Body inſtead of that clogging Body of earthly Corruption which here they carried about with them, earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed upon, *&c.* Learn thence, That ſuch as do believe and wait for a Bleſſed Immortality, do groan for it, and earneſtly deſire it, becauſe of the Miſeries and Preſſures by Sin and Sorrow of this preſent Life, becauſe they have already a Taſte of the Happineſs and Glory of the Life to come; and becauſe the Holy Spirit doth excite and ſtir up theſe groaning Deſires in the Hearts of Believers, *Rom.* 8. We alſo that have the Firſt-fruits of the Spirit do groan within our ſelves.

3 If ſo be that being cloathed, we ſhall not be found naked.

That is, if ſo be at our Paſſage hence we ſhall have the Happineſs to be of the number of thoſe who are found cloathed with Glory, or cloathed with Holineſs and good Works, to fit us for our cloathing in Glory, that we may not be *found naked* in our natural Turpitude of Sin and Spiritual Nakedneſs, which renders us abominable in the Sight of God. Learn hence, That none can groan and long for Heaven but ſuch as are cloathed with a Goſpel Righteouſneſs, that of Juſtification, Sanctification, and new Obedience: None ſhall be cloathed upon with Glory hereafter, but ſuch as are cloathed with Grace and Holineſs here.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened: not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.

Note here, that this groaning Deſire again mentioned by the Apoſtle in this Verſe, with reſpect to the Burthen of the Body, to get rid of it, is not either an unnatural Deſire, or a diſcontented Deſire, or a Deſire of Death as Death, or a Deſire to be unhouſed, and without cloathing, for the Soul, but he would be better cloathed with a Celeſtial Body, that his mortal Part might be ſwallowed up by Immortal Glory. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, As weary as I am of Life, by Means of Sin and Sorrow, by Reaſon of Corruption and Affliction, yet I would not barely for the ſake of that deſire a Diſſolution, but for the Hopes ſake of Eternal and Immortal Life. Learn hence, (1.) That whilſt the Saints live in this earthly, mortal Body, they are burthened with a heavy Load of Sin and Affliction. (2.) That Believers thus burthened do in an Holy Manner groan and long for a better State. (3.) That in that better State Mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of Life. (4.) That in that Life we ſhall be cloathed again with our own Bodies, Glorious and Heavenly: *We groan not to be uncloathed, but cloathed upon.*

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God; who alſo hath given us the earneſt of his Spirit.

That is, he that hath wrought and appointed us, he that hath prepared and fitted us for this Glorious Change, and hath ſet our Souls a longing for this Immortal State, is God; who hath alſo *given us by his holy Spirit* thoſe holy Affections, fervent Deſires, and faithful Endeavours, which are the Earneſt of Heaven, before we enjoy it. Learn hence, (1.) That Almighty God doth fit and frame his People for that happy State of Bliſs and Glory, which he has deſigned them for and appointed them unto; *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf, ſame thing is God.* Learn (2.) That to the intent his Saints may look and long for that Glorious and Immortal State with the greater Vehemency and Deſire, he has already given them an Earneſt and Foretaſte of it by his Holy Spirit in their Hearts.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.

We are confident; that is, by the Holy Spirit comfortably aſſured of a better State. They who have the Earneſt of the Spirit may be confident of their future Glorious State; or we are confident; that is, we are of good Courage, fearing neither

ther Death nor Danger in the Way of our Duty. *Knowing that whilſt we are here at home in the Body*; that is, whilſt ſojourning in the Body as Pilgrims and Strangers *we are abſent from the Lord:* That is, we are detained from the Bleſſed Sight and Enjoyment of God, and kept out of the Poſſeſſion of that Happineſs which makes Heaven. Here the Apoſtle plainly intimates, that whilſt we remain in the Body we are detained from our Happineſs, and that as ſoon as we leave the Body we ſhall be admitted to our Happineſs. Learn (1.) That a Chriſtian is not in his own proper Home while he ſojourned in the Body, and lives in his Earthly Tabernacle here below. His Birth and Parentage is from Heaven, his Treaſure and Inheritance is in Heaven, his Kindred, and Relations, and beſt Friends, are there, and there ſhall he longeſt abide. Learn (2.) That the true Reaſon why the Saints count themſelves here not at home, is becauſe they are abſent from the Lord whilſt preſent in the Body. *Whilſt we are here at home in the Body we are abſent from the Lord.*

7 For we walk here by faith only, and not by ſight.

That is, our Condition here in this World is ſuch, that we cannot ſee God Face to Face, but by Faith only; whilſt we are in the Body we do not ſee and enjoy, but believe and expect. Faith is the Thing in Expectation, Sight is the Thing in Fruition: Faith is a cloudy Diſcovery of Things at a diſtance, Sight is a clear View and Apprehenſion of Things that are preſent. Learn (1.) That Faith is for Earth, and Sight is for Heaven. (2.) That till we have Sight it is a great Advantage that we have Faith. (3.) That if we now have Faith, we may be well aſſured that e'er long we ſhall have Sight.

8 We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.

The Original Words, for we are confident and willing, denote firſt Courage and undaunted Boldneſs, with reſpect to Death and Complacency, and Satisfaction in it. *We are willing*; the Tranſlation is too flat ευδοκȣ̃μεν, we are well pleas'd: It is a grateful and deſirable a Thing to us to leave the Body, yet not in an abſolute but comparative Conſideration. We are willing *rather*; that is, rather than not ſee and enjoy the Lord, rather than be always here ſinning and groaning, we *had rather be abſent from the Body, than preſent with the Lord.* Learn (1.) That our Happineſs in the World to come lyes in our being preſent with the Lord. (2.) That we are preſent with the Lord as ſoon as the Soul quitteth and taſtes its leave and farewel of the Body. (3.) That a State of Separation from the Body is much more preferrable in the Saints than that of dwelling in the Body. (4.) That this Deſire, Preference, and Choice, ariſes from that confident Aſſurance which they have of a better State, and of their Intereſt in it. *We are confident, I ſay*, &c.

9 Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him.

The Word ſignifies to labour ambitiouſly, as an ambitious Courtier labours for his Prince's Favour. We labour whether preſent in the Body, or abſent from the Body, whether living or dying, that our Perſons and our Services may be accepted with him whenever we appear before him. Learn (1.) That to be accepted with the Lord is a very high Honour; to have our Perſons accepted, and our Performances acceptable, are high Favours; the former is the Ground of the latter, and Chriſt is the Foundation of both, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. Learn (2.) That it is a Gracious Perſon's great Ambition and Deſire, his Aim and Scope, his Deſign and Endeavour, that living and dying he may find Acceptance with God, and his Actions be ſuch as God may well like and approve of. We ambitiouſly labour, that whether preſent or abſent we may be accepted of him.

10 For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Theſe Words are fully Deſcriptive of a future Judgment, in which obſerve, (1.) The Neceſſity of a future Judgment, *We muſt*, willing or unwilling. (2.) The Univerſality of this Judgment, *We muſt all.* (3.) The Perſon by whom, and before whom, we muſt be judged, *Chriſt.* (4.) The Manner of this Judgment, *All muſt appear*, and be made manifeſt, both Perſons and Actions. (5.) The Matter about which we ſhall be judged, the *Things done in the Body.* (6.) The End of all this Inquiſition, to be puniſhed or rewarded according to our Actions. Learn (1.) That there will certainly come a Day when every Perſon that ever lived in this World ſhall certainly be judged by Jeſus Chriſt, *We muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt.* Learn (2.) That every Man's Judgment and Sentence at the great Day ſhall proceed and be pronounced according to what he has done in the Fleſh, be it good or bad, *That every one may receive the Things done in his Body*, &c.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſwade men; but we are made manifeſt unto God, and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your conſciences.

That is, knowing the Terror and Dread of that terrible and dreadful Day, in which Chriſt will judge the whole Race of Mankind, and being perſwaded of the Truth and Certainty of it our ſelves, we endeavour to perſwade all Men by all Means to fly from the Wrath to come, by Repentance and Faith, that they may be found of God in Peace in that Solemn Hour. Learn hence, That the Knowledge and Conſideration of the preſent terrible Judgments of God, and the future Terrors of the Great Day, ſhould move the Miniſters of God to perſwade, and their People to be perſwaded, to a careful and ſerious Preparation for it. Such Miniſters as know and conſider the Terrors of the Lord, will both perſwade others, and be perſwaded themſelves, to look after Reconciliation and Acceptance with God; that when Chriſt comes terribly, they may appear comfortably, *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perſwade Men:* It follows, *But we are made manifeſt unto God, and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your own Conſciences.* As if he had ſaid, we hope God hath diſcovered our Sincerity unto you in ſome Meaſure, as he is an Obſerver of it, and Witneſs to it himſelf. Learn hence, That then a Miniſter has the full Aſſurance of his Sincerity when he has the Approbation of God his own Conſcience, and alſo a Teſtimony in the Conſciences of his and People. This is gained by the Purity of our Doctrine, by the Piety of our Lives, and by the Prudence of our Conduct; when theſe are evident and manifeſt to the Conſciences of our People, how convincing is it to them, and how comfortable unto us?

12 For we commend not our ſelves again unto you, but give you occaſion to glory on our behalf, that you may have ſomewhat to anſwer them, which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, we commend not our ſelves to you upon our own Account, as if there were any need of it, with reſpect to us; but only to give you an occaſion to vindicate us, and to glory to others on our Behalf, when need requires, that you may have wherewith to anſwer the Calumnies of the falſe Apoſtles, who gloried much in outward Appearance of Piety and Zeal, but not in Purity of Heart, and upright Intentions. Learn hence, That tho' the Miniſters of Chriſt have no itching deſire to exalt themſelves in a Way of Self-commendation, yet they are ſometimes conſtrained to it in a Way of Self-vindication, and this is not only Lawful, but a Duty; becauſe Scandals caſt upon a good Man reach farther than himſelf, they reflect upon others as well as himſelf, yea, they reflected upon God himſelf, therefore to be wiped off and rouled away.

13 For whether we are beſides our ſelves, it is to God, or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe.

The Holy Apoſtle was ſometimes ſo zealouſly tranſported and carried forth in his high Actings for Jeſus Chriſt, that the falſe Apoſtles repreſented him as a frantick Perſon, crazed, mad, and what not; be it ſo, ſays the Holy Man, it is unto God, in his Cauſe, and to propagate his Glory, and not my own: Or if I be ſober in my Words and Actions, it is for your Benefit, not my own. Learn hence, That Wicked and Carnal Men account and repreſent the Holy Servants of God as a ſort of Mad-men. Workings of Grace are ſometimes ſo far above Reaſon, that they ſeem to be without Reaſon: There are ſeveral Acts of Holineſs which the prophane

World eſteem as Madneſs; as eminent Self-denial, great Seriouſneſs in Religion, their Burning Zeal, their Holy Singularity, their Fervours of Devotion, their Patience and Meekneſs under Sufferings and Reproaches. All theſe Acts of Holineſs repreſent the Saints as Mad-men to Carnal Men.

14 For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, ——

That is, the Infinite Love of Chriſt in dying for us, conſtraineth us to live unto him, and do the utmoſt Services for him. Some underſtand it paſſively, for the Love that Chriſt beareth us; others take it actively, for that Love which we bear to him. Now this Love is ſaid *to conſtrain*; ſome think it a Metaphor from a Woman in Travail, that ſtrives to be deliver'd of her Burthen; others that it ſignifies to have one Bound, and ſo much under Power, that he cannot move without leave. The Expreſſion denotes the Abſolute Empire which the Love of Chriſt had over him, ruling all the Inclinations of his Heart, and the Actions of his Life. It ſignifies the Sweet Violence and Force of Love, by which the Soul is overpower'd, and cannot ſay nay; it does wholly proſſeſs us, rule and command us, keeps us in its Power, and makes us do whatever it would have us do. Learn hence, That the Love of Chriſt has ſuch a Conſtraining Power, and Obliging Force and Efficacy, upon the Soul, that it enclines it to a Willing Performance of all Duties, tho' attended with the greateſt Difficulties and Dangers. Love is the Spring of Action, 'tis forceable and compelling, 'tis an Invincible, unconquerable Affection: And it has ſuch an Influence from the Conſideration of what Chriſt is in himſelf, and of what he has done for us, aud deſign'd for us.

14 Becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.

If one died for all, then were all dead. Some underſtand it of a Death in Sin; all were in a State of Sin and Death when Chriſt died for them; others underſtand it myſtically, when Chriſt died for all, all were then dead; that is, dead in Chriſt unto Sin; intimating, that when Chriſt died all Believers were dead in him to Sin and the World. As Chriſt died for Sin, ſo ought all to die unto Sin. Farther, Chriſt dying once for all, proveth the Verity of his Satisfaction, and the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction: What Vertue was there in that Death which merited Life for all? And what Love was there in our God, to appoint one for all, and to accept one for all? That one ſo worthy in himſelf, that one ſo dear to God, ſhould die, ſhould die ſo willingly, ſhould die ſo painfully, ſhould die ſo ſhamefully, ſhould die under a Curſe, to abſolve from Guilt, and diſcharge from Condemnation? *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us! Obſerve* next, The great End and Deſign of Chriſt in his Death and Reſurrection for us; namely, (1.) Negatively declar'd, that we ſhould not *live unto our ſelves*, to our own Eaſe, Profit, or Honour, gratifying our own Wills, Inclinations, and Corrupt Deſires, ſerving our own Intereſt and Ends; but poſitively *to live unto him*, according to his Word and Will, in Obedience to his Commands, and with an Eye at his Glory, *who died* for our Sins, *and roſe again* for our Juſtification. Had Chriſt only died for us the Favour had been inexpreſſible and unrequitable, and requir'd us to live to his Name and Glory; but when he not only died for us, but roſe again, and lives for ever in Heaven to pour down freſh Benefits upon us, and to do Good Offices daily and hourly for us, how endearing are our Obligations to love him, and to live unto him? Learn hence, (1.) That by Vertue of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection Chriſtians are both oblig'd to, and have obtain'd the Grace of Newneſs of Life, and Holineſs of Converſation. Learn (2.) That it is the Duty, and will be the Endeavour, of all thoſe that are quickned by the Spirit of Chriſt unto Newneſs of Life, to refer all their Actions not to themſelves, but unto him: None can do both, live to Chriſt and ſelf together. His we are already, by Creation, by Redemption, by Sanctification, by Voluntary Reſignation, we live by him. Our Spiritual Life is from him, we expect hereafter to live with him, let us therefore now live unto him, even unto him that died for us, and roſe again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh: yea, tho' we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Theſe Words probably were ſpoken by the Apoſtle to rebuke the Carnal Boaſtings of ſome Jews, who gloried in their having ſeen Chriſt in the Fleſh before he died; the Apoſtle directs them to a more Spiritual Knowledge of him now ſince his Reſurrection, as more ſuitable to his Glorified State, *q. d.* What tho' you have eaten and drunk in Chriſt's Preſence when on Earth? All that Corporeal Familiarity is ceaſed; 'tis his Spiritual Gracious Preſence which now you are to depend upon, and value your ſelves by. For *henceforth know we no Man after the Fleſh*; we value no Man for his outward Advantages, for his Wiſdom, Riches, or Learning. Yea, *tho' we have known Chriſt after the Fleſh*, ſeeing and converſing with him when here on Earth, yet muſt *we know him ſo*, and enjoy him as ſuch, *no more*. Our Carnal Affections and Relations to him muſt for ever ceaſe now he is exalted into a Spiritual and Glorious Condition. Learn hence, (1.) That a bare knowing Chriſt after the Fleſh ought to ceaſe amongſt Chriſtians. There is a Knowledge of Chriſt after the Fleſh ſince his Aſcenſion into Heaven; namely, by a Naked Profeſſion of his Name, without a Conformity to his Laws, and by Acts of Senſitive Affection. Some by reading the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion, others by ſeeing in the Sacramental Elements a Tragical Repreſentation of his Crucifixion, do find their Human Paſſion ſtir and move; but if it reſts here, without drawing forth our Love to his Perſon, and quickning our Obedience to his Commands, all this is but knowing Chriſt after the Fleſh to no Spiritual or Saving Purpoſes. Learn (2.) That a bare Knowledge of Chriſt after the Fleſh will do us no Good, be of no Comfort or Advantage to us, as to our Eternal Salvation; it is not a Fond Affection to his Perſon and Memory, but Obedience to his Laws, that Chriſt values. It is obſervable, that an Outward Ceremonious Reſpect to our Saviour's Perſon was very little regarded by him when he was here upon Earth; a Serious Attention to his Doctrine was infinitely preferr'd by him before all that. Our Love to Chriſt is better ſhewn by Religious Services than by Paſſionate Affections. We find St. *John* 20. when *Mary* fell at Chriſt's Feet, (after he was riſen,) and embraced him, when ſhe held him by the Feet, and worſhipped him, when in an Humble and Affectionate Devotion ſhe lyes proſtrate before him, Chriſt forbids it, *Touch me not*. He rejects all theſe External Teſtimonies of her Love, which proceeded only from Human Affection; but he directs her to a more Acceptable Service, namely, to run, and carry Tidings of his Reſurrection to his Diſconſolate Diſciples, *Go to my Brethren, and ſay*, &c. from whence I infer, that it is much more acceptable to Chriſt to be about his Service, and doing Good in our Place and Station, than performing any Offices of Human Love and Reſpect unto his Perſon. Seeing then that this Ceremonious Reſpect pleaſed Chriſt neither when on Earth, nor now he is in Heaven, *henceforth know we no Man after the Fleſh; yea, tho' we have known Chriſt after the Fleſh, yet henceforth know we him no more.*

17. Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become new.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, if any one amongſt you pretend to be a Chriſtian indeed, engrafted into Chriſt by Baptiſm and Regeneration, and is a Member of his Body, he is by Regeneration made a New Man, all the Faculties of his Soul are renewed, his Principles, Affections and Practices, are all new: Old Things are paſſed, or paſſing away daily, the Old Carnal Inclinations of Mind are wearing off, the Old Will is changed, the Old Life is reform'd; and in a Word, whatever was Old and Carnal is now become New and Spiritual. *Behold all Things are become new*; New Affections, New Inclinations, New Diſpoſitions, a New Courſe, and a New Converſation. Nothing is New Phyſically; he is the ſame Perſon, he has the ſame Faculties; but all Things are New Qualitatively, they are renewed in the Spirits of their Minds. Learn hence, (1.) That all ſuch as call themſelves the Diſciples of Chriſt, and own themſelves to be his Followers, are and ought to be New Creatures. This implies a real and inward, a thorough and prevailing Change both in Heart and Life; not a civil Change, barely from Prophaneneſs to Sobriety; not a ſudden Change, only under ſome great Affliction, or awakning Providence; not a Change from one Sect or Party of Profeſſors to another; but the Change of the New Creature conſiſts in a New Mind, a New Will, a New Judgment, New Affections, in a New Converſation, not in a New

Form and Profeſſion; the Change of the New Creature introduces the Life of God, and produces the neareſt Likeneſs to God. Learn (2.) That this New Creation, wrought in a Man by the Word and Spirit of God, is an Indubitable Evidence of his Intereſt in Chriſt, and Title to Salvation; for where the New Creature is, there all the Saving Graces of the Spirit are, as a Pledge and an Earneſt of Glory and Happineſs.

18 And all things are of God, ——

That is, all thoſe Things forementiond belonging to this New Spiritual Creation are of God, as the Author and Efficient Cauſe of them. Learn, that God is the Original Author of the New Creature, and of all Things belonging thereunto. This appears partly from the Nature of the Work, 'tis a New Creation; and partly from the Objects of this Work, the Perſons wrought upon. They are Averſe from God, in Enmity to him, and Rebellion againſt him, Dead in Sin, under the Dominion of Satan. Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay all theſe Things are of God.

18 —— Who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt; and hath given unto us the miniſtry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

In theſe Words the Apoſtle gives us a ſhort but full Account of the Grand Doctrine of a Sinner's Reconciliation unto God by the Death of Chriſt, which is the Principal Subject and Subſtantial Part of the Goſpel. Where *Obſerve*, (1.) The Priviledge itſelf, *Reconciliation*; this is Twofold. Fundamental in the Death of Chriſt, he is our Peace: God laid the Foundation of our Peace and Reconciliation with himſelf in the Death of his Son; Actual in the Application of it, on our Part, by Faith. The Death of Chriſt rendred God reconcilable, Faith renders him actually reconciled. *Obſerve* (2.) The Author of this Reconciliation, God the Father; he was the Perſon wronged by Sin, declaring his Anger againſt the Sinner: Hence we are ſaid to have Acceſs to the Father through Chriſt, and by the Spirit. The Son brings us to the Father, and the Spirit directs us to the Son; Chriſt takes away God's Enmity againſt us, and the Spirit takes away our Enmity againſt God. *Obſerve* (3.) The Medium of Means by which we become reconciled to God, *Jeſus Chriſt*. Chriſt was the Meritorious Cauſe of this Priviledge: Chriſt is the Centre of that Argument between the Juſtice of God, and the Mercy of God. *Obſerve* (4.) The Parties at Variance, and made One by Reconciliation, God and the World, God and Mankind. Almighty God in Conſideration of Chriſt's Death did ſo far reconcile and forgive the Offending World, as to offer them Pardon of Sin, and Salvation by a Redeemer, upon Condition of their Believing Acceptance: But none are actually reconciled but Believers, who actually accept the Terms and Condition of Peace and Reconciliation by Faith, which is a neceſſary Receptive Qualification. Learn hence, that there is an Happy Peace and Reconciliation made in and by Jeſus Chriſt, between an Offended God, and an Offending World. Reconciliation is a Repairing of Decay'd Friendſhip, or the making up of a Breach between Two that were formerly Friends, but now at Variance. The Reconciliation is mutual, becauſe the Enmity is ſuch; yet the Scripture ſpeaks more of our being reconcil'd to God, than of God's being reconcil'd unto us, becauſe we are in the Fault, and not God; we the Cauſe of the Breach, we offended God, not God us; and becauſe we have the Benefit of this Reconciliation, and not God. 'Tis no Profit to him that we are at Peace with him, and becauſe all the Difficulty of being reconcil'd lyes on our Part, and not God's.

20 Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as tho' God did beſeech you by us: we pray you, in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Miniſters Office and Employment declar'd; they *are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, Ambaſſadors from God to Man, and as Ambaſſadors they have their Miſſion, their Commiſſion, from a great Prince, about great Concerns; they muſt be faithful to their Inſtructions, they are Inviolable by the Law of Nations, and their Embaſſy muſt be receiv'd upon Pain of Diſpleaſure: Where let us remark the Wonderful Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God in appointing Men of the ſame Level with us, and not Angels Superior to us, to diſpence the Myſtery of Reconciliation to us. As God deals more familiarly with us in this Way, for we cannot bear the Voice of God, or the Sight of Angels; ſo there is more Certainty in this Way, becauſe Miniſters muſt deceive their own Souls if they deceive us: And herein God magnifies his own Power, and lets us know that the Efficacy of the Goſpel is from him the Author, and not from Man the Diſpencer. *Obſerve* (2.) The Miniſters Duty diſcover'd, in God's Name, and Chriſt's Stead, to entreat, beſeech, and perſwade Sinners to become reconcil'd unto God. Here *Note*, (1.) That God and Man were once Friends. (2.) That God and Man are now Enemies. (3.) That Man, and not God, firſt made the Breach of Friendſhip, and occaſion'd that Unhappy Controverſie which is now depending between God and Man. *Note* (4.) That tho' Man was firſt in the Breach, yet God is firſt in the Office of Reconciliation. (5.) That therefore it is the higheſt Duty and chiefeſt Intereſt of Man to accept of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with God. *Note* (6.) That in order to all this the great Duty incumbent upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel is this, with all Earneſtneſs to preſs upon People the Doctrine of Reconciliation, and to uſe all Arguments with them to perſwade them to become reconciled unto God.

21 For he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Spotleſs Innocency of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator declar'd, *he knew no Sin*; that is, practically and experimentally, he knew it not ſo as to commit it in the leaſt Degree. He was a Pure, Innocent and Sinleſs Perſon; but theoretically and ſpeculatively he did know Sin. He well underſtood its Nature, its Effects, and Fruits: None knew the Bitter Fruits of Sin ſo well as our Bleſſed Saviour. *Obſerve* (2.) God's Ordination of Chriſt with reference unto Sin, *He hath made him to be Sin*; not made him a Sinner, but a Sin-offering, a Sacrifice for Sin. *Made*; that is, ordain'd a Sacrifice to expiate Sin, and to bear the Puniſhment due to Sinners. *Obſerve* (3.) The End of this Ordination with reſpect to us, *That we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* Here *Note*, The Righteouſneſs of the Mediator is called the Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe, (1.) It was the Righteouſneſs of that Perſon who was God. (2.) Becauſe the only Wiſe God found out and appointed it. And, (3.) Becauſe it is accepted by God, and the Penitent Believer, for the Sake of it, look'd upon as righteous and juſtified. Learn hence, (1.) That Sin muſt have a Sacrifice. He hath made him to be Sin; that is, a Sin-offering, or a Sacrifice to expiate Sin: Under the Law the Sacrifice was call'd Sin, becauſe the Sin of the Perſon was laid upon the Sacrifice; there was a Sort of Tranſlation of the Sin from the Sinner to the Sacrifice. Learn (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt was made a Sacrifice for our Sin. Our Guilt was imputed to him, and our Puniſhment was borne by him, which made *Luther* call Chriſt the greateſt Sinner in the World; not that he had any Sin in his Nature, or in his Life, but becauſe the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all. Learn (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt's being made Sin for us, is the Meritorious Cauſe and Means of our being made the Righteouſneſs of God in him. Surely God may be as juſt in pardoning us, who have no Righteouſneſs of our own, as in condemning his own Son, who had no Sin of his own. Have we broken his Royal and Righteous Law? Yet Chriſt has kept it, and fulfill'd all Righteouſneſs. Have we ſinned againſt Mercy? Yet Chriſt has ſuffered without Mercy, and all this by the Ordination and Appointment of God the Father, who made his own and only Son to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.

CHAP. VI.

Our Apoſtle having diſpatcht the Apologetical or Excuſatory Part of his Epiſtle, comes now to the Hortatory Part of it. St. Paul's *Epiſtles excel both in Matter and Method. Their Matter is principally Reconciliation with God, and Juſtification through Faith in Chriſt; what Subjects either ſo Sweet or ſo Profitable! Their Method is by Way of Doctrine and Uſe; a Method, which if it be deſpiſed, St.* Paul's *Writings cannot be duly valued.*

In the laſt Words of the foregoing Chapter he poſitively aſſerted the great Doctrine of Reconciliation thro' Chriſt: Now in the beginning of this Chapter he draws Inferences from that Doctrine by Way of Application. The firſt of which we have in the following Words.

1 WE then, *as* workers together *with him*, beſeech *you* alſo, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain:

Here *Note*, (1.) The Nature of Miniſterial Function: The Miniſtry is a Work, an Arduous and Laborious Work; neither Angels nor Men are of themſelves ſufficient for it, without proportionable Aſſiſtance from God. Miniſters are *Workers*. *Note* (2.) They are *Workers* together, they join together with one Voice, with one Cry, beſeeching Sinners to be reconciled unto God. All the Miniſters of Chriſt are Fellow-labours, Workers together in God's Harveſt-field; that which is the Work of one, is the Work of all; they ſhould all join in it, and rejoice together in the Succeſs of it; not only labouring with, but bleſs God for the Services and Succeſſes of each other. Lord! How ſad is it to ſee the Miniſters of God divided in their Work and Way, when one rejoiceth in that which to another is cauſe of Mourning? *Note* (3.) Miniſters are Workers together with God, as well as with one another; they are ſubordinate Inſtruments working by him, but not co-ordinate Cauſes producing with him the Work of Converſion in the Souls of Men; not as if they could communicate any Power or Strength to the working of Grace by the preaching of the Word, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. who is *Paul*, and who is *Apollo*, but Miniſters by whom he believed. *Obſerve* (4.) The Exhortation or Cautionary Direction given, *We beſeech you receive not the Grace of God in vain*; where by the Grace of God is meant the Doctrine of the Goſpel, becauſe it is graciouſly and freely beſtowed upon a People, and becauſe the Matter and Meſſage which it brings is Grace; the Law diſcovers God's Will, the Goſpel diſcovers his Good-will: And by *receiving this Grace in vain*, is meant the receiving the Goſpel unfruitfully, unprofitably, and ineffectually; when we do not receive it with a due Eſtimation, with fervency of Affection, with a fiducial Application; when it doth not purifie the Heart, reform the Life, and ſave the Soul. It is not the receiving of the Goſpel into our Houſes, into our Heads, into our Mouths, but into our Hearts, that will bring us to Heaven.

2 (For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of ſalvation.)

Theſe Words are taken from the Prophet *Iſaith*, ch. 49. 8. they are a Promiſe which God the Father made to Chriſt as Mediator, that in the great Work of ſaving his Church the Father would Accept and Succour him as the Head of the Church: *I have heard thee in an Accepted Time, in the Day of Salvation.* Here *Note*, There is a Twofold Day of Salvation; the one was Chriſt's Day, for the Purchaſe of Salvation; the other is our Day, for the Application. (1.) Chriſt had a Seaſon aſſign'd him for the Impetration or Purchaſe of Salvation: And he ſet in and complied with that Seaſon, and it became an Acceptable Time with reſpect to him. (2.) We have alſo our Seaſon allotted us by God for the Application of Chriſt and his Benefits to our Souls. Behold now is our Accepted Time, now is our Day of Salvation, let us prize it highly, and improve it faithfully. 'Tis a Day, and that is but a ſhort ſpace of Time; 'tis a Day, and therefore continually ſpending; 'tis a Day, therefore when once gone is irrecoverably gone. Our working Day is a waſting Day; 'tis a Day, and that will be followed with a Night, in which none can Work, but only lament their Folly in not Working. *Behold then! Now is the Accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.*

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Nature and Quality of the Work which the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt are called to, and do labour in *a Miniſtry*. *Obſerve* (2.) What was the Deſire and Aim, the Care and Endeavour, of the Apoſtle then, ought to be the Study of every Miniſter now; namely, to avoid Offence, and that univerſally, both as to Perſons and Things, *giving no Offence in any Thing*. *Obſerve* (3.) What was the Ground and Reaſon of this Care and Endeavour, to give no Offence, namely, *that the Miniſtry be not blamed*. Learn, That it is the ſtanding Duty of all the Miniſters of Chriſt ſo to perform their Miniſterial Office, that they give no juſt Offence in any thing to any Perſon, that ſo the Miniſtry committed to them may not be blamed. We muſt give no Offence by our Words and Speeches in common Converſation, no Offence by unſound Doctrine, by perſonal Reflections, no Offence by groſs, careleſs and negligent Omiſſions, or by rude and irreverent Decencies, or by any affected Singularities in our Adminiſtrations; but eſpecially give no Offence by a bad Life and ſcandalous Converſation.

4. But in all things approving our ſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes. 5 In ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſtings.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great Care which the holy Apoſtle took to approve himſelf unto God in the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry: *In all Things approving our ſelves as the Miniſters of God*. *Obſerve* (2.) What an approved Miniſter muſt do, and endure, in order to the obtaining the Ends of his Miniſtry; if he be called to it, he muſt bear up againſt all Diſcouragements, and encounter all Oppoſitions: Let the Way be what it will, fair or foul, a green carpet Way, or dirty poachey Way, he muſt ſtick at nothing, but go thro' thick and thin, patiently enduring Afflictions of all Sorts, and cheerfully undergoing Suffering of all Kinds, and exerciſing all manner of Self-denial for the Goſpel's Sake. Behold here how the Miniſters of Chriſt, that will approve themſelves unto God, muſt run all Hazards, and venture thro' all Extremities: They muſt work in Heat and Cold, in Fire and Froſt, in all Sorts of Providences from God, in all Sorts of Aſpects from Men, fearing neither the Face nor Frowns of any: For tho' every Goſpel Miniſter attains not to St. *Paul*'s Zeal, and holy Fortitude and Courage, yet he has a Truth of Zeal, and ſuch a Firmneſs of Reſolution, as will, according to his Meaſure, carry him through a World of Evils and Incumbrances, in the doing of that Good which Duty and Conſcience doth oblige him to, and call for. *In much Patience, in Afflictions, in Neceſſities, in Diſtreſſes, in Labours, in Watchings, in Faſtings.*

6 By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by the holy ghoſt, by love unfeigned. 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left, 8 By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report:

The Apoſtle in the foregoing Verſes had declared how many Difficulties and Dangers muſt be encountred by him that will attain the Ends of his Miniſtry, and approve himſelf unto God in Integrity and Uprightneſs; here he ſhews by how many Ways and Means the Work of the Miniſtry is promoted, and how the Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt be qualified for it; namely, *by Pureneſs* of Converſation, *by Knowledge* of Divine Myſteries, and Study of the Holy Scriptures, *by long Suffering* under all Provocations, by *Kindneſs* towards all Men, by the Gifts and Aſſiſtances of the *Holy Ghoſt*, *by the Word of Truth* clearly preached, and *by the Power of God* confirming it; *by the Armour of Righteouſneſs*, which compleatly covers and protects us *on the Right Hand and on the*

Left, both in Proſperity and Adverſity; by paſſing *thro' Honour and Diſhonour*, by going through *Evil Report* and *Good Report.* Here *Note*, That the Miniſters of God do approve themſelves, and trial is made of them, as well by the Things on the Right Hand as on the Left. A Miniſter of Chriſt is tried as well by Honour as Diſgrace, as well by Praiſe as by Diſparagement. The good Report which we meet with in the World is certainly as great, yea, a more dangerous, Temptation than the ill Reports we paſs under: 'Tis a great Trial to a Miniſter to be diſpraiſed and deſpiſed, to have Dirt thrown undeſervedly in his Face; but verily it is as great a Trial to be praiſed, commended and applauded, to be lifted up in the Thoughts and upon the Tongues of Men. *Solomon* has an Excellent Proverb to this Purpoſe, Prov. 27. 21. *As the Fining-pot for Silver, and the Furnace for Gold, ſo is a Man to his Praiſe*; that is, a Man is tried by his Praiſe as really as Silver is tried in the Fining-pot, or Gold in the Furnace; Whenever a Miniſter is praiſed, he is tried; his Humility is tried, his Self-denial is tried; when he is praiſed by Men, he is tried whether he can give the entire Praiſe to God; when People cry up ſuch and ſuch a Preacher, they put him into the Fining-pot, and he that is but Droſs conſumes. Let Miniſters remember there are Trials on the Right Hand, as well as on the Left; that paſſing thro' Honour, and going thro' Good Reports, are great Trials, as well as paſſing thro' Diſhonour and Evil Reports. God prepare us for both.

8—As deceivers, and *yet* true; 9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chaſtned, and not killed; 10 As ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, *yet* poſſeſſing all things.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Verily our Life is made up of ſeeming, but not real, Contradictions. The Wiſe Men of the World look upon us *as Deceivers*, but we are the *True* Diſpencers of the Word of Life unto them; we are lookt upon by the World *as unknown*, obſcure Perſons, but we are *well known* to God and good Men by our Doctrine and Miracles; we are *as dying* Perſons daily by our paſſing thro' ſo many Perils, and by being expoſed to continual Perſecutions, and yet you ſee we are ſtill *alive*; and we are ſometimes *chaſtned* by God as well as perſecuted by Men, but we are not *killed*, nor given over unto Death. Outwardly we are *ſorrowful*, but inwardly always rejoicing in God, and in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience; in worldly Goods and outward Circumſtances we are very *Poor*, *yet making* many ſpiritually *Rich* in Grace and good Works. We have *nothing* we can call our own, yet in Chriſt all Things are ours. Hence *Obſerve* what has been the Lot and Portion of the faithful Ambaſſadors and Miniſters of Chriſt from the firſt beginning of Chriſtianity; the Dirt of a Thouſand Scandals hath been thrown upon their Faces, which in the Day of Chriſt's Appearance will be as Crowns upon their Heads. *Obſerve* (2.) That all outward Evils are to be received by the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt, in the ſame Manner, and with the ſame Mind, that good Things are received with Honour and Diſhonour, good Report and evil Report muſt be entertained with the ſame Evenneſs and Conſtancy of Mind, becauſe God is the ſame in all Variety of Eſtates. Tho' Men change their Opinions of us, yet God changes not his Judgment concerning us: He loves his Miniſters and Members when Poor, as well as when Rich, when the World ſmites us, as well as when it ſmiles upon us; therefore if God be the ſame to us at all times, it is our Wiſdom and Duty to keep the Temper of our Minds, and to be always the ſame to him, and to our ſelves. Whatever we meet with from the World, we have no Reaſon to be diſſatisfied if our Integrity be ſafe. *Obſerve* (3.) How Rich the Apoſtle was without Earthly Riches, and how abounding in Wealth, when he had nothing of worldly Treaſure to rejoice in; *Having nothing, he yet poſſeſſed all Things.* But how? And in what Scene? Anſwer, He and they poſſeſſed all Things. (1.) In Chriſt, by whom they had a Title to all Things. (2.) They had all Things in the Covenant Favour and Grace of God: He hath all Things, who hath him that hath all Things. (3. They had all Things virtually in that Contentment of Mind which they did enjoy: They poſſeſſed all Things in poſſeſſing themſelves, and wanted nothing which they could deny themſelves. The contented Man is only Rich; he is not Rich that has much, but he that has enough; that Man is Poor that covets more. (4.) They poſſeſt all Things eventually: They had the Good of all Things, when they had not the actual Poſſeſſion of all Things; their Poverty was a Bleſſing, and their very Wants in the Event worked for Good. (5.) They poſſeſt all Things in future Expectation, they lookt and long'd for Heaven and Everlaſting Happineſs, which would ſwallow up their Deſires with Fruition; for he that overcometh ſhall inherit all Things, *Rev.* 21. 7. Thus is this Apoſtolical Paradox unriddled, *As having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all Things.* True Faith apprehends and enjoys all Things in God, which it wanteth in the Creature.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not ſtraitned in us, but ye are ſtraitned in your own Bowels. 13 Now for a recompence in the ſame, (I ſpeak as unto *my* children) be ye alſo enlarged.

Theſe Words are very Pathetick and Expreſſive of St. *Paul*'s moſt Affectionate and Ardent Love towards the *Corinthians*, whom he had been an Happy Inſtrument to convert unto Chriſtianity. He tells them, *His Mouth was open to them*, not to receive, but to beſtow; his Mouth was open to fill them with the Treaſures of Goſpel Knowledge, not to be filled by them; *and his Heart*, as well as his Mouth, was open to them, and at their Service: If therefore they were ſtraitned in Affection towards him, who was thus enlarged in Heart and Mouth, by Tongue and Pen, towards them, it muſt be through Miſtakes and Miſapprehenſions on their part; therefore in a way of Recompence he challenges it as juſt and fit, that the ſame Reciprocal Love be beſtowed upon him their Spiritual Father, as he had manifeſted towards them his Beloved Children. Learn hence, That there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection, between any Relations upon Earth, than between ſuch Miniſters of Chriſt and their Beloved People, whom they have been happily inſtrumental to convert to God. *O ye Corinthians, our Heart is enlarged towards you.*

14 Be ye not unequally yoaked together with unbelievers: for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? And what communion hath light with darkneſs? 15 And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

The Holy Apoſtle cloſes this Chapter with an Exhortation to avoid all Intimacy with Idolaters, either in Civil Affairs, in Marriages, or in Religious Worſhip, leſt they be brought into Communion with their Idolatry, there being no more Agreement between a Believer and an Idolater, than betwixt Light and Darkneſs, betwixt Chriſt and Satan. And as we muſt not join with Idolaters in Spiritual Communion or Religious Worſhip, ſo ſhould we have no Communion with them in Marriages; that having proved a dangerous Snare to the Souls of many, our Divines have juſtly pronounced ſuch Marriages ſinful: Nay, it is both wiſe and ſafe to have as little Civil Communion with Idolaters as we can; and when we are neceſſitated to have Civil Communion with them, we muſt utterly avoid all Sinful Communion with them; that is, all Communion with them in their Sins. Learn, That to aſſociate with Idolaters, or to join in Affinity with them, but eſpecially to communicate with them in their Idolatrous Worſhip, is a God-provoking and a Wrath-procuring Sin. *Be not unequally and unſuitably yoaked with Unbelievers.*

16 And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idols? for ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my People.

This Form of Queſtions evidently implies the abſolute Inconſtancy between Believers and Idolators, and the Danger from Communion with them: And the Apoſtles calling Believers the Temples of the Living God, repreſents both their Dignity and Duty; their Dignity, in having the Spirit of God to dwell in them, and walk with them, their Duty, to be purified and adorned for his Habitation. *Obſerve*, Believers are a Spiritual Temple, in which the Holy Ghoſt dwells: This dwelling implies Propriety, Familiarity, Authority, Reſidency, and Fixedneſs of Abode. *Obſerve* (2.) That the indwelling Preſence of the Holy Spirit in good Men, as in a Temple, being the higheſt Honour and moſt perfect Felicity of the Reaſonable Nature, ſhould oblige them to univerſal Holineſs, and to avoid all Communion with Idolaters.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, go not then to the Idols Temples, join not with Idolaters in Communion to avoid Perſecution; but come out from amongſt them as an Holy People, ſeparated to the Lord, and defile not your ſelves with any unclean thing, and while you are pure, and cleave to God, he will own you for his Sons and Daughters. *Obſerve* here, (1.) A preſſing Exhortation to make a full Separation from unclean Perſons and Things, particularly from all Idolaters and Idolatrous Worſhip, *Come out from amongſt them*; the Words are taken out of *Iſa.* 52. 11. where the Prophet exhorts the Remnant of *Iſrael* to come fully out of unclean *Babylon.* Learn hence, That God expects and requires his Saints ſhould make a Separation from all Uncleanneſs, but eſpecially from the Uncleanneſs of Idolatry. God expects a Separation from us, from all unclean Courſes, from all unclean Company, from the Preſence and Appearance of all Uncleanneſs, from Communion with Idolatrous Churches, and from communicating with what is ſinful in the trueſt Churches of Chriſt upon Earth. *Obſerve* (2.) A quickning Encouragement to back this Exhortation; *I will receive you, and be a Father to you.* Here is a Twofold Promiſe, (1.) Of Reception, *I will receive you.* (2.) Of Adoption, *I will be a Father to you.* God will receive them both into his Houſe and Heart. Learn hence, That Almighty God will, as a Father, undoubtedly receive all thoſe into his Family and Favour who renounce Communion with all Impurity. As he is Almighty he is abundantly able, and as he is a Father he is graciouſly willing, to recompence all the Services and Sufferings of his Children, for the Honour and Intereſt of his Name and Truth. It is ſufficiently known how this Text hath been miſapplied by Separatiſts to very bad Purpoſes; (1.) To juſtifie their Schiſmatical Separation from the Beſt and Pureſt of the Reformed Churches, under pretence of finding greater Purity amongſt themſelves, whereas nothing will juſtifie a Separation from a Church, but that which makes a Separation between God and that Church: If the Churches Way of Worſhip (in their Opinion) be faulty, they preſently pronounce it Falſe, and they muſt not join in Falſe Worſhip; whereas no Man offers any Worſhip to Almighty God that is not Falſe Worſhip; if all that is Faulty be Falſe Worſhip, if Chriſt doth not diſown his Church for that Faultineſs, we ought not to deſert her for it. (2.) Others would ſeek Occaſion from theſe Words to juſtifie their Practice in refuſing to come to the Lord's Table where ſome vicious Perſons are apprehended to be, leſt they ſhould pollute the Ordinance, and theſe touch the unclean Thing; whereas the Preſence of a Bad Man at the Sacrament pollutes the Ordinance only to himſelf, for unto the Pure all Things are Pure; and who will neglect a certain Duty to eſcape an uncertain Danger? True, we muſt not own ſuch Worſhip as we know God rejecteth: But as God pardoneth the Faulty Imperfections of other Mens Worſhip, and of our own alſo, thus muſt we bear with our own and one another's Failings, that are tolerable, ſo far as we cannot cure them. Wo unto us had Almighty God no more Charity for us than we have for one another. A Defective Worſhip is not a Falſe Worſhip; ſinful Defects in the Adminiſtration of Ordinances do not hinder the ſaving Effects of Ordinances; a Wiſe and Good Man is certainly as great an Enemy to Separation as he is to Superſtition; Doctrines crying up Purity to the Ruin of Unity reject, for the Goſpel calls for Unity as well as for Purity.

CHAP. VII.

1 HAving therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

Theſe Words are Argumentative, and infer the indiſpenſable Duty of Chriſtians to preſerve themſelves untainted from the Idolatrous Impure World, by the Conſideration of the Promiſes ſpecified in the precedent Chapter, *I will dwell in you, and walk in you, and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my People*; a Promiſe which contains the higheſt Honour, and moſt perfect Felicity, of the reaſonable Nature. Now from hence he inferrs, That Chriſtians having ſuch Promiſes, ſuch Helps and Aſſiſtances, ſhould cleanſe themſelves from all ſinful Pollution, and endeavour after Perfection in Purity and Holineſs. *Having therefore*, &c. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Title wherewith the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf unto them, *Dearly Beloved*; this expreſſes both the Truth and alſo the Strength of his Affections towards them: By this Appellation he recommends his Counſel to their Acceptance; for as Light opens the Mind by clear Conviction, ſo Love opens the Heart by perſwaſive Inſinuation. *Obſerve* (2.) The Matter of the Addreſs, and that is to cleanſe our ſelves from all Pollution both of Spirit and Fleſh, and the changing of us into the unſpotted Image of God's Holineſs. The Pollution of Humane Nature is intimate and radical, diffuſed thro' all the Faculties of the Soul, and Members of the Body; we are therefore to pray for and endeavour after renewing Grace, and to be always advancing in Holineſs on Earth, till we arrive at Perfection in Heaven. *Obſerve* (3.) The Motive exciting hereunto, namely, the exceeding Great and Precious Promiſes aſſured to us from the Mouth of God, *Having theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves. Obſerve* (4.) The Means to help us herein, *the Fear of God.* This Grace has an eminent Cauſality and Influence in a Chriſtian's Sanctification; it is a powerful Reſtraint from Sin both in Thought and Act, by conſidering that God's pure and flaming Eye ſees Sin where-ever it is in order to Judgment. An Holy Fear of God, and an humble Fear of our ſelves, will both reſtrain us from Sin, and engage us to Obedience. From the whole Learn, That the Promiſes of the Goſpel lay the moſt powerful Obligations upon Chriſtians to endeavour after and ſtrive for the Attainment of Pure and Perfect Holineſs. As the Pollution is univerſal, ſo muſt the cleanſing be; and tho' thankful, we muſt be for the leaſt meaſure of ſanctifying Grace received, yet not ſatisfied with the greateſt, ſhort of our Perfection, *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God.*

2 Receive us: we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 I ſpeak not this to condemn *you*; for I have ſaid before, that you are in our hearts to die and live with *you.* 4 Great *is* my boldneſs of ſpeech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty which St. *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to, namely, to receive him their Apoſtle into their kind Affections, into the Boſom of their Love, *Receive us*; that is, into your beſt Affections. The Miniſters of Chriſt are very deſirous of a large Share and Intereſt in their Peoples Love, well knowing that if they be prejudiced againſt their Perſon they will reap no Benefit by their Doctrine. *Obſerve* (2.) The Solemn Proteſtation which the Holy Apoſtle makes of his Integrity and Uprightneſs towards the *Corinthians, we have wronged no Man, corrupted no Man, defrauded no Man*; that is, we have wronged none in their Reputation by Slander, we have corrupted no Man's Judgment by Error and Falſe Doctrine, we have defrauded no Men of any Part of their Eſtates, either by Force or Fraud. Learn hence, That the Holy Servants of God, eſpecially the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, may juſtifie themſelves, and make Solemn Proteſtations of their own Integrity and Uprightneſs, eſpecially when they fall under Jealouſie and Suſpicion by the Enemies of Religion. As it was the continual Practice of the Falſe Apoſtles to diſcredit St. *Paul*'s Miniſtry, and reflect upon his Perſon; ſo it was his conſtant Care to counterwork them by a profeſſed Vindication of himſelf and all his Actions. *Obſerve* (3.) The Fervour of the Apoſtle's Affection towards his *Corinthian* Converts, *You are in our Hearts, to live and die with you*;

that is, you lye, and are lodged ſo near our Hearts, that we could Live with you, and Die for you, to promote your Spiritual and Eternal Welfare. Behold how large a Room the People of God have in the Affections of his Miniſters, how near do they lye to their Hearts, and ſo paſſionately deſirous are they of their Peoples Salvation, that they could even lay down their Lives and Die to promote their Temporal and Eternal Advantage. *Obſerve* (4.) How the Apoſtle gloried in and was comforted by the *Corinthians* in the midſt of all his Afflictions, by the Report he had of their Repentance, Obedience and Liberality, *Great is my glorying in you, I am filled with Comfort, and exceeding Joyful in the midſt of all my Tribulations.* As if he had ſaid, Verily the Report I have had of your Repentance and Reformation upon the receiving my former Epiſtle has filled me with ſuch a Weight of Joy, as overballances all the Afflictions and Tribulations which I meet with for the Goſpel. Learn hence, That the Repentance and Reformation of any of our People, by the Bleſſing of God, upon our Miniſterial Endeavours, is Matter of great Rejoicing and Glorying to us the Miniſters of God, who deſire above all Things the Converſion, Edification, and Salvation, of the Souls of our People. *Great is my Glorying in you, I am filled with Comfort, I am exceeding Joyful.*

5 For when we were come into Macedonia, our fleſh had no reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide; without were fightings, within were fears. 6 Nevertheleſs, God that comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, comforted us by the coming of Titus: 7 And not by his coming only, but by the conſolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earneſt deſire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; ſo that I rejoiced the more.

Obſerve here, (1.) When the Apoſtle was come from *Epheſus* to *Macedonia*, how great a Conflict he had both from without and within; from without by Perſecution and Oppoſition both from *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and from within by Fears, leſt the falſe Apoſtles ſhould have perverted any of his young Converts from the Simplicity which is in Chriſt: Or fearing leſt the *Corinthians* being Tender and Weak in the Faith, the Violence of Perſecution, and the Strength of Temptation, ſhould cauſe them to Apoſtatize from their Religion, and backſlide from their Holy Profeſſion. *Obſerve* (2.) A moſt endearing Title given to Almighty God, *He comforteth all thoſe that are caſt down.* This is his Dear Title; he eſteems himſelf more honoured with the Amiable and Endearing Title of a Comforter and a Father, than with the Glorious Title of a Creator and a Sovereign. He is more pleaſed in doing us good, than we can be pleaſed in receiving of it, and can as ſoon forget himſelf as forget his Children. *Obſerve* (3.) The Inſtrumental Means which God made uſe of for the Apoſtle's Conſolation, Supports and Relief, namely, the coming of *Titus*. Firſt, *God comforted us by the coming of* Titus: Mark, he doth not entitle *Titus*, but God by *Titus* to the Comfort he received; whoever is the Inſtrumental Cauſe, God is the Principal Efficient Cauſe of our Conſolation and Comfort. It ſhews an Holy Frame of Heart when we ſtay not in Creatures, but are carried to God as the Author of our Comforts and Croſſes. Secondly, The glad Tidings and good News which *Titus* brought, as touching the *Corinthians earneſt Deſire* to have all Things amiſs rectified, *their Sorrow* expreſſed for the Sin reproved, their *fervent Affection* towards the Apoſtle, their Grief for offending him, their Zeal to vindicate him. All theſe were Matter of Comfort and exceeding Conſolation to the Apoſtle under all his Diſquietneſs in *Macedonia*. Learn hence, That when Trouble, both from without and within, do oppreſs the Minds, and even ſink the Spirits of the Miniſters of God, if they can but ſee the Succeſs of their Labours in the Lives of their People, that they are humbled for Sin, and turned from it, this is Matter of unſpeakable Conſolation at preſent, and will be their Crown of rejoicing in the Day of Chriſt. When *Titus* told us *of your earneſt Deſire, your Mourning, your fervent Mind, I rejoiced the more.*

8 For tho' I made you ſorry with a letter, I do not repent, tho' I did repent: for I perceive that the ſame epiſtle made you ſorry, tho' it were but for a ſeaſon. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed to repentance: for ye were made ſorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Altho' in my former Epiſtle I wrote ſomewhat ſharply to you, by reaſon of the many Abuſes that were crept in amongſt you, I do not now repent of that Severity, becauſe it produced a thorough and effectual Reformation: Tho' at firſt I did repent of it, being unwilling to put you to Grief; for I was troubled my ſelf becauſe I was neceſſitated to trouble you. However, now I rejoice not in your Grief as ſuch, but becauſe your Sorrow was a Godly Sorrow, and wrought Repentance, which is ſo neceſſary to Forgiveneſs; ſo that my Plain-dealing with you has evidently been no Damage, but an Advantage, to you. Learn hence, That the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt muſt by no Means omit the Duty of ſharp Reproof, nor neglect to bring the Cenſures of the Church upon Notorious Offenders, how ungrateful ſoever the Work is, either to themſelves or others. Learn (2.) That there is good Ground to hope that when the Cenſures of the Church are duly executed that they will have their deſired Effects, by bringing the Offenders to Repentance, and by Repentance to Remiſſion and Salvation. I rejoice *that ye ſorrowed to Repentance, for ye ſorrowed after a Godly Sort.*

10 For godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of.——

Note here, That Sorrow for Sin will be of no Advantage, or Avail, unto us, if it be not Godly Sorrow, or a Sorrow according to God, as it runs in the Original. Now it may be called a Sorrow according to God, when it is a Sorrow wrought in us by the Spirit of God, in Obedience to the Command of God, and with an Eye at the Glory of God, when it has Sin, and not Wrath, for its Object; Sin as a Wrong to God, as a Contempt of his Sovereignty, and a Contrariety to his Holineſs. Again, it is then a Godly Sorrow when it puts us upon an high prizing of Jeſus Chriſt, who became a Sacrifice for Sin, and prompts us to a Cordial and Unfeigned forſaking of all Sin, to ſuch a turning from it, as is reſolved againſt all returning to it.

10 ——But the ſorrow of the world worketh Death.

The Sorrow of the World may be taken Two ways. (1.) For the Sorrow of Worldly Men, whoſe Sorrow for Sin is only a vexing of their Hearts, not a breaking or humbling of their Hearts; which being ſeparate from true Faith, and without any Purpoſe to leave Sin, worketh Death, by wearing out the Natural Life lingeringly, and ſometime deſtroying the Natural Life violently, as in the Caſe of *Judas*. (2.) By the Sorrow of the World may be underſtood a Sorrow for worldly Things, a Sorrow for worldly Loſſes and Diſappointments. This is ſinful when it is exceſſive; and as it is prejudicial to the Soul, ſo doth it hurt the Body, and haſtneth Death. Worldly Sorrow is a killing Sorrow; *Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance, but the Sorrow of the World worketh Death.*

11 For behold, this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of your ſelves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge. In all things ye have approved your ſelves to be clear in this matter.

The Apoſtle in the foregoing Verſe had declared, that Godly Sorrow, or a Sorrow wrought by the Spirit of God, worketh true Repentance, and produceth a thorough Reformation, not to be repented of: Now in this Verſe he proves that the *Corinthians* Sorrow for the Inceſtuous Perſon's Sin was of this Nature, namely, a Godly Sorrow, becauſe it produceth ſuch Excellent Effects and Fruits as Godly Sorrow is wont to do. Seven of which he here reckons up. (1.) Care, or an holy *Carefulneſs* to amend what is amiſs for time to come, by ſhunning and avoiding all Occaſions and Temptations that lead to Sin. He that truly repenteth, is careful not to ſin again. (2.) *Clearing of themſelves*, that they did not approve the Fact of the Inceſtuous Perſon, but did inflict the Churches Cenſures upon him, and ſo put away Evil from amongſt them. (3.) *Indignation* againſt Sin; this is found where Godly Sorrow is found, the Heart riſes, ſwells and boils againſt Sin; we are then angry and ſin not, when we are angry at Sin; we are then angry and ſin not, when we are angry at Sin, and with our ſelves for ſinning. (4.) *Fear*; a true Penitent fears to offend, and that he may not offend, doth nouriſh in himſelf an holy Fear of God, and an humble Fear of himſelf: There is found with him a Fear of Reverence from an aweful Apprehenſion of the Holineſs and Majeſty of God, and alſo a Fear of Diligence and Viligance, watching and warring againſt Sin, that it may not ſet upon us, and ſurprize us for time to come. (5.) *Vehement Deſire* after a thorough Reformation, and to rectifie whatever is amiſs, a Deſire to be rid of all Sin, and in the mean time conflicting with it, and groaning under it. (6.) *Zeal*; this is an Affection in a true Penitent, compounded of Love and Anger; be Zealous and Repent is Chriſt's own Call, *Rev.* 3. 19. This will make a Penitent perſiſt in the Exerciſe and Expreſſion of his Godly Sorrow for Sin, and perſevere in his Courſe of Mortification, in Defiance of all Oppoſition made againſt him. (7.) *Revenge*, this is the Reſult of Zeal, when our Zeal boils into Revenge, and puts us upon Self-caſtigations: Not ſo much upon our Bodies with Whips and Scourges, but by the Abatement of Luſt which ſtirreth in us, buffetting the Fleſh, and bringing it into Subjection. And this Revenge leads the Penitent alſo to make Satisfaction for Wrongs done, either by open Confeſſion, or ſecret Reſtitution. *In all Things you have approved your ſelves to be clear of this Matter.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, by theſe forementioned Acts of yours, the Body of you have ſhewn that you did not approve of the Inceſtuous Perſon's Sin, but evidenced by your Sorrow for it, that you are clear of it. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there is no Way to get clear of the Guilt of other Mens Sins, but by duly mourning for them, *Now you are clear of this Matter. Learn* (2.) That true Repentance for Sin clears us from the Guilt of it, both in the Sight of God and Man; and if ſo, it is both Uncharitable and Unchriſtian to ſtigmatize or reproach any Perſon for the Sin which we either know or believe he hath truly repented of.

12 Wherefore tho' I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cauſe that had done the wrong, nor for his cauſe that ſuffered wrong, but that our care for you in the ſight of God might appear unto you.

Here the Apoſtle tells them, that he did not write ſo paſſionately and ſeverely to them, only or chiefly for the Inceſtuous Perſon's ſake, who had done the Wrong, that he might be puniſhed; nor for his ſake that had ſuffered the Wrong, namely, the injured Father, out of a particular Kindneſs to have him righted, but that our general Care, Solicitude, and Concern for you, the whole Church of *Corinth*, to remove Sin and Scandal from you, might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, becauſe his Spirit was refreſhed by you all.

That is, in all the forementioned Effects and Fruits, Signs and Evidences of a true Repentance, which were found in you, and are Matter of great Comfort to you, we are alſo comforted with you, and we alſo had a ſuperadded Joy for the Joy that *Titus* conceived upon his underſtanding of your Affairs; alſo your ready Compliance with the Duties and Directions given you in my former Epiſtle did wonderfully refreſh and rejoice his Spirit, and in all theſe your Conſolations and Comforts am I comforted. *Hence Learn*, That ſuch is the intimate and endeared Union between the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt, that they are comforted with one another's Comforts, and afflicted with each other's Sorrows and Sufferings.

14 For if I have boaſted any thing to him of you, I am not aſhamed; but as we ſpeak all things to you in truth, even ſo our boaſting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. 15 And his inward affection is more abundant towards you, whilſt he remembreth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16 I rejoice therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things.

Obſerve here, How the Apoſtle had formerly taken Occaſion to ſpeak Boaſtingly, and not without Aſſurance, concerning the Church of *Corinth*. Now ſays the Apoſtle, whatever I ſaid of you is as infallibly and certainly True, as what I have heretofore either written or ſpoken to you. Happy is it when a Miniſter's Commendations of his People unto others is not contradicted or gainſaid by the People themſelves, but confirmed greatly. Here what St. *Paul* had boaſted of the *Corinthians*, *Titus* found a Truth. *Obſerve* next, with what inward Affection *Titus* did embrace and receive the *Corinthians*; remembring with what great Deference and Regard they had received him; *he is greatly affected towards you*, upon his finding you ſo Obedient to me. Nothing doth more endear a People to the Miniſters of Chriſt, than to find them Obedient to their Spiritual Guides in Things pertaining to Godlineſs and Religion. *The Affection of* Titus *is more abundant towards you, whilſt he remembreth the Obedience of you all. Obſerve laſtly*, What Confidence the Apoſtle had that the Church of *Corinth* would hearken to, and comply, with his future Admonitions, Exhortations and Reproofs, *I have Confidence in you in all Things.* It is a Bleſſed Thing when the Miniſters of the Goſpel and their Beloved People have a mutual Confidence in each other, and when that Confidence on either ſide is not broken, but preſerved and encreaſed between them all their Days, when they can ſay of each other, as doth the Apoſtle here, *I rejoice that I have Confidence in you in all Things.*

CHAP. VIII.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this and the following Chapter is to excite and ſtir up the Corinthians *to a liberal Contribution of their Charity towards the Poor Saints in* Jeruſalem *and* Judea*: And this he does by ſeveral Arguments, as namely, by the Example of the* Macedonians, *by Commendation of their former Forwardneſs, by the Example of Chriſt, and by the ſpecial Benefit and Advantage which would certainly redound to themſelves thereby. The former of theſe Arguments is propounded* Verſe 1.

1 MOreover brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

The firſt Argument which our Apoſtle makes uſe of to excite the Charity of the *Corinthians* is drawn from the Example of the *Macedonians*, into whoſe Hearts God had poured that excellent Grace of Charity; inſomuch that the Churches of *Philippi*, *Theſſalonica*, *Beræa*, and other Churches in the Region of *Macedonia*, tho' under great Trials and Afflictions themſelves, yet ſuch was their Joy in, and their Affection to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, that notwithſtanding their deep Poverty, they abounded in their Liberality towards the Neceſſities of the Poor Saints in *Jeruſalem* and *Judea*. *Note here*, (1.) The Root from which all acceptable Charity to the Members of Chriſt muſt ariſe and ſpring, namely, from the *Grace of God*; from an inward Principle of Love to God, in Obedience to his Command, and with a pure and fixed Eye at his Glory. Liberality to the Poor Diſtreſſed Members of Chriſt (as ſuch) muſt flow from that Habit of Divine Love, by which Men are taught of God to love one another; for tho' from a Natural Sympathy and Compaſſion Man may relieve the afflicted as Men, yet without a Gracious Inclination they cannot do good to them as Members of the Houſhold of Faith. Charity then is here called the Grace of God, becauſe it proceeds from a Gracious Diſpoſition wrought in the Heart by God, as the Root and Spring, the

Motive and Attractive of it. *Note here*, (2.) The Condition which the Churches of *Macedonia* were in themſelves; when they thus liberally and cheerfully adminiſtred to the Neceſſities of others, they were firſt under great Affliction, and then in great Poverty themſelves, and yet *the Riches of their Liberality are here ſaid to abound.* From whence learn, that Poverty excuſes not from Charity: If we have nothing actually to give, God accepts the Inclination of the Mind, and a willing Deſire. If we have but little to give, God will accept our Mite, and reward us for that little, if given for his Sake. It is not the quantity of the Gift, but the good Affection of the Giver, that God's Eye is upon. If we give but a Cup of cold Water to a Diſciple, and as a Diſciple, God accepts it, and rewards it, provided we have nothing better to give; for if our Charity be not in ſome degree proportionable to what we have, it will not be acceptable, but we ſhall miſs of its Reward.

3 For to their power (I bear record,) yea and beyond their power they were willing of themſelves: 4 Praying us with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowſhip of the miniſtring to the ſaints.

Three Things are here Recorded as the Glory of the *Macedonians* Charity. (1.) It was profuſely liberal, beyond their Ability, *to their Power, yea, and beyond their Power they were ready:* Tho' generally ſpeaking we are to conſult our own Ability and preſent Circumſtances in all our Charitable Diſtributions, yet there may be, and ſometimes are, ſuch emergent Occaſions, that may make it a neceſſary Duty to adminiſter to others Neceſſities far beyond our own Ability. (2.) Their Charity was purely voluntary, they were *willing of themſelves*; that is, unſolicited by the Apoſtle, unask'd by any other, only prompted to it by the Grace of God: They made a Collection amongſt themſelves Freely and Cheerfully. (3.) Their Charity was accompanied with Importunity to the Apoſtle to receive and diſtribute it. He was ſo far from intreating them to give, that they intreated him to receive their Collection, and to take Care for its Conveyance to them, and Diſtribution among them; praying us, with much Intreaty, that we would receive this their Gift, and Fellowſhip of Miniſtry to the Saints.

5. And *this they did* not as we hoped, but firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Verily theſe *Macedonians*, in the liberal Diſtribution of their Alms to the Poor Chriſtians, have exceeded our Hopes and Expectations. Wherein? Firſt, They gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and then unto us, by the Will of God: They gave themſelves, their own ſelves, firſt to the Lord. To give a Man's ſelf to the Lord, is more than to give all his Eſtate to him, tho', ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is rather a Debt than a Gift, for we owe our ſelves to the Lord. And Oh! How infinitely ſhall we gain by this giving? He gains all who gives his All to God, God will return it with Advantage to him. Next, the *Macedonians*, ſays the Apoſtle, gave themſelves unto us by the Will of God; that is, they reſigned themſelves up to us, to be employed by us in ſuch Services as we thought meet. It ſeems they were ready to aſſiſt the Poor Saints, as well with their Perſons as with their Purſes. From the *Macedonians* giving themſelves firſt to the Lord, and then to the Churches Service, in all Charitable Diſtributions, we learn, that he that does not firſt dedicate himſelf, will never dedicate his Eſtate to God; but he that by a deliberate and voluntary Dedication gives himſelf to God, will keep back nothing that he requires from him: Yea, he will look upon all that he has and is as the Lord's: Not an Inch of his Time, not a Peny in his Purſe, but it is to be employed by, and improved for, God. He looks upon God as the Owner and Proprietor of all, and himſelf as the Steward and Diſpencer only: Oh! Let us in Imitation of theſe Noble, tho' Poor, *Macedonians*, firſt give our ſelves to the Lord, and then we ſhall never withhold any thing that is ours from him.

6 Inſomuch that we deſired Titus, that as he had begun, ſo he would alſo finiſh in you the ſame grace alſo. 7 Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; *ſee* that ye abound in this grace alſo. 8 I ſpeak not by commandment, but by occaſion of the forwardneſs of others, and to prove the ſincerity of your Love.

Here our Apoſtle proceeds to make uſe of ſeveral other Arguments to perſwade the *Corinthians* to the Exerciſe of the Duty and Grace of Charity; as namely, (1.) Becauſe he had deſired *Titus* to go to them; and as he had in his laſt Viſit begun to ſtir them up to this Duty, and to exerciſe this Grace, ſo he would farther promote and bring it to Perfection. And, (2.) Becauſe they abounded in other Graces and Gifts; as namely, in Faith, in Utterance, in Knowledge, *&c.* therefore they ought to abound in this Grace alſo, otherwiſe they would not be compleat in the whole Will of God. (3.) Becauſe hereby they would Teſtifie the Sincerity of their Love to the Saints. 'Tis not good Words, but Charitable Deeds, that evidence the Truth of our Love to our Fellow Members in Chriſt; not ſaying, be ye Warmed, or be ye Cloathed, but diſtributing to their Neceſſities according to our Abilities. Yet *Obſerve*, The Apoſtle doth not command their Purſes, and require ſo much of them for Charity; he mentions no particular Sum, much leſs doth he command them to give away all their Eſtates, and live upon a common Stock, and leave nothing to themſelves which they could call their own; for if a Man has nothing of his own, there is no room for Liberality. There muſt be Prudence then in the Exerciſe of our Charity, Prudence in finding out proper Objects for our Charity, Prudence in Timing of our Charity, Prudence in the Meaſure of our Charity, and Prudence in the End which we propound to our ſelves in the Exerciſe of our Charity.

9 For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that tho' he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be rich.

Here we have the Grand Motive uſed by the Apoſtle to excite their Charity, namely, the Example of Chriſt, who impoveriſh'd himſelf to enrich us, and emptied himſelf to fill us, therefore ſhould we be ready to adminiſter unto others, *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* &c. *Obſerve* hence, (1.) A Deſcription of Chriſt in his Divine Nature as God: He was Originally, Eſſentially and Eternally, Rich; that is, in his Godhead. All the Riches that Chriſt now has in his State of Exaltation he had from all Eternity; before his Humiliation, with reſpect to his Divine Nature, he was Rich. *Obſerve* (2.) A Deſcription of Chriſt in his Humane Nature, he became Poor; that is, in the Day of his Incarnation, when he aſſumed our Fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our Nature, he improveriſh'd himſelf: Tho' he was Rich, yet he became Poor. *Obſerve* (3.) The Perſons for whoſe Sake he did thus impoveriſh himſelf; for our Sake he became Poor, that we through his Poverty might be Rich. *Obſerve*, (4.) The moving, impelling, or impulſive Cauſe of this Condeſcenſion in Chriſt, and that was the Graciouſneſs of his Nature, *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve* (5.) The Uſe and Improvement which the Apoſtle makes of this Gracious Dignation and Condeſcenſion in Jeſus Chriſt, and that was by Way of Argument, to excite the believing *Corinthians* to exerciſe their Charity towards the Poor Saints which were at *Jeruſalem.* Learn from hence, That the extenſive Charity and wonderful Compaſſion of Chriſt towards us Sinners, has both the Force of an Argument to excite us to, and alſo the Nature of a Rule to direct us in, the Exerciſe of our Charity towards all our Fellow Brethren and Members of Chriſt. *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but alſo to be forward a year ago. 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readineſs to will, ſo *there may be* a performance alſo out of that which you have. 12 For if there be firſt a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

Here the Apoſtle proceeds to a freſh Argument for the quickning and exciting the *Corinthians* Charity, drawn from their own Reputation. He had heard that a Year ago, upon writing his former Epiſtle, they had made ſeveral Collections at ſeveral times, as their Gains came in; his Advice therefore is, that they perfect and compleat the good Work which they had undertaken; and that as there was a Readineſs and Willingneſs of Mind then, ſo there might be a Performance of their good Reſolutions now: For whatſoever is given to God is accepted, according to what a Man has, and it is not expected he ſhould give according to what he has not. *Learn hence*, That God interprets and accepts the Charity of Men according to the Largeneſs of their Hearts, and not according to the Straitneſs of their Fortunes. It is not ſo much the Quantity of the Gift, as the good Will and cheerful Mind of the Giver that God looks at. *If there be firſt a willing Mind it is accepted. Learn farther*, That to do any good with a willing Mind, be it little or much, is very acceptable to God; if there be little of the Purſe, and much of the Heart, in it, provided that little be what we can well ſpare, the Lord hath a great Reſpect unto it. *Learn laſtly*, That as we muſt give, ſo God will accept what is given according to what a Man has, and not according to what he has not. What is due to another, either by Debt or Duty, in making Proviſion for thoſe of our own Family, cannot be charitably given, as being not our own.

13 For I *mean* not, that other men be eaſed, and you burthened. 14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a ſupply* for their want, that their abundance alſo may be *a ſupply* for your want, that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, he that *had gathered* much, had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little, had no lack.

Obſerve here, The humble Modeſty and holy Prudence of the Apoſtle in what he demanded of the *Corinthians* by way of Charity for the Poor Saints in *Judea*. He tells them freely he did not deſign to lay a Load upon them to eaſe others, or to make others Rich by making them Poor, but that there might be an Equality in ſupplying the Wants of one another, that now you abound you may ſupply them, and when they abound they may ſupply you; yet mark, we muſt not by the Equality mentioned here underſtand it ſo, as if the Wiſdom of the Divine Providence had ordained *Levelling*, or making all Men equal in their Portion of the good Things of this Life: But ſo far Chriſtianity ſeems to require this Equality, that we ſhould not ſuffer others to lack the neceſſary Comforts of this Life, whilſt we abound with them, and can ſpare them, and ſuffer them to ſink in their Sorrows, whilſt we ſwim in Fulneſs. *Learn hence*, There is a Debt of Mercy and Pity, of Charity and Compaſſion, of Relief and Succour, due to Humane Nature, and payable from one Man to another; and ſuch as deny to pay it the diſtreſſed in the time of their Abundance, may juſtly expect it will be denied to themſelves in a time of Want. To confirm this, the Apoſtle draws an Alluſion from the Gatherers of Manna in the Wilderneſs, ſome gathered more, and others leſs; but they that had more were to give to them that had leſs: In like manner would Almighty God have it, that they which have great Riches ſhould impart of their Abundance to them that are in want; otherwiſe Almighty God will ſhrink their heap into ſome Equality with them whom they refuſed to relieve. With what meaſure we meet in Acts of Charity, as well as in Acts of Juſtice, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the ſame earneſt care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation, but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18 And we have ſent with him the brother, whoſe praiſe *is* in the goſpel, throughout all the churches: 19 (And not *that* only, but who was alſo choſen of the churches to travel with us, with this grace which is adminiſtred by us, to the glory of the ſame Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind.)

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I Thank God that *Titus* was as forward to move you to this good Work as my ſelf, for he did not barely yield to it at my Requeſt, but of his own accord was ready to come to you about it. And with him we ſent *Luke*, a Beloved Brother, whoſe Service for the Goſpel has made him honoured in all the Churches, and who was choſen by the Church to go with us in this Diaconary Service, namely, the Miniſtration of your Charity, to the Glory of God, and evidencing the Readineſs of your Mind to ſo good a Work. Here *Note*, (1.) The Holy Apoſtle's conſtant Cuſtom and Practice, to refer all Good in us to God, as the Author and Producer of it, *Thanks be to God that put this into the Heart of Titus. Note* (2.) That a Miniſter of the Goſpel who declines being chargeable to his People himſelf, may yet put on Confidence, and be Bold and Importunate in urging them to Charity for the Service and Supply of others. *Note* (3.) That St. *Paul's* Importunity for collecting this Charity at *Corinth*, ſhews how much the Caſe was altered, ſince at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* 4. they ſold all, and laid it at the Apoſtle's Feet: And as that was not intended for a conſtant and univerſal Practice, ſo we ſee how quickly the Love of Chriſtians grew more cold. To procure this Charity St. *Paul* writes, *Titus* is ſent, Exhortation is given, Arguments urged, and all due Means uſed to accompliſh this Collection for the poor diſtreſſed Chriſtians. *Note* (4.) That amongſt Chriſtians renowned for Gift and Parts coſtly Duties come hardly off, elſe what needed this ado? And yet it is not the cheap Duties of Religion, (ſuch are Prayer, hearing the Word, and receiving Sacraments,) but the coſtly Duties of Charity, that muſt evidence the Truth of our Faith and Love, which are certainly dead, if barren and deſtitute of theſe Fruits.

20 Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us in this abundance which is adminiſtred by us: 21 Providing for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of men. 22 And we have ſent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

Note here the holy Wiſdom of this great Apoſtle in joining ſome other Perſons with himſelf, as *Titus* and *Luke*, &c. in the Diſtribution of this Charity; leſt evil-minded Men ſhould ſuſpect him of Diſhoneſty, he takes care to cut off all Occaſion of Suſpicion, that he neither kept any part of this large Contribution to himſelf, or diſtributed it unfaithfully unto others; *Avoiding this, that no Man ſhould blame us. Note* (2.) The Reaſon alſo aſſigned by the Apoſtle for this his prudential Management, namely, becauſe as a Miniſter and a Chriſtian he was obliged to provide and take care that all Things be done blameleſly in the ſight of Men, as well as faithfully in the ſight of God. The Apoſtle, by this his Example, commends to all Miniſters and private Chriſtians a prudential Foreſight of ſuch ſcandalous Imputations as they may be expoſed to by the World, let their Sincerity in their Actions be what it will; and let us ſee how we ought to provide againſt them. Any one of theſe upright Perſons alone, either St. *Paul* alone, *Titus* alone, or St. *Luke* alone, were ſufficient to be entruſted alone with the Diſtribution of this Charity; but the Apoſtle did not know what a cenſorious World might ſay, and therefore to cut off all Occaſion, and to prevent all Suſpicion, he wiſely appoints ſeveral Perſons to be Witneſſes of this Action; if there be not in ſome Caſes overmuch Caution, all is too little, and not enough.

23 Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, *they are* the meſſengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Chriſt. 24 Wherefore ſhew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boaſting on your behalf.

Obſerve here what Pains the Apoſtle takes to anſwer all Cavils and Objections that might hinder the free Collection and regular Diſtribution of this Charity; ſome might pretend poſſibly to ſay then (as many amongſt us do now) we know not into whoſe Hands this Charity-money may fall; we know not whether ever they ſhall be the better for it for whom it was intended; therefore ſays St. *Paul*, if any make that Objection, that they do not know *Titus*, and enquire after him, or his Truſtineſs, tell them he is my Coadjutor, my Partner and Fellow-helper, in converting you to Chriſtianity; and if the other Two be enquired after, they are our Brethren, the Meſſengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Chriſt; that is, the Inſtruments of his Glory: Therefore let theſe Meſſengers ſee, and the Churches which did depute them, the Proof of your Love to me, and to the Saints, and that I did not boaſt of your Liberality in vain. *Note* here, The high Honour which St. *Paul* puts upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel in calling them *the Glory of Chriſt*; that is, the Glory of the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Glory of the Chriſtian Profeſſion, the Inſtruments of Chriſt's Glory, by whom his Honour and Glory is greatly promoted; Perſons who by their Exemplary Gloriouſneſs did bring much Honour and Glory to Chriſt. This Title I conceive ſhews both our Dignity and Duty; our Dignity, in that Chriſt accounts us his Glory when we are found faithful to him, as the Faithfulneſs of an Ambaſſador redounds to the Glory and Honour of the Prince that ſends him: And it points out our Duty to promote the Glory of Chriſt, to pray and endeavour that he would uſe us as Inſtruments for the Advancement of his Glory, that as we glorifie him on Earth, he may glory in us, and be glorified by us, before his Father in Heaven, and we be preſented faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy. *Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

The Argument of this is the ſame with that of the foregoing Chapters, namely, to excite the Corinthians *to a Liberal and Cheerful Contribution towards the Poor Saints at* Jeruſalem, *which were then under preſſing Neceſſities; and having laid ſeveral Arguments before them to quicken them to the Duty, he comes now to give Directions concerning the Right and Acceptable Performance of the Duty, adviſing them to give Liberally, becauſe God had abundantly Bleſſed and Encreaſed them; and Cheerfully, becauſe the Lord loveth a Cheerful Giver.*

1 FOR as touching the miniſtring to the ſaints, it is ſuperfluous for me to write to you. 2 For I know the forwardneſs of your mind, for which I boaſt of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

Obſerve here, The Holy Art and Skill of this Wiſe and Great Apoſtle, in prompting forward, and putting on theſe *Corinthians* to this Work of Pious Charity; he inſinuates their preſent Forwardneſs, to provoke them to farther Forwardneſs; he tells them it was ſuperfluous for him to uſe further Arguments with them, for their Forwardneſs was known unto him, and boaſted of by him, to the *Macedonians*; that the Chriſtians in *Achaia* (of which *Corinth* was the chief City) had made a Propoſal to ſupply the Poor Saints of *Judea* a Year ago, and that their Zeal therein had provoked very many to the like Forwardneſs. It is very happy when the Miniſters of Chriſt find their People forward and ready to every good Work, to coſtly Works of Charity eſpecially; yet it will be their Wiſdom, by commending their People for what they have done, to encourage them to do farther; not only for encreaſing their own Reward, but for provoking many to do the like. *I know the Forwardneſs of your Mind, and that your Zeal hath provoked very many.*

3 Yet have I ſent the brethren, leſt our boaſting of you ſhould be in vain in this behalf, that as I ſaid, ye may be ready: 4 Leſt haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we ſay not, you) ſhould be aſhamed in this ſame confident boaſting. 5 Therefore I thought it neceſſary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the ſame might be ready, as *a matter* of bounty, and not as *of* covetouſneſs.

As confident and fully perſwaded as the Apoſtle was of the readineſs and willingneſs of Mind that was found in the *Corinthians* towards this Charitable Contribution, yet he judged it both Expedient and Neceſſary to ſend the Brethren before to them, to get all Things ready, the Collection finiſhed and over, that ſo when he himſelf and the *Macedonians* ſhould come to *Corinth*, he might not be put to the Bluſh for them, having made great Boaſts of their Charity, but finding no Deeds; and alſo he deſires their Collection may be ready with reſpect to themſelves, that ſo their Beneficence may appear to be their own free Bounty, and not a Collection difficultly extorted from them, as from Covetous Men, who give grudgingly and unwillingly. *Note* here, (1.) That it is very lawful for the Miniſters of Chriſt to uſe an holy Craft, and innocent Guile, to draw Men to a ſpeedy Compliance with their Duty; ſometimes by engaging their Reputation in it, and ſometimes alluring them by juſt Praiſes to the doing of it. Thus our Apoſtle did here. *Note* (2.) That the Readineſs which St. *Paul* here preſſes them to is not the Readineſs of the Mind, but the Readineſs of the Action; he was well ſatisfied that they were ready in their Preparation of Mind long ago, but he preſſes them to finiſh the Collection, of which he had ſo much boaſted to the *Macedonians*. *Note* (3.) How the Bleſſed Apoſtle did conſult the *Corinthians* Honour and Reputation equally with his own, and was as deſirous to prevent Reflections upon them as upon himſelf; he would not have them aſhamed no more than himſelf, at at his coming among them. *Note* (4.) That a liberal free giving to the Saints in Diſtreſs is called here χάεις ϗ ευλογία, Grace and Bleſſing, we Tranſlate it Bounty: It is called Grace, becauſe an Heart to give Liberally is wrought in us by the Grace of God; the World ſhuts up our Hearts till God opens them; and if the Heart be open, the Hand will not be ſhut: And Works of Charity are a Bleſſing of God with our Subſtance, and the Way and Means to procure his Bleſſing upon our Subſtance. Giving to diſtreſſed Saints in Proportion to what God has given us, is by Almighty God accounted a Bleſſing of him, and a Bleſſing of our Fellow Brethren; and whoever thus Bleſſes God, ſhall be Bleſſed by him. *Note* (5.) That the *Corinthians* being a very Rich and Wealthy People, the Apoſtle ſtirs them up to an abundant Charity. Where God gives much he expects much; but how many, alas, grutch God a little of his own? And how difficultly is that little drawn from them, like Drops of Blood? Whereas to give Alms purely to ſatisfie the Importunity of others, or out of Shame, miſſes of its Reward before God.

6 But this I *ſay*, he which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: And he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, *ſo let him give*; not grudgingly, or of neceſſity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Here the Apoſtle comes to direct the *Corinthians* how and after what manner they ſhould give their Alms, as to ſecure a Bleſſing, namely, Deliberately. (1.) *As he purpoſeth in his Heart ſo let him give*, as he determined and reſolved within himſelf. When a Chriſtian gives he muſt take Care that it be his own Act as much as he can. Some Men give what they did never intend, and beſtow what they did never chuſe or deſign to beſtow: Importunity extorts Charity from ſome; they give to get rid of the Noiſe, and purchaſe their Quiet with their Alms; whereas the Liberal Man deviſes Liberal Things, and the Good Man lays by in Store what he intends to beſtow in Alms. (2.) Freely and Bountifully: For *he that ſoweth Bountifully ſhall reap Bountifully*; that is, he that giveth Liberally to the Poor, ſhall be Liberally rewarded by God; no Wiſe Man will pinch his Ground of the Seed. The Proportion, or how much every one ſhould give, cannot be determined, becauſe that muſt be meaſured according to the Ability of him that giveth, and according to the Neceſſity of him that receiveth. (3.) Cheerfully, not *grudgingly, or of Neceſſity*; *for the Lord loveth a Cheerful Giver.* In all thy Gifts ſhew a cheerful Countenance, ſays the Wiſe Man; let us give with the ſame Cheerfulneſs that we would receive, and be as willing to give as the Needy to receive; nay, it is our Duty to ſeek out Objects, for ſome of Chriſt's Members have as great Modeſty as they have Neceſſity, and cannot ſpeak for themſelves: And let none think that this Liberality will prejudice their Eſtates; no, 'tis Mens Luſts that undo them, and not their Charity.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all-ſufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 (As it is written, he hath diſperſed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever.

Here the Apoſtle tacitly anſwers the common Objection againſt liberal Almſgiving; Men are afraid they ſhall want themſelves what they give away to others: No, ſays the Apoſtle, God is able to make all Grace and Mercy ſhewed by you to abound the more towards you; that you having a Sufficiency of the Comforts of this Life may abound in every good Work of Charity towards others. As if he had ſaid, be not afraid to give, nor ſparing in giving; for hereby you make God your Debtor, and you will find him an All-ſufficient Pay-maſter; he will repay you both in Temporals and Spirituals. Thou ſhalt receive Silver for thy Braſs, Gold for thy Silver, Grace for thy Gold, a Treaſure in Heaven for thy Droſs on Earth; nay, your Gold and Silver will multiply here, as Seed ſown, when ſcattered with a Wiſe and Prudent Hand. The Apoſtle here engages God's All-ſufficiency for it; God will ſhew his All-ſufficiency in giving you an All-ſufficiency in all Things; only we muſt remember that we are to allow time; for Almighty God loves to be truſted upon his Word; and thoſe that will not give him Credit, let them try if they can improve the Eſtates better, or put them into ſafer Hands.

13 Now he that miniſtreth ſeed to the ſower, both miniſter bread for your food, and multiply your ſeed ſown, and increaſe the fruits of your righteouſneſs) 11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulneſs, which cauſeth through us thankſgiving to God.

Some look upon theſe Words as a Prayer, others as a Promiſe, that as Almighty God bleſſed the Increaſe of the Earth ſo largely that it ſufficeth for the Nouriſhment of Men, and for Seed to ſow again, in like manner would he ſupply all their Wants, and grant them Ability to ſupply the Wants of others, and plentifully Reward them for all the Fruits of their Righteouſneſs and Mercy; and they being thus enriched by the Goodneſs of God, and exerciſing all Bountifulneſs toward their Brethren, much Thankſgiving and Praiſe upon that Occaſion is given unto God. In theſe laſt Words is couch'd an Argument farther to preſs the *Corinthians* to this Liberality; namely, That it would cauſe both the Miniſters of Chriſt, the Diſpenſers of this Charity, and alſo the Poor Saints, the Receivers of it, to offer up inceſſant Praiſes and Thankſgivings to God for the ſame.

12 For the adminiſtration of this ſervice not only ſupplieth the want of the ſaints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God; 13 (Whilſt by the experiment of this miniſtration they glorifie God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all men) 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds by way of Motive farther to excite and ſtir up the *Corinthians* to this Charitable Contribution from ſundry Conſiderations; as namely, firſt, That it would be a very ſeaſonable Supply of the Churches Wants, who were at this time in great want of it: Now the Seaſonableneſs of any Mercy adds greatly to the Worth and Value, to the Pleaſure and Sweetneſs, of it. Secondly, That it would occaſion repeated Praiſes and inceſſant Thankſgivings to God from many Perſons, and upon many Accounts. Thirdly, This Diſtribution of yours, ſays the Apoſtle, will be a convincing Experiment, Evidence and Demonſtration, of your profeſſed Subjection to the Goſpel, and that your Faith is not barren and ineffectual: No better Evidence of our real Subjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, than a cheerful Compliance, not with the cheap, but with the coſtly, Duties of Chriſtianity. Laſtly, For your Alms; you will engage a Stock of Prayers going for you; this will procure, yea, provoke them to pray Night and Day for you; nay, not only engage Prayer for you, but it will alſo draw forth their Love and fervent Affection towards you, make them very deſirous of your Acquaintance, having received ſuch an Experiment of the Grace of God that is in you.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable Gift.

Here the Apoſtle concludes his Diſcourſe upon this great Argument with a Doxology, Praiſing and Bleſſing God for putting it into their Hearts in ſo liberal a Manner to relieve the Neceſſities of the Saints, by which ſo much Glory did redound to God, and ſo much Honour to the Chriſtian Religion. This he calls not barely an admirable, but an *unſpeakable, Gift*; becauſe a Gift by which God was ſo much Glorified, the Goſpel Adorned, the Poor Saints ſo much Comforted, and they themſelves ſo plentifully Rewarded, *Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable Gift:* But if the *Corinthians* Charity was an unſpeakable Gift, what was the Gift of Chriſt? The Gift of God to a loſt World, to whom this Title of *unſpeakable* doth beſt agree? Who is the Author and Finiſher of all Grace, and particularly of this Noble Grace of Charity in the Hearts of his People; for he ſends his Holy Spirit, and pours into their Hearts this moſt Excellent Grace of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Vertues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before him. Eternal Thanks then be to Chriſt for this Admirable Gift of Charity, and Thanks be to God for the Unſpeakable Gift of Chriſt. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Chapters pleaded with the Corinthians *on behalf of the Poor Chriſtians in* Judea, *he comes to this Chapter to plead for himſelf, and to vindicate his Authority from the Contempt caſt upon it by the Falſe Apoſtles, who pretended to ſay, that when he was perſonally preſent he was Humble and Mild, but when abſent Severe and Bold: Thus unworthily interpreting his Gentleneſs, Condeſcenſion, and winning Affability, to be no better than a fawning upon them for Falſe Ends; wherefore he gives them in this Chapter to underſtand, that he was well acquainted with their vilifying Reflections and Calumnies, which were both unreaſonable and unjuſt, and that he reſented them as ſuch.*

1 NOW I Paul my ſelf beſeech you, by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt, who in preſence am baſe among you, but being abſent am bold toward you. 2 But I beſeech you, that I may not be bold when I am preſent, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold againſt ſome which think of us, as if we walked according to the fleſh. 3 For tho' we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Charge brought in unjuſtly againſt St. *Paul* by the falſe Apoſtles, namely, that when he was preſent amongſt the *Corinthians* he was low and humble enough to ſome degree to Baſeneſs; but when abſent, that then he writes like a Lord to them, and exerciſes an Authority with Pride and Imperiouſneſs over them. The greateſt Apoſtle, no more than the meaneſt Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, cannot expect Protection from Slanders and

Falſe Accuſation. *Obſerve* (2.) The Pious and Prudent Courſe which the Apoſtle takes for his own Neceſſary and Juſt Vindication; he beſeeches them by all that Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, which according to the Command and Example of Chriſt he deſired to expreſs towards them, firmly to believe that he deſired nothing more than not to be forced to uſe his Power with that Boldneſs towards them, which he feared he muſt uſe againſt the Falſe Apoſtles, who accuſed him of too much Servility and Meanneſs in his Behaviour amongſt them, and reproached his Miniſtry as Carnal and Self-ſeeking.

3 For tho' we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh.

That is, altho' we yet dwell in the Body, and conſequently are not free from Humane Infirmities and Weakneſſes, yet neither my Miniſtry nor my Life are from fleſhly Principles, by fleſhly Means, or for fleſhly Ends. The beſt and holieſt of Men in this Life walk in the Fleſh; they are cloathed with a Mortal Body; but they do not *war after the Fleſh*, they do not fight under the Banner of corrupt Nature, Here *Note*, The Chriſtian Life deſcribed; it is a *Warfare*, *We war*; it is a Life of vigorous Oppoſition; the Chriſtians has many Enemies to conflict with, and to contend againſt, both outward and inward Enemies; in a paſſive Senſe he is a Man of Strife and Contention, his Hand is againſt many, and many Hands againſt him; he doth not manage a War for the Fleſh, but againſt the Fleſh; and in the next Verſe he tells us with what Weapons he managed this War.

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds) 5 Caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt:

Obſerve here, (1.) That as the Life of every Chriſtian is a continual Warfare, ſo the Miniſters of the Goſpel are more eminently Men of War; they fight againſt *Principalities* and *Powers*, and the Devil draws up his full Strength to pull down the Office of the Miniſtry, which is erected for the pulling down the Strong Holds of him and his Kingdom. *Obſerve* (2.) The Weapons which theſe Spiritual Warriors, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, do make uſe of in their Conflict and Combat with Sin and Satan; *The Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual.* They are not Carnal or Fleſhly Weapons that we uſe; neither Fraud, nor Flattery, nor Force, but Spiritual Armour, with which we batter the Fortreſſes of Sin and Satan; namely, the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the plain and perſwaſive Preaching of the Goſpel, the Holy Spirit. Miracles of all Sorts, Eminent Wiſdom and Patience, Exemplary Zeal and Courage in executing and inflicting the Cenſures of the Church upon the Diſobedient. *Obſerve* (3.) Theſe Weapons are called mighty, but mighty thro' God; that is, as quickned by the Power and Preſence of God's Spirit; then is our Miniſtry mighty when made mighty thro' God: The Spirits of Darkneſs cannot be conquered but by Spiritual Weapons; it is as poſſible to make an Impreſſion with your Finger upon a Wall of Braſs, as for the beſt Sermon in the World to make an effectual Impreſſion upon a Sinner's Will without the Co-operation and concurring Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit; *The Weapons of our Warfare are Spiritual and Mighty through God.* 'Tis the Spirit that gives them their Succeſs and Efficacy; there is a Real Spiritual Power, and Energetical Preſence of Chriſt, in his own Inſtitutions and Appointments. When the Sword of the Spirit is taken into the Hand of the Spirit it works Wonders. *Obſerve* (4.) The great and good Execution which theſe Spiritual Weapons do effect and accompliſh when thus accompanied with the Power of God; they are mighty to the *pulling down of Strong Holds*; by which ſome do underſtand a particular beloved Luſt, a ſpecial Sin, by which Satan keeps and holds Poſſeſſion of the Sinner's Heart: Others underſtand it more generally of every thing that oppoſeth, reſiſteth, and hindereth the Succeſs of the Goſpel; and particularly the ſtubborn Will of the Sinner, which is ſo ſtrong an Hold, that no Power ſhort of an Almighty Power can influence it to ſurrender; *Caſting down Imaginations*, or Reaſonings, and proud Conceits, and particularly Unbelief, in which Sinners fortifie themſelves againſt the Convictions of the Word, diſdaining to ſubmit themſelves to the Abaſing, Humble and Self-denying Way of the Goſpel. But behold the Glorious Conqueſt which the Goſpel of Chriſt obtains over Sinners thus fortified againſt it! It *caſts down Imaginations*, and *pulls down every Strong Hold.* Thus the Miniſtry of the Goſpel ſpoils Satan of his Armour, in which he truſted, by ſhewing the Sinner that all this can be no defence to his Soul againſt the Wrath of God. *Obſerve* (5.) The Improvement of the Victory; the Goſpel doth not only lead away theſe Enemies ſpoil'd, but brings them into Captivity and Obedience to its ſelf. O Happy and Bleſſed Conqueſt! Sinners do not only lay down their Arms, and fight no more againſt Chriſt, but they repair to his Camp, and fight for him, with thoſe Reaſonings of theirs which before were employed againſt him. O Bleſſed Victory, where the Conqueror and Conquered both Triumph together!

6 And having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

That is, having in a readineſs that which will revenge all Diſobedience upon Refractory and Stubborn Offenders, (namely, the Power of Excommunication,) and both Authority and Ability to inflict ſuch Corporal Puniſhment as he judged fit, by delivering them unto Satan, which Power he reſolved to make uſe of when the greater part of them were by their Obedience to his Admonitions reduced to good Order again; where *Note*, That the Apoſtle deferrs the excommunicating and cenſuring the Offenders amongſt them, they being very many, till he had by Exhortation and Argument brought over as many as poſſibly he could unto Obedience. There is no place of ſevere Remedies when the Diſeaſe has taken and infected the whole Church: The Offenders in a Church, when very many, cannot be eaſily puniſhed; for when great Multitudes are concern'd, they are like to draw great Multitudes after them. The Apoſtle's Practice in this Caſe here is a good Pattern for our Imitation, not to be too forward, raſh and haſty, in denouncing the Cenſures of the Church, but to proceed prudently and gradually; firſt uſing all fair Means and gentle Methods, and waiting with all Patience for the reducing them to their Duty who will be reduced, and then revenging the Glory and Honour of God only upon ſuch as will by no Means be reclaimed or reduced.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? if any man truſt to himſelf, that he is Chriſt's, let him of himſelf think this again, that as he is Chriſt's, even ſo are we Chriſt's.

Becauſe the falſe Apoſtles had taught the *Corinthians* to deſpiſe St. *Paul* upon the account of his mean Appearance, he does here expoſtulate with them, and deſires to know whether they would judge of Men by outward Appearance, or by inward Worth. As if he had ſaid, Are ye ſo weak as to judge of me by my outward Perſon, by my bodily Preſence, by the meanneſs of my Garb, by the ſmallneſs of my Stature, by my outward Aſpect and Countenance? But if you will judge of me and the pretended Apoſtles by Miniſterial Gifts and Authority received from Chriſt, ſurely I have as much to ſhew of theſe as they can pretend to ſhew; for in nothing was I behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles. There is no judging of Men, much leſs of Miniſters, by outward Appearances; much real Worth ſometimes lodges within, when nothing but what is deſpicable and contemptible appears without.

8 For though I ſhould boaſt ſomewhat more of our authority, (which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your deſtruction) I ſhould not be aſhamed:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I have not only an equal Power and Authority with thoſe which deſpiſe me, (the falſe Teachers,) but I have an Authority and Power which they cannot, durſt not, will not, pretend unto; namely, the Power to inflict Corporal Puniſhments upon obſtinate and contumacious Offenders, and delivering them up to Satan; which Power, if at any time I make uſe of, it is for Edification, not for Deſtruction. This Rod is not to be uſed raſhly, but diſcreetly, by me. *Obſerve* we, and learn from hence, an Excellent Rule, never to handle the Cenſures of the Church (thoſe Edge-Tools) but with Care and Caution, with an Intention to reform, not to ruin, to ſave, not deſtroy; for the Churches Power is for Edification, not Deſtruction.

9 That I may not ſeem as if I would terrifie you by letters. 10 For his letters (ſay they) are weighty and powerful, but his bodily preſence is weak, and his ſpeech contemptible. 11 Let ſuch an one think this, that ſuch as we are in word by letters, when we are abſent, ſuch will we be alſo in deed when we are preſent.

Our Apoſtle here goes on, vindicating himſelf from the Aſperſions and Reflections which the falſe Teachers caſt upon him. They told the *Corinthians* that St. *Paul*'s Letters were indeed Severe and Authoritative, Terrifying and Affrighting; but his Perſonal Preſence was Weak, and his Speech Contemptible. Tradition tells us, that *Paul* (according to his Name,) was a Man of a very little Stature, and his Voice anſwerably ſmall, whence probably the falſe Apoſtles took occaſion to raiſe this Report of his Preſence and Speech. St. *Chryſoſtom* ſaith that St. *Paul*'s Stature was low, his Body crooked, his Head bald; and when it is added that *his Speech was contemptible*, it cannot be underſtood as if it were ſo for want of Eloquence, but it is thought this referrs rather to ſome Infirmity or Natural Impediment which the Apoſtle might have in his Speech. The Gift of Knowledge and Learning, and the Gift of Utterance and Elocution, as they are diſtinct in their Nature, ſo they are ſeparable in their Subject, and do not always go together; a Perſon of Profoundeſt Knowledge is not always happy in Elocution and Utterance. However, in theſe falſe Teachers we ſee the conſtant Method and Practice of Impoſtors and Seducers; namely, to aſperſe and leſſen all that ſtand in their Light: This is an old Way of inſinuating into the People. The falſe Apoſtles feared they ſhould never Reign at *Corinth*, but by bringing St. *Paul* into Diſeſteem with the *Corinthians*, therefore they ſay *his Letters are weighty, but his Bodily Preſence weak.* But the Apoſtle, *Verſe* 11. gives them to underſtand that they ſhould find him the ſame both abſent and preſent; and that his Deeds then ſhould appear as awful as his Words now; that when he came again he would not ſpare, but puniſh, all Diſobedience. *Note* here, that the Thing which St. *Paul* would have his Accuſers fear, was that by the Miraculous Gift of the Holy Ghoſt given to him to inflict Corporal Puniſhments upon Diſobedient Perſons, they ſhould ſpeed as *Elymas* did, *Acts* 13. 8. who was ſmitten with Blindneſs, *&c.*

12 For we dare not make our ſelves of the Number, or compare our ſelves with ſome that commend themſelves: but they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe. 13 But we will not boaſt of things without our meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you. 14 For we ſtretch not our ſelves beyond our meaſure, as though we reach not unto you; for we are come as far as to you alſo, in preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt:

Obſerve here, (1.) St. *Paul*'s juſt Charge which he brings in againſt the falſe Apoſtles for their Pride and Vanity, in commending themſelves, and comparing themſelves with ſuch as were like themſelves, *They meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe.* The Reaſon why many think themſelves wiſer than they are, is, becauſe they compare themſelves with thoſe that are below themſelves, and not above them in Underſtanding and Knowledge. It is an Excellent Means to keep us from Pride to conſider how many are above us in Knowledge; that there are Thouſands ſo much excelling us in Underſtanding, that our Knowledge is but Ignorance, our Strength but Weakneſs, our Faith but Unbelief, our Fruitfulneſs but Barrenneſs, compared with theirs. *Obſerve* (2.) As the Pride and Vanity of the falſe Apoſtles, ſo the great Modeſty and Humility of St. *Paul*, the true Apoſtle of Chriſt Jeſus. *But we will not boaſt of Things without our Meaſure, but according to the Meaſure which God hath diſtributed to us*; where *Note*, The Apoſtle makes his Apoſtleſhip, or Preaching of the Goſpel, to be as it were his Spiritual Exerciſe, or running a Race, to which he here alludes; declaring that he kept his Province, his Stage, his Compaſs of Ground which God had marked out to him, beyond or out of which Line whoever pretends to run doth over-extend himſelf, and boaſt without his Meaſure. *Obſerve* (3.) That the Apoſtle's Line or Meaſure reached as far as *Corinth*, where Chriſt never had been Preached; thither he came, and there he firſt Planted the Chriſtian Faith amongſt them; and he takes Occaſion from hence to advance himſelf above the falſe Apoſtles. (1.) That he could ſhew a Commiſſion to Preach to the *Corinthians*; a Meaſure by which God had diſtributed the *Corinthians* to him, as his proper Province, which none of them could pretend unto. (2.) That whereas they went out of their Line, leaping from one Church to another, he went on orderly in the Converſion of Churches to the Faith, from *Judea* through all the Interjacent Provinces, till he came to *Corinth*. (3.) That whereas they came to thoſe Churches where the Goſpel had been already Preached, and ſo could only boaſt of Things made ready to their Hands, he preach'd the Goſpel where Chriſt was not named before.

15 Not boaſting of things without our meaſure, that is, of other mens labours; but having hope, when your faith is increaſed, that we ſhall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16. To preach the goſpel in the regions beyond you, and not to boaſt in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

Here the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* that he would not boaſt of other Mens Labours, nor pretend any Title to thoſe Chriſtians at *Corinth*, or anywhere elſe, whom others had Converted, as the falſe Apoſtles did: Notwithſtanding he declares his Hope, that when the Goſpel ſhould have an eminent Succeſs amongſt them, and thereby their Faith be encreaſed, that the Encreaſe of their Faith would encreaſe his Joy and Comfort, his preſent Advantage and future Reward; becauſe it was the Fruit and Encreaſe of the Seed which he had himſelf Sown amongſt them. The Apoſtle alſo doth farther declare his Hopes that he ſhould preach the Goſpel beyond *Corinth*, in the Regions of *Achaia*, where it had not been Preached before; he being unwilling to enter upon others Mens Labours. Here *Note*, That tho' ordinary Miniſters are fixed in particular Places, and confined to particular Churches, yet the Apoſtles had a Commiſſion to go into all Places, and preach the Goſpel over the whole World, and were tied to no certain Place or People. *Note* farther, That the Apoſtle ſeems to prefer an Inſtrumentality in the Work of Converſion before being Inſtrumental in the Work of Edification. The falſe Apoſtles could only pretend to Build upon other Mens Foundations, and carry on a Work by others made ready to their Hands: But the Apoſtle preferr'd preaching the Goſpel where Chriſt had never been heard of, as being unwilling to Build upon another's Foundation, or to boaſt of another Man's Line. It is a ſpecial Favour now vouchſafed by God to us his Miniſters, if he puts the Honour upon us, to make us Inſtruments in his Hands, either for Converſion or Edification, either for bringing Home or Building up a People. Happy we, if when our Predeceſſors have laboured before us, we enter into their Labours, and ſee the Seed which they ſowed with a Laborious Hand flouriſhing in the Lives of our People, to the Joy of our Hearts., E'er long both he that ſowed and he that reapeth ſhall rejoice together.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord:

Theſe Words are a Seaſonable Exhortation to all the Miniſters of the Goſpel. (1.) To take heed that they Glory not in themſelves, or in any Services or Performances of their own: As it is the higheſt Act of Grace to make our Boaſt of God all the Day long, ſo it is the higheſt Acting of Corruption to make a Boaſt of any thing we either have, or tho' but for a Moment. Alas! What have we that we have not received? Or what do we wherein we have not been divinely aſſiſted? And if ſo, why ſhould we Glory? Verily, when Man is moſt bent and ſet upon theſe Gloryings, God delights to check him therein, and ſpit upon his Glorying; and ſo jealous is God of his Glory, that he ſeldom ſuffers a proud Miniſter, that aſſumes and arrogates to himſelf, to be either ſerviceable or ſucceſsful in his Work. (2.) Theſe Words are an Exhortation to all the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as not to Glory in themſelves, ſo to Glory in the Lord; that is, (1.) To Glory in the Work of the Lord, that we promote his Kingdom, his Honour and Intereſt in the World. (2.) To Glory in the Help of the Lord; the Lord is a Maſter in Covenant with us, and that a Covenant of Grace, in which every Command hath a Promiſe annexed to it, a Promiſe both of Aſſiſtance and Acceptance. (3.) To Glory in the Reward of the Lord, expected by us, and ſecured to us, by Purchaſe, and by Promiſe; the private Chriſtians Labours ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, much leſs his faithful Miniſters, who have borne the Burthen and Heat of the Day; let them then Glory in the Lord, and not in themſelves, ſeeing all the Good that is in them and their Actions comes from him, and their Recompence of Reward is ſecured by him.

18 For not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Three Things are here obſervable. (1.) The Proneneſs which is in Human Nature to admire, applaud and commend itſelf. Man is a proud Piece of Fleſh, and a little apprehended Excellency in himſelf preſently puffs him up, and he looks big with Conceit: 'Tis rare to ſee a Man Rich in Gifts, and Poor in Spirit; Poverty of Spirit is better than all the Riches of Gifts; yea, it is the trueſt Riches of Grace. *Obſerve* (2.) Tho' Man is prone to commend and admire himſelf, yet Self-commendation is no juſt Praiſe, but rather Diſparagement, a ſhameful Indication both of Pride and Folly. He that commendeth himſelf is not approved either of God or Wiſe Men; the ſame Word in Hebrew ſignifies to praiſe our ſelves, and to be fooliſh, becauſe there is no greater Evidence of Folly than Self-commendation, yet ſometimes a wiſe Man is forced to boaſt of his own Performances, rather in a Way of Self-vindication than by Way of Self-commendation. *Obſerve* (3.) That it is God's Approbation, and not our own Commendation, which is Matter of true Praiſe and real Honour. When God and Conſcience bare Witneſs to our Sincerity, we need neither our own or others Commendation; the open Teſtimony of God, and the ſilent Applauſe of our own Conſcience, is above all Commendations whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

Our Apoſtle is forced in this Chapter, for his own Vindication, to enter upon a Juſt and Neceſſary Commendation of himſelf; he gives us a large Catalogue of his Sufferings and Services, not to Grace himſelf, but to Glorifie God thereby; not that his Perſon might be had in any undue Admiration, but for the Vindication of himſelf and his Apoſtleſhip from the Contempt of thoſe who preferr'd the falſe Apoſtles before him. And accordingly he beſpeaks the Corinthians *to bear with his ſeeming Folly a little, in commending of himſelf after this unuſual Manner. Thus he addreſſes them,* Verſe 1.

1 WOuld to God you could bear with me a little in my folly; and indeed bear with me.
2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealouſie: for I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.

Obſerve here. (1.) That which the Apoſtle calls his Folly, is his ſpeaking ſo much in his own Commendation and Praiſe, becauſe ordinarily Self-commendation has a very great ſhew of Folly in it, tho' not always. As if he had ſaid, I would you could bear with me a little in that which looks like a fooliſh boaſting in me, namely, my glorying in my Performances, in my Services and Sufferings, amongſt you; and indeed you muſt bear with me herein: Where *Note*, That altho' the Apoſtle lay under a Neceſſity to commend himſelf for the Vindication of his Office, which made him free from Folly in this Matter, yet becauſe, generally ſpeaking, Self-commendation uſually proceeds from Folly and Vanity, and ſuch as did not know the Neceſſity which lay upon St. *Paul* thus to ſpeak, would be apt to impute Folly to him for thus ſpeaking, he therefore calls it Folly himſelf firſt, and tells the *Corinthians* they did and muſt bear with it. *Obſerve* (2.) The Reaſon aſſign'd which conſtrained the Apoſtle thus to do it was his Holy Jealouſie for them. He had, by the preaching of the Goſpel, brought them to know and believe in Chriſt, and ſo by converting them to the Chriſtian Faith, had eſpouſed them to Chriſt: He earneſtly therefore deſired that he might preſent them a pure and chaſte Virgin; that is, a ſpotleſs Church unto Chriſt. As the Jews ſay that *Moſes* eſpouſed *Iſrael* to God in Mount *Sinai*, when he made them enter into Covenant with them there; ſo ſays the Apoſtle here, by converting you to the Chriſtian Faith, I have eſpouſed you to One Huſband, even Chriſt.

3 But I fear leſt by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your Minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes with a Rhetorical Inſinuation begg'd their Pardon and their Patience, whilſt by a juſt and neceſſary Commendation of himſelf he vindicated his Perſon and Office from Contempt, and having ſhew'd that what he did and ſaid was the Fruit and Effect of a Pious Jealouſie, or Holy Love mixed with Fear, accordingly he tells them very plainly in this Verſe that he was really afraid of them, leſt as *Eve* was ſeduced by the Subtilty of the Devil, ſo their Minds ſhould be corrupted by falſe Apoſtles, and ſeduced from the Pure Doctrine of the Goſpel: For as the nobleſt and moſt generous Wine is adulterated by mingling it with Water, ſo is the Doctrine of the Goſpel corrupted by mixing with it either with Philoſophical Speculations, or Jewiſh Traditions, or any Sort of Human Inventions. Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay, *I fear leſt your Minds ſhould be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Chriſt.*

4 For if he that cometh, preacheth another Jeſus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another ſpirit, which ye have not received, or another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, It is one Chriſt, one Spirit, one Goſpel, and not many, which we have preached, and you have received; now if your New Teachers, the falſe Apoſtles, have another Chriſt to ſet forth, more excellent Gifts of the Spirit to boaſt of, another Goſpel to preach unto you which I never preached amongſt you, let them be heard and received: But this being impoſſible, they might well bear with him in his modeſt Boaſting and Glorying in what he had done and ſuffered amongſt them, by whoſe Miniſtry they were at firſt converted to Chriſtianity.

5 For I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the very
chiefeſt Apoſtles. 6 But though I be rude in ſpeech,
yet not in knowledge: but we have been throughly
made manifeſt among you in all things.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great Modeſty of the Apoſtle in this Expreſſion, I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the chiefeſt Apoſtles: He might have ſaid that he was equal with them, and in ſome Senſe ſuperior to them, even the moſt eminent of them, *Peter*, *James* and *John*. Indeed the Apoſtleſhip, as an Office, was of equal Honour in all the Apoſtles; but even amongſt them ſome had more excellent Gifts, and greater Enlargements, and did more ſignal Services than others. Thus one of thoſe Stars differed from another in Brightneſs and Glory: But *Obſerve* (2.) Before whom it is that St. *Paul* thus compares himſelf with the chiefeſt Apoſtles; it was not before the true, but the falſe, Apoſtles, that he makes this modeſt Boaſt. He did not contend with any of the Apoſtles of Chriſt for the upper Hand, nor ſay, I am not behind any of you, or I am better than any of you; but he only gives check to thoſe falſe Apoſtles who Undervalued him, and poured Contempt upon him. He who ſaid at another time, *I am not worthy to be called an Apoſtle*, ſays here, *I am not behind the chiefeſt Apoſtle*; from whence we learn, That the Miniſters of Chriſt may ſtand upon Terms of Credit with thoſe that vilifie their Perſons, diſparage their Function, and diſcredit that Honourable Work which God hath called them unto. Tho' all Ambitious contending with others is odious, yet no Man ought to betray either the Truth of God, or his own Integrity, leſt he ſhould be counted Contentious: He purchaſes the Opinion of an humble and peaceable Miniſter too dear, who either pays the Faith of God for it, or his own Credit; ſomething of Reputation being abſolutely neceſſary in a Miniſter to render his Labours ſucceſsful. *Obſerve* (3.) The Objection which the falſe Apoſtles (thoſe proud Boaſters of their Eloquence) made againſt St. *Paul*, namely, that he was *Rude in Speech*; that the Apoſtle had ſome Imperfection in his Speech or Utterance is the Opinion of many. Others affirm that he was an Eloquent Preacher from *Acts* 19. 12. where he is compared to *Mercurius* for it: But he did not think fit in his Miniſtry to uſe the *Grecian* flaunting Way in Oſtentation thereof, that ſo the Power of the Goſpel might not ſeem to be placed in Human Wiſdom. However, ſays the Apoſtle, tho' *I be rude in Speech, yet not in Knowledge*; if my Language has nothing extraordinary in it, yet ſure nothing can be objected againſt my Skill in the Myſteries of Salvation: But I need not tell you of this, who have had the Proof of it in my Miniſtry amongſt your ſelves. *Note*, We here the Manner and Method of St. *Paul*'s preaching, it was Grave and Serious, Pious and Ardent, Plain and Profitable. No doubt he could have acted the Orator in the Pulpit as well as moſt; but he choſe rather to ſpeak cloſe and home to the Conſciences of Men in a plain and familiar Stile, delivering all his Evangelical and Apoſtolical Precepts ſo plainly, that the weakeſt Capacities might underſtand and receive them. Plain Truths, without any Art or Varniſh, may be conveyed with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience, than all the Charms of Human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue.

7 Have I committed an offence in abaſing my ſelf that you might be exalted, becauſe I have preached to you the goſpel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you ſervice. 9 And when I was preſent with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia ſupplied: and in all things I have kept my ſelf from being burdenſome unto you, and ſo will I keep my ſelf. 10 As the truth of Chriſt is in me, no man ſhall ſtop me of this boaſting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? becauſe I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13 For ſuch are falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt. 24 And no marvel; for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing, if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of righteouſneſs; whoſe end ſhall be according to their works.

Obſerve here, (1.) That St. *Paul* in his former Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* abundantly proved the Lawfulneſs of his taking Maintenance from thoſe to whom he preached the Goſpel; yet here he tells the *Corinthians* he preached freely to them, without putting them to any Charge, though at the ſame time he had a Subſiſtence from the Brethren of *Macedonia*. From whence learn, That one Church ought to Contribute towards the Furtherance of the Goſpel in and amongſt other Churches. Here the Brethren in *Macedonia* ſupplied the Apoſtle with Maintenance whilſt he preached to the Church at *Corinth*. *Obſerve* (2.) The Reaſon why St. *Paul* did preach the Goſpel without receiving any thing for the ſame at *Corinth*; namely, to cut off Occaſion from the falſe Apoſtles, who ſought Occaſion to traduce and ſlander him as a poor indigent Fellow that preached for Bread, and gloried that they preached freely; where *Note*, That it is very probable that theſe falſe Apoſtles were ſo Rich Men, who took no Pay of the Churches for what they did, but preached, or rather deceived freely, and would have reproached the Apoſtle as a mercenary Preacher had he taken any Thing. From the whole Learn (1.) That it is agreeable to the Mind of Chriſt that the Miniſters and Diſpenſers of his Goſpel ſhould be maintained: A Maintenance for the Miniſtry is certainly of Divine Right. Learn (2.) That the Apoſtles themſelves did not all work, at leaſt not at all times, for their Livelihood, but, generally ſpeaking, did always receive Maintenance from the Churches, *v.* 8. *I robbed other Churches, taking Wages of them.* We do not find the Eleven Apoſtles, after the Holy Ghoſt came upon them, wrought afterwards with their Hands for their Livelihood, but gave themſelves coninually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word, *Acts* 6. 4. Learn (3.) That tho' St. *Paul* did labour with his own Hands at *Corinth*, and refuſed Maintenance for the Reaſon forementioned, yet his Example doth not enjoin us to Work for our Subſiſtence with the Labour of our Hands, nor forbid us to take Maintenance when the Churches we ſerve are able to maintain us. St. *Paul* tells us when he wrought with his Hands he had then a Power to leave working, 1 *Cor.* 9. 6. he had a Right to Maintenance from the Church at *Corinth*, though upon Prudential Conſideration he did forbear it, and no Law of Chriſt reſtrained him from it. Learn (4.) That there have been Perſons all along, from the firſt Planting and Preaching of the Goſpel, who have ſought Occaſion, and taken all Occaſions, tho' very unjuſtly, to charge the Miniſters of Chriſt with Covetouſneſs, Worldly-mindedneſs, and with Preaching for filthy Lucre-ſake. It was St. *Paul*'s own Caſe here, and therefore, ſays he, *will I glory in this*, that at *Corinth*, and all *Achaia*, I have preached freely, to cut off Occaſion from them that deſire Occaſion to charge me with Covetouſneſs and Worldly-mindedneſs, which he would by no means give them an handle for, And thus it continues to this Day, let a Miniſter be never ſo laborious in his Office, or inoffenſive in his Life, if he expects but a moderate part of what is his juſt due, there are thoſe that will cheat him of one half of his Right, and then charge him with Covetouſneſs for demanding the other. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Deſcription and Character here given by St. *Paul* of the falſe Apoſtles, *They Transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt*; that is, they pretend themſelves to be Chriſt's Apoſtles, and act as if they were ſuch indeed: They take up the Doctrine of Chriſt in ſome Things which the Holy Apoſtles Taught, but it was that they might weaken the Eſtimation of the true Apoſtles in the Hearts of the *Corinthians*, and ſet up themſelves there. Theſe falſe Apoſtles were Judaizing Chriſtians, who mingled Judaiſm with Chriſtianity, and endeavoured to bring the *Corinthians* under the Bondage of the Ceremonial Law. Behold here the firſt Hereſie with which the Wiſdom of God was pleaſed to exerciſe the Church even in the Apoſtles Days; that no Church, and no Age of the Church, might paſs without ſome Temptation and Trial, *They Transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt, even as Satan himſelf is Transformed into an Angel of Light*; then is Satan an Angel of Light when he ſuggeſts Good for Evil Ends, and under ſpecious Pretences of bringing Glory to God, doth tempt Perſons to Tranſgreſs the Will of God. Thus the falſe Apoſtles would preach Error with as great Zeal and Induſtry as the Apoſtles of Chriſt did preach Truth, and uſe their utmoſt Arguments, Perſwaſions and Motives, for embracing of Error, which the Holy Apoſtles did for the Entertainment of Truth, ſeeming to do the ſame Things that the True Miniſters of Chriſt did. It is very poſſible for Men to be really Satan's Inſtruments, animated and taught by him to do his Work againſt the Intereſt of Chriſt and his Truth, and yet at the ſame time pretend to excel and go beyond Chriſt's Faithful Miniſters in preaching Truth and Holineſs: So that the high Pretences to Truth, Orthodoxneſs, Free-grace, Purity and Unity, are no ſufficient Evidences of a True Miniſtry. Satan and his Miniſters, who love to Transform themſelves ſometimes into an Angel of Light, may pretend to all theſe, and are notwithſtanding the ſworn Enemies of Chriſt and his Kingdom.

16 I ſay again, let no man think me a fool; if otherwiſe, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boaſt my ſelf a little. 17 That which I ſpeak, I ſpeak it not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly in this confidence of boaſting.

Here our Apoſtle returns again to his own juſt and neceſſary Vindication of himſelf; he acknowledges it unbecoming and unſeemly in itſelf to boaſt much; and that boaſting is the uſual Mark of a Fool; but it is no Folly when the Intereſt of God and Souls require it: It was only ſeemingly, and not really, his Folly; tho' it had the Appearance of Folly in Oſtentation, yet with reſpect to the Scope, the Aim, and End, and Deſign of it, it was needful and neceſſary. But yet he tells them, that what he had before ſpoke, and was now farther about to ſpeak, *he ſpake not after the Lord*; that is, as if the Lord commanded any ſuch boaſting and glorying in our ſelves, or of our ſelves. He did not pretend to have any Special Command from God to enlarge ſo copiouſly in his own Commendation; for the Spirit of God nowhere adviſes us to commend our ſelves, or to glory either in the Sufferings we have undergone, or the Services we have done: Yet what the Apoſtle here ſaid and did, though not after the Lord, yet was it not contrary to the Lord, or to the Direction of his Word, which nowhere command us to conceal what Grace God has wrought in us, or the Good done by us upon a fitting Occaſion, and with a ſincere Deſign, that he, and not our ſelves, may have the Praiſe and Glory of it.

18 Seeing that many glory after the fleſh, I will glory alſo. 19 For ye ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing ye *your ſelves* are wiſe. 20 For ye ſuffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face. 21 I ſpeak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: howbeit, whereinſoever any is bold, (I ſpeak fooliſhly) I am bold alſo.

Here our Apoſtle, with ſome kind of Salt and Smartneſs, reflects upon the *Corinthians* (whom Ironically he calls wiſe Men) for ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed upon by their falſe Teachers, to be tyrannized over, to be ſpunged upon and exhauſted, to be brought again into Bondage to Jewiſh Ceremonies, to be ſmitten on the Face; that is, to be upbraided to their very Faces, becauſe they had ſubjected themſelves to ſo mean and weak a Perſon as *Paul*, a Tentmaker. However, he aſſures them, that in any thing according to the Fleſh, wherein the falſe Apoſtles could glory, he could glory alſo. Here *Note*, That by glorying after the Fleſh is meant glorying in any external Priviledges and outward Advantages, particularly in glorying that they were the Seed of *Abraham* according to the Fleſh; for the *Jews* had a very high Opinion of themſelves, as being the Seed of *Abraham*, and the only People of God by viſible Profeſſion at that time in the World; having contemptible Thoughts of all others, whom they called the Prophane, and the People of the Earth, likening them to Dogs. Now the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* plainly, That altho' there is nothing after the Fleſh which deſerves greatly to be gloried in, yet ſeeing that the falſe Apoſtles did pride themſelves in theſe Things, he could boaſt of the ſame Carnal Priviledges with them, and glory after the Fleſh as well as themſelves; and accordingly thus he ſpeaks in the following Verſes.

22 Are they Hebrews, *ſpeaking the Jewiſh Language*? ſo am I: are they Iſraelites, *deſcended from Beloved Jacob*? ſo am I: are they the ſeed of Abraham, *and not Proſelytes*? ſo am I: 23 Are they miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) I am more ſo: in labours more abundant, *than any of them*, in ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft.

That is, I have ſuffered more for Chriſt by Stripes, by Impriſonments, by daily Dying, than any of them have done. Here *Note*, That theſe falſe Teachers, the *Judea* Doctors, were moſt certainly of the *Jewiſh* Race; and that they were not only converted to, but did preach up, the Faith of Chriſt; but withal, the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the *Jewiſh* Rites. Theſe Teachers went from *Judea*, and gave great Diſturbance to all Chriſtian Churches; as *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and *Philippi*: And we often find St. *Paul* complaining of them by the Name of thoſe of the Circumciſion, becauſe they required of ſuch as did embrace Chriſtianity to ſubmit to Circumciſion and the *Jewiſh* Law.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *ſtripes* ſave one.

The Law in *Deut.* 25. 3. allowed Forty Stripes to be given to them that were worthy to be beaten, but forbad them to exceed that number: But it being their Cuſtom to beat them with a Whip that had Three Cords, they muſt either ſtop at Thirty-nine, or exceed, and go to Forty-two. Here *Obſerve*, That the Apoſtle contending with theſe falſe Teachers, proves the Truth of his Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip; not as elſewhere, from the Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which did accompany his Preaching, but from his Sufferings, as being the Things which theſe falſe Apoſtles could not pretend unto, and ſo could not glory that they were like unto him in them.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwrack, a night and a day I have been in the deep: 26 In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderneſs, in perils in the ſea, in perils among falſe brethren; 27 In wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs.

Behold what a Catalogue the Apoſtle here gives of his Sufferings and Services: He was ſcourged by the *Jews* with Whips, beaten by the *Gentiles* with Rods, ſtoned by the Rabble, Thrice ſuffered Shipwrack, a Night and a Day toſſed to and fro upon the Sea, and in great Danger of Periſhing; in Journeyings often, from one Country to another, to Preach, Plant, and Propagate the Goſpel, in Perils at Sea and Land by Pirates and Robbers, in Perils by his Countrymen the *Jews*, in Perils in the Cities, *Damaſcus*, *Epheſus* and *Jeruſalem*, in Perils in Wilderneſſes and Deſarts, in Perils amongſt falſe Brethren, Men of the Chriſtian Profeſſion, in Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, by Travelling from Place to Place, in Hunger and Thirſt, in Faſtings often; that is, in neceſſitated Hunger often, and in voluntary Faſtings frequent, for Spiritual Purpoſes: *In Cold and Nakedneſs*; that is, very Poor and Thin in Cloathing. Lord! What Tongue can utter, or what Heart can conceive, the Pains which the Apoſtle took, or the Hazards which he run, in preaching the Goſpel to a loſt World? And yet the good Man heartily Thanks our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (for all that,) who had counted him Faithful, and put him into the Miniſtry. Verily none of the Miniſters of Chriſt have any Reaſon or Cauſe to repent of the Choice of their Office, whatever Services they undertake, or whatever Sufferings or Reproaches it either hath or may expoſe them to. Alas! What is all that we feel to what this Apoſtle underwent? And what is all that he underwent for Chriſt, compared with that Tranſcendent Reward which is in the Hand of Chriſt, both for him and us?

28 Beſides thoſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The Apoſtle's Burthen of outward Trouble was diſcovered before, his Burthen of inward Care is declared now. Beſides, thoſe Things which were afflicting to him from without, the Care and Buſineſs of all the new-planted Churches, was daily upon his Heart and Hand; beſides all his bodily Labours by Journeying and Travelling inceſſantly from Place to Place, his ſolicitous Care and Thoughtfulneſs of Mind for the Proſperity and Happineſs of all the Churches of Chriſt, both near and afar off, was great and preſſing; the Holy Man felt as much by Sympathy as he did by Senſe. Many were the Perſonal Troubles which he felt, but more were the Churches Troubles, of which he had feeling; concerning which he thus expreſſes himſelf in the next Verſe.

29 Who is weak, I and am not weak? who is offended, I and burn not?

That is, what particular Church, or what particular Chriſtian in any of the Churches of Chriſt, is weak in Faith, or wavering in their Profeſſion? Where is the Perſon that is aſſaulted with inward Temptations, or outward Troubles, and I do not ſympathize with him, yea, burn with Holy Zeal and fervent Deſire for his Settlement and Eſtabliſhing? Sympathy among all the Members, but eſpecially in and among the Miniſters of Chriſt, is a great Chriſtian Duty. They ought to have a tender Compaſſion to the whole Flock, and alſo a quick Senſe both of the Sins and of the Sufferings of every particular and individual Member and Part thereof. As

Chriſt, our Head, is afflicted in all his Churches Afflictions, ſo ought we as his Miniſters and Members to be afflicted in the Afflictions of our Fellow-Brethren. He that has no Croſs of his own muſt take up and bear his Brother's; yea, he that has many of his own muſt yet bear a part of all his Brethrens Croſſes. Good Men ever have been, and are, Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions, ready to mourn over, and lament for, both the Sins and Sufferings of others, from the Overflowings of a Chriſt-like Spirit in them. True Goodneſs evermore promotes Compaſſion.

30 If I muſt needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

By Infirmities here we are to underſtand Sufferings, Reproaches and Diſgraces, Afflictions and Perſecutions, for the Sake of the Goſpel; where *Note*, That the Apoſtle choſe rather to glory in what Chriſt had enabled him to ſuffer, than in what he enabled him to do for him; he had wrought divers Miracles, could ſpeak divers Tongues, had done very great and eminent Services for Chriſt, but not a Word of theſe; becauſe theſe indeed were Evidences of the Power of God in him, and of the Favour of God towards him, but no Demonſtrations of any inherent Grace or Goodneſs in him; whereas his patient bearing of ſuch ſharp, long and continual, Sufferings for the ſake of the Goſpel were undeniable Proofs of extraordinary Meaſures of Faith and Patience, of Holy Self-denial and Eminent Love to God, and conſequently were a truer and greater Cauſe of Boaſtings than extraordinary Gifts and Miraculous Operations.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Obſerve here how the Apoſtle in a moſt Awful and Solemn manner appeals to the All-knowing and Heart-ſearching God, that the foregoing Account of his Sufferings for Chriſt and his Goſpel was exact Truth, and no Lie. He calls God to bear Witneſs to the Certainty of all that he had ſaid of his Sufferings and Services: And calling him the *Father of our Lord* Jeſus, who is *Bleſſed for evermore*, affords an undeniable Argument to prove the Godhead of Chriſt; this Doxology, Bleſſed for evermore, being a Term of Honour uſually annexed by the *Jews* at the naming of God.

32 In Damaſcus the governour under Aretas the king, kept the City of the Damaſcenes with a gariſon, deſirous to apprehend me. 33 And through a window, in a basket was I let down by the wall, and eſcaped his hands.

The Apoſtle concludes this Chapter, containing a Relaon of his Sufferings, with a remarkable Deliverance which God gave him from Danger and Death, at the City of *Damaſcus* ſoon after his Converſion, of which mention is made, *Acts* 9. 24, 25. The *Jews*, whom he confuted and confounded with his Arguments at *Damaſcus*, ſought to kill him; to effect which they had by ſome Means or other brought over *Aretas*, who was King under the *Roman* Emperor at *Damaſcus*, and he engages with the *Jews* in perſecuting the Holy and Innocent Apoſtle: He ſhuts up the Gates of the City, keeps his Soldiers in Arms, and uſes all poſſible Means to prevent the Apoſtle's Eſcape. But what ſays the Pſalmiſt? *Pſ.* 127. 1. *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain*; either to keep out thoſe whom he will have in, or to keep in thoſe whom he will have out. All the Wall ſhall be an open Gate to thoſe whom Divine Providence will have to eſcape, as here to St. *Paul* being let down over the Wall by a Rope in a Basket; neither was it any evidence of Cowardice that the Apoſtle now fled, nor in the leaſt degree ſinful: Our Lord having given us a particular Licence in the Caſe, ſaying, when they perſecute you in one City fly to another. Beſides, the Perſecution now raiſed was directly levell'd againſt the Apoſtle in particular: It was therefore piouſly done in the Diſciples, and prudently done in himſelf, to attend the Means of his own Preſervation. As the Husbandman doth not commit all his Corn to the Oven, but ſave ſome for Seed, ſo doth God in Perſecution. All are not Martyrs, and none ſhall be ſo preſently; they muſt firſt finiſh their Courſe of Obedience before they finiſh their Courſe with Joy. Happy Soul, that can ſay with this Great and Good Man, *I have fought the good Fight, I have finiſht my Courſe, I have kept the Faith, I am ready to be offered up; henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away*, Amen.

CHAP. XII.

The Argument of this is much the ſame with that of the foregoing Chapter, namely, the Apoſtle's juſt and neceſſary Vindication of himſelf, (his Perſon and Miniſtry,) from the Aſperſions of the falſe Apoſtles, which were certain Erroneous Judaizing Teachers, who every where diſturbed the Churches Peace, and gave the Holy Apoſtle great Diſquiet. In the former Chapter he gloried in his Infirmities, that is, in his Suffering, called Infirmities, becauſe the beſt of Chriſtians are apt to bewray much Weakneſs, and to diſcover much paſſionate Infirmity, in and under them. But in this Chapter he comes to another kind of Holy Glorying, namely, in thoſe extraordinary Viſions and Revelations which he had from God. Concerning which he thus ſpeaks.

1 IT is not expedient for me doubtleſs, to glory: I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord.

That is, I acknowledge it neither Decent nor Advantageous, with reſpect to my ſelf, to go on in farther boaſting and glorying; but ſince it may be neceſſary with reſpect to you, I will declare what Viſions and Revelations I have received from the Lord, in which I ſhall give ſuch an Evidence of the Favours of Chriſt to me, and ſuch a Teſtimony of my Miſſion from Heaven, as none of theſe falſe Apoſtles or deceitful Workers can pretend unto. Learn hence, That altho' glorying or boaſting in itſelf is an inexpedient Thing, ſavours of Pride, and is an Evidence of Folly, when it is not neceſſary and juſt, and therefore all Chriſtians ſhould be backward to it: Yet that which is ſo inexpedient in itſelf, may, upon a juſt and fitting Occaſion, be not only lawful, but laudable, both a neceſſary and commendable Duty. *Obſerve* (2.) The preſent Subject Matter of St. *Paul*'s glorying; it was Heavenly Raptures and Viſions which he gloried in. Learn thence, That Divine Revelations acquainting the Soul with Heaven are Matters moſt worthy of humble and modeſt glorying. Oh! If God would vouchſafe to favour us with the Sight of what St. *Paul* ſaw, what little Things would Crowns and Scepters, Empires and Kingdoms, ſeem to us? How would it make us Long, Groan and Cry, to be with Chriſt? But though none of us may expect ſuch Raptures and Extaſies as this Apoſtle had, Bleſſed be God for that clear Revelation of this Heavenly Glory which the Goſpel gives, and for that Aſſurance which Faith gives, that Chriſt as our Forerunner is entered into it, and keeps poſſeſſion of it, in the Name and Stead of all Believers; he has prepared it for us, and is daily preparing us for that, and in his own appointed Time will put us into the actual Poſſeſſion of it; not for a few Hours, (which was all the Apoſtle enjoyed,) but for Eternal Ages.

2 I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) ſuch an one caught up to the third Heaven. 3 And I knew ſuch a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) 4 How that he was caught up into paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Obſerve (1.) That the Perſon here ſpoken of was doubtleſs himſelf, otherwiſe it had been no Cauſe or Ground of glorying to him at all; yet he ſpeaks in the Name of a

Third Perſon. Thence *Note*, That they who know moſt of God are moſt modeſt when they come to ſpeak of themſelves. *Obſerve* (2.) The Deſcription of the Perſon, *a Man in Chriſt*; that is, a Man acted by the Spirit of Chriſt above himſelf; and alſo a Deſcription of the Place he was caught up into, *Paradiſe*, the Seat of the Bleſſed. Learn thence, That there is a Third Heaven, or Heavenly Paradiſe, where are the Concerns and Hopes of Holy Souls: And Souls are not ſo cloſely tied to the Body, but they may, whenever God pleaſes, be rapt up into Paradiſe, or the Third Heaven. The Apoſtle not being able to tell whether he was in the Body, or out of the Body, ſheweth, that ſome-how the Soul was there, tho' he could not declare nor diſcover the manner how. *Obſerve* (3.) What St. *Paul* heard when thus rapt up into Paradiſe, namely, *unſpeakable Words*, ſuch as cannot be uttered; or if uttered, cannot be underſtood. Learn thence, That the Things of the Heavenly Paradiſe are to Mortal Men unſpeakable: There is no Human Language that hath Words fit to reveal that Part of Heavenly Things which God hath ſhut up as ſecret from us. *Obſerve* Laſtly, St. *Paul*'s great Humility, both in concealing formerly this extraordinary Favour, and now not without ſome Difficulty and Diſguiſe mentioning it, tho' for Defence of the Goſpel in a manner conſtrained thereunto; contenting himſelf with ſuch a Fame as his Deportment and outward Actions in ſerving the Intereſt of Chriſt could procure, and no way avoid.

5 Of ſuch an one will I glory: yet of my ſelf I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. *6* For though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool; for I will ſay the truth: but now I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

Here the Apoſtle declares, that altho' this Foretaſte of the Heavenly Glory was worthy to be gloried in, and tho' he might boaſt of himſelf as thus exalted, yet he being purely paſſive in it, and advanced freely by God to it, he choſe rather to aſcribe unto God the entire Glory of that, and content himſelf with glorying in ſuch Infirmities, and debaſing Sufferings, as he could ſtrictly call his own, being undergone by him with an invincible Courage and Conſtancy of Mind. However he aſſures them, that if he had a Mind to glory of this Rapture and Revelation, he might do it without Folly or Vanity, it being moſt certainly true; but he choſe rather to forbear, leſt he ſhould thereby give occaſion to any to over-value him, and to think more highly of him than his common Behaviour, his ordinary Words and Actions, gave them reaſon to do. A Wiſe and Good Man is not Ambitious of more Applauſe or Commendation than what his perſonal Worth or Merits deſervedly Challenges; he deſires no Man to think or ſpeak of him above that which he appeareth to be, which is always as he really is, being that in Reality which he is in Appearance.

7 And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure.

Obſerve here the great and ſpecial Sin which St. *Paul* was in danger of by the abundance of Revelations, namely, the Sin of Spiritual Pride. Learn thence, That Heavenly Revelations may be the Matter and Occaſion of unmeet and ſinful Exaltation; The Holieſt Chriſtians, after their moſt Heavenly Acquaintance, are not out of Danger of Spiritual Pride, or being too much exalted. Pride is ſuch a Sin as the Holieſt Saint is not fully ſecured from; no, not when he hath been hearing unutterable Words, and ſeeing the Heavenly Paradiſe it ſelf; no, not if he came down from the Third Heaven, newly from converſe with Angels, yet bringing an imperfect Nature with him, is he not out of Danger of this Sin, much leſs is he ſo when he cometh off his Knees from Prayer, *&c.* *Obſerve* (2.) The Way and Means which the Wiſdom of God made uſe of for preventing St. *Paul*'s falling into this dangerous Sin of Spiritual Pride, and that was the giving him a Thorn in the Fleſh; a bodily Pain ſay ſome, a bitter Perſecution ſay others, ſomething that was very afflictive to the Fleſh ſay all. Learn thence, That Spiritual Pride is ſo dangerous a Sin, that it is a Mercy to be freed from it, even by bodily Pain: God ſeeth our Danger when we ſee not our own, and will hurt the Body to ſave the Soul of his deareſt Children. Oh how much better is it that the Fleſh ſhould ſmart than that the Soul ſhould be over-much exalted! It is an happy Thorn in the Fleſh, which lets the Peſtilent and Corrupt Blood of Spiritual Pride out of the Soul. Lord! Why do we contend and quarrel with thee for every Sickneſs, bodily Pain, or afflictive Croſs? Can Sin be prevented or killed at too dear a Rate. *Obſerve* (3.) This Thorn in the Fleſh is called the Meſſenger of Satan, from whence St. *Chryſoſtom* concluded, that it was ſome Evil Angel that was permitted and impowered by God to Scourge and Buffet him. The Sufferings of the Beſt and Holieſt of Perſons in the Fleſh may be the Buffetings of a Meſſenger of Satan, and yet be from God. Satan certainly intendeth our Hurt, but God over-rules him as his Inſtrument to do us good: It is no Proof that a Man is not a Child of God becauſe Satan has a Permiſſion to Torment his Fleſh. The Meſſenger of Satan was ſent to buffet me, ſays St. *Paul*, leſt I ſhould be exalted.

8 For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

Note here, (1.) The Perſon prayed to, *the Lord*; that is, the Lord Jeſus, as appears by the Two next Verſes, that *the Power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.* Here is an Inſtance of Prayer directed to Chriſt, therefore here is an Inſtance of Chriſt's Divinity: Prayer made to Chriſt at all Times, in all Places, and for all Things, is an Evidence of his Omniſcience, Omnipotence, and Omnipreſence, and conſequently of his being Truly and Eſſentially God. *Note* (2.) The Subject Matter of this Prayer, and that was for the Removal of the Affliction, *I prayed that it might depart from me*; together with the reiterated Frequency of it, *I beſought the Lord Thrice.* Learn hence, That Peace doth not make the Fleſh inſenſible; a good Man may groan under bodily Pain, and lawfully pray for the removal of it, yea, be oft in Prayer for it; Earneſt and Frequent Prayer is not unſuitable to ſharp Afflictions; *for this I beſought the Lord Thrice*; where remark, St. *Paul*'s Conformity to his Saviour, who in his Agony prayed Thrice that the Cup might paſs; but both of them with profound Submiſſion. *Note* alſo, That the Apoſtles Gift of Healing was not to be uſed at their own Pleaſure, (then St. *Paul* might have healed himſelf,) but for the Confirmation of the Faith, when it pleaſed the Holy Spirit.

9 And he ſaid unto me, my grace is ſufficient for thee:——

Obſerve in this Anſwer that is given to St. *Paul*'s Prayer, that the Mercy prayed for is not in kind given in unto him, but promiſed Grace and Strength, which is better than the Mercy he prayed for. Learn thence, That the frequent and earneſt Prayers of the moſt Holy and Eminent Saints for Deliverance from outward Troubles may not be granted in the Kind or Thing deſired. We are not Lords, but Beggars, and muſt leave it to God to determine the Matter, the Manner, the Meaſure, the Time of our Afflictions, *Note* farther, That as in the Prayer, ſo in the Anſwer, St. *Paul* was conformed to Chriſt; the one was heard, but not by the paſſing of the Cup, the other was heard, but not by removing the Thorn in the Fleſh; but both were heard by Aſſurance and Supply of Divine Strength and ſufficient Grace to help in time of need; *He ſaid unto me, my Grace is ſufficient for thee.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Grace of Chriſt is ſufficient for his People in all their Afflictions; ſufficient for their Preſervation, to keep them from falling away from God and Godlineſs, by the Temptation which always attends Affliction; ſufficient for their Suſtentation, to uphold and ſupport them in and under their heavieſt Preſſures and Afflictions; and ſufficient to render their Afflictions truly advantageous and ſerviceable to them, to make them more Holy, Humble, Heavenly, Conformed unto Chriſt, *&c.*

9——For my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.

This is not to be underſtood as if our Weakneſs added any thing to God's Power, or could make his Power perfect; but our Weakneſs renders God's Power more illuſtrious,

ſtrious, he delights in and under our Weakneſs, to manifeſt moſt of his helping Power; as the Stars never ſhine ſo gloriouſly as in the ſharpeſt froſty Night, ſo the Power of God never appears ſo ſignally and conſpicuouſly as in and under our Weakneſs. *Learn hence*, That when God, upon our Prayer, doth not deliver us from Bodily Sufferings, he will be ſure to come in with ſufficient Grace, and manifeſt his Strength in our Pain and Weakneſs; we never thought how much or how long we could bear and hold out till God made manifeſt his own Strength in our Weakneſs. More of the Power of Grace is ſeen in the Sufferings of Believers than ever was ſeen in their Proſperity; beg then, O Chriſtian, more importunately for Divine Strength than for the departing of the Thorn: Grace is better than Eaſe or Health; the one is proper to Saints, the other is common to wicked Men and Brutes.

9 ——Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.

Here our Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* that moſt gladly he choſe rather to glory in his Afflictions and Tribulations, than in his Viſions and Revelations, becauſe by them he had greater Experience of the Power and Preſence of Chriſt with him, and ſupporting of him under all his Preſſures. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the People of God are ſupported under, and carried thorough, all their Sufferings and Afflictions by the Power of Chriſt; a Divine Power above their own Strength, like Everlaſting Arms, is underneath them in the Hour of Trial. *Learn* (2.) That to glory in Afflictions and Tribulations is an high Pitch of Holineſs and Grace, but attainable. To glory in Tribulation is, (1.) To rejoice in it. (2.) To expreſs that Joy outwardly upon a fit Occaſion. (3.) To expreſs it with a degree of Exaltation and Boaſting; many of the Martyrs were ſo far from changing Countenance at the Stake that they Sang and Triumpht in the midſt of Flames. *Q.* But can any Comfort be derived from this Text for ſinful Infirmities? *A.* From the Power of Chriſt in this Text there may. Thus the powerful Mediation and Interceſſion of Chriſt is magnified in procuring the Acceptance of our Perſons and Services, notwithſtanding the ſinful Infirmities cleaving to them; alſo the Power of his Grace will at Death be magnified in purging and purifying his People from all their Droſs and Dregs. There is nothing uneaſie to a Child of God but there is ſomething in Chriſt to alleviate it; Affliction is uneaſie, Temptation uneaſie, Death uneaſie, the Wrath of God uneaſie, the Law as condemning is uneaſie and unpleaſing; but Chriſt has delivered from the Curſe of the Law, ſatisfied the Juſtice of God, ſanctified the Croſs, ſweetned Death; Oh how adorable is the Power! How deſirable the Grace of Chriſt!

10 Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.

Obſerve here, (1.) The High and Heroick Pitch which St. *Paul*'s Spirit was raiſed to, *he took pleaſure in Reproaches and Perſecutions*. Pleaſure is a degree beyond Joy; though theſe Sufferings were painful to the Fleſh, yet were they pleaſing to the Spirit: A Chriſtian may not love that which he bears, yet may he love to bear; to bear is the Patience of Neceſſity, to love to bear is the Patience of Virtue; to delight to bear Reproach or Perſecution for Chriſt is expreſſive of the higheſt Affection towards Chriſt, and loweſt Subjection to him. If Nature ſuffers not a Saint to take Pleaſure in Reproaches, as ſuch, yet Grace enables him to take Pleaſure in what he is reproached for. *Obſerve* (2.) The Cauſe aſſigned why the Apoſtle took ſuch Pleaſure in his Sufferings and Abaſements, becauſe they gave him ſuch Experience of the Power of Chriſt; inſomuch that when he was moſt weak in himſelf, he was then moſt ſtrong in him. *When I am weak then I am ſtrong*, which Words are a Divine Paradox or Riddle: The Apoſtle affirms one Contrary of another; Weakneſs is contrary to Strength, how then can a weak Man be ſtrong when he is weak? The Meaning is, That when a Chriſtian is moſt ſenſible of his own Weakneſs, and moſt diffident and diſtruſtful of his own Strength, then the Power of Chriſt reſts upon him, and he experiences Divine Strenth coming in unto. Chriſt fills none but the hungry, nor doth he ſtrengthen any but the weak, only by going out of our Strength do we get Strength; when in an humble Senſe of our Weakneſſes we reſt upon Chriſt, the Power of Chriſt reſts upon us.

11 I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, tho' I be nothing. 12 Truly the ſigns of an Apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience, in ſigns, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it wherein ye were inferiour to other churches, except it be that I my ſelf was not burthenſome to you? forgive me this wrong.

Here again does our Apoſtle excuſe his Boaſting, and tells the *Corinthians* that they had compell'd him to it, and ought to have ſaved him the Labour of it, by defending him themſelves; for he had done and ſuffered as much as any of the moſt Eminent Apoſtles, tho' he lookt upon all as nothing: And conſequently his Services and Sufferings, his Miracles, Signs and Wonders, were ſufficient Arguments and undeniable Demonſtrations that he was indeed an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt. He farther adds, That the Church at *Corinth* had as great and excellent Gifts of the Spirit beſtowed upon them by his Miniſtry as any Church whatſoever; all the difference was, that whatever was done for them was done freely: He ſpared their Purſes, and put them to no Charge. Now, ſays he, if that be a Wrong I hope you can eaſily forgive it; *Corinth* was a very Rich and Wealthy City, but they loved a Cheap Goſpel; the Apoſtle ſpared their Purſes, not becauſe they were unable, but unwilling, to draw them. *Here obſerve*, That the People ought to give Teſtimony to their Miniſter's Integrity, and do all that in them lyes to ſupport and maintain the Honour of his Miniſtry; *I ought*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to be commended of you*. *Obſerve farther*, That when the People omit and neglect this neceſſary Part of their Duty towards their Miniſters, it is lawful, and not diſcommendable, for the Miniſters of Chriſt themſelves in a modeſt, humble, manner to declare both what they have been, and what they have done. *In nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtle, tho' I be nothing*; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Verily, I am as much an Apoſtle as they who think themſelves more than Apoſtle's, tho' you and they through Envy count me nothing, and tho' I in Humility account my ſelf nothing. Thus the Miniſters of Chriſt may ſtand upon Terms of Credit with any who lay their Perſons low, that they may diſparage their Work, and lay that Service low to which God hath called them: Tho' the Miniſters and Members of Chriſt ought in lowlineſs to ſubmit to one another, yet muſt they not ſubmit to the Pride or Luſts of any, how high ſoever in their own or others Account.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdenſome to you; for I ſeek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved.

The Apoſtle here acquaints the *Corinthians* that he prepared himſelf a third time to come unto them, being providentially hindred twice before, yet with a firm Reſolution not to be any ways burthenſome to them; for he coveted not their Poſſeſſions, but was deſirous of their Salvation: And as a Parent lays up for his Children, and not takes from them, ſo he deſired, as their Spiritual Father, to enrich them with Spiritual Good Things, and not to take from them any of their Temporal Riches. Nay, he adds, That he was willing to ſpend and be ſpent; that is, to ſpend his Time, his Strength, his Pains, his Life; altho' he met with very undue Returns from ſome of them, who loved him ſo little, becauſe he loved them ſo much, ſhewing more Kindneſs to their Falſe Apoſtles, than to him their Spiritual Father. Behold here an imitable Pattern of Miniſterial Diligence and Faithfulneſs, Love and Affectionateneſs, the Apoſtle was willing to ſpend and be ſpent; not only his Purſe and Pains, but Time and Strength, Life and Health. Oh how tender are ſome of their Carcaſe, how fearful of their Skin, how ſparing of their Pains, for fear of ſhortning their Days, and haſtning their End? Whereas the Lamp of our Lives can never burn out better than in lighting others to Heaven: Is it not better that our Fleſh conſume with Induſtry and Uſefulneſs, than wear out with Ruſt and Idleneſs? As it is the Duty, ſo 'tis the Diſpoſition, of the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt to ſpend and to be ſpent for Souls.

16 But be it ſo, I did not burden you: nevertheleſs being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I ſent unto you? 18 I deſired Titus, and with him I ſent a Brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the ſame Spirit? walked we not in the ſame ſteps?

Here the Apoſtle anſwers an Objection, which without any juſt Cauſe was made againſt him by ſome; it was ſuggeſted, that tho' he was not burthenſome to the *Corinthians* himſelf, nor took any thing of them for preaching the Goſpel, yet that he cunningly and craftily ſent others to them, and ſet them at work to take Money for him. Now to wipe off this Aſperſion the Apoſtle appeals to themſelves, whether any Perſon he ever ſent to them received any thing of them for his Uſe? Neither *Titus* nor *Luke* made a Gain of them, but with the ſame Generoſity and Freedom preached the Goſpel, and communicated the Riches of Grace to their Souls. When the Miniſters of the Goſpel at any time call in the Aſſiſtance of others to help them in their Work, their Care is to employ ſuch, as near as they can judge, who are of the ſame Spirit, and walk in the ſame Steps with themſelves. St. *Paul*, *Titus*, and *Luke*, all agree together in carrying on a Generous Deſign for the preaching the Goſpel to the *Corinthians* freely, and are of the ſame Mind and Practice in every thing.

19 Again, think you that we excuſe our ſelves unto you? we ſpake before God in Chriſt: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 20 For I fear, leſt when I come I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would, and that I ſhould be found unto you ſuch as ye would not: leſt there be debates, envyings, wrath, ſtrifes, backbitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults: 21 And leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, think not that for any Siniſter or By-ends of my own I excuſe my ſelf ſo often to you for deferring ſo long my promis'd and intended Journey among you, for all I do is with an Eye to your Advantage. 'Tis your Benefit and Reformation I aim at; for verily I fear whenever I come I ſhall find thoſe Sins unrepented of, and unhumbled for, by many of you, which will be Matter of Humiliation, Sorrow and Lamentation, to me; and that I muſt be neceſſitated, contrary to my Inclinations and Deſires, to inflict Cenſures and Corporal Puniſhments upon many among you; for the Schiſms, Debates and Strifes of ſome, for the Uncleanneſs, Fornication and Laſciviouſneſs of others. *Note* here, (1.) What great Diſorders and ſcandalous Crimes were found in the Church of *Corinth*, and yet ſhe retained the Denomination and Character of a true Church. The Apoſtle fears (and not without a Cauſe) that he ſhould find Debates, Envyings, Wrath and Strifes among them, the uſual and neceſſary Conſequences of Schiſms and Factions in a Church. *Note* (2.) That notwithſtanding all theſe Corruptions and Scandalous Abuſes, St. *Paul* neither ſeparates himſelf, nor perſwades any to ſeparate from them. Nothing will juſtifie a Separation from a Church, but that which makes a Separation between God and that Church, namely, Hereſie in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worſhip.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Concluſion of this Second Epiſtle, lets the Corinthians *know that he had a Third Time reſolved to come unto them, and to be ſharp againſt ſuch of them with his Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures as he found unreclaimed and unreformed amongſt them, ſparing neither great nor ſmall, one nor other, if involved in the ſame Guilt; which Cenſures of the Apoſtle were many times attended with Corporal Puniſhments, and ſometimes with Death: What the Civil Sword is in the Commonwealth, that Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline is in the Church, when duly executed, namely, a Revenger of all Diſobedience.*

1 THis is the third time I am coming to you: in the mouth of two or three witneſſes ſhall every word be eſtabliſhed. 2 I told you before, and foretel you as if I were preſent the ſecond time, and being abſent now, I write to them which heretofore have ſinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not ſpare: 3 Since ye ſeek a Proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. 4 For though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of God: for we alſo are weak in him, but we ſhall live with him by the power of God toward you.

The Apoſtle having throughout both his Epiſtle blam'd the *Corinthians* for ſeveral groſs Enormities found amongſt them, and hearing there were ſome that had not repented of them, he gives them plainly to underſtand that he had a full purpoſe to come unto them with his Rod of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline and Church-cenſures, and would not ſpare a Man of them, but execute that Power on the Impenitent which Chriſt had given him, by excluding ſuch unreclaimable Offenders from Church Communion. *Note* here, with what Wiſdom and Caution the Holy Apoſtle proceeds in the executing and inflicting the ſevere Cenſures of the Church; he uſes Admonition at firſt, ſecond, and third time, before he proceeds to the Awful Sentence of Excommunication: *I told you before, I foretel you now, and being abſent I write to you, that when I come I will not ſpare.* He tells them farther, that they had tempted him hereunto, in that they had required a Proof from him, whether Chriſt had owned him as an Apoſtle or not, and would ratifie his Cenſures by Judgments following them. He ſhews that Chriſt had owned him, and manifeſted his Power in his Miniſtry among them, by converting many of them to the Chriſtian Faith, by beſtowing the Gifts of his Spirit upon them, and by many Signs and Miracles which he enabled him to do in the midſt of them. When God calls his Servants to the Work of the Miniſtry, he leaves not either himſelf or them without Witneſs; he bears Teſtimony to their Sincerity, by giving them in ſome degree the Seal of their Miniſtry in the Converſion or Edification of thoſe they are ſent unto, *Since you ſeek a Proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, to you-ward he is not weak, but is mighty in and amongſt you.* Next, the Holy Apoſtle draws a Parallel, and makes a Compariſon between his Bleſſed Lord and Maſter and himſelf. As Chriſt in his State of Humiliation appeared to be a weak and frail Man by being crucified, but was evidenced to be the great and mighty God by his raiſing from the Dead; ſo the Apoſtle conſidered in himſelf, and in reſpect of his Afflictions, appears a weak and contemptible Man; but yet they had found, and ſhould farther find, a Reſemblance of the Power and Strength of Chriſt in his Life and Miniſtry; and particularly they ſhould find him armed with Authority from Chriſt to execute Cenſures upon the Contumacious and Impenitents. Tho' the Miniſters of Chriſt, like their Maſter when here on Earth, are in a State of Weakneſs, Poverty and Contempt, yet are they cloathed with Divine Power in the Execution of their Office and their Miniſtry is a living, powerful and efficacious Miniſtry in the vigorous Effects of it upon the Hearts of their People; *We are weak in him, but we ſhall live with him by the Power of God towards you.*

5 Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Here the Apoſtle adviſes the *Corinthians* inſtead of enquiring after the Proof of Chriſt in him, to examine whether they were in Chriſt themſelves; intimating to us; that ſuch are uſually moſt backward to examine the State of their own Souls, who are forward to enquire into the ſpiritual State and Condition of others. You ſeek a Proof of Chriſt in me, ſays the Apoſtle, Oh rather prove and examine your ſelves! Where *Note*, (1.) The Duty expreſt, examine your ſelves, prove your ſelves. The Word is a Metaphor taken from Goldſmiths, who with great Exactneſs try their Gold; the Truth of it by the Touchſtone, the Weight of it by the Scale, and the Purity of it by the Fire. And the Repetition of the Command, *Examine your ſelves, prove your ſelves*, implies the great Backwardneſs that is in Mens Natures to perform this Duty, the great Neceſſity of the Duty, and the great Diligence and Frequency to be uſed in performing of the Duty. Learn hence, That Self-examination is an Excellent, a Neceſſary and Important Duty, belonging to every one in the Church, and requires great Diligence and Faithfulneſs in the performing of it. 'Tis neceſſary in regard of our Comforts, and alſo in regard of our Graces; for there are counterfeit Graces as well as real, and common Graces as well as ſaving; and 'tis a Duty that requires Diligence and Frequency, becauſe the Work is difficult, becauſe the Heart is backward, becauſe we are apt to be deceived, and willing to be deceived; becauſe many have miſcarried without it, and many periſhed by a negligent performance of it, *therefore examine your ſelves, prove your ſelves*. *Note* (2.) The Subject Matter of our Examination, *Whether ye be in the Faith*; that is, whether ye be converted to the Chriſtian Faith, whether the Faith of Chriſt be in you, whether the Principle of Faith be in your Hearts, whether the Power of Faith be in your Conſciences, whether the Practice of Faith be in your Lives, whether your Faith be the Parent and Principle of Obedience, working Love, and working by Love. *Note* (3.) The Enforcement and Motive to this Duty, *Except you are Reprobates*; that is, counterfeit, adulterate, unſound, and inſincere Chriſtians, unaccepted of God, and not owned by him. As Reprobate Silver has no Worth or Fitneſs in it for Trading, ſo ſuch Chriſtians as upon Examination are not found to have the Grace of Faith in them, more Precious than Gold, are unapproved of God, and rejected by him. *Note* (4.) When the Apoſtles expoſtulates with them, and ſays, *Know ye not your own ſelves?* It implies both the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of the Neglect of the Duty, and alſo the Poſſibility and Eaſineſs of knowing whether Chriſt be in us or not, upon a due and diligent Enquiry whether we have experienced the quickning and tranſforming Power of Chriſt in our Hearts and Lives. Finally, So great is the Benefit, and ſo ſweet the Comfort, which flows to us by Examination and Self-acquaintance, that it will abundantly recompence our Care and Diligence in the frequent and faithful Diſcharge of it.

6 But I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not reprobates.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Whatever you upon Examination ſhall be found to be, I truſt you ſhall know and be convinced that we have not diſhonoured Chriſt, nor ſhall be diſowned of him. But whenever I come to you, you ſhall find that I am not deſtitute of the Grace and Power of Chriſt; whether for advancing your Faith, improving your Holineſs, or correcting your Miſcarriages. The Miniſters of Chriſt who are faithful to him, in contending with the Errors and Vices of Men, in reproving Sin, in cenſuring Sin, ſhall be owned and approved of God, when the Reprobate World ſhall be condemned by him. *I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not Reprobates.*

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we ſhould appear approved, but that ye ſhould do that which is honeſt, though we be as reprobates.

The Apoſtle drawing towards the Concluſion of his Epiſtle, ſhuts it up with Prayer, earneſtly imploring Almighty God that the *Corinthians* might be found doing no Evil which might expoſe them to his Cenſure, and force him to exerciſe his Apoſtolical Power, in puniſhing ſuch Offenders and Offences as he ſhould find amongſt them. And he prayed thus for them, becauſe he had rather have them good, than by puniſhing their evil Manners have an Occaſion to teſtifie himſelf an approved and faithful Apoſtle; for he did not ſo much regard his own Reputation as their Salvation.

8 For we can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth.

The Apoſtle having prayed that the *Corinthians* might be found doing no Evil in the former Verſe, and aſſuring them thereupon that they would then be ſecured from his Cenſures and Chaſtiſement, he aſſigns a Reaſon here for that Aſſurance given them; becauſe, ſays he, *We can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth*; having our Power given us only for Edification, and not for Deſtruction. Conſidering the Words without reſpect to the Coherence. Obſerve (1.) A Negative Propoſition, *We can do nothing againſt the Truth*. O Bleſſed Impotency! (2.) An Affirmation, or poſitive Aſſertion, but for the Truth. O Bleſſed Ability! He was as ſtrong as a Giant for the Truth, but as weak as an Infant againſt it. Learn, That ſincere Chriſtians in general, and the Miniſters of Chriſt in particular, cannot, dare not, will not, do any thing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth: They cannot, that is, they may not, they are reſtrained by an outward Command from God, who is Truth itſelf: They cannot, that is, they will not, there is a reſtraint of an inward Principle; neither the Conviction of their Underſtandings, the Clearneſs of their Judgments, nor the Holineſs of their Hearts, will ſuffer them to oppoſe the Truth. Again, They cannot attempt it; or if they did, they can never effect it; they cannot do it ſafely, they cannot do it ſucceſsfully. We can do nothing againſt the Truth in a Way of Diſcouragement, nor nothing againſt it in a Way of Diſparagement: But all our Endeavours are for the Truth; we embrace it in our Judgments, we hide it in our Hearts, and practice it in our Lives. Whatever Talent God entruſts any of his Miniſters with, whether of Parts, Power, or Eſtate, it is an Opportunity put into their Hands of doing Service for the Truth, and as ſuch to be accepted and improved.

9 For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are ſtrong: and this alſo we wiſh, even your perfection.

The Apoſtle may be underſtood Two Ways: (1.) We are glad *when we are weak*; that is, when I have no occaſion to manifeſt my Apoſtolical Power in cenſuring any of you as Offenders. *But ye are ſtrong*: Strong in Faith, and fruitful in good Works. Or, (2.) We are glad when we are weak, that is, when we are weakned by never ſo many Sufferings and Infirmities, provided you are made ſtrong thereby: For that is what we principally wiſh and endeavour, even your utmoſt Perfection in Knowledge, Faith and Holineſs. Nothing is more deſired by the zealous and faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt than to ſee their People ſtrong in Faith, fruitful in Good Works, perſevering in Well-doing, yea, perfect in Holineſs and Obedience. *This we wiſh*, nothing like it, *even your Perfection*.

10 Therefore I write theſe things being abſent, leſt being preſent, I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to deſtruction.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Verily I write thus to you, being abſent, purpoſely to reclaim you, leſt being preſent I ſhould be forced to uſe ſome ſharpneſs towards you, according to the Power which the Lord hath given me, tending to your Edification always, and not at any time to your Deſtruction. Obſerve here with what Tenderneſs the Apoſtle treats theſe Offenders; he tells them the Sharpneſs and Severity in his Letters (if they accounted it ſuch) was upon a kind Deſign, to prevent Sharpneſs and Severity in his Dealings with them, when he came amongſt them; yet withal, he aſſures them that if Matters ſhould come to an Extremity, that he muſt be forced to exerciſe his Apoſtolical Power, in cutting the Contumacious off from the Churches Communion, he would exerciſe it with a tender Regard to their Good, not their Hurt; for their Edification, and not willingly to their Deſtruction. Learn we from the Apoſtle's Practice to execute the Cenſures of the Church with great Tenderneſs and Affection, with great Pity and Compaſſion, with extraordinary Dread and Caution; not with Raſhneſs and In-diſcretion, or upon every light and trivial Occaſion, but like a tender-hearted Father, with a Rod in our Hand, and Tears in our Eyes.

11 Finally, brethren, farewel: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.

Here our Apoſtle ſhuts up his Epiſtle with a pathetical Oppoſition and affectionate Wiſh of all Perfection, Conſolation, Concord and Communion, to his Beloved *Corinthians:* Where Note, (1.) What a fervent and unfeigned Love there is in all the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt to the People committed to their Charge, and how deſirous they are, when they are taken their Leave of them, to leave God with them: *The God of Love and Peace be with you.* Now God's being with a People imports and implies theſe Things; namely, the Heart of God with them, the Help of God with them, and the Preſence of God with them, and that they ſhall ſhortly be with God. Note (2.) What are the particular Graces and Bleſſings which the Apoſtle wiſhes his Beloved *Corinthians:* He doth not wiſh them Earthly Honours, Worldly Riches, Senſual Pleaſures; but Perfection of Grace, Spiritual Conſolation, Mutual Love, Sweet Communion with God, Unanimity and Concord amongſt themſelves: Sanctifying Gifts and Saving Graces are the beſt Legacies that can be left by the Miniſters of God unto their People. *Be perfect*; be knit together; let the Schiſms and Breaches which have been amongſt you be healed. *Be of good Comfort*; rejoice in and under all your Sufferings for Chriſt, and the Profeſſion of his Holy Religion. *Be of one Mind*; of the ſame Judgment, if poſſible, in all Things; or if otherwiſe, let not Difference in Judgment cauſe Diſunion in Affection: If in ſome leſſer Things your Heads be different, yet let your Hearts be one. *Live in Peace:* For the Lord's Sake live no longer in Diviſion and Strife, in Contention and Wrath; let me hear no more of thoſe Debates, Envyings, Backbitings, Whiſperings, Swellings, which I have reproved you for; but eſpecially live in Peace with your Teachers and Spiritual Guides; cauſe not them to complain to God of you, nor to groan to God againſt you, for your Factious preferring one Miniſter before another; one crying, I am of *Paul*, and another, I of *Apollo*. Thus doing, *the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you:* That is, he who is the Author and Injoiner of Love and Peace will be with you, and dwell among you with his Gracious and Favourable Preſence.

12 Great one another with an holy kiſs. 13 All the ſaints ſalute you.

He exhorts them according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Eaſtern Countries to ſalute one another with a Kiſs, as a Token of mutual and ſincere Love: And ſince it was become a Practice in Sacred Meetings, and Church Aſſemblies, particularly before their Receiving the Holy Communion, to Kiſs each other, he adviſes them to uſe it innocently, chaſtly; let it not be a wanton, but an holy, Kiſs. However, afterwards the Piety and Purity of the Church degenerating and declining, it was laid aſide. That which is Innocent in itſelf, and Pious in its firſt Intendment, may in time fall under ſuch Abuſe as to cauſe it wholly to be laid aſide.

14 The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghoſt, be with you all. Amen.

Here are the higheſt Bleſſings and Benefits wiſhed to, and prayed for, in the behalf of the *Corinthians*, which they cou'd poſſibly be made Partakers of; namely, all that Love which doth or can flow from the Father, all that Grace which was purchaſed by the Son, and all that Fellowſhip and Communion with, and Communion from, the Holy Spirit, which might render them meet for the Service of Chriſt on Earth, and for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of him in Heaven. Obſerve here a full Text for the Holy Trinity; the Names of the Three Perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are here diſtinctly mentioned, as in the Commiſſion for, and in the Form of, Baptiſm, *Mat.* 28. 19. Here the Apoſtle calls the Father God, the Son Lord, and the Spirit the Holy Ghoſt; and as he attributes Love to the Father, Grace to the Son, ſo Fellowſhip to the Holy Ghoſt; ſo that we have no Reaſon to doubt of the Perſonality of either or any of them. Bnt when we conſider how many at this Day with Impudence and Impunity deny the Divinity of the Second, and the Perſonality of the Third, Perſon in the Bleſſed Trinity, we have Reaſon to Pray as our Church has taught us for our own Eſtabliſhment.

The Collect for *Trinity-Sunday.*

Almighty and Everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us thy Servants Grace, by the Confeſſion of a true Faith, to acknowledge the Glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the Power of the Divine Majeſty to worſhip the Unity: We beſeech thee that thou would'ſt keep us ſteadfaſt in this Faith, and evermore defend us from all Adverſities, who Liveſt and Reigneſt One God, World without End. Amen.

THE

THE Epiſtle of St. PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.

That this Epiſtle was written by St. Paul, *whoſe Name it bears, I think was never queſtioned; tho' it be not writ, as moſt of his other Epiſtles are, to the Chriſtians of one particular City, but of a whole Country, to wit,* Galatia.

The Galatians *very readily embraced the Goſpel upon the Preaching of St.* Paul, *and were at firſt exceedingly affectionate to his Perſon, and zealous in the Profeſſion of what he taught. But alas! Soon after St.* Paul *had left them, ſome falſe Apoſtles from* Judea *crept in amongſt them, perverting ſome, and ſtaggering others; teaching the neceſſity for ſuch as had embraced the Chriſtian Religion to ſubmit to Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Moſaical Inſtitution.*

To countenance this Inſinuation *of theirs they alledged, That S.* Peter, James, *and* John, *had ſent them thither, and that they were of their Minds in this Matter; and particularly, that St.* Peter *was againſt the rejecting of Circumciſion, and did himſelf practice the Ceremonial Law, and obſerve the Rites of it in common Converſation, ſeparating himſelf from the Gentiles. Thus theſe* Judaizers *oppoſed the Doctrine and Practice of St.* Peter *to that of St.* Paul: *And to carry on their Deſign with greater Succeſs, they magnified the other Apoſtles, and vilified St.* Paul, *not allowing him the Name or Right of an Apoſtle, having not ſeen Chriſt in the Fleſh, as the reſt had done; affirming, that he was never called by Chriſt, nor ever owned for an Apoſtle by the other Apoſtles.*

Hereupon St. Paul, *in his Abſence from the* Galatians, *writes this Epiſtle to them; in which, (1.) He vindicates himſelf and his Doctrine, proving that he was called to be an Apoſtle by Chriſt himſelf, and that he had received his Doctrine by immediate Revelation from him; and that it was conformable to, and the very ſame with, what was preached by the other Apoſtles.* Next, *he ſtrenuouſly proves, That Circumciſion, and all the Ceremonial Rites, were certainly aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt. And,* Laſtly, *He draws practical Inferences from this Doctrine, and Inſtructs them in the Duties of a Holy Life, exhorting them to live Religious in every relation: And ſo concludes his Epiſtle with a ſolemn Proteſtation of his ſincere Affection to them; aſſuring them, that as an Evidence thereof he had written the whole Epiſtle with his own Hand, wiſhing them abundant Conſolation from Chriſt, both in Life and Death.*

CHAP. I.

1 PAul an apoſtle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead.)

The Penman of this Epiſtle is here deſcribed by his Name, *Paul*; by his Office, *an Apoſtle*; and by his Commiſſion to that Office, which was not Humane, but altogether Divine, even from God the Father by Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve here, (1.) The great Modeſty of this great Apoſtle in the ſetting forth his Authority as an Apoſtle; you will find in the front of his Epiſtles, when he names any others in the Salutation with himſelf, (as *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*,) he mentions not himſelf an Apoſtle, when named with them, leſt he ſhould be thought to magnifie himſelf above them. But here, becauſe his Apoſtolical Office was called in queſtion he is neceſſitated to vindicate his Authority, and accordingly declares himſelf an Apoſtle, not of Men, nor by Man; that is, Men were neither the Authors nor Chuſers of him to this Office; he was not called as *Matthias* was, *Acts* 1. by the Suffrage of the reſt of the Apoſtles; he was not an Apoſtle of Mens Election, nor by Mens Inſtruction; but appointed by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the Dead. Learn hence, That no Sins before, nor yet after, Converſion, can hinder the Rich Mercy and Free Grace of God from uſing Men in the higheſt Employments in the Church if he pleaſes to make uſe of them. *Paul*, after he had been a Blaſphemer, was made an Apoſtle; and *Peter*, after his Converſion, denied Chriſt with Oaths and Curſes, yet is a chief Apoſtle, and an inſpired Penman of Holy Scripture. Obſerve (2.) The high Dignity conferr'd upon St. *Paul* with reference to his Apoſtolical Office, he did not take it upon himſelf, but was choſen to it; he was not choſen to it for any Merit in himſelf, but it was a Grace freely beſtowed upon him: And this not by the Miniſtry and Mediation of Man, but by the immediate Deſignation and Election of Jeſus Chriſt. Thus far he ſtands upon equal Terms with the reſt of the Apoſtles; they did not call themſelves, nor were they called by Chriſt, for any worthineſs in themſelves above others; but behold the peculiar Prerogative of St. *Paul* above the reſt of the Apoſtles in *this Particular*; they were called by Chriſt in the Day of his Humiliation, when he was here upon Earth in the Fleſh; but he was called by Chriſt after his Reſurrection, yea, in his higheſt State of Exaltation, when ſitting at his Father's Right Hand in Heaven. And as his Call was thus very extraordinary, ſo his Gifts were anſwerable to his Call: The Goſpel which he preached he received by inward and immediate Revelation, which made him ſo much excel all the other Apoſtles, inſomuch, that altho' in his own Opinion he was the leaſt of Saints when here on Earth, yet in the Opinion of others he was the holieſt Man when upon Earth, and the higheſt now in Heaven, next the Man Chriſt Jeſus.

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches in Galatia.

That is, all the Brethren which are with me, and own the Doctrine which I preach, ſend greeting unto the Churches of *Galatia*. Here note, (1.) How St. *Paul*'s Doctrine is juſtified from the Charge of Singularity, which the Judaizing falſe Teachers objected againſt it. What he wrote and taught he tells the *Galatians* was owned *by all the Brethren.* This ſhews the Conſent he had of the Church with him in that Holy Doctrine which was delivered by him. Note (2.) The generality of the Perſons to whom this Epiſtle is directed; not to a ſingle Perſon, nor to a particular Church, but unto all the Churches in the Province of *Galatia*; there were ſeveral Chriſtian Congregations called Churches in that large Country, and all of them being leavened, or in danger of being ſoured with Judaiſm, that is, of ſuperadding the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes* to the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Apoſtle, and the Brethren with him, direct this Epiſtle, not to any ſingle Church in that Province, but to them all ingeneral, being equally concerned: All the Brethren with me unto the *Churches* of *Galatia.* Note (3.) How the Apoſtle doth not ſay here, as elſewhere, to the Saints of God which are in *Galatia*, or to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, but barely ſays to the Churches of *Galatia*; thereby declaring his holy Indignation againſt the *Galatians*, as unworthy of thoſe Gracious Appellations, becauſe they had ſadly corrupted the Doctrine of the Goſpel, begun in the Spirit, and ended in the Fleſh; firſt owning Chriſt and the Liberty of the Goſpel, and afterwards pleading for the Bondage of the Ceremonial Law. Yet Note Laſtly, as corrupt as theſe Churches of *Galatia* were, our Apoſtle owns and acknowledges them to be true Churches; they retained the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, and were not guilty either of Idolatry, or a total Apoſtacy; therefore, tho' ſtained with divers Corruptions, both in Doctrine and Manners, which he ſharply rebukes and reproves them for, yet he doth not deny them the Name of Churches: All the Brethren which are with me, unto the *Churches of* Galatia.

3 Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe Words are both a Chriſtian Salutation, and an Apoſtolical Benediction: As they are a Salutation, they expreſs a Wiſh and Deſire of the Beſt of Bleſſings towards and on the behalf of them they ſaluted: From whence we may learn, that Religion doth not aboliſh and deſtroy, but ſpiritualize and improve, Civility, Humanity, and common Courteſie: The Heathens wiſhed Health to their ſaluted Friends, the Jews Peace, but Chriſtians Grace and Peace. Again, the Words may be underſtood as an Apoſtolical and Miniſterial Bleſſing; the Apoſtles were the Patriarchs of the Church of the New Teſtament; and as a Spiritual Father St. *Paul* here bleſſes his Children, wiſhing them firſt Grace, then Peace: Peace muſt be ſought after Grace, and not expected before it; Peace without Grace is no Peace; there can be no Peace with the Creator, no ſanctified Peace with the Creatures, except through Jeſus Chriſt we are firſt made Partakers of the Gracious Love and Favours of Almighty God. Accordingly, ſays the Apoſtle here, *Grace be to you, and Peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where Note, That Grace and Peace may be ſaid to be from the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, theſe Two Ways. (1.) Efficiently, as the Authors and Cauſes of both; God the Father is the Author of all Grace as he did decree it, and Chriſt as he did purchaſe it. (2.) Objectively; that is, this Grace and Love in God the Father, and this Peace and Satisfaction that is in Jeſus Chriſt, the more they are by Faith apprehended by us, the more are they increaſed in us, and upon us. Learn from the whole, that the holieſt and beſt of Chriſtians here on Earth ſtand in manifeſt need of fuller Supplies, and farther Additions, both of Grace and Peace to be daily communicated to them, and enjoyed by them; Grace *be to you*, and Peace.

4 Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the Will of God and our Father:

That is, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf unto Death for the Remiſſion of our Sins, that he might deliver us from this evil World; namely, to ſeparate, or bring us off, from the evil Cuſtoms and Practices of the wicked Men in the World, and engage us to live a Life of ſtrict Holineſs, according to the Will and Command of God our Father. Here Note, (1.) The Prieſtly Office of Chriſt declared and aſſerted, *He gave himſelf for our Sins*; that is, an Expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. So deadly was the Guilt of Sin, ſo exact the Juſtice of God, and ſo unalterable his Faithfulneſs, in executing the Judgment which was denounced againſt Sinners, that there was no hope for guilty Sinners Pardon, without Satisfaction given to the injured Juſtice of God for Sin; and nothing leſs would ſatisfie than the Blood of God; that is, the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, who is eſſentially, truly and really, God. Note (2.) A farther End and Deſign which Chriſt had in giving himſelf for us, namely, to deliver us from the Rage of our Luſts, as well as from the Wrath of God, to ſanctifie our Natures for us, and to mortifie our Corruptions in us, to redeem us from our vain Converſation, and *deliver us from this preſent evil World*; not totally to remove us out of the World, but morally to oblige us to abandon the wicked Courſes, the ſinful Practices, of the evil Men of the World. Bleſſed be God that Jeſus Chriſt did not only purchaſe Pardon and Remiſſion, but Holineſs and Sanctification alſo, for his ranſomed and redeemed Ones; and is as willing to free us from the Dominion as from the Danger of our Sins: *He gave himſelf for us, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil World.* Note (3.) As the final Cauſe of Chriſt's Death, Deliverance from God's Wrath, and Sin's Rage, ſo the efficient Cauſe of his Death, the Will of his Father: *He gave himſelf for us, according to the Will of God*; that is, according to the Purpoſe and Appointment of God. Chriſt as Mediator was the Father's Servant, and whatever he did in the Work of Mediation for us, was by the Appointment, and with the Special Approbation, of God the Father; Eternal Thanks be given that the Son's Purchaſe was the Father's Pleaſure. Note (4.) The comfortable Relation in which God now ſtands unto us ſince Chriſt gave himſelf for us; namely, that of a Father; *according to the Will of God and our Father*; that is, who is now our Father; learn hence, that Satisfaction being given by Chriſt to provoked Juſtice for our Sins, God who was before a Conſuming Fire, and a Sin-puniſhing Judge, is become our Gracious and Reconciled Father; our Father by Adoption, who before was our Father only by Creation. *According to the Will of God and our Father.*

5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

That is, to God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Redeemer, be given the higheſt Degrees of Honour and Glory throughout the Preſent and Eternal Ages. Note here, (1.) The Work and Duty incumbent upon Chriſt's Redeemed Ones, and that is to aſcribe all Honour and Homage, all Glory and Praiſe, to God the Father as the Contriver, and to Chriſt the Son as the Accompliſher, of the Work of Redemption: *To whom*, both whom, *be Glory.* Note (2.) The Duration and Continuance of this Duty, not for a Day or Year, but for Eternal Ages. This Duty of aſcribing Honour and Homage, Glory and Praiſe, to the Father and Mediator for the Glorious Work of Man's Redemption, is ſuch that it can never be ſufficiently diſcharged, but requires a Succeſſion of Ages to perform it in; yea, Eternity itſelf is too ſhort for the Performance of it, to whom be Glory *for ever and ever*. The Glory of the Redeemer, and of him that ſent him to redeem, will be the Long-laſting and Never-ending Song of Redeemed Ones through Millions of Ages, yea, to all Eternity; a Work begun on Earth, never finiſhed in Heaven.

6 I marvel, that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt, unto another goſpel: 7 Which is not another; but there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Heavy Charge which St. *Paul* brings in againſt the Falſe Apoſtles, or Judaizing Teachers, they perverted the Goſpel which St. *Paul* preached, and taught a New Goſpel of their own; yet not abſolutely ſo, but by compounding and mingling the Goſpel with the Ceremonial Law, and by making Circumciſion, and other Things, neceſſary to Salvation, which our Saviour never made ſo, this the Apoſtle calls *another Goſpel*; whence learn, (1.) That it is no New or Strange Thing to hear of New Goſpels, of True Goſpel Perverters, and of Falſe Goſpel Teachers: We find ſuch in the Primitive and Pureſt Churches, planted even by the Apoſtles themſelves, no wonder they are found in our Days, who are fallen into the very Dregs of Time and Error together. Learn (2.) That the Addition of any Thing to the Chriſtian Religion, as neceſſary to be believ'd and practis'd in order to Salvation, is a perverting the Goſpel of Chriſt, and preaching another Goſpel. Theſe *Galatians* did not renounce Chriſtianity, and go over to another Religion, but they receiv'd Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Law of *Moſes*, as an Eſſential Part of the Chriſtian Religion, and as a Condition of Eternal Salvation: Whereas the Death of Chriſt having put an End to the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, there was neither then, nor now, any Obligation upon Chriſtians to obſerve the Law of *Moſes*; and conſequently the Addition of any Thing to the Chriſtian Doctrine, as neceſſary to be believed and practiſed in order to Salvation, is preaching another Goſpel, and a manifeſt Perverting of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Learn (3.) That there is no Authority in the Chriſtian Church, in any, or in all the Guides of it, to impoſe upon Chriſtians any Thing as of Neceſſity to Salvation, which the Goſpel has not made neceſſary. The Apoſtles themſelves had no Authority to add any Thing to the Goſpel, much leſs can any that come after them pretend to it: Chriſt commanded them, *Mat.* 28. to teach all Nations to obſerve all Things whatſoever he commanded them; and had the Apoſtles themſelves added any Points of Faith or Practice, not given them in Charge by Chriſt himſelf, they had fallen under that Curſe themſelves which here they denounced againſt Falſe Teachers. *Obſerve* (2.) The Artifice which theſe Falſe Teachers uſed to draw the *Galatians* into theſe New Errors, and that was haſtily and ſuddenly to avow and own them before the World. I marvel that ye are *ſo ſoon* remov'd; Seducers are for clapping up an Haſty Match between the Mind and Error, and preſs the Seduced to Quick Reſolutions, an Haſty Diſpatch being their great Advantage, before they conſult their Spiritual Guides, or weigh Matters in the Ballance of Impartial Judgments. What, ſays the Apoſtle, are ye *ſo ſoon* remov'd? Yes, might the Falſe Teachers have ſaid, if not ſoon it might never; if not ſo ſoon removed they might never be at all: For Errors are like Fiſh, they muſt be eaten freſh and new, or they'll quickly ſtink, and be thrown away. *Obſerve* (3.) The True Cauſe from which the *Galatians* fall into Error did proceed. They truſted themſelves with themſelves; they truſted to the Clearneſs of their own Unaſſiſted Eyes, and to the Strength of their own Reaſon and Judgment, without conſulting their Spiritual Guide: Had not theſe *Galatians* a *Paul* to conſult with before they gave their Conſent to Falſe Teachers? Or if he was at a Diſtance from them about the Work of the Lord in remote Places, could not they have written to him, or adviſed with others beſides him? Wo to him that is alone when aſſaulted by Seducers.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. 9 As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any man preach any other Goſpel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.

Obſerve here, (1.) How our Apoſtle ſuppoſes an Impoſſibility only for the Confirmation of what he had before affirmed. He doth not ſuppoſe it poſſible for an Angel in Heaven, or Apoſtle on Earth, to contradict the Doctrine of the Goſpel which he had deliver'd, to preach any Thing contrary to it, or beſides it, or different from it, making that neceſſary to be believ'd and practis'd which Chriſt and his Apoſtles never made neceſſary. Learn hence, That the Written Word of God, without Unwritten Traditions, contains in it all Things neceſſary to Salvation; and whatever Doctrines are propounded to the Church, not only contrary to, but differing from it, or beſides the Written Word, are Accurſed Doctrines. *Obſerve* (2.) The Terrible Anathema which the Apoſtle denounces againſt thoſe, whoever they ſhould be, be it Apoſtle on Earth, or Angel from Heaven, that ſhould thus pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt, by making any Thing neceſſary to be believ'd or practis'd in order to Salvation which Chriſt has not made neceſſary, *Let him be accurſed.* Let the Church of *Rome* in general, and the Council of *Trent* in particular, dread the Efficacy of this Curſe, who have added ſo many New Articles to the Chriſtian Faith, and enforced them as neceſſary to be believed by all Chriſtians, inſomuch that they pronounce that no Salvation can be obtain'd without the Belief of them, and denounce their Anathema's againſt us who cannot believe them: But as their Curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not come, ſo we believe that their propounding Terms of Salvation, nowhere deliver'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, do bring themſelves under the Apoſtle's Anathema here in this Text; for if the New Articles of the Church of *Rome* be neceſſary to Salvation, then what Chriſt and his Apoſtles deliver'd was not ſufficient to Salvation before; and thus the Pride of Man exalts itſelf above the Wiſdom of God. *Obſerve* (3.) How the Apoſtle expreſſes his Aſſurance in this Matter; and to ſhew that he did not ſpeak raſhly, and in an heat, but upon due Conſideration, he repeats again, Verſe 9. *As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, if any Man preach otherwiſe, let him be accurſed.* Note here how poſitive and peremptory the Apoſtle is in this Matter; and doubtleſs this one Anathema of his is more dreadful than all the *Bruta Fulmina*, the Freakiſh Anathema's of an Enthuſiaſtick Church, who in a manifeſt Affront to the Authority of St. *Paul* has preſumed to add ſo many New Articles to the Chriſtian Religion, for which there is not the leaſt Ground or Warrant, either from the Holy Scriptures, or any of the Ancient Creeds. *Obſerve* Laſtly, How the Apoſtle put himſelf into the Number, *if I*, or any Man, or any Angel, preach otherwiſe, let him be accurſed. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, not only the Falſe Apoſtles are to be rejected, but I my ſelf deſerve to be Anathematiz'd, and accounted an Execrable Perſon, ſhould I preach any other Doctrine to you than what you have receiv'd from Chriſt by me; nay, ſhould any Angel from Heaven attempt it he ought to be deteſted for it. Learn, That no Angel in Heaven, no Perſon or Church upon Earth, have Power to make New Articles of Faith, or to impoſe any Thing upon our Belief or Practice that is either againſt or beſides the Written Word, or any Ways inconſiſtent with it, or contrary unto it.

10 For do I now perſwade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words diſcovers the great Sincerity he uſed in preaching the Pure and Unmixt Doctrine of the Goſpel to the *Galatians*, for he did not perſwade that Men, but God, ſhould be heard and obeyed, that ſo their Faith might be founded upon Divine, and not Humane, Authority; nor did he in his Miniſtry aim at pleaſing Men, but Chriſt: For ſhould he *now* pleaſe Men, being an Apoſtle, as he did in Times paſt, being a Phariſee, he ſhould not be *the Servant of Chriſt*. The Miniſters of Chriſt muſt not be Men-pleaſers; they muſt not pleaſe Men, either by Flattery or Falſhood, nor accommodate their Doctrines to the Humour and Diſpoſitions of Men; pleaſing of God is our great Work and Buſineſs, let us mind that; Man-pleaſing is endleſs and needleſs, any farther than for their Good, and the Goſpel's Gain. Accordingly the Apoſtle tells us elſewhere, that he was *made all Things to all Men that he might gain ſome*; not to make a Preſent Gain of them, but that they might be Eternal Gainers by him; it was not to exalt himſelf, but that Chriſt might be exalted in the Hearts and Lives of his Hearers, that he ſought in and by his Miniſtry to pleaſe all Men; and thus in Imitation of him let us ſeek to pleaſe all Men for their Good to Edification.

11 But I certifie you, brethren, that the goſpel which was preached of me, is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

The Apoſtle here, as he did before, Verſe 1, 2. aſſerts the Divinity of the Doctrine of the Goſpel which he had preached to them; and aſſures them likewiſe of his own Lawful Call to be an Apoſtle, which was queſtion'd by his Adverſaries, who affirm'd that he had receiv'd his Doctrine only from others at the Second Hand. To ſatisfie them in the Divinity of his Doctrine, he tells them it was not after Man; that is, it was not Human, but Divine; nothing belonging to Man, but all from God in it: And as for his Authority to preach it, he aſſures them he had a Revelation and Commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt ſo to do; he learn'd not his Doctrine of any Human Teacher, nor undertook to preach it by any Human Authority, but from Chriſt's Immediate Revelation. *Learn hence*, It is a Singular Satisfaction to the Miniſters of Chriſt, and that which gives them Boldneſs before their Falſe Accuſers, when they can give Good Proof of their Regular Call to the Work of the Miniſtry, and of the Divinity of the Doctrine diſpenced by them. Thus did St. *Paul* here; the Goſpel, ſays he, which I preached to you, and the Miſſion I had ſo to preach it, was not after Man, nor from Man, nor by Man, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt: Where Note, from Chriſt's being ſo often oppoſed to Man in theſe Verſes, and in the Firſt Verſe, that he is not meer Man, but God as well as Man; why elſe doth the Apoſtle oppoſe Chriſt to Man ſo often as he doth here? Not *of Man*, neither *by Man*, nor *after Man*, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, who is God.

13 For ye have heard of my converſation in time paſt in the Jews religion, how that beyond meaſure I perſecuted the church of God, and waſted it: 14 And profited in the Jews religion, above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Here the Apoſtle offers ſeveral Arguments to ſatisfie the *Galatians*, that both his Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, and alſo the Goſpel which he preached to them, were not from Man, but our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And the Firſt Argument to prove it, as a Convictive Evidence of it, was his Bitter Enmity againſt the Chriſtian Religion, and his Mighty Zeal for the Jewiſh Religion, in which he was educated and brought up: All which he mentions as a Thing publickly known, leaving them to infer from thence, that ſo great and ſudden a Change could not be the Effect of Human Perſwaſion, but Divine Revelation. *In Times paſt I perſecuted the Church of God, and waſted it*: Where *Note*, that although our Apoſtle did not ſhun to make an open Confeſſion of his Wicked Life before his Converſion, that he might thereby make evident that his Converſion was immediately from God, yet he makes an open Confeſſion only of his open Sins, ſuch as they had *heard of in Time paſt*, without diſcovering his Secret Sins, which had been kept from the Knowledge of the World, the divulging whereof would but have multiply'd Scandals and Stumbling-blocks unto others. To confeſs our Secret Sins to God is ſafe, to confeſs our Open Sins to the World is ſufficient. *Obſerve* farther, the Commendable Proficiency which St. *Paul* made in the Jewiſh Religion, wherein he was inſtructed and educated, *I profited in the Jews Religion above many of my Equals.* He was alſo a Zealous Maintainer of the Jewiſh Cuſtoms, and Unwritten Traditions, *being more exceeding Zealous of the Traditions of my Fathers.* From St. *Paul*'s Example we may infer, That it is a Special Duty incumbent upon all Perſons to make Religion the Matter of their Choice; and having eſpous'd it, to be the more Serious and Zealous in it; to labour to advance and grow both in the Knowledge and in the Practice of it, and that to a degree of Eminency, excelling and out-ſtripping others. *I profited in the Jewiſh Religion above many of my Equals or Contemporaries.*

15 But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his Grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jeruſalem to them which were Apoſtles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damaſcus.

Here we have a Second Evidence, which St. *Paul* brings to prove himſelf an Apoſtle Extraordinary, called by God himſelf unto the Miniſterial Service; and that the Doctrine he delivered was not mediately from the Mouths of the Apoſtles, but by immediate Revelation from Jeſus Chriſt. Thus he ſpeaks, When (ſays he) it pleaſed God, who decreed and determined to ſeparate and ſet me apart for the Work of an Apoſtle, even from my very Infancy, and afterwards of his meer Grace and Good-will called me to preach the Goſpel to the Gentile World, having firſt revealed his Son in me, and to me, and then by me, immediately I ſet about the Work, and comply'd with my Duty, not conſulting any Perſon living, neither my own Carnal Reaſon, nor any Man's Advice; neither went I up preſently to *Jeruſalem* to confer with, to receive Authority or Inſtruction from, them which were Apoſtles before me, but I went immediately from *Damaſcus*, the Place of my Converſion, into *Arabia*, and preached the Goſpel Three Years amongſt thoſe Wild and Barbarous Heathens, and then returned again unto *Damaſcus*; from whence it evidently appears, that I neither had Inſtruction nor Commiſſion from any of the Apoſtles that were before me, having never ſeen any of them as yet, but both my Miſſion and my Meſſage were immediately received from Jeſus Chriſt. *Here obſerve*, (1.) The Qualifications neceſſary in a Miniſter that reveals Jeſus Chriſt unto his People, namely, *That* Chriſt firſt be revealed to him, and in him. We muſt learn Chriſt our ſelves before we pretend to preach him to others. *When it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in me I preached him among the Heathen*: As there is no Knowledge like the Knowledge of Experience, ſo there is no Preaching like Experimental Preaching. Happy thoſe that can ſay, not only that which we have heard and read, but that which we have taſted, and felt, and experienc'd from the Holy Spirit's Operation in and upon our own Hearts, that declare we unto you. *Obſerve* (2.) What haſte the Apoſtle made to obey the Call and Command of God after he had received it, *immediately I conferred not with Fleſh and Blood.* He conſulted neither himſelf nor others, neither his own Heart nor the Wiſeſt Heads; he conſulted not his own Safety, nor Carnal Intereſt, but inſtantly did what he was commanded to do. The great Commendation of Duties is the ready Diſcharge of Duties: When once the Mind of God is declared, and Conſcience throughly ſatisfied, we cannot be too quick and expeditious in the Execution of Divine Commands. Lord! How readily ſhould all Men, but eſpecially thy Miniſters, anſwer and obey thy Call, and execute thy Will and Pleaſure? *Immediately I conferred not*, ſays St. *Paul*; *I made haſte, and delayed not*, ſays Holy *David*. In a Good Work it is good to make haſte, in God's Work we cannot readily make more haſte than Good-ſpeed.

18 Then after three Years I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the Apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave James the Lord's Brother.

Here is a Third Evidence to prove that St. *Paul* received his Miniſtry and Meſſage by Divine Revelation from Jeſus Chriſt, and not from Man, or by Man. He acknowledges that not till Three Years after his Converſion, when he had preached the Goſpel in the Deſarts of *Arabia*, had he ever ſeen *Peter*, or any other of the Apoſtles, and conſequently could not receive the Knowledge of the Goſpel from him or them, as his Adverſaries the Falſe Apoſtles would inſinuate and ſuggeſt. True, after this Three Years preaching in, and his return from, *Arabia*, he went up to *Jeruſalem*, and ſaw *Peter* and *James*, and converſed with them for Fifteen Days: But the ſhortneſs of his Stay with them is an Evidence that he went not up to *Jeruſalem* to learn the Goſpel from them, much leſs to pay Homage to St. *Peter* as the Prince of the Apoſtles; for St. *Paul* often affirms in his Epiſtles that he was not inferior to *Peter*, nor came behind the chiefeſt of Apoſtles: But it was only a familiar and friendly Viſit given by one Miniſter of Chriſt to another, in Token of mutual Conſent and Agreement in the ſame Truth preached by both, and by no Means to receive Ordination from *Peter*, or Divine Inſtruction, (for he had an higher Teacher than him, even Chriſt himſelf,) or to acknowledge any Subjection to him, by owning his Supremacy over all the Apoſtles, as the Church of *Rome* would bear us in Hand he did, in defiance of what St. *Paul* himſelf declares to the contrary; but we cannot help it, if Men who have their Credulity at their own diſpoſe, and can believe what they liſt, will yield their Aſſent to what is contrary to Divine Revelation, and the Reaſon of Things. Very evident it is to any Impartial Obſerver, that St. *Paul*'s Viſit at *Jeruſalem* was a Viſit of Civil Courteſie, yet for the Spiritual Conſolation and Mutual Edification, both of himſelf and the Apoſtles, whom he thus viſited. From hence Learn, (1.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould be ſo far from living at Variance with, or at any Diſtance in Affection from each other, that they ought to maintain Correſpondency and Familiarity with one another, and to give friendly Viſits to each other, in Token of their Harmony and Mutual Agreement in the ſame Divine Truths delivered by them. Thus did our Apoſtle here, he took a Journey to *Jeruſalem* to ſee *Peter* and *James*, our Lord's Kinſman. Learn (2.) From the ſhortneſs of his Viſit and Stay at *Jeruſalem*, though it was in the moſt delightful and deſirable, yea, moſt profitable Company, yet it was but for Fifteen Days, he haſtens away to his Charge again. Thence *Note*, That though the Miniſters of Chriſt may and ought to Viſit each other, as an Evidence of Reciprocal Affection, and in order to Mutual Direction, Edification and Conſolation, yet ought their Meetings to be neither ſo frequent, nor of ſo long continuance, that thereby their ſeveral Flocks ſhould ſuffer Prejudice; after a ſhort time ſpent in viſiting we muſt return to our Buſineſs, and mind above all Things our Miniſterial Charge; *I went no ſee* Peter, but *abode with him only Fifteen Days.*

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Obſerve here, That St. *Paul* having to do with falſe Apoſtles, and the ſeduced *Galatians*, whom he had juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect would not (as they ought) give much Credit to his Word, he aſſerts the Truth of what he affirmed upon Oath, appealing to the All-knowing and Heart-ſearching God as Witneſſes and Judge of the Truth of what he ſaid, ——*Behold, before God, I lie not.* Where *Note*, (1.) That it is no new Thing for the faithfulleſt and ableſt Miniſters and Servants of Chriſt to be look'd upon as Liars, unworthy to be truſted, and to have the Truth of what they deliver, though in God's Name, queſtioned and ſuſpected. Our Apoſtle's purging of himſelf here from Lying, doth import that ſome did ſuſpect him for a Liar, and if an Inſpired Apoſtle be, what private Miniſter may not be, ſuſpected? *Note* (2.) The Means which St. *Paul* makes uſe of for purging himſelf from the Imputation of Falſhood, it was by taking an Oath in a Solemn Manner. Learn thence, That though raſh Swearing, falſe Swearing, and upon every light Occaſion to take or multiply Oaths, be a very great Sin, yet to Swear, and bear Witneſs to the Truth, and to take an Oath upon due Conſideration, and for weighty Reaſons, and to Swear by the Name of God, is certainly a lawful, and ſometimes a very neceſſary and important, Duty.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria, and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Chriſt: 23 But they had heard only, that he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me.

The Fourth Evidence is here produced by St. *Paul*, to prove that both his Miniſtry and his Meſſage, his Office and his Doctrine, were Divine; and that he was ſo far from learning the Chriſtian Religion from the Chriſtian Churches in *Judea*, that he was not by Face ſo much as known to them, or they to him; they had heard indeed that one *Paul* a Perſecutor was become a Preacher, but they had never ſeen him; and accordingly they magnified the Grace of God in his Converſion, admiring the wonderful Change wrought in him. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The laborious Diligence and indefatigable Induſtry of St. *Paul*, in Planting and Propagating the Chriſtian Faith throughout the World, he Travels as ſoon as Converted into *Arabia*, then into the Regions of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, thinking he could never do Service enough for Chriſt, who had ſuffered and done ſo much for him. Oh! How full of Life and Zeal are young Converts! What Activity and Induſtry for Chriſt and Souls is found with them! They deſpiſe all Dangers, they ſurmount all Difficulties, are above all Diſcouragements, in expreſſing their Love to Chriſt, and venturing their Lives for him; but alas! As they grow older, their Affections are cooler, ſo that they have many times juſt Cauſe to ſay, *Oh! That it were with me as in the Months of old, in the Day when God* converted me, *when the Secret of God was with me, and when by his Light I walked* through all Difficulties to ſubſerve his Intereſt, and to promote his Glory. *Obſerve* (2.) The Great and Mighty Power of the Heart-changing Grace of God, which turns the Haters and profeſſed Enemies of Religion into Friends, and bitter and bloody Perſecutors into bold and painful Preachers of the Goſpel, *He who perſecuted in Times paſt, now preacheth the Faith which once he deſtroyed*; he that leads Captivity Captive, can ſoon make the ſtouteſt Enemies of Religion to become its ſtrongeſt Friends. *Obſerve* (3.) *Paul* before his Converſion is ſaid *to deſtroy the Faith*, becauſe he intended it, and endeavoured it, though he could not actually effect it, and accompliſh it: Sin and Evil intended by a determinate Reſolution are as good as acted in God's Account. Bloody Perſecutors deſign no leſs than a total Extirpation of the Truth to deſtroy the Faith, which though it be out of their reach to effect, yet having deliberately reſolved it, it is as actually accompliſhed in the Account of God; *he now preacheth the Faith that once he deſtroyed.* *Obſerve* laſtly, To whom the Glory and Praiſe of Converting Grace is due, namely, to God, and to God alone. *They Glorified God in me*; that is, they owned and admired the Grace of God beſtowed upon me, which wrought ſuch a Glorious and Bleſſed Change in me. The Converting Grace of God, wrought either in our ſelves or others, is Matter of Admiration, and calls for Thankſgivings and Acknowledgments unto God; *they Glorified God in me.*

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle proſecutes in this the Argument which he had begun in the former Chapter, namely, to evidence and prove that both his Miniſtry and his Meſſage, his Office and his Doctrine, were Divine, neither of them received from Man, but immediately from Jeſus Chriſt. And becauſe the falſe Apoſtles had ſuggeſted that St. Paul *taught divers Doctrines which were contrary to the Judgment and Practice of St.* Peter *and the other Apoſtles, he declares in this Chapter how he went up to* Jeruſalem, *and communicated his Doctrine which he had preached among the Gentiles to the moſt Eminent of the Apoſtles, who unanimouſly ſubſcribed to it, and in a full Synod declared their Approbation of it; for they perceiving that St.* Paul *was in an extraordinary manner called of God to be an Apoſtle, both from that Divine Aſſiſtance wherewith he was accompanied, and from thoſe Apoſtolical Gifts with which he was endowed, they acknowledged him for an Apoſtle, yea, that he was inferior to none of themſelves, to the great Shame of the falſe Apoſtles, who had miſrepreſented him as delivering Doctrines which were oppoſite and contrary to what was taught and practiſed by the other Apoſtles.*

1 THen fourteen years after I went up again to Jeruſalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me alſo. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Goſpel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, leſt by any means I ſhould run, or had run in vain.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the gracious Care and good Providence of God did watch over St. *Paul* from Place to Place, and from Time to Time, when and whereſoever he went forth to Preach, to Plant and Propagate, the Goſpel. After Fourteen Years he went up to *Jeruſalem*; that is, Fourteen Years after his Converſion, ſoon after which he went about preaching the Goſpel to the Gentile World. Bleſſed be God, who is oft-times pleaſed in Mercy to his Church to preſerve the Lives of his laborious Miniſters, and their Liberties alſo, for the free Exerciſe of their Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the joint Endeavours of Men and Devils to the contrary. This good Man, this great Apoſtle, whoſe Blood was thirſted after, having obtained Help of God, continued Fourteen Years together preaching the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) The End, Deſign, and Intent, of St. *Paul* in this preſent going up to *Jeruſalem*, and appearing before St. *Peter* there; it was not to acknowledge St. *Peter*'s Supremacy over him, or to appeal to him as the Infallible Judge in Matters of Religion; but it was in a Friendly and Brotherly Manner to acquaint St. *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles with the Doctrine preached by him, that their concurring Approbation being given to it, the Mouth of his Adverſaries, the falſe Apoſtles, might be ſtopped, who accuſed him for preaching contrary to what the reſt of the Apoſtles both believed and practis'd. *Obſerve* (3.) The Ground upon which St. *Paul* undertook this Journey to *Jeruſalem* at this time; *he went up by Revelation*; he adviſed with God about the Matter, and received Direction from God to undertake the Journey. Bleſſed be God that although we cannot expect immediate Direction and Information from God now, as the Saints of Old had before the Canon of the Scripture was compleated, yet we have the written Word of God *to be a Light to our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths*, to direct and guide us in all our Enterprizes; and we ought to regulate all our Actions according to it, and to judge of the Lawfulneſs and Expediency of our Undertakings by it. *Obſerve* (4.) With what Prudence and Holy Caution the Bleſſed Apoſtle proceeded in this Matter, he imparted his Sentiments, and communicated his Doctrine, to the reſt of the Apoſtles *privately*, for fear of exaſperating the zealous Judaizing Chriſtians: And to the moſt eminent of the Apoſtles, *ſuch as were of greateſt Reputation*, leſt if there ſhould be any Oppoſition made to his Doctrine, he ſhould hereafter run, or had run, in vain. Nothing more obſtructs the Succeſs and Efficacy of the Goſpel than Differences of Judgment, and Strife and Debate about thoſe Differences amongſt the moſt Eminent Preachers of it. Hence it was that St. *Paul* endeavoured ſo much to get the joint Conſent of the moſt Eminent Apoſtles to the Doctrine delivered by him, leſt by the Calumnies of his Adverſaries his Preaching ſhould have been rendred unſucceſsful, *and he ſhould hereafter run and labour in vain.*

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumciſed: 4 And that becauſe of falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out our liberty, which we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by ſubjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with you.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Inſtance and Evidence which St. *Paul* brings of the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*'s agreeing with him both in their Doctrine and in their Practice; and that was *Titus*, who being a Gentile, Born a Greek, and now a Preacher of the Goſpel, and never Circumciſed, the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* would no more compel him to be Circumciſed than St. *Paul* had done, but received him into Fellowſhip with them, tho' he was an Uncircumciſed Greek. This was a plain Evidence that they did not judge Circumciſion at that time to be a part of God's commanded Worſhip, for then they would have compelled *Titus* to it; that is, conſtrained him by the Force of Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures to become Circumciſed, had they thought Circumciſion neceſſary to the Gentiles. *Obſerve* (2.) The Reaſon aſſigned why the Apoſtle would not Circumciſe *Titus*, though he had before Circumciſed *Timothy*, namely, becauſe ſome falſe Brethren crept in would have taken Advantage from it to bring Perſons into Bondage to the Law of Ceremonies, and plead Conformity to Circumciſion as an obliged Duty. Learn hence, That although the Ceremonial Law was certainly aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt, yet Almighty God, partly with reſpect to it as his own Ordinance, and partly in Condeſcention to the Weakneſs of the Jews, was pleaſed to tolerate the Obſervation of ſome part of it, and particularly Circumciſion, as an indifferent Action, though not as a Part of Religion, for ſome time; the Ceremonial Rites being dead, they were to be decently, not over-haſtily, buried. *Obſerve* (3.) The Apoſtle's undaunted Courage, and Heroick Reſolution, in this Matter. He would, notwithſtanding the falſe Apoſtles Importunity, never yield Subjection or Submiſſion to, or Compliance with, their Commands in the leaſt Meaſure, by conſenting to Circumciſe *Titus*, that ſo the Truth and Liberty of the Goſpel might continue ſincere and unſhaken. Learn hence, That an outward Act of Compliance muſt not be conſented to, which in ſome Caſes might be complied with, when by making it neceſſary we turn Chriſtian Liberty into Servitude and Bondage, when Things in their own Nature indifferent are urged and inforced as neceſſary: In that Caſe the Practice of a Thing indifferent is to be abſtained from. Thus here, When falſe Brethren urged the Circumciſion of *Titus* as an Evidence of St. *Paul*'s receding from the Doctrine of Chriſtian Liberty, he would not obey them, nor conſent unto them. *To whom we gave Place, no not for an Hour*; that is, we refuſed to uſe Circumciſion, though but that once, becauſe he would not give the Adverſaries the leaſt Advantage againſt us, or againſt the Truth delivered and defended by us.

6 But of theſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat (whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's perſon) for they who ſeemed to be ſomewhat, in conference added nothing to me.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, when I came up to *Jeruſalem* thus I behaved my ſelf towards the falſe Brethren, as I have here declared; but now for thoſe *who ſeemed to be ſomewhat*;

that is, *Peter*, *James* and *John*, who were of chief Reputation amongſt the Apoſtles, and more than ordinary Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, being the Foundations of the Chriſtian Church laid by Chriſt himſelf, although they had ſome External Advantages above me, as being Apoſtles before me, and having converſed with Chriſt, and ſeen him here on Earth, which I never did; yet this maketh no matter to me, (for God values no Man for theſe outward Favours and Benefits,) neither in that Conference about Circumciſion did they add any Thing to me, either by their Authority or Inſtruction; they added nothing, they corrected nothing, but approved all Things, both what I did and ſaid; from whence it evidently appears that my Authority was equal with theirs, and my Doctrine the ſame with theirs alſo.

7 But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that the goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, as the goſpel of the circumciſion was unto Peter; 8 For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, the ſame was mighty in me towards the Gentiles.) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, perceived the Grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; that we ſhould go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumciſion. 10 Only they would that we ſhould remember the poor; the ſame which I alſo was forward to do.

Note here, (1.) That the Ordinance both of *Peter* and *Paul* for the Office and Work of Apoſtles was alike Divine. The former (St. *Peter*) was to be the Miniſter of the Circumciſion; that is, to exerciſe his Miniſtry among the Jews: And St. *Paul* by Vertue of the ſame Divine Ordinance was to exerciſe his Office among the Gentiles, called the Uncircumciſion; yet this muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if St. *Paul* might not preach to the Jews, nor St. *Peter* to the Gentiles, which they both did upon Occaſion: But becauſe their more Special and Particular Province was thus, St. *Peter* to preach to the Jews, and St. *Paul* to the Gentiles. Learn hence, That the Office of Preaching the Goſpel is a Special Truſt committed by God himſelf to ſuch as he qualifies for it; and as none muſt enterprize it but ſuch as he calls unto it, ſo muſt all that undertake be accountable to him for it; the Goſpel of the Uncircumciſion *was committed* unto me, and the Goſpel of the Circumciſion *was committed* unto *Peter*. *Note* (2.) How this Great Apoſtle aſcribles the Succeſs and Efficacy of his own Miniſtry among the Gentiles, and of St. *Peter* amongſt the Jews, alike to God; *He that wrought effectually in* Peter, *was alſo mighty in me*. It is neither the Perſon, nor Pains of the Miniſter, nor any Natural Energy or Efficacy in the Word preach'd, upon which the Succeſs of the Goſpel depends, but upon the Effectual Working of the Holy Spirit; he that *wrought effectually* in *Peter*, was alſo *mighty* in me. The Word of God works not as a Natural Agent, but as a Moral Inſtrument in the Hand of the Spirit: The Weapons of our Miniſterial Welfare are then mighty when made mighty through God, for the pulling down the Strong Holds of Sin and Satan. *Note* (3.) The Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt implicitely declared, namely, to be *Pillars*; not ſeeming to be ſo, but really ſo: As Pillars they are to uphold the Truth by their Doctrine and Diligence, as Pillars to be conſtant in defending the Truth againſt all the Blaſts and Storms of Error and Falſe Doctrine, as Pillars to adorn the Truth by an Innocent Life and Inſtructive Example, whereby they ought not only to ſhine before others, but alſo to outſhine others; *When* James, Cephas, *and* John, *ſeemed to be Pillars*. Theſe Three Apoſtles under Chriſt were the great Supporters of the Church of Chriſt by their Diligence and Faithfulneſs; yet obſerve, *James* is here named firſt before St. *Peter*, which ſhews the Weakneſs of the Papiſts Argument for *Peter's* Primacy, becauſe ſometimes firſt named: But it is evident he is not always ſo: St. *James* is here mention'd before him, becauſe, ſay ſome, Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, and the Lord's Brother, or near Kinſman; but certain it is, that St. *Paul* paid not here any Deference to *Peter* upon the Account of his Primacy or Supremacy, which is now ſo much contended for, but was not then thought of; becauſe it is the Apoſtle's great Drift and Deſign to ſhew that he was in every reſpect equal with *Peter* and the reſt of the Apoſtles, and in no reſpect inferior to any of them; and conſequently that neither in his Miſſion nor his Meſſage, neither in his Office nor his Doctrine, neither in his External Authority nor his Internal Gifts and Graces, did he come behind the Chiefeſt Apoſtles, as the Falſe Apoſtles had miſrepreſented him. *Note* farther, St. *Peter's* Integrity with *James* and *John's* in this Matter, they being all very well ſatisfied by Convincing Evidence that Almighty God had certainly call'd *Paul* to be an Apoſtle no leſs than themſelves; they own and acknowledge him for ſuch, no doubt, to the Grief as well as the Shame of the Falſe Apoſtles, who had vilified his Perſon, leſſened his Authority, and diſparaged his Doctrine. *When* James, Cephas, *and* John, *perceiv'd the Grace that was given unto me*; that is, the Grace of Apoſtleſhip, they in the Name of all the Apoſtles, and the whole Church, gave unto me, and *Barnabas* my Fellow-labourer, *the Right Hand of Fellowſhip*; that is, they own'd us to be Pillars as much as themſelves; and acknowledged us to be Apoſtles no leſs than themſelves. And it was agreed and concluded upon that we ſhould continue to preach chiefly to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. So far were the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* from condemning St. *Paul's* Doctrine, or undervaluing his Calling, which was the Thing that the Falſe Apoſtles were ſo deſirous of, and hoped for. *Note* Laſtly, That as an Evidence of the Happy Agreement of *Peter*, *James* and *John*, with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and of their owning them as Apoſtles and Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, they recommended to St. *Paul's* Charitable Conſideration the Poverty of the Jewiſh Converts to Chriſtianity, deſiring him to make Collections in the Gentiles Churches for the Chriſtian Jews. Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That the Jews were generally poorer than the Gentiles; it is frequently the Lot of thoſe who are rich in Grace to be poor in Goods, and to be reduc'd to ſuch Streights as to be forced to live upon ſome Charitable Supplies from others. *Obſerve* (2.) That although thoſe who are our own Poor, and live within our Bounds, near us, and about us, are chiefly to be reliev'd by us, yet in Caſes of Extream Neceſſity ſuch Poor as live remote from us, whoſe Faces were never ſeen by us, ought to be Sharers in our Charity. *Obſerve* (3.) That the Care of God's Poor, and the Supplying the Outward Neceſſities of his Saints, is an Employment not unworthy of the Higheſt Apoſtle, much leſs unbecoming the Ordinary Miniſters of Chriſt; they would that *we ſhould remember the Poor*. *Obſerve* (4.) That the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt ought upon juſt and fit Occaſions to excite and ſtir up their People to Duties of Charity as well as Piety, to Coſtly and Expenſive Duties as well as thoſe that are Eaſie, and leſs Burthenſome; theſe being no leſs profitable to the Church, and much more evidential of a Real Work of Grace upon the Heart. Thus did St. *Paul* here, the Apoſtles deſired me to remember the Poor, *the ſame which I was alſo forward to do*.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.

Obſerve here St. *Peter's* Offence, and St. *Paul's* Rebuke. St. *Peter's* Offence, (1.) Was this, he declin'd from the Doctrine taught by himſelf, concerning the Abrogation of Circumciſion, and the Ceremonial Law; he had formerly convers'd freely with the Chriſtian Gentiles without Scruple, making no Objection againſt them becauſe they were not Circumciſed: But at *Antioch* he withdrew himſelf from the Chriſtian Gentiles, refuſing to eat with them becauſe they were not Circumciſed, as if for want of Circumciſion they had been unclean, and altogether unfit to be convers'd with. This was his Fault; whereby it appears that St. *Peter* himſelf was not infallible, whatever his Pretended Succeſſors the Biſhops of *Rome* are ſuppoſed to be. Learn thence, How certainly and ſuddenly the Holieſt and Beſt of Men will run into Sin and Error, if a Special Aſſiſtance from the Holy Spirit doth not uphold them, and preſerve them. *Obſerve* (2.) As St. *Peter's* Offence, ſo St. *Paul's* Rebuke. He withſtood him to the Face; that is, rebuk'd him Publickly becauſe he was blameworthy, and not ſecretly behind his Back; ſuch as ſin openly, muſt be rebuked and reproved openly. Here *Note* how little St. *Paul* dream'd of St. *Peter's* Supremacy; if ſo, he had been more Modeſt than thus to reprove him to his Face. Learn hence, That as no Bands of Friendſhip muſt keep the Miniſters of God from reproving Sin and Vice, ſo when they find the Fault to be Notorious, they muſt reprove it where-ever they find it with much Boldneſs and Reſolution; St. *Paul* here in reproving St. *Peter* withſtood him: It is in the Original a Military Word, ſignifying to ſtand againſt, either by Force of Arms, as among Soldiers, or by Dint of Argument, as among Diſputants; it is a Word of Defiance, and ſignifies an Oppoſition Hand to Hand, Face to Face, Foot to Foot, not yielding an Hair's breadth to the Adverſary; yet withal, as St. *Paul's* Courage, ſo his Candour, appeared in reproving St. *Peter* to his Face, and not reproaching him, as ſome behind his Back: And behold this great and chief Apoſtle St. *Peter* ſubmits to his Reprover, neither juſtifying his Action, nor reflecting upon St. *Paul*, he replieth not again.

12 For before that certain came from James he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion. 13 And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation. 14 But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

A farther Account is given us in theſe Verſes of St. *Peter's* Offence at *Antioch*, in giving Occaſion of Scandal to the *Gentiles*, by refuſing to converſe and eat with them, although he had before in a Viſion received a Divine Command ſo to do. St. *Paul* calls it Fear, Verſe 12. Diſſimulation, Verſe 13. and not walking Uprightly, Verſe 14. He refuſed to converſe with the believing *Gentiles*, being uncircumciſed, for Fear of offending the believing *Jews*, who were ſo Tenacious of Circumciſion, and the Ceremonial Law. Learn hence, What Weakneſs and Inconſtancy is found with the Beſt of Men, eſpecially when Fear gets a prevailing Power over them; St. *Peter* was the Miniſter of the Circumciſion, in great Honour and Eſteem with the believing *Jews*, but fearing the Loſs of his Reputation among them, he falls into a Sin againſt God. *Obſerve* (2.) The Fatal Influence of that his Sin, it drew others into a Partnerſhip with him therein. *Barnabas himſelf* was led away with the Diſſimulation, and the other *Jews* diſſembled with him. Learn hence, That ſuch as are Eminent in the Church had need be exactly careful how they walk; for if they fall, they fall not alone, many do fall with them. *Obſerve* (3.) With what Openneſs and Freedom, with what Courage and Reſolution, St. *Paul* checks and reproves *Peter* for his Cowardice and Timerouſneſs in refuſing to converſe with the believing *Gentiles*, for fear of gaining the Diſpleaſure of the circumciſed *Jews*. I *ſaid unto* Peter *before them all*, *if thou being a Jew* liveſt in thy ordinary Converſation, after the manner of the *Gentiles*, *Why compelleſt thou the Gentiles*, by thy Example, *to live as do the Jews?* Where note what a conſtraining Power there is in the Example of Eminent Perſons; he is ſaid to compel in Scripture; not only who doth violently force, but who being of Authority doth provoke by his Example: The Errors of thoſe that Rule become Rulers of Error; Men ſin through a kind of Authority, through the Sins of thoſe who are in Authority.

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.

St. *Paul* having fully vindicated his own Authority as an Apoſtle from the Imputations of the Falſe Apoſtles, he comes next to vindicate his Doctrine, namely, the Evangelical Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt, which he had formerly preached to the *Galatians*, and which in his Abſence the Falſe Apoſtles had endeavoured to ſubvert and overthrow, urging the ſtrict Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law as neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation. Our Apoſtle therefore to ſtrike at the Root of this dangerous Error, excludes all Works of our own from having any Influence upon our Juſtification. Now this he proveth, (1.) Becauſe they that were *Jews* by Birth, and ſo federally the Holy People of God, found it neceſſary to renounce the Works of the Law in point of Juſtification, and to ſeek Righteouſneſs only through Faith in Chriſt; as well as the Profane Idolatrous Sinners of the *Gentiles*, who were Strangers to the Covenant of God; *For by the Works of the Law ſhall no Fleſh*, that is, neither *Jew* nor *Gentile*, *be juſtified*; that is, acquitted from the Guilt of Sin, and diſcharged from Obnoxiouſneſs to the Wrath of God. Now no Obedience of ours can obtain this, becauſe of the great Imperfection which cleaves to it, and becauſe God will have all Boaſting excluded, *Eph.* 2. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved through Faith, not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt*, but that he that glorieth ſhould glory in the Lord. *Obſerve* here, That the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, and not by Works, was early, very early, oppoſed by Satan and Falſe Teachers, it being *Articulas ſtantis & cadentis Eccleſiæ*, a Fundamental Article of our Chriſtian Faith; our Comfort ſtands or falls with it, no Wonder then it is ſtrenuouſly oppoſed.

17 But if while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we our ſelves alſo are found ſinners, is therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make my ſelf a ttanſgreſſor.

Theſe Words are generally lookt upon as an Objection, which the Adverſaries of the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith have been always ready to make againſt it, namely, that if Perſons be not juſtified by their Obedience to the Law, then they may live as they liſt in the Breach and Violation of the Law, and freely indulge themſelves in Sin; and conſequently make Chriſt the Miniſter of Sin, as if he had relaxt the Duty. The Apoſtle rejects this Inference and Deduction with the greateſt Abhorrency and Deteſtation, ſaying, God forbid! Hence *Note*, That it is no new Prejudice, though a very unjuſt one, againſt the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone, and not by Works, that it opens a Door to Licienciouſneſs, and makes Chriſt the Miniſter of Sin. *Obſerve* farther, A Second Objection here ſuggeſted; ſome might pretend that he built up by his Practice what he had deſtroyed; no, ſays the Apoſtle, I have, together with the Doctrine of Free Juſtification, preached to you, preſt upon you, the Duty of Mortification, as of indiſpenſable Neceſſity to be practiſed by you; ſhould therefore my Preaching or my Practice be otherwiſe than it has been, I ſhould build again what I have deſtroyed, and deſtroy what I have already builded; and thus by encouraging Sin, and diſcouraging Holineſs and Obedience, I ſhould be a Tranſgreſſor againſt the Law of Righteouſneſs. Learn hence, That the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone cannot be rightly preached, except the Duty of Mortification of Sin be urged and inforced with it; for the ſame Faith that depends upon Chriſt for Pardon of Sin, doth look up unto him for Power and Strength to vanquiſh and ſubdue Sin; if we do not the latter, Chriſt will never do the former.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Here the Apoſtle ſhews, that Believers are ſo far from being juſtified by the Law, that they are dead to the Law, ſo as to put no Confidence in their Obedience to it for Juſtification; particularly, (1.) They are dead to the Law; that is, they are delivered from the rigorous Exactions of the Law; prefect, perſonal and perpetual Obedience is the Duty which the Law exacts at the Believer's Hand, and he has performed it, though not in himſelf, yet in the Perſon of Chriſt his Surety, who yielded as abſolute and compleat Obedience to the Law as it could require or demand. (2.) The Law is dead to Believers, and they to that, in regard of the Condemnatory Curſe and Sentence of the Law; Chriſt has redeemed them from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for them, *Gal.* 3. 13. True, the Believer's Violation of the Royal and Righteous Law of God, in the ſmalleſt Meaſure and Degree, doth in its own Nature deſerve the Curſe and Condemnatory Sentence; but Chriſt has diſcharged him from Obnoxiouſneſs to the Curſe, by being made a Curſe. (3.) The Law is dead to Believers, as to its Authority, to juſtifie and ſave them: This is that the Law cannot do, being made weak through the Fleſh; though properly ſpeaking the Law is not weak to us, but we are weak to that; the Law has not loſt its Authority to Command, but we our Ability to Obey; it is as impoſſible for a fallen Sinner to keep the Law of God perfectly, as it is for a lame Cripple to run a Race ſwiftly. Yet, (4.) Believers are not dead, but alive, to the Law, as a Rule of Life and Holy Living; the Law binds the Believer (in Chriſt's Hand) as ſtrictly to endeavour Obedience to it as it did *Adam* in Innocency; but here is the Believer's Priviledge, That God the Father upon the Score of the Covenant of Grace, which the Blood of Chriſt has Ratified and Confirmed, doth graciouſly accept the Faithful Endeavours of his Children, inſtead of Perfect Performances, which Obedience the Law-Covenant did rigorouſly exact and require. Thus may every Believer ſay with the Apoſtle, *I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God*, namely, a Life of Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs.

20 I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

Several Things are here obſervable, *viz.* St. *Paul*'s Spiritual Death declared, and his Spiritual Life deſcribed, together with the Author and Inſtrument of it. *Obſerve* (1.) St. *Paul*'s Spiritual Death, *I am crucified with Chriſt*; that is, with Chriſt I am dead to the Law, (in the manner mentioned in the foregoing Verſe,) dead to Sin, and dead to the World. Learn thence, That all true Believers are Crucified with Chriſt Jeſus, or that all juſtified Perſons have Fellowſhip with Chriſt in his Death. They have Fellowſhip with him, (1.) In the Merit and Value of his Death; they are ranſomed by it as a Price paid down to the Juſtice of God for them. (2.) In the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death, which doth not only merit Pardon for us, but mortifies Sin in us; *our old Man is Crucified*; that is, the Power of Sin is ſubdued in us. (3.) A juſtified Perſon hath Fellowſhip with Chriſt in the Likeneſs and Similitude of his Death, and that is a Crucifixion: As Chriſt died a Painful, Shameful, Lingering and Accurſed Death for him, ſo doth Sin die Painfully, Shamefully, and Gradually in him; *They that are Chriſt's have Crucified the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts*, Gal. 5. 24. *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul*'s Spiritual Life deſcribed, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me.* Learn hence, That a Crucified Chriſtian is a Living Chriſtian, *I am Crucified, nevertheleſs I Live*; a Life of Juſtification and Sanctification at preſent in Hope of, and as an Earneſt for a Life of Glorification to come. Yet *Obſerve*, (3.) How the Apoſtle corrects, or rather explains himſelf, after what kind, and in what manner, he Lives; he denies himſelf to be the Author and Root of his own Life, and declares Chriſt to be both; *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me.* Chriſt is both the Author and Efficient Cauſe, the Exemplary Cauſe, the End or Final Cauſe, of the Chriſtian's Life; a Living Chriſtian lives not himſelf, but Chriſt lives in him. *Obſerve* (4.) As the Author of the Chriſtian's Spiritual Life Chriſt, ſo the Inſtrument of it, and that is Faith. *The Life which I live in the Fleſh*; that is, the Spiritual Life which I live as a Chriſtian here in the World, *I live by Faith in the Son of God*; my Life of Juſtification is by Faith in his Blood, my Life of Sanctification and Conſolation is through Faith, in and by Influences derived from his Holy Spirit. *Obſerve* (5.) How the Apoſtle appropriates to himſelf in particular what Chriſt had done for all Believers in general, *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; where *Note*, Though a firm Perſwaſion and a full Aſſurance of Chriſt's ſpecial Love to our ſelves, and his dying for us in particular, is not of the Eſſence and Being of juſtifying and ſaving Faith, yet it is attainable without an extraordinary Revelation; and as ſuch every ſincere Chriſtian ought to aim at it, to labour and endeavour after it.

21 I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.

The Apoſtle concludes the Chapter with a double Argument to prove the Chriſtian's Juſtification by Faith without the Works of the Law. (1.) Were it otherwiſe, we ſhould fruſtrate and make void the Grace of God: For if Juſtification be by Works, it can no more be by Grace, according to the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. 6. (2.) Chriſt's Death had been in vain, without any neceſſary Cauſe or Reaſon at all, if the Juſtification of a Sinner could have been obtain'd by his own Works: Where *Note*, That as well Works done after Faith and Converſion, as thoſe done before it, are excluded from being the Meritorious Cauſe of our Juſtification, either in whole, or in part; becauſe the joining of Works with Faith in the Matter of our Juſtification is a total excluding of God's Free Grace, and a loud proclaiming that Chriſt died in vain: *If Righteouſneſs come by the Law, I fruſtrate the Grace of God, and Chriſt is dead in vain.*

CHAP. III.

In this, and the following Chapters of this Epiſtle, our Apoſtle expoſtulates the Caſe with the Galatians, *who were ſeduced by the Falſe Apoſtles to relinquiſh the Liberty they were called to by the Goſpel, and to put their Necks under the Judaical Yoke again, ſo far as to obſerve Circumciſion; nay, the Days, Months, Times, aud Years of the Ceremonial Law. And thus they turned again to the Weak and Beggarly Elements of the Law, from which they had a Manumiſſion by the Goſpel.*

This Seduction of theirs our Apoſtle looks upon as a Piece of Faſcination, accounting them like Perſons that had been in Ill Handling, and practic'd upon by Witchcraft: He begins accordingly his Holy Charm againſt it in the Firſt Verſe of this Chapter, in which he thus beſpeaks them.

1 O Fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the Truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth crucified among you?

Obſerve here, (1.) The Object of the Apoſtle's Sharp Reprehenſion, the Churches of *Galatia*. *Obſerve* (2.) The Ground of the Reprehenſion, their Defection from the Truth into a very great Error, namely, their holding of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, as neceſſary to Salvation; which was a making of the Croſs of Chriſt of no Effect, and a Virtual Denial of his being come in the Fleſh. From hence we learn, That the Beſt and Pureſt of Particular Churches may err, and have erred fundamentally and dangerouſly: For what conſiſts ſuch a Church of but Perſons all fallible? Head and Members being all ſinful, are as unable to ſecure themſelves from Error as from Vice: Indeed the Church of *Rome* talks big, and boaſts of a Falſe Gift, that of *Infallibility*; but could never yet agree where it is lodged, whether in the Pope, or in a General Council; however, they are ſure they have it. Well, if ſo, the more wicked and wretchedly inexcuſable are they in not improving their Talent of Infallibility for the beſt Service of the Chriſtian Church, namely, by writing one Infallible Comment upon the whole Bible. What a Serviceable Performance would it have been in them to pin the Pope into his Chair, and hold down his Hands to write, as *Aaron* and *Hur* held up *Moſes* his Hands to pray, till all the *Amalekite* Errors and Hereſies, ſo much complain'd of, were routed and ruin'd? Wo unto them that let ſuch an Excellent Gift lye idle amongſt them, and unemploy'd by them. *Obſerve* (3.) The High and Heinous Aggravation of this Fault in the *Galatians*, *before whoſe Eyes Jeſus Chriſt had been evidently ſet forth crucified amongſt them*; that is, Chriſt, and their Freedom by him, from the Bondage of the Ceremonial Law, had been preached to them; and his Death and Sufferings, with the great End and Deſign of them, as plainly laid before them, as if Chriſt himſelf had been crucified in the midſt of them. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Brand of Infamy which our Apoſtle ſets upon theſe Judaizing Doctors, Heretical and Falſe Teachers; he calls them Spiritual Sorcerers, and their Doctrines Spiritual Witchcraft; *O Galatians, who has bewitched you?* Becauſe, (1.) As Sorcerers by deluding the Senſes made

Perſons apprehend they ſee what they ſee not; ſo Hereticks by caſting a Miſt of ſeeming Reaſon before the Underſtanding to delude it, and make the deluded Perſon believe that to be Truth which indeed is not. (2.) As Sorcerers in what they do are aſſiſted beyond the Reach of their own Ability and Skill by the Help of Satan, ſo Heretical Spirits are often, by Satan's Concurrence with them, more than ordinarily aſſiſted by him in drawing Multitudes after them, *O Fooliſh Galatians, who has bewitch'd you?* The Original Word ſeems borrow'd from the Practice of Witches and Sorcerers, who being aſſiſted by the Devil, 'uſe to caſt Miſts before the Eyes of the People to dazle and delude them.

2 **This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

Our Apoſtle having prepared the *Galatians* Attention, by a very Smart and Sharp Reprehenſion in the foregoing Verſe, returns to the Subject of Juſtification by Faith, without the Works of the Law, which he had enter'd upon in the former Chapter, and proſecutes at large in this; and he uſes here Five Arguments to prove that we are juſtified by Faith, and not by Works. The Firſt is contain'd in the Verſe before us, *Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I appeal to your own Experience, you have received the Spirit your ſelves, ſome of you for Sanctification, others for Miraculous Operations: Now I would know by what Means you receiv'd it; was it by hearing the Law of *Moſes* preach'd? You cannot ſay it, for you were Heathens, and without the Written Law; it muſt then be by hearing of the Goſpel, the Doctrine of Faith which I preach to you. Here we have a Truth expreſs'd, and a Truth imply'd; the Truth expreſs'd is this, That the Hearing of the Goſpel faithfully preach'd is the Inſtrumental Means by which Perſons receive the Holy Spirit, in the Sanctifying Gifts and Graces of it, to enable them to live an Holy and Spiritual Life. *Received ye not the Spirit by the Hearing of Faith?* Yes, ye did. The Truth imply'd is this, That a People ſhould take great heed that they never undervalue, much leſs deſpiſe and vilifie that Miniſtry, or that Doctrine, which God at firſt bleſſed for their Converſion. How many are there in *England* at this Day who diſown that Church, deſpiſe that Miniſtry, which God bleſs'd to their Converſion, if ever they were Converted? Sad it is, yet very certain, that like Vipers they gnaw out the Bowels of her who ſuckled them at her Breaſt.

3 **Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Fleſh?**

Obſerve here, The Apoſtle calls the Doctrine of the Goſpel *Spirit:* Becauſe by hearing the Goſpel preach'd they had receiv'd both the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Law, with all its Rights and Ceremonies, he calls *Fleſh*; becauſe they were now weak, and being but Temporary Inſtitutions, were aboliſh'd by the Coming of Chriſt and the Goſpel. *Obſerve* next, how the Apoſtle endeavours to convince the *Galatians* of the Folly and Abſurdity of hoping to perfect that in the Fleſh which they had begun in the Spirit. *Are ye fooliſh?* As if he had ſaid, that having at your Entrance into Chriſtianity begun an Holy Life, by and according to the Holy Spirit conferr'd upon you, that now you ſhould think to be made more perfect by the Fleſh, by the External Commandments and Obſervances of the Law? How unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe that your Juſtification ſhould be begun by a more Noble, and perfected by a leſs Noble, Cauſe?

4 **Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.**

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, To what Purpoſe have you ſuffered ſo much Perſecutions from the Jews for the Cauſe of Chriſtianity? All which Sufferings will be in vain, if after all you bring your ſelves under the Bondage of the Jewiſh Yoke; for theſe might have been eſcaped had you owned the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and other Legal Obſervances: But I hope you will recollect your ſelves, and perſevere in your Firſt Profeſſion, without which all your former Labours, your paſt and preſent Sufferings, will avail you nothing; *intimating*, that all the Good Actions we have done, and all the Hards Things which we have ſuffer'd, will be altogether in vain unto us, if we do not perſevere in Well-doing, and Patient Suffering unto the End. *Have you ſuffered ſo many Things in vain? If it be yet in vain. Note* here, (1.) That it has been from the beginning the Lot and Portion of ſuch as profeſs Chriſtianity to ſuffer *many Things* in the Defence of it. *Note* (2.) That it is very poſſible for ſome of thoſe who have made an Early and Long Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, yea, and ſuffered Hard Things for it, after all to make a Foul Defection and Apoſtacy from it. *Note* (3.) That all ſuch Sufferings have been, are, and will be, in vain, and return to no Joyful Account, if the Perſons ſuffering do afterwards apoſtatize from, and turn their Backs upon the Truths of God, formerly embraced and maintain'd by them; *Have you ſuffer'd ſo many Things in vain? If it be yet in vain.*

5 **He therefore that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

Obſerve here, (1.) That God did accompany the Firſt Preaching and Planting of the Goſpel with the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, with a Power to work Miracles, to heal Diſeaſes, and to ſpeak with Tongues, which were ſo many Atteſtations and Confirmations that the Doctrine of the Goſpel was from God; for here St. *Paul* appeals to the *Galatians*, as Men that had the Spirit and Miracles amongſt them, *he that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh Miracles*; implying, that *Almighty God* had given to them his Holy Spirit, both in the Sanctifying Graces, and Miraculous Gifts of it. *Obſerve* (2.) That the Spirit thus communicated in the Firſt and Early Days of Chriſtianity was not given to the *Galatians*, or any other Gentiles, by the Preaching of the Law, but by the Miniſtry and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, which is here called *the Hearing of Faith; he that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, doth he it by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* Learn hence, That although the Gifts and Graces of God's Holy Spirit are convey'd to the Hearers of the Goſpel by the Miniſtry of the Word, yet God is the Author, the Miniſter, and Diſpenſer of them, and the Goſpel only the Inſtrument and Means of their Conveyance. *He* miniſtreth to to you the Spirit.

6 **Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs.** 7 **Know ye therefore that they which are of Faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham.**

Here our Apoſtle proceeds to a Second Argument to prove that Perſons are juſtified by Faith, and not by Works, and that is drawn from the Example of *Abraham:* And the Argument lyes thus: As *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, was juſtified, ſo muſt all Believers, the Children of Faithful *Abraham*, be juſtified alſo. But though *Abraham* did abound in many Vertues and Good Works, yet was he not juſtified by theſe, but by Faith only, therefore by Faith muſt all his Children be juſtified alſo. *Abraham believed God*; that is, aſſented to, and relied upon the Promiſe of God made unto him, that in him, that is, in the Meſſias, who was to deſcend from him, ſhould all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed; and this Faith of his was accounted, imputed, reckoned to him for Righteouſneſs; that is, was accepted of God for his Juſtification. From whence the Apoſtle doth infer or draw this Concluſion, That ſuch as ſeek Juſtification by Faith, as *Abraham* did, are the Children of *Abraham*, as the Gentiles were; that is, the Children of his Faith; a far greater Priviledge than what the Jews gloried in, namely, that they were the Children of his Fleſh. Learn hence, That as the Pious Jews under the Old Teſtament, ſo are Chriſtians now under the New Teſtament, juſtified alike. Were they juſtified freely? So are we. Are we juſtified fully? So are they. Was a Righteouſneſs neceſſary for them to be cloathed with, in order to their Acceptance with God? The ſame is neceſſary for us alſo. Was Faith imputed by God to them for Righteouſneſs? So ſhall it be to us alſo.

8 And the ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtifie the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. 9 So then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.

Obſerve here, That becauſe the former Conſequence from *Abraham*'s Juſtification to ours might be queſtioned whether it holds in the *Gentiles*, who were not of *Abraham*'s Poſterity, therefore the Apoſtle declares, That the great Promiſe made to him, *that in him*, that is, in the Meſſias Chriſt Jeſus, who was to come of him, *all Nations*, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, *ſhould be Bleſſed:* God having determined, that all Believers indefinitely, of what Nation or Kindred ſoever, ſhould be all juſtified one and the ſame Way, namely, by Faith in Chriſt, without the Works of the Law. So that all that are of Faith, or true Believers, whether *Gentiles* or *Jews*, do partake of all thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings which believing *Abraham* did partake of, amongſt which Juſtification by Faith is the chief. *Learn hence*, (1.) That the Goſpel is no new Doctrine, but the ſame for Subſtance (though not for Clearneſs) with that which was preacht to *Abraham* and to the Church under the Old Teſtament, *The Scripture preached before the Goſpel unto Abraham.* Learn (2.) That the Bleſſing of Juſtification by Faith, and of other Spiritual Favours promiſed to the Nations in *Abraham*, was ſuch as *Abraham* himſelf was a Sharer in, and Partaker of; they were Bleſſed with Faithful *Abraham*.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Here is a Third Argument produced in this Chapter to prove that we are juſtified by Faith, and not by Works; becauſe they who ſeek to be juſtified by the Works of the Law are under the Curſe, and if ſo, cannot be juſtified. The Argument runs thus, our Obſervance of the Law, when at the beſt, is but imperfect: Now every imperfect Performance lays us under the Curſe, therefore no Performance of ours can juſtifie us. They that cannot fulfil the Law, can never be juſtified by the Law: But no fallen Man can perfectly fulfil the Law, therefore none can be juſtified by the Law. This is the Force of the Argument, which the Apoſtle proves by a Quotation out of *Deut.* 27. 26. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*; where *Note*, (1.) The Duty which the Law exacts, namely, Perfect, Perſonal, and Perpetual, Obedience. (2.) The Penalty which the Law inflicts, and that is the Curſe, *Curſed is every one*, &c. Learn hence, That Sin and the Curſe are inſeparable; where-ever Sin is, the Curſe will be, be it upon a Perſon by Imputation, or by actual Commiſſion; Where-ever Sin lyes, it lays under the Curſe; for Sin is an infinite Evil objectively conſidered; it is a Contempt of Infinite Authority, a Contrariety to Infinite Holineſs, a Provocation of Infinite Juſtice, and an Abuſe of Infinite Mercy, and conſequently the deſert of Sin is Death and the Curſe.

11 But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, it is evident: for the juſt ſhall live by faith. 12 And the Law is not of Faith: but the man that doth them ſhall live in them.

A Fourth Argument is here produced to prove that no Sinner can be juſtified before God by the Works of the Law, although before Men he may. The Argument is this, taken from *Hab.* 2. 4. *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*; that is. live his Spiritual Life by Faith, his Life of Juſtification and Sanctification alſo; the Life of his Righteouſneſs before God, of his Holineſs before Men, and his Life of Glory with God in Heaven, are all by Faith. He adds, *v.* 12. *The Law is not of Faith*; that is, the Law ſays nothing of Faith in a Mediator, or promiſes Life to any Perſon, ſave only to him who by a ſinleſs Obedience performs exactly what it preſcribes. but the Voice of the Law is, *Do, or die.* Learn hence, That *the Law of Faith*; that is, the Law and the Goſpel, they are not contrary each to other, but are mutually ſubſervient one to another in many Things; as thus, when the Law makes known Sin, the Goſpel holds forth the Remedy for Sin; the Law diſcovers our Need of Chriſt, the Goſpel make an Offer and Gracious Tender of Jeſus Chriſt; the Law makes known to us our entire Duty, the Goſpel furniſhes with Strength and Ability to perform that Duty. Learn (2.) That though the Law and Faith, that is, the Goſpel, which is the Doctrine of Faith, be not contrary each to other, yet in point of Juſtification they are mutually inconſiſtent one with another: So that if Juſtification be by the Works of the Law, it cannot be had by Faith; if it be had by Faith, it cannot be attained by the Works of the Law. There can be no Mixture of Law and Goſpel, of Faith and Works, in this Matter.

13 Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

This is the Apoſtle's Fifth and Laſt Argument, to prove that we are juſtified by Faith; and that notwithſtanding the Threats of the Law, a Believer is freed from the Curſe and Malediction of the Law; by Chriſt's bearing the Curſe for him, *Chriſt hath redeemed us*, &c. Where *Note*, (1.) The Believer's happy Diſcharge from the moſt diſmal and dreadful Thing imaginable; namely, the condemnatory Sentence and Curſe of the Law, whereby a Sinner is bound over to Death, even to Death of Soul and Body. *Note* (2.) The Perſon that doth, and only can, deliver the Sinner from this condemnatory Curſe and Sentence, and that is Jeſus Chriſt. He diſcharges the Believer from his Obnoxiouſneſs to Wrath, diſſolves his Obligation to Puniſhment, looſes all the Bonds and Chains of Guilt, ſo that the Curſe of the Law has nothing, and ſhall have nothing, to do with him for ever. *Note* (3.) The Way and Manner in and by which Jeſus Chriſt effecteth all this for us, namely, by *his being made a Curſe for us*; not that Chriſt was made the very Curſe itſelf, or changed into a Curſe, but he took the Curſe upon himſelf; our Sin became his by a voluntary Suſception of the Puniſhment, and Chriſt underwent that Death, the Death of the Croſs, which by the Law was accurſed, to free us from the Curſe of the Law; as Chriſt was made Sin for us, ſo was he made a Curſe for us. Now he was made Sin, not by contracting the Guilt of Sin, but by ſuffering the Puniſhment of Sin; ſo he was made a Curſe by undergoing that Death which the Law ſtiles Accurſed.

14 That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.

Obſerve here, One ſpecial Fruit of Chriſt's Sufferings, and being made *a Curſe for us*, namely, that the Curſe being aboliſhed, the Bleſſing of *Abraham*, that is, the Bleſſing of Juſtification, Reconciliation and Adoption, promiſed to *Abraham* upon his believing, might come upon all the believing *Gentiles* through Chriſt the promiſed Seed: And that the *Gentiles* might receive the Promiſes made by Chriſt of the Holy Spirit, both in its Miraculous Gifts and Sanctifying Graces, through their Submiſſion to the Faith of Chriſt, or the Doctrine of the Goſpel. *Learn hence*, (1.) That Chriſt by ſubmitting to the Curſe of the Law, did not only appeaſe the Wrath of God towards us, and deliver us from the Curſe of the Law deſerved by us, but purchaſed all Spiritual Bleſſings for us, ſuch as Grace here, and Glory hereafter. *Chriſt was made a Curſe, that the Bleſſing of* Abraham *might come on the Gentiles*; Oh wonderful Grace, infinite Love, and aſtoniſhing Goodneſs of God, in that great Work of our Redemption, in bringing about one Contrary by another! He giveth Life by Death, and the Bleſſing by the Curſe; *Chriſt was made a Curſe that the Bleſſing might come upon the Gentiles.* Learn (2.) That there was a Promiſe of divers Bleſſings made to *Abraham*; namely, that God would give him a Son, a Son by *Sarah*, a Son in his Old Age, and by that Son a numerous Iſſue; that Iſſue become a mighty Nation, and poſſeſs all the Land of *Canaan*, wherein he then Sojourned; and that he would ſettle his Covenant, that is, his Church, in that Family and Nation; and that in one Perſon deſcending from his Poſterity all Nations ſhould be Bleſſed; and that this Bleſſing, introduced by that one Perſon, ſhould aboliſh the Curſe brought upon all Nations by the firſt Perſon's Sin, *That the Bleſſing of* Abraham *might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt.*

15 Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſanulleth, or addeth thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one.

one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. 17 And this I ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe: but God gave it to Abraham by promiſe.

Obſerve here, (1.) An Argument drawn from Contracts among Men, to prove the Fixedneſs and Stability of the Covenant made by God; if one Man makes a Covenant with another, ſign it, ſeal it, and deliver it before Witneſs, it becomes irrevocable and irreverſible; much more then muſt the Covenant of Grace and Mercy made with us by God be perpetual and immutable, ſince it is a Covenant eſtabliſhed by Oath; and when God ſwears, he cannot repent. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle proves, That as the Covenant of God can never fail in regard of the Wiſdom and Unvariableneſs of him that made it, ſo it can never expire for want of Parties that have Intereſt in it, and Advantage by it, for want of *a Seed* to whom it is made; for as long as Chriſt hath a Church and Members upon Earth, ſo long ſhall the Promiſe be of Force; not only *to* Abraham, *but to his Seed, were the Promiſes made; not to Seeds, as of many, but as of one to thy Seed, which is Chriſt*; where by *one*, we underſtand one Myſtically, and in *Aggregato*; not only perſonally and individually, and by *Chriſt*, the whole Church, conſiſting of Head and Members, believing *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. *Obſerve* (3.) That the Apoſtle having confirmed the Truth of his Doctrine by Arguments in the foregoing part of the Chapter, comes now in the latter part of it to anſwer Objections which ſome might be ready to make againſt his Doctrine. The firſt we have Verſe 17. *This I ſay, that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the Law which was Four Hundred Years after cannot diſannul.* The Objection lyes thus, ſome might ſay, when Two Laws are made, whereof the one is expreſly contradictory to the other, the latter doth in common Preſumption abrogate and diſannul the former: But here we find that Four Hundred and Thirty Years after the Promiſe made to *Abraham* there was a Law publiſhed extremely contrary to that Promiſe, a Law without Mercy or Compaſſion, a Law both impoſſible and inexorable, a Law which can neither be obeyed nor endured, a Law which denounces a Terrible and Severe Curſe to the Tranſgreſſors and Breakers of it, therefore it ſhould ſeem as if ſome Cauſe had hapned to make God repent and revoke his former Covenant-Promiſe made to *Abraham*. To obviate this Objection, our Apoſtle ſhews firſt what the Purpoſe of the Covenant to *Abraham* was; namely, to give Life and Salvation by Grace and Promiſe; Secondly, What the Purpoſe of the latter Covenant by *Moſes* was not, namely, to give the ſame Life by Working, ſince in thoſe Reſpects there would be a Contradiction and Inconſiſtency in the Covenants, and ſo by Conſequence Inſtability and Unfaithfulneſs in him that made them; that therefore which the Apoſtle here drives at is this, That the coming of the Law hath not voided the Promiſe, and that the Law is not of Force towards the Seed to whom the Promiſe is made, in any ſuch Senſe as carries Contradiction to, or implies Abrogation of, the Promiſe before made; from whence it follows, if it be not to ſtand in Contradiction to, it muſt ſtand in Subordination to, the Goſpel, and ſo tend to Evangelical Purpoſes. Learn hence, (1.) That altho' God might have dealt with Mankind as an abſolute Lord and Soveraign, yet he doth not govern them barely by a Law, but by a Covenant which has Promiſes and Threatnings annext. Learn (2.) That after the Covenant of Works made with Man before the Fall was broken by *Adam*, God was pleaſed to enter into a Covenant of Grace with fallen Man, to deliver him out of an Eſtate of Sin and Miſery, and to bring him into a State of Salvation by a Redeemer. Learn (3.) That though the former and latter Covenant did differ in ſome conſiderable Cirumſtances, yet they are one and the ſame in Subſtance, and do fully agree in all the Eſſential Parts of both, Learn (4.) That God's Intent in giving the Law, and urging exact Obedience to it, under the Penalty of the Curſe, was not to take us off from ſeeking Righteouſneſs and Life only by the Promiſe, but to encourage us to ſeek it; for ſays the Apoſtle here, *The Law could not diſannul the Covenant made with* Abraham, *nor make the Promiſe of no Effect*.

19 Wherefore then ſerveth the law? it was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.

Here an Objection is moved: Some might be ready to ſay, if the Law, that is, Works done in Obedience to the Law, do not juſtifie, then the Law given by *Moſes* upon Mount *Sinai* is in vain, and to no purpoſe; for why was the Law given, enjoining ſo many Duties, promiſing Life to the Obedient, and threatning Wrath and a Curſe to the Diſobedient, if the Inheritance come not by the Law? The Apoſtle anſwers, That one great End for which the Law was given, was to diſcover Sin, and a Sinner's undone Condition by Reaſon of Sin, and to lead him to ſeek out for a Remedy. *The Law was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſions*, that is, to make Tranſgreſſion appear, to diſcover the Pollutions of Mens Hearts and Natures, and make them ſenſible of the Condemnation they are under. *The Law was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſions till the Seed ſhould come*; that is, Chriſt and his Church. Where *Note*, That the legal Diſpenſations were not to continue always in the Church, but only till the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; at whoſe Death the Partition Wall was broken down, and the *Gentiles* called into the Fellowſhip of the Church as well as the *Jews*. *Obſerve farther*, the Glorious and Amazing Manner in which the Law was given upon Mount *Sinai*, in Thunder and Lightning, by the *Miniſtry of Angels*, in ſuch a terrible Manner, that there was no Acceſs for ſinful Man to God, but by *Moſes* a Mediator ſtanding betwixt God and them, who in that Action was a Type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only Mediator between God and us. As *Moſes* was a Typical, National, and Repreſentative Mediator, ſtanding between the Lord and that People of the *Jews*, ſo Chriſt was, a Subſtantial and Univerſal Mediator between God and Mankind. Where *Note*, That the Law was publiſhed in Mercy and Pacification, not in Fury and Revenge; for had the Lord intended Death in the publiſhing of the Law, he would not have proclaimed *it* in the Hand of a Mediator, but of an Executioner. He adds, That a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, that is, of one Party, but of diſagreeing Parties. God and Man were once Friends, they were one, and needed no Mediator: But God and Man by Sin fell at Variance, and now need a Mediator; the very Notion of a Mediator doth ſuppoſe, that Men by Sin are at odds with God, and that God by Grace is willing to be one with Man. However, though a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, yet *God is one*; that is, though there be Two Covenants, and Two Mediators, yet God is one and the ſame in both Covenants; he carries on one and the ſame Purpoſe and Intention, both in the Law and in the Goſpel; namely, a Benevolence and Good-will towards, and a hearty Deſire of, Reconciliation with Mankind.

21 Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law. 22 But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

Another Objection is here made by the Apoſtle, The *Jew* might poſſibly ſay, That the Law given by *Moſes* was againſt the Promiſe of God made to *Abraham*. The Apoſtle anſwers no; That the Law is not contrary, but ſubſervient to the Promiſe; for the Law was not given on Mount *Sinai* to afford Life and Juſtification by Obedience to it, (ſeeing it could not by a fall'n Creature be ever perfectly kept,) but to convince of Sin, and to condemn for Sin, that Men deſpairing of Salvation in and of themſelves might ſpeedily betake themſelves to Chriſt for it: For God in the Scriptures hath *concluded*, that is, declared all Men to be under Sin, and under the Curſe due to Sin; that renouncing all Confidence in themſelves, they ſhould by Faith have Recourſe to the only Mediator for Righteouſneſs and Life, for Juſtification and Salvation. *Learn hence*, That God, in the Publication of the Law by *Moſes* on Mount *Sinai*, had none but Merciful and Evangelical Intentions. (2.) That the Publication of the Law by *Moſes* was not againſt the Promiſe of God made to *Abraham*,

braham, but they had both the ſame merciful Deſign and gracious Intention. To explain the Matter by a Similitude or Illuſtration thus: Suppoſe a Prince ſhould proclaim a Pardon to all Traytors if they would come in and plead it, and after this ſhould ſend forth an Officer to attack and arraign them, to threaten and condemn them. is the Prince contrary to himſelf? Hath he repented of his Mercy? No ſure! But he is unwilling to loſe the Glory of his Mercy, and moſt deſirous to have the Honour of it acknowledged, and therefore he bringeth theſe Criminals into Extremities, that when their Guilt is made evident, they may acknowledge the Juſtice of the Law that would condemn them, and the great Mercy of the Prince in offering a Pardon to them. The Caſe is alike between God and us; firſt to *Abraham*, and in him to us, God made a Promiſe of Mercy and Bleſſedneſs, even to all that would plead an Intereſt in it for Remiſſion of Sins, and Acceptance with God: But the World grew ſecure; and though Sin was in them, and Death reigned over them. they regarded not their miſerable Condition; being without a Law to evidence Sin and Death unto their Conſciences, they ſaw no neceſſity of pleading the Promiſe of Pardon. Hereupon Almighty God publiſhes by *Moſes* a ſevere and terrible Law, a Law which filled the Air with Thunder, and the Mount with Fire, inſomuch that *Moſes* the Mediator did exceedingly fear and quake; yet in all this God did but purſue his firſt Purpoſe of Mercy, and take a Courſe to make his Goſpel accounted worthy of all Acceptation, that Men being by this Law rouz'd from their Security, and made ſenſible of the Curſe and Malediction they lye under, might run from *Sinai* unto *Sion*, from *Moſes* to Chriſt, and by Faith plead that Pardon and Remiſſion which in Chriſt was promiſed, when God told *Abraham* that in his Seed ſhould all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our ſchool-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchool-maſter.

Before Faith came; that is, before Chriſt came, and the Doctrine of Faith was preached, *we were in* Bondage *under the* Law; the Ceremonial Law was a very great Bondage, their frequent going up to *Jeruſalem* at their Feſtivals was burthenſome, their Ceremonies were many, inconvenient and chargeable; their Laws for Uncleanneſs and Purifications rendred them unconverſable at all times with other People, and ſometimes unconverſable one with another; yet was the Law very uſeful to the Jews, that ſo they might be prepared by it to receive the Doctrine of Chriſt and Salvation by Faith in him. Hence it is that he calleth the Law their *School-maſter to bring them unto Chriſt*; the School-maſter exerciſes Authority over Minors only, not Over-grown Perſons; he teaches only Rudiments and firſt Principles for Beginners, not ſuch Things as require mature Judgment and perfect Age: Such was the Law in Compariſon of the Goſpel, and *Moſes* with reſpect to Chriſt. *Moſes* and the Law is a rigid and ſevere School-maſter, who by Whips and Threats require an hard Leſſon of their Scholars, whether able to learn it or not: But Chriſt and the Goſpel is a mild and gentle Teacher, who by ſweet and good Rewards invite their Scholars to their Duty, and guide and help them to do what of themſelves they cannot do; by which Means they love both their Maſter and their Leſſon, and rejoice when he is neareſt to them to direct them in their Studies. As the Law is our School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt, ſo Chriſt is our great Prophet that leads us to God. *Note* farther, That though the Law was a good School-maſter to the Jews in their Infancy and Minority, yet it has no Authority over Chriſtians now grown up to Maturity. The Goſpel Church; that is, both believing Jews and Gentiles, being like a Son come to Age, believing in Chriſt already come, are no longer to be treated as Children under the Diſcipline of the Law as a School-maſter, for they are now under the Evangelical, not *Moſaical*, Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace. *After that Faith is come*; that is, Chriſt the Object of Faith manifeſted, and the Goſpel the Doctrine of Faith revealed, we are no longer under a School-maſter.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Obſerve here, (1.) A Glorious Goſpel-Priviledge diſcover'd, namely, Adoption; *Ye are the Children of God*. The Church of God under the New Teſtament is in a ſpecial State of Sonſhip and Adoption, to whom the Priviledges and Immunities of Sons and Heirs grown up to Maturity do belong. *Obſerve* (2.) The Univerſality of this Priviledge, *Ye are all the Children of God*; that is, all both Jews and Gentiles, all both weak and ſtrong Believers; ſubſtantial Relations do not *Recipere magis & minus*; he that is a Father in Reality, cannot be more a Father to one Child than to another; the young one in the Cradle may call the Parent Father as well as he that grown to Man's Eſtate; *Ye are all the Children of God*. *Obſerve* (3.) The Inſtrumental Cauſe of this Bleſſed Priviledge, *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*; Chriſt inveſts every Believer, weak as well as ſtrong, in this Glorious Priviledge of Adoption; Faith in Chriſt to come did entitle Believers under the Old Teſtament to the Dignity of Sons and Daughters, and Faith in Chriſt now already come doth add ſome peculiar Dignity of Sonſhip to Believers under the New Teſtament: They with us, and we with them, are all the Children of God through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus; Chriſt of a Son became a Servant, that we of Slaves might become Sons.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.

What the Apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing Verſe he proves in this; namely, *that all Believers are the Children of God through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, becauſe they are baptiz'd into Chriſt, and have put on Chriſt; that is, they are admitted into the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm, they profeſs Chriſt's Holy Religion; and if they live as they profeſs, they put on Chriſt; that is, they are made Partakers of his Spirit, and do copy forth the Excellencies of his Life. To put on Chriſt, is not as to put on a Suit of Cloaths fitted to the Body, but as Metal caſt into a Mould, receiving the Figure from it. Happy they who are not only Sacramentally, but Really and Spiritually, Baptized into Chriſt, incorporated into him, and made one Body with him by Faith; who do not only bear his Name, but wear his Image.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, now ſince the coming of Chriſt there is no difference or diſcrimination between one Nation and another, no regard to any National Priviledge, either of Jew or Gentile, no diſtinction of Conditions, either Bond or Free, or of Sexes, either Male or Female, but Circumciſed or Uncircumciſed. We are all one as good as another in reſpect of outward Priviledges or external Advantages; but being ſincere Believers, we are all equally accepted of God in Chriſt. Learn hence, That no external Priviledge or Prerogative whatſoever, without Faith in Chriſt, is any whit available to Salvation; none are debarred from Chriſt, nor more or better accepted with him, for any of theſe Things. Both the Circumciſed and Uncircumciſed are his, if believing in Chriſt.

29 And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.

That is, if ye be Chriſt's Servants and Subjects, then are ye the true Seed of Faithful *Abraham*, and Heirs of the Bleſſing, according to the Promiſe made to him and to his Seed. This our Apoſtle aſſerts in Oppoſition to the Falſe Apoſtles, who maintained that there could be none truly reputed *Abraham*'s Seed except they were Circumciſed, and ſubjected themſelves to the Law of *Moſes*: Yes, ſays the Apoſtle, if ye be Chriſt's, and by Baptiſm ingrafted into him, you are the true Children of *Abraham*, tho' ye be not Circumciſed; yea, you are Heirs apparent of the Heavenly Inheritance given unto *Abraham* by Promiſe. Learn hence, That all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are *Abraham*'s Spiritual Seed, Children of his Faith, though not of his Fleſh; and being the Children of his Faith, are Heirs together with him of the ſame Promiſes. *If ye be Chriſt's*, that is, ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians, *then are ye* Abraham*'s Seed, and Heirs according to the Promiſe.*

CHAP. IV.

Our Apoſtle farther proceeds in this Chapter to clear the Freedom of Chriſtians under the Goſpel from the Servitude and Bondage of the Moſaick *Law. He ſhews that the aboliſhed Ceremonies of the Legal Diſpenſation were properly ſuited to the Minority and Infant State of the Jewiſh Church, which required Inſtruction in Spiritual Myſteries by Carnal Reſemblances; but that now Chriſt by his Actual Appearance in Humane Fleſh had obtained our Freedom from all thoſe Yokes, and put us into a fuller Poſſeſſion of the Rites of Children, even of ſuch as are come to Age, and grown up to Riper Years. The Jewiſh Church before Chriſt our Apoſtle compares to an Infant in reſpect of Age, they were Babes and Children; to a Servant in reſpect of Fear and Subjection; to a Pupil, under Tutors and Governours, under the Inſtitution of a curſt Schoolmaſter,* the Law, *acquainted only with the firſt Rudiments of Religion; the high Myſteries of Faith being not ſo clearly manifeſted, or made known unto them; and accordingly the Apoſtle thus beſpeaks them.*

1 NOW I ſay, that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governours, until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even ſo we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

The Apoſtle in theſe Words compares the Church of God under the Old Teſtament to an Infant or Child in its Minority and Nonage; partly with reſpect to their Weakneſs in Underſtanding, and want of the Means of Knowledge, comparatively to what we enjoy, and partly with reſpect to the Diſcipline they were under from their rigid Schoolmaſter, the Ceremonial Law. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, as a Child, though he be Heir to and Owner of all his Father's Inheritance in hope, yet ſo long as he is a Minor, and under Age, he differeth nothing from a Servant in point of Subjection, but is under the Management of Tutors and Directors: In like manner the Church, when in its Infant State, under the Old Teſtament, was kept in Bondage and Subjection under the rigid Adminiſtration and rigorous Exactation of the Law, and tied to almoſt a numberleſs Number of Ceremonial Obſervances, by which it pleaſed Almighty God to inſtruct the former Ages of his Church. Learn hence, That the Jewiſh Church in its Infant State was obliged to learn and practice the Elements of a Religion chiefly conſiſting in viſible and bodily Performances of the Ceremonial Law, which were but Rudiments in reſpect of that Heavenly Doctrine concerning Spiritual Life, which the Goſpel now reveals, and clearly makes known unto us; *When we were Children we were in Bondage under the Elements of the World.*

4 But when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law. 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.

That is, when the Fulneſs of Time was come which God the Father had appointed for the finiſhing of the Legal Diſpenſation, and for the aboliſhing the Ceremonial Rites, God ſent forth from himſelf the Son of himſelf, his only Begotten Son, made, that is, born of a Woman, made under and obedient to the Law, ſubjecting himſelf both to its Precepts and its Curſe, to redeem them who were under the Law, and diſcharge them from the Curſe and Malediction of it, that we Believers, we the Members of the Chriſtian Church, might receive the Adoption of Sons, without any Obſervance of Circumciſion, or other Ceremonial Rite. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That Chriſt was God's Son, his own Son, the Son of himſelf, as the Original calls him, *Rom.* 8. 3. his Son; not barely in regard of his miraculous Conception, or in regard of his Sanctification and Miſſion, or in regard of his Reſurrection and Exaltation, or in regard of that endeared Affection which the Father bare unto him, but in regard of his Eſſence and Nature, as begotten by him, his Son by Eternal and Ineffable Generation; being for Nature Coeſſential, for Dignity Coequal, and for Duration Coeternal, with the Father. *Obſerve* (2.) That Chriſt, God's own Son, was ſent forth by God the Father; *God ſent forth his Son.* This ſending of the Son doth, (1.) Pre-ſuppoſe his Pre-exiſtence before his Incarnation; (for if he had not had a Being he could not have been ſent,) it ſuppoſes alſo his Perſonality, that he was a Perſon; not an Operation or Manifeſtation only, for that could not be ſent; and that he was a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father, for how elſe could one ſend the other? (2.) God's ſending of Chriſt doth imply his ordaining, conſtituting, and appointing, Chriſt from all Eternity to come into the World; alſo his fitting and qualifying of him for his Incarnation, and his authorizing and commiſſionating of Chriſt to take our Natures upon him, and in that Nature to do and ſuffer for us, as our Pattern, and as our Surety. *Obſerve* (3.) That Chriſt, God's own Son, ſent forth by God the Father, was made of a Woman, did really aſſume and take upon him our Fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our Nature: It was not an indigeſted unſhapen Maſs or Lump of Fleſh that Chriſt aſſumed, but that Fleſh was organized and formed into a perfect Body, having the ſame Parts, Members, Lineaments and Proportions, which ours have; St. *Paul* calls it, *Coloſ.* 1. 22. *The Body of his Fleſh*; a *Body*, to ſhew the Organization of it, and a Body of *Fleſh*, to ſhew the Reality of it. *Obſerve* (4.) That the Seaſon in which Chriſt was ſent forth was not in the Beginning of Time, nor at the End of Time, but in the Fulneſs of Time. He came not in the Beginning of Time, to excite his Peoples Affections and longing Deſires for his coming, and to teach them to prize him the more when come: He ſtaid not till the End of Time, leſt the Faith of his Church and People ſhould have fail'd; the Patriarchs believed in Chriſt to come, the Apoſtles believed in Chriſt then preſent amongſt them, and we believed in Chriſt as come, and gone again to Heaven. Thus in all Differences of Time paſt, preſent, and to come, Faith had, has, and will have, its ſuitable Work and proper Employment. *Obſerve* (5.) That the great End of God in ſending Chriſt unto us, and the Gracious Deſign of Chriſt in his Undertaking for us, was our Redemption from the Bondage and Curſe of the Law, and our Adoption into the Number of God's Children; *To redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.*

6 And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, that you are now under the Goſpel, become and made the Sons of God, appeareth by this, that God hath ſent the Spirit of his Natural Son into your Hearts, to authorize and enable you to call upon him, not only as your God, but as your Father; the Goſpel aſſuring you that you are no longer in that ſervile Condition you were in whilſt under the Law; but God will deal with you now upon Goſpel Terms, and juſtifie you by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law. Now God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Title given to the Holy Spirit; it is called the Spirit of God's Son; that is, the Spirit of Chriſt; becauſe it is the ſame Spirit which abode upon him that reſteth upon us, and becauſe the Spirit is purchaſed and procured for us by the Blood of the Son. Thoſe Rivers of Living Water, by which the Effuſion of the Spirit is expreſſed, do flow out of Chriſt's pierced Side; Chriſt purchaſed the Spirit for us, before he ſent him from Heaven to us. *Obſerve* (2.) The Act reſpecting his Perſon, *God hath ſent forth.* This imports not any Change of Place, as if he was more diſtant from the Father when he was thus ſent than he was before; but it denotes his Commiſſion for ſome ſpecial Work in and upon the Creature. *Obſerve* (3.) The Objects which have the Benefits of this Act, God hath ſent the Spirit of his

Son into your Hearts; that is, into the Hearts of Believers; ſignifying, that the Work here intended is an inward Work, and a ſaving Work, *Ezek.* 36. 37. I will put my Spirit within them; not into the Brain, to dwell there by common unſanctified Gifts, but into the Heart, where all the Habits of Grace are planted, and from whence all the Iſſues of Life proceed. *Obſerve* (4.) The Office which the Holy Spirit performs in the Believer's Heart. Firſt, It Cries. Secondly, It Cries, *Abba, Father*: The Spirit Cries, by enabling us through his Gracious Influences and Aſſiſtances to Cry or Pray unto God; and it Cries, *Father, Father*; the Repetition made, and the Word redoubled, denotes the Strength and Vehemency of the Deſire, and ſpeaks a Paſſionate and Extraordinary Concernment of Soul for obtaining the Mercy deſired, and the Bleſſings prayed for. Learn hence, (1.) That there are Three Sacred Perſons in the Bleſſed Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; all are held forth to us in this ſingle Verſe, yea, in this ſingle Clauſe of the Verſe, *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son.* Learn (2.) That the Spirit is not a Quality or Operation, but a Perſon that has a real Being and Subſiſtence, elſe the Phraſe of being ſent could not be properly applied to him. Learn (3.) That the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son; for he is the Spirit of the Son, and is ſent by the Father: There is an Order among the Divine Perſons, though no Priority of Being. Learn (4.) That the Spirit of Adoption is a Spirit of Supplication, and this Spirit of Supplication is the great Priviledge and Advantage of Believers under the Goſpel; for it teaches us what to pray for, the manner how we are to pray, it joineth with our Prayers his own Effectual Interceſſions, it gives us a Right and Priviledge to come unto God as unto a Father, and gives us alſo Confidence and Aſſurance as Sons to be accepted with him. Learn (5.) That the great Priviledge of Adoption is both diſcovered and improved by the help of the Spirit of Chriſt: Our Priviledge of Sonſhip under the Goſpel excels by far theirs under the Law. (1.) In Point of Manifeſtation and Clearneſs. (2.) As to Fulneſs and Amplitude of Enjoyment.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon; and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.

Note here, (1.) That the Spirit of the Firſt Covenant was a Servile Spirit, a Spirit of Fear and Bondage, and they that were under that Covenant were rather Servants than Sons; not but that True Believers in and under the Old Teſtament were the Sons and Daughters of the moſt High God, and we find them challenging their Priviledge, *Iſa.* 63. 16. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father*; but yet it was in ſo defective a degree, that they ſeemed more like to Servants than to Sons, and were trained up under ſuitable Diſcipline; hence ſays the Apoſtle here, *Thou art now no more a Servant*, implying they were once ſo. *Note* (2.) That the Spirit of the New Covenant is a Free and Ingenuous Spirit, and the Goſpel State a more Filial State than the Legal State was. *Thou art now no more a Servant, but a Son*; and if Sons, *then are you Heirs of God*, and have a Right to the Inheritance of Heaven when you die, and to the Bleſſed Priviledges and Royal Immunities contained in that great Charter, the Covenant of Grace, whilſt you live; *if a Son, then an Heir of God through Chriſt.*

8 Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?

Our Apoſtle having proved ſufficiently the believing Chriſtian's Freedom from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, next endeavours to convince the *Galatians* how abſurd and unreaſonable it was for them voluntarily to put themſelves under the Obligation and Obedience of it, and to look upon it as neceſſary to their Juſtification and Salvation. Now in the Verſes before us he tells them, that when they were Gentiles they were the worſt of Slaves, ſerving them that were no Gods at all; whereas the Jews ſerved the True God, though in a ſervile Manner; theſe *Galatians* being Heathens before Converſion, ſerved Falſe Gods, and ſo were in a Bondage much worſe than that of the Jews: The Apoſtle therefore juſtly blames them, that they being naturally Gentiles, and never under the Ceremonial Law, ſhould now deſire and chuſe to enter into that Bondage, which was apparently to go backward in Religion, or to return to thoſe Principles which they had already over-paſt. Thence learn, That it is poſſible for a profeſſing People to Advance very far in the Way of Chriſtianity, and yet make a foul Retreat afterward in a Courſe of Defection and Apoſtacy, *After ye have known God, that is acknowledged the Living and True God, and been acknowledged by him, how turn ye again to the Weak and Beggarly Elements?* Here *Note* how Contemptuouſly, or at leaſt Diſeſteemingly, our Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Legal Rites of the Ceremonial Law. He calls them Elements or Rudiments, becauſe they were God's Firſt Inſtructions given to his Church for his Worſhip, to which he intended afterwards a more perfect Way of Worſhip: Next he calls them Weak Elements, becauſe the Law made nothing Perfect, and the Obſervance of it was Impotent and Unavailable to a Sinner's Juſtification before God; and laſtly, he calls them Beggarly Elements, in Compariſon with that more Rational and Spiritual Way of Worſhip under the Goſpel. Whence we may learn, That Holy Zeal will teach a Saint to ſpeak with a ſort of Contempt of any Thing that encroaches upon the Honour due to Chriſt, or any of his Offices: True, the Levitical Ceremonies were appointed by God himſelf, as a Part of Divine Worſhip leading to Chriſt, and as ſuch to be Religiouſly obſerved: But when the Falſe Apoſtles did urge the Obſervation of them under the Goſpel as a Part of neceſſary commanded Worſhip, and as a Part of the *Galatians* Righteouſneſs before God, St. *Paul* is bold then to give them the Name of Weak and Beggarly Elements.

10 Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years, 11 I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.

St. *Paul* here gives Inſtances to the *Galatians*, wherein it did appear that they brought themſelves under an unneceſſary Bondage to the Rites of the Ceremonial Law; he tells them plainly, that they kept the Ceremonial Sabbaths, Feaſts and Faſts, as if that Law were Obligatory, and ſtill Binding. *Ye obſerve Days*; that is, the Jewiſh Sabbath-Days, and New Moons; *and Months*, as the Feaſt of the Firſt Month, and of the Seventh Month; *and Times*, that is, the Times of their Solemn Feſtivals for going up to *Jeruſalem*, as the Paſſover, Penticoſt, and Feaſt of Tabernacles; *and Years*, as the Sabbatical Years, and Years of Jubilee. This, ſays the Apoſtle, makes me afraid of you, that I have preached the Goſpel, and the Doctrine of Free Juſtification by Faith, in vain to you, becauſe you leave the Doctrine I taught you, and put your Confidence in obſerving thoſe Legal Ceremonial Rights. Learn hence, (1.) That the Work of the Miniſtry is a Laborious Work, *I have beſtowed upon you Labour*, ſays St. *Paul*: A Miniſter's Life is not a Life of Eaſe, but of much Toil and Pains, a labouring unto Faintneſs and Wearineſs, as the Word here uſed doth import and ſignifie. Learn (2.) That the moſt Laborious Miniſters and Lively Preachers may ſometimes ſee ſo little Fruit of their Labours and Endeavours, that they may have juſt Cauſe to fear that few are ſavingly converted by their Miniſtry; St. *Paul* here was afraid *leſt he had laboured in vain* among the *Galatians*. Learn (3.) That in order to the Succeſs of our Miniſtry, we muſt not content our ſelves with a Reproof of Sin in General, but muſt deſcend to Particulars, and give Inſtances of thoſe ſeveral and diſtinct Sins which our People are guilty of, and ought to fall under our Reproof for. Thus the Apoſtle here gives particular Inſtances of the Sins formerly reproved, in their obſerving *Days, and Months, and Times, and Years*; Generals, we ſay, do not affect, but particular Reproofs are more piercing, and more convincing; when we ſay to the Sinner, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the Man*, this, if any thing, will ſtick cloſe to the Conſcience.

12 Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

Obſerve here the Holy Wiſdom of our Apoſtle, in tempering his former Reproofs with great Mildneſs and Gentleneſs, *I beſeech you Brethren.* He well knew that theſe *Galatians* were alienated in their Affections from him, and fearing leſt from his preſent Severity and Sharpneſs towards them, they ſhould apprehend that he was alienated from them alſo, he thus Lovingly beſpeaks them, I pray you be affected towards me, as I ſtand affected towards you; count me not your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth; for I am the ſame to you that ever I was; my Love is not alienated from you for any Wrong or Injury done to me by you; for alas! It is your ſelves, and not me, that you Injure, by bringing your ſelves into this Bondage to the Ceremonial Law, to the Loſs of your Chriſtian Liberty. *Be as I am, for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all.* Learn from St. *Paul*'s Example, That tho' the Miniſters of Chriſt may, and ſometimes muſt, uſe Severity and Sharpneſs in the Rebukes and Reproofs which they give for Sin, yet muſt they temper Severity with Gentleneſs, and Inſinuations of Kindneſs and Affection muſt be mingled with Rebukes, as looking not ſo much at what their Sin deſerveth, as what is moſt convenient for bringing them to Repentance, *Brethren, I beſeech you be as I am.* Learn (2.) That when the Miniſters of God, from a true Zeal for the Glory of God, do rebuke Sin, and reprove Sinners, the People are too apt to apprehend that our Zeal flows from a private Spirit of Revenge, as if we had ſome particular Diſpleaſure againſt their Perſons for ſome perſonal Injury done unto our ſelves, all which groundleſs Suſpicions it is our Duty to labour to wipe of: So doth our Apoſtle here, *Ye have not injured me at all*, ſays he.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh, I preached the Goſpel unto you at the firſt. 14 And my Temptation which was in my fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus. 15 Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Obſerve here, (1.) A ſingular Inſtance which St. *Paul* gives of his ſincere Affection towards theſe *Galatians*, *he preached the Goſpel to them at Firſt*, and this both with Difficulty and Danger, *through the Infirmity of the Fleſh*; that is, through much Bodily Weakneſs and Imperfection. The Ancients ſay St. *Paul* was a little Man, and had ſome Deformity or Crookedneſs of Body, and Imperfection in his Utterance, which rendred both his Perſon and his Speech contemptible. Theſe Bodily Infirmities he calls a Temptation, intimating, that the Afflictions of the Body are great Temptations to the Soul: And beſides theſe Bodily Infirmities, he encountered alſo with Perſecutions in preaching the Goſpel to them, which were Evidences and convincing Demonſtrations of his fervent Love and affectionate Regard towards them, *Ye know how through Infirmity of the Fleſh I preached the Goſpel to you at the Firſt.* *Obſerve* (2.) The Reciprocal Returns of Love and Affection which the *Galatians* made to St. *Paul* at his Firſt coming among them to preach the Goſpel, they received him as an Angel of God, or as a Meſſenger from God ſent unto them, yea, as Jeſus Chriſt; as if Chriſt himſelf had been there in Perſon, and preached to them: Nay, ſo warm were their Affections then to St. *Paul* at his Firſt coming amongſt them, that they did not only pull open their Purſes, but had it been poſſible for them, or profitable to him, they could even have plucked out their very Eyes for him; but *Note*, It was at his Firſt coming amongſt them, and preaching to them. Whence we may *Obſerve*, That the Firſt Years of a Miniſter's preaching to and amongſt a People are uſually moſt Succeſsful; then our Peoples Affections are warmeſt, and perhaps our own too. Our People then hear us without any kind of Prejudice againſt us, with great Deſire and Delight: Afterwards their Affections cool, either through their own Inconſtancy, or our Inadvertency, or by the Malice of Satan, or by the miſchievous Deſigns and Miſrepreſentations of ſome of his Inſtruments. *Obſerve* farther, That the Love and Reverence which People owe to their Miniſters ſhould not be Verbal, and in Profeſſion only, but Real, and in Sincerity; they ought to part with what is dear to them to promote the Work of God in their Houſes. There was a Time when theſe *Galatians* could have given all they had to the Apoſtle, Money out of their Purſe, Bread from their Table, yea, Blood out of their Veins, and the very Eyes out of their Head, *I bear you Record, that you would even have pluckt out your own Eyes, and have given them to me.* Learn Laſtly, That it is an high Commendation to a People, when neither Poverty, nor Deformity, nor any Deficiency, which may render a Miniſter of the Goſpel Baſe and Contemptible in the Eſtimation of the World, can poſſibly diminiſh any thing of that Reſpect which they know to be due and payable unto him; notwithſtanding the *Galatians knew the Infirmity and Temptation* of the Apoſtle, yet *they received him* (at Firſt) *as an Angel of God.*

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, How come your Affections, which were ſo warm at firſt, to be ſo cold now? Whence is it that I who was formerly ſo Precious in your Eſteem, am now look'd upon as an Enemy, and only becauſe I declare the Truth of God unto you? Can any Reaſon be given on my Part for this ſudden Change of Affection on your Part? I trow not, unleſs you count my Candour and Ingenuity in telling the Truth a Crime: *Am I become your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth?* Learn hence, That notwithſtanding the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt in reproving Sin, and vindicating the Truths of God, are ſometimes counted and treated as Enemies, yet they will perſiſt and finally perſevere in their Duty, whatever the Event may be; though the World accounts them their *Enemy*, yet will they tell them the *Truth.*

17 They zealouſly affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them.

They, that is, the Falſe Apoſtles, pretend great Love to you, and a Zealous Affection for you, *but not Well*, not upon Honeſt and Juſt Grounds. There is often an ill Cauſe, which is to be condemned and avoided; Zeal is a mixt Affection of Love and Anger working into a Fervency of Mind, in defending what we believe to be True and Good, and in oppoſing what we judge to be Falſe and Bad; *They zealouſly affect you, but not Well.* Nothing is more common, and conſequently more dangerous, than for Heretical Teachers to pretend great Zeal for the Glory of God, and great Love and Affection to the People of God, whilſt they are about to perſwade them to embrace their pernicious Errors and Damnable Hereſies. He adds, *Yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them*; *exclude you*, that is, from the Liberty and Priviledges of the Goſpel ſay ſome, from depending upon me, or any Faithful Paſtor, ſay others; they would ingratiate themſelves, that they may ingroſs you, and you may affect them only. The Old Practice has ever been amongſt Seducers, firſt to alienate the Peoples Minds from their own Teachers, and next get themſelves lookt upon as alone and only worthy to have room in the Peoples Hearts and Affections; *they would exclude you* from us, and us from you, only that you might affect them.

18 But it is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am preſent with you.

Note here, That although there is a Zeal in a Bad Cauſe, which is to be condemned and avoided, yet there is a Zeal in a Juſt and Righteous Cauſe, which is laudable, and worthy to be practiſed; when it is a Zeal guided by Religion, governed by Prudence, attended with Perſeverance, when in a good Thing we are affected, zealouſly affected, and zealouſly affected always. This the Apoſtle deſires that the *Galatians* ſhould be, and that as well when he was abſent from them, as when he was preſent with them.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Chriſt be formed in you.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Endearing Title which the Apoſtle gives to the Apoſtatizing *Galatians*, he calls them *Children, little Children, his little Children, my little Children. Note*, He calls them *Children*, becauſe converted to Chriſtianity by preaching of the Goſpel; and being thus Regenerate and Born again, they were to be as Children, Innocent and Inoffenſive. He calls them *little Children*, to denote the Tenderneſs of their Growth in Chriſtianity, the Smallneſs of their Proficiency in Religion; they were not come to that Conſiſtency in Grace, to that Maturity in Goodneſs, to that Perfection in Knowledge, which he did deſire. Farther, he calls them *his* little Children, to denote that Spiritual Relation which was between them, the having been the undoubted Inſtrument of their Converſion, and ſo was their Spiritual Father; and alſo to denote that Endearneſs of Affection which he bare unto them, and that Tender Care and Concern which he had for them. *Obſerve* (2.) The Holy Vehemency of the Apoſtle's Deſires, how earneſtly he longed after them in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt. He compares himſelf to a Mother in Travail until he ſaw Chriſt formed in their Hearts and Lives. *I travail in Birth till Chriſt be formed in you.* Learn hence, (1.) That there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection, between any Relations upon Earth, than between ſuch Miniſters of Chriſt and their Beloved People, as they have been happily inſtrumental to convert and bring home to Chriſt. Learn (2.) That there is nothing in this World which the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt do ſo paſſionately deſire, and affectionately long after, as to ſee Jeſus Chriſt formed and faſhioned in the Hearts and Lives of their Beloved People; *My little Children, of whom I travail in Birth,* &c.

20 I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice, for I ſtand in doubt of you.

Our Apoſtle, as a farther Teſtimony of his Endeared Affection towards the *Galatians*, declares here his Earneſt Deſire to have been with them, and ſee them Face to Face, that ſo being more fully acquainted with their Caſe, he might know how to ſuit his Diſcourſes to them, and might have more Cauſe of rejoicing with, than complaining of, them. Learn hence, (1.) That though a Miniſter may ſometimes neceſſarily withdraw himſelf from his Flock, yet he ought always to have a Fervent Deſire to be preſent with them, without neglecting any Opportunity when Occaſion offereth of returning to them: *I deſire to be preſent with you.* Learn (2.) That it is a Miniſter's Duty to get as much as may be the Exact Knowledge of his Peoples Inclinations, and Diſpoſitions of their State and Condition, that he may know how to make a fit Application to all of them, admoniſhing and reproving ſome, threatning and correcting others. Thus the Apoſtle here wiſh'd to be preſent with them, *that he might change his Voice*; that is, know the better how to ſpeak moſt ſuitably and ſeaſonably to their Condition; *I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my Voice.*

21 Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. 23 But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the fleſh, but he of the free-woman was by promiſe.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds to the End of this Chapter in ſhewing the *Galatians* that it was the Deſign of God at the Coming of Chriſt to aboliſh the Legal Diſpenſation, and free Men from the Servitude and Bondage of that Law. And firſt he argues with them from the Nature of the Law they were ſo willing, yea, ſo deſirous, to be under, *v.* 21. *Ye that deſire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?* That is, ye that deſire to be juſtified by your Legal Performances, by obſerving Circumciſion, *&c.* do you not hear and take notice how the very Law itſelf doth Sentence, Curſe and Condemn you? And do you not find in the Old Teſtament the Story of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac?* Are you Ignorant that *Abraham* had Two Sons, *Iſhmael* by *Hagar* the Bond-woman, and *Iſaac* by *Sarah* the Free-woman? *Iſhmael* the Bond-woman's Son was Born after the Fleſh; that is, by the ordinary Strength of Nature in Generation, *Hagar* being Young, and *Abraham* being Strong; but *Iſaac* was the Son of the Promiſe; God gave him by Vertue of his Promiſe made to *Abraham* when his Body was dead, unfit for Generation, and *Sarah* paſt Conception alſo. Now from this Hiſtory of *Abraham*'s Family, conſider'd in itſelf, (without the Myſtery prefigur'd by it,) we learn, (1.) That the Beſt of Men are Imperfect Men; the Holy Patriarchs lived in the Sin of Poligamy, or taking more Wives than one, contrary to the Firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, either not knowing or not conſidering it was a Sin. *Abraham had Two Wives.* Learn (2.) That the Truth and Veracity of God engages him to fulfil and make good all his Promiſes, tho' all Ordinary Means and Secondary Cauſes fail, and become impotent and unable to bring about the Thing promiſed. Thus here a Promiſe being made to *Abraham* that *Sarah* ſhould have a Child, ſhe conceiveth and beareth *Iſaac*; not according to the Courſe of Nature, but through Vertue of the Promiſe; *He of the Free-woman was by Promiſe.*

24 Which things are an allegory; for theſe are two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her Children. 26 But Jeruſalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Here the Apoſtle makes an Allegorical and Spiritual Application of the foregoing Hiſtory of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, of *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*; and the Myſtery he tells us is this, the Two Mothers, *Sarah* and *Hagar*, are Types of the Two Covenants, the one of Works, the other of Grace; the Two Sons, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, are a Type of Two Sorts of Men living in the Church, the one proceeding from the Firſt, the other from the Second, Covenant; the one regenerate, the other unregenerate, Men. All regenerate Men are under the Covenant of Grace, and Free-men, for every Man's Freedom depends upon the Covenant under which he ſtands; *Iſhmael* is the Son of the Bond-woman, and points at *Jeruſalem* which then was, and the People of the Jews as they then ſtood affected, ſeeking Juſtification, and expecting Eternal Salvation by the Works of the Law: But now behold in *Iſaac*, a Son of the Free-woman, an Emblem of the Goſpel Church, which dares not depend upon the Righteouſneſs of the Law for Juſtification, but relies upon the Meritorious Righteouſneſs of the Mediator; and this points out *Jeruſalem* above, which is Free, and the Mother of us all. Learn hence, That all unregenerate Men, who continue in a State of Nature, are under the Firſt Covenant, or Covenant of Works. *Iſhmael* is a Type of all unregenerate Men: Mankind is bound to God by a Double Bond; Firſt, by a Bond of Creation; Secondly, by a Bond of Stipulation: The one is a Natural, and the other is a Voluntary, Obligation; by the former we are bound to God, by the latter he is bound to us. The Covenant made with Man in his State of Innocency was *Fœdus Amicitiæ*, a Covenant of Friendſhip; the Covenant made with us ſince the Fall is *Fœdus Miſericordiæ*, a Covenant of Reconciliation; the former made with the Firſt *Adam*, the latter with Chriſt the Second *Adam*. The Firſt Covenant was made not barely with the Perſon, but with the Nature, of *Adam*, with the Whole Race of Mankind; for God dealt with *Adam*, not as a Single Perſon, but as *Caput Gentis*, as the Root and Repreſentative of Mankind; and conſequently this Covenant was not aboliſhed by the Fall, but ſtands ſtill in force; not to give Life, becauſe it is become weak thro' our Fleſh; we are become weak to that, not that weak to us: But it commands Duty as it did before, namely, Perfect, Perſonal, and Perpetual, Obedience, and in caſe of failure denounces the Curſe. Lord! Awake every natural and unregenerate Man, who bearing only *Adam*'s Image, is alſo under *Adam*'s Covenant; he is a Bond-man now, as was *Iſhmael* of old, in Bondage to Sin, in Bondage to Satan, in Bondage to the Law, in Bondage to his own Fears, in Bondage to the World. Oh reſt not till by Grace you are delivered from this Bondage, by being tranſlated into the Kingdom of God's Dear Son, and heartily ſubmitted to the Terms and Conditions of the Second Covenant, which propoundeth Repentance, and promiſeth Pardon and Acceptance upon our Repentance.

27 For it is written, rejoice thou barren that beareſt not; break forth and cry thou that travelleſt not; for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an Husband.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds, and ſtill goes on in his former Allegory; the Church of the Gentiles he compares to *Sarah*, who was a long time Barren, but at laſt brought forth a Child of the Promiſe, a Seed in which all the Families of the Earth were bleſſed. The Church of the Jews is repreſented under the Notion of a Woman that had an Husband and many Children; but the Barren Gentiles are by a Spirit of Prophecy called upon to rejoice and ſhout for Joy, becauſe there ſhould be more Children brought forth to God amongſt them than were amongſt the Jews. Here and hence *Obſerve*, That it is not the Churches Lot to be always alike fruitful in bringing forth Children unto God; ſhe hath her Barren Time, in which the Labours of her Miniſters are attended with little Succeſs, and few are converted and brought home to God; in the Firſt Beginnings of the Chriſtian Church, though

Chriſt himſelf was the Preacher, ſhe was as one *that beareth not, and travelleth not.* Learn (2.) That upon the Enlargement of Chriſt's Kingdom, and the Weakening of Satan's Intereſt in the World, when Souls are gathered in, and brought home to Chriſt, by the Power of Converting Grace, all the Churches of Chriſt ought to rejoice, and break forth into Singing, as being Matter of exceeding Joy and great Exultation, *Rejoice thou Barren that beareſt not, break forth into Singing*, &c.

28 Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe. 29 But as then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even ſo it is now.

In the former of theſe Two Verſes the Apoſtle applies the foregoing Allegory, or Typical Hiſtory of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, thus, as, ſays he, *Iſaac* by Vertue of the Promiſe being Born of the Free-woman was Heir to all his Father's Eſtate, in like manner they who ſeek Salvation not by the Law, but by Faith in Chriſt, are the Free Children of God, and Heirs of the Promiſe of Life Eternal; *We, Brethren, as* Iſaac *was, are the Children of the Promiſe.* In the latter of theſe Two Verſes, which gives us an Account of the Perſecuting Enmity that was in the Heart and Tongue of *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac*, we have ſeveral Things obſervable: As, (1.) The Root and Riſe of *Iſhmael's* Perſecuting Malice diſcover'd, and from whence it proceeded, and that was an Inward Antipathy to the Work of Grace in *Iſaac*. Thoſe great Differences in Divine Heraldry, and of being Born after the Fleſh, and after the Spirit, evidently diſcover where the Quarrel lay, and whence it aroſe; it was the Spiritualneſs of *Iſaac* that exaſperated *Iſhmael's* Rage; *Iſaac* was Born after the Spirit, and doubtleſs he ſhewed ſome Fruits of the Spirit which *Iſhmael* could not reliſh, and therefore did deride and mock him. *Obſerve* (2.) What was the Kind of Perſecution which *Iſaac* underwent; it was the Perſecution of the Tongue, in Deriſions, and Cruel Mockings: *Moſes* tell us in the Book of *Geneſis* the Manner how, and the Weapon with which, *Iſhmael* did not lift up his Hand againſt *Iſaac* as *Cain* did againſt *Abel*, but his Tongue only, yet St. *Paul* calls it here Perſecution. Mocking and Scoffing either at the Word, Ways, or People of God, is a Sin of Unſpeakable Profaneneſs, a Blaſpheming of Chriſt, and a Perſecution of his Members, *He that was Born after the Fleſh, perſecuted him that was Born after the Spirit. Obſerve* (3.) That this Perſecution of the Tongue at leaſt is that which the Children and Church of God have met with in all former, and muſt expect to meet with in future, Ages; as it was then, ſays the Apoſtle, even ſo it is now; Afflictions are the Donatives of the Goſpel, and Perſecution is the Churches Patrimony; to us it is given on the Behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but to ſuffer, *Phil.* 1. 29. *Obſerve* Laſtly, from *Iſhmael's* being Brother to *Iſaac*, and yet his Bitter Perſecutor, that the Soreſt Trials and Sharpeſt Perſecutions which the Saints endure are very often from their Neareſt Relations, who are tied to them by the Strongeſt Obligations, either of Kindred or Acquaintance. Bittereſt Things are ſometimes endur'd from the Hands of thoſe from whom better Things might juſtly have been expected; Chriſt foretold all this, the Brother ſhall betray the Brother to Death, and the Father the Son. *Cain* is dead, but the Spirit of *Cain* yet lives; they that Scoff would Bite, and make their Teeth meet, had they Power to uſe their Cheek-bone: He that is Born after the Fleſh will perſecute thoſe of his own Fleſh and Family that are Born after the Spirit; as it was then, we may go on to ſay, even ſo is it now.

30 Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.

The Apoſtle goes on in explaining and applying this Typical Hiſtory of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, and tells us, that the caſting out of *Iſhmael*, the Son of *Hagar* the Bond-woman, did typifie Excluſion of the Law from a Partnerſhip with the Goſpel in the Juſtification of a Sinner before God: As *Iſhmael* was caſt out of *Abraham's* Family, and none but *Iſaac* muſt inherit, ſo they that depend upon the Law for Juſtification ſhall be caſt out of the Church of God, and never attain the Heavenly Inheritance: But they who depend upon the Promiſe of God, and expect to be juſtified by Faith, without Legal Performances, they only ſhall be Heirs of Grace and Mercy. The Doctrine of Juſtification by the Works of the Law, when it is not only Doctrinally maintained, but Practically purſued and walked in, doth exclude Perſons from having any Part or Share in the Kingdom of Heaven. So much was typified and prefigured by the Son of the Bond-woman's being caſt out, and not allowed to be Heir with the Son of the Free-woman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

Here the Apoſtle draws a Concluſion from the foregoing Diſcourſe thus, as *Sarah* caſt out *Hagar* and *Iſhmael*, ſo muſt the Children of the New *Jeruſalem* caſt out the Law, and all the Legal Rites, henceforth to be obſerved no more, either Alone without Chriſt, or in Conjunction with Chriſt. And as the Church of the Gentiles was not typified in *Hagar*, but in *Sarah*, ſo we Chriſtian Gentiles are not obliged to Judaical Obſervances, but freed entirely by Chriſt from them, and juſtified by Goſpel Grace without them. The Concluſion and Sum of all is this, to bring off the *Galatians* from ſeeking Juſtification by the Works of the Law, and to apprehend themſelves no longer in Bondage to Circumciſion, and the *Moſaick* Rites, but to ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them Free, which introduces that Excellent Diſcourſe to this Purpoſe, which we find contain'd in the next Chapter.

CHAP. V.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapters clearly aſſerted, and ſtrenuouſly prov'd, the Doctrine of Free Juſtification by Faith, without the Works of the Law, and that Circumciſion, and the Ceremonial Rites, were all certainly aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt, he comes now (as his Manner was) to improve his Diſcourſe *by Way of* Application *to them; and this he doth both for the informing of their Judgments, and directing of their Practice. And the Firſt Duty he exhorts the* Galatians *to, is to perſiſt and ſtand faſt in their Chriſtian Liberty, which Chriſt by his Death had purchaſed for them, and to be no longer in Bondage to Circumciſion, and the Ceremonial Law. Accordingly he thus beſpeaks them,* Verſe 1.

1 STand faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage.

As if he had ſaid, ſince Chriſt by his Death has purchaſed our Freedom from the Yoke and Bondage of the Ceremonial Law, let us reſolutely ſtand faſt in this our Chriſtian Liberty, without ſubjecting our ſelves again to the Obſervation and Circumciſion, and the *Moſaick* Rites. Here *Note*, (1.) The Servile Condition of the Jewiſh Church, they were under *Bondage*, under a *Yoke* of Bondage. This Servitude of theirs conſiſted in the Vaſt Number of their Religious Rites and Obſervances, as to Days and Weeks, Months and Years; in the Multitude of their Sacrifices of all Sorts, which they were oblig'd every Day to offer; in their frequent Purifications and Waſhings; in the Strict Diſtinction they were oblig'd to make betwixt Clean and Unclean Meats; in the Numerous Rites and Ceremonies they were requir'd to obſerve at their Marriages and Burials, at Bed and Board, at Home and Abroad; nay, even in Plowing, Sowing, and Reaping: So numerous were theſe Obſervances that they took up half their Time, and as burthenſome as they were numerous. Well might the Apoſtle here call it a Yoke of Bondage, and elſewhere, *viz.* Act. 15. 10. *A Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear. Note* (2.) The Happy Liberty and Freedom from this Intolerable Yoke purchaſed by Chriſt for the Chriſtian Church, *Chriſt has made us free*; he by his Obedience and Death hath purchaſed this Happy Freedom for us, a Freedom from Ceremonial Bondage, from Sinful Servitude and Slavery, not from Civil Subjection ; not from the Yoke of New Obedience, but from the obliging Force of the Ceremonial Law, and the Curſe and irritating-Power of the Moral Law. *Note* (3.) The Chriſtians Duty with reference to this Priviledge, namely, to ſtand faſt in the Liberty which Chriſt has purchaſed for them, without obliging themſelves to obſerve any part of the Ceremonial Law, which was now a Servility perfectly unprofitable, and nothing elſe ; ſtand faſt in it ; that is, maintain and defend it both in Judgment and Practice.

2 Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.

That is, behold I *Paul* your Apoſtle do poſitively declare and expreſly tell you the *Galatians*, and all other Chriſtians converted by me to Chriſtianity, that if ye be circumciſed ; that is, join Circumciſion with the Goſpel as a Thing neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation, Chriſt's undertaking will profit you nothing ; for embracing Circumciſion after Chriſt's coming, is vertually to deny and diſown that he is come, and in effect to renounce and diſclaim him ; becauſe at his coming the Promiſe was fulfilled, and Circumciſion of its own Nature ceaſed. Learn hence, That for Perſons Religiouſly to obſerve any of the Rites of the Ceremonial Law in Obedience to any Divine Precept, or to join any thing with Chriſt and Faith in him for the Juſtification of a Sinner before God, is a plain Denial of Chriſt, and a Diſdaining of his Ability and Sufficiency to juſtifie and ſave us ; *if ye be circumciſed* verily *Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.*

3 For I teſtifie again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

He that urges the neceſſity of Circumciſion is a Debtor to the Law in a double reſpect, namely, in regard of Duty, and in regard of Penalty. Firſt, He is a Debtor in regard of Duty ; becauſe he that thinks himſelf bound to keep one part of the Ceremonial Law, Circumciſion, doth thereby oblige himſelf to keep the whole Ceremonial Law ; yea, and the whole Moral Law too, without Deficiency, and that under the Penalty of Condemnation. Again, Secondly, As he is a Debtor in point of Duty, ſo he muſt needs be a Debtor in regard of Penalty, becauſe he is not able to keep any part of it perfectly. Hence we may infer, (1.) How endearing our Obligations are to Chriſt, who as our Surety paid both theſe Debts for us, namely, our Debt of Duty, and our Debt of Penalty to the Law of God ; by fulfilling all Righteouſneſs he paid our Debt of Duty, and by ſuffering the Puniſhment due to Tranſgreſſors he paid our Debt of Penalty. We may alſo, (2.) Infer, That as he that is circumciſed is bound to keep the whole Law, ſo he that is baptized is obliged to obey all the Commands of the Goſpel, to make Conſcience of the Duties of both Tables, as an Argument of his Sincerity, and as an Ornament to his Profeſſion.

4 Chriſt is become of none effect unto you ; whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.

Here another Argument is uſed to ſhew that Believers are dead to the Ceremonial Law, and are by no Means to expect Juſtification by it ; *Whoſoever of you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is juſtified by the Law* ; that is, whoever ſeeks and endeavours to be ſo juſtified, (for in reality none can in that manner be juſtified,) *Chriſt is become of no Effect* unto ſuch Perſons ; that is, they renounce Chriſt, and diſclaim Benefit by his Death ; and they are fallen from Grace ; that is, fallen from Chriſtianity, and the Covenant of Grace ; they have forfeited the Grace of the Goſpel, by cleaving to the Ceremonial Law, they are fallen from the Doctrine of Grace delivered in the Goſpel, and Chriſt is become of no Effect unto them. Learn from hence, That ſuch Perſons as do believe that Faith in Chriſt alone is not ſufficient to Juſtification and Acceptance with God, without the Obſervation of the abrogated Law, they do in effect diſown their Relation to Chriſt, and diſclaim all Benefit by his Death ; *Chriſt is become of no Effect*, &c.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith.

That is, we Chriſtians, we Believers, through the Spirit which we have received, and not by Legal Obſervances, do hope both for ſuch a Righteouſneſs as will denominate and conſtitute us Righteous in the Sight of God, and alſo for the Crown of Righteouſneſs in Heaven, which now we wait and hope for here on Earth. *Note* (1.) That a Believer does not value himſelf by what he has in Hand, but by what he has in Hope ; his Riches are not ſo much in preſent Poſſeſſion as in future Expectation ; *we wait for the Hope*, that is, for Heaven, the Good hoped for. *Note* (2.) That none have either Right to Heaven, or can warrantably expect the Enjoyments of Heaven, who are deſtitute of Righteouſneſs. Heaven is here called the Hope of Righteouſneſs ; that is, the rational Hope and Expectation of Righteous Perſons only. *Note* (3.) That it is a Righteouſneſs made ours by Faith, even the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, which gives us the beſt Title to, and the firmeſt Ground to hope and wait for, the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life. *Note* (4.) That it is the ſpecial Work of the Holy Spirit to produce in us the Graces of the Spirit, both Faith and Hope ; Faith to enable us to apprehend, and Hope to enable us to wait for the Crown of Righteouſneſs, even Eternal Glory ; *We through the Spirit do wait for the Hope of Righteouſneſs by Faith.*

6 For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.

In Chriſt Jeſus ; that is, in the Oeconomy of Chriſt Jeſus, under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, in our State of Chriſtianity ; ſince Chriſt's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion availeth any thing with God, as to our Acceptance with him, or Reward from him : But the Qualification *now* neceſſary to Salvation under the Goſpel is Faith working by Love ; that is, ſuch an effectual Belief of future Happineſs purchaſed for us, and promiſed to us by Chriſt, as cauſes us to love and ſerve him, to truſt in and depend upon him for the ſame. Learn (1.) That although Circumciſion, and the reſt of the Levitical Ceremonies, were once enjoined by God, and practiced by the Jews as an acceptable Service, and the neglect or Contempt of them was a mortal Sin ; yet, ſince Chriſt's coming in the Fleſh, who was the Subſtance of all thoſe Shadows, the Command whereby they were enjoined did ceaſe, and neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion avail any thing to Salvation. Learn (2.) That tho' the Ceremonial Law be aboliſhed, yet a Believer under the Goſpel has Work to do, a Work of Faith, and Labour of Love ; for tho' Faith alone juſtifieth us before God, yet it is not alone in the Heart when it doth juſtifie, but is always accompanied with the Grace of Love to God and our Neighbours ; *For in Chriſt Jeſus* no Faith availeth any thing, but that *which worketh by Love.*

7 Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth?

Ye did run well ; that is, in the Race of Chriſtianity you ſet out well at firſt, and received the Goſpel in the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it, without any Mixture of Jewiſh Ceremonies : What hindred you ? Who ſtopt you ? Who drove you back from your Belief of and Obedience to the Truth of the Goſpel, which you then received from me ? Here *Note*, (1.) With what Holy Wiſdom our Apoſtle mixes Commendations with his Reproofs : At the ſame time that he reproves them for their preſent Backſliding, he commends them for their former Forwardneſs ; *Ye did run well.* *Note* (2.) That ordinarily a Chriſtian's firſt Ways are his beſt Ways, his firſt Fruits his faireſt Fruits ; *Jehoſaphat walked in the firſt Ways of* David *his Father*, 2 Chron. 17. 3. Commonly young Converts are carried out with a greater Meaſure of Affection and Zeal, and make a ſwifter Progreſs in Religion than others do at firſt, or they themſelves do afterwards when they are of older ſtanding. Theſe *Galatians* did run, yea, did run very well at firſt in the Race of Chriſtianity. *Note* (3.) That when a Perſon's or a People's Progreſs in Chriſtianity is not anſwerable to their hopeful Beginnings, it is Matter of Regret and Grief to all Beholders, as well as Matter of Reproach and Shame to the Perſons themſelves ; *Ye did run well, who hindred you ?* Intimating, that this their Defection and Apoſtacy was no leſs Matter of Aſtoniſhment to St. *Paul*, than it was of Rebuke and Reproach to them.

8 This perſwaſion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, this judaizing Opinion and Practice of yours, this Perſwaſion of the Neceſſity of your being Circumciſed, and obeying the Law of *Moſes*, this New Doctrine, ſo contrary to the Spirit of the Goſpel, and the Deſign of Chriſtianity, was never taught you either by God or my ſelf, or any other Faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, who Firſt converted you to the Faith, but it is a meer Deluſion of Satan, and his Emiſſaries, the Falſe Apoſtles. And do not think this a ſmall Matter; let not Circumciſion ſeem a little Thing to you; and let not theſe judaizing Teachers be diſregarded by you as inconſiderable becauſe they are few in Number, for they are like to Leaven, and ye know very well that a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump; *intimating*, That a few Falſe Teachers, and a little of Error and Falſe Doctrine crept into the Congregation and Church of Chriſt, may do unſpeakable Miſchief, by ſpeedily Infecting the whole Church, as a little Leaven (to which Error is compared) leaveneth the whole Lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded: but he that troubleth you, ſhall bear his judgment, whoſoever he be.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle's Holy Confidence grounded upon Charity, that *through the Lord*, that is, through the Lord's aſſiſting his Endeavours, and through the Lord's Bleſſing upon their Serious Conſideration of what he had written to them, they would be reclaimed from their Errors, and brought to be of the ſame Mind with himſelf; where *Note*, How the Holy and Zealous Apoſtle was divided betwixt Hope and Fear concerning theſe Men; he feared the worſt of theſe *Galatians*, and yet hopes the beſt; *I have Confidence in you through the Lord.* It is a Fault in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, when they deſpair of Men too ſoon, when we ceaſe or ſlacken our Endeavours for our Peoples Good, looking upon them as reſolutely bent upon, and judicially given up unto, all Evil. Though our Apoſtle here had not a Confidence of Faith, or full Perſwaſion, yet he had a Confidence of Charity, which cauſed him to hope that they would be like-minded with himſelf; *I have Confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be no otherwiſe minded. Obſerve* (2.) With what Holy Caution, as well as Chriſtian Prudence and Charity, our Apoſtle applies himſelf unto them; declaring, That though he hoped they might be reclaimed from their Error, yet leſt they ſhould conclude their Error not to be very Dangerous, he ſhews his juſt Indignation againſt it, by denouncing deſerved Puniſhment againſt thoſe that ſeduced them into it; *he that troubleth you ſhall bear his own Judgment*; this Condemnation due to him in Hell, without Repentance, which is ſuppoſed in all Threatnings; for the Condition of conditional Threatnings, though it is not always expreſt, yet it is to be underſtood. *Obſerve* (3.) The Univerſality of the Threatning, *he ſhall bear his Judgment whoever he be*; let him be who he will, or what he will; who he will for Abilities and Parts, what he will for Power or Reputation; whoever he is, or whatſoever he be, he ſhall bear his Judgment. Such is the exact Juſtice of God, and ſuch his Impartiality in the exerciſe of it, that he will ſuffer no Impenitent Tranſgreſſor to eſcape his Indignation, whoever he is, without Reſpect of Perſons; *he that troubleth you ſhall bear his Judgment, whoſoever he be.*

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words ſignifies to us, that ſome of the judaizing Teachers had ſuggeſted to the *Galatians* as if he himſelf had preached elſewhere the Doctrine of Circumciſion, and alſo practiſed the Duty of Circumciſion, (by Circumciſing *Timothy*) which here he oppoſes. True, he did Circumciſe *Timothy*, but it was only to avoid offending the Weak Jews, not out of any Opinion which he had touching the Neceſſity of Circumciſion: Therefore to diſcover to them the Falſhood of that Suggeſtion he declares, that if he would have preached Circumciſion he might have eſcaped Perſecution; the Jews were his Perſecutors, looking upon him as an Apoſtate from their Holy Religion, for preaching up the Aboliſhment of the *Moſaick* Law: Where *Obſerve*, That the Jews, who lookt upon themſelves to be the People, yea, the peculiar and only People of God, and accounted all others contemptible and profane, were yet far greater Perſecutors of Chriſt and his Apoſtles than the Blind and Barbarous Heathens, and all this out of Zeal for God and his Law; *Why do I yet ſuffer Perſecution?* Implying, That the Jews did perſecute him, and that his not preaching Circumciſion was the Cauſe why they did ſo——He adds——*Then is the Offence of the Croſs ceaſed.* By the Croſs may be underſtood either, (1.) The Doctrine of the Croſs, the Doctrine of the Goſpel; and then the Senſe is, the Jews would not have taken ſuch Offence at my preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel as they do, were it not becauſe by it Circumciſion and the whole Frame of the Old Legal Adminiſtration are laid aſide: Or elſe, (2.) By the Croſs may be underſtood the Afflictions and Sufferings which he underwent for the Sake of Chriſt and his Holy Religion; and the Senſe then is this, Verily all my Sufferings had long ſince been at an end would I but have yielded the Jews this Point, That *Chriſtians are obliged to Circumciſion, and to yield Obedience to the Law* of Moſes; would I grant them this my Sufferings might ſoon be at an end; but my daily Perſecutions are evident Demonſtrations that I do not Preach up Circumciſion, for had I ſo done, the Offence of the Croſs had long ſince ceaſed. Learn hence, That the Faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt will not, dare not, conceal any Part of neceſſary Truth when the Eminent Hazard of Peoples Salvation calls for the preaching of it, though the imbitter'd Enemies of Religion ſhould ariſe againſt them the fierceſt Perſecutions for the ſame. *If I yet preach Circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer Perſecution?*

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

The Apoſtle's meaning is, that 'twere very fit, were it ſeaſonable, that thoſe which had thus ſeduced them ſhould be excommunicated and cut off from the Churches Communion: Where *Note*, (1.) How implicitly and interpretatively St. *Paul* compares theſe Seducers to rotten Members, which are and ought to be cut off, leſt the Gangrene overſpread the whole Body, *I would they were cut off*; implying, that like rotten Members they deſerved it, and the Churches Safety called for it, would her then Circumſtances admit of it. *Note* (2.) That in the very Expreſſion here uſed by St. *Paul* of *cutting off*, there ſeems to be an Alluſion to the Practice of Circumciſion, which is a cutting off the Foreskin of the Fleſh, and throwing it away. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, I wiſh that theſe judaizing Teachers that urge you to be Circumciſed, that is, to cut off and caſt away the Foreskin of your Fleſh, I wiſh that they might be cut off as ſuperfluous Fleſh, and caſt out of the Fellowſhip and Communion of the Church. Yet *Note*, (3.) The Apoſtle doth rather declare what ſuch Seducers deſerve, than actually inflict the Cenſure itſelf; he ſatisfieth himſelf with an Affectionate Wiſh, leſt the Number of the ſeduced being great, and perhaps the Seducers not a few, they ſhould be hardned rather than reformed, and the Ordinance itſelf expoſed; *I would they were even cut off*, &c.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another.

Our Apoſtle having finiſht the former Part of the Chapter, which contains an Exhortation to *ſtand faſt in that Liberty which Chriſt had purchaſed for them*, he now enters upon the Second Part of it, namely, to caution them againſt abuſing of their Chriſtian Liberty, and by no Means to apprehend or ſuppoſe as if they were thereby freed from all Obligation to ſerve God or Man in the Duties particularly required of them. Brethren, ſays he, ye are called unto Liberty, that is, to the Enjoyment of Evangelical Liberty, which conſiſts in a Freedom from the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law, and the Curſe of the Moral Law; uſe it then ſo as not to abuſe it; uſe it neither to Sin, nor Scandal; not to Sin, to allow your ſelves the leaſt Liberty in indulging any carnal Luſt or ſinful Affection, nor yet to ſcandalize the Weak, who at preſent ſcruple the forſaking of Circumciſion, and the reſt of the Ceremonial Rites; *Uſe not your Liberty for an Occaſion to the Fleſh, but in Love ſerve one another.* Learn hence, (1.) That our Liberty and Freedom purchaſed for us by Chriſt doth not diſſolve any Tie or Obligation which we lye under either to God or Man; the Yoke of Duty is very conſiſtent with our Chriſtian Liberty. *Learn* (2.) That one of the great Occaſions of the Sins we commit in the Courſe of our Lives is the too free Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty; the uſing our Liberty to the utmoſt Pitch and Extent of that which we call lawful is the Occaſion of our running into that which is certainly ſinful. Religion moſt certainly allows us all Reaſonable Liberty in the Gratification of our Natural Appetites and Paſſions; but all Exceſſes and Immoderate Liberties are forbidden by Religion.

And accordingly one good Rule for ſecuring our ſelves from falling into Sin, in the uſing our Chriſtian Liberty, is this, namely, That in Matters of Duty we ſhould rather do too much than too little; but in Matters of Indifferency we ſhould rather take too little of our Liberty than too much. Inſtance, Prayer and Almſgiving are indiſpenſable Duties, but how oft we ſhould pray, and how much we ſhould give, is not poſitively declared; in this Caſe to pray very frequently, and to give Alms very liberally and largely, is our Wiſdom and Duty; no Damage will come by doing too much, but both Damage and Danger may accrue by doing too little. *Learn* (3.) That it is not ſufficient, in order to the right Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty, that we do not from thence take Occaſion to Sin our ſelves; but we ought to take Care, leſt by an indiſcreet uſe of our own Liberty we give Offence, and miniſter Occaſion of Sin and Stumbling unto others. This Truth is implied in the Second Injunction, *by Love ſerve one another*.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.

Here our Apoſtle inforces the foregoing Exhortation to Love and Serve one another with a forcible Argument or Motive, namely, becauſe Love is the fulfilling of the Law; that is, (1.) It is the fulfilling of that Part of the Law which relates to our Neighbour; all the Moral Law reſpecting our Neighbour is fulfilled in that one Word, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neigbbour as thy ſelf*: Or, (2.) Love may be ſaid to be the fulfilling of the Law in general; for true and regular Love to our Neighbour, ſuppoſeth our Love to God ſpringeth from it, and is an Evidence of it; yea, the Love of our Neighbour is the perfecting and compleating of our Love to God, 1 Joh. 4. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us*. Learn, That as *Love* is a very comprehenſive Duty, comprizing the inward Affection as well as the outward Action, ſo the Word *Neighbour* is of a very extenſive Conſideration, and includes all Perſons, Friend and Foe, Rich and Poor, near and afar off; all that partake of Humanity muſt be Sharers in our Charity: Our inward Affection and Good-will muſt extend to all, tho' the outward Expreſſions of it can reach but a very few. Thus the Law is fulfilled in one Word, when we love our Neighbour as our ſelves; not as we do (often) love our ſelves, but as we ſhould love our ſelves, namely, with a Wiſe and Well-guided Love.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not conſumed one of another.

The Apoſtle, to enforce the foregoing Exhortation to mutual Love, urges here the dangerous Effects which their Animoſities and Strifes, which their Controverſies and Contentions, would moſt certainly produce: By biting one another, ſays he, ye will deſtroy and conſume one another; where it deſerves a Serious Remark, that St. *Paul* compares the Enmities and Animoſities, which were amongſt them upon the Score of their Differences in Religion, to the Bitings, Rendings, and Devourings of wilds Beaſts, *If ye bite and devour one another*; and gives them timely notice of the Fatal Miſchiefs and Conſequences that will follow thereupon, namely, a total Devaſtation and inevitable Conſumption of the whole Church, *Take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another*. It is a true Saying, *Odia Religionum ſunt Acerbiſſima*, there is no ſuch bitter Hatred amongſt Men as upon the Score of Religion: As the Zeal of the *Jews* would not ſuffer an uncircumciſed Perſon to live amongſt them, ſo probably theſe zealous Judaizers in *Galatia* would not ſuffer thoſe who had caſt off legal Obſervances to live quietly and peaceably by them, which might give occaſion to theſe Words of the Apoſtle, *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not conſumed one of another*. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there ever have been, are, and will be, Differences about Matters of Religion in the Beſt and Pureſt Churches here on Earth. *Learn* (2.) That theſe Differences may and ought to be managed with great Temper and Charity. *Learn* (3.) That then Contentions are highly uncharitable and very ſinful when Men bite and devour one another. *Learn* (4.) That ſuch uncharitable Contentions do prepare and make ready a People for utter Deſtruction, *If ye bite*, &c.

16 This I ſay then, walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.

To prevent the forementioned Evils, as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I adviſe and exhort you to walk in the Spirit, that is, according to the Guidance and Direction, according to the Influence and Motion, of the Holy Spirit's ſpeaking to you in his Word, and then you will never fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh; that is, you will never accompliſh and bring into compleat Act (eſpecially with Deliberation and Conſent) the inordinate Motions of Corrupt Nature. *Learn hence*, That the more Chriſtians ſet themſelves to obey the new Nature, and follow the Motions of the Spirit of Grace, the more will the Power of indwelling Sin and inbred Corruption be mortified and kept under. This Expreſſion, *Ye ſhall not fulfil the Luſt of the Fleſh*, may be thought to import and imply theſe Two Things, (1.) That an inward Principle of Grace in the Heart will give Check to Sin in its firſt Motions, and cauſe it oft-times to miſcarry in the Womb, like an untimely Birth, before it comes to its full Maturity; it ſhall never gain the full Conſent of a Gracious Perſon's Will, as it doth of an Unregenerate Perſon. (2.) But if notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition Grace makes to hinder the Production of Sin, if yet it doth break forth into Act, ſuch Acts of Sin are not committed without Reluctancy and Regret, and are followed with Shame and Sorrow; yea, thoſe very Surprizals and Captivities of Sin at one time, are made Caution and Warnings to prevent it at another time: And thus they that *walk in the Spirit do not fulfil the Luſt of the Fleſh*.

17 For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Theſe Words are brought in as a ſpecial Reaſon why Chriſtians ſhould walk in the Spirit, that is, after the Motions and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit, becauſe otherwiſe the Fleſh will quickly prevail over them; for the Fleſh is continually luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh; that is, the evil *Inclinations* of corrupt Nature are continually ſtruggling with, and ſtriving againſt, the good Motions which the Holy Spirit of God ſtirreth up in us: And in like manner, the Spirit, or renewed Nature, oppoſeth the Motions of corrupt Nature; for theſe Two Principles are contrary the one to the other, ſo that ye who are led by the Spirit cannot act with Deliberation and Conſent, according to the Fleſh, nor can they that are led by the Fleſh do the Things which delight the Spirit. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there is a Diverſity of Principles in a Chriſtian, *Fleſh and Spirit*; there is a good Principle called Spirit, becauſe the Spirit of God is the Author of it, and a bad Principle in us which is called Fleſh, by which we are inclined to that which is Evil. This is called Fleſh, to denote its Intimacy with us; it is as near to us as our Fleſh, to denote its Dearneſs to us; it is as dear to us as our own Fleſh, as dear as a Right Hand or Right Eye; and to denote its Continuance with us, as long as we carry Fleſh about us, ſo long will this Principle of corrupt Nature remain in us, and continue with us. *Learn* (2.) That the Motions and Inclinations in our Natures to Sin, do ever conflict and combate with, oppoſe and war againſt, the Motions of God's Holy Spirit exciting and inclining us to Good: Tho' Contraries cannot be together in the ſame Subject in an intenſe, yet they may be together in a remiſs, Degree. *Learn* (3.) The Conſequence and Iſſue of this Combat, we *cannot do the Things that we would*, nor any Things as we would; we cannot perform any Holy Duty perfectly in this Life. As ſoon may an imperfect Father beget a perfect Child, as we in our State of Imperfection perform any Duty free from Sin. Oh what need, what great need, then have the Beſt of Saints of the Mediation and Interceſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt when they preſent any performed Duty unto God? And what need alſo to watch our own Hearts when we are upon our Knees, to fortifie them againſt the Incurſions and Diſturbances of the Fleſh, ſeeing after all our Care and Vigilance in Duty we can none of us do the Things that we would, nor any Things as we would.

18 But if ye be led by the ſpirit, ye are not under the law.

That is, if you be under the Guidance and Government of the Holy Spirit of God, and that renewing Principle of Grace which he has produced in you, you are no longer under the Law; that is, not under the Moral Law as a Covenant of Life for our Juſtification, though under it as an Eternal Rule of living; not under the vindictive, though under the directive Power of the Law: So that the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument ſeems to lye thus, you are by the Spirit, by the Spiritual Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, freed from the Curſe and Terror of the Moral Law, how unreaſonable then is it to ſuppoſe that you ſhould be ſtill ſubject to the Ceremonial Law? No, if you be led by the Spirit, neither the Moral Law ſhall condemn you, nor the Ceremonial Law oblige and bind you.

19 Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, 21 Envying, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes exhorted the *Galatians* to walk in the Spirit, to be led and guided by the Spirit, and by no means to obey or fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh, he comes in theſe and the following Verſes to diſcover how they might with Certainty and Aſſurance know whether they were Spiritual or Carnal, whether the Spirit or the Fleſh had a Prevalency in them, or Dominion over them: Accordingly he deſcribes particularly the Fleſh and the Spirit by their various and different Effects, and gives us a Catalogue of the one and the other; he reckons up no fewer than Seventeen Works of the Fleſh, all which, yea, any of which, continued in, and unrepented of, are damnable; after this he enumerates Nine Special and Gracious Fruits of the Spirit, which qualifie us for, and entitle us to, the Kingdom of Heaven; *The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt*, &c. Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That Sin is called a Work; thereby intimating to us the Labour and Toil, the Drudgery and Pains, which Sinners meet with in a ſinful Courſe: The Ways of Sin are very Toilſome, although in their Iſſue very Unfruitful; Sin is no pleaſurable Service, but a laborious Servitude. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle calls Sin by the Name of Works, in the Plural Number, *The Works of the Fleſh*; intimating, That Sin never goes ſingle, but has a dangerous Train and Retinue: He that yields himſelf a Servant to one Sin, ſhall ſoon find himſelf a Slave to many. *Obſerve* (3.) That Sin is called a Work of the Fleſh, becauſe moſt Sins are committed by the Fleſh; the Body is the Soul's Inſtrument as well in the Work of Sin, as in the Service of Chriſt; and the Fleſh is the Object, about which theſe Works are converſant, as well as the Organ and Inſtrument by which they are committed. *Obſerve* (4.) Theſe Works of the Fleſh are here ſaid to be manifeſt; but how ſo? Firſt, They are moſt of them manifeſtly condemned by the Light of Nature; a Natural Conſcience in Men ſtartles at them at firſt, till by Cuſtom and frequent Practice they become Habitual and Natural to them. Secondly, They are all of them manifeſt by the Light of Scripture; the Word of God which is in all our Hands, condemns all theſe Works of the Fleſh to the Pit of Hell. *Obſerve* (5.) The particular Enumeration of the Works of the Fleſh here made by our Apoſtle; *Adultery*, or the defiling our Neighbour's Bed; *Fornication*, or the unlawful Mixture of ſingle Perſons one with another; *Uncleanneſs*, under which is comprehended all Sorts of Filthineſs, and filthy Luſts, whether Natural or Unnatural; *Laſciviouſneſs*, by which is meant all wanton Behaviour, either in Speech or Action, tending to excite filthy Deſires either in our ſelves or others; *Idolatry*, whereby God is repreſented to Corporeal Eyes by Pictures and Images, and ſo brought down to Humane Senſes; properly therefore is Idolatry as ſuch called here a Work of the Fleſh. Again, *Witchcraft*, a Deviliſh Art, whereby ſome Men and Women having made a Compact with the Devil, either expreſly or implicitely, are enabled, with God's Permiſſion, and by the Aſſiſtance of Satan, to produce Effects beyond the ordinary Courſe and Order of Nature; and theſe for the moſt Part rather Miſchievous to others than Beneficial to themſelves; *Hatred*, or a ſecret Enmity in our Hearts againſt our Neighbour, either for real or apprehended Injuries; *Variance*, or outward Contention by Words or Actions, ariſing from the forementioned Enmity in the Heart; *Emulations*, or an inward Grief and Diſpleaſure at ſome Good in others, or done by others, which eclipſes and overſhadows *us*; *Wrath*, or violent Anger, and immoderate Paſſion, depriving a Man for the time of his Reaſon, and transforming him into a Beaſt; *Strife*, or a litigious Spirit, a continual Proneneſs to quarrelling and contending; *Seditions*, or rending of Societies into Factions, and dividing Communities into Parties, which dividing Work when it falls on in the State is called Sedition, when in the Church by the Name of Schiſm; *Hereſies*, or dangerous Errors in the Fundamental Points of Religion; not ariſing purely from Miſtakes of Judgment, but from the eſpouſing of falſe Doctrines out of Diſguſt or Pride, or from Worldly Principles, to avoid Perſecution or Trouble in the Fleſh; theſe may well be accounted Carnal Luſts, and called Works of the Fleſh, although they be mental Errors, and their firſt Seat is in the Underſtanding and Judgment; *Envyings*, a Peſtilent Luſt, which makes another's Good our Grief: Our Eyes ſmart at the Sight of what another enjoys, though we have never the leſs becauſe another has more; *Murders*; that is, the executing of private Revenge by ſhedding of Blood, and taking away our Neighbour's Life unjuſtly; *Drunkenneſs*, *Revelling*, the one is Intemperance in Drinking, the other an Exceſs in Eating; all ſinful Abuſe of the Creatures of God, which he has given, not barely for Neceſſity, but Delight, is Cenſured here as a Work of the Fleſh. *Obſerve* (6.) The ſolemn Warning which the Apoſtle gives the *Galatians* to watch againſt all theſe Sins, and not to indulge or allow themſelves in the wilful Commiſſion of any one of them: I tell you, ſays he, that ſuch ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God, but be eternally baniſhed from him. Now from the whole learn, (1.) That the Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt not ſatisfie themſelves barely to reprove and condemn Sin in General, but muſt deſcend to Particulars; though Invectives againſt Sin at large are of good Uſe to expoſe the Deformity of Sin, yet in order to the awakening of particular Sinners, we muſt take into our Conſideration their particular Sins, and endeavour to convince them of them, and turn them from them; ſo doth our Apoſtle here in the foregoing Catalogue of Vices. *Learn* (2.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt acquaint their People, not only with the Danger of allowing themſelves in the groſſer Acts of Sin, as Adultery, Fornication, Drunkenneſs and Revellings, and ſuch like, but alſo with the Danger of indulging themſelves in Secret Sins, Heart Sins, Sins which the Eye of the World can never accuſe them of, but God will condemn them for; ſuch are Hatred, Emulation, Envy, *&c.* not only the outward Act of Sin, but the inward Deſire, is dangerous and damning. 'Tis eaſie for a Man to murther his Neighbour in the Account of God by a ſecret Wiſh, and a paſſionate Deſire; he that hateth his Brother is a Murtherer, and he that looks upon a Woman unduly is an Adulterer in the Sight of God. *Learn* (3.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt can never often enough warn Sinners of the Danger of Sin, and Continuance in it; we muſt do it over and over again; every Sabbath, and every Sermon, muſt ring a Peal in the Sinner's Ears of the Fatal Danger of a reſolute Impiety: Thus here, *I tell you now as I told you in Times paſt, that they which do ſuch Things ſhall never inherit*, &c.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith: 23 Meekneſs, temperance: againſt ſuch there is no law.

Obſerve here, (1.) That the Apoſtle, who called *Sin* the Work of the Fleſh, doth here call *Grace* the Fruit of the Spirit. Sin is a Work of our own; it proceeds wholly from our ſelves, our own depraved Minds and Wills, without the leaſt Co-operation of the Holy Spirit; he can neither be the Author nor Abettor of any Thing that is Evil. All ſinful Works are Works of the Fleſh, and therefore our own Works; but all Graces accompanying Salvation are the Fruit of God's Spirit, both becauſe he is the Author of them, and alſo becauſe they are ſo acceptable and pleaſing to him, even as Fruit is unto our Taſte, and likewiſe ſo profitable and advantageous to our ſelves. Where the Fleſh ruleth, there the Work exceeds the Fruit, and accordingly, without any mentioning of the Fruit, they are called Works of the Fleſh; but where the Spirit of God ruleth, there the Fruit exceeds the Work, and therefore without ever mentioning the Work it is called the Fruit of the Spirit. *Obſerve* (2.) That the Works of the Fleſh are ſpoken of as many, but the Fruit of the Spirit is ſpoken of as one; many Works, but one Fruit. There is ſuch a Connexion and

Concatenation of Graces, that although they are diſtinct in their Natures, yet are they inſeparable in their Subject; pull one Link of a Chain, and you pull all; ſo he that has any one Spiritual Grace in Reality, or at leaſt in Eminency, cannot be utterly deſtitute of any other; for where the Holy Spirit is, there cannot be a total Defect of any Holy Grace. *Obſerve* (3.) That the Works of the Fleſh are ſaid to be manifeſt, *v.* 19. but no ſuch thing is here affirmed of the Fruit of the Spirit. Alas! God knows the Works of the Fleſh are but everywhere too manifeſt; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Drunkenneſs, do ſo abound in all Places, that you can ſcarce look beſide them: But the Fruits of the Spirit are not ſo; Love, Peace, Gentleneſs, Meekneſs, theſe are very thin in the World; Hips and Haws grow in every Hedge, when choicer Fruits are but in ſome few Gardens. *Obſerve* (4.) How St. *Paul* enumerates here Nine Special Fruits of the Spirit; not as if there were no more, but becauſe theſe here mentioned ſtand in a direct Oppoſition to the former Vices recited in the foregoing Verſes. The firſt ſweet Fruit of the Spirit, taken notice of here by our Apoſtle, is *Love*; an Holy Affection in the Soul, whereby a Perſon is carried forth to love God, primarily and chiefly for himſelf, and his Neighbour for God's Sake; *Joy*, Delight in doing our Duty, and rejoicing in Expectation of the Reward for Well-doing; *Peace*, inward Peace with God and Conſcience, and outward Peace with one another; *Long-ſuffering*, an Inclination of Mind diſpoſing us to bear Injuries patiently, and to forgive them readily; *Gentleneſs*, or Affability and Courteſie in Converſation, a Sweetneſs of Temper, which renders us greatly uſeful, as well as exceedingly delightful to Mankind; *Goodneſs*, a Diſpoſition inclining us to communicate what we have and are to others, and to do all the poſſible Good we can in our reſpective Places and Stations; *Faith*, or Fidelity towards Men, in our Promiſes, and in all our Actions, ſpeaking exact Truth; *Meekneſs*, this is Threefold, a Natural Meekneſs, which is the Product of the Temperament of the Humours in the Body, a rare Felicity; there is alſo a Moral Meekneſs, which is the Product of Education and Counſel, this is an Amiable Virtue; and there is a Spiritual Meekneſs, that orders the Paſſions according to the Divine Rule, the Holy Law of God: This is a Noble and Divine Grace, which attracts the Eſtimation of God, and the Admiration of Men; *Temperance*, a ſober Uſe of Meat, Drink, and every thing wherein our Senſes are gratified or delighted. *Obſerve* (5.) A Special Priviledge belonging to all thoſe who are poſſeſt of the forementioned Fruits of the Spirit, and that is, Exemption from the Law; *Againſt ſuch there is no Law*; that is, no Law to compel, no Law to accuſe or condemn them, for the Law enjoins them, and encourages the Practice and Performance of them. *Learn* hence, (1.) That the beſt, yea, the only Way to have the Fruits of the Spirit thrive in our Hearts, is firſt to mortifie the Works of the Fleſh; Weeds and Thiſtles muſt be rooted up before Grain can grow or thrive. As the Corruption of one Form is the Production of another, ſo the Mortification of Sin makes way for the Plantation of the Fruits of the Spirit. *Learn* (2.) That Moral Virtues are the Fruits of the Spirit, and commence Chriſtian Graces when they are acted by Faith in Chriſt, influenced by Love unto him, and aiming at the higheſt of Ends, the Glory of God, and our own Salvation. *Learn* (3.) That if we compare the Fruits of the Spirit with the Works of the Fleſh, there will appear ſo much Beauty in the one, and ſuch real Deformity in the other, ſo much Satisfaction in the one, and ſuch Diſquiet and Vexation in the other, that beſides the Difference between them in their Original and Event, the former Conſiderations are abundantly ſufficient to engage our Love to the Fruits of the Spirit, and to excite our Hatred to the Works of the Fleſh.

24 And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts.

They that are Chriſt's, that is, they that are truly his Followers, and ſincere Diſciples, they have *Crucified*, that is, Subdued, and in ſome Degree Mortified and put to Death, their Fleſhly Corruptions, their Carnal Luſts, and Sinful Affections and Paſſions. They did by Baptiſm engage themſelves to die unto Sin, and the Regenerate have done it in ſome Meaſure: They have Crucified the Fleſh; yet we muſt not underſtand this of a total, plenary, and final, Crucifixion, but inchoative only; and they are ſaid to have done it, becauſe they are daily doing of it, *in Propoſito, Voto, & Conatu*, in Reſolution, in Deſire, and in Endeavour. And by Affections we are not to underſtand natural, but inordinate, Affections; and by Crucifixion is not to be underſtood a total Extinction of Sin, but a Depoſing of it from its Regency and Dominion in the Soul of the Sinner; yet as Death ſurely, tho' ſlowly, follows Crucifixion, ſo likewiſe doth Sin live in a Believer a dying Life, and dies a lingring, but a certain, Death; *They that are Chriſt's have Crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts. Learn hence*, (1.) That there are a peculiar People which are Chriſt's that have ſpecial Intereſt in him. Union and Communion with him: *They that are Chriſt*'s, not by External Profeſſion only, but by an Internal Implantation into him by Faith. *Learn* (2.) That all ſuch as thus have Intereſt in Chriſt are daily Crucifying the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts. The Death of Sin is here compared to our Saviour's Crucifixion; (1.) To ſhew the Conformity there is betwixt the Death of Sin and the Death of Chriſt; did Chriſt die a painful, ſhameful, lingring and accurſed, Death, ſo dies Sin in the Soul of a Believer? There is a gradual weakning of the Power of Sin in him; Sin is dying as he, but it is a long time a dying. (2.) To denote the Principal Means and Inſtrument of our Mortification, namely, the Death of Chriſt; by Virtue whereof Believers do Crucifie their corrupt Affections, the great Arguments to Mortification being drawn from the Sufferings of Chriſt for Sin. *Learn* (3.) That the Work of Mortification, (called here Tropically a Crucifixion,) it ſtrikes not only at all Sin, but at the Root of all Sin: It ſpares none, neither the Fleſh, nor any of its Affections and Luſts, do eſcape; Root and Branches, Head and Members; the Old Man is crucified, and the Body of Sin deſtroyed, and the Ax of Mortification laid to the Root of every Sin and ſinful Affection. In this Manner do they that are Chriſt's Crucifie the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.

If we live in the Spirit; that is, if the Spirit lives in us, if the Holy Spirit of Grace be the Principle of our Life, *let us then walk in the Spirit*; that is, let us live and act under the Conduct and Guidance, under the Direction and Influence, of the Holy Spirit; let us do the Works of the Spirit, let us bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, and let us live a Spiritual Life; let our Dealings be about Spiritual and Heavenly Things, and our chiefeſt Delight be in ſuch Things, and by theſe Spiritual Delights and Exerciſes we ſhall every Day become more and more Spiritual, and in the Account of God be eſteemed and reckoned amongſt the Number of thoſe that walk in the Spirit. Let us then evidence the Life of Grace in our ſelves, by exerciſing that Grace in a Life of Communion with God: This ſeems to be the Importance of this remarkable Place, if we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit. Here we may *Note*, (1.) That there muſt be a Principle of Spiritual Life before there can be any Spiritual Motion and Exerciſe; we muſt firſt live in the Spirit, and the Spirit live in us, before we can poſſibly walk in the Spirit; the Child muſt live before it can walk. *Note* (2.) That where there is a Principle of Grace and Spiritual Life in the Heart, there will be the Actings and Exerciſe of Grace in the Life; if we *live in the Spirit we ſhall walk in the Spirit*, Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within them, and cauſe them to walk in my Statutes; an Holy Heart will be attended with a Holy Life, and a good Conſcience accompanied with a good Converſation; Spiritual Life will produce Spiritual Motion.

26 Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Our Apoſtle cloſes this Excellent Chapter with an Exhortation to the *Galatians*, to avoid all Pride and Ambition, all vain-glorious Boaſtings and Oſtentation, not provoking one another by their Contentions, nor Envying either the Gifts or Graces of God beſtowed on others. *Learn hence*, (1.) That there is and may be in all Men a Deſire of Applauſe and juſt Commendation: All Men pretend to a Share in Reputation, and do not love to ſee it Monopolized and Engroſſed by any Perſon. *Learn* (2.) That a vain-glorious Deſire of Applauſe and Reputation is ſinful, when we ſeek for what we do not deſerve, or for more than we deſerve, or ſeek more to be Applauded by Men, than to be Approved by God. *Learn* (3.) That Ambition is uſually attended with Envy and Contention; no Sin goes Single, but has a Train of Followers. *Let us not be deſirous of Vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

CHAP. VI.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Concluding Chapter of this Excellent Epiſtle to the Galatians, *exhorts them to the Practice of ſeveral Important Duties, in order to an Holy Life, which was ſo neceſſary to evidence the Truth of their Converſion to Chriſtianity, and ſo concludes his Epiſtle with a Solemn Proteſtation of his ſincere Affection towards them.*

1 BRethren, if a Man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the Spirit of meekneſs; conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.

The firſt Exhortation here given, is how they ſhould carry themſelves one towards another, upon Suppoſition of their Scandalous falling either into Error, or into Sin, namely, not with Rigour and Severity, but with Mildneſs and Lenity. *If any be overtaken in a Fault*, &c. Here *Note*, (1.) An Evil ſuppoſed, namely, that the Wiſeſt, the Holieſt, and the Beſt of Men, may be overtaken in a Fault, and ſurprized by a Temptation; *If any Man be overtaken*, implying, that any Man may be ſo: *That* Sin, or *That* Miſery, which befals ſome Men, may befal others, any others, yea, all others; for all are Partakers of the ſame frail Nature, ſubject to the working of the ſame Corruption, and liable to the Danger of the ſame Temptation. *Note* (2.) The Duty directed to, with relation to theſe Perſons, who trip and fall either into Sin, or into Error, *reſtore him*, ſet him right, put him in joint again; a Metaphor taken from Boneſetters, who place diſlocated Bones, and ſet broken ones, with great Tenderneſs: Thoſe Three Things which we ſay are neceſſary in a Boneſetter, are abſolutely needful in a Reprover; namely, an *Eagle*'s Eye, to diſcern where the Fault lyes, a *Lion*'s Heart, to deal faithfully and freely with the Faults, and a *Lad*'s Hand, to uſe them gently and tenderly. *Note* (3.) The Perſons particularly named, who are and ought to manage this Duty of Brotherly Reproof, *ye that are Spiritual*; you that are the Governours of the Church, ſay ſome; you that are endewed with Spiritual Gifts, ſay others; the Prophets among you, who perform all Spiritual Offices for you, let them Rebuke Offenders. Others by Spiritual underſtand ſuch as had received larger Meaſures of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit than others; let ſuch as are ſtrong bear with the Infirmities of the weak. *Note* (4.) The Manner how this Duty of Fraternal Correption, or Brotherly Reproof, is and ought to be managed, namely, with Patience and Meekneſs, not with Severity and Roughneſs; ye that are Spiritual reſtore him in the *Spirit of Meekneſs*; if the Reproofs you give others be imbittered with your own Paſſions, they will ſpit them out of their Mouths, yea, ſpit them back upon your very Faces. *Note* (5.) The Argument to excite to all this, namely, the Conſideration of our own Perſonal Frailty, and great Liableneſs to fall into Temptation our ſelves, conſidering *thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted*; who knows what a Feather the ſtrongeſt Saint and ſtouteſt Chriſtian may prove in the Wind of Temptation? Therefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall, and exerciſe great Candour and Chriſtian Tenderneſs toward them that are fallen before him. *Hodie mihi, cras tibi.* From the whole *Learn*, (1.) That Fraternal Correption, or Brotherly Reproof, is a great Duty which Chriſtians mutually owe to one another, when they either run into Error, or fall into Sin: *If any of you be overtaken, reſtore him. Learn* (2.) That altho' it be the Duty of private Chriſtians to Admoniſh and Reprove one another, as being Members one of another, yet thoſe that are *Spiritual*, Chriſt Miniſters, the Guides of his Church, the Stewards of his Houſhold, ought in ſpecial to look upon it as their obliged Duty to reprove and rebuke with all Long-ſuffering and Gentleneſs. *Learn* (3.) That Rigour and Severity expreſt towards the Failings and Eſcapes of others, will rather exaſperate than reclaim them; we muſt deal as gently with a fallen Brother as with a broken Bone; if we do not temper our Reproofs with Meekneſs they will certainly prove Succeſleſs. *Learn* (4.) That the Holieſt Saint and moſt Spiritual Man is here on Earth, within the reach of Temptation, and may poſſibly fall himſelf, therefore ought to treat a fallen Brother with great Tenderneſs and Regard.

2 Bear ye one another's burthens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.

This is a general Precept, and requires us to Sympathize with our Brethren in all their Sorrows and Sufferings, and to bear a Part with them under the Load and Burthen of Oppreſſive Wants and Neceſſities; particularly bearing with the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of our Brethren, ſeems here to be recommended to our Care and Practice in this Apoſtolical Injunction, *Bear ye one another's Burthens.* The Encouragement to which Duty follows, *So ſhall we fulfil the Law of Chriſt*; that is, the Law of Love, the Moral Law, which enjoins us to love our Neighbour as our ſelves; but why is this called the Law of Chriſt, when it was long before Chriſt, yea, before *Moſes*, and as old as *Adam* himſelf, being Part of the Law of Nature, which was written in *Adam*'s Heart before there was any written Bible? I Anſwer, the Law of Love is very properly called the Law of Chriſt, becauſe he Revived it, Reſcued it, Recommended and Enforced it, frequently Urged it upon his Followers, and Exemplified it in his own Life and Converſation, therefore called a New Commandment, and his Commandment; this is my Commandment, *&c. A New Commandment I give you, that ye love one another.* St. *John* 13. 34. See the *Note* there. Learn hence, (1.) That to have our Ear, our Heart, and our Hand, open to our Brethren in Diſtreſs, is a Neceſſary Chriſtian Duty: Our Ear open to their Mournful Complaints, our Heart open to Sympathize with, and mourn over, them, our Hand open to the Relief of their Neceſſities and Wants. This is a Burthen which the Law of Chriſt has laid upon us, *Bear ye one another's Burthens.* Learn (2.) That to bear a part of our Brethrens Burthens with a Compaſſionate Heart, and helping Hand, is a fulfilling of the Law of Chriſt, becauſe much Love, which is the fulfilling of the Law, goes out, and is acted in the bearing of it. *So fulfil the Law of Chriſt.*

3 For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another. 5 For every man ſhall bear his own burthen.

The Apoſtle is ſtill directing the *Galatians*, and enforcing them to expreſs great Lenity and Tenderneſs towards ſuch of their Brethren as had fallen into Sin and Error, and particularly cautions them, (1.) To beware of the Sin of Pride and Self-conceit, and to abound in the Grace of Humility and Modeſty; *intimating* to us, That Pride, and an high Opinion of our ſelves, are the certain Cauſes of Cenſoriouſneſs and raſh Judging of others; and the true Reaſon why we Deſpiſe and Glory over an offending Brother, inſtead of Pitying of him, Sympathizing with him, and endeavouring to Reſtore him; *He that thinks himſelf to be ſomething, here*, is the Man that hath proud Thoughts of himſelf, who thinks himſelf more Righteous and Holy, more Steady and Steadfaſt, than his fallen Brother, and conceits he has more Power to preſerve himſelf than others; ſuch a one thinks himſelf to be ſome great Thing, when alas every Man is nothing; and the beſt of Men have nothing but what the Grace of God confers upon them, 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. *Obſerve* (2.) How the Apoſtle ſtrikes at the Root of the forementioned Sin of Pride and Self-conceit, namely, the comparing themſelves with thoſe who are worſe than themſelves, which is very apt to ſtir up Pride and Arrogancy; to Cure which he directs them to compare themſelves with thoſe that are better than themſelves, and to try and prove their own Works by the Rule of the Word of God, and not by the Example and Practice of others, and ſo ſhall they find Matter of Rejoicing in themſelves, in the Teſtimony of God, and the ſilent Applauſe of their own Conſciences, without borrowing Matter of Rejoicing from the Failings and Infirmities of other Perſons. *Obſerve* (3.) The Argument or Motive uſed by the Apoſtle to enforce upon every Man the Duty of Trying his own Work, rather than to be prying into the Infirmities of others, becauſe when he cometh to Judgment every Man muſt *bear his own Burthen*, or give an Account of himſelf and his own Actions to God, who will then Abſolve or Condemn Men; not as they have done better or worſe than others, but as they ſhall be then found in themſelves, abſolutely conſidered; it is a great Error for any Man to meaſure himſelf by the Meaſures of other Men, either by their Perfections, or by their Imperfections. To conclude our Eſtate ſafe becauſe we are not ſo bad as others, or unſafe beacuſe we have not attained to the Perfections of others, is alike dangerous; God will not proceed by this Rule, no more ſhould we; every Man that appears before him ſhall bear his own Burthen, and anſwer for his own Sins. Here *Note*, (1.) That how light ſoever Men make of Sin in the Commiſſion of it, it will be found heavy and burthenſome when they come before God to account for it; *he ſhall bear his own Burthen. Note* (2.) That the Righteous God in the great Judgment will call no Man to Account for the Sins of others, unleſs he has ſome Ways been Acceſſary to them, but every one ſhall bear his own Burthen, both of Guilt and Puniſhment.

6 Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.

In this and the following Verſes our Apoſtle enters upon a New Exhortation, and that is, to ſtir up the *Galatians* to Liberality and Beneficence upon every fitting Occaſion, to be ready to Diſtribute, willing to Communicate, and to do Good unto all Men. And becauſe it is highly probable, that by Reaſon of the Prevalency of Error amongſt them, and the Number of falſe Teachers found with them, that the *Galatians* Love to the Word, and to the Miniſters and Diſpencers of it, was grown Cold, he firſt begins to ſtir up their Liberality towards their Teachers, ſaying, *Let him that is taught in the Word* of the Goſpel, *Communicate unto him that teacheth*, in all ſuch good Things as he ſtands in need of. Learn hence, (1.) That the Wiſdom of God has ſeen it fit to teach Men by the Miniſtry of Man; not by his own immediate Voice, this we cannot bear; not by the Glorious Angels, theſe would terrifie rather than teach us; but by Men like our ſelves doth the great God inſtruct us: He has appointed ſome to teach, and obliged others to be taught, but the Pride of Man is grown to that Pitch in our Days, that almoſt every one thinks himſelf ſufficient to teach, and few have Humility enough to be taught. Learn (2.) That it is the ſpecial Duty of Miniſters not only to teach, but to teach the Word; *let him that is taught in the Word*, that is, the written Word, particularly the Holy Goſpel; our Buſineſs is not to go into the Pulpit, and read a Lecture to our People out of *Ariſtotle*'s Ethicks, or *Seneca*'s Morals, much leſs to load them with the Burthen of unwritten Traditions, but to make known a Crucified Saviour to them, and the Way to Eternal Salvation by him. Learn (3.) That ſeeing the Miniſters of Chriſt are to give themſelves wholly to the Work of Teaching, *&c.* without being intangled with the Affairs of this Life, the People whom they teach, and amongſt whom they ſpend their Time and Strength, are obliged by common Equity, as well as by the Command of God, to allow them a Comfortable Subſiſtence, and, if able, an Honourable Maintenance; *Let him that is taught, Communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things*. Learn (4.) That the Churches Maintenance is only due to ſuch Miniſters as are apt to teach, that labour in the Word themſelves: None have a Right to the Churches Salary which do not perform the Churches Service. Let ſuch Laymen as by their Impropriations take away the Vicar's Bread, and ſuch Clergymen as eat the Sweat of their Curate's Brows, conſider how they will anſwer it at the Bar of God.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. 8 For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.

Here the Apoſtle offers ſeveral Arguments to Conſideration, for exciting them to the forementioned Duty of Liberality and Chriſtian Beneficence in general, and to the Miniſters of the Word in particular: And the firſt of them is taken from God's Omniſciency, who takes notice of all the Petty and Pitiful Pretences, Pleas and Excuſes, which Men make why they cannot be ſo kind as they would be to the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt. Alas, their own Wants are many, (but 'tis their Luſts that make them ſo,) their Burthens are great upon them, and they muſt provide and take care for themſelves; but, ſays the Apoſtle, though you may with theſe lying Pretences cheat your ſelves, and mock your Miniſters and poor Neighbours, yet God is not, will not, cannot, be mocked; there is no juggling with God, no deceiving of his Eye; Man never deceives himſelf ſo much as when he thinks to deceive God in the leaſt: Man may be mocked and deceived by Man, but God can never be mocked by Man. *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul* compares Charity and Chriſtian Bounty to Seed ſown, and aſſures us that the Crop we reap ſhall be anſwerable, both in Quality and Kind, and alſo in Meaſure and Degree, to the Seed we now Sow; whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. Learn, That every Man's Harveſt hereafter ſhall be according to his Seed-time here. The Actions of this Life are as Seed ſown for the Life to come; if the Husbandman ſows Tares he muſt not expect to reap Wheat: *For whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. Obſerve* (3.) How the Apoſtle doth amplifie in particular, what he had before aſſerted in general, namely, that ſuch as the Seed is, ſuch will the Harveſt be; he that ſoweth to the Fleſh, that is plainly, he that ſpends his Subſtance upon his Luſts, ſeeking no more than the Gratification of his Senſual Deſires, he ſhall reap Corruption; that is, Periſhing Satisfaction only at preſent, and Eternal Perdition afterwards: But he that ſows to the Spirit, he that improves his Eſtate for God, for the Support of his Goſpel, for the Subſiſtence of his Members, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting. The Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead, will alſo raiſe us up at the great Day, and reward our preſent parting with the Things of this World, which we cannot keep, with Eternal Life, which we ſhall never loſe.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſhold of faith.

The Holy Apoſtle in theſe Words exhorts the *Galatians*, and in them all Chriſtians, to the Practice of one of the moſt Important Parts and Duties of the Chriſtian Religion, namely, that of doing Good one to another; and he doth not barely excite us to the Duty, but he exhorts us alſo to an unwearied Diligence in the doing of it, according to our Ability and Opportunity. In the Exhortation before us *Obſerve* (1.) The grand comprehenſive Duty we are exhorted to, *Well-doing, and an unwearied Diligence therein*: This comprehends all thoſe Ways and Means whereby we may be Beneficial and Uſeful one to another, both to Soul and Body, in Spiritual and Temporal good Things, and promote both the preſent Comfort and future Happineſs of each other. *Obſerve* (2.) The Extent and Latitude of the Duty, with reſpect to its Object, which is all Mankind: *Let us do Good unto all.* The *Galatians* were in Danger of Judaizing in their Practice, as well as in their Doctrines; that is, of loving none but themſelves, and their own Country-men; for the *Jews* were grown ſo Soure and Churliſh in their Temper, that they would not do the leaſt Office of Kindneſs to any that was not of their own Nation; therefore St. *Paul* here exhorts them to extend their Charity Univerſally to all, and every one that is of the ſame Nature with themſelves. *Obſerve* (3.) The ſpecial and particular Objects of our Charity, *The Houſhold of Faith*; do Good to all, but eſpecially to them; by the Houſhold of Faith, as appears by the Context, *Verſe* 6. are primarily meant the Miniſters of God, the Teachers of his Word, theſe are God's Domeſtick Servants: Where-ever there has been a People, there has been a Religion profeſt, ſuch as it was: Where-ever there has been a Religion profeſt, there have been Perſons Conſecrated and ſet Apart to attend the Service of that Religion, and a Maintenance provided for thoſe Attendants; it was ſo by God's Appointment under the Law, and by Chriſt's under the Goſpel. 1 *Cor.* 9. 14. But farther, by the Houſhold of Faith we are to underſtand the whole Collective Body of Believing Chriſtians, all the

Members of Chriſt's Myſtical Body; ſuch are very dear to God, and ought to be ſo to us. *Obſerve* (4.) The Subjects of this Duty, or whom it doth eminently concern, all Chriſtians. As *we* have Opportunity let us do Good; that is, every one of us; for verily there is no Condition in the World ſo mean and deſpicable but it yields Perſons an Opportunity one way or other of doing Good, if not by their Purſe, yet at leaſt by their Prayers, and by their Example. *Obſerve* (5.) The Frequency of the Duty, *as we have Opportunity*; that is, as often as the Occaſions of doing Good are preſented to us, and as long as Ability for doing Good is found with us. Some Men defer doing Good till they come to die, till they come to make their Will, that unwilling Will, in which they give God a ſmall Pittance of his own becauſe they can keep it no longer; they will Repent when they are dying, and be Charitable after they are dead. Good God! How unwilling are Men to part either with their Sins or their Money as long as they can keep them? But verily a Death-bed Charity may be as unavailable as a Death-bed Repentance: The Rule is here,as we have Opportunity,that is, as often as an Opportunity is offered; let us decline no Opportunity, by getting out of the Way (with ſome) when a Work of Charity preſents itſelf unto us. *Obſerve* (6.) The Meaſure of this Duty, as we have Ability let us do Good unto all; that is, proportionably to what God hath given us let us be willing to give to others: God could eaſily level the World, and give every Man alike, but he is pleaſed to give ſome more than others, on purpoſe to try their Graces; the Charity and Bounty of the Rich, the Faith and Patience of the Poor; and verily an Eſtate above what ſufficeth our Occaſions and Neceſſities is no farther a Bleſſing to us than as it puts an Opportunity into our Hands of doing more Good than others. *Obſerve* (7.) An unwearied Perſeverance of doing Good required at our Hands, *let us not be weary in Well-doing*; tho' we have done much Good, there is room for more; new Objects will appear, new Occaſions will ariſe, new Opportunities will preſent themſelves unto us. Let us never think we can do enough, much leſs too much Good; the Beſt of Beings are moſt unwearied in Well-doing; God, Chriſt, the Holy Angels, were never weary of this Bleſſed Work, let us never be weary in imitating them in that which is their higheſt and their chiefeſt Excellency and Perfection. *Obſerve* (8.) The Argument and Encouragement to the cheerful Diſcharge of this Duty, *in due Seaſon we ſhall Reap if we Faint not*; that is, ſooner or later; either in this World, or in the next, or in both, we ſhall certainly receive the Reward of Well-doing. We ſhall reap, but what? *Anſwer*, We ſhall reap the Bleſſing of God upon all we have, are, and do; we ſhall reap the Benefit and Bleſſing of their Prayers to whom we extend our Charity; we ſhall reap the higheſt Pleaſure and Satisfaction in our own Minds of doing Good,with which no ſenſual Pleaſure can be compared. The Reflection upon any Good we have done is a perpetual Spring of Peace and Pleaſure to us; the Thoughts of it lye even and eaſie in our Minds, and the Remembrance of it refreſhes the Soul with a ſtrange kind of Delight and Joy. But, Lord! What Tongue can utter, or what Heart conceive that vaſt and unſpeakable Reward which an unwearied Diligence in Well-doing will meet with in the other World? It will plead for us at the Day of Judgment, and procure at the Hands of a Merciful God for the Rich Merits of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt a Glorious Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt; and proportionable to the Degrees of our Charity will be the Diſpenſations of this Reward. From the whole Learn, That great are the Obligations which all Chriſtians do lye under of doing Good one to another, according to their Abilities and Opportunities. *Learn* (2.) That great is the Reward of Well-doing, which Chriſtians may eye as a Motive to an unwearied Diligence, and unfainting Perſeverance in Well-doing.

11 Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

It is very probable that St. *Paul* ordinarily did only dictate, and that ſome other Perſons wrote his Epiſtles, as that to the *Romans* wrote by *Tertius*, Rom. 16. 22. Sometimes he only wrote the Salutation, and ſubſcribed the Epiſtle with his own Hand, as 1 *Cor.* 16. 21. But here he tells the *Galatians* that he wrote this Epiſtle to them all with his own Hand, having never wrote ſo large an Epiſtle wholly with his own Hand to any Church as he did to them. This he did for Two Reaſons, (1.) To teſtifie the Fervency of his Affections towards them, and to inſinuate how much he loved them. (2.) To evidence the Sincerity of his Endeavours for their preſent and future Happineſs. To accompliſh theſe Ends he adjudged no Pains too great. From whence *Learn*, (1.) That the Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt will ſtick at no Pains, but encounter with all Difficulties, to advance the Good of Souls in general, and to reduce an erroneous and wandring People in particular to the Obedience of the Goſpel. Thus this great Apoſtle, tho' he had upon him the Care of all the Churches, and conſequently a Multiplicity of Buſineſs, many Avocations, and a Multitude of Diſtractions, yet in order to the reclaiming of theſe *Galatians*, who were deeply tinctur'd with Error, as well as dangerouſly tainted with Sin, he redeems Time for, and undergoes the Fatigue and Trouble of writing this whole Epiſtle to them with his own Hand; *You ſee how large a Letter I have written to you with mine own Hand.* Learn (2.) That it neither ſavours of Pride nor Vain-glory in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, if upon Occaſion (though ſparingly) they make known to the World the great Pains they have taken for promoting the Good of their People, that ſo they may be excited the more to bring forth Fruit anſwerable to the Coſt and Culture which the Miniſters of Chriſt have expended upon them; St. *Paul* here ſticks not to tell the *Galatians*, and the whole World, the Pains he had been at in writing this large Epiſtle with his own Hand to them; yet it was not to commend himſelf, but to excite and encourage them.

12 As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt:
13 For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh.

Here our Apoſtle returns to the Deſcription which he had before given of the Falſe Apoſtles, who though they urged the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, yet it was not with any Sincerity of Intention; it was firſt *to make a fair ſhew in the Fleſh*; that is, to make a fair outward Shew of Religion, an high Pretence to Holineſs, by obſerving Circumciſion, and the other abrogated Rites of the Ceremonial Law: And, Secondly, this pretended Zeal of theirs proceeded from Puſillanimity and Fear, leſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution from the Jews for preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel, called here the Croſs of Chriſt, becauſe it treats of a Crucified Chriſt. Now the Fury of theſe Perſecutors was abated towards thoſe that preached up Circumciſion, but enraged abundantly againſt thoſe that preached Circumciſion down. *Obſerve* farther, How well the Apoſtle makes good his Charge againſt theſe Falſe Apoſtles, the judaizing Doctors, that they urged the Neceſſity of Circumciſion inſincerely, and for baſe Ends; namely, becauſe they made no Conſcience to keep the Law themſelves, but could diſpence with Circumciſion well enough if they were among their Friends, but pleaded for it when in fear of their perſecuting Enemies; thus they *became all Things to all Men*, but it was to ſave themſelves. And laſtly, he aſſures them that they urged Circumciſion upon them that they might glory in their Fleſh; that is, might pride themſelves that you were become their Converts, by being Circumciſed at their Perſwaſion, and be able to boaſt of the Multitudes of their Proſelites, who received Circumciſion at their Inſtigation, and carried it as a Mark of their Inſtruction. *Learn hence*, (1.) That deſigning Hypocrites do conſtantly pretend high to Religion, but they evermore ſeek themſelves, under a Pretence of acting for God and his Glory; they that conſtrain you to be Circumciſed make a fair Shew in the Fleſh. *Learn* (2.) That though it is our Duty to eſchew Perſecution when we can fairly avoid it, yet we muſt not part with the leaſt Iota of Truth, or eſpouſe the ſmalleſt Error, to avoid the ſharpeſt Perſecution; they conſtrain you to be Circumciſed leſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution. *Learn* (3.) That Men who talk loud of Religion, and pretend high to it, who preach it to, and preſs it upon, others, but do not conſcienciouſly practice it themſelves, it is an evident Demonſtration that they are Men of corrupt Minds, of profligate Conſciences, that do not believe themſelves; for he only believes what he ſays, that lives as he doth believe; *Neither they themſelves who are Circumciſed*,

ciſed, ſays the Apoſtle, *keep the Law*. Learn (4.) That there is nothing which falſe Teachers and erroneous Seducers do ſo much glory of, magnifie themſelves by, and pride themſelves in, as in the Number of their Proſelytes and Converts, which they look upon as ſo many Trophies of their Victory, and Speaking Proofs of their unparallell'd Abilities; they conſtrain Men to be Circumciſed that they may glory in their Fleſh.

14 But God forbid that I ſhould glory ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Having ſhewn what it was that the falſe Apoſtles gloried in, he next ſhews what it was that he himſelf gloried in, namely, in the Croſs of Chriſt; that is, in his preaching Chriſt crucified, and the Neceſſity of Faith in him who died as a Sacrifice upon the Croſs. The Croſs of Chriſt is taken Three Ways in Scripture, Materially, Metaphorically, and Metonymically; the Material Croſs of Chriſt is that which he died upon at *Jeruſalem:* This the Church of *Rome* glories in greatly, but not the Apoſtle. The Metaphorical Croſs of Chriſt is Afflictions, *Luke* 9. 28. Let him take up the Croſs, that is, ſubmit to any Affliction: God ofttimes ſanctifies this Croſs for the crucifying the Hearts of his People to the World; but the Croſs of Chriſt is taken Metonymically for the Goſpel, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, or of him that died upon the Croſs. Now Chriſtianity, or the Doctrine of the Goſpel, crucifies us to the World. Firſt, By diſcovering to us the great Vanity and Emptineſs of the World, and all the periſhing Satisfactions of it: Secondly, By propounding ſuch Arguments to crucifie the World as were never heard of from all the Philoſophers and Wiſe Men that ever lived in the World; namely, Arguments taken from the Glory of God, from the Death of Chriſt, from the Dignity of the Soul, *&c.* *Learn hence*, That ſuch a Chriſtian as doth experimentally find his Heart and Affections daily more and more crucified to the World by the Croſs of Chriſt, has unſpeakable Cauſe and Reaſon ſufficient for Spiritual Glorying and Rejoicing. *Queſtion*, Wherein conſiſts not our Crucifixion to the World? *Anſwer*, It conſiſts not in a vile Eſteem of the World as uſeleſs or hurtful, or in caſting off all Care and Concern for the Things of the World as ſinful and unneceſſary; nor is every degree of Deſire after, Love unto, or Delight in the things of the World inconſiſtent with our being Crucified to it; nor doth it conſiſt in, or oblige us to, the withdrawing our ſelves from all Society and Converſation with the Men of the World: But poſitively, Crucifixion to the World conſiſts in a crucified Judgment and Opinion of the World, in crucifying our Love and Affections to the World, in crucified Hopes and Expectations from the World, in crucifying our Care and Concern for the World, in crucifying our Delight in, and our Endeavours after, the World. *Queſtion*, How doth a Chriſtian's being crucified to the World afford him Cauſe for unſpeakable Rejoicings? Thus; we may and ought to glory in the Bleſſed Effect and Fruit of Chriſt's Death, in the Reinſtamping the Image of God upon the Soul, in the certain Tokens of the Love of God. We may glory in the Death of Chriſt's Enemy, and our Soul's Enemy; we may glory in that wherein God is Glorified, and in that which is the Earneſt of our own Glorification. Now Crucifixion to the World by the Croſs of Chriſt is this, all this, and therefore warrantably to be boaſted of, and gloried in.

15 For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.

Here the Apoſtle ſubjoins a Reaſon why he gloried only in the Croſs of Chriſt, and not in thoſe Carnal Ordinances and fleſhly Priviledges of Circumciſion, *&c.* which the falſe Apoſtle ſo much gloried in; namely, becauſe Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion, neither the preſence of that Ordinance, nor the want of it, availeth any thing as to our Acceptance with Chriſt, and Intereſt in him, but the New Creature is all in all; a circumciſed Heart, not a circumciſed Foreskin, a renewed Nature, a divine Temper of Mind, rendring us like to Chriſt. This will enable us to love him, and qualifie us for living with him now in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, under the Oeconomy of the Goſpel, neither the preſence nor abſence of this outward Badge of Circumciſion will avail any thing to our Juſtification before God, but that which was ſignified by Circumciſion is the thing that pleaſes God; namely, the Renovation of our Natures, and becoming new Creatures both in Heart and Life. *Learn hence*, That according to the Terms of the Goſpel Covenant, or Chriſtian Religion, nothing will avail to our Acceptance with God, but the real Renovation of our Hearts and Lives; *neither Circumciſion availeth any Thing, or Uncircumciſion, but a new Creature.*

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Nature of Chriſtianity deſcribed, it is a Walk; now a Walk is a Motion, a free and voluntary Motion, an uniform and even Motion, it is a progreſſive Motion, and a conſtant Motion. *Obſerve* (2.) The Condition of this Walk, and that is Regularity, it is a Walk by Rule; a Chriſtian is not a Lawleſs Perſon, to range, and ramble, and run up and down as Fancy leads him, but he walks by Rule, by the Rule of Scripture, by the Rule of Charity. *Obſerve* (3.) The Determination of that Rule which a Chriſtian is to walk by, it muſt be according to this Rule; what Rule? The foregoing Verſe declares it is Regeneration, and the Law of the new Creature; as many as walk according to that Rule, when the new Creature in the Principles and Workings of it is made the Ground, the Pattern, and Direction, of our Obedience, and we frame and ſquare all the Actions of our Lives according thereunto. *Obſerve* (4.) The Bleſſed Priviledges belonging to them that thus walk, Peace be on them, and Mercy; that is, there ſhall be Peace and Mercy to them; theſe ſhall be their Portion; nay, they ſhall be upon them; that is, in a large and plentiful manner vouchſafed to them. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Honourable Mention which the Apoſtle makes of them that thus walk by Scripture Rule, according to the Law of the New Creature written in their Heart, he calls them the true *Iſrael of God*, the Spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, the Children of his Faith, which was a Thouſand times greater Priviledge than to be the Children of his Fleſh; theſe are the Perſons intereſted in this Bleſſing. *Learn hence*, That True and inward Peace, great and laſting Peace, Peace with God, and Peace with Conſcience, is the aſſured Portion, and ſhall be the Poſſeſſion of all, and only thoſe who walk according to the Law of God, the Rule of the New Creature, as many as walk according to this Rule.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.

The Apoſtle having thus fully declared the Mind of God, in the Matter controverted betwixt himſelf and the falſe Apoſtles, touching the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, he now makes uſe of his Apoſtolick Authority, and charges his Adverſaries to give him no farther Trouble or Diſturbance, either by gainſaying his Doctrine, or detracting from his Authority; becauſe he bare in his Body the Marks of his Sufferings for Chriſt Jeſus, namely, the Stripes and Wounds which he patiently received for the Name of Chriſt and his Holy Religion, 2 *Cor.* 11. 13. *Learn hence*, That whatever hard Meaſure we meet with for the Sake of Chriſt, what Wounds and Marks we receive for profeſſing Faith in him, and perſevering in Obedience to him, he will own them for his own, and give us leave to look upon them as his own, yea, to call them his own, as our Apoſtle did here; *I bear in my Body the Marks of the Lord Jeſus.*

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit. Amen.

Here our Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with his accuſtomed Valediction, moſt affectionately praying that the Grace and Favour of Chriſt, in the ſweet Effects of it, and in the ſenſible Apprehenſion of it, might remain in their Soul, to Enlighten, Sanctifie, Comfort, and Quicken, them more and more, that from thence they might derive and draw abiding Conſolation both in Life and Death. *Amen.*

THE

Epiſtle of St. PAUL

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

St. Paul *having planted a Famous Church at* Epheſus, *which was the Metropolis or Chief City in* Aſia, *where he had preached the Goſpel for Three Years with Eminent Succeſs, and being now a Priſoner at* Rome, *he juſtly feared leſt they ſhould faint in their Chriſtian Courſe; and accordingly to prevent it he writes this Epiſtle to the Churches of Chriſt in and about* Epheſus, *to eſtabliſh them in the Faith he had preached to them, which he was now a Priſoner for, and ſtood ready to Seal with his own Blood.*

And here the good Providence of God towards St. Paul *and them is very remarkable, that though he was now a Priſoner at* Rome, *yet not ſo cloſe as to be denied Pen and Paper; God gave him Favour in the Sight of his Keeper, and having Work for him to do in Priſon, provides a Keeper for his Turn.*

St. Paul *is no ſooner* Nero's *Priſoner, but he falls a Preaching and Writing too. Happy was it for* Oneſimus *that* St. Paul *was ſent to Goal, where he was begotten in his Bonds by the preaching of the Goſpel; and as happy was it for the* Epheſians *too, unto whom he wrote this Excellent Epiſtle, that they might be the more Comforted and Confirmed. The Devil had better have let* St. Paul *alone than thus impriſon him, for no ſooner was he committed, but he falls both a Preaching and Writing; at which the Gates of Satan's Kingdom fly open, and Sinners come forth to his Sorrow and Shame. There is no ſuch Way to be even with the Devil and his Inſtruments for all the Spight and Malice againſt us, as by doing all the poſſible Good we can where-ever we come.*

This Excellent Epiſtle Divinely ſets forth the great and aſtoniſhing Myſteries of our Redemption and Reconciliation by Jeſus Chriſt, the Freeneſs and Riches of God's Grace, the Admirable Benefits and Priviledges of the Goſpel, the Marvellous Diſpenſation of God to the Gentiles *in revealing Chriſt unto them.*

The principal Parts of this Epiſtle are Two, Doctrinal and Practical. The former is contained in the Three firſt Chapters, in which he Treats of the Sublime Priviledges of our Election, Vocation, Juſtification, and Adoption; the latter in the Three laſt Chapters, in which he exhorts them to Conſtancy in the Faith, to Preparation for and Patience under Sufferings, and to live Religion in every Relation, by making Conſcience of Relative Duties one towards another, as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, in which the Life and Beauty of Religion lyes; and ſo cloſes and ſhuts up his Epiſtle, wiſhing them all Peace and Proſperity, and a mutual Encreaſe of Love and Charity, and adviſing them to manifeſt the Sincerity of their Love to Chriſt by the Purity and Incorruptneſs of their Lives and Converſations.

CHAP. I.

Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, to the ſaints which are at Epheſus, and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Penman of this Epiſtle deſcribed, by his Name, *Paul*, by his Office *an Apoſtle*, by his Commiſſion to that Office, *The Will of God*; that is, by the Command and Appointment of God; it is Matter of great Conſolation to the Miniſters of Chriſt, as well as great Satisfaction to their People, that their Calling is from God, and not from themſelves; that they ſpeak not in their own Names, but by Commiſſion received from Chriſt, whoſe Ambaſſadors they are. *Obſerve* (2.) The Superſcription of this Epiſtle, the Perſons to whom it was directed and ſent, *To the Saints at Epheſus*; ſo they were all at *Epheſus* by viſible Profeſſion, and many of them no doubt by real Sanctification.

fication. All the Members of the viſible Church are obliged to be Saints, and the true and real Chriſtian is a true and real Saint: He adds, *And to the Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus* throughout all *Aſia.* This pointed out their Duty to them, to be not only Holy in Profeſſion, but Faithful in Converſation; theſe Two Words, Saints and Faithful, conjoined, denote both their Dignity and their Duty; their Dignity in ſtanding near to God as his Children, their Duty in being faithful to him as his Servants. *Obſerve* laſtly, He ſtiles them Saints and Faithful *in Chriſt Jeſus*; intimating, that all our Grace and Holineſs muſt be Holineſs in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, acted and exerciſed, by Strength fetch'd from Chriſt Jeſus, and that all our Holineſs muſt be accepted in Chriſt Jeſus.

2 Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe Words may be conſidered Two Ways, (1.) As a Religious Salutation, taken from the manner of the Jews, who expreſt their Deſires for one another's Well-doing by wiſhing Peace; that is, all kind of Happineſs and Proſperity to each other: Chriſtianity doth neither forbid nor aboliſh, but doth ſpiritualize and improve, Civility, Humanity, and common Courteſie. (2.) The Words may be conſidered as an Apoſtolical Benediction, in Imitation of the Prieſt's Bleſſing, *Numb. 6.* The Apoſtles were the Patriarchs or Spiritual Fathers of the Church of the New Teſtament, as the Sons of *Jacob* were of the Old; accordingly they bleſs their Children, wiſhing *Grace from God the Father*, or Grace from God as a Father; thereby *denoting*, that God beſtows not his Grace as a Creator, but as a Father in Chriſt, in a diſcriminating Way and peculiar Manner: And *Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; he being the Purchaſer of our Peace, he upon whom the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was laid, and he that made Peace for us by the Blood of his Croſs, and thereupon God of his Free Grace accepts us, juſtifies us, and is at Peace with us. *Learn*, That ſuch as have received moſt Grace from God, ſtand in farther need of Supplies of Grace from him; they are thankful for Peace, but they cannot content themſelves with Peace without Grace; they deſire both to have the Heart and Love of God ſet upon them, as well as pacified towards them; they deſire to be pardoned, but above all ſeek to be beloved of the Father.

3 Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Work which the Heart of the Apoſtle was ſet upon, and that is, the Work of bleſſing God; we bleſs God one Way, he bleſſes us another; he bleſſes us imperatoriouſly, by commanding his Bleſſings upon us, we bleſs him optatively, when with thankful Hearts we praiſe him, when we wiſh well to him, and ſpeak well of him. Lord, what an infinite Favour and Priviledge is this vouchſafed to us, not only to pray to God, and receive Bleſſings from him, but to admit us to bleſs him, and to account himſelf honoured by us when we acknowledge him the Fountain of all Bleſſings and Bleſſedneſs to us his Creatures. *Obſerve* (2.) The Title under which our Apoſtle bleſſeth him; namely, as the *God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He doth not ſay now under the Goſpel, as of Old under the Law, Bleſſed be the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, or Bleſſed be the Lord God of *Iſrael*, but Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where *Note*, (1,) He is a God to Chriſt in relation to his being Man, Chriſt being fore-ordain'd before the Foundation of the World to the Work and Office of a Mediator, 1 *Pet.* 1. 20. and the Father making a Covenant or federal Tranſaction with him from all Eternity as Mediator. *Note* (2.) He is a Father to Chriſt, and that both as God and Man; a Father to him as God, by Eternal and Ineffable Generation, the one being *Deus Gignens*, the other *Deus Genitus*; thus he was the only Begotten Son of the Father; and a Father to him as Man, by vertue of the Perſonal Union of the Two Natures in Chriſt, *Luke* 1. 32. therefore that Holy Thing ſhall be called the Son of God. *Obſerve* (3.) The Reaſon why under theſe Relations he ſo affectionately bleſſes God, namely, for beſtowing Bleſſings, Spiritual Bleſſings, all Spiritual Bleſſings, and this in or concerning Heavenly Things, which tend to fit us for Heaven and Eternal Glory; and laſtly, All theſe Bleſſings are conferr'd upon us in Chriſt; he by his Merit has purchaſed them, he as our Head and Advocate in our Name has received them, by virtue of our Union, with whom we have a Right unto them, and ſhall e'er long in Heaven be fully and finally poſſeſs'd of them. Behold here the Tranſcendent Bounty and Liberality of our Heavenly Father; he has more than one Bleſſing for his Children, he has all Spiritual and Heavenly Bleſſings for them, Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven; Grace to enable them to glorifie him upon Earth, and Glory as the Reward of Grace with himſelf in Heaven. Rejoice, O Chriſtian, in thy Lot and Portion. God himſelf hath but all Things, and ſo haſt thou; has he all Spiritual Bleſſings in Heaven in full Poſſeſſion? Thou haſt them alſo in Right and Title at preſent, and e'er long ſhalt enjoy them in full Fruition. Eternally Bleſſed then be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Places, or in Heavenly Things in Chriſt.

4 According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame, before him in love:

Our Apoſtle having in the former Verſe offered up a very ſolemn Thankſgiving to God for bleſſing the *Epheſians* with all Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Things in Chriſt, he comes in this Verſe to diſcover and declare the Fountain from whence all theſe Spiritual Bleſſings did proceed and flow, namely, from God's Gracious Purpoſe in our Election before all Time; *He hath choſen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be Holy*, &c. Where *Note*, The Favour vouchſafed, Election, and the Fruit and Product of that Favour, Holineſs of Life and Converſation. *Note* (1.) The Favour and Priviledge vouchſafed by God, *He hath choſen.* This denotes the Freeneſs of the Favour, he choſe when he might have refuſed; his Book of Life is a Book of Love; the Cauſe of our Love is in the Object, the Reaſon of God's Love is in himſelf. *Note* (2.) The Subject of this Favour, he hath choſen *us*, us Gentiles; the Jews much gloried in their being a choſen Generation, a peculiar People, we Gentiles are a choſen Generation alſo; they were belov'd for the Father's Sake, *Abraham's*, we for Chriſt's Sake. *Note* (3.) The Antiquity of this Favour, *before the Foundations of the World*, that is, from all Eternity; the Apoſtle, to take the Jews off from boaſting (as they did) that the World was made for their ſake, and that the Meſſiah from the beginning of the World did enter into a Covenant with God to redeem them eſpecially, declares that the deſpiſed Gentiles were elected and choſen by God to be an Holy People to himſelf, and all this in the Purpoſe of God, before the Foundations of the World were laid. *Note* (4.) God is ſaid to have choſen us *in Chriſt*, as our Head. Conſider Chriſt as God, ſo we are choſen by him. I know whom I have choſen, ſays Chriſt: Conſider him as Mediator, ſo we are choſen in him, not choſen for him; becauſe not Chriſt's undertaking for us, but the Father's good Pleaſure towards us, was the Spring and Fontal Cauſe of our Election. The Truth is, God was ſo far from chuſing the Gentiles out of Faith foreſeen, that he did not chuſe them for the Sake and Obedience of Chriſt foreſeen; God did not love us from Eternity becauſe Chriſt was to die for us in time, but becauſe he loved us with an Everlaſting Love, therefore in the Fulneſs of Time was ſent to die for us; ſo that the Death of Chriſt was the Fruit and Effect, but not the Cauſe, of our Election; no other Reaſon (ſays Biſhop *Fell* upon the Place) can be aſſigned of this Priviledge, but the good Pleaſure of God; and if Chriſt's Sufferings were not the Cauſe of our Election, much leſs our own Deſervings, as *he* adds there, Almighty God not chuſing us becauſe unworthy, but to make us worthy by chuſing us. *Note* (5.) The Effect and Fruit, the Benefit and End, of this free and ancient Favour, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame, before him in Love. (1.) Holineſs is here declared not to be the Cauſe, but the Effect, of our Election; God choſe the Gentiles from Eternity to be his People, not becauſe they were holy (they were far enough from that, being afar off from God,) but deſigning that they thus graciouſly choſen ſhould be *Holy*, initially, progreſſively, and perſeveringly, Holy in this Life, and perfectly Holy in the next: Yet arriving at ſuch a Perfection here in Holineſs, as to denominate us *blameleſs* in the Account of God, by virtue of our Faith in Chriſt, and Love to one another. From the whole Learn, (1.) That God's beſtowing all Spiritual Bleſſings upon us in time, is the Effect and Fruit of his Electing Love from all Eternity; *he hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings, according as he hath choſen us in Chriſt before the Foundation of the World.* Learn (2.) That God hath choſen none to Happineſs and Glory hereafter, but only ſuch as are Holy in Converſation here, Holy in the Habitual Frame and Diſpoſition of their Hearts, and in the General Courſe and Tenour of their Lives and Actions. *Learn* (3.) That ſuch as are Holy before God, will endeavour to walk unblameably in the ſight of Man, in the Exerciſe of Love, and in the Practice of all the Duties of the Second Table, which are at once Evidences of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion; *that we ſhould be Holy, and without Blame before him in Love.*

5 Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, 6 To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved :

That is, having predeſtinated *us Gentiles*, who in the eſteem of *Jews* were accounted Dogs, to be his adopted Sons and Daughters, in and by Jeſus Chriſt, in whom he hath made us accepted, to the abundant Praiſe and Glory of his Free Grace and Mercy. *Obſerve here*, (1.) That none are the Children of God by Nature; none are born Sons, but made Sons; not of their own, but God's, making; and in order to this Glorious Priviledge we were *predeſtinated unto the Adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve* (2.) The Attribute mentioned here by the Apoſtle which moved God to predeſtinate us to the Adoption of Children, it was the Glory of his Grace; he mentions not the Glory of his Holineſs, the Glory of his Juſtice, or the Glory of his Power; becauſe the Glory of his Power is manifeſted in making of the World, the Glory of his Holineſs in making of his Law, the Glory of his Juſtice in turning the Tranſgreſſors of that Law into Hell; but his Grace he ſhews nowhere ſo much as in the Predeſtination of his Children, and in what he hath predeſtinated them unto; he ſheweth indeed all his Attributes herein, but Grace over and above all the reſt. *Obſerve* (3.) The Effect and Fruit of this Priviledge, namely, of our being predeſtinated to the Adoption of Children, and that is, our being made Accepted in Chriſt the Beloved; the Word is properly rendred, he hath made us Dear, Precious, and Delightful, to himſelf; or in one Word, he hath ingratiated us. Here *Note*, that as Jeſus Chriſt is in an eminent manner beloved of God, and accepted with him, ſo in like manner all God's Adopted Children do and ſhall find Favour with God, and Acceptance through Chriſt; he hath made us freely accepted in the Beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes enumerated the Great and Glorious Priviledges which the Children of God were made Partakers of before all Time, comes next to diſcover what they are admitted to the Participation of in Time: And here in this Verſe he mentions Two of them, namely, Redemption and Remiſſion of Sin, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, *&c.* Here *Note*, The Priviledge itſelf, Redemption, the Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, (in whom) the Price of this Redemption paid down, (his Blood,) one Fruit of this Redemption inſtanced in for all the reſt, (the Forgiveneſs of Sin,) and, Laſtly, the Spring or Source of all this, (the Riches of his Grace.) *Learn* (1.) The deplorable State into which the whole Race of Mankind was brought by Sin; namely, an Eſtate of Slavery, and Bondage, and ſpiritual Captivity unto Sin; Redemption ſuppoſes this; Slaves and Captives need a Redeemer, none elſe; we are all by Nature under Slavery to Sin, to Satan, and the Curſe of the Law, and the Wrath of God. *Learn* (2.) That there was no Delivery to be had from this Slavery but by a Price paid down to the Juſtice of God; Redemption is a Delivery by Ranſom and Price. *Learn* (3.) That no other Price did or could redeem us from our miſerable Captivity but the Blood of Chriſt; *we have Redemption through his Blood.* Learn (4.) That all Believers, and only they, have Remiſſion of their Sins through the Redemption purchaſed for them by the Blood of Chriſt. *Learn* (5.) That's God's free Grace, and Chriſt's full Satisfaction, do ſtand well together in the Work of Redemption and Remiſſion of Sin; true, God had a Satisfaction from the Hand of our Surety Chriſt Jeſus; but was it not Free Grace and Rich Mercy in God to accept of a Surety and a Subſtitution, when the Rigour of the Law required none, and would admit of none, but demanded that the Soul which ſinn'd ſhould die? Was it not Free Mercy not only to accept a Surety, but to provide a Surety for us as God did, and this Surety his own Son? And to deliver up this Son to a painful, ſhameful, and accurſed, Death, that we might have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sin, according to the Riches of his Grace?

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom and prudence, 9 Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he had purpoſed in himſelf:

That is, in which Diſpenſation of his, namely, our Redemption from Sin and Wrath by the Blood of his Son, God the Father hath diſcovered abundant Wiſdom, wonderful Wiſdom, Riches of Divine Wiſdom, to the Children of Men; taking the Works in this Senſe the Obſervation is, that God's ſending his Son in the World to ſuffer in our ſtead, and to ſatisfie for our Sin, was not only an Act of ſpecial Grace and peculiar Favour, but alſo an Evidence and Demonſtration of wonderful Wiſdom in God; *he hath abounded towards us in all Wiſdom:* Oh! What wonderful Wiſdom appeared in the Contrivance of the Work of Redemption, and in the Accompliſhment of it! What Wiſdom in appointing ſuch a Mediator as was fit to reconcile God to Man, and Man to God! What Wiſdom in laying the Platform and Deſign of the Goſpel in ſuch a Way and Manner, as at once to advance the Honour and ſecure the Glory of God, and to promote the Holineſs and Comfort of Man. *Obſerve* next, the Deſcription which St. *Paul* gives us of the Goſpel, and the Preaching of it, it is the Myſtery of God's Will reveal'd and made known to a loſt World. Learn, that the Goſpel's Method for recovering and ſaving loſt Sinners by a Redeemer, it was a Myſtery, an hidden Myſtery; it hid where all the World could never have found it, where Angels and Men could never diſcover it; it was hid in God, in his Breaſt and Boſom, in his Heart and Thoughts; it was hid from Angels; nay, the Churches knew it before the Angels; yea, the Angels learn it from the Churches, *Eph.* 3. 10. Unto Principalities and Powers is known by the Church the manifold Wiſdom of God; and as it was hid from Angels, ſo from the Wiſe Men of the World, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. we preach the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, even the hidden Wiſdom, which none of the Princes of the World knew; nay, the Goſpel was hid from all the Saints of the Old Teſtament, comparatively, not abſolutely; with reſpect to that clear Revelation which we have of the Goſpel now, it may be ſaid to be hidden to them then. Oh what Obligations then do we lye under who live under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, to acknowledge what an infinite Favour it is from God clearly to know the Myſtery of his Will, concerning the Redemption and Salvation of poor loſt Sinners by a Mediator! God has now reveal'd it, and he deſires all may know and receive the Revelation of it, namely, the hidden Myſtery of his Will. *Obſerve laſtly*, what was the impelling and moving Cauſe of God's making known the Myſteries of his Will to a loſt World; it was his own *good Pleaſure* which he hath purpoſed in himſelf; God's making known the Myſtery of his Will by the Goſpel, and his enlightning the Underſtandings of Men ſavingly to apprehend it, proceeds entirely from the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of his own Good-will; *having made known unto us the Myſteries of his Will according to his Good Pleaſure which he purpoſed in himſelf.*

10 That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.

Theſe Words diſcover to us the End and Deſign of God in making known the Myſteries of his Will; that is, in revealing the Goſpel; it was to gather into one univerſal Church both Angels and Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under Chriſt their Head, and by Virtue of that Union become one with the Father, as he and Chriſt are one. Here *Note*, (1.) That Chriſt is the Head both of Angels and Men; an Head of Confirmation to the Angels, of Redemption to fallen Man; both

Angels and Saints in Heaven and on Earth make up one Family, of which Chriſt is the Head; the Angels are a part of the Worſhippers of Chriſt as well as we, they are a part of his Family and Houſhold: The Angels fill our Churches as well as Men, and are preſent in our Congregations and Aſſemblies, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. *Note* (2.) That all Mankind by Nature, and as conſidered in themſelves, are under a fearful Diſſipation or Scattering; Sin hath rent and ſeparated them from God, from Man, and from the Bleſſed Angels; *Gathering together* preſuppoſes a foregoing Scattering. *Note* (3.) That the Purpoſe and Deſign of God in diſcovering the Truths of the Goſpel unto Men was this, that he might gather them together into Union with Jeſus Chriſt, that by Virtue of that Union they might be one with the Father, as he and Chriſt are one: *That in the Fulneſs of Time he might gather together into one* Body in Chriſt *all Things* capable of Eternal Happineſs, *both in Heaven and Earth*; even in him who is the Head of that Body, whereof Angels as well as Men are Members.

11 In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will: 12 That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle having hitherto ſpoken of the Glorious Priviledges of the Goſpel in general, he comes now to make Application of this his Doctrine, firſt to the Jews, and next to the Gentiles, in particular; as to the Jews, who were firſt called by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and who were the firſt that truſted or hoped in Chriſt for Salvation, before there was any conſiderable Number of Converts among the Gentiles, he declares that theſe Jewiſh Believers (whereof himſelf was one) had in and through Chriſt obtained a Right to be God's Portion and peculiar People; and that they ſhould not, by embracing the Goſpel, loſe that Ancient Priviledge which their Forefathers ſo mightily boaſted of and gloried in, namely, to be a choſen Generation, and a peculiar People; but together with their being God's Portion, they ſhould have Right to an Inheritance, *in whom we have obtained an Inheritance*; namely, an Inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan*, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and to this Inheritance, ſays he, you have been appointed, God having fore-ordained that this Inheritance ſhould be the Portion of all Believers, and the Conſequent of Faith in Chriſt, by Vertue of which we become the Sons of God, and all this *to the Praiſe of his own Glory*; that is, to the Intent that his Glorious Attributes of Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Mercy, might be acknowledged, and highly prais'd. Learn hence, (1.) That to be called to Faith, and brought to believing in Chriſt, before others, is a Favour and ſpecial Prerogative which ſome Perſons have above others. *We who firſt believed in Chriſt*; it's an high Honour above all others to be in Chriſt before others, *Rom.* 16. 7. *Who were in Chriſt before me.* Learn (2.) That as all Believers are God's Portion, and the Lot of his Inheritance, ſo they do obtain from him Right and Title to, a Lot and Share in, an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for them: *We have obtained an Inheritance.* Learn (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator is that Perſon in, by and through, whom Believers are inſtituted to this Inheritance; *in whom we have obtained an Inheritance*; Chriſt has purchaſed this Inheritance for them, he has promiſed it to them, he has already taken and ſtill keeps Poſſeſſion of it for them, and will put them into the full and final Poſſeſſion of it at the great Day. Learn (4.) That the great End and Deſign of God, in all the diſtinguiſhing Favours and Benefits which by Jeſus Chriſt we obtain from him, is this, *that we ſhould be to the Praiſe of his Glory.* The Words may be underſtood, (1.) Paſſively, the Praiſe of his Glory was to be manifeſted in them. (2.) Actively, that the High Praiſes of God were to be ſet forth by them.

13 In whom ye alſo truſted after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your Salvation: in whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, 14 Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory.

Here the Apoſtle recounts the Favours and Priviledges which the Gentiles as well as the Jews, upon their believing in Chriſt, were admitted to the Participation of; he aſſures them that in and through Chriſt they had obtained a Right to this Heavenly Inheritance alſo, as well as the Jews, having been brought to truſt and believe in him, by hearing the Word of Truth, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, preached to them: And next, that they were Sealed for the Children of God by the ſanctifying Spirit promiſed to the Sons of God, which produced a real renovating Change in their Hearts and Lives, and ſo was a Pledge and Earneſt of, as well as made them Meet and Fit for, the Heavenly Inheritance, the full Enjoyment of which is not to be expected till the laſt Day, when, and not before, all Believers ſhall obtain compleat Redemption, and their Bodies being raiſed ſhall be reunited to their Souls, and both rendred perfectly and everlaſtingly Happy. The End of God in all this Diſpenſation of Grace and Mercy to the Gentiles being the ſame with that beforementioned to the Jews, namely, the Praiſe of his own Glorious Grace. Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That both the Gentiles and Jews are ſaved by the ſame Faith and Truſt in Chriſt, *in whom ye alſo truſted*; as they have the ſame common Inheritance, ſo they have the ſame common Affiance and Faith in Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) That the Faith of the Gentiles came by hearing of the Word, *in whom ye alſo truſted after ye heard the Word*, &c. That is, preſently after they heard they believed and obeyed, *Coloſ.* 1. 6. Ye obeyed from the firſt Day that we preached the Goſpel; what a Shame and Reproach is this to thoſe amongſt us, who have heard the Goſpel preached all their Days, yet never did believe or obey the Goſpel? *Obſerve* (3.) A double Encomium which the Apoſtle gives the Goſpel by which theſe gentle *Epheſians* were converted, he calls it, (1.) *The Word of Truth*; that is, a Word of the moſt Eminent and Excellent Truth; there is no Truth that ever God ſwore to but the Truth of the Goſpel; the Law is Truth as well as the Goſpel, but the Law was made without an Oath; had it been made with an Oath it had been never recalled; the Goſpel is Sealed with an Oath, and therefore ſhall never be reverſed. (2.) He calls it *the Goſpel of Salvation*, and the Goſpel of *their* (the *Epheſians*) *Salvation*; it is called a Goſpel of Salvation, becauſe the Matter of it is Salvation, becauſe the Offer of it is Salvation; and it declares the only Way and Means by which loſt Sinners may obtain Salvation, and the Goſpel of *their* Salvation, becauſe God had by his Holy Spirit made the Preaching of this Goſpel effectual for their Converſion and Salvation. *Obſerve* (4.) The Priviledge which the *Epheſian* Gentiles obtained after they had by Faith conſented to this Goſpel of Salvation, and that was their Sealing. *After ye believed ye were ſealed with that Holy Spirit of Promiſe.* Where *Note*, That the Priviledge of Sealing always follows the Duty of Believing, never goes before it. Sealing doth imply that Precious and Excellent Eſteem which they have with God; nothing but what is Precious is Sealed by us; who Seals up Dung and Pebbles in a Bag? Believers are God's Jewels, his Treaſure, therefore Sealed. Sealing alſo is for Safety and Security, for Diſcrimination, and for Confirmation; the Holy Spirit by ſanctifying of us doth diſcriminate and diſtinguiſh us from the reſt of the World, doth ſecure and preſerve us from the Fatal Danger of a Ruinous Apoſtacy, and doth alſo confirm our Hopes of the Glorious Inheritance. *Obſerve* (5.) That the Holy Spirit is given to Believers in the Nature of an Earneſt; ſanctifying Grace wrought in the Heart here, is a ſure Earneſt of Glory hereafter, *which is the Earneſt of our Inheritance*; an Earneſt binds the Bargain, and is a part of the Bargain; if it be but a Shilling given as an Earneſt it ſecures a Contract for a Thouſand Pounds. Believers are to conſider and look upon Grace, not barely as Grace, but as an Earneſt of Glory. Oh! Be thankful to God for his ſanctifying Spirit, not only as ſubduing thy Corruptions, but as a Pledge and Earneſt of a Glorious Inheritance. It is a great Comfort to find Grace in the Soul as Sanctifying, as Quickning and Renewing, but a greater Matter of Rejoicing to find it alſo there as Witneſſing, as Sealing and Confirming, as a Part of our Inheritance in Glory, and as a Pledge and Earneſt of the whole. *Obſerve* (6.) That the Holy Spirit of God is God; to Sanctifie, to Seal, to Confirm our Hearts, are Divine Operations; he that doth theſe muſt be a Divine Perſon. True; how the Spirit of God is God, and how he proceedeth from the Father and the Son, cannot be comprehended by our Reaſon and ſhallow Underſtandings. No Wonder that the Doctrine of the Trinity is Inexplicable, ſeeing the Nature of God is Incomprehenſible; our Faith then muſt aſſent to what our Reaſon cannot comprehend, otherwiſe we can never be Chriſtians. *Obſerve* Laſtly, That Heaven is here called a Poſſeſſion, and a purchaſed Poſſeſſion; that is, by the Blood of Chriſt; a King's Ranſom we accounr a vaſt Sum. Oh! What will our Ranſom by the Blood of the Son of God come to? Grace is purchaſed, and Glory is purchaſed, both by the Blood of Chriſt. Lord! What will that Glory come to? In Eternity we ſhall admire it, but never fully comprehend it.

15 Wherefore I alſo, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints. 16 Ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſpecial Duties which St. *Paul* performed on the Behalf of theſe *Epheſians*, he gave Thanks for them, he Prayed for them, and both without ceaſing. *I ceaſe not to give Thanks for you, making mention of you in my Prayers.* Where *Note*, how enlarged St. *Paul*'s Heart was in Thankfulneſs to God for the Salvation of others, as well as unwearied in his Endeavours in order to their Salvation. This will be one great Exerciſe of our Grace in Heaven, namely, Thankfulneſs to God for the Salvation of others, as well as our own; and verily it ought to be a mighty Argument to move the Heart of any one to work out his own Salvation, when he ſees another, be it his Miniſter, his Parent, his Maſter, his Neighbour, ſo Sollicitous for it, and taking ſuch Care of it. *Note* farther, that the Duties of Prayer and Praiſe, of Supplication and Thankſgiving, ought to accompany one another; we are never to pray for freſh Mercies, either for our ſelves or others, without giving Thanks to God for former Mercies. Beſides, there is no ſuch effectual Way of Begging as Thankſgiving; he that is ſpiritually thankful for what he has received, engages God to confer upon him the Mercies which he wanteth. Add to this, that Holy Thankfulneſs is an Evidence of true Grace in us: Need and Want will make us Beggars, but Grace only Thankſgivers. *Obſerve* (2.) The Occaſion of St. *Paul*'s Prayers and Praiſes on the *Epheſians* Behalf; namely, his having heard, (1.) Of their Faith in Chriſt. (2.) Of their Love to all Saints. Where *Note*, how he joins Faith and Love together, as the Two moſt Eminent Graces, and as the Two great Evangelical Commandments, Faith in Chriſt, and Love to Saints. But how comes he not to make mention of their Love to God? Anſwer, Becauſe Love to God is ſuppoſed and neceſſarily included in our Love to Saints as Saints; for he that loves them that are begotten, much more loves him that begetteth; he that loves the Child for the Father's Sake, loves the Father much more for his own Sake. *Note* farther, It is Love to Saints as Saints, and to all Saints without Exception, that is the Evidence of true Faith, Poor Saints as well as Rich, Weak Saints as well as Gifted. There are froward and fretful Saints, paſſionate and peeviſh; Chriſtians, who may have Infirmities, great Infirmities, cleaving to them, though diſallowed by them, yet theſe profeſſing Chriſtians are loved, and to be beloved by us, even as a Brother loveth all his Brothers for his Father's Sake that begat them all, though one be Little, another Lame, a third Crooked, a fourth Sickly. Lord, how far are the Profeſſors of this Day from the Practice of this Duty: How doth a little Difference in Judgment occaſion a great deal of Judging and raſh Cenſuring one another? Chriſt has received us, why ſhould we reject one another? One Heaven will hold us all hereafter, why ſhould not one Communion hold us here? Verily, if Children quarrel and fall out with one another at a full Table, there is an Enemy at their Backs that will quickly take away the Voider: If our Hearts be not turned ſuddenly to one another, Almighty God will certainly come and ſmite the Earth with a Curſe.

17 That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

Theſe Words give us a ſhort but very comprehenſive Account of that Affectionate Prayer which St. *Paul* put up to God on the Behalf of theſe *Epheſians* newly converted to Chriſtianity; in which *Obſerve*, (1.) The Perſon whom he prays unto, *God*, under a very endearing Title for the ſtrengthning of his Faith; he ſtiles him not, as the Old Teſtament Saints, the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, but in the Language of the New Teſtament, *the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Father of Glory.* The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as he is Man and Mediator, commiſſioned of him, and ſent by him; and the Father of Glory, as being in himſelf infinitely Glorious; to whom all Glory is and ought to be aſcribed, and from whom alone it is communicated. Learn hence, That as all our Prayers and Requeſts are and ought to be directed unto God only, ſo in order to our having Acceſs to God with Aſſurance in Prayer, it is our Duty to apply to him as a Father, as a Father in Chriſt, as a Father in Chriſt to us; and under this Notion and Apprehenſion to ſtrengthen our Faith for the obtaining of what we ask in Prayer, *May the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, give unto you*, &c. *Obſerve* (2.) The great and comprehenſive Bleſſing prayed for, namely, Divine Illumination and Spiritual Knowledge: That is, a farther Encreaſe of that Wiſdom and ſaving Knowledge of Divine Myſteries whereof the Spirit of God is the Author. Learn hence, That as Spiritual Wiſdom, or the ſaving Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, is neceſſary to a Chriſtian, ſo thoſe who have a good Meaſure of this Grace already received, ought not to ſet down ſatisfied with it, but aſpire after farther Meaſures and Degrees of it; Spiritual Knowledge is as neceſſary for Encreaſing Grace, as it is for Working Grace in the Soul. *Obſerve* (3.) The Title here given to the Holy Spirit of God, he is ſtiled the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation; he being the Author of all that Knowledge in the Myſteries of Religion which we attain unto, and it being his proper Work and Office to reveal unto us the Will of God for our Salvation. Learn hence, (1.) That Believers themſelves, who are Divinely Enlightned by the Holy Spirit of God, have yet need of farther Meaſures and fuller Degrees of Spiritual Wiſdom. Learn (2.) That the Way to obtain this fuller Meaſure of Divine Wiſdom and Spiritual Illumination, is to be earneſt with God in Prayer for his Holy Spirit. So the Apoſtle here.

18 The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightned, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints:

Our Apoſtle proceeds in this Verſe, and to the End of the Chapter, in a very Affectionate and Fervent Prayer on the Behalf of the *Epheſians*, namely, that the Bleſſed Spirit of God, the Author of all Divine-Illumination, would *farther* open the Eyes of their Underſtanding, *formerly* ſhut up in Heatheniſh Blindneſs and Darkneſs, that ſo they might know, (1.) What is the Hope of his Calling; that is, what High and Glorious Hopes he had called them unto, for *Hope* here is taken for the Object of Hope, or the Great and Good Things hoped for; and it is ſaid to be the Hope of their *Calling*, becauſe at their Converſion from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity they were intituled to, and called to, the Expectation of theſe great and good Things, which were the Object of Hope. Where *Note*, The *Epheſians* deplorable State before Converſion, they were without Hope, and the happy Exchange of their Condition by embracing Chriſtianity, they were begotten to a lively Hope of Glorious Things which before they were wholly Ignorant of, and Strangers to. As a Sinner's Miſery lyes not in what he feels, but what he fears, ſo a Chriſtian's Happineſs conſiſts not in what he has in Hand, but in what he has in Hope; may you know *what is the Hope of his Calling*. The Second Bleſſing which he prays for on their Behalf is, that they may know *what is the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints*; that is, ſay ſome, what an exceeding Glorious Thing it is to be a Chriſtian, or what an exceeding Glory redounds to God by his People, which are his Inheritance, ſay others; but moſt underſtand the Words as a Deſcription of Heaven, which is here called an Inheritance, a Rich Inheritance, a Glorious Inheritance *in* or among the *Saints*; that is, the Saints in Heaven, who hold that in Poſſeſſion, which the Saints on Earth have in Hope and Expectation. Learn hence, That Heaven is the Saints Inheritance; an Inheritance is an Eſtate that belongs to Children, to all ſuch, and none but ſuch. 'Tis an undeſerved Poſſeſſion, and it is a ſure and certain Poſſeſſion. Here *Note*, That Almighty God is ſaid in Scripture to make Heaven as ſure to his Saints by all Sorts of Ways as a Man can make an Inheritance ſure to his Child; 'tis theirs by Promiſe, 'tis theirs by Purchaſe, 'tis theirs by Gift, 'tis theirs by Requeſt; it is given by Will to them, St. *Luke* 22. 29. *I appoint by* Will *unto you a Kingdom*: Can any thing be ſurer, or more Ways made ſecure to any Perſon, than this Inheritance of Heaven is to the Holy Servants of God? But farther, the Apoſtle calls it the *Riches* of the *Glory* of his Inheritance; that is, a very Rich and exceeding Glorious Inheritance;

tance; ſuch Abundant Riches, and Tranſcendent Glory, found in it as overwhelms the Mind of Man that here enters upon the Cloſe Contemplation of it. Heaven will appear to be a Glorious Inheritance, if we conſider the Glory of the Place, the Glory of the Company, the Glory of the Employment, and the Glory that will be then and there put upon our Souls and Bodies. Lord, make us meet for this Glorious Inheritance of thy Saints in Light.

19 And what is the exceeding greatneſs of his Power to us-ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power; 20 Which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead,

The next Particular which the Apoſtles prays for on Behalf of the Converted *Epheſians* is this, that they might know, or ſenſibly apprehend, the Greatneſs of that Divine Power which God had exerted, firſt, in their Converſion, next, in carrying on that Work Step by Step in deſpight of all Oppoſition; then in giving them the Extraordinary Gifts of his Spirit, as Miracles, Tongues, and Prophecy; alſo the Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit, as Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love, Joy, and Patience, to enable them to go on in ſuffering for Chriſt to the uttermoſt; and laſtly, that they might know the Exceeding Greatneſs of that Power which God will farther exert towards them as Believers, in raiſing up their Dead Bodies, to enter upon that Glorious Inheritance which God by Promiſe inſured to them, which Power he aſſures them would bear ſome Likeneſs to, and Correſpondence with, that Omnipotent Power which God put forth in raiſing Chriſt from the Dead, and advancing him to the Heavenly Glory, where he is Lord of all. *Obſerve* here what an Heap of Words our Apoſtle makes uſe of to ſet forth the Power of God in the Soul's Converſion from the Power of Sin, and in the Body's Reſurrection from the Power of the Grave; he calls it Power, the Power of God, the Greatneſs of his Power, and the Exceeding Greatneſs of his Mighty Power, and the Power which raiſed up Chriſt from the Dead. Lord! What a Glorious Power was that which opened our Redeemer's Grave when he lay in the Heart of the Earth, with a Mighty Stone rouled upon his Sepulchre? May the ſame Almighty Power break aſunder all thoſe Bars of Unbelief which keep our Souls under the Power and Dominion of Sin now, and at the Great Day break in pieces the Bars of Death, and the Grave, that it may be altogether impoſſible for us any longer to be holden by them: For towards thy Saints, and in order to their Salvation, thou doſt engage the Uttermoſt of thine Attributes, the Uttermoſt of thy Love, and the Exceeding Greatneſs of thy Power.

20 —— And ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet,——

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words diſcovers to us Chriſt's Exaltation, or that Glory and Dignity which after his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion the Father put upon him as God-Man, or Mediator, far ſurpaſſing the Glory of all created Beings. Now this is repreſented to us by the Notion, and under the Metaphor, of Chriſt's *Setting at God's Right Hand*; this imports, (1.) Fulneſs of Reſt and Pleaſure, that he doth quietly, ſecurely, and everlaſtingly, poſſeſs all that Happineſs and Satisfaction in Heaven which God himſelf is poſſeſſed of, and delighted with, far above all the Pleaſures and Delightful Satisfactions which all the Glorified Saints and Glorious Angels do or can poſſibly enjoy. (2.) It implies a Fulneſs of Honour and Glory, of Dignity and Reſpect; when *Solomon* ſat *Bathſheba* at his Right Hand it was in token of Honour and Reſpect to her. *Heb.* 2. 9. We ſee Jeſus to be Crowned with Glory and Honour, ſetting down at the Right Hand of Majeſty on High. (3.) Chriſt's ſetting at God's Right Hand imports, his having all Rule, Dominion, and Power, put into his Hand, to govern all Things both in Heaven, and on Earth. (4.) It imports and implies Ability to execute that Power; all thoſe Royal Glorious Endowments which God filled the Humane Nature of Chriſt with, to make him fit to be the Supream Head of his Church, and the Great and Wiſe Governour of the World; all this doth God's ſetting Chriſt at his own Right Hand import and imply. In the next Verſe (21.) the Apoſtle expreſſes more plainly what he had ſaid in the former Verſe figuratively; God hath exalted Chriſt, (ſays he,) *far above all Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion, and every Name that is named, and hath put all Things under his Feet.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Eminency, (2.) The Univerſality, of our Lord's Exaltation. Its Eminency appears in the Height of his Exaltation; he is not only *above*, but *far above*, all Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion, and in the Lowneſs of the Subjection of all Things to him, *having put all Things under his Feet.* And the Univerſality of Chriſt's Exaltation appears by inſtancing in *Principalities and Powers, Might and Dominion*, under which he comprehends all Things that are Excellent in Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, *&c.* all Creatures whatſoever being plac'd in a Degree of Inferiority beneath him, and in the Loweſt State of Subjection under him. Whence we learn, (1.) That the Humane Nature of Chriſt, and his Glorified Body, by vertue of that unſpeakable Union between the Two Natures of Chriſt, his Godhead and Manhood, is ſo highly dignified and exalted in Heaven, that all the Glory of Heaven and Earth, of Kings and Emperors, of Sun, Moon, and Stars, of the Souls of Juſt Men made perfect, yea, and of the Spotleſs Glorious Angels themſelves, is nothing to it, nor may be compared with it. Chriſt ſits now in Heaven, in our Glorified Humanity united to his Glorious Deity; that Body which hung on an Ignominious Croſs in Blood and Gore, now ſhines brighter than Ten Thouſand Suns in the Kingdom of his Father. All this Honour and Homage, Glory and Praiſe, Dominion and Power, is due to our Lord the Redeemer as the Reward of his Sufferings; God hath ſet him at his own Right Hand, far above all Principalities and Powers. *Learn* (2.) That although the Mediatorial Kingdom of Chriſt ſhall ceaſe at the laſt Day, (and be deliver'd up by Chriſt unto his Father,) as to the Way wherein he now adminiſters it, by ruling in the midſt of his Enemies, whom he ſhall then have finally ſubdued and deſtroyed, yet his Natural Kingdom as God ſhall never ceaſe, but continue *in the World to come* without End. Thoſe Words here, *not only in this World, but in the World to come*, do ſhew the Duration of Chriſt's Kingly Government, and that he is King for ever; and ever, that his Kingdom is an Everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth through Eternal Ages.

22 ——And gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, 23 Which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.

St. *Paul* having ſpoken of Chriſt's Soveraignty in general over all created Beings, both in Heaven and Earth, in the foregoing Verſes, doth in the Words before us declare, that as he is an Head of Dominion and Authority to the whole Creation in general, ſo he is an Head of Influence to his Church in particular. *Note*, Chriſt was given by the Father to be the Church's Head: Now this Metaphor of an Head implies ſeveral Things; as, (1.) Eminency above the Church, as the Head is above the Members. (2.) Authority over the Church; the Head governs all the Members. (3.) Oneneſs of Nature betwixt him and his Church; to ſee an Head of one Nature, and Members of another, is monſtrous. (4.) It implies a ſtrict, intimate, and cloſe, Union betwixt him and his Church. as betwixt Head and Members; which Union, as to the Members of the Viſible Church, is a Political Union, but as to the Inviſible Members, (Real Believers,) the Union betwixt Chriſt and them is Myſtical, Spiritual, Supernatural, and Indiſſoluble. Laſtly, This Metaphor of an Head given here to Chriſt implies a Communication of Influences from himſelf unto all his Members; an Influence of Common Gifts to the Viſible Members of his Body, and an Influence of Spiritual Life and Motion to the Inviſible Members, (True Believers.) Indeed Chriſt is the Head of Angels as well as Saints, but in different Reſpects; to Angels he is an Head of Dominion and Government, an Head of Authority and Superiority, but to his Church he is an Head of Dominion and Direction alſo; not only an Head of Authority, but an Head of Vital Influence too: The Angels are Chriſt's Honourable Subjects, but Saints are the Myſtical Members of his Body;

dy; the former are as the Nobles in his Kingdom that attend upon his Perſon, but the latter are the Endeared Spouſe that lyes in his Boſom. O Glorious Dignity of the Meaneſt Believer above the Higheſt Angel! For as the Nobles in a Prince's Court think it a Preferment and Honour to wait upon his Queen, ſo the Glorious Angels account it no Diſhonour to them to ſerve and adminiſter to the Saints, to which Honourable Office they are appointed, *Heb.* 1. 14. namely, to be *miniſtring* or ſerviceable *Spirits for the Good of them that are the Heirs of Salvation.* As the Chiefeſt Servants diſdain not to ſerve the Heir, ſo the Angels delight to ſerve the Saints. *Obſerve* (2.) As the Character here given of Chriſt, *The Head of his Church*, ſo the Honourable Title put upon the Church, ſhe is *his Body, the Head over all the Church, which is his Body*; not his Natural, but his Myſtical, Body. This implies, (1.) The Church's Union with Chriſt, and her Relation to him. (2.) The Church's receiving Influences from him, Life, Motion and Strength, all which the Members of the Body receive by Vertue of Union with their Head. (3.) It implies the Duty of Subjection and Obedience due from the Church to Chriſt, as from the Members to the Head. (4.) It implies the Union and Order among the Members themſelves; that as all the Members of the Natural Body ſympathize with, and are ſubſervient to each other, ſo ſhould all the Members of the Church, Chriſt's Myſtical Body, imploy their Gifts, and improve their Functions and Offices, for the General Good of the whole, and the Mutual Benefit and Advantage of each other, as becomes the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular. But eſpecially the Church is ſaid here to be the *Body* of Chriſt, and he her Head, (1.) With reſpect to a Communication of Influences; Chriſt our Head is our Fountain of Life; our Head is our Heart alſo, out of it are the Iſſues of Life; from him we live, by him we move; and our Spiritual Being is derived from him, ſtrengthened and ſuſtained by him; the whole Church receives Spiritual Life, Motion and Strength, from Chriſt, as the Body doth from the Animating and Enlivening Soul. (2.) Chriſt is called here the Head of the Church his Body with reſpect to *a Complication of Intereſts*, as well as a Communication of Influences. As the Head and the Body, as the Husband and the Wife, ſo Chriſt and his Church are mutually concern'd for each other; they ſtand and fall, live and die, together; whatſoever he has is theirs; they have nothing but through him, they have all Things in him, and by him; his God is their God, his Father is their Father, his Blood, his Bowels, his Merit, his Spirit, his Life, his Death, is theirs; and as all that he has is his Church's, ſo all that he did is for his Church, called here *his Body.* He obeyed as his Church's Head, he died as her Head, he roſe, aſcended, and reigned, as her Head, and hath in his Church's Name taken Poſſeſſion of Heaven as a purchaſed Inheritance for her. How fitly then may Chriſt be called Head of the Church, and the Church be called the Body of Chriſt? *Obſerve* (3.) How Chriſt came to be the Head of his Church. God the Father gave him this Authority, *v.* 22. —— *And gave him to be the Head over all Things to the Church*; that Dignity and Superiority, that Dominion and Power, which Chriſt has over his Church, is given to him by God the Father, none elſe was fit for it but himſelf; and although it was due unto himſelf, yet it muſt be given him. Now if Chriſt did not exerciſe any Authority over the Church till it was given him, what Bold Preſumption is it, and will it be, in any Perſon upon Earth to aſſume any Power over, or to exerciſe any Office in, the Church, when never called to it, nor authorized by Chriſt to undertake it? We may demand of ſuch Confident Undertakers as the Phariſees demanded of the Holy and Humble Jeſus, *By what Authority doſt thou theſe Things? And who gave thee this Authority? Obſerve* (4.) The High Honour which is put upon the Church by being Chriſt's Body, by this ſhe becomes Chriſt's Fulneſs, —— *The Church, which is his Body, the Fulneſs of him.* —— Yet *Note*, The Church is not the Fulneſs of Chriſt Perſonal, but of Chriſt Myſtical; not of his Natural, but Myſtical, Body; every Saint, and every Degree of Grace in a Saint, is Part of Chriſt's Fulneſs. The Work of the Miniſtry then is the Beſt and Nobleſt Work in the World, becauſe it is an adding to the Fulneſs of Chriſt. God had but one Son in the World, and he made him a Miniſter: And if encreaſing the Number of Converts, and adding to Perſons Growth in Grace, be an Addition to Chriſt's Fulneſs, then how Glorious a Sight will the Great Day afford, when Chriſt ſhall have all his Fulneſs; when there ſhall not be one Saint wanting, nor one Degree of Grace in any Saint wanting; when Head and Members ſhall be both full, full of Grace, full of Joy, full of Glory; when Chriſt ſhall be fully glorified in his Saints, and they everlaſtingly filled with the Fulneſs of him that filleth all in all? *Obſerve* (5.) The Glorious Title here given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as Head of his Church, he *filleth all in all*; he filleth all Perſons, both Angels and Men; he filleth all Places, Heaven with Glory, Earth with Grace, Hell with Horror; he filleth all Ordinances, Prayer with Prevalency, Preaching with Efficacy, *&c.* he filleth all Relations, Fathers with Paternal Affections, Mothers with Maternal Bowels; he fills all Conditions, Riches with Thankfulneſs, Poverty with Contentment.

CHAP. II.

The Deſign and Scope of our Holy Apoſtle in this Chapter is to ſet forth before the Epheſians *the Happineſs of that State and Condition which by their embracing Chriſtianity upon the Preaching of the Goſpel they were brought into; to which End and Purpoſe he ſhews them the Deplorable Miſery of their former Condition before Converſion; declaring, that their Natural Heatheniſh Eſtate was a State of Spiritual Darkneſs, yea, of Spiritual Death, they being dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins: In which they, and the whole Heathen World with them, did generally then lye, before the Publiſhing of the Goſpel, as appeared by their manifold Idolatries, which the Grace of the Goſpel had both convinc'd them of, and turn'd them from; accordingly the Apoſtle thus beſpeaks them.*

1 AND you hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins,

Obſerve here, (1.) The Deplorable Condition which the *Epheſians* were in by Nature, and all Perſons with them, before their Converſion from Sin to God. It is a State of Spiritual Death; the Natural and Unregenerate Man is a Dead Man, ſpiritually Dead in Sin: Our Apoſtle doth not ſay they were in a Dying, but a Dead, Condition; not half Dead, but altogether Dead: But how ſo? Not Dead as to Natural Actions, they can eat and drink; not as to Rational Actions, they can reaſon and diſcourſe; not as to Civil Actions, they can buy and ſell, bargain and trade: Nor is the Natural Man Dead to Moral Actions, he can pray, read, and hear the Word, meditate upon it, and diſcourſe of it; if he pleaſe he can hearken to the Voice of God's Judgments, conſider and call his own Ways to remembrance; but as to Spiritual Acts, to be ſpiritually performed, here he is Dead till quickned by a Vital Act of the Holy Spirit, whoſe Office it is to enlighten Blind Eyes, and whoſe Delight it is to quicken and enliven Dead Souls. But what doth this State of Spiritual Death imply? *Anſ.* It doth ſuppoſe and imply a State of Separation from God, Inſenſibility of that Diſmal State, an Impotency and Inability to recover our ſelves out of that Condition, and our Loathſomeneſs and Offenſiveneſs to Almighty God whilſt we continue in it. In ſhort, every Unregenerate Man is a Dead Man in a Double Senſe: He is, (1.) Legally Dead, being under the Condemnatory Sentence of the Law; we call a Man under a Legal Sentence of Death a Dead Man. (2.) Spiritually Dead, as being deſtitute of a Principle of Spiritual Life, a Quickning Principle to enable the Soul to perform Spiritual Operations. Thus before Regeneration are we Dead in Oppoſition to Juſtification, and Dead in Oppoſition to Sanctification alſo; and the Fatal Inſtrument by which our Souls die is here diſcovered, Dead in or by *Treſpaſſes* and *Sins.* This is the Sword that kills Souls, and cuts them off from God; you hath he quickned, being *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins. Obſerve* (2.) The Choice and Singular Priviledge and Favour vouchſafed to the *Epheſians* in and under the Power of Spiritual Death. They were *quickned*; that is, made ſpiritually Alive by the Quickning and Life-giving Power of the Spirit of God. A Regenerate Man is a Living Man; he lives a Life of Juſtification, which conſiſts in Pardon of Sin; a Condemned Man's Pardon is his Life; and he lives a Life of Sanctification, having received from the Holy Spirit a Vital Principle of Grace in all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul; Juſtification reconciles God to us, Sanctification reconciles us to God; Juſtification takes away the Legal Enmity, Sanctification the Natural

Enmity, betwixt God and us. Here *Note*, That the Perſon who is ſpiritually quickned is univerſally quickned; there is not a Faculty in the Soul but is ſpiritually dead, and therefore not a Faculty but muſt be ſpiritually quickned: As there is an univerſal Pollution in every Faculty, ſo muſt there be an univerſal Renovation; for no Spiritual Duty can be performed without it, no Spiritual Priviledge can be enjoyed without it, and we can never be ſaved hereafter if not ſpiritually quickned here: But if quickned aright we live a Divine Life, the Life (in ſome Meaſure) which God himſelf lives; and this muſt needs be an Excellent Life, and a Pleaſant Life, here on Earth, and ſhall be an Everlaſting Life with Chriſt in Heaven: *Whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die*. *Obſerve* (3.) The Perſon Quickning deſcribed, *you hath he quickned*; that is, God the Father, who *Ch.* 1. 17. Is ſaid to have given them the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of himſelf; Man in his natural State conſidered is unable of himſelf to quicken himſelf; he doth not ſo much as deſire the quickning Grace of God till God gives the Grace of Deſire. Alas! The Underſtanding is naturally ſo Blind, the Heart ſo Hard, and the Will ſo Stout and Stubborn, that none but a Divine Power can enlighten the one, and efficaciouſly incline the other: 'Tis a Change of Stone into Fleſh, of a dead Sinner in a living Saint; a Change from Nature to Grace requires as much, or more, of Divine Power, than a Change from Grace to Glory. To ſee a Creature naturally filthy, now to delight in Purity; to ſee a Sinner that by Nature drinks in Iniquity like Water, now thirſting after Righteouſneſs; to ſee a Man that loathed the Holy Law and Holy Ways of God, now longing to walk in them, and to come as to an Exact Conformity to God in them; theſe Acts are above Nature, contrary to Nature, and conſequently the God of Grace is the Author of them; you hath he quickned.

2 Wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Verſe deſcribed the *Epheſians* by their internal State and inward Condition, as dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, doth in this Verſe ſet forth their Miſery in reſpect of their outward Converſation, they walked in, and made a conſtant Trade of, Sin; *Wherein in Time paſt ye walked according to the Courſe of this World*, &c. Here *Note*, (1.) Their conſtant and continued Courſe of Life ſet forth by *walking*; a Metaphor frequently uſed in Scripture to ſet forth the Tenour of a Perſon's Converſation; *wherein*; that is, in which Sins in time paſt ye walked. *Note* (2.) The Path in which they walked, in Sins and Treſpaſſes; this denotes the abundance of Sin that was in them, and committed by them, with Facility and Eaſe, with Satisfaction and Delight; walking is a Motion, a voluntary Motion, a progreſſive Motion, a Pleaſant and Delightful Motion; it is Natural to Men whilſt unregenerate to walk in Sin with ſome ſort of Delight and Pleaſure; but alas! It is the Pleaſure of the Beaſt, and not of the Man, a Senſual, and not a Rational, Satisfaction. *Note* (3.) The Guides which they are here ſaid to follow, *the World and Satan*. (1.) The World; that is, the corrupt Courſe and ſinful Cuſtoms of the Men of the World, according to the Time and Place in which they live; for though the World alters in the Courſe and Faſhion of it, from Time to Time, yet it is, and ever will be, the World ſtill; and the unregenerate Part of Mankind will always walk according to the Courſe of this World. The ſecond Guide which the *Epheſians* followed was Satan, ſtiled here a Prince in regard of that mighty Power which he has in and over the Men of the World; and the Prince of the Power of the Air, becauſe he exerciſes his Power (by God's Permiſſion) in the lower Regions of the Air; all the Elements and Meteors ſtoop to his Direction; when God gives him leave he can command the Fire, the Water, the Winds, the Thunders; all theſe Powers that are in the Air he can command, therefore he is called their Prince; yet here is Matter of Comfort to us, Satan is the Prince of the Air only: If ſo, when the Air ſhall ceaſe, his Kingdom ſhall ceaſe; when the World is ended, his Dominion and Power is ended. Again, there is farther Comfort in this, Satan is Prince of the Air, but Chriſt is Prince of Heaven and Earth, and the Air too; both our Prayers whilſt we live, and our Souls when we die, paſs through the Air, but Satan can neither intercept the one, nor ſtop the other, in their Paſſage thither: Chriſt when he aſcended into Heaven went through the Air, this Kingdom of Devils, and ſpoiled their Principalities and Powers; he entred Heaven in the Sight of them all, and lead them all Captive in Triumph at his Chariot, ſo that he ſhall never hurt the Souls of his People, nor ever keep them from Heaven. Again, the Devil is here deſcribed by the Influence he has upon the Minds of Sinners, *he works in the Children of Diſobedience*: Satan's Way of working in and upon obſtinate and impenitent Sinners is very Powerful and Efficacious. Hence it is ſaid here, (1.) That they are led by Satan, they walk according to the Prince of the Power of the Air; that is, according to his Guidance, according to his Mind and Will; he has them at his Beck; he ſays to one Sinner, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh. (2.) They are excited and aſſiſted by Satan, he *works in them*, and ſuggeſts evil Thoughts to them; he filled the Heart of *Ananias* and *Saphira* to Lie unto the Holy Ghoſt; he puts a Lie firſt into their Hearts, and then into their Mouths: Now from whence we may infer, that the Holy Spirit of God doth alſo inwardly Work in Pious Perſons, enabling them to will and to do, according to his own good Pleaſure: For it is unreaſonable to conceive that the Evil Spirit ſhould have more Power over the Children of Diſobedience, in whom he dwells, than the Good Spirit has in thoſe Pious Perſons, in whoſe Hearts he is ſaid to dwell: Surely the Spirit of God doth more to the ſaving of Souls, than the Devil can do to the damning of them.

3 Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words is ſuppoſed to ſet forth the Condition of the Jews by Nature, as he had done before of the Gentiles; and that he declares, that even they had their Converſation amongſt the Number of Diſobedient Perſons, and were no leſs obſtinately Rebellious againſt God than the Diſobedient Gentiles, following the Motions of their corrupt Luſts and vile Affections; nay, he affirms roundly concerning himſelf and all the Jews, without Exception, that as to their Way and Courſe, whilſt unregenerate, they did whatſoever their corrupt Minds willed, liked, and inclined to, and as to their State were by Nature Children of Wrath as much as others, yea, even as much as the deſpiſed Gentiles were. Here *Note*, (1.) The Caſe of all Men, Jews and Gentiles, alike deſcribed Children of Wrath; that is, our Eſtate and Courſe is ſuch by Nature as deſerves Deſtruction, as tends to, and will end in, Deſtruction, without the renewing Grace of God. *Note* (2.) The Riſe of this Caſe expreſſed *by Nature*, which implies, (1.) The Term from which this commences, namely, from the firſt receiving of our Beings and Natures from our immediate Parents, and together with the Depravation of our Natures, we received an Obnoxiouſneſs to the Wrath and Curſe of God. (2.) It implies the Ground for which this Wrath doth impend and hang over us, namely, for that Depravity of Nature which ſince the Fall is found with us. Learn hence, (1.) That Original Corruption is univerſal to all Mankind, both Jew and Gentile. (2.) That this Original Corruption leads to, and will lodge under, Eternal Wrath every Perſon in whom Regeneration and Tranſplantation into Chriſt are not found; *We were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others.*

4 But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love; wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt, (by grace ye are ſaved.)

St. *Paul* having ſet forth that miſerable State which both Jews and Gentiles were in by Nature, namely, Dead in Sin, and Children of Wrath; he doth next ſet forth their Deliverance from that woful Eſtate by the Rich Mercy and Free Grace of God: God who is Rich in Mercy, *&c.* Here *Obſerve*, (1.) The Author of our Deliverance, *God*, and the moving or impulſive Cauſe of it, *Rich Mercy and Great Love*. Where *Note*, that God hath done more for us, infinitely more, than he did for the Angels; he ſhewed Love to them, but Mercy to us; they are Veſſels of Honour, but

We are Veſſels of Mercy; the Object of Mercy is a Creature in Diſtreſs and Miſery. *Note* farther, that all the Attributes in God are ſubjected to his Love; this is the great prevailing Attribute which ſways all the reſt; which Way Love goes all Attributes go; Mercy, Power, Juſtice, and Wiſdom, they all Work in Subordination to Love, they are all at Love's Beck, and Love ſets them all on Work for the Good and Benefit of the Object loved. *Note* (3.) That the Love which God bears to the Children of Men, it was a great Love, and the Mercy which was ſet on Work by it is Rich Mercy; his Love ſo great that it can never be expreſt, his Mercy ſo rich that it can never be conceived; rich Mercy is abundant Mercy, inconceivable Mercy, inexhauſtible Mercy, ſure Mercy. *Note* (4.) The Bleſſed Effects and Fruits of this great Love and rich Mercy in God towards the *Epheſians*, in quickning them when dead, in ſaving them when loſt, in doing all Things for them when they had undone themſelves. *God who is rich in Mercy---even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt.* Learn hence, That poor loſt Sinners do ſtand in need of all the Riches of Mercy that are in God, in order to their Regeneration and Salvation; if ever we be ſaved it is Riches of Mercy that muſt ſave us. *Note* (5.) How the Apoſtle aſcribes the whole Work of their Salvation to God's Free Grace, in Oppoſition to any Merit or Worth in the Perſons to be ſaved; *by Grace ye are ſaved.* Learn hence, That the Dependency our Salvation has in the whole, and in all the parts of it, upon the Free Grace of God, is the great Thing which St. *Paul* delighted to diſcover and make known; thus here by Grace ye are ſaved; and he aſſerts it again, *Verſe* 8. By Grace, *&c.*

6 And hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.

The Apoſtle here inſtances in Two Branches more of that Salvation which he had of the foregoing Verſe affirmed to be of Grace, namely, that of our Reſurrection and Glorification, both which are yet to come, and yet they are ſpoken of as already paſt; when the Father raiſed and glorified Chriſt, all Believers were raiſed and glorified in him; for in his Reſurrection and Glorification he did ſuſtain the Quality of a publick Perſon, repreſenting his whole Church as their Head and Husband; and accordingly Believers are and may be ſaid to be raiſed already, and glorified already, not in their own Perſons, but in Chriſt their Head; the Apoſtle ſays, God *has* raiſed us up, and *has* made us ſit together; not he *ſhall* raiſe us, and will make us ſit to denote the Dependency which our Reſurrection and Glorification has upon Chriſt's, as the Effects depends upon the Cauſe, and alſo the undoubted Certainty that they ſhall come to paſs, Chriſt's Reſurrection and Glorification being a Pledge of ours. Learn hence, (1.) That Chriſt roſe from the Dead, and aſcended up into Heaven, not as a Private Perſon, but as the Common Head and Parent, Root and Repreſentative, of his Chriſt and People; ſo that what he has done they may be ſaid to have done; they roſe in him, and are ſet down in Heaven *in* him; and Bleſſed be God for the well-grounded Hopes, that as we now ſit together in Chriſt, ſo e'er long we ſhall for ever ſit together *with* Chriſt. Learn (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt is the Cauſe of our Reſurrection and Glorification; he is the Efficient Cauſe, the Meritorious Cauſe, and Exemplary Cauſe, of our Reſurrection and Glorification. Learn (3.) From the Phraſe here uſed of ſitting, and of ſitting together in Chriſt, that Believers ſhall certainly partake of the ſame Kingly State and Dignity, of the ſame Honour and Glory, of the ſame Delight and Pleaſure, of the ſame Reſt and Tranquility, of the ſame Safety and Security, with Chriſt in Heaven; *he hath made us ſit together in Heavenly Places in Chriſt Jeſus.*

7 That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us, through Chriſt Jeſus.

Theſe Words are expreſſive of the final Cauſe, or ſpecial End, of that Salvation which God propounded in his Gracious Workings upon the Hearts of theſe *Epheſians*, namely, that in all preſent and ſucceeding Ages, to the End of the World, he might give a convincing Proof and Example of the exceeding Riches of his Grace, for the Encouragement of the greateſt Sinners to hope for Mercy in and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Learn hence, That the Inſtances and Examples of God's Mercy, Grace and Goodneſs, Love and Kindneſs, towards loſt Sinners in one Age, are and ought to be an Encouragement to future Generations to hope in the ſame Mercy, to draw nigh to the ſame Fountain of Rich Grace, for Pardon of Sin, and Salvation by Chriſt. Oh! When we conſider that others as unworthy as our ſelves (theſe *Epheſians* for inſtance) have been admitted to the Participation of ſuch Divine Favours, Lord! What Encouragement is it to us and to others to venture our Salvation upon the ſame Grace? Verily, the Primitive Chriſtians were intended by God as Patterns of Grace to ſucceeding Chriſtians; nay, God did not only deſign them as Patterns, but as Pledges, that he would go on as he had begun, in After-Ages to magnifie the Riches of his Grace in the Converſion of the Vileſt and Worſt of Sinners.

8 For by Grace are ye ſaved, through Faith; and that not of your ſelves: it is the gift of God. 9 Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt:

In theſe Words our Apoſtle informs the *Epheſians*, and in them all ſucceeding Chriſtians, that their compleat Salvation, from the Firſt to the Laſt, from the Loweſt to the Higheſt Step, depends upon God's Free Favour and Grace in Chriſt, and not upon any Merit or Deſert in our ſelves; Works having no Meritorious or Cauſal Influence upon our Salvation, (for they are not Cauſes, but Effects, of that Grace by which we are ſaved,) to the Intent that all Boaſting may be excluded, and that all the Saints Glorying may be in God, and not in themſelves. *Note* here, (1.) That Believers are ſaved already in ſome Senſe, not only becauſe they have Salvation begun in their New Birth here, but they have already a Right and Title to, yea, a Pledge and an Earneſt of, compleat Salvation: Believers are ſaved here. *Note* (2.) That the Believer's Salvation is through Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. *Note* (3.) That Faith, by and through which they are ſaid to be ſaved, is not of themſelves, it is the Gift of God; Faith is the Gift of God as well as Jeſus Chriſt, and the one as neceſſary as the other; for as the only Way to Heaven is by Chriſt, ſo the only Way to Chriſt is by Faith; as Sin has put a Vanity into the Creature, ſo Unbelief puts a Vanity in Chriſt, that he ſhould profit us nothing; wreſtle we then with God in Prayer for a believing Heart.

10 For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes aſſerted the whole of our Salvation to be of Grace, and not of Works, leſt by magnifying of Grace he ſhould ſeem wholly to ſet aſide Good Works, and the Neceſſity of a Holy Life, he declares in this Verſe that Chriſtians are ordained to them, created and prepared for them, and conſequently they are Effects flowing from Grace, though not Cauſes producing Grace; *We are his Workmanſhip.* (1.) In our natural Capacity as Men. (2.) In our civil Capacity as ſuch or ſuch Men, High or Low, Rich or Poor. (3.) In our Spiritual Capacity as Saints, this is intended here: Believers are God's Workmanſhip as ſuch, by Supernatural Renovation and Spiritual Regeneration; they are not only once made as other Perſons, but they are new made as Saints; not by receiving new Faculties, but new Qualities; for Grace is not a Subſtantial, but a Qualitative, Change. Lord! As we are all thy Workmanſhip by natural Creation, let us be ſo by Gracious Renovation likewiſe; *Created in Chriſt Jeſus unto Good Works.* *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Manner of this Workmanſhip *created*, this denotes Two Things. (1.) That in their new making they were intended to Good Works: This was God's Mind and Meaning in fore-ordaining that they ſhould walk in them. (2.) That in their new making they were filled and prepared for Good Works, therefore did they receive as new Nature from God, new Principles, new Affections, new Diſpoſitions and Inclinations, on purpoſe to fit them for an Holy Life, fruitful in Good Works. Here *Note*, That as Good Works are antecedently Neceſſary to Salvation, ſo renewing Grace is abſolutely Neceſſary to Good Works, therefore before there can be a Good Work, there muſt be a Good Workman, and that Good Workman muſt be God's Workmanſhip created anew through the Power of God. *Obſerve* (2.) The Meritorious Cauſe of this Spiritual Workmanſhip, and that is Chriſt Jeſus, *We are his Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, through the intervening Mediation of Chriſt Jeſus. The Life which we live in this new Creation State, namely, a Life of Holineſs, it is purchaſed by his Death, produced by his Spirit; all Spiritual Life comes from God thro' Chriſt as a Mediator, he is a Quickning Head and Life-giving Spirit, 1 *Joh.* 4. 9. *God ſent his Son that we might live by him*; Chriſt is firſt our Ranſom, and then the Fountain of Life unto our Souls, *created in Chriſt Jeſus.* *Obſerve* (3.) The final Cauſe of this Divine Workmanſhip, and that is *to good Works*;

Works; all thoſe that are new Creatures are created unto Good Works, ſo that a Holy Life is the neceſſary Fruit of their New Creation; new Creatures are not to live idlely, much leſs to live wickedly, but to make Conſcience of every Duty, to bring forth Fruits of Piety towards God, of Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbour, of Love and univerſal Charity towards all Mankind; *which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*; that is, God hath before prepared theſe Works for us, and alſo prepared us for them; he has prepared theſe Works for us, firſt by his Decree and Purpoſe; he that ordained the End, *Salvation*, hath appointed Good Works as the Means then, by his Precept and Command. Micah 6. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good*, &c. And as God hath prepared theſe Works for us, ſo he has prepared us for them by his Holy Spirit, making our Hearts fit for our Work, by enlightning our Minds, and inclining our Wills. Learn hence, That new Creatures are both ordained and obliged to, and alſo fitted and prepared for, Good Works; God will have his Children diſtinguiſhed from others by the Good they do, as well as the Devils Children are characterized by the Miſchief which they do. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Conſtancy of the Chriſtian's Duty declared, with reference to Good Works, he is *to walk in them*. Now Walking denotes and implies both a Way and an Action. Walking, (1.) It implies a Way; and intimates plainly to us, that Good Works are the Way and Means to obtain Salvation; we can never come at Heaven as the End, but by Walking in the Path of Good Works as the Way and Means. (2.) An Action; Walking denotes Spontaneity in the Principle, Progreſs and Perſeverance in the Motion; he that Walks goes Forward, gets Ground, gives not over till he comes to his Journey's End. A Good Man is as Diligent and Zealous, as Conſtant and Preſerving in Good Works, as if he were to be ſaved for them, and by them; and at the ſame time relies by Faith on the Merits of the Mediator, for his Acceptance with God, renouncing all Confidence in his own Good Works; he knows they cannot juſtifie themſelves, much leſs can they juſtifie him, who has a better Righteouſneſs than that of his beſt Obedience, to denominate him Righteous in the Sight of God. Thus are we *God's Workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus to Good Works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.*

11 Wherefore remember that ye being in time paſſed Gentiles in the fleſh, who are called uncircumciſion by that which is called the circumciſion in the fleſh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Our Apoſtle doth Two Things in theſe Two Verſes, namely, (1.) He calls upon the *Epheſians* to remember their former miſerable Condition before Converſion, when they were in their Heathen and Unregenerate State, when they were Gentiles, and reproached by the Jews for being uncircumciſed, and lookt upon by the Jews as Dogs; he calls upon them here to remember their Obligations to God for bringing them out of this miſerable State and deplorable Condition; *Remember that in Times paſt ye were Gentiles in the Fleſh.* Learn hence, That Believers remembring and calling to mind the Sin they were guilty of, and the Miſery they were expoſed to in their Natural and Unregenerate State, may many Ways be of ſingular Uſe and Advantage to them, and be ſpiritually Improved by them: Namely thus, (1.) To excite us to magnifie the Greatneſs of God's Love, and to admire the Freeneſs and Riches of his Grace: This we ſhall certainly do, when we remember that where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. (2.) To inflame our Love to Jeſus Chriſt: *Mary* loved much when ſhe remembred that much was forgiven her. (3.) To encreaſe our Godly Sorrow for Sin; *then ſhall they be confounded* when they remember *that I am pacified towards them for all their Abominations*, Ezek. 36. (4.) To quicken us up to greater Zeal and Induſtry for God: It was the remembrance of what *Paul* was before Converſion that fired him with Holy Zeal, and carried him forth with ſuch Vigour and Induſtry after his Converſion, that he laboured more abundantly than all the Apoſtles. (5.) The remembrance how Bad we were our ſelves before Converſion, will be a ſpecial Means to keep up our Hearts in Hopes of, in Prayers for, and Endeavours after, the Converſion of others, tho' very Bad at preſent: *What* they are, *that* thou once wert, and *what* thou now art, *that* they may alſo be. *Obſerve* (2.) That as St. *Paul* does put the *Epheſians* in mind of their former Miſerable Condition, in their Heatheniſh and Unregenerate State, ſo he does Particularize the ſame, and Branch it forth into its diſtinct Parts and Members. When they were unconverted Gentiles. (1.) *They were without Chriſt*, that is, without the Knowledge of Chriſt, without any Relation to him, or Intereſt in him, without Union and Communion with him, without any Communications of Life and Light, of Grace and Holineſs, of Joy and Comfort, of Pardon and Protection, receiv'd from him: They did not diſcern any Excellency, nor taſte any Sweetneſs, in Chriſt; and conſequently had no Love to him, no Longings after him, no Delight or Satisfaction in him: Ah! miſerable Condition of a Chriſtleſs Soul; if thou art without Chriſt, thou art without the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt, to enlighten thee, to quicken thee, to ſanctifie and ſave thee. (2.) They *were Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael*; that is, they were no Members of Chriſt's Church, either viſible or inviſible; they did not ſo much as profeſs themſelves to be a People that ſtood in any Relation to God; they were Unchurched Gentiles, for *in Jury* only was God known, and his Name great in *Iſrael*, *Pſal.* 76. 1. Verily, whatever the World thinks of it, it is a very great Favour from God to be Born within the Pale of the viſible Church, and to have Communion with her; for thereby we partake of many Excellent Priviledges, namely, the Word and Sacraments, the Communion of Saints, together with the Offers of Chriſt and Salvation by him. (3.) *They were Strangers to the Covenants of Promiſe*; that is, to the Covenant of Grace, *firſt* made with *Adam* after the Fall, *then* with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, *afterwards* with *Iſrael* upon mount *Sinai*; for which reaſon it is here by the Apoſtle called Covenants in the Plural Number, tho' it was always one and the ſame Covenant in Subſtance; and its being called the Covenants of Promiſe, ſeems to point at the Promiſe made to *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 15. That firſt Grand Original Promiſe, of which Promiſe all the following Promiſes were but Branches, or more full Explanations. Now the *Epheſians* are here ſaid to be Strangers to the Covenants of Promiſe, becauſe as Gentiles this Covenant was never revealed to them, nor any Offer of it made by the Miniſtry of the Word, and conſequently they could have no actual Intereſt in the Bleſſings and Priviledges of it. This *intimates* to us, that for Men to live and die without an Offer of the Covenant of Grace made unto them, is a woful, ſad, and dangerous, Condition; becauſe their Salvation is rendred in an ordinary Way impoſſible, foraſmuch as the Terms upon which Salvation may be had are concealed for them. (4.) They were *without Hope*; that is, They were without the Grace of Hope, and without the Means of Hope; they were without Hopes of Redemption, without Hopes of Pardon and Reconciliation, and conſequently without any well-grounded Hope of Eternal Life and Salvation: Such as are Chriſtleſs muſt be Hopeleſs; ſuch as are without Faith muſt needs be without Hope; and ſuch as are without the Promiſe muſt neceſſarily be without Faith; for the Promiſe is the Ground of Faith, and Faith is the Ground of Hope. Learn, That for a Perſon to be without a well-grounded Hope of future Happineſs is a very deplorable Caſe and Condition; but all ſuch as are without the Pale of the Chriſtian Church, without the Bond of the Covenant of Grace, without the Offer of a Saviour in the Goſpel, they muſt be without Hope, even in this Life, and ſo are of all Men moſt miſerable. (5.) They were *without God in the World*; that is, without the Knowledge of the True God, without Worſhipping of him as God, without any Affiance or Truſt in him, without performing any Obedience to him; not that the *Epheſians*, and other Heathens, lived without all Senſe of a Deity, (for they worſhipped Falſe God's abundantly,) but they lived without any Senſe or Senſible Apprehenſion of the Majeſty and Holineſs of the True God; now this is to live without God in the World, and verily ſuch a Life is worſe than Death. The Apoſtle calls all the Gentiles, not only the Barbarous and Savage, but the beſt Poliſh'd and Civilized, Nations, Ἄθεοι, Atheiſts, becauſe they wanted the right Knowledge of God, by and through a Mediator; there is no knowing God acceptably, except we know him in Chriſt, and approach unto him by Chriſt. In this affecting Manner doth our Apoſtle ſet before the *Epheſians* their dark and diſmal State whilſt Gentiles, and before brought into the Chriſtian Church by preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt unto them; they were without Chriſt, Aliens from the

Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World God grant that every unregenerate Sinner may think of it, till his Heart and Soul are affected with it.

13 But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.

The Apoſtle having ſet before the *Epheſians* the black and dark part of their Lives before their Converſion to Chriſtianity in the foregoing Verſe, comes here in this to acquaint them with the bleſſed Change which was made in their State, and by whom. Now, ſays he, in or by Chriſt Jeſus, ye who were ſometimes afar off, namely, from Chriſt, his Church, his Covenant, from ſaving Hope, and from God himſelf, are made as nigh as the Jews, and have as much Right to expect the aforeſaid Benefit as they, the Blood of Chriſt having purchaſed them for you, and ſeal'd them to you. *Ye that were before afar off, are now made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt.* Where *Note*, That Perſons who are moſt remote, and at the fartheſt diſtance from God, are ſometimes unexpectedly brought home unto him. Ye who were afar off are now made nigh. *Note* (2.) That it is owing to the Blood of Chriſt, to his Death and Sufferings, that any Soul is brought into a State of Nearneſs unto God, and finds Acceptance with him: Ye are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of Partition between us; 15 Having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in Ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain, one new man, ſo making peace;

He is our Peace; that is, (1.) He is the Mediator of our Peace, the great Peacemaker betwixt God and Man. (2.) He is our Peace; that is, The Purchaſer of our Peace: (3.) He is our Peace, that is, The Eſtabliſher of our Peace: All which is to be underſtood not only of Peace betwixt God and Man, but alſo betwixt Man and Man; *who hath made both one*, that is, both Jews and Gentiles one Church. Here *Note*, That there was a very great and deep-rooted Enmity betwixt Jews and Gentiles until Chriſt purchaſed their Peace and Reconciliation. The Jews derided, ſcorned, and hated, the Gentiles as unclean, compared them to Dogs and Swine: The Gentiles they reproached the Jews for circumciſing their Fleſh, eſteemed them of all Nations the worſt, and would hold their Noſe at the Jews when they met them, and Cry, O! *Fætentes Judei*, O! Ye ſtinking Jews, and turn away their Eyes from them. Learn from hence then, That the uniting both of Jew and Gentile into one Church was one Bleſſed Effect and Sweet Fruit of the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood; Chriſt's Offering of himſelf was intended as a Sacrifice for Enmities between Man and Man, as well as for Enmities between God and Man: *He is our Peace who hath made both one.* *Obſerve* next what Chriſt hath done in order to his making Peace between Jew and Gentile. (1.) He has aboliſhed the Ceremonial Law, called here a *Partition Wall*, between the Jews and the Gentiles, in Alluſion, no doubt, to that Wall in *Solomon*'s Temple which ſeparated the Court of the Jews from that of the Gentiles, that they could neither come at, nor look at, one another. So that this Partition Wall being ſaid to be broken down, intimates to us, that Jew and Gentile, who before had Two Manner of Religions, the one in and under a Covenant with God, the other afar off and without God, yet now by Chriſt are both adopted into the ſame Church, Partakers of the ſame Covenants, incorporated into the ſame Faith, intituled to the ſame Glory. (2.) Chriſt has aboliſhed the Enmity and perpetual Strife which was occaſioned between Jew and Gentile upon the account of the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, and the Ordinances thereunto belonging. *He has aboliſht the Enmity*, that is, the Ceremonial Law which made the Enmity between them. The Ceremonial Law was the Cauſe and Continuer of that Enmity which was betwixt Jew and Gentile: This is called *the Law of Commandments, contained in Ordinances*; becauſe Almighty God did actually ſeparate the Jews from all the World, by giving them Ordinances and Commandments, Judicial and Ceremonial Laws, containing many viſible and external Obſervances, which God forbad them to communicate with the Gentile World. Now Chriſt being come in the Fleſh, all thoſe Obſervations ceaſed, and thoſe Legal Ordinances vaniſh'd away: All Nations became Bleſſed in Chriſt, and Jews and Gentiles became one Church, both alike the People of God, both admitted equally into Covenant, and both alike Bleſſed. Here *Note*, That the Moral Law ſummarily comprized and comprehended in the Ten Commandments, was no Part of the Partition-Wall between Jew and Gentile, nor did the Death of Chriſt abrogate this Law, or is it at all aboliſhed; but it was the Law of Ceremonies only, which the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt put an end unto; for when he died they all vaniſhed, as the Shadow diſappears when the Subſtance is come.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father.

1. Our Apoſtle had declared in the foregoing Verſes that one End of Chriſt's Death was to make Peace between Jew and Gentile; here he aſſures us a ſecond End was to make Peace between God and Man, that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile, thus united, to an offended God. This he did by the Sacrifice of himſelf upon the Croſs, whereby he did deſtroy that Enmity which was betwixt God and Man, by undergoing the Puniſhment of Sin, the Cauſe of that Enmity. Learn hence, That in order to our Reconciliation with God, and being at Peace with him, a Price was paid by Chriſt upon the Croſs, to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and atone Divine Diſpleaſure. *Obſerve next*, That Chriſt having purchaſed Peace, he came and preached Peace to both Jews and Gentiles; to the Gentiles ſaid here to be afar off, and to the Jews that were nigh: But how did Chriſt preach to the Gentiles? Where do we read that he ever did ſo? Anſwer, Tho' he did not in his own Perſon preach Peace to the Gentiles, yet he gave Commiſſion to the Apoſtles to preach to them, *Matth.* 28. and they and their Succeſſors, purſuant to ſuch Commiſſion, did preach Peace unto them, even to them that were afar off, and them that are nigh. Learn hence, That when the Miniſters of Chriſt do come in his Name, and by a Commiſſion received from him to preach Peace, and offer Terms of Reconciliation unto loſt Sinners, it is all one as if Chriſt himſelf did come and preach; he expects the ſame Readineſs from them in receiving the Meſſage as if it were delivered to them from his own Mouth, and will treat the Deſpiſers of his Miniſters, and the Contemners of their Meſſage, as if the Affront were offered immediately to his own Perſon. *Obſerve* (3.) The Apoſtle's Argument to prove that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were effectually called by the preaching of the Goſpel to partake of Peace and Reconciliation with God, becauſe they had both equal Acceſs and Liberty to approach unto God in all Holy Duties, as unto a Father, by the Manuduction of the Spirit; *thro' him*, that is, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, we *both* Jews and Gentiles have *Acceſs*, that is, Liberty of Approach by one and the ſame *Spirit*, unto the Father. Learn hence, That thro' Jeſus Chriſt all Believers, of what Denomination ſoever, have Acceſs to God by the Spirit of Grace. *Queſt.* What doth this Acceſs to the Father denote? *Anſ.* It ſuppoſes a preceding Diſtance between God and us, both a Natural and a Moral Diſtance, Creatures and as Sinners: It denotes a Propinquity and Nearneſs unto God, in oppoſition to this Diſtance, and that our Approach to God is Free and Voluntary, Friendly and Complacential, Peculiar and Privilegious, Fruitful and Advantageous. *Queſt.* 2. In what Reſpects have Believers Acceſs to God as to a Father? *Anſw.* In this Life they have Acceſs to the Father's Heart and Love, to the Father's Ear and Audience, to the Father's Care and Protection, to his Providing Care, to his Guiding and Counſelling Care, to his Comforting and Supporting Care, but eſpecially to his Sanctifying Care. *Qu.* 3. Thro' whom have we this Acceſs to God? *Anſw.* Thro' Jeſus Chriſt, through his Mediation and Manuduction, we have Acceſs to God's Heart, to God's Ear, to his Fatherly Care on Earth, and to his Gracious Preſence in Heaven. *Qu.* 4. What Influence the Holy Spirit gives unto this Acceſs unto the Father? *Anſw.* It is by his Influence that they are at firſt brought home to the Father; he prepares them for this Acceſs unto the Father; he ſtirs up Holy Affections, and enkindles Holy Deſires, in them after God, and helps them

to make Improvement, an Holy, Fruitful, and Advantageous Improvement, of all their Acceſſes unto.

19 Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizen with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom you alſo are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Our Apoſtle began this Chapter with ſetting before the *Epheſians* the Horror and Dread of their Heatheniſh State before converted to Chriſtianity, here he cloſes the Chapter with an Account of that Glorious and Bleſſed State which the Chriſtian Religion embraced by them had tranſlated them into; *Now ye are no more Strangers, but Fellow-Citizens*, &c. Where obſerve, (1.) Their preſent Happy Condition is ſet forth both Negatively and Poſitively; Negatively, by ſhewing what they were not, neither *Strangers* nor *Foreigners*, but Freemen and Fellow-Citizens, *&c.* Where it muſt be remembred, that all the Nations of the World, except the Jews, were called Strangers to the God of *Iſrael*, but the Jews were called *propinqui*, his Neighbours, or Near Ones; but, ſays the Apoſtle, there is now no ſuch difference, for the Believing Gentiles are equally admitted with the Believing Jews to the Priviledges of the *New Jeruſalem*, and are Fellow-Citizens with one another; they are no longer Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, but Freemen. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle ſets forth their Happy Condition poſitively under a Threefold Similitude; namely, that of a City, that of an Houſhold or Family, and that of an Edifice or Building. *Note* (1.) Our Apoſtle compares the Chriſtian Church (of which the *Epheſians* now were Members) to a City, and ſhews that themſelves, as believing Gentiles, had a Right to all the Priviledges and Immunities of that City, as well as the Jews, who accounted themſelves the only Free Members of it: *Ye are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints*; that is, the Patriarchs and Prophets, and all other Members of the Church of the Jews, ye are Free Denizens, Burgeſſes, and Enfranchiz'd Citizens, with the reſt of that Holy Society, ye are all Members of the Holy Catholick Church. *Note* (2.) Our Apoſtle compares the Chriſtian Church to an Houſhold or Family; *ye are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God.* Now this Metaphor intimates a greater Degree of Nearneſs to, and Communion with, the Church, than what the former Metaphor did imply, there being a Straiter Tie of Familiarity and Friendſhip between the Members of a Family, than between the Members of a City. Whence we learn, That the Church of Chriſt under the Goſpel is God's great Houſhold or Family, in a Peculiar Manner admitted to an Intimate Communion with him, in a Special Way provided and cared for by him, and every Sincere Chriſtian becomes a Member of this Bleſſed Family, and enjoys all the Priviledges thereof; *ye are all Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God.* *Note* (3.) St. *Paul* proceeds yet farther, and compares the Church of Chriſt to an Edifice or Stately Building, *ye are Built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*, &c. Now this Similitude holds forth unto us ſtill a farther Degree of Nearneſs to, and Communion with, God and his Church than the former; what can be more cloſely united, and more ſtrictly join'd together, than Stones in a Building? And our Apoſtle calling the Church an *Holy Temple*, ſeems to allude to *Solomon*'s Temple, which was a Type of the Chriſtian Church, as the Tabernacle was of the Jewiſh Church; the Tabernacle was ambulatory and changeable, made of Decaying and Corruptible Materials, and ſo fitly typified the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, which was Temporary and Tranſient; the Temple was made of Durable and Rich Materials, and thereby a Proper Type of the Chriſtian Church, which is called *a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken.* But obſerve farther, how our Apoſtle doth deſcribe this Stately Edifice, this Spiritual Building, the Chriſtian Church, theſe ſeveral Ways; (1.) By its Foundation which it ſtands upon, namely, the Apoſtles and Prophets; that is, upon the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, not upon their Perſons, Chriſt himſelf being the Perſonal Foundation, and Chief Corner Stone. Learn, That though Chriſt himſelf be the Builder of, and the Chief Corner Stone in his Church, yet he imploys his Miniſters now, as he did the Prophets and Apoſtles of old, to lay the Foundation, and carry on the Superſtructure, and no one Apoſtle had a Priviledge in this above another; and therefore for the Pope, as St. *Peter*'s Succeſſor, to ſtile himſelf the Foundation of the Catholick Church, is an Impudent Preſumption, for no more is here ſaid of *Peter* than is ſaid of all the Apoſtles and Prophets. (2.) The Church, as a Spiritual Building or Temple, is here deſcribed by the Unity and Compactedneſs of its Parts, *in whom all the Building fitly framed together*, that is, all the Members of the Church, are by Faith firmly join'd to Chriſt as the Foundation, and to one another by Love, and their Unity is both their Strength, and their Beauty. (3.) This Building is deſcribed by its Growth and Perpetual Encreaſe, *it groweth unto an Holy Temple.* The Church groweth Two Ways, by an Addition of New and Particular Converts, and by an Addition of New Graces in every Particular Convert; where remark, how this Spiritual Edifice, the Church of Chriſt, differs from all other Buildings; both the Whole of it, and all the Individual Parts of it, are endewed with Life, a Life flowing from Chriſt the Foundation, a Life far from a State of Perfection, *in whom all the Building groweth*; all a Chriſtian's Life and Spiritual Growth flows from his Union and Communion with Chriſt; *in him all the Building groweth.* (4.) This Building, namely, the Chriſtian Church, conſiſting both of Jews and Gentiles, is here deſcribed by the End and Deſign of Chriſt in erecting this Growing Edifice; namely, to be an *Holy Temple* unto God, wherein now (as in the Material Temple of old) he may manifeſt his Gracious Preſence, and be perpetually worſhipped, glorified, and ſerved: The whole Church, or Collective Body of Believers jointly, and each Believer ſeverally and apart, are a Spiritual and Holy Temple unto the Lord, in and by whom all Spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe are offered up, and all Duties of New and Sincere Obedience acceptably perform'd.

CHAP. III.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is to let the Epheſians *know that he was now a Priſoner at* Rome *for preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles in general, and conſequently that they (the* Epheſians*) had no Cauſe to be offended at his preſent Sufferings in particular, eſpecially conſidering that his Calling to that Work and Office was by Divine Revelation; and that he was not only extraordinarily called to it, but qualified and fitted for it: From all which Conſiderations he dehorteth them from fainting upon the Score of his Sufferings, which he gladly underwent for ſo good a Cauſe, and in diſcharging ſo honourable an Employment; accordingly he thus beſpeaks them.*

1 FOR this cauſe, I Paul, the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for you Gentiles:

For this Cauſe, that was, for Preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles in general, and in particular for aſſerting that the Priviledges of Juſtification and Salvation by Chriſt belonged equally to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, though they were not Circumciſed; for this Cauſe I was perſecuted and impriſoned by the Jews. Where obſerve, the Apoſtle ſtiles himſelf Chriſt's Priſoner, *I Paul, the Priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt:* He was at once Chriſt's Priſoner, the Jews Priſoner, the Romans Priſoner, the Gentiles Priſoner; Chriſt's Priſoner, as ſuffering for his Goſpel; the Jews Priſoner, as ſuffering by their Accuſation; the Romans Priſoner, as ſuffering by their Sentence; the Gentiles Priſoner, as ſuffering for his Labours in order to their Salvation. Lord! What a Title of Honour is here put upon the Apoſtle, *I Paul* the Priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt; his Impriſonment for Chriſt was verily a greater Honour, and Matter of higher Glorying, than his Rapture into the Third Heavens.

2 If ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery, (as I wrote afore in few words,

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to the Goſpel, it is ſtiled *the Grace of God*, partly becauſe the Glad-Tidings which the Goſpel brings are the Effect and Product of God's Grace and Favour, and partly becauſe the Goſpel is the Inſtrument and Means of working Grace in the Souls of Perſons. *Obſerve* (2.) The Title given to St. *Paul*'s Apoſtleſhip, he ſtiles it *the Diſpenſation of the Grace of God*, becauſe God had Commiſſioned him to declare and diſpence the Goſpel of Grace to them; Chriſt's Miniſters are the Diſpencers of his Mind to the Children of Men. *Obſerve* (3.) The Title here given to the Calling of the Gentiles, he ſtiles it *a Myſtery*. The Calling of the Gentiles to Salvation by Faith in Chriſt, without the Works of the Law, was a Myſtery hid from Ages. *Obſerve* (4.) The Way and Manner how St. *Paul* came by the Knowledge of this Myſtery, it was by Divine Revelation from Heaven; *ver.* 3. *How that by Revelation he made known unto me the Myſtery.* The Myſtery of Man's Redemption in general, and of the Calling of the Gentiles in particular to the Participation of that Grace, was made known by Divine Revelation to the Apoſtles by God himſelf. The Truth is, the Redemption of a loſt World, by the Incarnation, Death, and Paſſion, of the Son of God, is ſo Stupendious and Surprizing, ſo Wonderful and Amazing, that the very Thought of it had been the higheſt Blaſphemy if God himſelf had not revealed it.

4 Whereby when ye read, ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt, by the goſpel:

Our Apoſtle here proceeds in ſetting forth this great Myſtery of Man's Redemption in general, and the Calling of the Gentiles in particular; he ſtiles it a Myſtery. (1.) Now a Myſtery is a Purpoſe and Decree of God, unknown to, and unſearchable by, Man, unleſs firſt by Revelation diſcovered and made known by God himſelf; ſuch a Myſtery was the whole Goſpel in general, and this Article concerning the Calling of the Gentiles in particular. (2.) St. *Paul* ſtiles it a Myſtery *in other Ages* of the Church, *not made known*, that is, not ſo plainly and clearly unto the Sons of Men, Jews or Gentiles; for the Calling of the Gentiles was foretold and propheſied of under the Old Teſtament but darkly and obſcurely, the Time when, the Manner how, and the Means by which, were not underſtood, till now the Holy Spirit of God revealed it to the Apoſtles and Evangelical Prophets under the New Teſtament. (3.) The Apoſtle amplifies and ſets forth the Glorious Excellency of that Myſtery which here he had made mention of, namely, that the Gentiles ſhould have acceſs unto the Church, without an entrance by the Door of Circumciſion, be joint Heirs of the Heavenly Inheritance with all Believers, and together with the Jews taken into the Bond of the Covenant; and finally, that they were brought into this happy Eſtate by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and by Believing and Obeying of it. Learn hence, That the Calling of the neglected and deſpiſed Gentiles to the Knowledge of Chriſt, and the Participation of Goſpel Priviledges with the Jews, was a great Myſtery. awfully to be admitted, and a Glorious Mercy, with all thankfulneſs to be acknowledged, *That the Gentiles ſhould be Fellow-heirs of the ſame Body*, &c.

7 Whereof I was made a miniſter, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectuall working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; 9 And to make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, of this Goſpel it pleaſed God to make me a ſucceſsful Miniſter or Diſpencer, furniſhing me with ordinary and extraordinary Gifts and Graces from his Holy Spirit, for that weighty Work and Service unto me; even unto me, I ſay, was this ſpecial Favour granted, tho' unworthy, (*being* leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, becauſe once a great Perſecutor,) yet unto me was the Apoſtolick Office committed, to preach unto the Gentiles the incomparable and incomprehenſible Riches of God's Mercy towards them in Chriſt, in receiving them fully, freely, and finally into Covenant with himſelf, and to make known unto all Men what is the Communion or Fellowſhip of this Myſtery, namely, that the Gentiles with the Jews ſhould have one Faith, one Lord, one Hope, one Heavenly Inheritance, which was a Myſtery hid in the ſecret Intention and Decree of God, until diſcovered by Divine Revelation. *Obſerve* here, (1.) How careful the Apoſtle was to aſſert his Authority and Apoſtolical Commiſſion, *I was made a Miniſter*; and how he referrs his Calling immediately to the Grace of God, *unto me was this Grace given*. 'Twas the Grace of God converted him, 'twas the Grace of God revealed the Goſpel to him, and that called him to reveal it unto others. *Obſerve* (2.) How the Apoſtle attributes the Succeſs of his Miniſtry to the Power of God, and not to his own Endeavours, *by the effectual working of his Power*. The Grace of God in him, and the Power of God accompanying him, was effectual to the Converſion of very many Sinners, and to the producing of great Signs and Miracles which were wrought by him. *Obſerve* (3.) The Noble Subject of St. *Paul*'s Sermons, what it was he preached amongſt the Gentiles, namely, the *Unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*; Riches imply abundance, and abundance of ſuch Things as are of Worth and Value; in Chriſt are Riches, all Riches, eminently and tranſcendently found, Riches of Grace, and Riches of Glory; and theſe are called *unſearchable*; not as if it were unlawful to ſearch after them, but becauſe after our utmoſt ſearch after them we can never fully diſcover them. Learn hence, That there are ſuch Mazes, ſuch Myſteries of Love and Goodneſs, in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as though it be our Duty to be continually ſearching after them, yet we can never, by our utmoſt ſearching, fully diſcover them, and find them out. *Obſerve* (4.) The humble and low Opinion which this great Apoſtle had of himſelf, he ſtiles himſelf not barely the leaſt, but leſs than the leaſt, of all Saints; he was in his own Eſteem as little as could be, and therefore he puts himſelf down ſo little as could not be *leſs than the leaſt*; a double Diminutive, a Comparative made of a Superlative: Thus he debaſes himſelf upon conſideration of his former Enmity againſt Chriſt and his Church; lower he could not lye than he lays himſelf; the greateſt, the chiefeſt, of Sinners, the leaſt, yea, leſs, than the leaſt of all Saints; growth in Grace, and increaſe in Humility, accompany one another.

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to the Holy Angels, they are ſtiled Principalities and Powers, becauſe God makes uſe of their powerful Miniſtry in governing the Kingdoms and Principalities of this World; and they are ſaid to be in Heavenly Places; not as if they were never here upon Earth below, but becauſe the ordinary Place of their Reſidence is Heaven above. *Obſerve* (2.) That the Angels are not Omniſcient and All-knowing. The Wiſdom of God in the Work of Redemption it was a Secret, unknown to the Glorious Angels; they did not know it till God made it known unto them. *Obſerve* (3.) That God did not make the Myſtery of the Goſpel, or the Glorious Work of Redemption, known unto the Angels immediately, but occaſionally, by the Revelation of it firſt to the Church, and by the Church to them; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Had it not been for the Light given to, and ſpread abroad in the Church, the Angels had been in the Dark about the Myſteries of the Goſpel to this Day. *By the Church is made known unto the Angels the manifold Wiſdom of God. Queſt.* But how could the Church communicate this Knowledge to Angels? *Anſw.* Either the Angels did gather up their Knowledge of theſe Myſteries by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles preaching them to the World in a Way of Information, or elſe they ſaw, as in a Glaſs, the manifold Wiſdom of God, and the Diſpenſations of his Mercy, Grace, and Goodneſs, towards his Church in a Way of Contemplation. *Obſerve* (4.) The Title here given to the Work of Redemption, it is ſtiled *The manifold Wiſdom of God*. Oh! How full of Variety was the Wiſdom of God in Man's Recovery? It is of many Folds and Flights, manifold in Kinds, manifold in Degrees, manifold in its Adminiſtrations; there are manifold Secrets in this Wiſdom, ſome leſs perfectly ſeen, ſome more perfectly underſtood, and ſome that will never perhaps be thoroughly underſtood: Doubtleſs there are ſome Secrets in the Wiſdom of God which it belongs only to God to underſtand and know. Bleſſed be God that ſo much of the manifold Wiſdom of God in the Glorious Work of Redemption is made known to us as will eternally raviſh and delight us.

11 According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him. 13 Wherefore I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulation for you, which is your glory.

Our Apoſtle here ſhews, (1.) That whatever the Wiſdom of God has done in the Work of Redemption was from all Eternity purpoſed to be done, and that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was the Perſon by whom God would in Time execute his Eternal Purpoſe; *According to the Eternal Purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus.* Next he ſhews the Great and Gracious Priviledges which all Believers are admitted to the Participation of, by and thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, namely, Boldneſs, Acceſs and Confidence; *In whom we have Boldneſs and Acceſs with Confidence thro' the Faith of him. Acceſs*; that is, Liberty of Approach to God as a Father: *Boldneſs*; that is, a Freedom of Speech in delivering our Heart, our whole Mind and Heart, to him in the Duty of Prayer and Thankſgiving: *Confidence*; that is, a Well-grounded Perſwaſion that both our Perſons and Performances ſhall find Acceptance with God: All which Priviledges are enjoyed by the Exerciſe of Faith in Chriſt; *We have Boldneſs, Acceſs and Confidence, thro' the Faith of him.* Laſtly, He exhorts them not to faint under, or be diſcouraged at, his preſent Sufferings, much leſs to backſlide from Chriſtianity upon that Account, ſeeing that his Tribulations were both profitable, and alſo glorious and honourable: *I deſire that ye faint not at my Tribulations for you, which is your Glory. Obſerve* here, (1.) That New Converts to Chriſtianity are ſubject to Fainting and Drooping Diſcouragements at the News of Sufferings. (2.) That Perſecution for the Goſpel of Chriſt is a Trial, not only to thoſe who are under it, but to thoſe that hear of it. St. *Paul* here was more afraid of the *Epheſians* Fainting under his Sufferings than he was of his own Fainting, and therefore he doth carefully guard againſt it: *I deſire ye not to faint at my Tribulation. Obſerve* (3.) That the Perſecutions and Afflictions, the Hardſhips and Severities, which the Miniſters of Chriſt do for the moſt Part endure and undergo, are for the Sake of their People; they might ſhift off, and ſhun the Croſs as well as other Men, did not Love to the Souls of their People engage them to ſuffer the ſharpeſt Perſecution for their Sake: I deſire you faint not at my Tribulations *for you*; that is, for preaching the Goſpel to you. *Obſerve* (4.) From thoſe Words, *My Tribulation is your Glory*; that ſo honourable it is to ſuffer for Chriſt, that not only the Miniſters of Chriſt themſelves, who ſuffer, are thereby honoured, but the People of their Charge alſo are greatly honour'd thereby; it teſtifying God's high Eſteem of ſuch a People, in ſending his Miniſters not only to teach and inſtruct them, but to ſuffer with them, yea, even to die for them. Which Conſideration ought not only to prevent our Peoples Fainting at our Sufferings, but ſhould make them Glory in them, and take Encouragement from them. *My Tribulation*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *is your Glory.*

14 For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his ſpirit in the inner man;

Our Apoſtle having exhorted the *Epheſians* in the foregoing Verſe, not to faint at his Tribulations for the Goſpel, here he puts up a moſt Affectionate Prayer to God for them on the ſame Account. *For this Cauſe*, and in order to this End, I bow my Knees, *&c.* Now in this Affectionate and moſt Excellent Prayer of the Apoſtle we have ſeveral Particulars worthy of our Notice and Remark. As, (1.) The Humble Geſture which the Apoſtle uſed in his Prayers, *I bow my Knees*; thereby expreſſing the Reverend Frame of his Heart in Prayer. Learn hence, that the Geſtures which we uſe in Prayer ſhould be ſuch as may beſt expreſs our Reverence of God, and denote our Profound Humility before him. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon prayed to, *God* under the Appellation of a *Father*, and in particular as the Father of *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *I bow my Knees to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Bleſſed be God that Believers and Chriſt have one and the ſame Father; he by Nature, we by Grace; he by Eternal Generation, we by Gracious Adoption. By Vertue of this Relation we may expect to be heard in Prayer, as Chriſt was, and to be help'd in our Diſtreſſes, as Chriſt was, and in God's Time to be poſſeſt of the Inheritance of Children, as Chriſt is. *Obſerve* (3.) The Title given to the Church, it is ſtiled God's *Family*, his Houſhold; all the Saints on Earth, whether Jews or Gentiles, and all the Glorified Angels and Saints in Heaven, do make but one *Family.* There is but one Catholick or Univerſal Church, comprehending all its Members both in Heaven and Earth; and all within the Church are of one Kindred and Line, deſcending of one Common Father, and this Family is named, that is, united under Chriſt, he being the Head of all. *Obſerve* (4.) The Mercy prayed for, *v.* 16. *That he would grant you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthned with Might by his Spirit in the Inner Man.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Mercy itſelf, Spiritual Strength; Strength in the Inward Man, to enable them to bear Afflictions, to endure Perſecutions, to reſiſt Temptations, to grapple with all their Spiritual Enemies in the Progreſs of their Chriſtian Courſe. *Note* (2.) The Fountain from whence all Spiritual Strength flows, and that is, from the Holy Spirit, *ſtrengthned with Might by his Spirit.* It is the Holy Spirit of God that conſtantly renews the Believer's Strength, by upholding and actuating their Graces, which otherwiſe would fade and wither, would languiſh and die. So many, and ſo mighty, are our Spiritual Enemies that we have to wreſtle with, and ſtrive againſt, that except we be underprop'd and ſtrengthned by the Almighty Power of the Holy Spirit in the Inner Man, we cannot keep our Ground, much leſs get Ground of our Enemy, but ſhall become an eaſie Prey to every Temptation. *Note* (3.) The Moving, Impelling, or Impulſive, Cauſe from whence the foregoing Mercy is expected to proceed and flow, namely, from the Rich and Glorious Mercy of God; *grant you according to the Riches of his Glory to be ſtrengthened.* In all our Approaches to God for any Bleſſings, eſpecially for Spiritual Bleſſings, it is our Duty to direct the Eye of our Faith to that Inexhauſtible Fountain of Rich Mercy, and Almighty Power, in God, whereby he is both able and willing to beſtow upon us whatever is agreeable to his Holy Will. *God grant you according to the Riches of his Glory to be ſtrengthened with Might by his Spirit in the Inner Man.*

17 That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.

Our Apoſtle here proceeds with Affectionate Ardours to pray for farther Spiritual Bleſſings on the Behalf of his Beloved *Epheſians.* (1.) He prays that Chriſt may dwell in their Hearts by his moſt Holy Faith. The Phraſe of *dwelling in us*, imports a very Cloſe and Intimate Union between Chriſt and Believers; he dwells in them ſubjectively and effectively by his Gracious Influences, by his Powerful Aſſiſtances, by his Quickning Impreſſions. The Holy Spirit is the Bond of Union on Chriſt's Part, and Faith on our Part. (2.) He prays that they may be *rooted* and *grounded* in Love; that is, that they might be ſo deeply poſſeſt with the Senſe of God's Love, that they might find their Hearts inflamed with Love to God, and one towards another; and that Love might be the very Habit of their Souls, and a rooted Nature in them. (3.) He prays that the *Epheſians* may comprehend what is the *Breadth*, *Length*, *Depth*, and *Height*, of the Love of God, and the Myſteries of the Goſpel; intimating to us, that we are not to content our ſelves with a Superficial View of God's Free Love in Chriſt, but to make an Accurate Inſpection into all the Dimenſions of it, to view it in its Breadth, as extending to all Ages, Jewiſh and Chriſtian; in its Length as reaching from Eternity to Eternity; in its Depth, as it ſtoops down to ſuccour and relieve the Vileſt and the Greateſt if Penitent Sinners; in its Height, whereby it reaches up to Heaven, and entitles us to the Joy and Felicity of the Saints above. Verily, the Love of God in Chriſt to a Loſt World is ſo Vaſt and Boundleſs, ſo Rich and Matchleſs, exceeding not only our Comprehenſion, but Conceptions alſo, that not only the Natural Man cannot underſtand it, but the Renewed Man alſo is unable to fathom it, but muſt be daily endeavouring to take Dimenſions of it; for the Love of Chriſt ſurpaſſingly tranſcends the Knowledge of the moſt Illuminated Believer; it ſurpaſſes Natural Knowledge, Apoſtolical Knowledge, yea, Angelical Knowledge; *that ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height.* (4.) He prays that he may know the Superlative Love of Chriſt, which ſurpaſſeth all Humane Underſtanding and Knowledge; *implying*, that the Love of Chriſt to a Loſt World is a Tranſcendent Love; that the Knowledge of it may be attain'd in ſome Meaſure; that it is our Duty to ſeek after it, and ſearch into it; but after all we can never fully comprehend it; what Created Underſtanding can know what is unknowable, or comprehend what is incomprehenſible? Learn, There are ſuch Dimenſions and Degrees in the Love of Chriſt to Sinners, which at leaſt, in this Preſent and Imperfect State, do ſurpaſs all Comprehenſion and Conceptions; alſo that Love whereby he took our Nature upon him, that Love whereby he took our Sins upon him, is ſo ſtupendious and amazing, that the Holy Angels awefully admire it, but even their Enlarged Capacities cannot fully comprehend it. (5.) He prays that they might be filled with all the Fulneſs of God; that is, with ſuch Meaſures of Grace, Knowledge, Faith, Holineſs, and Love, which God has appointed Believers unto, and they are capable of in this Life. *Note* here, (1.) That there is a Fulneſs in God which we neither can be filled with, nor may we ſtrive to be filled with; God is eſſentially full, originally full, independantly full, inexhauſtibly full, of all Holineſs and Grace; now this Fulneſs of his is undiminiſhable, and conſequently incommunicable. *Note* (2.) That there is a Fulneſs of God which we may, and therefore ought to pray and endeavour to be filled with, namely, to be filled with the Knowledge of God, to be filled with the Grace and Spirit of God, to be filled with the Wiſdom of God, that we may know God more, ſerve him better, glorifie him on Earth, and be glorified with him in Heaven; in a Word, we may pray for, and ſtrive to be filled with, ſuch a Meaſure of the Fulneſs of God and his Grace, as God ſhall ſee fit to give, and as our Capacities are or may be prepared to receive; God is not ſtreightned towards us, let not us be ſtreightned in our ſelves: *Open thy Mouth wide*, ſays God, *and I will fill it.* Bleſſed be God for a Preſent Fulneſs of Sufficiency, and for the Hopes of a Fulneſs to Satiety.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Obſerve here, (1.) How our Apoſtle cloſes his Prayer with Thankſgiving and Praiſe, intimating to us, that Praiſe ſhould evermore conclude that Work which Prayer began, and that Spiritual Bleſſings principally deſerve our Praiſes. *Obſerve* (2.) The Title which St. *Paul*'s Faith fix'd upon in his Approaches to God in Prayer and Praiſe, and that is his Omnipotency or Almighty Power: In all our Addreſſes to God it is our Duty to have ſuch Apprehenſions, and uſe ſuch Expreſſions concerning him, as may moſt ſtrengthen our Faith. He is *able*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. Note* here the Comprehenſive Fulneſs of this Expreſſion, he is able to *do for us*, to do *abundantly* for us, to do *exceeding abundantly* for us, *above what we ask*, yea, to do exceeding abundantly for us, above what we can *think*, as well as ask. Oh! How narrow, ſhort, and poor, are our Prayers, compared with the Power of God? 'Tis much that the Tongue can ask, 'tis more that the Mind can think; but the Lord is able to do for us, not only above what we can ask, but abundantly above what we can think. Lord! What an Everlaſting Spring of Comfort is this? What Encouragement doth it adminiſter to thy People? What Encouragement to Prayer? What Encouragement in Prayer? They pray to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think. *Obſerve* (3.) That it is not God's abſolute Power that St. *Paul* bottoms his Faith in Prayer upon, (for God can do many Things that he never will do,) but it is his operative, promiſed, and formerly Experienc'd Power, *according to the Power that worketh in us*; that is, according to that Infinite and Almighty Power which God had exerted and put forth in their Firſt Converſion; this Power was, and is, a Main Prop for Confidence in Prayer. Learn hence, That the Experience we have had of God's Gracious Power in working in us by Converting and Quickning Grace, may and ought to confirm our Faith that he will do exceeding abundantly for us, above what we can expect, yea, above what we can ask or think, when we are upon our Knees in Prayer before him. *Obſerve* (4.) The Concluding Doxology; *to him be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all Ages, World without End, Amen.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Divine Praiſe given to Almighty God, namely, that of *Glory, to him be Glory.* Glory is the Fountain of all Excellency in the Creature; they all ſhine with Beams borrowed from God's Excellencies, as Stars ſhine with the Light they receive from the Body of the Sun: Almighty God is that infinitely Glorious Being, in whom all the Excellencies and Perfections of the Creatures are eminently and tranſcendently found. *Note* (2.) The Perſons giving this Glory unto God, the Church, *to him be Glory in the Church.* True, it is the Duty of all Reaſonable Creatures to ſet forth God's Glory, but only the Church, Holy and Gracious Perſons alone, can perform it in an Active and Acceptable Manner. *Note* (3.) The Perſon through whom this Duty becomes acceptable unto God thro' Chriſt Jeſus; *To him be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus.* The Duty of Praiſe and Thankſgiving is what we owe to God for receiv'd Favours, and indeed is all we have to pay him; but neither this, nor any other Duty, can find Acceptance with God, but by and thro' the Mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Note* (4.) The Duration and Continuance of this Duty of Thankſgiving, *throughout all Ages, World without End:* As God ſhall never want Glory from his Church, ſo there ſhall always be a Church to the End of the World, to give Glory unto God, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail. *Note* Laſtly, In this Divine Doxology, after what Manner, and with what Affection, this Praiſe is given, intimated in the Word *Amen, World with End, Amen.* This *Amen*, (1.) Is a *Note* of Aſſent, and as ſuch uſed by the Jews and Chriſtians in all Ages at the End of their Prayers, to teſtifie that they aſſented and agreed to what was put up to God in their Name, and on their Behalf. Again, (2.) It importeth Earneſt Deſire. Hence *Jeremiah, Chap.* 28. 6. ſaid *Amen* to the Propheſie of *Hannaniah* concerning the Return of the Captives to their Land, to ſhew how earneſtly he deſired that it might be ſo. (3.) It imports Steadfaſt Faith, that the Thing we pray for ſhall be granted, and accordingly, in Teſtimony of our Deſire and Aſſurance to be heard, we ſay *Amen*, ſo be it, ſo let it be, ſo let it be, O Lord, for ever.

CHAP. IV.

Our Apoſtle having in the Three foregoing Chapters managed the Doctrinal Part of this Epiſtle, and treated of the Great and Deep Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, comes now (as his Manner was in all his Epiſtles, to the Practical Part of it; wherein he exhorts his Beloved Epheſians *to many Excellent Chriſtian Duties, which Almighty God expected from them, for all the Diſtinguiſhing Favours and Priviledges received from him. Theſe Duties are laid down, firſt more generally, and then more particularly; the more General Duties he begins with here in this Chapter, Verſe* 1, 2.

1 I Therefore, the priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

As if he had ſaid, ſeeing the Riches of God's Grace in Chriſt has ſo abounded towards you, who were once *Epheſian* Idolaters, but now Converted Gentiles, I *Paul*, who am a Priſoner for Preaching the Goſpel, and for declaring this Grace to you, do moſt affectionately exhort you, that ye live anſwerably to your Profeſſion, and according to the great Obligation of your High and Holy Vocation from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity. Here *Note*, (1.) The Perſon exhorting and beſeeching, *I Paul, the Priſoner of the Lord*, beſeech *you*; I that am in Bonds for Chriſt, I that am impriſoned for preaching the Goſpel to you, and for proſelyting you by it to Chriſtianity: Nothing can more oblige a People to hearken to the Exhortations of the Miniſters of Chriſt than this Conſideration, that the Truths which they deliver to them they ſtand ready, both to ſuffer for, and to ſeal with, their Precious Blood; *I the Priſoner of the Lord beſeech you.* *Note* (2.) The comprehenſive Duty exhorted to, *That ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called*; worthy, that is, beſeeming and becoming your Holy Profeſſion, anſwerable to the Dignity and Obligation of your Chriſtian Name; or as he exhorted the *Philippians*, *Ch.* 1. 20. walk as becometh the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt: But when may we be ſaid ſo to do? *Anſ.* When we walk according to the Precepts and Commands of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Priviledges and Prerogatives of the Goſpel; anſwerable to that grand Pattern of Holineſs which the Goſpel ſets before us, the Example of Jeſus Chriſt; anſwerable to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords; finally, to walk worthy of our Vocation, is to walk anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious Hopes which the Goſpel raiſes the Chriſtian up to the Expectation of.

2 With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Having exhorted them to the Practice of their general Duty, namely, to *walk worthy of their Holy Vocation*, in the former Verſe; in theſe Two Verſes he preſſes upon them more ſpecial and particular Duties, the chief of which is the Duty of Chriſtian Unity and Concord, *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit.* The Word ſignifies a diligent, induſtrious, and united, Endeavour to preſerve and keep, to ſupport and maintain, the Unity of the Spirit; that is, an Union of Heart and Spirit, an Unity of Faith and Doctrine, an Unity of Judgment and Affection, amongſt all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity. *Obſerve* (2.) The Means by which this Duty may be performed, and the Unity of the Spirit maintained, namely, *in* or by *the Bond of Peace*; a peaceable Diſpoſition and Temper, a peaceable Deportment and Behaviour, is the Bond or Ligament which binds Chriſtians together, whereas Diſcord and Diviſion cuts that Bond aſunder. *Obſerve* (3.) The Special Graces which the Apoſtle recommends unto us as Excellent Helps for preſerving Unity and Peace, namely, Humility, Meekneſs, and mutual Forbearance. (1.) Humility; *ver.* 2. *with all Lowlineſs*, that is, with all Submiſſiveneſs of Mind, and humble Apprehenſions of our ſelves. What *Tertullus* ſaid of *Feſtus* flatteringly, we may ſay of Humility truly, by thee, O Humility, do we enjoy great Quietneſs; the humble Man is the peaceable Man, only by Pride cometh Contention. (2.) Meekneſs; which conſiſts in a Backwardneſs to provoke others, and to be provoked by others; as Lowlineſs ſtood in Oppoſition to Pride, ſo Meekneſs here ſtands in Oppoſition to Peeviſhneſs; with all Lowlineſs and Meekneſs. (3.) Long-ſuffering and mutual Forbearance; when Chriſtians are ſo far from reſenting every Wrong, and revenging every Injury that is offered to them, that they can bear with one another's Weakneſſes, cover each other's Infirmities, pity one another's Failings, and pardon each other's Provocations. And this Duty of mutual Forbearance ought to proceed from a Principle of Love to each other, *forbearing one another in Love.*

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The Apoſtle having exhorted the *Epheſians* to a ſtrict Unity and Concord amongſt themſelves, next proceeds to enforce his Exhortation with ſeveral Arguments; and there are no fewer than Seven ſumm'd up in the Three Verſes now before us. (1.) Says the Apoſtle, there is one *Body*, that is, one Univerſal Church, whereof ye are all Members. (2.) There is one Spirit, by which ye are all Animated and Enlivened, and therefore keep the Unity of the Spirit. (3.) There is *one Hope* of Eternal Life, by which we are all Excited; our Inheritance in Heaven is the ſame; God doth not give one a double Portion, or a Party-colour'd Coat, above another; but it is called an Inheritance in Light, becauſe all alike are Partakers of it, and Sharers in it; the Saints have all one Hope, therefore ſhould have all but one Heart. (4.) *One Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, the Head of his Church, the Saviour of the Body, one whom we all profeſs to ſerve and obey: Be ye therefore one, for your Lord is one. (5.) There is one Faith; that is, either one Grace of Faith whereby we believe, or one Doctrine of Faith which is believed; ye all believe in one and the ſame Saviour, and are all juſtified by him after one and the ſame manner; therefore be ye alſo one, one in Affection, as well as one in Belief. (6.) There is one Baptiſm, one Door by which we all enter into the Church; both Jew and Gentile, Bond and Free, Rich and Poor, they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus, and by one Spirit baptized into one Body. (7.) One God and Father of all Things, and of all Perſons in Chriſt, whom we all expect one and the ſame Salvation from: And this God is tranſcendently above all, and over all; his Eye penetrates and pierces thorough you all, and he is in and among you all, as in his Holy Temple; therefore ſuch as endeavour to divide you, do as much as in them lyes to divide God himſelf that dwells in you. This then is the Sum of the Apoſtle's Argument, ſeeing ye are all Members *of one Body*, Partakers of *one Spirit*, Expectants of *one Hope*, having one *Lord* and common Saviour, one *Faith* and *Belief*, one and the ſame *Baptiſm*, in the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and one and the ſame *God* and Father in *Chriſt*, ſeeing you are one in all theſe Particulars, be one among your ſelves, and *endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* From the whole Learn, That ſo many are the Obligations, ſo ſtrong the Bonds and Ties, which lye upon all the Members of the Church to be at Unity among themſelves, of one Judgment, and of one Heart, that ſuch as violate theſe Bonds, and culpably divide and ſeparate themſelves from Communion with their Brethren, Chriſt looks upon them no longer as Members of his Body, but as having rent and torn themſelves from it.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt. 8 Wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he aſcended, what is it, but that he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that deſcended, is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave ſome, apoſtles: and ſome, prophets: and ſome, evangeliſts: and ſome, paſtors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt:

Our Apoſtle here in theſe Verſes ſupplies us with another weighty Argument to perſwade us *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; namely, That it was one great and chief End which Chriſt aimed at, in inſtituting the Miniſtry of the Word, in appointing the ſeveral Officers in his Church, of Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors and Teachers, and alſo in the ſeveral Gifts which he beſtowed upon thoſe Officers; he aſſures us, it was Chriſt's great Deſign in and by all theſe to bring his People not only to Faith and Knowledge, but *to Unity in the Faith, and in the Knowledge of the Son of God.* And here, (1.) Our Apoſtle ſhews, that the Diverſity of Gifts and Graces, and the different Meaſures and Degrees of thoſe Gifts and Graces beſtowed by Chriſt upon the ſeveral Members of the Church, do all tend to preſerve and to promote Unity, they all coming from one and the ſame Author, and being all given for one and the ſame End. *Unto every one of us is given Grace according to the Meaſure of the Gift of Chriſt.* Learn hence, (1.) That there is Grace given by Chriſt to all his Members, bearing ſome Proportion and Similitude to that Grace which was conferr'd upon Chriſt himſelf. Learn (2.) That the Deſign of Chriſt in diſpencing his Grace in different Meaſures and Degrees, is the general Good of his Church, and particularly for preſerving and promoting Unity and Love amongſt his Members; for ſeeing every one has his ſeveral Graces from God, and no one has all, if one hath that Grace which another wants, and if one wants that Grace which another has, it ſhews that we want the Help of one another, and therefore ought to love one another; this is the Apoſtle's Argument. Next he proceeds to prove that Chriſt *has* diſpenced this Diverſity of Gifts amongſt his Members; affirming, that in the Day of his Aſcenſion into the higheſt Heavens *he led Captivity Captive, and gave Gifts unto Men.*

In which Expreſſion there is a manifeſt Alluſion to the *Roman* Conquerors, who in the Day of their Triumphs ſcattered their Magnificence and Bounty, their Largeſſes and Donatives, amongſt their Soldiers and their Subjects. Thus Chriſt, after he had Triumph'd over his own and his Churches Enemies upon the Croſs, rode in the Triumphant Chariot of his Aſcenſion into Heaven, where he received Gifts as the Purchaſe of his Blood, and ſhed forth thoſe Gifts of his Spirit in various Kinds, upon his Members in general, but upon his Miniſters in particular; which Gifts in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity were Extraordinary, as the Gifts of Tongues and Miracles, but now Ordinary, and to continue to the End of the World. Now from the Apoſtle's Scope and Deſign in this Argument we Learn, That though Diverſity of Gifts in the Church, and divers Meaſures of Grace in and among the Members thereof, are too often a ſad Occaſion of Diviſion and Strife, through the Prevalency of Envy and Pride, and other dividing Luſts, yet this great variety and diverſity of Gifts and Graces rightly conſider'd, would be found to be one of the ſtrongeſt Ties and Bonds of Union, ſeeing we all ſtand in mutual Need of the Gifts and Graces of each other. 'Tis very evident that our Apoſtle's Scope here is to urge and enforce Unity from the Diverſity of Gifts and Graces which are amongſt the Members of the Church; God forbid then that they ſhould occaſion Envy and Animoſities, Strife and Contention, Rents and Diviſions. Our Apoſtle's next Argument for Unity is in the Eleventh and Twelfth Verſes, where he proves, that as the Unity and Edification of the Church was the Deſign of Chriſt, in diſpencing divers Gifts and Graces amongſt the Members of his Church, ſo was it likewiſe his Aim and End in inſtituting ſuch Variety of Officers and Offices in his Church; for this End it was that he gave to his Church by Qualification and Miſſion, firſt, *Apoſtles* ſent forth firſt by his own Mouth, to be Witneſſes of his Doctrine and Miracles, and then to preach the Goſpel throughout all the World, having received the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary Manner at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* to fit them for that Service, *Acts* 2. 1, 2. Next *Prophets*, who explain'd the Myſteries of Faith, foretold Things to come, and expounded the Writings of the Old Prophets. Then *Evangeliſts*, who were ſent out by the Apoſtles, ſome to Plant, others to Water the Churches which they had Planted, without being fixed to any particular Place. Laſtly, *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, called alſo Biſhops and Elders, who were ſet over the Churches as Guides and Inſtructors. Learn hence, (1.) That it is Chriſt's ſpecial Prerogative, as Head of the Church, to inſtitute and appoint ſuch Offices and Officers in his Church as his own Wiſdom ſeems meet for the Edification and Government of it. Learn (2.) That the great End and Deſign of Chriſt, in inſtituting ſuch variety of Offices and Officers in his Church, was his Church's Unity, that by all Miniſterial Helps and Endeavours his Members might be compacted and knit together, and made one entire Body by the Encreaſe of Sanctity, Concord and Unity. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the Perfecting of Saints*, (not for converting of Sinners only,) *and for the Edifying of the Body of Chriſt*. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Apoſtle declares how long the Work of the Miniſtry appointed by Chriſt for his Church's Edification and Advantage was to continue; namely, to the End of the World, to the Day of Judgment, *till all come*, by Means of the ſame Faith in Chriſt, and Knowledge of him, *unto a Perfect Man, and unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt*; that is, till the Church, which is Chriſt's Myſtical Body, ſhall be Compleat and Perfect, and attain its full Stature from Infancy to full Manhood. Learn hence, (1.) That the Church of Chriſt here on Earth is labouring for, and endeavouring after, Perfection in Grace and Knowledge, to come unto a Perfect Man, and to attain to the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt. Learn (2.) That the Miniſtry of the Word is an Ordinance of Chriſt's own Appointment, to continue to the End of the World, in order to that Purpoſe and Deſign. Learn (3.) That none of the moſt Eminent Saints on Earth, (the moſt Knowing and Pious Miniſters of the Goſpel not excepted,) are above Ordinances, above the Miniſtry of the Word, above receiving Benefit and Advantage by the plain and practical Preaching of it; even St. *Paul* here puts himſelf in, and reckons himſelf among the Number of thoſe who ſtood in need of the Miniſtry of God's Word, to bring him to a Perfect Man, and to the Meaſures of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt; he ſays, not till *ye*, but till *we* all, come unto a Perfect Man. Such People then as think themſelves above Ordinances, are above God himſelf; none need Ordinances ſo much as thoſe that want them leaſt. And ſuch Miniſters as turn their Backs upon the Preaching of the Word, becauſe they know more than the Miniſters can teach them, and can better inſtruct the Preacher than be inſtructed by him, they betray their own Ignorance both of the Intent and End of the Miniſtry of the Word, and alſo of the State of their own Hearts; for if their Underſtandings want no Light, do their Affections need no Warmth? Have you no Graces to be perfected, no Corruptions to be weakened, no good Reſolutions to be ſtrengthened? If your Knowledge be imperfect, as ſure it is, do not your Affections want a freſh Excitement? Admit the deſpiſed Preacher cannot be your Inſtructor, yet ſure he may be your Remembrancer, and excite you to that Duty which you know already perhaps better than you Practice it.

14 That we henceforth be no more children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lye in wait to deceive:

St. *Paul* in theſe Words declares one ſpecial End for which the Miniſtry of the Word was Inſtituted and Appointed, namely, to preſerve from Error and Seduction, to prevent Inſtability of Mind, and Unſettledneſs of Judgment, and to confirm Perſons in Fundamental Truths, *that we henceforth be no more Children toſſed to and fro*, &c. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Name which St. *Paul* gives to unſtable Perſons, and unſettled Profeſſors, he calls them *Children*; not in Regard of Age, but in Reſpect of Knowledge and Underſtanding; Children is a Word that denotes Imperfection and Weakneſs, Inſtability and Ungroundedneſs, in Knowledge. *Obſerve* (2.) How the Unſteadineſs of theſe Profeſſors is expreſt by a double Metaphor, the former is drawn from a Wave of the Sea, they are *toſſed to and fro*, the latter is drawn from a light Cloud hovering in the Air, *carried about* from Place to Place; neither Wave nor Cloud have any Conſiſtency, but are both moving if the leaſt Wind be ſtirring. *Obſerve* (3.) The Cauſe of this Inſtability, *every Wind of Doctrine*; Profeſſors that have no ſolid Principles, every Wind of Doctrine has Power over them to drive them to and fro; every Teacher can caſt them into what Mould he pleaſes, and blow them, like Glaſſes, into this or that Shape, at the pleaſure of his Breath: But why *Wind* of Doctrine? Becauſe there is no Solidity in it, but being Wind in the Preacher, it breeds but Wind in the Hearer, becauſe of its Variety and Novelty, and becauſe of its Prevalency over unſtay'd Men. How ſuddenly ſometimes is a Family, a Town, yea, a whole Country, leavened with a particular Error? *Obſerve* (4.) The Character of thoſe Impoſtors and Seducers that do thus unſettle and unhinge Men, they uſe *Sleight*; a Metaphor taken from Gameſters, who with Art and Sleight of Hand can cog the Dice, and win the Game. Seducers cheat with falſe Doctrines, as Gameſters do with falſe Dice; *Cunning Craftineſs*; the Word ſignifies the Subtilty and deep Policy of the old Serpent, implying, that Seducers are old and cunning Gameſters, skilful to deceive; *they lye in wait, to deceive*; the Word ſignifies an Ambuſhment or Stratagem of War, implying, that all Seducers Sleight and Craftineſs is to this very End and Purpoſe, that they may entrap and catch Men within the Ambuſh of their Impoſtures. From the whole Learn, That Seducers and Falſe Teachers are Crafts-Maſters of Sleight and Subtilty, and Stratagems of Deceit, they have Artifices, Ways and Methods, to take Men unawares, and to make Merchandize of the People; they wreſt and wrack the Scriptures to make them ſpeak what they pleaſe, not what the Holy Ghoſt intended; if all this Art fails, their laſt Device is to recommend their Doctrines upon ſome private pretended *Revelation*, and uncommon Impulſe of the Holy Spirit; by all which Methods they lye in wait to deceive.

15 But ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt:
16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body, unto the edifying of itſelf in love.

Our Apoſtle had ſet forth the Excellent End of the Miniſtry in the foregoing Verſe, for farthering our Stability and Steadfaſtneſs in Grace; here he declares the Admirable

Fitneſs of it for helping forward our Proficiency and Growth in Grace. *Speaking the Truth in Love*; that is, cleaving to the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine, and living in Love one with another, you may grow up in Chriſt, by making Progreſs in all Chriſtian Graces, being united to him as Members to the Head. Here *Note*, how the Apoſtle draws a Compariſon between the Natural and Myſtical Members, and the Increaſe of both; as there muſt be a Fellowſhip betwixt the Natural Head and Members, ſo muſt there be a Union betwixt Chriſt the Spiritual Head, and Believers his Myſtical Members; and as there is farther required a mutual Communion and Fellowſhip of the Members of the Body within, and amongſt themſelves, in order to Growth and Encreaſe, ſo muſt there be Concord, Love and Unity, amongſt Believers, if they expect to ſee Grace growing in themſelves, or in one another. Are the Members of the Natural Body ſeverally diſtinct one from another, ſome Principal, others Miniſterial, but all concurring to the Service of the whole? So in order to Spiritual Growth muſt all the Members of Chriſt's Myſtical Body keep their Rank and Order, and Act in their own Sphere with Spiritual Wiſdom and Humility, the Eye not doing the Work of the Hand, nor the Hand the Work of the Foot, but every one in the Calling wherein he is called muſt there abide with God. Again, is there a ſupply of Nouriſhment from one Member to another, according to the Meaſure of every Part in the Natural Body? So is there a ſupply from Head to Members in the Myſtical Body, and from one Myſtical Member to another; one is apt to Teach, another ready to Comfort, a Third able to Convince, a Fourth willing to Exhort, a Fifth to Adviſe and Counſel, and all theſe, and every one of theſe, contributing all they can to the Welfare and Growth of the whole. Happy is it both for the Natural and Myſtical Body, when the Members of both are ſubſervient to each other, and contribute all they can to the mutual Growth and Improvement of one another, and eſpecially for the Benefit and Advantage of the whole.

17 This I ſay therefore and teſtifie in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart: 19 Who being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.

Our Apoſtle having finiſh'd his grand Exhortation to Love and Unity amongſt all Chriſtians, and enforced it with the moſt weighty Arguments and Motives in the former part of the Chapter, comes now in the latter part of it to preſs the *Epheſians* to the practice of particular Duties. The firſt of which is this, to take ſpecial Care, that being now Converted Chriſtians, they walk no more like Ignorant and Unconverted Heathens: ***Walk not as other Gentiles walk.*** Next, he gives particular Inſtances how and after what manner the Gentiles in the Black Night of Paganiſm did walk. Namely, (1.) In the Vanity of their Minds, following their own Imaginations, and not any Revelation from God, in the Matters of his Worſhip. (2.) Having their *Underſtandings* darkned, their Minds void of ſaving Knowledge. (3.) They were ***alienated*** from the Life of God; that is, from a Godly Life; they were Strangers to the Life which God commanded, which God approved, and which God himſelf lived. Here *Note*, That Holineſs is called the *Life of God*, becauſe it is the *Life* which God requires of us, it is the *Life* which he works in us, it is the *Life* whereby God liveth in us; the *Life* whereby we live unto God, it is an ever-living *Life*; not obnoxious to Death, as the *Epheſians* were; ſo every Carnal Man before Converſion is alienated from this Life of God; he has no liking of it, no inclination to it, but prefers a Life of Sin before it. Lord! How many that are ſurrounded with the Celeſtial Beams of the Goſpel are as Impure and Impenitent now, as theſe Gentiles were then in the Black Night of Paganiſm? (4.) *They were paſt feeling*; their ſottiſh Stupidity had benumb'd them, the Flames of their Luſts had ſeared their Conſciences to a deſperate degree of Hardneſs and Inſenſibility; they were at once inſenſible of their Sin, and of their Danger, by reaſon of Sin. A dead Conſcience, and a deſperately diſſolute Life, are inſeparable Companions. (5.) ***They gave themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, to work all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs.*** Here ſee how Inſenſibility of Sin begets Inſatiableneſs in ſinning; they work Uncleanneſs with unſatiable Greedineſs who have once abandoned themſelves to Sin, eſpecially to the Sin of Uncleanneſs. Lord! This was the deplorable Caſe of the Heathen World before the Light of thy Goſpel did ariſe and ſhine upon them; but alas! It is the Caſe of Multitudes that ſit under the brighteſt Beams of Goſpel Light, they ſhut their Eyes, and will not ſee; they extinguiſh all Senſe of Immortality, and a future State, and ſo abandon themſelves to a Life of brutiſh Senſuality, ***working all Uncleanneſs with greedineſs***; but let them know aſſuredly, that tho' they live like Beaſts, yet they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their latter End be like theirs, the Soul being under a Divine Ordination to an Everlaſting Exiſtence in a future State, in which it ſhall be Eternally Happy, or Intolerably Miſerable, according as we manage our Deportment in this preſent World.

20 But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt; 21 If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts: 23 And be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

In theſe Verſes, (1.) Our Apoſtle acquaints the Converted *Epheſians*, that the ſaving Knowledge of Chriſt which they had received, inſtructed them better than to practice ſuch Licenciouſneſs and Wickedneſs as the unconverted Gentiles wallowed in. *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt*, that is, the Goſpel of Chriſt. Nothing curbs Sin, nothing cures Sin, in a Licencious Sinner, like the Doctrine of Chriſt revealed in the Goſpel; no Moral Precepts from the School of the Heathens, which ſome ſo much magnifie and applaud, can compare with this, which lays open the Root of this accurſed Diſeaſe, and leads us to the Remedy which the Wiſdom of God has appointed for its Cure, even the Blood of his own Son; then bleſſed be God for Revealed Religion. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle acquaints them what *the Truth as it is in Jeſus*, that is, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, doth direct them to, injoin and require of them, namely, to *put off the Old Man*; that is, their former Heathen Converſation, and manner of Life, ſay ſome; but this they had put off already at their firſt Converſion to Chriſtianity; by the Old Man then, underſtand the old corrupt Nature, ſo called, becauſe it is as old as *Adam*, and derived from *Adam*, and which daily more and more corrupts and depraves us by its deceitful Luſts, if it be not reſiſted and ſubdued; but this is not ſufficient that we put off the Old Man, unleſs we put on the New, and be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds after God; that is, after the Image of God, which conſiſteth in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs. *Note* here, (1.) That regenerating Grace is called the New Man, becauſe the Perſon has a new Principle infuſed into him, (ſays the Pious Biſhop *Fell* upon the Place,) which enables him to lead a new Life: Regenerate Men then are New Men, they have a renewed and inlightned Underſtanding, they have a ſanctified and renewed Will, renewed Affections and Deſires: Old Things are paſſing away, and all Things becoming New. *Note* (2.) That God himſelf is the Pattern and Exemplar, after which, and according to which, the New Man is formed in the Soul, *which after God is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs*; what is Godlineſs but God-likeneſs? What is Holineſs but the Conformity of our Natures to the Holy Nature of God, and the Conformity of our Lives to the Will of God? *Acts* 13. 22. I have found *David* a Man after *my own Heart*, who ſhall perform *all my Will*. *Note* (3.) That Holineſs is not only the reforming of the *outward Man*, but it is the renewing of the *Mind*; and not only of the *Mind*, but of the *Spirit* of the *Mind*; by which underſtand the higheſt and moſt refined Faculties of the Mind, that Part which is moſt free from the Dregs of Sin, and which comes up neareſt to God, as the Spirit of the Mind and Underſtanding doth; verily not our Minds only, but even the Spirit of our Minds, needs renewing, becauſe Corruption is got into the higheſt Powers and ſuperiour Faculties of the Soul, and becauſe we muſt ſerve God with all our *Mind*, and if ſo, with the Spirit of our Mind; and bleſſed be God that regenerating and renewing Grace is a Univerſal Principle, as Sin was. Did Sin invade the whole Soul, all the Powers and Faculties of it, and deprive us of the Divine Image? It is the Work of Grace to reſtore our depraved Natures to their primitive Integrity; the renewed Perſon is ſanctified *totus*, tho' not *totaliter*; a new Nature is found with him, which *after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.*

25 Wherefore putting away lying, ſpeak every man truth with his Neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Our Apoſtle cloſes this Chapter with an Exhortation to ſeveral Duties belonging to the Second Table, namely, to abſtain from *Lying*, from *Anger*, from *Stealing*, from *corrupt Communication*, from all *Bitterneſs of Spirit*, from *Malice and Revenge*, and to exerciſe Brotherly *Kindneſs*, and mutual *Forgiveneſs*. From whence *Note*, That Chriſtians muſt make Conſcience of the Duties of the Second Table as well as of the Firſt, and perform their Duty towards their Neighbour, as well as towards God, for the Law is one Copulative, God ſpake all theſe Words; the Authority of the Lawgiver is deſpiſed in the Violation of the leaſt Command; when therefore Second-Table Duties are performed by us from Arguments and Motives draw from the Firſt Table, that is, when in Obedience to God's Command, and with an Eye at his Glory, we perform our Duty to our Neighbour, this is both an Argument of our Sincerity, and alſo an Ornament to our Profeſſion. *Wherefore put away Lying*, &c. Lying was a Vice very common among the Heathens; 'Tis like the *Epheſians* in their Heathen State had been very guilty of it, for they thought it lawful when it was beneficial to Lie; and affirmed, that a Lie was better than a hurtful Truth. Our Apoſtle therefore exhorts them, now converted to Chriſtianity, to ſpeak exact Truth one to another, and adds a forcible Reaſon for it, becauſe they were Members of one another, that is, of Human Society, which by Lying is deſtroyed; Falſhood diſſolves the Bond of Human Society. Learn hence, That there is no Sin more unſeemly in a Chriſtian, more inconſiſtent with Grace, more abominable to God, more like unto the Devil, more injurious and prejudicial to Human Society, than the Sin of Lying; Fidelity towards each other, and Mutual Confidence in each other, being that which makes Humane Society both ſafe and eaſie.

26 Be ye angry and ſin not: let not the ſun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the Devil.

Some underſtand theſe Words only as a cautionary Direction, and ſenſe them thus, if ye be angry at any time take heed that ye Sin not by exceeding due Bounds; and if at any time it doth ſo, ſuppreſs it ſpeedily, before the Sun go down; this was a Practice even amongſt the Heathens, before the Sun went down they would ſhake Hands, and embrace one another, to the ſhame of Chriſtians, who gave place to the Devil, according to the known Proverb, *Contubernalem habet Diabolum, qui tectum perit iratus*, he that goes angry to Bed has the Devil for his Chamber-fellow, yea, for his Bed-fellow; nay, he lyes not only in his Bed, but in his Boſom. Others underſtand the Words as a Precept and Command, be angry, but take heed of ſinful Anger; now the way to be angry, and not ſin, is to be angry at nothing but at Sin; it is our Duty to be angry when we ſee others depart from their Duty. Meek *Moſes*, who was cool enough in his own Cauſe, was hot in God's; he has no Zeal for God that is not moved when he ſees or hears God diſhonoured. Learn hence, (1.) That Anger being an Affection implanted by God in the Human Nature, is not in it ſelf evil or ſinful, but in ſome Caſes a neceſſary Duty. Learn hence, (2.) That there is an eaſie and ready Paſſage from what is lawful to what is ſinful, be angry, and ſin not; implying that it is a very eaſie Matter to ſin in our Anger, and no eaſie Matter to be angry, and not to ſin. Learn (3.) That it is very difficult, it not impoſſible, to avoid Sin in our Anger, if we let Anger hang upon our Spirits, and continue with us; Anger may paſs thro' the Heart of a Wiſe Man, but it reſts in the Boſom of Fools; Anger againſt Sin muſt continue, but continuance in Anger will be ſinful. To prevent the Sin of immoderate Anger theſe Rules will be uſeful. (1.) Deſire not to hear what others ſay of thee, leſt you want Patience to bear what you hear; many tear themſelves with Anger, when they hear themſelves torn with Slander; we had better be in the dark concerning our own Wrongs, than by knowing of them wrong our ſelves by Paſſion or Deſires of Revenge. (2.) What you do hear ſaid of you interpret always in the moſt favourable Senſe; call it an Infirmity, and diſtinguiſh between the Action and Intention, between what is ſpoken, and the intent of the Speaker. (3.) In and under all Provocations caſt your Eye upward; look up to God, and caſt your Eye inward, and ſee what you have deſerved, though not at your Neighbour's Hand, yet at God's Hand. *Shimei* gave *David* Provocation to boyl up his Anger to the height of Fury, 2 *Sam.* 16. 5. but by eying God how calm and meek was his Spirit? Thus be angry, and ſin not.

28 Let him that ſtole ſteal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Sin diſſwaded from, Theft and Stealing. This the Heathen Nations counted no Crime; they made no Conſcience, either openly or fundamentally, go take away their Neighbour's Goods. Therefore, ſays the Apoſtle, let thoſe of you who in the time of your Paganiſm and Unregeneracy were given to ſtealing, now being converted to Chriſtianity do ſo no more. *Obſerve* (2.) The Remedy preſcribed for the Prevention of this Sin, and that is Diligence and Labour in ſome honeſt Calling; let him labour, working with his Hands; Idleneſs occaſions Poverty, brings Men to Want, encreaſes their Neceſſities, and then they betake themſelves to indirect and unlawful Means to ſupply them. *Obſerve* (3.) One ſpecial Reaſon why Perſons ſhould labour in the Way of their Calling, that they might have *to give to him that needeth*; not only that they may have wherewith to relieve their own Wants, but the Wants of others. Where *Note*, that God expects Charity from the Hands of thoſe who get their Living with their Hands; Day-labourers, and ſuch as have nothing to live upon but their Work, muſt yet give their Mite, their Alms, for the help of the Indigent. *Obſerve* (4.) The Reſtriction and Qualification of this Labour of the Hands, he muſt *work* that which is *good*, that he may give to him that needeth; to relieve others with the Gain of Oppreſſion, or with the Hire of an Harlot, is unacceptable; the Matter of our Alms muſt be Goods righteouſly gotten, otherwiſe 'tis Robbery, not Righteouſneſs.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers.

Here the Apoſtle directs us how to manage our Tongues both negatively and poſitively; telling us what we ſhould not ſpeak, and what we ſhould; let no corrupt, rotten, filthly, Diſcourſe come out of your Mouth; ſuch as have rotten Lungs have a ſtinking Breath; filthy Diſcourſe argues a polluted Heart; ſuch noyſom Diſcourſe is unſavoury to an holy Ear, and greatly offenſive, contagious and infecting, to common and ordinary Hearers. Next he tells them what they ſhould ſpeak, that which is Profitable and Edifying, and that which may miniſter encreaſe of Grace to the Hearers: Our Speech ſhould be ſo Gracious and Savoury as to diſcover Grace wrought in our Hearts, and be a Means for working it in the Hearts of others; elſewhere St. *Paul* adviſes that our Speech be Savoury, ſeaſoned with Salt, *Coloſ.* 4. 6. Truth, Holineſs, and Prudence, is the Salt of our Words. Chriſtians muſt not ſuffer their Tongues to run at random in their ordinary Diſcourſe; it is not ſufficient that they do not ſpeak to evil Purpoſe, but they muſt ſpeak to edifying Purpoſe; that which has a tendency to make the Hearers ſome way or other either wiſer or better, this the Apoſtle calls that which is good to the uſe of Edifying.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to the Spirit of God, he is ſtiled the Holy Spirit, being Eſſentially and Infinitely Holy in himſelf, and the Author of all Grace and Holineſs in us. *Obſerve* (2.) The Affection of Grief which is here attributed to the Spirit, not properly, but improperly; when we do that which would moſt certainly afflict and grieve him, were he a Subject capable of Grief, and when upon Provocations given on our Parts, he carrieth himſelf towards us after the manner of a perſon grieved; namely, when we provoke him to ſuſpend his Influences, to withdraw his Comforts, leaving us without any preſent ſenſe or feeling of his Aſſiſtances; he is alſo then grieved when he is oppoſed, interrupted, controuled and diſturbed in his Operations of Grace and Comfort upon our Souls. *Obſerve* (3.) The Argument uſed to enforce the Exhortation, not to grieve the

Holy Spirit of God, becauſe by it we are *ſealed* to the Day of Redemption. But what doth God's *ſealing* his People by his Holy Spirit intimate and imply? *Anſ.* (1.) It intimates that God has diſtinguiſhed them from others. (2.) That he has appropriated them to himſelf. (3.) That he has put a Value upon them, and a very high Eſteem. And, (4.) It imports the Irrevocable Purpoſe of God for their Salvation. Seals are for theſe Uſes, Ends, and Purpoſes; Seals are for Diſtinction, for Appropriation, for Confirmation, and argue a High Valuation and Precious Eſteem of the Perſon or Thing which the Seal is put upon; grieve not the Spirit whereby you are Sealed to the Day of Redemption, that is, to the Day of Judgment.

31 Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.

Our Apoſtle had exhorted in the former Verſe not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in the next Verſe he acquaints us with the Particular Sins that would afflict and grieve him; namely, *Bitterneſs*; that is, a Secret Grudge and a Smothered Diſpleaſure againſt our Brother; *Wrath*, or an Impetuous Fierceneſs of Spirit upon ſome Real or Apprehended Injury; *Anger*, an Eager Deſire of Revenge; *Clamour*, Loud Threatnings, or Reviling Language; *Evil Speaking*, either of others, or to others; *Malice*, a Rooted Enmity, the Rage of the Devil, and renders a Man as like the Devil as any Sin on this Side Hell: All theſe Sins do exceedingly grieve the Holy Spirit, they make him both loath and leave his Lodgings. In the laſt Verſe, as a Proper Remedy againſt all the foregoing Sins, he exhorts them to Mutual Kindneſs, be ye *kind* one towards another; that is, of a Sweet and Loving Diſpoſition, Affable and Courteous to each other; neither carrying it loftily nor moroſely, but affably and humbly; *Tender-hearted*, having a Compaſſionate Senſe of the Miſeries and Infirmities of one another; *forgiving* one another, whatever has been Matter of Provocation in each other, according to the Example of God, who for Chriſt's Sake has forgiven us. Learn hence, (1.) That Chriſtians are obliged by the Laws of their Holy Religion to forbear and forgive one another. Learn (2.) That they are obliged to forgive one another, as God for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiven them. As God forgives us univerſally, freely, heartily, and ſincerely, and when he has Power in his Hand to revenge; ſo ſhould we in like manner forgive one another, even as God for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiven us.

CHAP. V.

1 BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Our Apoſtle having in the Concluſion of the foregoing Chapter exhorted the *Epheſians* to Mutual Offices of Love and Kindneſs towards each other, in the Beginning of this Chapter he makes uſe of ſeveral very Cogent Arguments to excite and quicken them thereunto: The Firſt of which is drawn from the Example of God, as he has been kind to us, and for Chriſt's Sake forgiven us, let us therefore be Followers of him; not as our God only, but as our Father; *be ye Followers of God, as Dear Children.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Duty exhorted to, *be ye Followers of God*; that is, in all the Excellencies of his Communicable Attributes, and particularly in the Exerciſe of Univerſal Goodneſs and Kindneſs, Mercy and Forgiveneſs. *Note* (2.) The Argument exciting to this Duty, *as Dear Children*; you are Children, and who ſhould Children imitate but their Father? And you are Dear Children, will not you imitate ſuch a Father? Learn from both, that ſuch as lay claim to a Relation to God, without imitation of him, are not Children, but Baſtards; they may be of his Family, but not of his Houſhold; of his Family by Inſtruction, but not by Deſcent; there is no Implantation into Chriſt, without an Imitation both of the Creator and Redeemer, *Heb.* 3. *v.* 6. Chriſt as a Son over his own Houſe, whoſe Houſe are we if, *&c.*

2 And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering, and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.

Here we have a Second Argument urged, to walk in Love one with and one towards another, drawn from the Example of Chriſt; he alſo as well as God the Father hath loved us and the Inſtance given of his Love is the higheſt that ever was or can be given; he gave *himſelf* for us an *Offering* and a *Sacrifice* to God for a Sweet-*ſmelling Savour.* *Obſerve* here, (1.) The great Duty of the Law, (walk in Love.) This implies the Exerciſe of this Grace, not barely to have it in the Principle and Habit, but to exerciſe and exert it in the Act: And it implies the Univerſal Exerciſe of this Grace; whatever we do both to God and Man muſt be done in Love, 1 *Cor.* 16. 14. Let all your Deeds be done with Charity. *Obſerve* 2. As the great Duty of the Law, [to walk in Love,] ſo the great Pattern of the Goſpel, [as Chriſt alſo hath loved us.] The Particle [as] hath firſt the Force of an Argument, and is as much *becauſe* Chriſt hath loved us; and it has alſo the Force of a Rule to direct us in the Manner how we ſhould love one another, with an [as] of Identity, but not Equality; not with the ſame Degree, but with the ſame Kind of Love wherewith Chriſt *hath* loved us. But why *hath*, rather than *doth* love us? Why in the Preter, rather than in the Preſent, Tenſe? *Anſ.* To denote both the Priority of Chriſt's Love, that he loved us before we loved him; yea, before we loved our ſelves; nay, before we had any Being in the World we had a Being in his Love, even from all Eternity. And alſo to denote the Indubitable Certainty of his Love; he hath loved you, you need not doubt it, nor queſtion it; he has given Actual and Undeniable Proofs of it; follow him from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven again, and you will find every Step he took to have been in Love; walk then in Love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us. Learn hence, (1.) That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has given Ample and Full Demonſtration of his Great and Wonderful Love unto his Church and People. (2.) That this Love of Chriſt towards us ſhould not only be an Argument and Motive to excite and quicken us to walk in Love one towards another, but alſo an Exact Rule and Copy to direct and guide us in our Walking. They were ſome Incommunicable Properties in Chriſt's Love which we cannot imitate; as his Love was an Eternal Love, an Infinite Love, a Free Love, without Motives, and in deſpight of Obſtacles, a Redeeming Love, ſuch cannot our Love be one to another: But as Chriſt's Love was an Operative Love, a Beneficent Love, a Preventing Love, a Soul Love, a Conſtant Love, thus we are to imitate it, and walk in Love one towards another. *Obſerve* (3) The High Inſtance and Expreſſion which Chriſt has given of his Love unto us, *he gave himſelf for us a Sacrifice unto God*, &c. *He gave*, now Gifts are Expreſſions of Love; *he gave himſelf*, that's more than if he had given all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Treaſures on Earth, for us; more than the whole World, yea, than Ten Thouſand Worlds; he gave himſelf an *Offering and a Sacrifice*, a Voluntary Sacrifice, a Meritorious, Efficacious, Expiatory and Propitiatory Sacrifice; and this *for us*, to be ſtuck and bleed to Death in our Stead; and he gave himſelf a Sacrifice *to God*, as an Injur'd and Offended God; to *God* as the Revenger of Sin; to *God* as the Guardian and Giver of the Law; to *God* as the Aſſerter of his Truth in his Threatnings; he appear'd before God as ſitting upon a Seat of Juſtice, that he might open to us a Throne of Grace. Laſtly, *For a Sweet-ſmelling Savour*; that is, he gave himſelf with an Intention to be accepted, and God received him with a Choice Acceptation; our Sin had ſent up a very Ill Savour to Heaven, which diſturb'd the Reſt of God; Chriſt expels this Ill Scent by the Perfume of his Precious Blood. Learn hence, (1.) That the Sacrifice and Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt were very free and voluntary: He offer'd himſelf, and his Offering was a Free-will Offering. Learn (2.) That this Voluntary Sacrifice and Free-will Offering of Chriſt was acceptable to God, and efficacious for Men; 'twas acceptable to God, becauſe a Compleat Satisfaction for Sin's Wrong; and efficacious for us, becauſe a Diſcharge from the Obligation of Sin's Guilt.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh ſaints:

The Apoſtle in this, and the following Verſes, exhorts the *Epheſians* to ſhun ſeveral Sins which were frequently practiſ'd among the Gentiles before their Converſion to Chriſtianity; as Firſt, *Fornication*, and all Sorts and Degrees of *Uncleanneſs*: This was look'd upon as an Indifferent Action, and no Sin at all, by the Pagan World. Next, he adviſes them to beware of Covetouſneſs; that is, all Irregular and Inordinate Deſires, and luſting after Things forbidden in the general; and particularly, all inſatiable Love of Riches, which in Trading Cities, (ſuch was *Epheſus*,) doth uſually very much abound, which Sins he earneſtly deſires may not be *named* amongſt them; that is, not named with Approbation, not named without Reprehenſion, not named, that is, not committed, by any of them; yea, not ſo much as named by them without Deteſtation. And the Argument offered to diſſwade from theſe Sins is drawn *ab indecoro*, as not *becoming* Saints; that is, Converted Chriſtians, who profeſs Separation from the World, and Solemn Dedication to God and Chriſt, and therefore ought to be Holy in Heart, Chaſte in Mind, Heavenly in Deſire, Undefiled in Body: A Life of Purity and Chaſtity well becometh Saints; they muſt be pure in Heart, pure in Tongue, pure in Hand, pure in Intention, pure in Expreſſion, pure in Converſation, otherwiſe they anſwer not their Name, nor walk according to their Renewed Nature; *let no Uncleanneſs be once named amongſt you, as becometh Saints.*

4 Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not covenient: but rather giving of thanks.

Here our Apoſtle adviſes Chriſtians to guard againſt the Sins of the Tongue, to avoid all *Filthy* Diſcourſe, and all *Fooliſh* Diſcourſe, all Scurrilous and Obſcene *Jeſtings*, all Exceſs in Drollery, which is nothing but the Foam of a Frothy Wit; Moderate Mirth by Innocent and Inoffenſive Jeſting is not here forbidden; but when we Jeſt by Tart Reflections upon the Way, Geſture, Natural Imperfections, of others, eſpecially when we furniſh out a Jeſt in Scripture Attire, and in a Jocular Humour make Light and Irreverent Applications of Scripture Phraſes. Lord! What an Impious Liberty do ſome Men take to bring forth Scripture as the *Philiſtians* brought forth *Sampſon*, only to make them Sport. Theſe Men e'er long will find Almighty God in Earneſt, tho' they were in Jeſt, when they play'd the Buffoon with the moſt Serious Things in the World. *Obſerve* further, our Apoſtle's Argument to diſſwade from ſuch Talks is this, *they are not convenient*; not convenient in themſelves, not convenient for the Speaker, not convenient for the Hearers, for they poyſon inſtead for profiting the Company, and pollute both the Minds and Manners of the Hearers. Oh! What a Great and Common Inſtrument of Sin is the Mouth or Tongue of Man? The Tongue of a Good Man is his Glory, the Tongue of a Sinner is his Shame; there is no Member of the Body that doth ſo much Service for the Devil as the Tongue, eſpecially in Common Converſation; then it is that Men let their Tongues run Riot, then they utter Oaths and Blaſphemies againſt God, Cenſorious, Opprobrious, Slanderous, Words againſt their Neighbours; to prevent all which the Apoſtle exhorts in the laſt Words of the Verſe, that when we meet together we ſhould rather recount the Favours received from God, and bleſs him for them. *But rather giving of Thanks.* As there is at all Times, and in all Places, Cauſe of Thankſgiving adminiſtred to us by God, ſo is it our Duty to take all Occaſions and fit Opportunities to excite both our ſelves and others to the Practice of it, who are naturally very averſe and backward to it. From the whole *Note*, That ſo quick and eaſie is the Paſſage from what is lawful and allowed to what is ſinful and forbidden, that it is a Task of no ſmall Difficulty to keep within the Bounds of lawful and allowed Mirth; eſpecially in recreating our Spirits by Pleaſant and Delightful Diſcourſe, ſo that we exceed not either in Matter, Manner, or Meaſure; well might St. *James* ſay, (*Chap.* 3. 2.) if any Man offend not in Word, he is *a Perfect Man*; intimating, that there are many, very many, that do thus offend, and ſuch as do not are Chriſtians of no Common Attainments, but great Proficients in Grace; Perſons of Extraordinary Meaſures both of Piety and Prudence.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean Perſon, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt, and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Our Apoſtle conſidering how exceeding common the forementiond Sins were among the Gentiles, and how ready Perſons were to eſteem lightly of them, adviſes the *Epheſians* here not to entertain in their Minds light Thoughts of them, or to believe any Libertines which ſhould repreſent them as ſmall and inconſiderable Matters; for how can a little Sin be committed againſt a great God? Or that Sin be accounted light which brings down the heavy Wrath of God upon the Perſon, and ſhuts him out of the Kingdom of God? *Note* here, (1.) The Deſcription of Heaven, 'tis a *Kingdom*; for its Eminency and Glory, for its Fulneſs and Sufficiency, for its Safety and Security, for its Duration and Perpetuity, ſo call'd: And it is the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, and *of God*; that is, either the Kingdom of Chriſt, who is God; or the Kingdom of Chriſt by Purchaſe, and the Kingdom of God by Free Donation; but mark, the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of God; of Chriſt firſt, becauſe there is no coming into the Kingdom of God but by Chriſt; Chriſt is firſt named, becauſe we enter by him into the Kingdom, and in his Right. *Note* (2.) The Sins enumerated which will aſſuredly ſhut Perſons out of this Kingdom, and they are not External and Corporal Sins only, as Whoredom and Uncleanneſs, but Internal and Spiritual, *Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry*; as a Man may be guilty of Adultery, and yet never touch a Woman, and of Murther, yet never ſtrike his Neighbour, ſo may he be guilty of Idolatry, and yet never bow his Knee to an Idol; Secret Idol, Soul Idolatry, will ſhut out of Heaven as well as Open Idolatry. Any Thing that has our Higheſt Eſteem and Regard, our Supream Love and Delight, and is the Special Object of our Hope, our Affiance and Truſt, of our Fear and Care, this we make our God; and thus the Covetous Man is an Idolater, for he gives theſe Acts of Soul-worſhip to the Creature, to ſomething in the World which is not God. Every Natural Man is an Idolater, either the World, or ſome Worldly Luſt, is his God; and no Idolater can have (while ſuch) any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of God. *Note* (3.) The Seaſonable Advice which St. *Paul* gives the *Epheſians*, and *us* in them, not to be Partakers of other Mens Sins; *be ye not therefore Partakers with them*, leſt ye be alſo Partakers with them in their Plagues and Puniſhments. *Queſt.* But when may we be ſaid to be Partakers of other Mens Sins? *Anſ.* When we conſent to them, connive at them, rejoice in them, give counſel or command for them, by not hindring of them, by not publiſhing and puniſhing of them, if in our Power, by not mourning over them, *but* eſpecially by joining with them in the Sinful Practice of them, all theſe Ways are we Partakers of other Mens Sins.

8 For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light,

Here the *Epheſians* are put in mind of the Darkneſs and Blindneſs of their Heathen State; before the Light of the Goſpel came among them they were not only Dark, very much in the Dark, but Darkneſs itſelf; next acquaints them with their Happy Condition by entertaining of the Goſpel of Chriſt, they thereby became *Light in the Lord*, they were ſavingly enlightned by the Word and Spirit of God; and accordingly he urges them to walk anſwerably to their Chriſtian Profeſſion, *walk as Children of the Light*. *Note* here, (1.) That the State which every Soul is in by Nature, and before Converſion, it is an Eſtate of Spiritual Darkneſs; like Men in the Dark they go they know not whither, they do they know not what, they ſtumble and fall they know not how nor when. *Note* (2.) That all thoſe whom God calls effectually out of the Darkneſs and Ignorance of their Natural and Unregenerate State he doth enlighten them by his Word and Holy Spirit. *Note* (3.) That ſuch as are ſo called and enlightned ought to walk ſuitably to their Priviledge, and anſwerable to their High and Honourable Profeſſion. *Walk as Children of the Light*; that is, holy, humbly, chearfully, thankfully, before God, exemplarily and unblameably before the World.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth,) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Theſe Words contain a Reaſon why the *Epheſians*, who were once Darkneſs, but then enlightened by the Holy Spirit, ſhould walk as Children of the Light, namely, becauſe the Fruits of that Light, or of the Holy Spirit, the Author of that Light which they had received, *is in all Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs* and *Truth*; that is, it conſiſteth in theſe Things; theſe are the Fruits of the Enlightning and Enlivening Spirit of God; ſo that the Force of the Argument lyes thus, ſuch a Walking as is here directed to, namely, in the Love and Practice of Univerſal Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, it is the Genuine Fruit and Natural Reſult of the Holy Spirit, and accordingly as ſuch they were obliged to it; none can walk as Children of the Light, but ſuch as are renewed and quickned by the Holy Spirit of God, and made Children of Light, and ſuch will be found in the Practice of thoſe Duties, wherein that Walk conſiſteth; *proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.* That is, *Firſt*, To ſtudy the Word, and find what is pleaſing unto God. *Secondly*, To embrace with our Hearts what we find to be ſo. And, *Thirdly*, To practice in our Lives what we embrace with our Hearts. The Scripture acquaints us with ſome Perſons and ſome Performances which are very acceptable unto God; ſuch Perſons as live moſt by Faith, as are very upright in their Walkings, very ſincere in all they do, ſuch are greatly acceptable unto God; ſo the Performances are alſo acceptable; namely, when we do Juſtice and Judgment, this is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice; both commutative and diſtributive Juſtice betwixt Man and Man, more pleaſing to God than the higheſt Acts of Worſhip performed to him without this, *Prov.* 21. 3. To ſerve Chriſt with a pure Intention, with Good-will, or a willing Mind, and to ſuffer patiently for Well-doing, this is highly pleaſing and acceptable unto God, 1 *Pet.* 2. 20.

11 And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.

Obſerve here, (1.) The odious Character wherewith Sin in general is branded; 'tis ſtiled Darkneſs, a Work of Darkneſs, Works of Darkneſs, and an unfruitful Work.——Sin is ſtiled Darkneſs, becauſe it originally ſprings from Darkneſs, it naturally delights in Darkneſs, it ultimately leads to Eternal Darkneſs.——Sin is called a Work of Darkneſs, to imply the Drudgery and Toil, the Labour and Pains, that the Sinner is at in the Service of Sin; the Work of Sin is a meer Drudgery; 'tis not a pleaſurable Service, but a laborious Servitude.——And the Apoſtle calling Sin by the Name of Works, doth intimate to us that one Sin never goes ſingle and alone, but has a dangerous Train and Retinue.——Finally, Sin is an unfruitful Work; not materially and ſubjectively unfruitful, for the corrupt Nature of Man is a rank Soil, in which Sin thrives apace; but terminatively and ultimately; it is unfruitful in the Concluſion, in the Event and Iſſue, *Rom.* 6. 21. What Fruit, *&c.* *Obſerve* (2.) A Dehortation, or Negative Precept, have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs; it is both the Duty and Intereſt of every Chriſtian to have nothing to do with any ſinful Work; the preceptive Will of God requires this, Sin being contrary to the Holineſs of his Nature and Will; and the Dignity and Purity of the Goſpel calls for this, which is a Law of Holineſs, and a Rule of Holy Living. *Obſerve* (3.) A poſitive Injunction, *but rather reprove them*; how are we to reprove the unfruitful Workers and Works of Darkneſs? Two Ways, (1.) By our Lips; with Plainneſs, but yet with Prudence; with Faithfulneſs, but yet with Meekneſs; in Reproof never uſe ſharp Words if ſoft Words will ſerve the Turn. (2.) With our Lives; thus *Nehemiah* by his princely Demeanour did reprove the Covetouſneſs of former Governours, *Neh.* 5. So did not I, becauſe of the Fear of the Lord; a Holy Life is a viſible and daily Reproof given both to Sin and Sinners.

12 For it is a ſhame even to ſpake of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret. 13 But all things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the light: for whatſoever doth make manifeſt, is light.

Here our Apoſtle aſſigns particular Reaſons why the *Epheſians* ſhould have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Workers and Works of Darkneſs, but reprove them, namely, (1.) The abominable Filthineſs of thoſe Sins which the wicked Pagans committed, eſpecially in their Heathen Myſteries, preſcribed by the Devil as Parts of his Worſhip; ſuch Things done in Secret as it was even a Shame to ſpeak of. (2.) Becauſe Admonition and Reproof makes the Works of Darkneſs manifeſt to the Sinner's Conſcience, ſets Sin forth in its black and ugly Colours. A Diſcovery of Sin in its Vileneſs, Odiouſneſs and Uglineſs, is neceſſary to a Sinner's Conviction of it, and Converſion from it; and God doth not only bleſs the Miniſtry of the Word from the Pulpit, but ſometimes a Word of Reproof from the Mouth of a private Chriſtian, and the Light of his Holy Example, for this great End. A Reproof piouſly and prudently given to Open Sinners by private Chriſtians ſhall not miſs of its End, it will certainly have its Effect, either in the Sinner's Converſion and Salvation, or in his Obduration and Condemnation; as all Things reprovable are made manifeſt by Light, ſo a prudent Reproof and pious Converſation puts Sin to Shame, if not to Silence.

14 Wherefore he ſaith, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.

The laſt Argument which our Apoſtle offers to Conſideration, for enforcing the Duty of reproving the unfruitful Workers and Works of Darkneſs, is drawn from the Example of God himſelf, whoſe great Deſign it is by his Holy Word to awaken Men out of the Sleep of Sin and Death, that Chriſt may give them Light. Here *Note*, The dangerous and deplorable, though not hopeleſs and deſperate, State of an unconverted and impenitent Sinner, namely, Spiritual *Sleep* and *Death*; every Man by Nature is in a dead Sleep till the Renovating Change; he apprehends Things as a Man Aſleep; all his Thoughts of God and Chriſt, of Heaven and Hell, of Sin and Holineſs, are ſlight and hovering Notions, not real and thorough Apprehenſions; the moſt ſubſtantial Realities are with them but Phantaſms and Imaginations,--- imaginary Dangers ſtartle them, like Men in a Dream, but real Dangers, though never ſo near, do not affect them: As in Natural Sleep all the Senſes of the Body, ſo in Spiritual Sleep are all the Senſes of the Soul bound up; and accordingly this Sleep is not Caſual, but Connatural, to our preſent ſinful State; a Soul drench'd in Senſuality ſleeps as it were by Choice, and not by Chance. But how, O Sinner, canſt thou ſleep under ſuch a Load of Sin and Guilt, with ſo many Wounds in thy Conſcience, with ſo many Ulcers in thy Soul? Can a diſeaſed Man ſleep? Can a condemned Man ſleep? Can a Man in Debt ſleep? All this the Sinner is; and yet, though God thunders above, and Hell gapes from beneath, and the Sinner hangs over it by the fretted Thread of his Life, yet he is in a profound Sleep; but his Damnation ſlumbers not, if he doth not ſpeedily awake and ariſe from the Dead, that Chriſt may give him Light.

15 See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe,

Theſe Words may be conſidered Two Ways: Either, *Firſt*, as a Direction to thoſe who according to the foregoing Exhortation do reprove Sinners for their unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, namely, to walk very circumſpectly themſelves; ſee then *how* circumſpectly you walk, ſo the Words may be rendred; and it *intimates* to us, that thoſe only are fit to reprove Sin in others, who walk very circumſpectly and unblameably themſelves; ſuch only have Authority to reprove, and ſuch only can hope for Succeſs in reproving, *ver.* 11. *Rather reprove them*; *ſee then that ye walk circumſpectly.* *Secondly*, The Words may be conſidered as a new Precept added by St. *Paul* to the former, given in this Chapter for directing the *Epheſians* to an Holy Life; he aſſures them that if they will walk holily, they muſt walk circumſpectly, and that circumſpect Walking is wiſe Walking. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Neceſſity of circumſpect Walking, *ſee that you walk circumſpectly.* Learn hence, That it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to maintain a Holy Courſe of Obedience to the Commands of God, without great Care and Caution, Heedfulneſs and Circumſpection; none can walk holily, that do not walk circumſpectly and watchfully; ſuch is that weakneſs and inconſtancy of our Natures, ſo many and ſo ſubtil are our Spiritual Enemies, and ſo intimate with us, ſo ſtrict and exact is the Law of God we are to walk by, and ſo holy and jealous is that God we are to walk before, that it is impoſſible to walk before him acceptably, if we do not walk circumſpectly. *Obſerve* (2.) As the Neceſſity, ſo the Excellency, of circumſpect Walking; it is not fooliſh, unadviſed and unaccountable, Walking, but it is truly wiſe Walking; ſuch Walking as the Wiſdom of God recommends to us, and ſuch Walking as beſpeaks us truly and really wiſe; ſuch as walk looſly walk fooliſhly; careleſs Walking is fooliſh Walking, but circumſpect Walking is wiſe Walking; for it is to be wiſe for our ſelves, and wiſe as to our beſt and trueſt Intereſt; it is to be wiſe for Time, and wiſe to Eternity; wiſe both for this and for the coming World. *See that ye walk circumſpectly; not as Fools, but as Wiſe.*

16 Redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.

Obſerve here, (1.) A moſt important and neceſſary a Duty exhorted to, namely, to redeem the time; this cannot be done in a natural Senſe; Time once paſt irrecoverably loſt, we can no more recal it; but in a moral Senſe Time may be ſaid to be redeemed, when our Diligence to improve it is redoubled,

doubled, when we do much Work in a little Time; to redeem Time ſuppoſes and implies a right Knowledge of the Uſe and End of Time, and high Valuation of the Worth and Excellency of Time, and Reſolution to reſcue it out of the Hands of thoſe that would devour it: Idleneſs, Exceſs of Sleep, inordinate Adorning of the Body, immoderate Recreations, vain Company, an Exceſs of Worldly Buſineſs, all theſe are Robbers of our Time, and Time muſt be reſcued out of their Hands. *Queſt.* Who are the Perſons more eſpecially concern'd to redeem Time? *Anſw.* All thoſe that are Young: Such as have idlely waſted a great Part of their Time; all that are Ignorant aud Graceleſs; all that are Weak and Aged, and have but a few Sands in their Glaſs; all thoſe that are recovered from Sickneſs; and all ſuch as through Poverty, Reſtraint, or Service, are ſcanted of their Time, ſhould wiſely redeem it, and induſtriouſly improve it, for God and their Souls; becauſe upon this Moment depends Eternity, and according to our preſent Choice will be our eternal Lot. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle's Argument here to excite all Perſons wiſely to redeem their Time, namely, becauſe the Days are Evil; that is, full of Sin by the ſcandalous Lives of Profeſſors, full of Error by the Subtilty of Heretical Seducers, full of Affliction and Miſery by reaſon of ſharp and hot Perſecutions; when Days are moſt evil, moſt ſinful or calamitous, then is it a Chriſtian's Duty to improve his Time well and wiſely for God and his Soul. Redeem the Time becauſe the Days are Evil.

17 Wherefore, be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

As if he had ſaid, ſeeing the Times are ſo perillous, and your Opportunities of doing Good ſo uncertain, be wiſe and underſtand what are the proper Duties of your Place and Station, and know how to manage your ſelves in every Relation, with reference to the Duties, Dangers, Snares and Temptations, which may be before you, and this according to the Will of God revealed in his Word. Learn hence, That it is a ſpecial Part of Divine Wiſdom to underſtand and know what is the Mind and Will of God concerning us, in every Condition of Life which his Providence brings us into, to the Intent that we may fill up every Relation with the proper Duties of it, to the Glory of God, and our own and others Satisfaction. *Be ye not unwiſe, but underſtand what the Will of the Lord is.*

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs: but be filled with the Spirit:

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle's ſeaſonable Dehortation, *be not drunk with Wine*; Drunkenneſs as well as Uncleanneſs, and Drunkenneſs with Uncleanneſs, (for they commonly go together,) were Sins which the *Epheſians* and unconverted Pagans were generally guilty of; St. *Paul* therefore cautions theſe new Converts againſt this old Sin, which tranſports Men to inſolent and outrageous Practices, as the next Words intimate, for therein *is Exceſs*; the Original Word may be rendred Lewdneſs and Luſt; to denote that when Perſons are inflamed with Wine they are liable to all Manner of exceſſive Wickedneſs, and particularly to the Sin of Uncleanneſs. *Obſerve* (2.) The Duty exhorted to in order to the Prevention of this Sin, and that is, to labour and endeavour, inſtead of being filled with Wine, to be full of the Holy Spirit of God, to be filled with the Sanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit: Bleſſed be God he allows us to ſeek after the greateſt and the fulleſt Meaſures of the Holy Spirit: and Injurious we are to our ſelves if we content our ſelves with ſmall Meaſures and Degrees of it. The Senſe of the Words ſeems to be this; let no Chriſtian allow himſelf in any ſinful Exceſſes, let him never fill himſelf with Wine or Strong Drink, or with Meat and Drink to the full, for that Fulneſs will breed all manner of ſenſual Luſts in him: But let his Deſires and Endeavours be carried out after the Grace and Spirit of God, let him be filled therewith; for that Fulneſs will keep the Soul Holy, the Body Chaſte, and render the Chriſtian fit for the Service of God on Earth, and meet for the Fruition and Enjoyment of God in Heaven. Take your fill of the Spirit, you can never be over filled.

19 Speaking to your ſelves in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

The Apoſtle in the foregoing Verſe cautions the *Epheſians* againſt that Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs which did commonly attend them at the Solemnities of their Heathen Gods; their *Bacchanalia*, or Feaſts dedicated to *Bacchus*, the God of Wine, were uſually concluded with exceſſive Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs. In theſe drunken Feaſts they had their drunken Hymns, which they ſang to their drunken Deity, in Praiſe of him whom they called the God of Wine: Now in Oppoſition to theſe drunken and impure Songs, the Apoſtle exhorts the Chriſtian *Epheſians* to ſing the Pſalms of *David*, or the Hymns compoſed by Spiritual Men, ſuch as *Zacharias* and *Simeon*, or by the *Afflatus* of the Holy Spirit, which in thoſe Times did immediate inſpire Perſons, both to Pray and Sing in their Aſſemblies, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. Singing theſe with the Mouth, and alſo making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord. *Note* here, The Hearts and Spirits of Good Men are full of Spiritual Mirth and Joy, they are as Merry in the Lord as Sinners in their Luſt; that it is lawful and laudible for them to expreſs their Mirth, and give vent to their Spiritual Joy, by Singing; that Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, do beſt become their Mouths when they perform thoſe Spiritual Exerciſes; that in Singing theſe there muſt be an inward Harmony and muſical Melody in the Soul and Heart as well as in the Tongue; beſides a Melodious Tuning of the Voice, the Exerciſe of the Underſtanding, and the orderly Motion of the Affections, muſt accompany them that will make Melody in the Heart to the Lord in their Singing. Singing of Pſalms then, both in Publick Aſſemblies, and in Private Families, and ſounding forth the High Praiſes of God for Mercies receiv'd, is a ſpecial Duty to be jointly performed by all Perſons capable of it: *Speaking to your ſelves in Pſalms and Hymns.*

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

The next Duty St. *Paul* exhorts to is that of Spiritual *Thankſgiving*. Where *Note*, (1.) The Time when it ought to be performed, *always*; that is, at leaſt every Day, and upon every Solemn Occaſion; keeping the Heart continually in a Praiſing as well as a Praying Frame. *Note* (2.) The Matter for which we are to give Thanks for, *all Things*; that is, Firſt, For all Providences, whether proſperous or adverſe, for Sickneſs as well as Health, God intending our Good by both. Secondly, For all Mercies, for ſparing Mercy, preventing Mercy, recovering Mercy, for common Benefits, for peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Favours, for Mercies received, for Mercies expected, for what we have in Hand, and what we have in Hope. *Note* (3.) The Perſon to whom our Thankſgivings are to be offered, to God and the Father, to God our Creator, to God as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and our Father in him. *Note* (4.) The Perſon thro' whom our Thankſgivings are acceptable unto God, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as all Spiritual Addreſſes, both of Praiſe and Thankſgivings, muſt be offered up to God, ſo their Acceptance with God is only to be expected by or thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

21 Submitting your ſelves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, ſubmit your ſelves unto your own huſbands as unto the Lord. 23 For the huſband is the head of the wife, even as Chriſt is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo *let* the wives *be* to their own huſbands in every thing.

Our Apoſtle having exhorted the *Epheſians* to ſuch general Duties as belong to all Chriſtians, comes now to exhort them to the Practice of relative Duties, as they are Members of Societies, and particularly as they live in a Family-Society one with another, as Huſbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, much of the Life and Power of Religion appearing in the Conſciencious Practice and Performance of Relative Duties. But firſt he gives them a general Direction to *ſubmit themſelves one to another in the Fear of God*; that is, be yielding and mutually condeſcending each to other, ſtooping to the meaneſt Offices of Love and Kindneſs one towards another, and this *in the Fear of God*; that is, either in Obedience to the Command of God, which enjoins this Submiſſion, for when we perform our Duty towards one another acceptably, and as we ought; when we eye the Command of God in what we do; or elſe *in the Fear of God*; that is, making the Fear of God the Rule and Meaſure of our Submiſſion one to another; for we are by no Means bound to ſubmit our ſelves in order to the pleaſing of our Neighbour any farther than is conſiſtent with that Subjection and Obedience which we owe to God. Learn hence, That where that Noble and Divine Principle of the Fear of God prevaileth in the Heart, it will make a Man conſcienciouſly careful of his Duty towards Man; the Fear of God in him will have both the Force of a *Motive* to quicken him up unto, and alſo of a *Rule* to guide and direct him in, that Submiſſion, which in Obedience to God is due and payable to his Neighbours. Having laid down this general Rule, now he come to preſs us to the Practice of particular Duties, *Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own Husbands*, &c. *Note* here, he begins with the Wife's Duty firſt before the Husbands, probably becauſe her Duty of intire Subjection is the moſt difficult Duty, and *that* being conſcienciouſly diſcharged, is a compelling Motive to the Husband to ſet about his Duty in like Manner. *Note* (2.) The particular and ſpecial Duty which the Wife is exhorted to, and that is Submiſſion, *Wives ſubmit your ſelves*. This ſuppoſes the Wife's due Eſteem of, and her affectionate Love unto, her Husband, as the Root of his Submiſſion. *Note* (3.) The Univerſality and Extenſive Nature of the Command, it is to all Wives to pay this Tribute of Subjection to their own Husbands; no Honour, Superiority, or Antecedent Dignity, in the Wife, no perſonal Infirmity, no moral Infirmity, nay, no Error in Religion, can give a Diſcharge from this Obligation; there is no Wife, whatever her Birth and Breeding, whatever her Parts or Priviledges, may be, that is exempted from this Tie of Subjection to her Husband; for the Law of Nature, the Ordinance of God, and her own voluntary Covenant and Promiſe in Marriage, do oblige and bind her to it. Yet *Note* (4.) The Qualification and Manner of this Submiſſion, it muſt be *as unto the Lord*; that is, in Obedience to the Command of the Lord, who has given the Husband Power over the Wife, and required, and will reward her Obedience to him; or elſe *as unto the Lord*, it pointeth out a Similitude, and Likeneſs, and Reſemblance, in the Wife's Subjection to the Husband, with that which they owe to Chriſt the Lord; that is, it muſt not be Feigned, but Sincere; it muſt not be Conſtrain'd, but Willing, from a Complacency taken in the doing of this Duty. And Laſtly, *as unto the Lord*, that is, in all Lawful Things; the Wife is by no Means to obey the Husband in any Commands which are contrary to that ſubmiſſive Obedience which ſhe owes to Chriſt her Supream Lord. Now with this Limitation the Wife in ſubjecting herſelf to her Husband is ſubject unto the Lord. *Note* (5.) The Reaſon given by the Holy Ghoſt for enforcing this Duty of ſubmiſſive Obedience upon Wives. *V.* 23. *For the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church*, &c. That is, the Wife ought to ſubmit herſelf to her Husband becauſe, (1.) He is her Head, and, (2.) Therein doth reſemble Chriſt's Headſhip over his Church. *Obſerve* here, That this Metaphor of an Head applied to the Husband, denotes both the Dignity and Duty of the Husband; it implies his Eminency by reaſon of his Sex, it implies his Authority to govern and direct, as the Head has Power to guide and govern the whole Body; and it points out his Duty as well as his Dignity; as the Head is the Seat of Wiſdom and Knowledge, ſo Husbands ſhould be endowed with greater Meaſures of Knowledge and Prudence, to enable them to guide and govern in the Place God has ſet them. And farther, the Apoſtle would have Wives conſider and obſerve, that God will have ſome Reſemblance of Chriſt's Authority over the Church, held forth in the Husband's Authority over the Wife. Is Chriſt an Head of Dominion and Direction alſo to his Church? So ſhould the Husband be to his Wife; doth Chriſt exerciſe his Dominion and Power over the Church, not Rigidly and Tyrannically, but with Meekneſs and Gentleneſs? So ſhould the Husband rule. In a Word, Is Chriſt the Saviour of the Body Meritoriouſly? So ſhould the Husband be Miniſterially, to defend the Wife from Injuries, to ſupply her Neceſſities, and to improve his whole Power and Authority over her for her Good. *Note* (6.) The Manner of this Subjection ſpecified and declared, as the Church is ſubject, ſo let the Wife be ſubject. Is the Church ſubject to Chriſt Willingly, Chearfully, Dutifully, Delightfully? So let the Wife be ſubject. Doth the Church ſubject itſelf to Chriſt univerſally? So let the *Wife* be ſubject *in all Things*: Not abſolutely in all Things, but in all Things Lawful, Godly and Honeſt; nothing is excepted out of the Wife's Subjection to her Husband, but that which is contrary to her Duty to him who commanded this Subjection; when there appears little Diſcretion in the Husband's Command, then there will appear a great Senſe of Duty in the Wife's Obedience.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it: 26 That he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word, 27 That he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh.

The Apoſtle having propounded the Wife's Duty firſt, recommends the Husband's Duty next; her's was the Duty of Submiſſion, his of Love and entire Affection. This the Apoſtle mentions, becauſe the Husband for want of Love is too ready to abuſe that Sovereignty and Superiority which God has given him over his Wife, by proving rigorous and bitter unto her, therefore ſays he, *Husbands, love your Wives*, that is, with a Special, Peculiar, Conjugal, Love, ſuch as no other muſt ſhare in. This Duty of Love is very Comprehenſive, and it includes a very Affectionate Regard to her, a tender Care over her, Cohabitation with her, Contentment and Satisfaction in her alone, a patient bearing with her Weakneſſes, a prudential hiding of her Infirmities, a providing a Supply of her Wants ſuitably to her Rank, a readineſs to inſtruct and direct her, a willingneſs to pray for her and with her; where true Conjugal Love is found, theſe Duties included will be performed. *Obſerve* next, As the Apoſtle propounded the Church for a Pattern of Subjection to the Wife, ſo he propounds Chriſt as a Pattern of Love to Husbands, *Husbands, love your Wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the Church*; did he love his Church with an active and operative Love, with a real and ſincere Love, with an intire and undivided Love, with a laſting and a conſtant Love, notwithſtanding all his Church's Weakneſſes and Failings? Such ought the Husband's Love to be; that is, every Husband to his own Wife: No Meanneſs of Birth, no Want of Education, no Homelinſes of Perſon, no Frowardneſs of Diſpoſition, in the Wife, will diſcharge the Husband from the Obligation of this Duty towards her; Chriſt's Example has both the Force of an Argument to excite us to it, and is alſo an exact Rule to guide and direct us in it. *Husbands love your Wives, as Chriſt alſo loved the Church.* *Obſerve* farther, the Inſtances and Evidences which Chriſt has given of his Love unto his Church, he gave himſelf for her, *that he might Sanctifie, and Cleanſe, and preſent it to himſelf a Glorious Church, without Spot or Blemiſh.* Here *Note*, (1.) The Church's polluted and impure Condition, ſuppoſed before Chriſt gave himſelf for it; the Church in herſelf was, as the World is, polluted, otherwiſe ſhe had ſtood in no need of Chriſt's Waſhing and Cleanſing. *Note* (2.) The Care of Chriſt to purifie and cleanſe his Church from this Pollution; he gave himſelf for her, that he might ſanctifie and cleanſe her; he loved her, and waſhed her from her Sins in his own Blood. *Note* (3.) The Inſtrumental Means of the Churches Sanctification, it was with the waſhing of Water by the Word; the Word and Sacraments are the great Inſtrumental Means in the Hand of Chriſt, by which he applies the Vertue and Efficacy of his Death for the ſanctifying and cleanſing of his Church and Children. *Note* (4.) The Holy and Glorious Condition which the Church ſhall be found in at the great Marriage-Day, without Spot or Wrinkle; *that he might* at the laſt Day *preſent it to himſelf a Spotleſs* Spouſe, a Glorious Church, having no Spot of Sin, nor Wrinkle of Deformity, or any ſuch imperfect Thing, but be perfectly Beautiful, Holy, and without Blemiſh; intimating, that the Church hath her Spots and Wrinkles now in her Militant State; but when Chriſt ſhall at laſt preſent the Church Triumphantly to himſelf, then ſhall ſhe be like himſelf, without Spot. Bleſſed be God Believers have now a Righteouſneſs in Chriſt without Spot or Wrinkle, then ſhall they have an Holineſs in themſelves without Spot or Wrinkle; nothing of Imperfection cleaving to them, or inhering in them. The Blood of Chriſt has already perfectly juſtified and thoroughly cleanſed Believers from Sin's Guilt, e'er long the Spirit of Chriſt will perfectly cleanſe them from all Sin's Filth. Oh! What a Pure and Spotleſs, what a Perfect and Beautiful, Creature will the Church come out of Chriſt's Hands, and preſented to the Father at the great Day in the ſhining Beauty of perfect Holineſs be? God ſtrengthen our Faith in the Belief of it, and prepare us for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of it.

28 So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himſelf. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh; but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the Church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones.

Our Apoſtle here propounds a farther Argument to inforce this Duty of Love from Husband to Wife, taken from that near Conjunction between them, ſhewing that they are one Fleſh and one Body, not in a Natural, but in a Relative Senſe; and accordingly a Man ſhould ſo love his Wife even as himſelf; doth a Man love himſelf Superlatively, Cordially, Tenderly, Induſtriouſly, Perſeveringly? So ought he to Love his Wife. Will a Man not be out of Love with himſelf, much leſs Hate himſelf, tho' he be deformed, or by ſome Accident maimed? In like manner ought not any natural Defect, or accidental Miſchance, to cauſe a Remiſſion, much leſs a Ceſſation, of the Man's Love unto his own Wife. As it is an unnatural thing for a Man to hate his own Fleſh Perſonal, ſo his own Fleſh Relational. Again, a Man is ſo far from hating his own Fleſh, that he nouriſheth and cheriſheth it with the utmoſt Care and Tenderneſs; in like manner ought he to be Kind to, and Tender over, his Civil Self, the Wife of his Boſom; in Imitation likewiſe of Chriſt's Example, who Nouriſhes and Cheriſhes his Church, as being Fleſh of his own Fleſh, and Bone of his Bone; that is, as near to one another, by a Myſtical and Spiritual Union, as *Adam* and *Eve* were by a Matrimonial Union. Oh Stupendious Priviledge, for Believers and Chriſt to be as one Fleſh! Husband and Wife are not ſo near, Soul and Body are not ſo near, as Chriſt and the Believers are to each other.

31 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wife, and they two ſhall be one fleſh. 32 This is a great myſtery: but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church. 33 Nevertheleſs, let every one of you in particular, ſo love his wife, even as himſelf: and the wife *ſee* that ſhe reverence *her* husband.

Here our Apoſtle uſed a farther Argument to excite the Husband's Love to his eſpouſed Wife, taken from the Law of Marriage, which making them Two one Fleſh in a Civil Senſe, therefore the Man ſhould leave Father and Mother and cleave to his Wife; not that their Obligations ceaſe to their Parents, or as if they were to caſt off Natural Affection to them, but he ſhews that there is a nearer Union betwixt Husband and Wife than betwixt Parents and Child, and that the Bonds of Matrimonial Love are ſtronger than thoſe of Nature. Their being ſaid to be one Fleſh, implies a moſt ſtrict Union, and moſt intimate Communion, whereby they have one Intereſt, common Goods, common Friends, yea, and all Things common, as if they were but one Perſon; but the Apoſtle farther intimates to us at the 31ſt Verſe, that this Matrimonial Union betwixt Man and Wife was deſigned by God, to ſhadow forth and repreſent that Myſtical Union which is betwixt Chriſt and his Church. Doth the Conjugal Union give the Wife an Intereſt in the Eſtate and Honour of the Husband, be ſhe never ſo meanly Deſcended in herſelf? In like manner from the Saints Union with Chriſt does there immediately reſult a Sweet and Bleſſed Communion or Fellowſhip with Chriſt in Graces and Spiritual Priviledges; all that Chriſt is and has is theirs by Communication to them, or Improvement for them; well might the Apoſtle therefore ſay this is a great Myſtery, &c. In the 33d *Verſe* the Apoſtle ſhuts up his Diſcourſe upon this Argument with a repeated Exhortation to the Husband to Love his Wife, and to the Wife to Reverence her Husband, *let every one of you in particular ſo Love his Wife, even as himſelf*; *ſo Love*, that is, with an Extenſive Love, reaching the whole Perſon, Soul and Body; with an Intenſive Love, above all other Perſons and Relatives whatſoever; with an hearty Love, without Diſſimulation; with an Holy Love, without Pollution; with a conſtant Love, without Alteration; and with great Love, beyond Compariſon—— *And let the Wife ſee that ſhe Reverence her Husband*. The great Duty which the Wife owes to her Husband is *Reverence*. This is made up of Three Ingredients, namely, Eſtimation, Love and Fear; the Wife that Reverences her Husband eſteems him, and dares not think meanly of him; her Eſteem of him provokes her Love unto him, and her Love of him is accompanied with an ingenuous Fear to offend and grieve him; and the Wife expreſſes this Reverence in her Geſtures, by a reſpectful Demeanour towards him, in her Speeches to him, when with her, and of him, when abſent from her, always mentioning him with Reſpect and Honour; in her Actions, by complying with his Deſires, by following his Directions, by hearkening to his Reproofs, and by her Chearful and Reſpectful Behaviour towards him at all Times, and in all Places, as well at Home as Abroad, before the World; and that the Wife may thus Reverence her Husband, let her be earneſt with God in Prayer, for Wiſdom and Underſtanding, for Prudence and Patience, for Humility and Meekneſs; a Proud Spirit would not agree with an Angel, but the Humble will agree with any Perſon.

CHAP. VI.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother, (which is the firſt commandment with promiſe,) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.

Our Apoſtle in the foregoing Chapter began to treat of Relative Duties, and concluded that Chapter with the Duties of Husbands and Wives; he begins this with the Duty of Children and Parents each to other; and here we have obſervable that he begins with the Duty of the Inferiour firſt, of the Child to the Parents, as he did before with the Duty of the Wife, *Ch.* 5. 22. He firſt puts them in mind of their Duty who are to obey, that being the more difficult Duty, and the Perſons concerned in it uſually more defective, and the Work leſs eaſie and pleaſing to our Nature. *Obſerve* (2.) The Important Duty which Children are directed to, the Duty of Obedience and Honour. *Children, Obey, Honour your Father and Mother*; this Duty of Honour and Obedience implies inward Reverence, and an awful Eſtimation of their Perſons, and honouring of them in Heart, Speech and Behaviour; it implies alſo outward Obſervance, a Pious Regard to their Inſtructions, executing all their Commands which are not Sinful, depending on their Counſels, and following their good Examples, owning with Thankfulneſs their Parents Care and Concern for them, and covering the Failings and Infirmities found in them. *Obſerve* (3.) The Object of this Duty, both Parents; not the Father alone, or the Mother only, but both Father and Mother jointly. Children, obey your *Parents*, Honour thy *Father* and *Mother*; as Obedience belongeth to all Children, of what Age, or Sex, or Condition, ſoever, ſo are Children obliged to obey both Parents, the Mother as well as the Father; yea, ſhe is named firſt, *Levit.* 19. 3. her Sex being weaker, ſhe is the more ſubject to Contempt; and becauſe the Mother in Old Age is liable to be deſpiſed, God has particularly guarded about her, by his poſitive and expreſs Command to free her from Contempt, *Prov.* 23. 22. ſaying, *Hearken to thy Father which begot thee*, and deſpiſe not *thy Mother when ſhe is Old*. *Obſerve* (4.) The Noble Principle from whence this Obedience in Children to Parents ought to flow, namely, from the Fear of God; obey them *in the Lord*, that is, in Obedience to his Command, and in all Things agreeable to his Will, fearing his Diſpleaſure in caſe of Diſobedience; let not your Obedience be barely Natural and Prudential, but Chriſtian and Religious. *Obſerve* (5.) The Arguments uſed by our Apoſtle to excite to the Practice of this Duty. The firſt Argument is drawn from the Equity, of it, *This is Right*; that is, the Law of God and Nature requires it. The great Motive which ought to excite us to the Practice of any Duty, is not ſo much the Advantageouſneſs, as the Righteouſneſs and Equity of the Duty, as being commanded by God, and well-pleaſing in his Sight; *Children, Obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is Right*. A Second Argument is, becauſe this is the Firſt Commandment of the Second Table, which has a particular Promiſe annext to it: *This is the firſt Commandment with Promiſe*, that is, with an explicit and expreſs Promiſe; for every Commandment hath both a Promiſe and a Threatning implied in it, and annexed to it; but this is the Firſt Commandment with a Promiſe expreſt, and that is a Promiſe of long Life, *that thy Days may be long*; and this Promiſe is always fulfilled, either in Kind, or in Equivalency, either by enjoying a long Life on Earth, or a better Life in Heaven. Learn hence, That altho' our firſt and chief Motive to Obedience be the Equity and Righteouſneſs of what God requires, yet we may as a Secondary Encouragement have reſpect to the promiſed Reward, and particularly to the Temporal Advantage of our Obedience. Long Life is here promiſed to Children as an Encouragement to Obedience, which is in itſelf a very valuable Mercy and Bleſſing; and having eyed the Command of God in the firſt place, they may and ought to have reſpect to the Recompence of Reward in the next place.

4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Here the Duty of both Parents to their Children is laid down. Where *Note*, (1.) The Apoſtle's Dehortation, or negative Precept, *provoke not your Children to Wrath*; that is, be not too ſevere towards them, abuſe not your parental Power over them, provoke them not, nor imbitter their Spirits againſt you, by denying them what is convenient for them, by inveighing with bitter Words againſt them, by unjuſt, unſeaſonable, or immoderate Correction of them. To provoke or ſtir up any to Sin, eſpecially Young ones, and particularly our Children, renders us guilty before the Lord of all that Sin which they have committed thro' our Provocation. *Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath. Note* (2.) St. *Paul*'s poſitive injunction given unto Parents, *bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. Where (1.) He directs to their Education, *bring them up*. (2.) To join Nurture and Admonition with their Education; *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; that is, give them good inſtruction, with-hold not early Correction, ſet before them good Example, begin with them betimes, and ſuffer not the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, to beſpeak them for their Service, before you engage them for God's; and remember that there is a Tie of Nature, a Tie of Intereſt, and a Tie of Religion, which Parents are under thus to do: *Provoke not your Children to Wrath, but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition*, &c.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your maſters, according to the fleſh, with fear *and* trembling, in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt: 6 Not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing ſervice, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Obſerve here, (1.) The general Duty incumbent upon Servants, that of Obedience *to their Maſters according to the Fleſh*, that is, in Temporal things only; obey your Earthly Maſters in things pertaining to the World, leaving the Soul and Conſcience to God only, who alone is the Sovereign Lord of it. Chriſtian Liberty is not inconſiſtent with civil Subjection; ſuch as are God's free Men, may be Servants to Men, tho' not the Servants of Men, and as Servants Obedience is their Duty in all lawful things. *Obſerve* (2.) The Qualification and Properties of this Obedience which is due and payable from Servants to Maſters. (1.) It muſt be with *Fear and Trembling*, that is, with Fear of diſpleaſing them; yet they muſt not act barely from Fear, but out of Love, both to God and their Maſter. (2.) It muſt be in *Singleneſs of Heart*, in great Simplicity and Sincerity of Spirit, without Guile, Hipocriſie and Diſſimulation. (3.) They muſt *eye* their great Maſter in Heaven in all the Services they perform to their Maſters here on Earth, *not with eye-Service*. But how ſhould Servants have an eye to their great Maſter in Heaven? *Anſ.* They ſhould have an eye to the Preſence of their great Maſter, to the Glory of their great Maſter, to the Command of their great Maſter, and to the Aſſiſtance and Acceptance of their Maſter in Heaven. Learn hence, That our eying of God in all the Services we perform, and making him the Judge and Spectator of all our Actions, will be a ſingular help to make us Sincere and Single-hearted in all we Do, and in all we Deſign. Again, (4.) Their Service muſt be performed *with good Will*, that is, with Chearfulneſs and Delight, not Grudgingly, Unpleaſantly, or from fear of Puniſhment only; eying the Lord Chriſt in all that Service they do for Men. Learn hence, That the Meaneſt and Baſeſt Services and Imployments in the Place and Station which God ſets us in, being done with right Qualifications, with Faithfulneſs and Chearfulneſs, from right Motives, and for right Ends, it is Service done to Chriſt, and as ſuch ſhall be Accepted and Rewarded by him, *with good Will, doing Service as to the Load, and not to Men. Obſerve* Laſtly, the Reward which the Holy Ghoſt propounds as an Encouragement to Poor Servants in their Obedience to their Maſters, and that is, the Aſſurance of a Reward from God, whatever Diſappointment they may meet with from Men, *knowing that whatever a Man* doth out of Obedience to the Lord, a Reward of the ſame ſhall he receive, whether he be a Poor Bond-Servant or a Free-Man and Maſter. *Note* here, how the baſeſt Drudgery of Servants, when performed in Obedience to God, and with an eye at his Glory, is called here *a good* Work, and ſhall not fail of a good Reward? *Whatſoever good thing any Man doth*; when a Poor Servant Scoure a Ditch, or does the meaneſt Drudgery, God will reward him for it, for he looketh not at the Beauty, Splendour, and Greatneſs of the Work, but at the Integrity and Honeſty of the Workman; the Mean, and outwardly Baſe Works of Poor Servants, when Honeſt and Sincere, ſhall find Acceptance with God, and be Rewarded by him, as well as the more Splendid, Honourable and Expenſive Works of their Rich Maſters; *the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, whethor he be Bond or Free.*

9 And ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them, forbearing threatning: knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven, neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.

Here the Maſter's Duty to his Servant is directed to, both generally, and more particularly; in general he directs Maſters to *do the ſame things to* their Servants, not the ſame things for Kind, but for Manner of doing them; that is, in Obedience to the ſame Command of God, with an Eye to the ſame Glory of God, with the ſame Singleneſs of Heart, with the ſame Love and Good-will. Here *Note*, That the greateſt Maſter, yea, the greateſt Prince and Potentate upon Earth, lye under Obligations in point of Duty to their Servants and Inferiors; and it ought to be as much their Care to diſcharge their Duty ſincerely, cheerfully, with Good-will, and eying their great Maſter in Heaven, as it concerns the pooreſt Servant to obey them in and after the ſame Manner; *ye Maſters, do the ſame things unto them. Next* follow the particularly Directions given to Maſters, namely, to forbear Threatnings, that is, let them not exerciſe their Authority over them Imperiouſly, and with Rigour, but Mildly, and with Gentleneſs: Rule them not Tyrannically, but Govern with Moderation and Temper; Lord! how ordinary is it for Men in Place and Power a little above others, to inſult over and trample upon others, forgetting that there is one above them, whom they muſt be accountable unto themſelves; forbearing Threatnings, knowing that your Maſter alſo is in Heaven, *with whom there is no reſpect of Perſons.* Here we have Almighty God deſcribed Two ways, (1.) From his magnificence and ſtately Palace, in which his illuſtrious Glory ſhineth; *your Maſter is in Heaven*, not as if he were only there, and not elſewhere, but eminently there, though every where elſe. (2.) God is here deſcribed by his Juſtice and Impartiality in judging, *there is no reſpect of Perſons with him*, that is, when the Rich Maſter and Poor Servant come to ſtand upon a Level before him, he will not reſpect either of them for their outward Circumſtances, but as a Juſt Judge reward them both aceording to their Works. Thus our Apoſtle concludes his Exhortation to the Practice and Performance of relative Duties, between Husband and Wife, Parent and Child, Maſter and Servant. He now cloſes his Epiſtle with a ſpecial Exhortation to all Chriſtians, to look upon themſelves as Spiritual Soldiers, liſted under Chriſt's exalted Banner, engaged in a continued Warfare with the World, and the Prince of the World, and accordingly he beſpeaks them in Martial Phraſe to the End of the Chapter.

10 Finally, my brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil.

Our Apoſtle calling us here forth to the Chriſtian Warfare gives forth firſt the Word of Encouragement to Battle, *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in his mighty Power*. A Chriſtian above all Men needs Reſolution, and a daring Courage; if he be poſſeſt with Fear, he is unfit to go into the Field, if diſpirited with ſtrong impreſſions of Danger, how unready for the Encounter? Cowards win neither Earth nor Heaven. But where lies the Chriſtians Strength? Verily in the Lord, and not in himſelf; the Strength of the whole Hoſt of Saints lies in the Lord of Hoſts, and accordingly it ought to be the Chriſtian's great Care in all Difficulties and Dangers to ſtrengthen his Faith on the Almighty Power of God. *Obſerve* (2.) A Direction given how a Saint may come to be ſtrong in the Lord, namely, by putting on the whole Armour of God; that is, by being cloathed with the following Graces, which are hereafter mentioned in this Chapter, as the Shield of Faith, the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs, the Sword of the Spirit, *&c.* Now theſe are called Armour of God becauſe they are of his Appointment and Inſtitution, and of his Make and Conſtitution, and this Armour muſt be put on, that is, our Grace kept in continual Exerciſe; it is one thing to have Armour in the Houſe, and another to have it buckled on in the Field; it is not ſufficient to have Grace in the Habit and Principle, but it is Grace in Act and Exerciſe that muſt conquer Spiritual Enemies. *Obſerve* (3.) A Reaſon aſſigned why the Chriſtian is to be thus compleatly Armed, *that he may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil*; intimating that the Devil is one chief Enemy we have to combate with in the Chriſtian Warfare, and that this Enemy is a wily, ſubtil Enemy, diſcovering his dangerous Policy, firſt by tempting and alluring into Sin, and then by vexing and tormenting for Sin: But Satan with all his Wits and Wiles ſhall never finally vanquiſh (tho' he may in a particular Battle overcome) a Soul clad with Spiritual Armour; nay, he that hath this Armour of God on, ſhall certainly vanquiſh and overcome him. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt, *&c.*

12 For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high *places.*

The Apoſtle mentioned our Enemy in the former Verſe, here he deſcribes the Combate in this Verſe, we Wreſtle: A Chriſtian's Life is a perpetual Warfare, a continual wreſtling; but with what? And with whom? *Anſw.* Negatively, ***not with Fleſh and Blood***; that is, not only or chiefly with Fleſh and Blood, with Humane Enemies, but we muſt Grapple and contend with Angelical Power, with Devils, who are Principalities and Powers, *&c.* *Note*, here how the Devil and his Angels are deſcribed, (1.) By their Prince-like Authority and Government which they exerciſe in the World, called therefore Principalities and Powers, to denote that Satan is a Great and Mighty Prince, a Prince that has the Heart and Knee of all his Subjects. (2.) By the Seat of his Empire, he rules in this World, not in the other; the higheſt the Devil can go is the Air, Heaven fears him not, and he is ***a Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World***, that is, in ſuch Sinners as labour under the Darkneſs of Sin and Ignorance. (3.) Satan and his Angels are here deſcribed by their Spiritual Nature, called Spiritual Wickedneſſes, that is, wicked Spirits, intimating to us that the Devils are Spirits, that they are Spirits extremely Wicked; and that theſe wicked Spirits do chiefly annoy Chriſtians with, and provoke them to Spiritual Wickedneſſes. (4.) They are deſcribed by their Reſidence or Place of Abode in high Places, that is, in the Air, of which he is called the Prince; from the whole, *Note*, how plainly Chriſt our Captain deals with all his Soldiers, and the Difference between Chriſt's dealing with his Followers, and Satan with his; Satan durſt not let Sinners know who that God is whom they fight againſt, but Chriſt is not afraid to ſhew his Saints their Enemy in all his Power and Strength; well he might, becauſe the Weakneſſes of God are ſtronger than the Powers of Hell.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs; 15 And your feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all Saints;

Obſerve here, (1.) How our Apoſtle, having deſcribed the Enemy in the foregoing Verſe, and ſet him forth in all his formidable Strength and Power, comes forth at the Head of his *Epheſian* Camp, gives them a freſh Alarm, and bids them Arm, Arm! take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand in the evil Day; ***Intimating***, that an evil Day is before us, that it will be of mighty Advantage to us to be able to ſtand in the evil Day: And that without the help of Divine Armour we cannot ſtand in that Day. The ſanctifying Graces of God's Spirit are this Armour; he that has not theſe, let his common Gifts be never ſo Gay and Glorious, he will never hold out to fight the laſt Battle, but fall into the Enemy's Hand, and be taken Captive by him at his Will. *Obſerve* next how our Apoſtle comes to deſcribe the Armour of God piece by piece, which the Chriſtian is to put on before he takes the Field againſt the Enemy; here is the Soldier's Girdle, his Breaſt-plate, his Shooe, his Shield, his Helmet and his Sword, all deſcribed; his offenſive and defenſive Weapons, wherewith Soldiers of old uſed to Arm their Bodies from Head to Foot; now the Apoſtle aſſigneth to particular Graces a uſe and excellency anſwerable to theſe Pieces of Armour, and ſhews that there is ſome Reſemblance between every Grace and that Piece of the Bodily Armour, to which it is here compared; but obſervable it is, that although there be Pieces of Armour for all other Parts of the Body, here is none aſſigned for the Back nor Back-parts, becauſe there muſt be no running away; no hope of eſcaping by flight in this Spiritual Warfare; if we turn our back upon our Enemy, we lie open to his Darts, and are in danger of Deſtruction; if we fight on we have our Second in the Field, and are ſure of Victory, provided we enter the Field in Order, and ſtand to our Arms, maintain our Watch, keep our Ground, and appear Armed ***Cap-a-Pe*** from Head to Foot, with the ſeveral Pieces of Armour here reccommended; the ***Firſt*** of which is the Girdle of Truth, ***ver.*** 14. ***having your Loins girt about with Truth***, that is, ſincerity of Heart. Doth a Girdle or Belt adorn the Soldier? So doth Sincerity adorn the Chriſtian. Doth the Girdle ſtrengthen the Soldier's Loins? So doth Sincerity ſtrengthen the Soul and every Grace in the Soul; 'tis ſincere Faith, that is, ſtrong Faith; 'tis ſincere Love, that is, mighty Love. ***Secondly, The Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs***, by which is to be underſtood the Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs; but why is this compared to a Breaſt-plate? ***Anſ.*** Becauſe as the Breaſt-plate defends the moſt principal Parts of the Body, where the Heart and other Vitals are cloſely coucht together; thus Holineſs preſerves the Soul and Conſcience, the principal Part of a Chriſtian, from the Wounds and Harms of Sin, which is the Weapon that Satan uſes to give Conſcience its deadly Stab with. The ***Third*** Piece of Chriſtian Armour is the ſpiritual Shooe, fitted to the Soldier's Foot, and worn by him ſo long as he keeps the Field againſt Sin and Satan; the Soldiers way is ſometimes full of ſharp Stones, and ſometimes by the Enemy ſtrowed with ſharp Iron Pikes ſtruck into the Ground; the Soldier will ſoon be wounded or foundred if not well ſhod, therefore the direction here is, let your ***Feet be ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of Peace***, that is, maintaining an holy readineſs of Spirit, and a reſolute frame of Heart, to undergo any ſuffering and endure any hardſhip in your Chriſtian Warfare; which frame of Spirit being wrought in us by the Doctrine of the Goſpel, is therefore called the ***preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.*** The ***Fourth*** Piece of Armour recommended above all to be put on is the Shield of Faith; this is that Grace by which we believe the truth of God's Word in general, and depend upon Chriſt in particular, as crucified for Pardon and Life, and this upon the warrant of the Promiſe. But why is Faith compared to a Shield? ***Anſ.*** Becauſe as the Shield defends the whole Body, ſo Faith defends the whole Man, the Underſtanding from Error, the Conſcience from Seareedneſs, the Will from Rebellion againſt the Will and Command of God: And as the Shield defends the whole Armour as well as the Soldier's whole Body; it defends the Breaſt-plate as well as the Breaſt; ſo Faith is our Armour upon Armour, a Grace that preſerves all other Graces whatſoever. The ***Fifth*** Piece of Armour is mentioned ***ver.*** 17. ***The Helmet of Salvation***, by which the Grace of Hope is underſtood, which has for its object Salvation, called therefore the Hope of Salvation; Salvation is the ultimate and comprehenſive Object of the Chriſtian's expectation; and it is compared to an Helmet, becauſe as the Helmet defends the Head, ſo doth the Hope of Salvation defend the Soul; it keeps the Head above Water, and makes the Chriſtian Bold and Brave: Hope is a Grace of ſingular Uſe and excellent Service to a Chriſtian in the whole Courſe of his Chriſtian Warfare, it puts him upon noble Services, it keeps him Patient under the greateſt Sufferings, and it will enable the Soul to wait long for the performance of Divine Promiſes. The *Sixth* Piece of Spiritual Armour is the Sword, *ver.* 17. The former were defenſive, but this is both an offenſive and defenſive Weapon, ſuch is the Word of God: But why compar'd to a Sword? *Anſ.* In regard both of its Neceſſity and Excellency, the Sword was ever eſteemed a moſt neceſſary and uſeful Part of the Soldier's Furniture, of ſuch Uſefulneſs, Neceſſity and Excellency is the Word of God, by which the Chriſtian doth defend himſelf and offend his Enemies: But why is it called the Sword of the Spirit? *Anſ.* Becauſe the Spirit was the Author of it, the Spirit of God is the interpreter of it; and it is the Spirit that gives the Word its Efficacy and Power in the Soul; the Word of God contained in the Scriptures is the Sword, by which the Spirit of God enables his Saints to overcome and vanquiſh all their Enemies. The *Seventh* and *Laſt* Piece of Spiritual Armour is mentioned, *v.* 18. and that is Prayer, *praying always with all Prayer*, &c. Here *Note* (1.) The Time for Prayer, praying *always*; the Sorts and Kinds of Prayer, *praying always, with all Prayer*; the inward Principle of Prayer, from which it muſt flow, *in the Spirit*; the Guard to ſet about the Duty of Prayer, *watching thereunto*; the Conſtancy to be exerciſed in the Duty, *with all Perſeverence*; the comprehenſiveneſs of the Duty, *for all Saints.* Learn, That Prayer is a neceſſary Duty for all Chriſtians, and to be uſed with all other Pieces of Spiritual Armour by the Chriſtian Soldier.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel: 20 For which I am an ambaſſador in bonds: that therein I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak

Our Apoſtle having directed the *Epheſians* to the Duty of Prayer in general, deſires them here to pray for himſelf in particular. Where *Obſerve*, (1.) His Exhortation and Direction to pray for himſelf, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpel, *and for me.* Learn hence, That the Miniſters of Chriſt are and ought in an eſpecial manner to be remembred in the Saints Prayers. *Obſerve* (2.) The Mercy which he deſires them to pray for, *that utterance may be given*; namely, a readineſs to deliver to Others what God has handed in to Us; Miniſters depend upon God for Utterance, and it is their Peoples Duty to be earneſt with God to give it to them. *Obſerve* (3.) The End why he deſires this Utterance, *that he may open his Mouth boldly to make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel.* Where *Note*, the ſublime Nature of the Goſpel, it is a Myſtery. (2.) The Work of a Goſpel Miniſter, and that is, to make known that Goſpel Myſtery. (3.) The Manner how he is to perform this Work, *that I may open my Mouth boldly*; namely, In aſſerting Truth, and in reproving Sin, with a Wiſe and Prudent, with a Meek and Humble, with an Active and Zealous Boldneſs. *Obſerve* (4.) A double Argument to back and enforce his Requeſt, to pray for him (1.) From his Office, *for which I am an Ambaſſador*: The Miniſters of the Goſpel are God's Ambaſſadors, and ſhall not their People pray for the Succeſs of their Embaſſies? (2.) From his afflicted State; he was an *Ambaſſador in bonds*; his Zeal for God and his Truth confined him to a Priſon, he preach'd himſelf into a Goal, well therefore might they pray for him who had now loſt his Liberty, and ſoon after was to loſe his Life for *them*; no Prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the Hands and encourage the Hearts of ſuch as ſuffer Tribulation and Perſecution for the ſake of Chriſt; *pray for me, that I may make known the Myſteries of the Goſpel, for which I am an Ambaſſador in bonds.*

21 But that ye alſo may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus a beloved brother, and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Obſerve here, *Firſt*, The tender Love and affectionate Regard which St. *Paul* bare to theſe *Epheſians* in the midſt of his Sufferings, and during his Impriſonment, he not only wrote, but ſent to them; no doubt the Apoſtle had but few, very few faſt Friends with him at *Rome*, whom he could repoſe an intire Confidence in, and receive great Conſolation from, however he will deny himſelf to ſerve them: A faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is ſo tenderly affectionate towards his Flock, that he prefers their Spiritual Edification before his own private and particular Advantage; tho' St. *Paul* was now a Priſoner, and under a daily expectation of Death, and had few to attend him, yet he ſends one of his moſt beloved Friends away to them, chuſing rather himſelf to want an Attender, than that they ſhould want a Comforter; nothing better becomes a Miniſter of Chriſt than a publick Spirit. *Obſerve* (2.) the Character of the Perſon whom St. *Paul* ſent unto them, he is deſcribed, (1.) By his Name, *Tychicus*, (2.) From his State, he was a Brother, that is, a Chriſtian, a beloved Brother, a Brother in Chriſt. (3.) By his Office, he was a Miniſter, yea, a faithful Miniſter in the Lord, that is, in the Work of the Lord, between whom and St. *Paul* there was a ſweet Harmony, an happy Union of Hearts, a joint Care and Endeavour in carrying on the Intereſt of Chriſt amongſt the Churches: Behold how Good and Pleaſant a thing it is when Miniſters of Chriſt are dear to each other, when inſtead of Diviſions, Emulations and Strife amongſt them, they can give Teſtimonials of each other as well deſerving, without endeavouring to conceal and obſcure the Gifts and Graces of God, which are eminent in any of their Fellow-Labourers, on purpoſe only to ſet off themſelves, that their own Performances may be the more taken notice of. St. *Paul* was far from this Spirit, as appears by the Character which, upon a fit Occaſion, he gave of *Tychicus*. *Obſerve* (3.) The Deſign and End which St. *Paul* had in ſending *Tychicus* unto them, and that was Twofold. (1.) That he might acquaint them with St. *Paul*'s Condition and State, *that ye may know my Affairs*, how I do, and what I do, I have ſent *Tychicus* to declare unto you all things. What, all things without exception? Yes, both Doings and Sufferings, the Apoſtle was aſhamed of neither. Learn thence, That the Life and Converſation of Miniſters, both publick and private, muſt and ought to be ſuch, that they need not be aſhamed to have it known, or concerned that the Church ſhould know what they do, how they manage, to the intent that their People may be edified by their Converſation, as well as inſtructed by their Preaching, *Tychicus ſhall declare unto you all things.* The *Second* End St. *Paul* had in ſending *Tychicus* from himſelf to the *Epheſians*, was that he might *comfort their Hearts*: But how could *Tychicus* do this? Theſe ways, (1.) By making known to them the true Cauſe of his Sufferings. St. *Paul*'s Enemies had laid heavy things to his Charge, theſe might perhaps fly as far as *Epheſus*; now tho' the Apoſtle regarded little what the wicked World ſaid of him, yet he deſired to be ſet right in the Thoughts of the Churches, and accordingly ſends *Tychicus* to acquaint them with the cauſe of his Impriſonment. (2.) To keep them from diſcouragement, and being inordinately caſt down at the report of his Sufferings: No doubt St. *Paul*'s Chain entred into their Souls, and his Sufferings were their Sorrow, he therefore ſends *Tychicus* to prevent their immoderate Sorrow and Mourning upon his account. (3.) To comfort their Hearts with the report of that Holy joy and chearfulneſs of Spirit which was found with him in and under all his Sufferings. O! 'tis an excellent ſight to behold the Saints at liberty, mourning over their afflicted Brethren, and them that are Sufferers, become Comforters of them that are at Liberty. Lord! never doth thy Holy Religion appear more Glorious, than when thy Miniſters commend it by their Suffering for it, and no way can they commend it higher than by an Holy, Humble, Chearfulneſs of Spirit in their Suffering for it; thy Miniſters preach with far greater advantage from a Priſon, than they can from a Pulpit. (4.) Might not St. *Paul* ſend *Tychicus* now to the Church at *Epheſus*, to engage the Churches to pray with earneſtneſs for himſelf, as well as to comfort them? Oh! none ſo coveteous of Prayers as the Miniſters of Chriſt, and no Miniſters like ſuffering Miniſters. St. *Paul* ſets all the Churches at work to pray for him in Priſon, and great reaſon for it; a Priſon has its temptation as well as a Palace; when Man plays the Perſecutor the Devil forgets not to be a Tempter; ſometimes he will attempt to ſoften them with impreſſions of Fear, at another time he hopes to overcome them, and weaken their Courage by their Friends Tears and Entreaties; ſometimes the Devil hopes to imbitter a Suffering Saints Spirit againſt his Perſecutors, and to ſowre them with the leaven of Malice and Wrath. O! 'tis no eaſie matter to receive Evil, and yet wiſh none to him from whoſe Hands we have received it; to reſerve Love for him that ſhews Wrath and Hatred to us is a glorious, but a difficult Work. But if all this fails, yet the Devil hopes to blow him up with Pride, and a high Conceit of himſelf, who dares ſuffer when others ſhrink, and is ready to lay down his Head when others pull in their Heads, and ſeek to ſave themſelves in a whole Skin. Pride is a Salamander that can live in the very flames of Martyrdom; if any Saint need the Humility of many Saints, it is he that is called to ſuffer for Chriſt. St. *Paul* was very ſenſible of this, he well knew that a ſuffering Condition is full of Temptation, that a Chriſtian's Srength to carry him thro' it is not in his own keeping; God muſt help, or the ſtouteſt Champion will quail: he alſo knows, that Prayer is the beſt Means to fetch in that help, and accordingly St. *Paul* here ſends *Tychicns* to *Epheſus*, to engage the Auxiliary Forces of the Saints Prayers on Earth, and the *Poſſe Cœli* from Heaven, that he might glorifie God in a Suffering Hour.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Cloſe and Concluſion of this excellent Epiſtle, he ſhuts it up with very fervent and affectionate Wiſhes and Prayers for them. (1.) He wiſhes the Brethren, the converted Chriſtians in and about *Epheſus*, *Peace*, Peace with God, Peace with Conſcience, Peace eſpecially one with another, and all manner of outward Proſperity comprehended in the Word Peace. (2.) Mutual Love among themſelves. (3.) The Grace of Faith, the Fountain of the former; all which he wiſhes from God the Father, not excluding but including the Son and Holy Ghoſt, and from Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, through vertue of whoſe Merit and Interceſſion all ſaving Benefits are conveyed unto Believers; St. *Paul's* Example is inſtructive to the Miniſters of Chriſt in all ſucceeding Ages. Would we have our Miniſterial Endeavours attended with manifeſt Succeſs? We muſt be much in Prayer, in ſerious and fervent Prayer to God, to work thoſe Graces in our People, *Faith*, *Love*, and *Holineſs*, which we have been by our Miniſtry recommending to their Care and Practice; that Miniſter who is moſt prayerful is uſually moſt ſucceſsful.

24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Amen.

Still our Apoſtle goes on praying; he began and cloſes his Epiſtle with Prayer, and the Bleſſings prayed for are Grace and Peace; Peace in the former Verſe comprehending all temporal Felicity, and Grace in this, comprehending the ſpecial Favour and Loving-kindneſs of God; this he prays may be the Portion of all thoſe that Love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity or Incorruption, as the Word ſignifies, that is, not for Time only, but for Eternity; not in Show and Appearance only, but in Reality. Sincere Love to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is a ſure Character and undoubted Mark of ſuch a Perſon as has found Grace in God's ſight, and is very high in the Divine Favour. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he doth not ſay with a Seraphim's, but with a Sincere Love. *Queſt.* But when and how may a Perſon know that he loves Chriſt in great Sincerity? *Anſw.* If Chriſt be enthroned in thy Heart as a Chief Commander; if he be eſteemed by thee as thy chiefeſt Excellency, and thy choiceſt Treaſure; if he be thy chiefeſt Delight and Joy; and if he be thy chiefeſt Refuge, unto which thou flieſt in all Dangers and Diſtreſſes; thou may'ſt conclude thy ſupreme Love is placed upon him: That thou loveſt him in Sincerity; and the more thou Loveſt him, the more Lovely wilt thou be unto him, and the more will thy Heart be let out in Deſires after him, and in fervent Longings for the full Fruition and final Injoyment of him; for thoſe whom we Love, we long to be with.

Come then, Lord! down to Me,
Or take me up to Thee.

THE

THE
Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

St. Paul *being warned by the Holy Ghoſt to go into* Macedonia *and preach the Goſpel, as we find,* Acts 16. *he plants firſt a Church at* Philippi, *a principal City in* Macedonia, *ſo called from* Philip *King of* Macedon, *who beautified and enlarged it.*

But St. Paul's *Charge being to preach the Goſpel to all the Gentiles, he travels from Place to Place till he came at* Rome, *where he was in Bonds, and conſequently in Neceſſity and Streights; which the* Philippians *underſtanding, they ſend* Epaphroditus, *their Biſhop or Chief Miniſter to him, with a liberal Contribution to ſupply his Wants: By whom St.* Paul *ſends this affectionate Letter to them, partly to teſtifie his Thankfulneſs for the Relief received from them, but principally to confirm them in the Faith, to prevent their being offended at his Sufferings for the Goſpel, to encourage them to walk worthy of the Goſpel, to warn them againſt Seducers and judaizing Teachers, and to quicken them to divers Chriſtian Duties: And ſo concludes his Epiſtle with particular Salutations, and an Apoſtolical Benediction.*

CHAP. I.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this firſt Chapter, is to encourage the Philippians *to Conſtancy in the Faith, to Perſeverance in Holineſs; not to be diſcouraged at his Sufferings for the Goſpel, ſeeing Chriſtianity had already gained very much, and would, he was very confident, gain much more by the Sufferings he underwent for the ſake of the Goſpel. Accordingly he exhorts them to Courage and Conſtancy, by ſeveral weighty Arguments, to the end of the Chapter.*

PAul and Timotheus, the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus, which are at Philippi, with the biſhops and deacons:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Penman of this Epiſtle, St. *Paul*, joining *Timotheus* with him in the Salutation, becauſe his Companion and Fellow-labourer, and one that had aſſiſted in the inſtructing of the *Philippians*, and was a Perſon much valued and eſteemed by them. *Obſerve* (2.) The great Modeſty of St. *Paul* in the Character he gives of himſelf, he doth not ſtile himſelf here an Apoſtle, but the Servant of Jeſus Chriſt; in his other Epiſtles which he wrote alone, he ſtiles himſelf an Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 1. *Gal.* 1. 1, *&c.* He doth not ſay here, *Paul* an Apoſtle, and *Timotheus* a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt, magnifying himſelf above *Timothy*, but ſets himſelf upon a Level with him, ſaying, *Paul and Timotheus, the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.* Learn hence, (1.) That true Humility teaches Chriſtians to ſpeak ſparing of themſelves, of their own Authority and Credit, except upon a juſt and neceſſary Occaſion, and when weighty Reaſons do urge and oblige them to it. Learn (2.) That the Miniſters and Diſpenſers of the Goſpel are, in a ſpecial manner the Servants of Jeſus Chriſt, wholly devoted to his Service, and diſcharging themſelves faithfully in the performance of it. *Obſerve* (3.) The Superſcription of this Epiſtle, or the Perſons to whom it was directed, *To all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus*, in general, *which were at Philippi, and to the Biſhops and Deacons, to all the ſaints at Philippi:* So he calls them, becauſe they were all Holy by viſible Profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by real Sanctification, being inherently as well as externally Holy; and the Denomination is here taken from the better, tho' not the greater Part, for whoſe ſake the whole Community are here called Saints. But why *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus*? Becauſe as it is neceſſary to make a Man internally Holy, that he be in Chriſt Jeſus by real implantation; ſo to denominate a Man externally and federally Holy requires a viſible Profeſſion, and an external Union with Chriſt, *John* 15. 2. In particular, this Epiſtle is directed to the *Biſhops and Deacons*; they were both the Churches Overſeers, the Biſhops to overſee and inſpect the Lives and Manners of Perſons, the Deacons to overſee the Neceſſities of Perſons, and to ſerve the Church in taking care of the Poor. *Note* here, the great and ſpecial Care which our Holy Lord has taken of his Church, in appointing ſtated Officers to undertake the overſight of his whole Family, to rule and govern, to direct and inſtruct it; yea, not only has he appointed Officers for the overſight of the Souls of his People, but others to inſpect their Bodily Neceſſities, that thoſe who are indigent might be ſupplied by their Care, and the Charity of the Church. To the Saints at *Philippi*, *with the Biſhops and Deacons.*

2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Grace from God the Father, or Grace from God as a Father; *intimating*, that God beſtows not his Grace as a Creator, but as a Father, as a Father in Chriſt. And *Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; he being the Purchaſer of our Peace, he upon whom was laid the Chaſtiſement of our Peace, and in whom, and for whoſe ſake, God becomes Reconciled to us, and at Peace with us. Learn hence, That ſuch as have received moſt Grace from God, do yet ſtand in need of farther Meaſures, and freſh Supplies of it: Grace to pardon Sin, and Grace to ſubdue Sin. (2.) That Peace, as well as Grace, may and ought to be the Subject of a Chriſtian's Prayer and Care to obtain Peace with God, Peace with Conſcience, Peace with one another, and if it be poſſible, Peace with all Men.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 (Always in every prayer of mind for you all, making requeſt with Joy,) 5 For your fellowſhip in the goſpel, from the firſt day until now.

Obſerve here, (1.) The proper Character of a Goſpel Miniſter, he is his Peoples conſtant Remembrancer, and the Remembrancer of all his People, *I remember you all*, ſays the Apoſtle, *I remember you always, and in every Prayer.* This is a very great part of our Miniſterial Duty to pray for the People; not in our publick Offices only, but in our private Addreſſes alſo, and this continually, and without ceaſing; we ſhould never riſe off our Knees without bearing our People upon our Hearts before the Lord. Did Miniſter and People more ſtrive together in their Prayers one for another, there would be leſs Strife and Contention between them one with another; Miniſters muſt be their Peoples Remembrancers; St. *Paul* here remembred the *Philippians, all the Philippians always*, and in *every* Prayer. *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul* could and did remember the *Philippians* with Joy; tho' he was in Sadneſs himſelf *in a Priſon*, yet he could think of them as a People converted by his Miniſtry with Joy, *making Requeſt with Joy*. When the Miniſters of Chriſt ſee any Succeſs of their Labours in the Lives of their People, it is Matter of inexpreſſible Joy to them, how ſad ſoever the Caſe is with them, as to their outward Circumſtances; when they ſigh in a Priſon with reſpect to their perſonal Sufferings, they can ſing and rejoice if they find their Peoples Proficiency in Knowledge, and Growth in Grace; *I thank my God for you, making Requeſt with Joy. Obſerve* (3.) The Ground and Occaſion of this his Joy, *v.* 3. *for your Fellowſhip in the Goſpel*; that is, for your ready embracing of the Goſpel at my firſt preaching of it to you, for the real Subjection of ſome, and the profeſſed Subjection of all to the Faith of Chriſt, whereby you were brought *into Fellowſhip* with Chriſt and his Church; and alſo for the *Continuance* of you in the Faith and Profeſſion of the Goſpel, *from the firſt Day until now*. Learn hence, That when a People upon the plain and perſwaſive Preaching of the Goſpel do readily receive and obey it, and remain conſtant in their Profeſſion of it, and Obedience to it, it is Matter of unſpeakable Thankſgiving and Praiſe to the faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt. *I thank God for your Fellowſhip in the Goſpel, from the firſt Day until now*; that is, for continuing in the Faith, and perſevering in your profeſſed Subjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, I bleſs God for this.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt:

Here we have a farther Cauſe aſſigned of St. *Paul's* Joy on the *Phillipians* behalf, namely, the firm and full Aſſurance which he had of their Perſeverance in Grace unto the End: God that has begun will perfect, that is, augment and encreaſe it, till it arrive at Perfection in Glory. *Note* here, (1.) The Nature of Grace deſcribed, or the proper Title deſervedly given to the Grace of God, it is called a *good Work*; *he that hath begun a good Work*, &c. Well may regenarating Grace be called a good Work, becauſe it is the Living Foundation, and Vital Principle, from whence all good Works do proceed and flow; the Grace of God in the Heart is the Root of all true Holineſs in the Life; as good Works are neceſſary to Salvation, ſo renewing Grace is neceſſary to good Works. *Note* (2.) As the Nature of Grace deſcribed, ſo the Author, Augmentor of Grace declared, and that is God; he that hath begun a good Work in you *will perform it*, that is, augment it, and encreaſe it; as the good Work of Grace in the Heart is God's Work, and he is Author of it, ſo he will maintain it, and carry it on unto Perfection, and be both the Encreaſer, and Perfecter of it; God never doth his Work by halves. *Note* (3.) The Certainty of Grace aſſerted, being confident of this very thing; but what Ground had St. *Paul* for this Confidence? *Anſ.* Becauſe Grace is the Care of the whole Trinity; all the Perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, do concern themſelves, both in the Production, Preſervation, and Perfection of it, the Father decrees it, the Son purchaſes it, the Spirit infuſes it, the Father begets it, the Son excites it, the Holy Spirit conducts it; and as they did all concur to its Production, ſo do they all co-operate and work together for the Preſervation of it. Learn hence, That ſuch Perſons in whoſe Souls Almighty God has begun a good Work of Grace, may with much Aſſurance expect, by the Influence of God's Care, and the Exerciſe of their own Endeavours, that they ſhall hold out and perſevere in a ſtate of Grace unto the End; *until the Day of* Chriſt, that is, the Day of Judgment.

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe I have you in my heart, inaſmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the goſpel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle aſſigns a Ground and Reaſon of that Confidence which he expreſt himſelf to have of the *Philippians* Perſeverance in Grace and Holineſs in the foregoing Verſe, namely, becauſe they were *Partakers* of the ſame *Grace* with himſelf, and were ready to Suffer for Chriſt as he was; we may warrantably be perſwaded of their Perſeverance in Grace unto the End, in whom we ſee both Readineſs of Obedience to the Goſpel, and at ſo zealous and chearful Suffering for and in Defence of the Goſpel. Thus did St. *Paul* here; where *Obſerve*, the Apoſtle, accounted it a *Grace* and Favour from God that he was thought worthy to Suffer for the Goſpel, and the *Philippians* with him: *Ye are Partakers of my Grace*. Learn thence, That to ſuffer Bonds and Impriſonment for the Goſpel's ſake is a ſpecial *Grace* and Favour of God, not conſidered in its Self, but in the Fruits and Conſequence of it. A *Second* Ground of his Confidence was their Reſpect to him, *I have you in my Heart*, and I find you *have me in* your Heart; you partake of the Miſery of my Bands, you ſuffer with me in my Sufferings, and ſympathize with me in my Sorrows; they relieved and refreſhed him in his Impriſonment, which he underwent for the ſake of Chriſt and his Goſpel, and from hence he had a good Confidence that they would perſevere unto the End. An operative Love to the faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially when they are under Perſecution, is a good Evidence of the Sincerity of their Love to Chriſt, and of their Steadfaſtneſs and Perſeverance in Grace unto the End.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe Words are expreſſive of that paſſionate Degree of Chriſtian Love which St. *Paul* bear to the *Philippians*; he durſt appeal to God as to the Sincerity and Fervency of it. *God is my Record*, I call him to Witneſs, and can appeal to him as the Searcher of Hearts, *how greatly I long after you*, that is, how paſſionately and ſincerely I love you, with the moſt Intenſe and Hearty Affection, *in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*; the Expreſſion may denote both the efficient Cauſe, and the exemplary Cauſe of his Love. (1.) That the Author of this his Love unto them was *Chriſt*, he was the Spring and Procurer of it; and conſequently it was no carnal or ſelfiſh Love to ſerve his own Ends and Deſigns upon them, but truly ſpiritual. (2.) That Chriſt's Love to him was the Pattern and Example, according to which he loved them, with no common Love, but with an intire and intenſe Affection, from the ground of the Heart, and the moſt intimate *Bowels*; no Words can be more expreſſive of that fervent Love, and earneſt Longing, which St. *Paul* had for the Welfare of the *Philippians*; a Love which not only exceeds the Love of all Relations; he doth not ſay, I long after you in the *Bowels* of a Father, or in the Bowels of an Husband, but in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt: Humbly comparing his Love towards them to the Love of Jeſus Chriſt; not for the Degrees of it, not for the Fruits and Advantages of it, but for the Truth and Sincerity of it: *I greatly long after you all, in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*. Learn hence, That there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection, between any Relations upon Earth, than between ſuch Miniſters of Chriſt, and their beloved People, as they have been happily inſtrumental to convert to God; when preſent with them, they paſſionately love them, when abſent from them, they affectionately long after them; imitating as much as they can their Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both in the Reality and Sincerity, and alſo in the Meaſure and Degree of endearing Affection: *God is my Record, how greatly I long after you all in the Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.*

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; 10 That we may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without offence till the day of Chriſt. 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory and praiſe of God.

After Salutations given by St. *Paul* to his beloved *Philippians*, he next pours out his Soul in fervent prayer and Supplication for them; and the Mercy which he prays for is obſervable, Firſt, namely, Growth and Proficiency in Grace. This I pray, *that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment*; that their Love to God, their Love to him, and their Love one to another, may yet more and more abound. Love is the Root-Grace from which moſt Graces ſpring; therefore he prays for the ſtrengthening of that Grace in particular, and that there may be found with them Judgment, as well as Affection, in the Exerciſe of it; we ought to love judiciouſly, as well as affectionately: The more judicious a Saint grows in his Chriſtian Courſe, and the more Underſtanding and Judgment is found with him in the Way of his Duty, the ſtronger his Grace is, and the more Glory will he bring to God. The Underſtanding and Judgment being the guiding and leading Facultes in Man, there can be no more acceptable Holineſs in the Will, than there is Knowledge in the Underſtanding: I can hate Sin, and love God, no more than I know of the Evil of Sin, and of the Perfections that are in God; the more judicious then a Chriſtian grows, the more his Holineſs grows; and accordingly St. *Paul*'s Prayer is, that they may grow more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment. *Obſerve* (2.) The great Ends mentioned by the Apoſtle, for which he did ſo earneſtly deſire their Proficiency in Knowledge and Judgment, and their Growth in Love, and every other Grace, namely, (1.) That they might approve Things that are Excellent, that is, all ſuch things as the Goſpel requires, *Implying*, that the things preſcribed to us in the Goſpel are things Excellent and Good for us, things worthy to be preſcribed by God, and things reaſonable to be practiſed by us; and that the Approbation of theſe things by a Steadineſs in Judgment and Practice, is every Chriſtian's Duty, and ought to be their great Endeavour. (2.) That they may be ſincere in their holy Profeſſion, incorrupt and pure, both in Doctrine and Manners. (3.) That they might be *without Offence*, unblameable in Converſation, and be kept from being Occaſions of ſtumbling unto others, even to the End of their Days. (4.) He prays that they may not only be inoffenſive Perſons, but fruitful Chriſtians, *being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God*; that is, that they may abound in good Works, undertaken in Chriſt's Strength, and with an Eye at God's Glory. Learn hence, (1.) that a Negative Holineſs is not ſufficient to Salvation; 'tis not enough that Chriſtians be harmleſs, and inoffenſive towards others, but they muſt labour after an holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works; he muſt be *filled with all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs.* Learn (2.) That our Works be truly good, and Fruits of Righteouſneſs; it is neceſſary that they be done by Chriſt's Strength and Aſſiſtance, and with an Eye at the Glory and Praiſe of God, in Order to their Acceptance, *filled with Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.* Learn (3.) That no ſhorter time ought to be aſſigned for our Inoffenſive Walking, and Fruitfulneſs in Converſation, than the Day of our Death; *unto the Day of Chriſt*, ſays our Apoſtle, that is, till the great Reckoning-Day, when Chriſt will render to us our compleat Reward; if we be faithful, and fruitful to the Death, we ſhall then receive the Crown of Life.

12 But I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the goſpel: 13 So that my bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the palace, and in all other *places*; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear.

Our Apoſtle's Deſign in theſe Words is to prevent the *Philippians* ſtumbling, and being ſcandalized at his preſent Sufferings, aſſuring them, that the things which happened to him, thro' the Malice of his Perſecutors, have fallen out rather to the Furtherance of the Goſpel, than any Ways to the Hindrance of it, as they feared. Learn hence, That the Sufferings and Perſecutions which the Meſſengers and Miniſters of Chriſt do undergo for the ſake of the Goſpel, are ofttimes ſo over-ruled by the Wiſdom of God, that they rather encreaſe than diminiſh the Church, and rather promote than prejudice the Intereſt of the Goſpel. Next, he declares the ſpecial and particular Advantages which had redounded to the Goſpel by thoſe Sufferings which he had patiently endured for the Goſpel's ſake. (1.) His Bonds in Chriſt, (that is, his Impriſonment for the Goſpel of Chriſt) were manifeſt in the Palace, that is, were manifeſtly taken notice of in *Nero*'s Court, and elſewhere in the City, ſo that People inquiring into the Cauſe of his Sufferings, found that it was not any Miſdemeanour, but that his preaching and practiſing the Doctrine of Chriſtianity was the only Reaſon of his Sufferings. (2.) Another Advantage which accrued to the Church by his Bonds was this, namely, that many Miniſters of Chriſt who preach'd the Word of God far and near, hearing of his Conſtancy under Sufferings, were both encouraged and emboldened thereby, encouraged to ſhake off Fear, and emboldened to preach Chriſt with greater Reſolution. *Many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing Confident by my Bonds, were much emboldened to ſpeak the Word without Fear.* *Note* here, the Title given by this great Apoſtle to the Inferiour Miniſters of the Goſpel, he calls them *Brethren*, and *Brethren in the Lord*, putting himſelf and them in mind of their mutual and reſpective Duties, which was to live and love as Brethren, to admoniſh, exhort and encourage one another to ſtand up in Defence of the juſt Credit and Reputation of one another, and jointly to ſet their Shoulders to the Work of Chriſt together. *Note* (2.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt obſerving how God upholds ſome of their Brethren under Sufferings and Perſecutions, ſhould encourage themſelves to go on with Reſolution in the Work of the Lord, not fearing their own perſonal Sufferings, knowing that the ſame Aſſiſtance which ſupported one, ſtands ready to ſuccour others. *The Brethren in the Lord waxed confident by my Bonds.*

15 Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtrife; and ſome alſo of good will. 16 The one preach Chriſt of contention, not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel. 18 What then? notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Our Apoſtle had declared in the foregoing Verſes that ſeveral of his Brethren in the Work of the Miniſtry, thro' his Conſtancy in ſuffering, were emboldened to preach Jeſus Chriſt with more Reſolution than before. But here he diſcovers that there was a vaſt Difference between thoſe Preachers, all did not preach Chriſt alike, with the ſame Mind, from the ſame Motives, for the ſame ſincere Ends. Some alas! Preach Chriſt *out of Envy and Strife*; that is, envying the Succeſs of the Apoſtle's Miniſtry, and endeavouring to draw People off from approving him to applaud them, hoping to grieve and gaul him thereby; but others preach'd the Goſpel of Chriſt *of Good will*, with a Purity of Intention, and Sincerity of Affection, both towards Chriſt, and towards himſelf, who for the Defence of the Goſpel now lay in Priſon. However, ſeeing Chriſt was preached and made known by both, by ſome in Pretence, by others in Truth, the Apoſtle rejoiced at it, and took Comfort in it. Learn hence, That ſuch Miniſters of the Goſpel are gladly and joyfully to be heard, who preach Chriſt, and his pure Word, ſoundly and truly, with what Mind ſoever, from what Motive ſoever, and for what End ſoever, they preach Chriſt, and his Holy Goſpel. The Word is his which they bring, how Vicious ſoever the Perſon, and how Bad ſoever the Intention be of him that brings it; and if the Meſſage be his, it is our Duty to receive it without Prejudice, be the Principle what it will in him that delivers it. Many preach in Chriſt's Name, who ſhall periſh in his Wrath; for Chriſt takes notice of the inward Intention, as well as of the outward Action, and obſerves not only the Matter which Miniſters preach, but the End for which, and the Motives from which they preach, whether from Love and Good-will, or from Envy and Strife. Learn (2.) That ſuch Chriſtians who find their Hearts inflamed with Zeal for the Glory of Chriſt, and the Salvation of Souls, do and will rejoice exceedingly that Chriſt is preached, who ever the Perſon is, or whatever the Principle may be in him that preaches; If Chriſt be preached, ſays St. *Paul*, I therein rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation through your prayer, and the ſupply of the ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt. 20 According to my earneſt expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but *that* with all boldneſs, as always, *ſo* now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

Still our Apoſtle purſues and proſecutes his former Deſign, namely, to prevent the *Philippian's* being offended at his Sufferings; and accordingly he ſhews, that as the Goſpel of Chriſt had gained much already, it ſhould gain yet more, by his Impriſonment and Afflictions, which he was very confident would tend to the Furtherance of his Salvation, thro' the Help of their Prayers, and the Supplies of Grace from the Spirit of Chriſt; where by ***Salvation*** is meant Deliverance out of his preſent Sufferings, which he fully expected by the Help and Benefit of the Church's Prayers. Great are the Expectation of the Saints, even as to temporal Salvation and outward Mercies, from the joint Prayers and Interceſſions of the Church of Chriſt, *this ſhall turn to my ſalvation thro' your prayer*; but if by Salvation be meant eternal Happineſs, then his confident Perſwaſion was this, that all the Deſigns of his Adverſaries againſt him ſhould be ſo overruled and ordered by God, that thro' the Influences and Supplies of the Holy Spirit all ſhould work together for Good and his eternal Salvation be advanced thereby, thro' the Concurrences and Aſſiſtance of their Prayers. In the 20th Verſe he tells them, that according to his former Expectation and Hope he was reſolved that no Terror ſhould ever make him aſhamed to own the Truth of Chriſt, but that with a convincing Boldneſs he would now, as heretofore, appear in the Defence of it, and that Chriſt ſhould be *magnified by him in the Body, whether by Life or Death*; that is, whether my Life be farther prolonged, or be now by Martyrdom ended. Chriſt will be magnified if I live, the Power of Chriſt will be magnified in my Deliverance from Death; if I die his Power will be magnified in enabling me to undergo Death for his Name and Sake, ſo that I am at a Point, either to live or die, as the Wiſdom of Chriſt ſhall determine; I am, as to my ſelf, indifferent for either, well knowing that Chriſt will be glorified in me, and by me, both by Life and Death. Learn hence, That nothing lies ſo near the Heart of a Saint as the Honour and Glory of Chriſt; this he reſolves ſhall be promoted by him, living and dying, by his great Services ſupporting his Life, and by his extraordinary Sufferings, and Martyrdom in caſe of his Death.

21 For to me to live *is* Chriſt, and to die *is* gain.

Our Apoſtle had declared in the foregoing Verſe his firm Expectation that Chriſt would be magnified and glorified by him, both in Life and Death; in this Verſe he diſcovers what Reaſon he had to think ſo, for ſays he, *to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain*; that is, if I live Chriſt ſhall be the Scope of my Life, and the End of my Living, I reſolve to live to his Service; if I die, Death will be a real Gain and Advantage to me, intimating, that both Life and Death are Gain to a good Man, and that it is Chriſt that makes both Life and Death gainful and advantageous. *To me to live is Chriſt, to die is gain.* Words both ſhort and ſweet, few in Expreſſion, but large in Extenſion; in them we are taught, both how to Live, and how to Die. *Obſerve* (1.) The Scope and End of a Chriſtian's Life, *to me to live is Chriſt*, (2.) The Hope and Fruit of a Chriſtian's Death, *to die is gain.* Learn, That Chriſt is the Believer's Life, and Death the Believer's Gain. The Life of a real Chriſtian is reſolved into Chriſt, and his Death is reſolved to Gain. *Note* (1.) Chriſt is the Believer's Life; both his Life of Grace, and his Life of Glory is reſolved into Chriſt. As to his Life of Grace, Chriſt is the Life of this Life, he is the Efficient or Principal Cauſe of this Life, he is the Exemplar Cauſe or Pattern of it, he is the Final Cauſe or Scope of it, and he is the Conſerving Cauſe or Preſerver, and Maintainer of it. So for the Life of Glory, which Believers have in Reverſion, Chriſt is alſo the Life of that Life; thus he hath purchaſed it for them, he has given it to them, he has taken and keeps Poſſeſſion of it in their Names, he has prepared it for them, and them for it, and will put them into the full and actual Poſſeſſion of it in his own Time. *Note* (2.) That Death is the Believer's Gain; Death in general, Violent as well as Natural Death; it is not only not Injurious, but Advantageous; no Hurt, but Profit; no Loſs, but Benefit; not only to die for Chriſt, but to die in Chriſt, is Gain; bleſſed are the Dead that die in the Lord, as well as thoſe that die for the Lord. Death appears Gain to the Believer, if we conſider the privative Evils it frees and delivers him from, namely, from Sin, from all Temptations to Sin, from all Inclinations to Offend, from all poſſibility of Sinning, from all Temporal Afflictions, from all Sufferings for God, from all Sufferings from Man for God's ſake: And if we conſider the poſitive Good that the Believer gains by Death, namely, Perfection in Grace, Fulneſs of Joy, the bleſſed Viſion, the Society of glorified Saints and Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect. So then, if a State of perfect Holineſs and Purity, be better than a State of Corruption and Temptation, if a State of Reſt and Peace be better than a State of Labour and Sorrow, if it be better to be Triumphing above than Sighing and Groaning below, then *Dead* Saints are better where they are, than where they were, and Death to them is Gain, and infinitely Advantageous. *Note* (3.) That the Gain which comes by Death to the Believer is procured by Chriſt, namely, by his meritorious Satisfaction, by his glorious Aſcenſion and Poſſeſſion, by his prevailing Interceſſion; *to live is Chriſt, to die is gain.*

22 But if I live in the fleſh, *this is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I ſhall chuſe I wot not. 23 For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better. 24 Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh, *is* more needful for you.

But if I live in the Fleſh, that is, if I ſhall continue to live longer in this mortal Body, *this is the fruit of my labour*, that is, I foreſee what will be the bleſſed Fruit of my Labour, namely, the Converſion and Gaining of more Souls unto God and Chriſt; at leaſt, as it is worth my Labour, ſo ſhall it be my Endeavour to glorifie Chriſt by my Continuance in the World. Learn hence, That as it is the End of a Miniſters Life, ſo he makes it the End of his Living, to glorifie Chriſt by gaining Souls unto him; and in order to the obtaining this great End, he is willing for the preſent to deny himſelf the Advantage of being with Chriſt. *Obſerve* next, St. *Paul*'s Strait which he was now in, what to chuſe, either Life or Death, if God ſhould leave it to his Choice, *I am in a ſtrait beiwixt two*, that is, I am divided in my Thoughts and Deſires, whether to wiſh for Life or Death; his Ardent Love to Chriſt and himſelf inclined him to deſire a Diſſolution, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*; but his affectionate Regard to his beloved *Phillippians* inclined him to deſire a Continuation of his Time and Talents; *nevertheleſs, to abide ſtill in the fleſh, is more needful for you.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Life of a Pious Miniſter is far more profitable for his People than his Death. (2.) That his Death being a Departure unto Chriſt, is far better, and more deſirable to himſelf than Life; their Life is Profitable to civilize ſome, to convert others, to convince the Erroneous, to confirm the Weak; the World wants them, the Church wants them, their Flocks want them, their Families want them, and they want them moſt, that think they cou'd ſpare them beſt. But their Death being a Departure, an immediate Departure unto Chriſt, is far better and more deſirable to themſelves than Life; *having a deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is far better:* Better in Point of Honour, for as they here laboured in the Work of the Miniſtry for him, they ſhall there ſit down upon the Throne with him, *Rev.* 3. 24. Better in Point of Profit, he is Heir and Poſſeſſor of all things, and they ſhall be joint Heirs and joint Poſſeſſors with him; thus may the Words be conſidered with relation to St. *Paul* as a Miniſter of the Goſpel; but they may be farther conſidered with reference to him as a private Chriſtian; *I deſire to depart.* Hence learn, That it is not only Warrantable, but highly Commendable, for a Chriſtian to be not only fearleſs but deſirous of Death. There are (1.) Unwarrantable and ſinful Deſires of Death, as when they are Raſh and Haſty, when they are Poſitive and Peremptory, when they are Directing and Preſcribing to God, either as to the Time, or Kind, or Manner of our Diſſolution; and when our Deſires are purely Selfiſh, deſiring Death only as a freedom from preſent Evils, and as a prevention of future Sufferings. (2.) There are Warrantable and Juſtifiable Deſires of Death and Diſſolution, namely, when we deſire it to free us from the indwelling Preſence of Sin, to put us into a State of perfect Holineſs, to bring us to the ſight of Chriſt, to give us the poſſeſſion of that Happineſs which was contrived by infinite Wiſdom, purchaſed by infinite Merit, prepared by infinite Power, and beſtowed by infinite Love. (3.) There are alſo commendable Deſires, or the laſt mentioned Deſires are highly Commendable; they commend our Faith, and proclaim our certain Belief of a Future State; they commend our Love to God, to Chriſt; they commend our Obedience, *&c.* Learn (2.) That the Souls of Believers, at their departure from the

Body, are with Chriſt. *Queſt.* What is it to be with Chriſt? *Anſw.* It implies ***Intuition***, we ſhall ſee him, and ſee him as he is, not as once he was in a State of Abaſement; it implies ***Fruition***, we ſhall enjoy him, as well as ſee him, and enjoy him to Satisfaction. *Pſal.* 17. *ult.* and it implies ***Duration***, we ſhall for ever be with the Lord. *Queſt.* But how doth it appear that the Souls of good Men, upon their Departure from the Body, are with Chriſt? *Anſw.* Thus, they are immediately capable of his Preſence and Enjoyment upon their Departure, and they are fully Prepared for it; if we be not fit for Heaven when we die, we ſhall never be fit; all is done upon us that was ever intended to be done. And neither Chriſt's ardent Deſires to have his Children with him, nor the vehement Longings of their Souls for the Fruition and Injoyment of him, can or ſhall be Delayed; ſuch Delays would make their Hearts ſick; no, they expect Satisfaction, and God will not diſappoint their Expectation.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all, for you furtherance and joy of faith: 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt for me, by my coming to you again.

St. *Paul* having, in the foregoing Verſes, told the *Philippians* how Needful it was for him to abide in the Fleſh with reſpect to them, here he gives them a ſort of confident Aſſurance, (which was given him by immediate Revelation) that his Life ſhould at this time be preſerved for the Benefit of the Church, and he ſet at Liberty, and that he ſhould come and ſpend a part of his time amongſt them, for the Furtherance of their Faith, and the Encreaſe of their Joy, that ſo they might have more abundant Matter of rejoycing in Chriſt, having received a new Proof of his Power and Good-will towards them, in delivering him their Apoſtle from Death, and ſending him to them again. Learn hence, (1.) That God always can, and ſometimes will, ſo calm the Rage of Perſecutors, that they cannot Execute the Evil by them intended and reſolved againſt his Faithful Miniſters and Servants; notwithſtanding *Nero*'s Cruelty, St. *Paul* had a confident Perſwaſion that he ſhould come out of Priſon, and once more viſit the Churches. Learn (2.) That Almighty God, in great Mercy to his Church, doth ſometimes prolong the Lives of his Faithful Miniſters, and moſt uſeful Servants, and keep them longer out of Heaven, that his People may reap the greater Advantage by their Labours here on Earth. Learn (3.) That the more unexpectedly the Life of a Labourious Miniſter, or a Pious and Extraordinary Chriſtian is given in by God, the more abundant ought the Church to be in their Expreſſions of Joy and Thankſgiving to God for ſuch an invaluable Bleſſing: *That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt for me, by my coming to you.*

27 Only let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt: that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The general Charge given by the Apoſtle to his beloved *Philippians*, that their Lives ſhould anſwer their Light, and their Practices correſpond with their Profeſſion, *Let your converſation be as becometh the Goſpel.* A Goſpel Profeſſion requires and calls for a Goſpel Converſation; as the Goſpel is a Goſpel of Truth and Faithfulneſs, of Sincerity and Plainneſs, ſo our Converſation ſhould be Sincere and Upright, without Deceit or Fraud; as the Goſpel is a Goſpel of Peace, ſo a Chriſtian Converſation is a quiet, calm and Peaceable-Converſation; Chriſtians ſhould be Men of Peace, Peace-makers, Peace-preſervers, Lovers of Peace, and Livers in Peace. The Goſpel is a Goſpel of Love and Mercy, of Grace and Goodneſs; the Badge and Cognizance of Chriſt's Diſciples, the Mark and Brand of Chriſt's Sheep is Love unfeigned; thus a Goſpel-Converſation is an Amicable, Loving and Charitable-Converſation. Again, the Goſpel of Chriſt is a Goſpel of Meekneſs and Humility, and its chief Leſſon is Humility: Learn of me for I am Meek and Lowly in Heart, *Matth.* 11. 29. and be ye Cloathed with Humility, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. In a Word, the Goſpel of Chriſt is a Goſpel of Holineſs and Purity; a Chriſtian-Converſation muſt be a Pure, an Holy and Spotleſs-Converſation: Saints by Profeſſion ſhould be Saints indeed; and there is a *comelineſs* in a Goſpel-Converſation, both as to the inward and outward Man; walk *as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*, that is, anſwerable to the Precepts and Commands of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Promiſes and Encouragements of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords, anſwerable to that grand Pattern of Holineſs which the Goſpel ſets before us, and anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious Hopes which the Goſpel raiſes us up to the joyful Expectation of; this is to walk as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle, having given a general Injunction to walk as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, next gives a particular Injunction for Concord and Unity amongſt themſelves, *that ye ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one Mind.* Learn hence, That all thoſe who would walk worthy of the Goſpel, ſhould endeavour after a Cloſe, Holy and Laſting Union among themſelves. We can never expect to Thrive in Grace, if we do not live in Peace; let us prize Unity and Peace as the Beauty and Strength of the Body, and let us purſue Peace and Union with the utmoſt Strength of our Soul. *Obſerve* (3.) Another duty exhorted to, and that is an united Contention, *ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel*; before he exhorted them to an Holy Union, now to an united Contention, unite but ſtrive; yet let your ſtriving be in Communion, not in Contention; ſtrive together in all Holy and United Endeavours to Comfort and Confirm one another in the Faith of the Goſpel. *Obſerve* (4.) He exhorts them as to an Holy Union and an United Contention, ſo to an Humble Boldneſs, *in nothing terrified by your Adverſaries*; in nothing, that is, terrified at nothing they can do, and terrified in no Degree at any thing they ſhall do. Be not afraid to be Holy, for your Adverſaries can never hurt you, if they do not hinder you in your Duty; the leſs they fear God, the leſs you need to fear them. *Obſerve* (5.) A double Argument to perſwade them to the foregoing Duty, in nothing terrified by their Adverſaries. (1.) This will be to them an evident Token of Perdition; that is, an United, Humble, Peaceable Boldneſs in your Holy Courſe, whereby you walk in the Spirit and Power of the Goſpel, without Fright or Fear, it will be to your Perſecutors an evident Token of Perdition. Perſecution is a Black Mark of a Son of Perdition, and a very evident Token to a Man's own Conſcience that he is in the Way of Deſtruction. (2.) *But to you of Salvation*; that is, ſuch as ſuffer patiently, yet reſolutely for the Goſpel, are in the Way of Salvation, and their Sufferings ſhall promote their eternal Salvation; it is added ----- *Salvation, and that of God*; now this implies Two things, (1.) That the Salvation of Suffering Chriſtians ſhall be ſure, they ſhall certainly be Saved, for God has undertaken for it; now if it be God that Saves, who ſhall Deſtroy? Satan will ſay, Serve me, and I will Save you, but he is Feeble and cannot, Falſe and will not Save; the World will ſay caſt in your Lot among us, and we will Save you harmleſs, but there is no more truſt to the Children than to the Father of Lyes; but if the God of Truth and Power ſays I will Save, who will ſay nay? (2.) That their Salvation ſhall be great as well as ſure; he will Save them with a mighty Salvation from their Mighty Sufferings and Mighty Fears; Suffer for Chriſt, and then fear none of thoſe things which you ſhall Suffer.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.

Theſe Words come in by way of Encouragement to the Practice of the formentioned Duty, namely, of couragious Suffering for the Goſpel of Chriſt; he tells them that as Ability to Believe on Chriſt, ſo likewiſe Power to Suffer for Chriſt, were both the Gift of God, and as ſuch purchaſed by Chriſt for them, and freely beſtowed upon them. Learn hence, (1.) That it is the Duty of all the Diſciples and Followers of Jeſus, not only to believe in him, but chearfully to Suffer for him, when he calls them to it ------ not only to Believe, but to Suffer. Learn (2.) That Suffering for Chriſt is the Gift of God, as well as Faith in Chriſt; *unto you it is given not only to Believe, but to Suffer*; Afflictions are the Donatives of the Goſpel, Suffering for Chriſt is the Gift of Chriſt. (1.)

Ability to ſuffer, his Gift; 'tis the Purchaſe of his Merits, 'tis the Fruits of his Mediation; Preparation for Suffering, and Patience under Sufferings, are the Gift of Chriſt. (2.) As Abilities for Suffering, ſo the Comforts of Suffering, are the Gift of Chriſt; through him it is that his Saints Glory in Tribulation, and their Trials are not only tolerable, but joyous. In ſhort, to ſuffer for Chriſt is, Firſt, a Free Gift; and Secondly, an Honourable Gift; and, Thirdly, a Special and peculiar Gift; 'tis a Gift peculiar to Saints, yea, peculiar only to ſome Saints; 'tis only peculiar to Saints; the Angels glorifie Chriſt by Doing, but not by Suffering; I doubt not but had the Angels Bodies of Fleſh as Saints have, they would be glad to lay their Necks on the Block for Chriſt as Saints do? but this is the peculiar Privilege of Believers, *nnto you it is given, and not to them.* And altho' a Suffering Diſpoſition, a readineſs and preparation of Mind to glorifie Chriſt by Suffering, is given to all Believers; yet the Honour of actual Suffering Death for Chriſt is given but to a few. Learn (3.) That Faith in Chriſt muſt go before Suffering for Chriſt; it muſt *firſt* be given to us to Believe on him, before we can Suffer for his ſake; then only are the Sufferings truly Chriſtian, and an evidence of Salvation, when the Sufferer is firſt a Believer; without the Shield of Faith we can no more reſiſt the Fury of the Perſecutors, than we can repel the fiery Darts of the Deſtroyer: *Unto you it is given on the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but* &c.

30 Having the ſame conflict which ye ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Here is the laſt Argument made uſe of by the Apoſtle to Encourage them unto patient Suffering for the Goſpel of Chriſt; as it would render them Conformable to Chriſt their Head, ſo to him their Apoſtle, who ſuffered many hard things when he was at *Philippi*, as they had ſeen, and ſtood ready to ſuffer, not only Bonds, but Death it ſelf, now he was at *Rome*, which they heard of, *having the ſame conflict which you ſaw in me, and now hear to be in me.* Here *Obſerve*, (1.) The Title given by St. *Paul* to his Sufferings for the Goſpel, he calls them a *Conflict*. Learn, That Chriſtian Courage under Sufferings cannot be kept up without a Mighty Conflict; we muſt Conflict with our Enemies, with the Rage of our Perſecutor, we muſt Conflict with our ſelves, and with our own Spirits, to keep them from fainting under Perſecution, and we muſt even Conflict with God himſelf, Wreſtle with him by Prayers, for extraordinary Meaſures of Strength to ſupport under Sufferings, and to enable us to glorifie God in and by them; well might the Apoſtle then call his Sufferings a Conflict. *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul* encourages the *Philippians* to Conflict with Sufferings from his own Example before them, *having the ſame Conflict which you ſaw in me.* Learn, That the Prudent and Patient Sufferings of the Miniſters of Chriſt for the Truth of the Goſpel, are and ought to be a powerful Encouragement to all their People to Conflict with the like Difficulties and Trials for the Teſtimony of Chriſt; the Captain goes firſt, leads the Van, his Miniſters follow, and their People bring up the Rear; and having Suffered together, they ſhall be alſo Glorified together; a Suffering Head, and Suffering Members, ſhall never be ſeparated.

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle in the concluding Part of the foregoing Chapter recommended to the Philippians *Care and Practice the Duty of Conſtancy in the Faith of the Goſpel, and of Chriſtian Unity amongſt themſelves, the Profeſſors of the Goſpel; but he could not ſatisfie himſelf with a Simple and Naked Propoſing of this Duty, but in this Chapter he urges and enforces it with a moſt Elegant and Prevalent Obteſtation, Charming and Adjuring them, as it were by all that is Dear and Precious to them, and as they had any Regard unto, or Value for the moſt Glorious Privileges of Chriſtianity, to be like minded, to be found in the Exerciſe and Practice of Unity and Humility. And accordingly he begins this Chapter with a moſt Pathetical Inſinuation, which has alſo the Force of a moſt Rational Argumentation; ſaying, in the Firſt Verſe, unto them.*

IF *there be* therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

Here we have Obſervable, (1.) The important Duty which the Apoſtle exhorts the *Philippians* to, and that is Love and Unity, Unity in Judgment and Opinion, Unity in Heart and Affection, Unity in Deſign and Endeavours; ſo Neceſſary and Advantageous is the Duty of Unity and Concord amongſt all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, that all the Cautions and Warnings, all the Advice and Council, all the melting Entreaties and paſſionate Importunities of the Miniſters of Chriſt, are little enough to excite Perſons to it, and direct them in the Practice of it. *Obſerve* (2.) What an heap of Arguments the Apoſtle makes uſe of to excite and quicken the *Philippians* to the Love and Practice of this Duty: *if there be any Conſolation in Chriſt, any Comfort of Love, any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, any Bowels and Mercies.* As if he had ſaid, if ever you have taſted by Means of my Miniſtry and Sweetneſs and Conſolation in Chriſt and his Holy Religion, if ever you have found any Comfort in his Love, if ever you have enjoyed any Communion with his Spirit, if ye be Men, and have any Bowels of Mercy for your ſelves, if ye be Chriſtians, and have any Pity for me in my Bonds, *fulfil ye my Joy in this, that ye be like minded, having the ſame Love, being of one accord, and of one Mind.* Oh! the Tenderneſs, the Gentleneſs and Meekneſs of Soul which was in St. *Paul*, and ought to be in every Spiritual Paſtor towards their People, to win them, and prevail upon them to Love the Truth and Peace: *fulfil ye my Joy*, ſays the Apoſtle, as if he had ſaid, Sufferings I have enough already; Oh! do not you by your Diviſions and Diſſentions add more; I am already a Priſoner, expecting the Sentence of Death, preparing for the Sword of Perſecution, but none of theſe things move me; I can Rejoice in a Dungeon, Sing in the Stocks, Triumph in Death, if I can but hear you ſtand faſt in one Spirit, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel: but if I hear that you are broken by Diviſions, my Heart is broke, the News of Differences and Diſſentions among you will be heavier to me than my Chain, darker than my Dungeon, ſharper than *Nero*'s Sword; do not thus add to my Sorrow and Sufferings, but as you have begun and occaſioned Joy in me, I beſeech you fulfil and compleat my Joy, by your being of one Heart, of one Mind, intirely one.

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through ſtrife, or vain glory, ———

Here our Apoſtle diſſwadeth the *Philippians* from a double Vice, deſtructive to Unity, namely, Contention and Vainglory, which are the very Bane of Unity and Unanimity; let nothing be done amongſt you through Emulation and Envy, through Contention and Vainglory; Pride and Ambition are uſually attended with Strife and Contention; a Vainglorious Perſon over-rates himſelf, undervalues others, and breaks the Peace with all.

3 — But in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others bettter than themſelves.

Here our Apoſtle directs to Humility, in order to Peace and Unity, which Humility he ſtiles *lowlineſs of Mind*, a Grace whereby a Man thinks Meanly of himſelf, and Highly of others, having a better Opinion of others Wiſdom and Piety than his own; now this a Man may do, and not Sin, though he be miſtaken; the Publican judg'd the Phariſee better than himſelf, and though it was not ſo, God did not diſapprove him for it, but he went away juſtified; 'tis no Crime to judge another better than our ſelves, though he be not ſo, but it is Pride to judge another worſe than our ſelves; though he be really ſo. Learn hence, That true Humility doth not conſiſt in lowlineſs of Expreſſion, but in lowlineſs of Mind and Opinion; not the Man that ſpeaks meanly of himſelf, but he that thinks ſo is the humble Man. Learn (2.) That the Humble or Lowly-minded Man is ſo conſcious to himſelf of his own Infirmities, ſo modeſt in the eſtimating of his Graces and Virtues, and ſo forward to Hope and Believe the beſt of others, that not only in outward Expreſſion, but in real Eſtimation, doth he give others a Preference before himſelf, *in lowlineſs of Mind let each eſteem others better than themſelves.*

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.

The Apoſtle here diſſwadeth from another Sin, which is very deſtructive of Unity and Peace of Concord and Love, and that is the Sin of inordinate ſelf-love, whereby we regard only our own Honour and Profit, wholly neglecting the Concerns of others; *look not every Man at his own things*, that is, his own private Advantage only or chiefly, but take care of the things which tend to the Advantage of others; not but that a Chriſtian may and ought to look at his own things, but not wholly: our Regard muſt extend farther than our ſelves, and our own things; we muſt look on the things of others alſo, we muſt be as Juſt and True to another's Reputation as our own, and regard both the Honour and Profit of our Neighbour as well as our own; and where Chriſtians are of this publick Spirit and Temper, it contributes much, very much, towards the preſerving and maintaining of Unity and Peace among them.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus:

That is, this humble Mind. Here the Apoſtle preſſes the Duty of Humility from Chriſt's Example; he was a perfect Pattern of Humility when here on Earth; Example therefore ſhould recommend this Grace and Vertue to us, which was ſo orient in the Life of Chriſt, whoſe Humility was as conſpicuous as his Innocency; and accordingly the Apoſtle deſcends in the next Verſe to give particular Inſtances of the Humility and Humiliation of the Son of God.

6 Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: 8 And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.

Behold here the greateſt Example of Humility and Lowlineſs of Abaſement that ever the World was acquainted with, the Mighty God becomes leſs than Man; to make a due eſtimate hereof we muſt firſt *Obſerve*, what Chriſt was before his Incarnation and Humiliation, namely, the Great and Mighty God; for, ſays the Apoſtle, he was in the Form of God, and Equal with God; that is, being the ſubſtantial Form and Eſſential Image of the Father, injoying the Divine Nature with all its Glory, and all the Enſigns of Majeſty which God himſelf had Eternally and Invariably. As to be in the Form of a Servant, ſignifies that he was a Servant; ſo to be in the Form of God, ſignifies that he was God; and *Obſerve*, he was in the Form of God before he was in the Form of a Servant; and being in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery to be Equal with God; now if *he* thought it no Robbery, it could be no Robbery, and if no Robbery, he muſt be Equal, and if Eqnal, he muſt be God by Nature, as the Father is. Learn hence, That our Saviour poſſeſt that Glory which is truly Divine before he aſſum'd our Nature as Man; he had a Peerage or Equality with his Father in Glory; the Angels adored him in Heaven before his Incarnation on Earth, *Iſa.* 6. 1, 2. *Obſerve* (2.) What mighty Abaſement the Holy Jeſus, God bleſſed for evermore, underwent when he humbled himſelf; *he was found in faſhion as a Man, he took upon him the Form of a Servant, and became obedient to the Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Behold here the Sun of Righteouſneſs under an (almoſt total) Eclipſe: He that was eternally Beautiful and Glorious, being the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, was ſo Vail'd, Clouded and Debaſed in the Day of his Humiliation, that he appears not like a God, ſcarce like a Man. *Note* (1.) *He took upon him the Form of a Servant*; now this was a lower Degree of Condeſcenſion than the aſſuming the naked Humane Nature; for a Servant is not ſimply a Man, but a mean Man, a Man in a low Eſtate. Lord! what Abaſement was here, that Chriſt, who was in the Form of God, ſhould degrade himſelf into the Form of a Servant, and take the Humane Nature without Honour, after it had loſt its primitive Innocency, after Sin had blotted the Original Glory of it, and withered the Beauty and Excellency thereof. Oh inconceivable Cendeſcenſion! *Note* (2.) He emptied himſelf, *or made himſelf of no Reputation*, that is, in the Day of his Incarnation he laid aſide the Robes of his Glory, he emptied himſelf of that Divine Splendour and Majeſty which before he had, not by ceaſing to be what he was, but by aſſuming ſomething to himſelf which before he was not; the Son of God deſcended from his Throne, and put on our vile Mortality, he parted with his Glory that he might part with his Life for our Salvation. *Note* (3.) *He was made in the likeneſs of Men, aud found in faſhion as a Man*; that is, he was truly and really Man, made in the likeneſs of other Men, without any viſible outward Difference; he was in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted, *Rom.* 8. 3. He is ſaid to appear in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, that is, in Fleſh that had the Marks and miſerable Effects of Sin upon it; not that Chriſt aſſumed ſinful Fleſh, or Fleſh really defiled by Sin, but he aſſumed the Humane Nature, attended with a whole Troop of Humane Infirmities which Sin firſt let into that Nature, as Hunger and Thirſt, Wearineſs and Pain, Mortality and Death: By reaſon of which, tho' he was not a Sinner, yet he look'd like one, and they that convers'd with him took him for one, ſeeing all theſe Effects of Sin upon him. Lord, what a Stoop was this! To be made in the likeneſs of innocent Fleſh had been much, but to be made in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, rebellious Fleſh, Fleſh, tho' not *Defiled*, yet miſerably *Defaced* by Sin. Oh what is this! and who can declare his Humiliation! *Note* (4.) The Nature of this Humiliation, *he humbled himſelf*; the Word imports both a Real and a Voluntary Abaſement. *Real*; Chriſt did not Perſonate an humble Man, nor act the Part of one in a debaſed State, but was Really and in very Deed humbled, both in the Sight of God and Man; and, as it was Real, ſo alſo was his Humiliation Voluntary. 'Tis not ſaid he *was* Humbled, but that he humbled himſelf; he was willing to ſtoop to this low and abject State for us; and it was the voluntarineſs of his Humiliation that made it ſo Acceptable to God, and ſo Beneficial and Serviceable unto us. *Note* (5.) The Degrees of our Holy Lord's Humiliation, *he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Here we have the depth of Chriſt's Humiliation ſpecified; it was *unto Death*, and alſo aggravated, *even unto the Death of the Croſs*; he Humbled himſelf, not only to become a Mortal Man, but a Dead Corps; and that too hanging on a Tree, dying the Death of a Malefactor: There was Pain, Shame and a Curſe, in the Death of the Croſs; Chriſt underwent the Pain patiently, the Shame meekly; the Curſe obediently, all of them willingly and chearfully, that the Juſtice of God might be ſatisfied, his Wrath pacified, his Majeſty reconciled, Death and Hell vanquiſhed and deſtroyed. Behold the Tranſcendency of Chriſt's Love to the Children of Men! Greater Love has no Man than this, that a Man lays down his Life for his Friends; but greater Love had the Son of God than this, that he laid down his Life for his inveterate Enemies; *he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.*

9 Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth: 11 And that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The former Verſes ſpake of the Depth of Chriſt's Humiliation, theſe of the Height of his Exaltation. Where *Obſerve* (1.) The Dignity it ſelf conferred by God upon Chriſt; God *exalted* him, highly exalted him, exalted him above all Exaltation, as the Word ſignifies; Chriſt in his Reſurrection was exalted, in his Aſcenſion he was very highly exalted, in his ſitting at God's Right-hand he was very highly exalted above all Exaltation. *Obſerve* (2.) How the *Steps* of Chriſt's *Exaltation* did punctually anſwer the *Steps* of his *Humiliation*; the firſt Step of Humiliation was his Incarnation, by which he was made Man, and as our Surety was made Sin. The firſt Step of his Exaltation was his Reſurrection, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with Power; and as our Surety having paid our Debt, was releaſed from the Priſon of the Grave. The ſecond Step of his Humiliation was his Poor and Contemptible Life, and his Painful, Shameful and Accurſed Death; anſwerable thereunto is Chriſt's Aſcenſion into Heaven, and Sitting there at God's Right-hand, advancing him above all Principalities and Powers, that is, above all the Angels, and placing him next to himſelf in Dignity and Honour. *Obſerve* (3.) The Connexion between Chriſt's Humiliation and Exaltation, *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the Death, wherefore*

God hath highly exalted him. Where *Note*, that ſome make the Humiliation of Chriſt the meritorious Cauſe of his Exaltation, and his Exaltation the Reward of his Humiliation; others make the Humiliation of Chriſt only the Antecedent of his Exaltation; he humbled himſelf, and God has exalted him to a Dignity above all Dignities and Preheminency whatſoever, making him *King* and *Head* of his Church, and giving him all Power both in Heaven and Earth, requiring that the Divine Honour due to God ſhould be given to him alſo. *Obſerve* (4.) The Particulars of our Lord's Exaltation declared, and they are Three. (1.) God hath *given him a Name above every Name*, that is, Dignity and Power, Majeſty and Authority, over all Creatures both in Heaven and Earth. (2.) *That every Knee of things in Heaven*, and things in *Earth*, and things *under* the Earth, ſhould *Bow* to the Name of Jeſus; every *Knee*, that is, every Creature in Heaven, Earth and Hell, ſhall *Bow*, that is, yield Subjection to Chriſt, ſome voluntarily, others unwillingly; the good Angels and good Men paying a chearful Homage, the evil Angels and bad Men yielding a forced and conſtrained Subjection to him. (3.) That *Every Tongue* muſt *confeſs* that *Jeſus Chriſt* is *Lord*; every Tongue, that is, every Perſon, Men of all Nations and Languages, ſhall confeſs Chriſt Crucified to be the Lord and Judge of the World, acknowledging his Royal Sovereignty and Dominion. *Obſerve* (4.) The End of Chriſt's glorious Exaltation, it was *to the Glory of God the Father*; that is, it pleaſed God the Father, for his own Glory, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, after he had been deeply Humbled, ſhould be highly Exalted. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Apoſtle's great Deſign and Scope in ſetting before the *Philippians* the Humiliation and Exaltation of Jeſus Chriſt, and that was to excite them to the Grace and Duty of Humility, that the ſame Humble Mind ſhould be in them which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus; as if he had ſaid, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt Humbled himſelf greatly for us, and afterwards was highly Exalted by God above us, ſo in proportion may you expect to be Exalted by God, if you Humble yourſelves in order to maintain and preſerve the Church's Peace and Unity, for before Honour is Humility.

12 Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence, work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of *his* good pleaſure.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Commmendation given by St. *Paul* of his beloved *Philippians* for their chearful Obedience to the Precepts of the Goſpel, they *always* obeyed, that is, ever ſince their firſt Converſion to Chriſtianity; not only while the Apoſtle was upon the Spot with them, but ſince the Providence of God neceſſitated his Abſence from them, not in my *Preſence* only, but now *much more* in my Abſence. But how came it to paſs that their Obedience was greater, when they wanted the Apoſtle for their Inſtructor; *Anſ.* In the Abſence of one Teacher they had another, and him a better than the inſpired Apoſtle, even the inſpiring Spirit of God, who in the Apoſtle's abſence was more immediately preſent with them by his inward Motions, to excite and enable them both to Will and to Do what is well-pleaſing to him. Oh! how good is God at the ſupplying the Wants, and making up the Loſſes of his People; if Perſecution drives his Church's Miniſters into Dungeons, and they cannot hear a Voice behind them, they ſhall have the Preſence of his Holy Spirit, and hear a Voice within them, ſaying, this is the Way, walk in it. *Obſerve* (2.) a ſpecial Duty which St. *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* to be found in the Practice of, namely, to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling; implying, that it ſhould be every Chriſtian's great Work to be daily working out his own Salvation, that is, diligently making uſe of all Means and Faithfulneſs, practiſing all Duties in order thereunto. *Note* here, (1.) The excellency of the Object propoſed, and that is Salvation, there is Salvation held forth and rendred by God to loſt Sinners in the Goſpel. *Note* (2.) The Difficulty of Salvation ſuppoſed and implied in the Word *Work*, which ſignifies an exerting our utmoſt Endeavours in order to the attaining of it: The Work of Salvation is no lazy Man's Buſineſs, but a Work of Labour and Difficulty, tho' the Difficulties may be overcome by an Induſtrious Diligence. *Note* (3.) The Neceſſity of Perſeverence in order to our attaining of Salvation: *Work out* your Salvation, that is, perfect and conſummate the Work which you have happily begun. *Note* (4.) The Manner how we ſhould work out our own Salvation, namely, with *Fear* and *Trembling*, intimating, that an Holy Fear of God, and an Humble Fear of our ſelves, will be of ſingular Uſe and Advantage to us in the working out of our Salvation. *Obſerve* (3.) The Argument or Motive to excite unto this Labour and Diligence in and about the Work of Salvation, and this is very Encouraging, becauſe God Works with us, and in us, *v.* 13. *for it is God that worketh in you, both to Will and to Do*; that God works with us is great Encouragement to us to Work, but we muſt remember God works Arbitrarily, and not Neceſſarily; he worketh but of his own *good Pleaſure*, as a free Agent, who can ceaſe when he pleaſes, therefore work with Fear and Trembling. Learn from the whole, (1.) That we can do nothing without God (2.) That he will do nothing without us: we can do nothing without his Aſſiſtance, he will do nothing without the Concurrence of our Endeavours; he worketh in us both *to Will* and *to Do*, and we muſt work with him in order to the working out of our Salvation.

14 Do all things without murmurings, and diſputings: 15 That ye may be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world: 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Here our Apoſtle ſeems to reſume the Exhortation which he began to preſs before, namely, to Love and Concord, to Unity and Peace amongſt themſelves; he exhorts them as to do all things without Contention, ſo without *Murmurings*, and hot *Diſputings*, in which uſually the Laws of Charity are violated, and the Peace of the Church, and Quietneſs among Chriſtians interrupted. And to provoke them thereunto, he diſcovers to them the many great and bleſſed Advantages which would redound unto them by their Unity and Concord. (1.) Hereby they ſhould be *Blameleſs* and *Harmleſs*, the Sons of God *without Rebuke*, that is, very inoffenſive Perſons, or, as the *Greek* Word renders it, that ye may be the Spotleſs Sons of God; not abſolutely Spotleſs, Pure and Perfect, but without ſuch Spots as are inconſiſtent with your Son-ſhip; there is a Spot which is, and a Spot which is not the Spot of God's Children, *Deut.* 32. 4. Sins of Infirmity are Spots found upon the beſt of his Children, Sins of Preſumption, if at any time found upon, yet they are not the Spots of his Children. (2.) Hereby they ſhould ſhine as Lights in the World, that is, in the Pagan World, and in the Chriſtian Church: This imports both the high Dignity and ſpecial Duty of Chriſtians to be as ſo many Suns, to ariſe and ſhine like mighty Luminarias in the Firmament of the World, caſting out their Rays and Beams in a Holy and Heavenly Converſation. (3.) Hereby they would *hold forth* the Word of Life; not only hold it faſt for their own Comfort, but hold it forth for others Benefit, that is, in their Chriſtian Practice and Profeſſion: the Lives of Chriſtians ſhould publiſh the Word of Life, to the intent that the Enemies of it may fall in Love with it; perhaps as many have been Converted to Chriſtianity by holding forth the Word of Life in Practice, as by holding it forth from the Pulpit; an holy Life is the loudeſt Proclamation, and the beſt Way of holding forth the Word of Life. (4.) Hereby he ſhould have Joy and Rejoicing, as well as they reap Benefit and Advantage; *that I may rejoice in the Day of Chriſt that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*, that is, that I have not preach'd the Goſpel unprofitable amongſt you. Here *Note*, That the Work of the Miniſtry is a laborious Work, a ſpending Work; the Apoſtle here ſets it forth by running a Race, which is a waſting and ſtrength-conſuming Exerciſe; *I have run, I have laboured.* *Note* (2.) That the Labour and Pains of the moſt faithful and indefatigable Miniſters of Chriſt may be, and too often are loſt upon and *in vain* unto the People that are conſtantly made Partakers of them; they may run in vain, and labour in vain, as to their People, but bleſſed be God it ſhall not be *in vain*, as to themſelves, *Iſa.* 49. 4. tho' *Iſrael* be not gathered, yet ſhall they be glorious. *Note* (3.) That the Glory which ſhall be put upon our People in the Day of Judgment, who were converted to God by our miniſterial Endeavours, will add to our joy as Miniſters, and be our Crown of rejoicing in that Day; *that I may rejoice in the Day of Chriſt that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.*

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18 For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Behold here how St. *Paul*, the Under-ſhepherd, imitates Chriſt, this great and good Shepherd, in his readineſs to lay down his Life for the Sheep; not for their Reconciliation, but for their Confirmation; if, ſays he, it ſhall pleaſe God that I be by Martyrdom offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, that is, to eſtabliſh you in the Faith which I have taught you, and to confirm and ſeal the Truth of it with my Blood, I will rejoice therein for your Sakes, and I deſire you to rejoice with me, and to bleſs God for me in ſo doing. *Note*, here the Emphaſis and Elegancy of the Apoſtle's Words, *if I be offered up*, a manifeſt Alluſion to the Jewiſh Sacrifices, in which there was Wine to be poured out as a Libation upon the Sacrifice, and then offered up to God. Thus, ſays he, if my Blood like Wine be poured forth, whilſt I am imployed by the preaching of the Goſpel to render you Gentiles in acceptable Sacrifice, and a ſweet-ſmelling Savour unto God, I ſhould rejoice even thus to die in your Service, and for the Confirmation of your Faith. Hence learn, That Life itſelf is not, and will not be thought too Dear, or accounted by the Miniſters of Chriſt too much to lay down in the Service of their People's Souls, and for the Confirmation of their Faith; *if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I joy and rejoice.* Learn (2.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould not preach any thing to their People but what they dare ſeal and confirm the Truth of with their very Blood, if God calls them thereunto: St. *Paul* had before preacht the Doctrine of the Goſpel to the *Philippians*, and now he ſtood ready to ſeal it with his Blood.

19 But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus, to ſend Timotheus ſhotly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort when I know your ſtate. 20 For I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate. 21 For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that as a ſon with the father, he hath ſerved with me in the goſpel. 23 Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me.

Our Apoſtle, having finiſht the firſt Part of the Chapter which contained Exhortations to Duty, comes now to the ſecond Part of it containing Arguments of Comfort; and here firſt he comforts the *Philippians*, by promiſing to ſend *Timothy* unto them ſhortly. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Greatneſs of St. *Paul*'s Soul, widened with Deſires to advance the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt; his Pious Zeal put him upon contriving ſome Way of making a Supply of his neceſſitated Abſence from the *Philippians*; what he could not do by himſelf, he deſires and endeavours to do by another, even *Timothy*, him he promiſes to ſend as a living Epiſtle, to inſtruct and exhort, to quicken and comfort the Church at *Philippi*, in his conſtrained Abſence from her: Bleſſed Apoſtle, ſo that Chriſt might be advanced, thou cared'ſt not by whom it were, whether by thy ſelf, or by another; thou art willing to ſtand in the Croud and be hidden, ſo that Chriſt might ſtand upon another's Shoulders and be ſeen; I truſt in the Lord *to ſend* Timotheus *you ſhortly*. *Obſerve*, (2.) St. *Paul* being about to ſend *Timothy* to *Philippi*, ſends firſt a Commendation of him, and that which he particularly commends *Timothy* for, was his affectionate Love unto the *Philippians*, and his tender Care and Concern for them; *I have no Man like minded who will care for your State*: Now this Care in *Timothy*, for and towards the *Philippians*, is here commended by St. *Paul* in ſeveral obſervable Inſtances of it. (1.) It was a ſpiritual Care chiefly, careth for *your State*, that is, for your ſpiritual State; not that he was without Concern for their temporal Happineſs, but the Proſperity of their Souls was the prime Object of his Care. (2.) It was a ſollicitous Care, the Greek Word ſignifies an Anxious Care, a Soul-cutting, a Soul-rendring Care; his Care was not to cut and wound the Souls, to vex and grieve the Spirits of his People, but he cuts his own Soul with caring for his People. (3.) It was a ſincere Care, a natural genuine Care, *he naturally careth for your State*; naturally, that is, heartily, ſincerely, not artificially, and in appearance only; ſome can artificially act the Part of a Zealot when their own Intereſt or Applauſe make it Neceſſary, but *Timothy* was unſkilful in ſuch Arts, he did naturally, chearfully, and conſtantly care *for your State*; there was a Reality, yea, a large Quantity of Love, and hearty Affection towards the *Philippians* found with him. (4) St. *Paul* commends this Care in *Timothy* towards them from the Rarity of it, I find none like minded, that is, few, very few like minded with him, and equally-hearted to him in the Cauſe of Chriſt; St. *Paul* had divers Miniſters now with him, but one *Timothy*, others ſought their own things, but he the things of Jeſus Chriſt: Yet I conceive this is not to be underſtood univerſally, but ſynecdochically; not as if all Miniſters, except *Timothy* only, ſought themſelves, and regarded their own private Intereſt, but the moſt and far greateſt Part did ſo, refuſing to undertake ſuch a tedious Journey from *Rome*, to *Philippi*, as *Timothy* ſtood ready to undertake. Learn hence, That it is a great Sin in all, but eſpecially in the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, to be of a ſelf-ſeeking Spirit. *Obſerve* (5.) He commends this Care of *Timothy's* towards them, by their experimental Knowledge of it, and Acquaintance with it; for when old *Paul* was at *Philippi*, young *Timothy* was an Aſſiſtant to him, as a Son to a Father, obeying his Counſel, following his Directions, imitating his Example, in all things tending to the Edification of the Church. Now from the whole, that is, from St. *Paul's* Care to ſend *Timothy*, thus qualified, to labour in the Goſpel at the Church in *Philippi*, we *Note*, That ſuch as have Power to ſend forth Miniſters to Flocks, and Paſtors to take Care of the Souls of a People, ſhould ſend ſuch as are both able and willing to ſpend and be ſpent for the good of Souls; and if it may be, ſuch as are well known unto, and approved of by the Flock for their Zeal and Diligence in the Work of Chriſt. St. *Paul* here is a Pattern for all Patrons, laying before them the Qualifications of the Perſons whom they ſhould recommend to the Cure of Souls; ſuch as, with *Timothy*, have a Compaſſion for Souls, a truly ſolicitous Care and Concern for the Happineſs and Welfare of Souls, ſuch as the People have had ſome Knowledge of, or at leaſt a Liberty to enquire after; not the Man of ſmall Miniſterial Abilities, but great Symoniacal Gifts; for if Patrons in the Execution of that vaſt Truſt (but little conſidered) do ſeek only their own things, no Wonder that their Clerks ſeek not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.

24 But I truſt in the Lord, that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly. 25 Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-ſoldier, but your meſſenger, and he that miniſtred to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heavineſs, becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick. 27 For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes declared his Reſolutions to ſend *Timothy* to the *Philippians* as ſoon as he ſhould ſee how it would go with himſelf at *Rome*, and what would be the Iſſue of his Bonds; and having alſo diſcovered his own Purpoſe to come himſelf to them as ſoon as the Providence of God ſhould ſet him at Liberty; in the mean time he aſſures them he would no longer detain their own ſpecial Miniſter *Epaphroditus* from them, whom they had ſo kindly ſent with a liberal Supply unto him in the Priſon at *Rome*; *I ſuppoſe it neceſſary to ſend unto you* Epaphroditus, *my Brother, my Companion in Labour, my Fellow-ſoldier, your Meſſenger, and he that miniſtred to my Wants.*

(1.) Here *Note* how copious St. *Paul* is in the Commendation of *Epaphroditus*, he calls him *his Brother*, his Brother in Chriſt, his Brother in the Miniſtry, his *Companion in Labour*, his Fellow-labourer in Chriſt's Vineyard, travelling from one Part of it to another, to plant and propagate the Goſpel of Chriſt; his *Fellow-ſoldier* alſo, a faithful and conſtant Aſſociate with him in the Chriſtian Warfare. Their Apoſtle or Meſſenger, the Biſhop of *Philippi*, ſay the ancient Fathers; their Meſſenger to carry the Church's Alms to St. *Paul*, ſay others; behold here in St. *Paul's* ſending away *Epaphroditus* loaden thus with Commendation, the great

Modeſty, *Sincerity* and *Humility*, of this chief Apoſtle. St. *Paul* had many Prerogatives above *Epaphroditus*, he was immediately Called by Chriſt, extraordinarily fitted and furniſhed for his Calling; he laboured more abundantly, and ſuffered more abundantly than all the reſt, yet he almoſt equalizes and levels *Epaphroditus* with himſelf, calling him *Brother*, *Fellow-labourer*, *Fellow-Soldier*, and highly magnifies the Gifts and Graces of God's Spirit in him, without the leaſt Diminution; teaching ſuch as are dignified in the Church, and exalted by their Merits above others, not to deſpiſe the Perſons, nor to extenuate and leſſen the Gifts, and Graces, and Uſefulneſs of their inferiour Brethren; Pride in any Perſon is Odious, but in a Miniſter 'tis Monſtrous, they that have received more than others, and know better than others, ought to be Patterns of Humility unto others.

(2.) *Note* the Reaſons here aſſigned why St. *Paul* judged it neceſſary to ſend *Epaphroditus* back to his Charge at *Philippi*. (1.) He longed after his Flock, *ver.* 26. *he longed after you all*, even unto Heavineſs; we do not read of his longing after his Family, or his Friends, or the Fleece, but his Flock, his Church and Charge at *Philippi*; this lay near his Heart, this he longed to be with. (2.) This Longing and Heavineſs was mutual, the *Philippians* longed for him, and were full of Heavineſs becauſe of his Sickneſs; when the Head of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt akes, his Peoples Hearts ake; mutual Longings between Miniſters and People in Caſe of Abſence, and mutual Heavineſs and Mourning in Caſe of Sickneſs, is a certain Argument and Evidence of mutual Love one towards another.

(3.) *Note* how our Apoſtle confirms the Report of *Epaphroditus*'s Sickneſs, and celebrates the Mercy and Goodneſs of God in his unexpected Recovery; *indeed he was Sick nigh unto Death, but God had Mercy on him, &c.* Here *Obſerve* (1.) The Eminency of the Perſon, who was Sick, *Epaphroditus*, a great Man, a good Man, a Man of God, St. *Paul*'s Brother, Companion, Fellow-ſoldier, falls Sick, when engaged in Chriſt's and the Church's ſpecial Service; Saints as well as Sinners, Miniſters as well as People, are ſubject to Sickneſs, Diſeaſes, nay, Death itſelf may meet them in the Work of Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) As the Eminency of the Perſon, ſo the Extremity of the Diſeaſe, he was nigh unto Death. But why did not St. *Paul*, who had the Gift of Healing, help *Epaphroditus* now Sick, as well as raiſe *Eutychus* when Dead? *Act.* 20. 9. *Anſ.* The Apoſtles had not the Gift of Healing to make uſe of at their Pleaſure, but as God was pleaſed by a ſpecial Inſtinct and a ſtrong Faith to excite them to it, when it was his Pleaſure to have them uſe it: Theſe Gifts were given for the ſake of Unbelievers, to convince them of the Truth of Chriſtianity, but God did not think fit to have them ordinarily exerciſed upon Believers. *Obſerve* (3.) The Recovery of *Epaphroditus*, and the Author of it, God had Mercy on him; he who is Lord of Life and Death ſaid in Mercy to him return and live; when God preſerves the Lives, and reſtores the Health of his faithful Miniſters, it is an Act of no ſmall Mercy, both to their People and themſelves: To their People, as they become the greater Inſtruments of their Good, to themſelves, as it encreaſes their own Reward; the longer a Miniſter lives, the more Glory he brings to God, and the more Glory he brings to God on Earth, the more Glory ſhall he partake of with God in Heaven; in ſhort, the longer he lives the more Souls he converts, and every Soul is a new Gem added to that Crown, which ſhall one Day be put upon his Head, *Dan.* 12. 2. They that turn many to Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Share which St. *Paul* had in the Mercy of *Epaphroditus*'s Recovery, *God had Mercy not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow*; *Paul* had much Sorrow, a great Load of Sorrow upon him at that time; he was now among Strangers, yea, among Priſoners, in the midſt of Perſecutors, and his Mind oppreſt with Sorrow, partly for the *Philipians*, partly for *Epaphroditus*; therefore the Lord in tender Pity to him did not take away by Death his dear and uſeful Companion, leſt he ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow, and cauſe his Wounds to bleed afreſh. Learn hence, So compaſſionate is God towards his dear Children, that tho' he often cauſes them Grief and Sorrow, yet he will not overcharge them therewith, nor add Affliction to the Afflicted, nor ſuffer them to be exerciſed and tried above what they are able; *God had Mercy on me leſt I ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow.*

28 I ſent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs, and hold ſuch in reputation: 30 Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to ſupply your lack of ſervice toward me.

Here firſt St. *Paul* aſſigns the Reaſon why he was ſo careful to ſend back *Epaphroditus* to the *Philippians*, namely, to aſſwage his own Grief, and to encreaſe their Joy, *that when ye ſee him ye might rejoice, and I be the leſs ſorrowful.* Next the Apoſtle exhorts them to receive him with all Joy and Gladneſs, and to give him, and all ſuch as he was, due Honour, and deſerv'd Reſpect; and doubtleſs the *Philippians* received him with inexpreſſible Joy, as a Miniſter of Chriſt riſen from the Dead, recovered from the Grave, received to Life and Service, when all hopes of enjoying were cut off. Oh! the Folly and Frailty of Humane Nature; we prize our Mercies more by the Want than by the Worth of them. Laſtly, he aſſigns a ſpecial Reaſon why he would have then receive him with ſuch Demonſtrations of Joy, namely, becauſe it was in their and his Service that he was brought to the very Brink of the Grave, *for the Work of Chriſt he was nigh unto Death*; the Work here meant is probably his Journey to *Rome*, which was Long and Tedious, his Watchings and Pains-taking with and for the Apoſtle there were very Spending, he endeavoured to ſupply the Abſence and Want of the whole Church to St, *Paul*; his Zeal for God, and his Affection to St. *Paul*, carried him out beyond Himſelf, beyond his Strength, to the apparent Prejudice both of his Health and Life. Learn hence, (1.) That to relieve the Members, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt in their Neceſſities and Wants, is the Work of Chriſt, *for the Work of Chriſt he was nigh unto Death*; Miniſters are not only engaged in the Work of Chriſt when they Preach, *&c.* but when they Viſit their Flock, Inquire into the Wants of the Poor, and Adminiſter to the Neceſſities of the Diſtreſſed, this is the Work of Chriſt. Learn (2.) That Sickneſs may overtake, ea Death itſelf may meet the faithful Servants and Miniſters of Chriſt when they are engaged in his own Work; it was *in the Work of the Lord* that *Epaphroditus* met with this Sickneſs and had he met with Death itſelf he had been happy; for bleſſed are they that die in the Work of the Lord, they ſhal reſt from their Labours, and their Works ſhall follow them

CHAP. III.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is to arm the Church of the Philippians *againſt theſe falſe judaizing Teachers, who confounded Chriſt a* Moſes, *Circumciſion and the Goſpel together; this he oth by ſeveral Arguments, namely, firſt from the Diſpoſition, Quality and End of thoſe falſe Teachers; th are Dogs, unclean Beaſts, that bark only for the Belly, and do not only bark, but watch their Time to bite too. Our Apoſtle therefore wiſely warns the* hilippians *in the Chapter before us to beware of them and guard againſt them.*

FInally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

There is no Duty which Believers do more llingly Hear, or more difficultly *Obſerve*, than the Duty o iritual Rejoicing; had our Apoſtle called upon the bleſſ Angels to rejoice, who have neither Sin, nor Sorrow nor Fear, not Sufferings, nor Enemies to annoy them, t might have ſeem'd agreeable; but is it at all Congru to perſwade Sinners loaded with Guilt, and defiled th Corruption, cloathed with Infirmities, aſſaulted with mptation, perſecuted by the World? To bid them joice may ſeem ſtrange: But the Wonder will ceaſe if w onſider the Object which he directs them to rejoice and that is, the Lord; not in themſelves, but in the rd Jeſus Chriſt; *my Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* Le hence, (1.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great, ſur nd perpetual Joy of his own People; the Object of Joy a preſent Good, a precious Good, a proportionable Go a perpetual Good, ſuch is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Learn (2.) That it is the Duty of all ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians to joy and rejoice in him, *finally, Brethren, rejoice in the Lord*; rejoice in his Perſon, in the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge that are found in him, which render him an Object worthy of Angelical Adoration; rejoice in his Mediation, in the great Things he has done and ſuffered for you, in the Graces of his Spirit conferr'd upon you, and in the Hopes of that Glory to which he has intitled you.

1 —— To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* ſafe.

To write the ſame things, that is, not the ſame things which I wrote before, but the ſame things which I preached to you before, and which you often heard by word of Mouth from me before; tho' I inculcate and preſs the ſame Truths upon you by my Writing, which I have done by my Preaching, it is neither Grievous nor Burthenſome to me, nor Unneceſſary or Unprofitable for you. Learn hence, That the often repeating and frequent inculcating of ſuch Truths as are moſt uſeful and neceſſary for the Inſtruction and Edification of the Hearers, ought to be eſteemed neither Burthenſom by the Miniſter, nor Weariſom by the People. Learn farther, That we have here St. *Paul*'s Judgment againſt Oral-tradition, which the Church of *Rome* prefers before the written Word; ſo did not St. *Paul*, knowing that what is delivered by Word of Mouth might ſoon ſlip out of the Memory, but what is written is remaining; bleſſed be God for his written Word.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the conciſion.

Obſerve here, (1.) The cautionary Direction given the *Philippians* to beware of falſe Teachers, who adulterated and corrupted the Doctrine of Chriſt, by joining the Works and Obſervances of the Law with the Doctrine of the Goſpel in Point of Juſtification, making them at leaſt the partial Ground of their Confidence and Rejoicing; beware of ſuch, ſays our Apoſtle. *Obſerve* (2.) The cutting Reproof given to the judaizing —— Teachers, in that odious Character he gives of them, and in that Brand of Infamy which he claps upon them. (1.) He calls them *Dogs*, a Term not of Diminution only, but of utmoſt Diſgrace; *Is thy Servant a Dog*? 2 *King*. 8. 13. ſuppoſing that nothing could be thought more Vile and Baſe. The Jews called all the Gentiles *Dogs* becauſe unclean; St. *Paul* here calls theſe falſe Teachers Dogs fitly, becauſe as Dogs they did rend and tear the Simplicity of the Goſpel, and divide the Glory of Man's Salvation betwixt Faith and Works; becauſe, as Dogs, they did bark out Reproaches againſt the Apoſtles and their Doctrine, delivered in its native Purity and Simplicity; becauſe as Dogs they did take a great deal of pains to compaſs abundance of Ground to gain their Game, or in our Saviour's Words, *they compaſs Sea and Land to make Proſelytes*. (2.) *Evil Workers*; becauſe pretending to labour in the Goſpel they did ſubvert and overthrow the great Deſign of the Goſpel, pretending to be Fellow-workers with the Apoſtle, but pulling down what they built up. (3.) *The Conciſion*; ſo in Contempt he calls Circumciſion, which theſe judaizing Teachers pleaded the Neceſſity of, as *Hezekiah* called the brazen Serpent *Nehuſhtan*, becauſe Circumciſion being no longer an Ordinance of God, was no better than a cutting off the Fleſh, and they that made it neceſſary to Juſtification, cut themſelves off from Chriſt, and from the Church of Chriſt; by urging the Neceſſity of Circumciſion they cut and rent aſunder the Church of God. *Note* here, (1.) How different the Temper of this Apoſtle was in different Caſes; in things of an indifferent Nature, and leſs Neceſſary, who more mild, indulgent and complying, breathing forth the Spirit of the meek Jeſus? But when Opinions were broached, which tend to pervert Souls, and to ſubvert the Goſpel, then he ſpeaks Fire and Thunder, and no Terms are bad enough for ſuch Seducers; let us follow St. *Paul* as he followed Chriſt, and learn when to be mild, and when to be zealous. *Note* (2.) With what an Exceſs of Care he cautions the *Philippians* againſt theſe falſe Teachers, ſaying, *beware, beware, beware*, three times together in one ſhort Verſe; thereby inſtructing the Miniſters of Chriſt, that their utmoſt Zeal and Diligence is neceſſary in warning their People to guard againſt Seducers.

3 For we are the circumciſion, which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.

That is, we Chriſtians are alone the true and ſpiritual Circumciſion, and accounted circumciſed by God, becauſe we have that which the outward Circumciſion ſignified, namely, the Circumciſion of the Heart, and the Mortification of all carnal Luſts and Deſires; we have the Subſtance of that Ordinance which is infinitely more pleaſing to God than the Ceremony and Shadow; tho' you have the Sign, we have the Thing ſignified. But how doth that appear? Three Ways; we worſhip God in the Spirit, we rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, we have no Confidence in the Fleſh. (1.) We worſhip God in the Spirit, that is, (1.) We give him the Worſhip of our Souls and Spirits, and do not put him off with meer bodily Worſhip, or with the old antiquitated Jewiſh Worſhip. (2.) We worſhip God in the Spirit, that is, thro' the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit he excites and quickens to the Duty, he aſſiſts and enables in the Duty, and he encourages and emboldens the Soul to expect Audience and Acceptance after the Duty: Again, (2.) We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus; this was a ſecond Evidence of their being the true Circumciſion; let them glory in their carnal Ordinance of outward Circumciſion, we will rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, who hath freed us from the Slavery of that Ordinance. (3.) We have no Confidence in the Fleſh, not in Circumciſion, or any fleſhly Privileges, or carnal Prerogatives; we confide only in Chriſt, and in nothing but Chriſt. *Note*, that by Fleſh here is meant paiticularly the Circumciſion of the Fleſh, but more generally by Fleſh may be underſtood all the Externals of Religion which Men place their Truſt and Confidence in; all outward Privileges and Ordinances are Fleſh, in the Apoſtles Senſe here; Prayer is Fleſh, Ordinances are Fleſh, the Righteouſneſs of the Law is Fleſh, nay, Grace it ſelf truſted to and confided in is Fleſh; the ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian rejoices in Chriſt Jeſus, confides in him, but dares not place any Confidence in the Fleſh. *We are the Circumciſion, who worſhip God in the Spirit, rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no Confidence in the Fleſh.*

4 Though I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, I more: 5 Circumciſed the eighth day, of the ſtock *of* Iſrael, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Phariſee; 6 Concerning zeal, perſecuting the church; touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, let no Man think that I undervalue the Jewiſh Privileges becauſe I want them; ſhew me ever a judaizing Teacher of them all that can pretend to more, or ſo many of them as my ſelf; ſo that were this a Ground of Confidence I can vie with any one of them in carnal Privileges, Jewiſh Prerogatives and outward Performances; yea, I can boaſt of as much Self-righteouſneſs as the beſt of them, and beyond them all, for he was *Circumciſed*, and had the Seal of the Covenant applied to him, yea, he was Circumciſed the *eighth Day*, the very Day preſcribed by the Law, the Jews maintaining that Circumciſion before the eighth Day was no Circumciſion, and after the eighth Day was of leſs Value; *of the Stock of Iſrael*, one of that Nation which God ſet a part for himſelf when he rejected all the Nations of the Eerth beſide; *of the Tribe of Benjamin*, of a Noble Tribe, as well as deſcended of an honourable People; a Tribe which kept cloſe to God when other Tribes revolted to the Worſhip of *Jeroboam*'s Calves, a Tribe honoured with the firſt of *Iſrael*'s Kings, King *Saul*; *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*, that is, Born a Jew both by Father's ſide and Mother's ſide; *as touching the Law a Phariſee*; that is, as touching the Interpretation and Obſervation of the Law a Phariſee, or one of the ſtricteſt Sects amongſt the Jews for the Profeſſion of Religion; *concerning Zeal, perſecuting the Church*; that is, as touching Zeal for the Jewiſh Religion, I have ſhewed *that* above others in my fiery and furious Perſecution of the Church of Chriſt, I was active according as my Judgment and Conſcience directed me; *and as touching the Righteouſneſs which is in and by the Law*, that is, as to his perſonal Obedience unto the Law he was *Blameleſs*, without Spot, as the original Word ſignifies; that is, in his own Account, and in Man's Eſteem, his Converſation not ſtained with any groſs Sin, but very Exact in his Deportment

ment and Behaviour, living up to his Knowledge, his Practice correſponding with his Profeſſion. Behold here a Man that had a large Stock of Jewiſh Privileges and Prerogatives: All theſe Grounds of Confidence the Apoſtle had before Converſion, and he might have reſted there, and have gloried, and confided therein, as well as the judaizing Doctors did, who gloried in their external Privileges; *but how* far St. *Paul* was from this Spirit and Temper the next Verſes inform us.

7 But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt. 8 Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.

That is, the forementioned Privileges which heretofore he accounted *Gain*, and thought to gain Juſtification and Salvation by, now ſince this *Illumination* he counted them all *loſt*; he ſaw he had loſt his Soul for ever had he truſted to theſe, but Chriſt being made known to him as the only Way to gain Pardon of Sin, and Acceptance with God, he renounces all his former Privileges, his former legal Righteouſneſs; he durſt not lean upon theſe broken Reeds, he would have no more Confidence in the Fleſh, but in Chriſt only; *what things were reputed gain to me, theſe I accounted as loſs for Chriſt's ſake.* And he repeats the Words over again with Confidence and Aſſurance, that he might not be thought to ſpeak unadviſedly, and in a heat; *yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs*, he did not only count them Loſs, but he had actually renounced them as ſuch: An Alluſion to a Merchant, who is content to ſuffer the Loſs of all his Goods to ſave his Life. But how did St. *Paul* ſuffer the Loſs of them? *Anſw.* He did not make Shipwrack of holy Duties, and caſt off the Performance of them, but he caſt off all Dependency upon them, and caſt away all Expectation of Happineſs and Salvation from them, which he had before. *Obſerve* farther, he did not only count them Loſs, but caſt them away as Dung, as filthy Carrion, as Garbage caſt to Dogs, as the Word ſignifies. Such things as theſe the falſe Teachers (whom he called Dogs) might delight in; but as for himſelf he could reliſh and ſavour nothing in them, in Compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt. In the Words *Obſerve* (1.) The low Eſteem and mean Account which St. *Paul* had, and every inlightned Chriſtian has, of the greateſt Advantages which this World doth or can afford, in Compariſon of Jeſus' Chriſt and him crucified; *I count all things but Loſs*, all my ſpiritual Privileges, with all my worldly Advantages; I do upon the greateſt Deliberation and Thought undervalue them all for the ſake of Chriſt and his Grace. *Obſerve* (2.) The high and honourable Eſteem which he had of the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt; he declares there was a tranſcendent Excellency in it; *for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.* The Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of the Way and Method of Salvation by and thro' him, it is an excelling Knowledge; every thing of Jeſus Chriſt is Excellent and Worthy to be known, the Dignity of his Perſon, as God, as Man, as God-Man, or Mediator between God and Man, the Dignity of his Offices, as the great King, Prieſt and Prophet of his Church, the Eminency of his Example, the Depth of his Humiliation, the Heighth of his Exaltation, the Tranſcendency of his Love in all his Undertakings for us, and the Way and Method of his Juſtification of us by Faith in his Blood; we may conclude of the Act by the Object; Chriſt is the moſt excellent Object, therefore the Knowledge of Chriſt is and muſt be the moſt excellent Knowledge; not only all the Excellencies of the Creature are found in him in the moſt excelling Manner, but all the Excellencies of the Godhead, the Fulneſs of the God-head dwells in him bodily, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially. *Obſerve* (3.) The Effect which this Knowledge of Chriſt had upon our Apoſtle, it enabled him *to ſuffer the loſs of all things*; ſuch as have attained the excellent Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, will not think much to ſuffer the Loſs of any thing, yea, of all things, for the obtaining of him, and Salvation by him. *Obſerve* (4.) The End and Deſign of St. *Paul* in parting with all for Chriſt, or the Motive and Encouragment which induced him thereunto, namely, that he *might win Chriſt*, that is, that he might obtain an Intereſt in him, and the Bleſſings purchaſed by him; for this was he willing to part with all his Privileges, all his Accompliſhments, all his Enjoyments, all his own Righteouſneſs; his Exactneſs in the outward Obſervation of the Law, he renounced it all, not in Point of Performance, bnt in Point of Dependance, he renounced all Confidence in it for his Juſtification before God; *yea doubtleſs, I count all things but Loſs*, &c.

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Subject Matter of St. *Paul's* Deſire, it was to be found in Chriſt. *Beza* upon the Place brings in the Juſtice of God purſuing *Paul* as a Malefactor, and Chriſt as a City of Refuge which he deſires to flee unto, and be found in. By being found *in Chriſt* then underſtand ingrafting and incorporating into him by Faith, to find Acceptance with God through him, as our Surety and Repreſentative, and to perſevere in our Obedience to him to the End of our Lives. Learn, that ſuch as deſire above all things to be found in Chriſt, are willing to do, to ſuffer any thing, yea, all things; and care not in what Condition they be found, how Poor and Low, how Afflicted and Deſpiſed ſoever, ſo they may be found in Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) The Manner how St. *Paul* deſires to be found in Chriſt, this is expreſt both negatively and poſitively. (1.) Negatively, *not having my own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law*; that is, not depending upon any thing he could call his own, neither upon his ſpiritual Privileges, nor natural Accompliſhments, nor religious Performances, nor upon his moſt perfect Righteouſneſs, and beſt Obedience, for his Juſtification before God, knowing it to be both unwarrantable and unſafe ſo to do; unwarrantable, becauſe our good Works never had the Impreſs of God's Ordination for that End; they were never deſigned to juſtifie our Perſons, but to juſtifie our Faith; and unſafe it is to truſt to our own Righteouſneſs and beſt Services, becauſe of the many ſinful Imperfections cleaving to them; alas! They cannot juſtifie themſelves, how then ſhould they juſtifie us! Our beſt Duties deſerve to be thrown as ſo much Dung upon our Faces; ſurely, we may plead the Excellency and preach the Neceſſity of good Works, though we do not ſet them in Chriſt's Chair; ſuch then as would be found in Chriſt, *though* they never ſo careful are to maintain good Works, (*which* it is their Duty and Intereſt, their daily Care and Endeavour to do) yet they dare not reſt in them, or rely upon them for Juſtification, or make any thing in themſelves, or done by themſelves, the Ground of their Confidence. Chriſt's perfect Obedience entitles us to Heaven, our own imperfect (if ſincere) Obedience will evidence that Title; ſome rely upon a natural Righteouſneſs, that which they call good Nature; others rely upon a negative Righteouſneſs, becauſe they are not ſo unrighteous as ſome; others rely upon a Poſitive Righteouſneſs, a Moral Righteouſneſs in obſerving the Duties of the Second Table, a Religious Righteouſneſs in performing the outward Duties of Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacraments. But tho' St. *Paul* was one of the moſt Religious Men that the Jewiſh Religion ever had, yet he durſt not be found with this Righteouſneſs alone, but deſires to be found in Chriſt, not having his own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law. *Obſerve* farther, the Way how the Apoſtle deſired to be found in Chriſt is not only Negatively, but, (2.) Poſitively declared, *that which is through the Faith of Chriſt, that Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.* Here *Note*, (1.) That Righteouſneſs which ſecures a Guilty Sinner from the dint of God's Wrath is Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, he is made unto us of God *Righteouſneſs*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. Now this Righteouſneſs is here called, (1.) The Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe of his Appointing, Ordaining and Accepting. (2.) The Righteouſneſs of Faith, becauſe this Righteouſneſs is made ours by Faith; Faith apprehending and applying the Death and Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, the Fruit and Benefit of his Undertaking, becomes the believing Sinner, and God is at Peace with him: ſuch as will be found in Chriſt muſt have a Righteouſneſs, the Meritorious Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to anſwer the Demands of the Law, and a Perſonal Righteouſneſs of their own, to anſwer the Commands of the Goſpel. St. *Paul* here, tho' a Tranſcendent Saint, tho' an Eminent Apoſtle, yet diveſts himſelf of his own Righteouſneſs, that he might be Cloathed upon with the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, be found in him as his Surety in the Day of Account, and obtain Pardon for the ſake of Satiſfaction. *Note* (2.) That there is no Gain to be had from this Righteouſneſs by a Loſt Sinner, except it be apprehended by Faith; it was not a Righteouſneſs of his own that St. *Paul* deſired to be found in, but Faith was his own, Inherent in him, and Acted by him, which did Entitle him to that Righteouſneſs, called therefore here *the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.*

10 That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Our Apoſtle had in the foregoing Verſe expreſt his earneſt Deſire to be found in Chriſt, with reſpect to his Juſtification; in this Verſe, with reſpect to his Sanctification, he deſired to *know Chriſt* as the Meſſiah and Mediator, that he might *experience the Power of his Reſurrection*, raiſing him from the Death of Sin to a Life of Grace and Holineſs, and taſte ſomething of that Comfort and Joy which is found in Suffering with him, and for him; and to be made *conformable unto his Death*, by a daily dying unto Sin, knowing that if he were conformed to him in the Likeneſs of his Death, he ſhould be alſo in the Likeneſs of his Reſurrection. Here *Note*, (1) What it is that a Perſon juſtified by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt doth moſt deſire, namely, a Spirit of Holineſs and Sanctification, flowing from Chriſt, to enable to Live unto him; *that I may know the Power of his Reſurrection*, that is, experience that Divine Power in my Soul quickning me to a Life of Grace, which Chriſt experienced in quickning his Dead Body when it lay in the Grave; it is as great a Work of the Spirit to Form Chriſt in the Heart of a Sinner, as it was to faſhion him in the Womb, or to Raiſe him from the Grave, ſays the Pious Biſhop *Reynolds* upon the Place. *Note* (2.) That ſuch as are Juſtified and Sanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, are willing to have Fellowſhip with him in his Sufferings; not Ambitious to ſhare with him in the Merit of his Sufferings, but deſirous to participate with him in the Benefit of his Sufferings, and alſo to be conformed to him in their own Sufferings; the Members think it an Honour to be like their Head, their Suffering Head, as well as their Glorified Head, and well they may, for in and under all their Sufferings, eſpecially for him, they have his Preſence with them, his Compaſſion to moderate them, his Strength to bear them, his Interceſſion to preſerve from falling away in them; and his Crown, after we have ſuffered a while, to reward us for them.

11 If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead:

By the Reſurrection of the Dead here, is not to be underſtood the general Reſurrection, for all Men ſhall attain that, whether they ſtrive for it or no; but he intends that compleat Holineſs, and abſolute Perfection in Grace, which ſhall attend the State of the Reſurrection, ſo he explains it himſelf in the next Verſe, not that I have already Attained, *&c.* or were already Perfect; and he ſhews how diligent he was in endeavouring in the Uſe of all poſſible Means to Arrive at it, and Attain unto it. Learn, That the glorious Reſurrection of the Juſt, or Grace Conſummated in Glory, is attainable, and deſerves and requires the utmoſt Care and Diligence of the moſt Holy and Zealous Chriſtians, to be exerted and put forth in order to the attaining of it; if by any means I may attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. 13 Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, 14 I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

Our Apoſtle here compares himſelf to a Perſon running in a Race, the Prize which he did Contend and Run for was Perfection in Grace. The higheſt Degree of which in this Life conſiſts in a Deſire and Endeavour to obtain the largeſt Meaſures, and fulleſt Degrees of Holineſs, that are here attainable; the Manner how he ran for this Prize he tells us was by looking forward, not backward; he did not look back to the things which he had loſt behind, namely, to the Priviledges of Judaiſm, nor to his paſt performances, but, like a Racer, kept himſelf continually upon the Stretch, with his Eye fixed firmly upon the Prize at the End of the Goal, that he might lay Hold upon it, and be Crowned with it. *Note* here, Chriſtianity is a Race, every Chriſtian in this Life muſt run this Race, in his running he muſt look forward, and not backward, not reckon how much of the Way is paſt, but make the beſt of the Way to come; he muſt keep Heaven, as the Mark and Prize he runs for, continually in his Eye, to hearten him on againſt all Hardſhips and Diſcouragements whatſoever, and in a Word, muſt be *Apprehended* before he can *Apprehend*; St. *Paul* was apprehended by Chriſt, and caught hold of by him, when he fled from him, otherwiſe he had never apprehended; Chriſt takes hold on us before we have any Deſires to lay hold on him; we move as moved of him, and aſſiſted by him.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe-minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. 16 Neverthleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.

Let as many as be perfect, that is, grown Chriſtians, inſtructed throughly in their Chriſtian Duty, (who compared with others may be called Perfect) be thus Minded as I am, namely, to believe the Circumciſion of the Fleſh aboliſhed, and that no Confidence is to be placed in any Righteouſneſs of our own, but in the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith only, and if any ſeduced by the Judaizing Teachers be otherwiſe-minded, and think that the Ceremonial Law is not Abrogated, nor the Practice of Circumciſion Aboliſhed, God in his due time will ſhew them their Error, and convince them that none of thoſe things are now neceſſary for the obtaining of his Favour. Nevertheleſs, in the mean time, he exhorts all Perſons, according to the Meaſures of Light and Knowledge which they had received, to walk according to the Rule of the Scriptures, preſerving mutual Love, and avoiding farther Rents and Diviſions. *Obſerve* here, that in the firſt and beſt Age of the Chriſtian Church there was, and we cannot expect but there ever will be, a Variety of Opinions, and Differences in Judgment, amongſt the Members thereof. *Obſerve* (2.) That in this Caſe of unavoidable Differences amongſt good Men, there ought to be mutual Charity and Meekneſs, Moderation and Forbearance, no cenſorious judging of each other, but look firſt at what is wanting in our ſelves, and next at what is uſeful in others, the one will make us Humble, the other Charitable, and both Peaceable.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample. 18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they* are the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt: 19 Whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is *their* belly: and *whoſe* glory is in their ſhame, who mind earthly things.)

Here our Apoſtle propounds his own Example to their Imitation; *follow me* who have renounced all my Jewiſh Priviledges, all Confidence in any thing of my own, and mark them for your Patterns who walk ſo as to have us for an Example; Oh! How happy is it when the Miniſters of Chriſt go before their People, and tread out the Steps which they are to take towards Heaven, when they can ſay to their People, (without any upbraidings from their own Conſciences) be followers of us, and of all ſuch as have us for an Example. Next he warns them againſt following the Doctrines and Practices of the Falſe Teachers, the Judaizing Doctors, thoſe great zealots for the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, and the Right of Circumciſion; theſe he Paints out in their proper Colours. (1.) He calls them the *Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt*, becauſe they Preach'd up the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, and ſo in Effect denied Chriſt to be Come in the Fleſh, or affirming that he Died in Vain; *whoſe End is Deſtruction*; if they perſiſt in their Wicked Doctrines and Practices, their End will be everlaſtiug Deſtruction; *whoſe God is their Belly*, who chiefly mind the Gratification and Pleaſing of a ſenſual Appetite; they who Serve their Belly before God, or as they ſhould Serve God, do make a God of their Belly; we may provide for the Belly, but not Serve it, that is to Serve us, by fitting us to Serve God, our Neighbour, and our Selves; *whoſe Glory is in their Shame*, that is, they gloried in their Wicked Practices in general, whereof they ought to be aſhamed, and in the Circumciſion of the ſhameful Member in particular; they are puffed up with that which ſhould rather make them Bluſh; *they mind Earthly things*; the Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, Applauſe of the World, are things wholly upon their Hearts, counting Gain, Godlineſs, not regarding Chriſt's Intereſt, but only the promoting their own Deſigns. Lord! what a diſmal Character is this of thoſe Men that undertake to be Teachers of others? With what a black Coal doth the Apoſtle draw their Picture, and yet his Hand was guided by the Spirit of God, whoſe Judgment of them was according to Truth.

20 For our converſation is in Heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, as you love your Souls, follow not thoſe falſe Teachers afore deſcribed, for they are Citizens of this World; but imitate and follow us who are Citizens of Heaven, where our Head is, where our Heart is, where our Happineſs is. 'Tis true, we Live here below, but we belong to the Corporation and Society above, our Citizenſhip is in Heaven; for we have an high Eſteem of that Happineſs, and our chief Concern is to make ſure of it, and we Pleaſe and Delight our ſelves with the joyful Expectation of it, and we Live anſwerably to our Expectation; as we hope hereafter to Live like the Angels in Glory, ſo we now endeavour to Live like the Angels in Holineſs. Learn hence, All the Faithful, both Miniſters and People, have a Right to Heaven as to their City; they are therefore with their Hearts and Affections to be daily aſpiring after it, and Live in Hopes of getting e're long the full Poſſeſſion of it.

21 Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his Glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

Obſerve here, (1.) All the faithful who have their Converſation in Heaven do expect and look for Chriſt's coming from thence, not as a terrible Judge, but as a gracious and a powerful Saviour. *Obſerve* (2.) What they do expect at the coming of this Saviour, namely, the changing *of their Vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his Glorious Body*. *Note* here (1.) The preſent Condition of the Body of Man, it is in a Vile Condition, Vile in their Original, our Bodies are made of Vile Duſt; Vile in Regard of their moral Vileneſs, and ſinful Vileneſs, Vile in Regard of their accidental Vileneſs, as their Bodies is the Seat of their Vile Diſeaſes, and ſubject to Vile Abuſes; Vile conſidered with Reſpect to its ultimate Vileneſs at Death; how does a Body as Beautiful as ever was *Abſolom*'s, when Death comes, run into Rottenneſs and Putrefaction; our Sin made us Vile in the Sight of God whilſt we lived, and renders our Bodies Viler in the Sight of Men when we die, *Note* (2.) The future Condition which the Bodies of good Men ſhall be in at the Appearance of Chriſt; this Vile Body ſhall be a Beautiful and a Bleſſed Body, the Body we lay down ſhall be rebuilt, formed, and faſhioned like unto Chriſt's Glorious Body; reſembling his in Incorruptibility and Immortality, in Purity and Spirituality, in Power and Activity, in Happineſs and Felicity. *Note* (3.) The efficient Cauſe of this great and glorious Change, with Reference to the Body, and that is Chriſt, *he ſhall change our Vile Bodies*; together with the Means, by which all this ſhall be effected and accompliſhed, namely, the wonderful Power of Chriſt, *according to the Working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* Surely it is as eaſie for Chriſt to give a Body to a Soul at the Reſurrection, as to breathe a Soul into a Body every Day in the Work of Creation. But the Power of Chriſt is but a weak Argument to build our Hopes of the Body's Reſurrection upon, without a Revelation of his Will; he can quench all the Fire in Hell in a Moment, but where has he ſaid he will do it? But now in the Caſe before us, Chriſt is not only able to raiſe, but declared he will raiſe and change our Vile Bodies, ſo that Faith is enabled to make a ſufficient Reply to all the aſtoniſhing Difficulties that Reaſon can muſter up; and thoſe Chriſtians that can now ſay *our Converſation is in Heaven*, may add from thence, *we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall change our Vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his Glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.*

CHAP. IV.

Our Apoſtle coming now to the Cloſe and Concluſion of his excellent Epiſtle, exhorts the Philippians *to the Practice and Performance of ſeveral Duties which were of great Importance to the Honour of God, the Credit of Religion, and their own Benefit and Comfort; the firſt of which is Conſtancy in the Faith, and Stedfaſtneſs in the true Religion,* Verſe 1.

THerefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

Obſerve here, (1.) The loving, affectionate and endearing Compellations which St. *Paul* beſtows upon his beloved *Philippians*, he calls them his *Brethren*, twice in one Verſe, *his dearly Beloved*, and *longed for, his Joy and Crown*; thereby teſtifying his fervent Affection towards them, his paſſionate Longing for their ſpiritual Welfare, and that their Converſion by his preaching was Matter of great Joy and Comfort to him, yea, the Crown and Honour of his Miniſtry; my *Joy and Crown*, that is, my chief Joy and Crown of Rejoicing, that which he rejoiced in more than he could in any Earthly Crown. Behold in this Glaſs the Heart of every faithful Ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt; it would not pleaſe them ſo much to have an imperial Crown ſet upon their Heads, and be made the Emperours of the World, as to ſee Souls brought off from the World, by their Miniſtry, to the Obedience of the Word. This made the *Philippians* St. *Paul*'s Joy and Crown at preſent, and gave him Hopes that they would be his Crown of rejoicing in the Day of Chriſt; may the ſame Mind be in us which was in this great Apoſtle. *Obſerve* (2.) The great and important Duty which St. *Paul* here exhorts the *Philippians* to, and that is, Steadfaſtneſs in the Faith and Doctrine of the Goſpel in general; and in particular, in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free, without obliging themſelves to obſerve Circumciſion, or any Part of the Ceremonial Law: ſtand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved, my Joy and Crown. Learn hence, (1.) That Steadfaſtneſs in the True Religion, and Perſeverance in the Faith of Chriſt, is the great and indiſpenſable Duty of every Chriſtian that has a due Regard to his Salvation. (2.) That ſuch a Steadineſs in the Faith of Chriſt and his Holy Religion is a preſent Joy, and will be an eternal Crown of rejoicing to the Miniſters of God.

2 I beſeech Euodias, and beſeech Syntiche, that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow, help thoſe women which laboured with me in the goſpel, with Clement alſo, and with other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names are in the book of life.

The former Verſe was an Exhortation to Conſtancy, this to Concord. Here *Obſerve*, (1.) The Perſons exhorted to the Duty, Two Women of eminent *Note* in the Church, *Euodias* and *Syntiche*, who *Laboured* with him in the Goſpel, that is, in Offices proper to their Sex; not in Publick Preaching, but in Private Teaching of Youth, and inſtructing other Women in the Principles of Religion; between theſe two good Women, it ſeems, there was ſome Difference, a want of Love and Unanimity; it is but too frequent for Perſons, truly Pious and Painful in the Work of the Lord, to be at odds amongſt themſelves, and ſuch are the Fatal Conſequences of ſuch Differences (tho' between two Perſons only) that they are lookt upon as worthy to be taken notice of by a great Apoſtle. *Obſerve* (2.) The great Care and Pains which St. *Paul* takes timely to Compoſe this petty Difference between theſe two Perſons, he writes to an eminent Miniſter in the Church at *Philippi*, whom he calls his true Yokefellow, (becauſe they had faithfully laboured together in planting a Chriſtian Church in that City) to exert his utmoſt Endeavours in reconciling theſe two diſagreeing Parties. Such as are ſenſible of the dangerous Miſchief of Strife and Contention, of Diſcord and Diviſion, will account it their Duty to look to Breaches betimes, to quench ſuch Fires at their firſt kindling, and will call in all the help they can, by engaging the Prayers and Tears of God's Miniſters, and the Endeavours of all faithful Chriſtians in order thereunto; and all this Care, God knows, little enough in order thereunto. *Obſerve* (3.) The charitable Thoughts and good Opinion which St. *Paul* had of all his Fellow-labourers at *Philippi*, he believed *their Names were in the Book of Life*; that is, he adjudged them truly Gracious Perſons, and in a State of Salvation; tho' none can paſs a certain and infallible Judgment upon others, yet ſuch as are Holy in Converſation themſelves, and contribute their utmoſt Endeavours to promote Holineſs in others, may in the Judgment of Charity be pronounced perſons whoſe Names are in the Book of Life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I ſay, rejoice.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty exhorted to Chriſtian Chearfulneſs and Joy, a Duty which glorifies God, adorns Religion, is beneficial to our ſelves, by enabling us to bear Afflictions, to Glory in them, and to Triumph over them. *Obſerve* (2.) The Object of this Duty, a Glorious and Repleniſhing Object, Chriſt the Lord, rejoice in your Lord. (3.) The Perpetuity and Conſtancy of the Duty, *rojoice always*, that is, at all Times, and in all Conditions. (4.) The Difficulty of the Duty implied in the Repetition of the Command, *again I ſay, rejoice*. From the whole, *Note*, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the great, ſure and perpetual Joy of his Children and People. (2.) That it is their Duty to be joying in him always, and always rejoicing for him, to rejoice in their Knowledge of him, in his Undertaking for them, in their Intereſt in him, in their Influences of Grace and Comfort derived from him, in their Hopes of Glory to be eternally injoyed with him. (3.) That to get the Heart up to this Duty at all Times, and in all Conditions, is no eaſie Work, therefore the Exhortation is doubled, rejoice always, I ſay again, rejoice, pointing out how averſe we are to this Spiritual and very Beneficial Duty.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

That is, let your Mildneſs and Gentleneſs towards others, your Meekneſs and Patience under your own Trials, be very Conſpicuous, becauſe the Lord is at hand to execute Judgment on his own Crucifiers, and on the Perſecutors of his own People. Learn, That the Conſideration of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of Chriſt's coming to Judgment, ought to be improved by us as an Argument to all Mildneſs and Gentleneſs towards others, and to all Meekneſs and Patience under our preſent Sufferings. *Let your Moderatiou be known unto all Men*, &c.

6 Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty exhorted to, namely, to be Anxiouſly and Sollicitouſly careful for nothing; it is not Care, but Carefulneſs, that is, Inordinate Care, Heart-cutting, Diſtracting, Soul-rending Care and Sollicitude which is here forbidden; there is a prudent provident Care for the things of this Life, which is an unqueſtionable Duty. *Obſ.* (2.) The Remedy preſcribed for the prevention of ſollicitous Care, and that is Fervent Prayer; in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, let your Requeſt be made known. The People of God may and ought to have Recourſe to him in every thing. *Obſ.* (3.) The Apoſtle directs to Thankſgiving in every thing as well as to Prayer, in every thing by Prayer with Thankſgiving, let your Requeſt be made known; when Afflicted we are to be thankful for the expected Benefit of Afflictions, when Tempted to be thankful that God will not leave us to be Tempted above what we are able; when we fall into Sin there is Cauſe of Thankfulneſs that we are not let to run into all Sin, that we were not cut off in the very Act of Sin, and did not Die in our Sins; thus are we in every thing to give Thanks. *Obſ.* (4.) The Benefit and Advantage which St. *Paul* aſſures them would redound unto them by the Practice of the forementioned Duties, namely, ſweet *Peace which paſſes all Underſtanding*; that is, which none can conceive that have not felt it, and none can expreſs that have experienced it. This Peace he tells them will keep and Guard their Hearts and Minds; a Sound Peace is the Soul's Guard againſt all inward Terrors and outward Troubles; as the Perſons of Princes are ſecured by Guards of Armed and Valiant Men, who Watch while they Sleep, ſo are Chriſtians Guarded and Secured by the Peace of God, better than any Prince ever was by a Guard of Forty Thouſand Men. The Peace of God ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds, thro' Chriſt Jeſus, that is, through the Aſſiſtance of Chriſt Jeſus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatſoever things *are* true, whatſoever things *are* honeſt, whatſoever things *are* juſt, whatſoever things *are* pure, whatſoever things *are* lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praiſe, think on theſe things.

Here we have a very comprehenſive Precept deſcribing the Duties of all Chriſtians, *whatſoever things are true*; Truth is the Principal Character of our Profeſſion, and is to be expreſt in our Words and Actions; *whatſoever things are Honeſt*, Venerable or Grave, that is, anſwer the Dignity of our High Calling, and agree with the Gravity and Comelineſs of the Chriſtian Profeſſion, *whatſoever things are Juſt*, according to Divine and Humane Laws; *whatſoever things are Pure and Chaſte*, intimating, that we muſt preſerve the Heart, the Hand, the Tongue, the Eye, from all Impurity; *whatſoever things are Lovely*, and *of good Report*, as Eaſineſs to Pardon, Readineſs to Oblige, Compaſſion to the Afflicted, Liberality to the Diſtreſſed, Sweetneſs of Converſation, without Gall and Bitterneſs, theſe are of univerſal Eſteem with Mankind, and ſoften the moſt ſavage Tempers and Diſpoſitions. *Note* here (1.) That there are things naturally Honeſt, Juſt and Lovely, in their own Nature, and Praiſeworthy in themſelves, which do raiſe and refine the Humane Nature, and without a Command, their Goodneſs is a ſtrong Obligation to obſerve them. *Note* (2.) That Chriſtianity doth adopt Morality, or Preecepts of good Life and Manners, into its Frame and Conſtitution; and it is indeed an integral Part of the Chriſtian Religion; not that any moral Precepts, tho' never ſo Good, can raiſe a Soul from the Death of Sin to a Life of Holineſs, without Faith in Chriſt, and Aſſiſtance from his Spirit; but the Morality which the Scriptures teach us is founded, not barely upon Principles of Reaſon, but Divine Revelation, and obliges us to the Practice of Moral Duties, in Obedience to Chriſt's Command, in Conformity to his Example, in the Strength of his Aſſiſtance, and with an Eye at his Glory,

9 Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in me, do: and the God of peace ſhall be with you.

Obſerve (1.) With what great Confidence and good Aſſurance St. *Paul* here recommended his own Practice and Example to his Peoples Imitation; all thoſe things which he had by his Doctrine and Life commended to them, were to be carefully obſerved and imitated by them; it is a bleſſed thing when a People's Eyes are taught by their Miniſter's Holineſs of Life, and their Ears by the Soundneſs of his Doctrine. Our People have Eyes to ſee how we walk, as well as Ears to hear what we preach; therefore it is a Miniſter's great Duty, by Strictneſs and Gravity of Deportment, to maintain their Eſteem in the Conſciences of their People, yet always tempering Gravity with a condeſcending Affability: That Miniſter only can go off the Stage with Honour and Comfort, who has left behind him the good Seed of ſound Doctrine, and the good Savour of an holy Example, that can ſay with our Apoſtle, *the things which you have both heard and ſeen in me, do*. *Obſ.* (2.) The Promiſe annexed to the foregoing Precept, *theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you*. Where *Note*, (1.) Who will be with us, the God of Peace; now he that is the God of Peace is the God of Power, he that is the God of Peace is the God of Patience, who though he can puniſh, yet will pardon the Infirmities of his People. *Note* (2.) How he will be with us; the Heart of God will be with us, the Help of God with us? and the Preſence of God will be with us, to guide and direct us, to lead and conduct us, to cover and protect us; and if God be with us, we ſhall ſhortly be with him. Learn hence, That thoſe which obey the Goſpel, whatſoever or whomſoever they want, ſhall ever abide in a peaceable and bleſſed Condition: *Theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.*

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again, wherein ye were alſo careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want: for I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, *therewith* to be content. 12 I know both *how* to be abaſed, and I know *how* to abound: everywhere, and in all things I am inſtructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need. 13 I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengthneth me.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Concluſion of his Epiſtle, acquaints the *Philippians* with what great Joy he had received their Charity ſent unto him; and that it came no ſooner, he believed did not proceed from any Diſreſpect towards him, but only for want either of Ability or Opportunity of ſending to him; yet withal, gives them to underſtand, that he could bear Want or a ſtrait Condition very well, for having Chriſt for his Teacher, he had learned in whatſoever State he was, therein to be content; he could bear either Plenty or Scarcity, Fulneſs or Want, yea, could do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthned him. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Viciſſitude and great Uncertainty of St. *Paul's* outward Condition; at one time he abounds, in another time he is abaſed; at one time he is full, at another in want: Teaching us, that the deareſt of God's Children, in Regard to their outward Condition, are ſubject to Variety of Changes. *Obſerve* (2.) The general Leſſon which they have learnt, with Reference to this Variety of Conditions, and that is the Leſſon of Contentment; I have learned in whatever State I am therewith to be Content. *Obſerve* (3.) The particular Leſſons learnt by him, both how to abound, and how to be abaſed: They are both hard Leſſons, but of the two, perhaps, it is harder to know how to abound, than how to be abaſed. *Queſt.* (1.) When may a Man be ſaid to know how to abound? *Anſw.* When he ſets a due Value and a right Eſteem upon the things of the World, and neither prizes them too high nor too low; when a Man ſo uſes his Abundance, as to avoid the Temptations which do attend and accompany that Abundance, when he is willing to part with his Abundance at the Call and Command of God; and, in a Word, when he attends more to the Duties of his proſperous Eſtate, than to the ſenſual Pleaſures and Satisfaction of it. *Queſt.* (2.) What is it to know how to be abaſed? *Anſw.* Not to be diſcouraged, or ſuffer the Spirit to ſink or faint in the Day of Adverſity; to be not only humbled by Affliction, but Humble under it; to ſuffer what God inflicts without Impatience or Complaint, without Sowreneſs of Spirit or Diſcontent; to believe firmly, that whatever we meet with is from the Hand of a Father, that whatever we part with is but a periſhing Creature; that God is able to reſtore all our loſt Comforts with Advantage to us, and will do it, if it be good for us, either in Kind or in Equivalency; this is to know how to be abaſed. *Queſt.* (3.) How doth it appear harder to know how to abound, than how to be abaſed? Thus; there are more Duties, and harder Duties, required of thoſe that abound, than of them that want. There are more Temptations, and ſtronger Temptations, which attend thoſe in abundance, than them that want. Hence it is that God gives ſo many ſolemn Charges and Commands to thoſe that abound, to take heed to themſelves, more than to thoſe that are in want. See *Deut.* 6. 12. When thou art full then beware leſt thou forget the Lord thy God, and thy Heart be lifted up; in a Word, I do not remember one Inſtance in all the Scripture of a full or proſperous Condition, which was ever ſo much as the remote Occaſion of a Sinner's Converſion unto God; but, I find in Scripture that an Afflicted Condition has been bleſt to many for this End, 2 *Chron.* 33. 12. *Hoſ.* 5. 15. *Job.* 33. 14. *Obſ.* (4.) The School which St. *Paul* learnt this great Leſſon in, to know how to be abaſed, and how to abound, and to be thoroughly content in every Condition; it was not at *Gamaliel's* Feet, but Chriſt's Feet, *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthning me*; Chriſt was both his Tutor and his Strengthner, he taught him his Leſſon, and enabled him to Practice it. See here, (1.) That a real Chriſtian is able to do all things, all things that concern a Chriſtian, all things that belong to the Glory of God and his Soul's Salvation; all things, not in a Legal, but Evangelical Senſe; not all things, nor indeed any thing with a ſinleſs Perfection, but all things in Reſpect of his Love to the whole Law, in Reſpect of his Purpoſe and Reſolution, in Reſpect of his Deſire and Endeavours. Again, *I can do all things*; underſtand it in an active Senſe, I can deny my ſelf, believe in a withdrawing God, conquer the World, ſubdue unmortified Corruption, and live a Life of Evangelical Perfection; Take it alſo in a paſſive Senſe, I can ſuffer all things, I can bear Chriſt's Croſs, wear his Yoak, endure any thing for him, or from him, when called forth to ſuffer. *Note* (2.) That as a Chriſtian can do all things, ſo his Ability to do all things lies not in himſelf, but in Chriſt. A Believer receives an active Power from Chriſt to enable him to do whatever he requires him to do; Ability to ſubdue Corruption, to conquer Temptation, to bear Affliction, and to glorifie God in every Condition; all this is from Chriſt, and the ſincere Chriſtian may ſay with this eminent Saint, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.*

14 Notwithſtanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know alſo, that in the beginning of the goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Theſſalonica ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity.

Although our Apoſtle had declared in the foregoing Verſes that he had fully learnt the Duty of Contentment in all Conditions, and could bear Poverty and Want without complaining, yet withal he aſſures them here, that they did well in ſending ſuch Supplies to him in Priſon by *Epaphroditus*, as they had done, and thereby teſtifying by their Chriſtian Commiſeration, that they ſhared with him in his Afflictions and Sufferings for Chriſt. Where *Note*, (1.) The Apoſtle's thankful Acknowledgment of the *Philippians* preſent Liberality towards him, now in Bonds, for preaching the Goſpel to them; and how he takes Occaſion from thence to make an honourable Mention of their former Bounty towards him, even from his firſt Preaching of the Goſpel to them; nay, when he was gone from them at *Philippi*, and preach'd to thoſe at *Theſſalonica*, yet did the *Philippians* ſend their Bounty after him more than once, which no other Church had then done beſides themſelves. Learn hence, (1.) *That* theirs is a Rule of Equity to be obſerved, as between other Relations, ſo between Miniſters and People, that as they beſtow Labour and Pains, ſo they ſhould receive Encouragement and Maintenance, and this not barely as a Gratuity, but as a due Debt. (2.) That the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, tho' they may challenge a Supply of temporal Things from their People for their ſpiritual Things, as a due Debt, yet do they fully receive it, and gratefully acknowledge it to the Honour and Commendation of their People, with fervent Prayer to God, that it may be Fruit redounding to their Account in the great Day of Account. *O ye Philippians, know that when no Church communicated with me, ye ſent once and again to my Neceſſities.*

17 Not becauſe I deſire a gift: but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were ſent* from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God. 19 But my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.

Here remark, (1.) The Modeſty and great Ingenuity of the Apoſtle, in aſſuring them that his praiſing their Liberality ſo much was not upon Deſign to get more, *not becauſe I deſire a Gift*, that is any farther Gift for my own private Advantage, I am far from the Thought of ſpunging upon you: But I aim at your Advantage in this, That your Liberality may afford you the Fruits of a plentiful Reward in the Day of Chriſt, who will not forget your Work and Labour of Love in miniſtring to the Saints. Having thus guarded againſt all Suſpicion of Greedineſs in himſelf, and evidenced that his commending of their Liberality was not upon Deſign, he proceeds again to praiſe their Liberality yet farther, and extols it in ſuch Words as may cauſe Admiration. *Note* (1.) How abundantly ſatisfied the Apoſtle was with what he had received, *I have all, and abound, I am full*; as if he had had the Treaſures of the *Indies* in his Coffers;

Grace is content with a little, and thinks that little an abundance; the contented Man is only Rich. (2.) How St. *Paul* gives an Acknowledgment under his Hand, that *Epaphroditus* had faithfully delivered to him the whole of their Charity ſent by him, *I have received of* Epaphroditus *all the things which were ſent from you*; *Epaphroditus* was their chief Miniſter or Biſhop, a Perſon of great Reputation, whoſe Fidelity none could ſuſpect, yet St. *Paul* gives it under his Hand that he had executed his Truſt faithfully. Though a Man be never ſo Truſt-worthy in himſelf, and be never ſo much intruſted by others, yet he ought in Wiſdom to guard againſt any Suſpicion which may be taken up againſt his Honeſty and Faithfulneſs. *Note* (3.) The high Expreſſions which St. *Paul* makes uſe of in ſetting forth the *Philippians* Charity towards him, he calls it *an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice Acceptable and Well pleaſing to God*; the very ſame Words here which he makes uſe of *Eph.* 5. 2. where he calls the Death of Chriſt *a Sacrifice and a Sweet-ſmelling Savour.* The Expreſſion is borrowed from the Levitical Sacrifices, which were of God's appointing and approving; and *it imports*, that our Charity expreſt towards the Members, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, now under the Goſpel, is as acceptable and well pleaſing unto God as the ſweeteſt Incenſe, and the fatteſt Sacrifices were under the Law. Here *Obſerve*, That the Socinians, to leſſen the Meritoriouſneſs of Chriſt's Sacrifice, do parellel this Text with that other, *Eph.* 5. 2. Is the Death of Chriſt, ſay they, called a Sacrifice and ſweet-ſmelling Savour? So is the *Philippians* Charity here called a Sacrifice, but both in a Figurative and Mataphorical Senſe only; but mark the Difference; St. *Paul*, *Eph.* 5. 2. ſays, Chriſt gave *himſelf* a Sacrifice, which being once offered was ſufficient to take away Sin, *Heb.* 10. 10. but the *Philippians* are not ſaid to give themſelves a Sacrifice, but their Alms were as grateful to God as Incenſe: If it be ſaid from *Rom.* 12. 1. that Belivers are required to preſent themſelves living Sacrifices unto God, and acceptable; I *Anſwer*, So they are, and ſo they do preſent themſelves gratulatory, but not expiatory Sacrifices unto God, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. ye are a Royal Prieſthood to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices acceptable unto God, through Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt's Oblation and Sacrifice was acceptable for its ſelf, Believers and their Euchariſtical Sacrifices are acceptable to God only in, by, and thorough our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Heb.* 13. by him let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe continually. *Note* Laſtly, The Aſſurance which St. *Paul* gives the *Philippians*, that God would abundantly recompence their Charity into their own Boſoms, *ver.* 19. *My God will ſupply all your Need*, *&c.* as if he had ſaid, do not think you ſhall want becauſe you have liberally ſupplied my Wants; no, my God will ſupply you for your ſupplying me; *according to his Riches in Glory*, that is, according to his rich Mercy and glorious Grace; there is no need to be ſupplied in the Glory of the next Life, but there is a Glory in rich Grace, which readily and plentifully ſupplieth all our Needs in this Life. *Note* here, (1.) That ſuch as adminiſter now to the Wants of others, may fall into Want, and be driven to Straits themſelves. (2.) That the more forward they have been to ſupply the Wants, and adminiſter to the Neceſſities of others in the time of their Abundance, the more may they expect from the bountiful Hand of God in the Day of their Neceſſity and Diſtreſs: *My God ſhall ſupply all your Need*, &c.

20 Now unto God and our Farher be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Note here, (1.) The endearing Title given to Almighty God, *God our Father*; the Word *Father* is a Title of great Honour, the Word *our* is a Word of ſingular Comfort. The appropriating poſſeſſive Terms, *mine*, *thine*, *ours*, have a great Sweetneſs in them, and breathe abundance of Affection. As *Luther* uſed to ſay, the Comfort of the Goſpel lay in Pronoun Poſſeſſives, when we can ſay with Believing *Thomas*, *my* Lord, and *my* God, with Bleſſed *Paul*, who loved *me*, and gave himſelf for *me*. Learn, That God is a Father in a more peculiar and ſpecial Manner to all that are intereſted in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. The Word Father implies Spiritual Generation, that we are begotten by him, and like unto him; it implies Vehemency of Affection, no Bowels comparable to us Fathers; it implies Deſigned Benefit, by Correction that he exerciſes unto Profit. And in the Word *our* is implied that God is the Father of every Believer, the weakeſt as well as the ſtrongeſt, we are all the Children of God, through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus. And it points out our Duty alſo, that as there is one God and Father of all, ſo all Believers ſhould be of one Heart and one Mind amongſt themſelves. *Note* (2.) What it is which our Apoſtle attributes and aſcribeth unto God, namely, *Glory*, and that *for ever and ever*; Glory, that is, the Manifeſtation of all his glorious Excellencies and Perfections. Learn hence, That it is the fervent Deſire of all Believers to have the Worth and Excellencies of God everlaſtingly acknowledged, and in a boundleſs Manner diſplayed; *unto God be Glory for ever and ever.* This Word for ever and ever, it is upon different Accounts the ſaddeſt and ſweeteſt Word in all the Bible; when applied to the Excellencies of God, and our Intereſt in them, no Word like it for Comfort, this God is our God *for ever and ever.* Oh Raviſhing Conſolation! But when applied to Sinners, and what they ſuffer from God as the Deſert, the due Deſert of their Sins, then it is a Word of the ſaddeſt Weight, *Rev.* 14. 11. the Smoak of their Torment aſcended up *for ever and ever*, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord. 'Tis the Word *for ever and ever* that ſets all Hell a roaring, and 'tis the ſame Word that fills Heaven with Joy and Rejoicing. *To God and our Father be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

21 Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus: The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the ſaints ſalute you, chiefly they that are of Cæſar's houſhold.

Our Apoſtle cloſes his Letter with reſpective Salutations, he ſalutes in his own Name all and every Saint in Chriſt Jeſus; the Soul of the pooreſt and meaneſt Saint was not neglected by this great Apoſtle, he loved the Brotherhood, the whole Fraternity of Believers, the whole Society of Saints; all Church-Members are Saints by external and viſible Profeſſion, and ought to be ſo by internal Renovation and ſpiritual Regeneration, and one as well as the other are here ſaluted by the Apoſtle; *ſalute every Saint in Chriſt Jeſus.* Next he ſends the Salutations of all the Brethren that were with him, and of all the Saints that were at *Rome*, all thoſe whom he had there converted to Chriſtianity, and particularly ſome of thoſe that were in *Nero*'s Family, called here *Cæſar*'s *Houſhold.* Where *Note*, (1.) That ſuch a mighty Efficacy had the Preaching of the Goſpel, accompanied with the Influences of the Holy Spirit, that it enter'd the Houſes of the greateſt Perſecutors, and changed the Hearts of ſome who were moſt unlikely to receive and entertain it. Behold here are ſome in Bloody *Nero*'s Family converted to Chriſt by the Preaching of the Goſpel, *thoſe of Cæſar*'s *Houſhold.* *Note* (2.) That ſometimes God endues the Profeſſors of the Goſpel in general, and young Converts in particular, with ſuch a Spirit of Zeal and Courage, Magnanimity and Holy Reſolutions, that they dare lift up a Banner for Truth, and publickly own the deſpiſed Members of Chriſt, without either Shame or Fear; *thoſe of Cæſar*'s *Houſhold* do *greet* and *ſalute* you.

23 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all. Amen.

He ſhuts up all with his uſual Apoſtolical Valediction; by *Grace* we are to underſtand the free Favour of God as the Fountain, and all good things as ſo many Streams flowing from that Fountain; this is called the Grace of *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe purchaſed by his Merit, and applied by his Interceſſion. This Grace he prays may be with them in the ſweet Effects of it, and in the ſenſible Apprehenſions of it, to enlighten, ſanctifie, comfort and quicken them more and more; knowing then the exceeding Riches of Grace which we have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, let us glorifie him eminently, abundantly; and as we have all things by him, let us do all things for him, and to his Glory.

THE

THE
Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

This Epiſtle was written by St. Paul *when he was Priſoner at* Rome, *about the ſame time in which he wrote the foregoing Epiſtle to the* Philippians. *It is directed to the* Coloſſians, *that is, the Church of Chriſtians, newly gathered in and about the City* Coloſſe *in* Phrygia, *by the preaching of* Epaphras, St. Paul *not having ſeen their Face in the Fleſh*, Chap. 2. v. 1.

Epaphras *having founded a Church here, and inſtructed the* Coloſſians *in the Great and Fundamental Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, he left them for a time and went to* Rome, *and was Fellow-Priſoner with* St. Paul *there. In his abſence from them the* Coloſſians *were infeſted with falſe Teachers of Two Sorts; ſome were the Judaizing Doctors, that is, Perſons converted from Judaiſm to Chriſtianity, who ſought to impoſe upon them Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, long ſince aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt; againſt theſe falſe Teachers moſt of the foregoing Epiſtles were Written and Directed. The other Sorts of falſe Teachers, againſt whom this Epiſtle is written, were ſuch Perſons as were Converted from Gentiliſm to Chriſtianity, who obtruded upon the* Coloſſians *their Philoſophical Speculations, and ſome of their Heatheniſh Practices, particularly their worſhipping of Angels, under this Notion* then, *(as the Church of* Rome now) *that Almighty God is ſuch an infinitely Glorious being, that Man, ſinful Man, muſt not dare to approach him, without the interpoſure of the Angels, as Mediators between God and them. Now in Oppoſition to both theſe Sorts of falſe Teachers* St. Paul *writes this Epiſtle, ſhewing the former, that Chriſtians, ſince the Death of Chriſt, lay under no Obligation to obſerve Circumciſion, or any Part of the Ceremonial Law, and convincing the latter, that Chriſt, and not Angels, was the appointed Mediator between God and Man, and that we being reconciled to God by him, have Acceſs thro' him unto God in all our Neceſſities.*

CHAP. I.

The former Part of this Chapter diſcovers the great Affection which St. Paul *bare to the* Coloſſians, *both in his Thankſgivings and Prayers for them; he gives thanks to God for the ſpiritual Graces conferred upon them, particularly for their Faith in Chriſt, and Love to all Chriſtians, and for their Holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works; and prays fervently for their Encreaſe in Knowledge, Growth in Holineſs, Courage under Sufferings; and that they may be made every Day more and more meet for the Glory of Heaven, ſtiled by him the* Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

PAUL an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother, 2 To the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſe: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) That this Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* contains many of the ſame Things, and often the very ſame Words, with that to the *Epheſians*, particularly the Salutation here is the ſame with that to the *Epheſians*; in which *Note* (1.) The Perſon ſaluting, *Paul*, once a Perſecutor, now a Profeſſor, yea, a zealous Preacher of the Faith of Chriſt, dignified with the Title and Office of *an Apoſtle*, an Apoſtle of *Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, called and ſent immediately by him to Plant and Propagate the Chriſtian Faith throughout the Heathen World; *but by the will of God*; Chriſt as Head of the Church is intruſted with ſending out Miniſters into his Church, but the Father's *Will*, and Chriſt's *Will*, do bot concur and fully agree in ſending forth his Miniſters to inſtruct and Edifie his Church; and woe to ſuch as intrude themſelves into any Office in the Church without their Call and Commiſſion; let them expect a Blow inſtead of a Bleſſing. *Note* (2.) The Apoſtle joins *Timothy* in the Salutation; tho' *Timothy* was not an Apoſtle, or a Penman of any Part of the Scripture, yet becauſe he was well known to the *Coloſſians*, and much valued and eſteemed by them, and was a Perſon of eminent Worth and Excellency in himſelf, and of ſingular Serviceableneſs to the Apoſtle, he therefore calls him his Brother, being his Fellow-labourer in the Work of the Goſpel. Where the great Humility of St. *Paul* is Remarkable and worthy of Imitation; who tho' an inſpired Apoſtle, extraordinarily and immediately called by Chriſt himſelf, an aged Perſon, long engaged in the Work of Chriſt, yet is ſo far from deſpiſing young *Timothy*, his Inferiour, greatly his Inferiour in all Reſpects, that he gives him all fitting Reſpect, and puts Honour upon him, in calling him his Brother, they being Fellow-labourers in the Work and Service of the Goſpel. *Note* (3.) The Perſons ſaluted, *the Saints and faithful Brethren in Chriſt, which are at* Coloſſe. He calls all the Members of this Chriſtian Church by the Name of *Saints*, they all making an outward and viſible Profeſſion of Sanctity and Holineſs, and many of them no doubt were what they profeſſed, not only relative, but real Saints; he ſtiles them alſo *faithful Brethren in Chriſt*, that is, implanted into Chriſt, ſome by outward Profeſſion, others by inward Sanctification; or the Expreſſion, *Saints in Chriſt Jeſus*, may intimate to us, that all our Grace and Sanctity muſt be exerciſed and acted by Strength derived from Chriſt, and all our Holineſs be accepted in Chriſt Jeſus. *Note* (4.) The Salutation it ſelf, *Grace be to you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* By Grace Underſtand the free Love and gracious Favour of God, together with all the Effects and Fruits of it; theſe are wiſht from God as a Father; *intimating*, that God beſtows not his ſpecial Grace as a Creator, but as a Father in Chriſt; next he wiſhes them *Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, he being the Purchaſer of our Peace, upon whom was laid the Chaſtiſement of our Peace, and by whom God is at Peace with us, and reconciled to us. But why is there no mention of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as of God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Becauſe it is by the Spirit that God the Father and Jeſus Chriſt dwell in us, and do communicate this Grace unto us, ſo that praying for this Grace, is praying for the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt.

3 We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, praying always for you: 4 Since we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the Saints;

Our Apoſtle, to give the *Coloſſians* a full Aſſurance of the Firmneſs of his Love unto them, acquaints them, that himſelf and *Timothy*, from the time they heard of their Converſion, did never ceaſe to give ſolemn Thanks to God for it, and particularly for their Faith in Chriſt, and for the Love which they bear to all Saints, to all their Brethren and Fellow-members in Chriſt. Where *Note* (1.) The Perſon whom St. *Paul* offers up his Prayers and Praiſes, his Supplications and Thankſgivings to, and that is *God*; intimating, that religious Invocation and Adoration belongs only to God, not to any Creature, who can neither know, nor is able to ſupply our Want. This God whom St. *Paul* prayed to is called *the Father of our Lord Jeſus*; ſo he is with Reſpect both to his Divine and Humane Nature; in Reſpect of his Deity he is of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, begotten of him from all Eternity, and in Reſpect of his Humanity he is his Father, being, as Man, conceived by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt. *Note* (2.) The Mercies and Bleſſings which St. *Paul* offers up his Thankſgivings to God for on the Behalf of the *Coloſſians*; in general they are ſpiritual Bleſſings, in particular, (1.) For their *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*; Chriſt alone is the proper Object of our Affiance and Truſt; and by Faith we repoſe the intire Truſt and Confidence of our Souls upon the Sufficiency of his Merits. (2.) *For their Love to all Saints.* Where *Obſerve*, that Faith and Love are inſeparable Companions; there is a neceſſary Connexion between them; Faith without Love is no living Grace, Love without Faith is no ſaving Grace. *Obſ.* alſo the proper Object of a Chriſtian's Love, it is the Saints as Saints, that is, for their Sanctity and Holineſs, and to all the Saints, let their private Opinions and perſonal Infirmities be what they will: we have *heard of your Love to all Saints*: Love is that brotherly Affection which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow-members in Chriſt, for Grace's ſake; now the Love of Grace in another, being ſo good an Evidence of the Life of Grace in our ſelves, hence it was that St. *Paul* hearing of the *Coloſſians* Love to all the Children of God, ceaſes not to give thanks unto God for it, as the Fruit and Evidence of their Converſion.

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel: 6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the World, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth.

Here (1.) St. *Paul* diſcovers the Motive which excited the *Coloſſians* to ſuch Steadineſs and Conſtancy in the Faith of Chriſt, and in Love one to another, and that was *the Hope laid up for them in Heaven*, that is, the great and good Things here hoped for, and there to be enjoyed. As the Sinner's Miſery conſiſts not in what he feels, but what he fears, ſo the Believer's Happineſs lies not in what he has in Hand, but in what he has in Hope; the Reward which encourages his Perſeverance in Faith and Love is *laid up* in Heaven, that is, ſafely and plentifully, as a Parent lays up his Treaſures for the uſe of his Children; it is both lawful and laudable then for Chriſtians to have an Eye to the promiſed Reward, as an Encouragment to Duty, *for the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven*. *Obſ* (2.) The Means by which they came to the Knowledge of this Hope, it was by *the Word of Truth*, the preaching of the Goſpel to them by the Miniſtry of *Epaphras*; this was ſo exceedingly Bleſſed by God, that thereby the ſaving Hope of this Reward was wrought in them. Where *Note* the Title given to the Goſpel, it is eminently *the Word of Truth*, having Chriſt for its main Subject, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and being confirmed by Chriſt the Teſtator's Blood. *Note* farther, that the preaching of this Word of Truth, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, is the great inſtrumental Means appointed by God for begetting in us a lively Hope of the Reward laid up for us in Heaven, *for the Hope laid up for you in Heaven, whereof you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Goſpel*. *Obſ.* (3.) The Commendation here given of the Goſpel, which had begot in theſe *Coloſſians* a lively Hope of the heavenly Reward: It is commended, (1.) For being one and the ſame Goſpel which was preached by the Apoſtles throughout all the World; *which is come unto you, as it is in all the World*, that is, with incredible Swiftneſs into the moſt eminent Parts and Places of the World then known; an infallible Proof of the Divinity of the Goſpel, that it was thus owned and bleſſed of God. The Goſpel at all Times, and in all Places, is one and the ſame, and Chriſt, when he pleaſes, can ſwiftly drive the Chariot of the Goſpel round about the World, and bring in not only Perſons and Families, but Cities, Nations and Kingdoms, to the Obedience of it. (2.) The Goſpel preached to them is commended for its Fruitfulneſs, *it bringeth forth Fruits, as it doth alſo in you*, that is, Fruits of Piety and Holineſs towards God, and Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Charity towards Man. Learn hence, that it is Matter of Praiſe, and unſpeakable Thankſgiving, to the Miniſters of Chriſt, when the Light of the Goſpel breaks forth among a People where it never before ſhined, and is accompanied with early and conſtant Fruits of Piety, Humility, Faith and Love, in the Hearts and Lives of thoſe to whom it is preached. *The Goſpel bringeth forth Fruits, as it doth alſo in you, ſince the Day you heard of it*, &c.

7 As ye alſo learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-ſervant, who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt; 8 Who alſo declared unto us your love in the ſpirit. 9 For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſon who firſt preached the Goſpel of Chriſt to the *Coloſſians*, and converted them to the Chriſtian Faith, it was *Epaphras, as ye learned of* Epaphras. *Obſ.* (2.) The Commendation given of *Epaphras*, and his Character by St. *Paul*, he was regularly called to the Work, and a diligent Fellow-labourer with St. *Paul* in the Work of preaching and diſpenſing the Myſteries of the everlaſting Goſpel to a loſt World, *who is for you a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt*. Learn hence, That the Knowledge of Life and Salvation is ordinarily wrought in Perſons by the preaching of the Goſpel, by Men called of God to that ſacred Function. *Obſ.* (3.) A particular Inſtance of the Faithfulneſs of *Epaphras* towards the *Coloſſians*, he declared unto St. *Paul* their *Love in the Spirit*, that is, their ſpiritual Love, and fervent Affection to him, tho' they had never ſeen his Face nor heard his Voice. The faithful Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chriſt do affectionately love one another, tho' they ſee not the Face of each other; there is no ſuch Loadſtone of Love as the Grace of God; this will draw forth the Heart and Affections of a Believer to the Ends of the Earth, to pray for, to mourn over, and to rejoice with, ſuch of their Brethren as they never ſaw, but of whoſe Condition they have heard. *Obſ.* (4.) The kind Return which St. *Paul* makes to them for their Love in the Spirit towards him, *for this Cauſe we do not ceaſe to pray for you*; there is no ſuch Way to attain an Intereſt in, and to obtain conſtant Benefit and Advantage by the Prayers of the Miniſters of God, as to be expreſſive of our Love and Affection, both to God and them. *Obſ.* (5.) The ſpecial Bleſſings which he prays for on the *Coloſſians* Behalf, namely, that they might be filled with *the Knowledge of his Will*, that is, attain to a more perfect and comprehenſive Knowledge of God's Will and their Duty, furniſhed with all Divine *Wiſdom* and *Spiritual Underſtanding*, to regulate their Lives according to their Knowledge. Learn from hence, That there is a Fulneſs of Divine Knowledge, which is attained by none, but ſhould be aimed at by all, ſeeing they that know moſt of God's Word and revealed Will, come far ſhort of what they ſhould know. Learn (2.) That the Knowledge, Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, which Chriſtians ſhould eſpecially labour after, and attain unto, is of things ſpiritual, that ye *be filled with Knowledge, and ſpiritual Underſtanding*. Oh! let divine and ſpiritual Knowledge be our chief Care, and principal Buſineſs; 'tis called here *ſpiritual* Underſtanding, becauſe it is from the

Holy Spirit, and converſant about ſpiritual Things, which far exceeds the moſt refined Notions concerning other things; and Chriſt tells us, that eternal Life depends upon it, *John* 17. 3. ſpiritual Knowledge fits us for the Service of God on Earth, for the Sight of God in Heaven: and Chriſt has told us, that he will take a ſecond Journey from Heaven, to render Vengeance on them which know not God, and on them which do know (*Notionally*) but obey not Practically the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 8.

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and encreaſing in the knowledge of God;

Here the Apoſtle ſets down the End of his Prayer in the forementioned Manner, for the *Coloſſians*, why he deſired that their Knowledge ſhould ſo exceedingly encreaſe, it was in in order to practice, that they might *walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleaſing, and be fruitful in every good Work*; this is the true End of Knowledge, *Practical Obedience*. All Knowledge without this makes a Man like *Nebuchadnezar*'s Image, with an Head of Gold, and Feet of Clay; ſome Perſons ſtudy to know, only to know, that's Curioſity; others endeavour to know, only to make themſelves known, that's Vain-glory. But to know that we may practice what we know, this is Goſpel-duty. *Queſt.* But how can any Perſon be ſaid to walk worthy of the Lord? *Anſw.* Not with a Worthineſs of Merit, but with a Worthineſs of Meetneſs, when we walk as it is meet and fit for Perſons profeſſing Godlineſs, to walk; when we walk, *as becometh the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, in obedience to his Precepts, in imitation of his Pattern, anſwerable to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the *Goſpel* affords, and anſwerable to the high and glorious Hopes which the *Goſpel* raiſes us to the Expectation of, this is to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing. The ſecond Branch of the Apoſtle's Prayer, on the Behalf of theſe *Coloſſians*, was, that they might be fruitful in every good Work, that is, labour after an univerſal Fruitfulneſs in good Works. By good Works he undoubtedly means, Works of Piety towards God, Works of Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbours, Works of Sobriety towards our ſelves, Works of Charity towards all. By Fruitfulneſs in theſe good Works he means, an unwearied Diligence and perſevering Conſtancy in the doing of them, that our Fruitfulneſs be an univerſal Fruitfulneſs, an humble and ſelf-denying Fruitfulneſs, a proportionable Fruitfulneſs, an abounding and abiding Fruitfulneſs; this is to be fruitful in every good Work. The third Requeſt which in this verſe he puts up for them is, that they may *encreaſe* in the *Knowledge* of *God*. As Fruitfulneſs in good Works makes much for the Encreaſe of Knowledge, ſo encreaſing in Knowledge will contribute very much towards our Fruitfulneſs in good Works; the Way to grow in Grace is to grow in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18.

11 Strengthned with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs:

In the former Verſes Prayer was put up to God by St. *Paul* to enable the *Coloſſians* to do his Will, his whole Will acceptably; in this Verſe he pleads with God to ſtrengthen them with an Almighty Power to bear Afflictions, the ſharpeſt and longeſt Afflictions, patiently and joyfully, *ſtrengthned with all Might unto all Patience with Joyfulneſs.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Croſs of Chriſt, or Sufferings for Chriſt, are unavoidable, but not unſupportable, tho' they will ſhock an ordinary Patience and Conſtancy of Mind, yet *Might, all Might, Power, glorious Power*, which is here prayed for us, and elſewhere promiſed to us, can and will enable us to ſtand under them! Glorious Power will be Victorious Power. Learn (2.) That Patience, much Patience, very much Patience, yea, all Patience, is needful, nay, abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to enable a Chriſtian to bear ſome Trials, and to glorifie God in an afflicted Condition. All Patience, I ſay, is neceſſary in order to the chearful bearing of Afflictions, that is, Patience at all times, Patience under all Croſſes, Patience, if poſſible, without any Mixture of Impatience; Patience that may give a Man the Poſſeſſion of himſelf, and quiet the whole Man, the Tongue, the Hand, and the Heart. Such Meaſures and Degrees of Patience as will keep the Heart from ſinking, the Tongue from complaining, the Hand from revenging. Lord! grant that whenever any of thine are called forth to ſuffer either for thee, or from thee, they may be ſtrengthned with all Might, *according to thy glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-ſuffering with Joyfulneſs.*

12 Giving thanks unto the father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light:

Our Apoſtle having prayed for the *Coloſſians* in the foregoing Verſes, here breaks forth into the Duty of Thankſgiving on their Behalfs, *giving Thanks to the Father*, &c. Where (1.) *Note*, a Deſcription of Heaven, or the bleſſed State of good Men in another World; 'tis an Inheritance, the Inheritance of Saints, and an Inheritance in Light. (1.) 'Tis an Inheritance; now that is a Poſſeſſion proper only to Children, *Hæreditas filiis debetur, non ſervis.* 'Tis an immerited and undeſerved Poſſeſſion, and 'tis the beſt Donative that a Father has to give unto his Children. Particularly, this Inheritance of Heaven which God gives to all, and yet to every one of his Children, it is the freeſt Inheritance, the ſureſt, the moſt ſatisfying, and the moſt delightful, and the moſt durable Inheritance. (2.) Heaven 'tis the Inheritance of Saints, or of holy Perſons only, ſuch as are really Holy, univerſally Holy, perſeveringly Holy, to them, and only to them, does it belong; 'tis purchaſed for them, 'tis promiſed to them, 'tis given to them, they have already the Firſt-fruits of it in the Spirit's Inhabitation, which is given to them as an Earneſt of Heaven; it is prepared for them, and they are prepared for that; and it ſhall be finally adjudged to them at the great and laſt Day. (3.) 'Tis an Inheritance in Light, that is, an Inheritance with God, an Inheritance in Joy, an Inheritance in Glory, and a common Inheritance for all the Saints: as the Light of the Sun is a common Bleſſing to all that have Eyes to ſee it, and every Perſon in a Room has the Benefit of the Light of the Candle as if he enjoyed it by himſelf alone; ſo is the Inheritance of Heaven, it is full and entirely enjoyed by all the Saints, as if they were but one to poſſeſs and enjoy it. *Note* (2.) The Qualification of the Perſons who may upon good Grounds expect to be made Partakers of this glorious Inheritance when they die, namely ſuch, and only ſuch, as by the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, and the Concurrence of their own Care and Endeavours, are made *meet*, that is, fit, prepared and ready, for this Inheritance, whilſt they live. Our Perſons muſt be juſtified by the Blood of Chriſt, our Natures renewed by the Grace and Spirit of Chriſt, and our Lives daily more and more conformed to the Doctrine and Example of Chriſt, or we can never partake of this Inheritance; without Likeneſs to God we can have no Expectation of living with him. *Note* (3.) The Duty belonging to and expected from them whom the Father has made meet for his glorious Inheritance, and that is the Duty of eternal Thankſgiving, *giving Thanks to the Father who has made us meet*; as none ſhall enjoy this Inheritance, but ſuch as are made meet for it, ſo thoſe, all thoſe, who are made meet for it, muſt aſcribe their Meekneſs unto God, and give him thanks for it. 'Tis a ſpiritual Bleſſing, 'tis a tranſcendent Favour, 'tis a diſcriminating Favour, 'tis an everlaſting Favour; Eternity will be too ſhort to ſpend in the Admiration of it, and in Gratulations for it; let ſuch of us as are intereſted in it now begin the Work upon Earth of giving thanks to the Father, for making us *meet to the Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son;

In theſe Words our Apoſtle declares how God makes his Children and People meet for the Inheritance of Heaven and eternal Glory, namely, by bringing them out of that dark State of Heatheniſm, Sin and Miſery, in which they lay, and tranſlating them into a State of Grace, called here the Kingdom of God's Dear Son.

Who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkneſs. Here we have the Deliverer, *God* the Father, *ver.* 12. he delivered *us*; all that are made meet for the Inheritance i Light were once under the Power of ſpiritual Darkneſs; th Deliverance itſelf, and the manner of the Deliverance, he hat reſcued us by a ſtrong Hand, as the Word imports, as *Lo* was delivered out of *Sodom*. *Note* (1.) That the State whic every Soul is in by Nature, it is an Eſtate of Darkneſs; Si originally ſprings from Darkneſs, it naturally delights i Darkne

Darkneſs, it ultimately leads to eternal Darkneſs.. *Note* (2.) That it is God, and God alone, that can deliver a Soul from the Power of ſpiritual Darkneſs. (3.) That no Power, ſhort of an Almighty Power in God, is able to deliver a Sinner from the Dominion of Sin, and the Power of ſpiritual Darkneſs; ſuch is the Ignorance and Blindneſs of the Underſtanding, ſuch is the Rebellion that is found in the Sinner's Will, ſo great the Irregularity and Diſorder of the Affections, and indeed of the whole Soul, that the Sinner is not only unable to deliver himſelf, but ſtands in a direct Oppoſition to the Grace of God, which offers to work Deliverance for him, till of unwilling he is made willing in the Day of Chriſt's Power, *Pſal.* 110. 3.

——*And tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,* that is, brought us into a Goſpel State, made us Members and Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and Heirs of his Kingdom of Glory. Learn (1.) That Chriſt was God's Son, his Dear and Only Son, the Son of himſelf, and the Son of his Boſom Love; he is called his Son, being ſo by an eternal and ineffable Generation; not upon the account of his miraculous Conception only, nor in regard of his Sanctification and Miſſion only, nor in regard of his Reſurrection chiefly, nor in regard of the Dignity of his Perſon, nor in regard of the Dearneſs of his Perſon, but he is very God of very God, Begotten of his Father, by whom all things were made, and accordingly he is for Nature Coeſſential, for Dignity Coequal, and for Duration Coeternal with the Father, and conſequently truly and really God; and he that denieth the Divinity of the Son, in God's Account, denieth the Father alſo. Learn (2.) That Chriſt is God's Dear Son, is a ſpiritual King, and exerciſes a Kingly Power in and over the Souls of thoſe whom he has delivered from the Power of Darkneſs. Learn (3.) That ſuch as are Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace ſhall certainly be tranſlated into his Kingdom of Glory.

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins.

Here our Apoſtle farther declares how we are made mete for the Inheritance of Heaven, and delivered from the Power of Darkneſs, namely, by our Redemption in Chriſt from Sin, Satan, Death and Wrath, by a Price paid by the Mediator to the Juſtice of God his Father. *In whom we have Redemption,* that is, the Fruit and Benefit of Chriſt's Redemption, which eminently conſiſts in Remiſſion of Sin. *Note* here, (1.) The deplorable State into which the whole Race of Mankind was brought by Sin, namely, an Eſtate of Slavery, and ſpiritual Captivity unto Sin; Redemption ſuppoſes this; Slaves and Captives need a Redeemer, none elſe. (2.) That there was no Delivery from this Slavery but by a Price paid down to the Juſtice of God: Redemption is a Delivery by Ranſom and Price. (3.) That no other Price did, or could redeem us from our miſerable Captivity, but the Blood of Chriſt; we have *Redemption* thro' his *Blood.* (4.) That altho' Chriſt did pay this Ranſom unto God, and not to Satan, whoſe enſlaved Captives we are, yet by Virtue of the Ranſom paid, we are delivered from Satan's Slavery and Sin's Dominion; when God the Judge was once ſatisfied, Satan the Jaylor had nothing to do to detain and keep us any longer in Priſon. (5.) That Forgiveneſs of Sin, or a full and final Diſcharge from Sin's Guilt, and from all Obnoxiouſneſs to God's Wrath, was one ſpecial Fruit of Chriſt's Redemption; he died to deliver us from the Wrath of God, and from the Rage of our Luſts too, otherwiſe he had but ſealed us a Patent to Sin with Impunity.

15 Who is the image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature.

The Apoſtle having mentioned our *Redemption* in the former Verſe, deſcribes the Perſon of our *Redeemer* in this and the following Verſes, in ſuch lofty Characters as evidently beſpeak him to be a Divine Perſon, truly and really God, and conſequently the fitteſt Perſon to undertake ſo great and glorious a Work as the *Redemption* and Salvation of a loſt and periſhing *World.* *Note* here, (1.) The Redeemer deſcribed by his eternal Relation to God, he is *the Image of the inviſible God,* that is, his natural and eſſential Image; thus he is in reſpect of his eternal Generation as God; as a Child, whom we call the expreſs Image of the Father, is of the ſame Nature with his Father, ſo is Chriſt of the ſame Eſſence and Nature with God; his Nature is the ſame, his Attributes are the ſame, his Works the ſame, the Worſhip given him the ſame, Faith and Affiance in him the ſame, *John* 14. 1. *ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Again, Chriſt is the Image of the inviſible God, as God-man; by him, as a lively Image, did God the Father ſet forth unto us his glorious Attributes of Wiſdom, Mercy, Righteouſneſs and Power; the firſt Perſon in the Godhead is called inviſible here, becauſe he did never appear in any viſible Shape to the Patriarchs, but the Son frequently did, as a *Preludium of his Incarnation,* in which he appeared viſibly to all. *Note* (2.) Chriſt is here deſcribed, as by his eternal Relation to God, ſo by his eternal Relation to the Creatures, *He is the firſt-born of every Creature;* that is, (1.) He was before every Creature, and therefore he himſelf cannot be a Creature: the Apoſtle ſays expreſly, *ver.* 17. *that he is before all things,* that is, Chriſt had a Being before there was any created; he was before all Creatures, both in Point of Dignity, and in Point of Duration. Thus, *Rev.* 3. 14. Chriſt calls himſelf the *Beginning of the Creation of God,* that is, the principal and efficient Cauſe of the Creation, and ſo could not be a Creature himſelf, but conſequently muſt of Neceſſity have been God from all Eternity with the Father; or elſe, (2.) By the Firſt-born of every Creature may be underſtood that he was the Lord and Heir of all the Creatures, in alluſion to the Firſt-born among the Jews of Old, who were Lords over their Brethren, *Gen.* 27. 37. *Behold I have made him thy Lord;* the Firſt-born is natural Heir, and Heirs did anciently ſignify Lord. Now Chriſt is ſaid in *Acts* 10. 36. to be Lord of all, and *Rom.* 4. 14. he is called Heir of all things; now how well may Chriſt be ſaid to be the Lord and Heir of all things; when all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made that was made? Learn hence, That the *Socinians* have no Gronnd from this Text to reckon Chriſt amongſt the Number of Creatures, he having a Being antecedent to all Creatures, yea, being Lord of the whole Creation; and acordingly the Apoſtle ſtiling him here the Firſt-born of every Creature, never deſigned to inſinuate, that the Son of God is a Creature, as moſt evidently appears by the next Verſes.

16 For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.

Mark the Connexion; the Apoſtle affirms Chriſt to be the Firſt-born of every Creature, namely, becauſe by *him were all things created, and by him all things conſiſt;* now if all things were created by him, ſurely he himſelf cannot be a Creature? And thus the ſence of the Apoſtle's Words runs eaſie, Chriſt is the Image of the inviſible God, the Heir and Lord of the whole Creation, for by him all things were created; he that created all Creatures cannot himſelf be a Creature, for it is impoſſible that any Creature ſhould create itſelf. Mark farther, Chriſt is here repreſented as Creator of the Univerſe; all things were created by him in Heaven, and in Earth, all the Angels in their ſeveral Orders, Degrees, and Dignities. (2.) As he is repreſented the Creator, ſo likewiſe the Upholder of every Creature; as by him were all things created, ſo by him do all things conſiſt. (3.) He is ſet forth as the laſt End of all the Creatures; all things were created for him, as well as by him. Learn hence, (1.) That all created Beings, from the vileſt Worm to the brighteſt Angel are the Workmanſhip of Chriſt's Hand; they are not only Creatures, but his Creatures, he is their Omnipotent Creator, and their Rightful Lord. Learn (2.) That all things were created for him, as well as by him, for the Manifeſtation of his own Glory as God; he that was the firſt Cauſe, muſt be the laſt End, and accordingly all the Creatures throughout the whole Creation do give Glory unto Chriſt, ſome in an active Way, as Angels and Saints, ſome in a paſſive Way, as Damned Men and Devils, ſome in an objective Way, as Sun, Moon, and Stars, giving us occaſion to glorifie the Power and Wiſdom of their great Creator. Learn (3.) That ſeeing the whole Creation was at firſt made, and is ſtill upheld by the Power of Chriſt, it proves him to be evidently and undeniably God; he that created all things, and upholdeth all things, by the Word of his Power, is and muſt be God. Vain here is the *Socinian* Evaſion, who by *Creation* nnderſtand a

Renovation of the Mind, and a *Reformation* of the Manners of Men by the Goſpel; for *Chriſt* is here ſaid to create all things in Heaven, that is, particularly the Angels in Heaven, but they having kept their firſt Station wanted no Renovation, ſo that it muſt be underſtood of the firſt Creation of the natural World, and not of the Renovation of the moral World. God forgive theſe Mens perverting and bold practiſing upon the Scriptures. Can any ſenſible Man perſwade himſelf, that when St. *Paul* ſays, that all things were created by Chriſt in Heaven and Earth, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, that the Apoſtle ſhould mean no more than the moral Renovation of the World below by the preaching of the Goſpel, in which the Angels were not concerned; for tho' Chriſt was an Head of Confirmation to them, yet had they no need of a Renovation, or being made New, having always kept their firſt Station.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Our Apoſtle having, in the foregoing Verſes, deſcribed what Chriſt is in himſelf, comes next to deſcribe him with Relation to his Church, ſhewing, (1.) That he is her Head, he is the Head of the Body, the Church; as the Head and the Members make one Body, ſo Chriſt and his People conſtitute one Church; he is of the ſame Nature (as Man) with his Church, he poureth forth of the ſame Spirit upon his Church, he is both an Head of Authority and an Head of Influence to his Church; he ſympathizes with her in all her Sufferings on Earth, and longs for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of her in Heaven. (2.) He is the Beginning of the Chriſtian Church, the Root, the Fountain and Foundation of it, the active Beginning, or the firſt Principle and Author of it, and of all thoſe Influences of Grace and ſpiritual Life which do animate and enliven it. (3.) He is called the *Firſt-born* from the Dead, (1.) Becauſe he was the Firſt that aroſe to an immortal Life, never to die more; all others that were raiſed to Life, beſides him, died again, but Death had no more Dominion over him. Again, (2.) Becauſe he was the principal and efficient Cauſe of the Reſurrection; all that were raiſed before him were raiſed by him, by a Power derived from him; and, (3.) Becauſe he is the Pattern and exemplary Cauſe of the Reſurrection; his Members are not only raiſed by him, but like unto him, *Phil.* 3. 21. *faſhioned like unto his glorious Body*; was his Body raiſed ſubſtantially the ſame? So ſhall ours be. Was his Body wonderfully improved by the Reſurrection? So ſhall ours, in Point of Purity and Spirituality, in Point of Power and Activity, in Point of Immortality and Incorruptibility; was his Body raiſed to be eternally glorified? So ſhall ours. How fitly then is our Lord here called the Firſt-born from the Dead? Even herein he had *the Preeminence*.

19 For it pleaſed *the father* that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in deſcribing the Perſon of our Redeemer, and the admirable Qualifications found in him for the Work and Service of our Redemption; he declares here, that there was a perfect and compleat Fulneſs of all Divine Graces and Excellencies dwelling in the Mediator, and that by the Pleaſure and Appointment of God the Father; there is in him a Fulneſs of Merit for our Juſtification, a Fulneſs of Grace for our Sanctification, a Fulneſs of Wiſdom for our Direction, a Fulneſs of Power for our Preſervation, a Fulneſs of Mercy, Pity, and Compaſſion, to relieve and ſuccour us in all our Diſtreſſes. And this Fulneſs which is in Chriſt, it is an original and independant Fulneſs, and it is an infinite and inexhauſtible Fulneſs, it is a compleat and comprehenſive Fulneſs, and it is a Miniſterial Fulneſs; the Fulneſs that is in him of Grace and Comfort, it is on purpoſe to communicate to us, to be diſperſed and given forth to all his Members. No ſooner had our Apoſtle ſaid, that he is the Head of the Body, the Church, but he inſtantly ſubjoins, that it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell, namely, for his Churches Benefit and Advantage. Learn hence, That for any one to be, or pretend to be the Church's Head, it is neceſſeary that he be endued with all the Fulneſs of the Godhead, and of all Miniſterial Graces, and therefore it is the higheſt Degree of Blaſphemy in the Pope, a vain ſinful Man, to aſſume this Title to himſelf, being deſtitute of this Divine Fulneſs; full indeed he is, but full of Pride, full of Sin, full of himſelf, and, without Repentance, for this and his other Blaſphemies, will, at length, be full of Wrath.

20 And (having made peace through the blood of his croſs) by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by him, *I ſay*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

Here one ſpecial Reaſon is aſſigned, why all Fulneſs dwelt in our Lord the Redeemer, namely, to fit him for the great Work and Office of a Mediator or Reconciler, that ſo he might happily make up that Breach which Sin had made between God and the World, having removed the Enmity which was betwixt them by his Death and Sufferings, called here the Blood of his Croſs, that is, the Blood which he freely and voluntarily ſhed upon the Croſs. *Note* here, (1.) That God and Man were once Friends, tho' ſoon by Sin made Enemies; *Reconciliation* doth ſuppoſe an antecedent Friendſhip. *Note* (2.) That tho' Man was firſt in the Breach, yet God was firſt in the Offer of Reconciliation; *it pleaſed the Father, by him, to reconcile all things to himſelf*. *Note* (3.) That as there was no Poſſibility of ever making up this Breach but by a Mediator, ſo no Perſon in Heaven or Earth was, or could be, found in all things fitted and furniſhed for the Work of a Mediator but only Chriſt; *By him* to reconcile all things to himſelf. *Note* (4.) The Univerſality of the Subject reconciled, *all things both in Heaven and Earth*: by things in Heaven (1.) Some underſtand the bleſſed Angels, but there being no Breach between God and them, Chriſt was not the Author of Reconciliation, though he was an Head of Confirmation to them, others underſtand it of a Reconciliation between the Angels and Man thus; whilſt Man continued in his Obedience to God, Angels and Men were in a State of perfect Friendſhip one with another, but when Man rebelled againſt God the Angels became averſe to Man for that Rebellion; but God being reconciled to Man by the Death of his Son, the Angels are become Friends and miniſtring Spirits to us, and both they and we conſtitute one Church under Chriſt the Head thereof; thus Chriſt reconciled all things in Heaven and Earth, that is, the Angels in Heaven he has reconciled to Man on Earth. But (2.) Others by things in Heaven do not underſtand the Angels, but the Saints departed, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and all the Faithful now in Heaven, or here on Earth, they were all reconciled in order to their being ſaved, intimating, that the Blood of Chriſt did expiate the Guilt of thoſe Perſons who lived before him, as well as thoſe that died after him; he reconciled all things in Heaven and Earth, capable of Reconciliation, appointed to it, and that ſtood in need of it. *Note* Laſtly, The Inſtrumental Means by which all this was effected, namely, by the Blood of the Croſs; to make up the Breach betwixt God and the fallen Creature, coſt the Mediator no leſs than his Precious Blood. Lord! Who can look upon Sin as any other than an infinite and immenſe Evil, which coſt the Son of God his Life to expiate the Guilt of it; how can a little Sin be committed againſt a great God!

21 And you that were ſometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, 22 In the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his ſight.

St. *Paul* having treated of Chriſt's Work of Reconciliation in general, in the preceding Verſe, in this he applies it to the *Coloſſians* in particular. Where (1.) He deſcribes to them the miſerable State and deplorable Condition they were in before they were converted to the Chriſtian Faith; they were Strangers, nay, Enemies unto God, *Enemies in their Minds*, which implies a deep-rooted Enmity, advancing ſo high as to hate God, not as a Creator, but as a Law-giver, not as a Benefactor, but as a Judge and Revenger of Sin! Oh deplorable Degradation, to be at Enmity in our Minds againſt him who is the Author of our Being, and the Fountain of our Happineſs! *Obſ.* (2.) The gracious Change wrought in their Condition by Virtue of Chriſt's Mediation, *you hath he reconciled*; not only laid down his Life to purchaſe Reconciliation for them, but by the Miniſtry of the Word, accompanied with the Operation of his Holy Spirit working upon their Hearts, even then when they had a ſtrong Averſion from God, to accept of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with him: *You who were alienated and Enemies in your Mind by wicked Works, now hath he reconciled.* Obſ. (3.) The Way and Means by which Chriſt effected this Work of Reconciliation for them and us, namely, by taking upon him a true Body, ſubject to fleſhly Infirmities, tho' without Sin; and in that Body ſuffering Death for us, that we might be preſented at the laſt Day perfectly Holy unto God. In order to our Reconciliation with God, it pleaſed Chriſt, the Second Perſon in the ever glorious Trinity, to aſſume a Body of Fleſh, that he might be of the ſame Nature with us, and in that Body of Fleſh to die for Sin, that the ſame Nature which had ſinned might give Satiſfaction for Sin. And farther, to make us compleatly Happy, he has not only taken away the legal Enmity on God's Part, but the natural Enmity on our Part; for he ſanctifies thoſe whom he reconciles initially in this Life, but perfectly and compleatly in the next, where and when they ſhall be preſented holy, unblameable, and unreproveable, to his Heavenly Father.

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled, and be not moved away from the hope of the goſpel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a miniſter.

Here our Apoſtle declares to the *Coloſſians* how they may know whether they were indeed of the Number of thoſe who were actually reconciled unto God by the Blood of his Son, namely, if they perſevered in the Faith, and continued grounded faſt in their holy Religion; *if ye continue in the Faith grounded and ſettled*; implying, that it is the great Duty of Chriſtians, who have ſat under the preaching of the Goſpel, to be well ſettled in the Doctrine of Faith, which they have heard and received; and that the beſt Way to be ſettled is to be well-grounded; if we are not ſettled in Religion, we can never grow in Religion; an ungrounded Chriſtian can never be a growing Chriſtian; and if we are not well-grounded in the Faith, we can never ſuffer for the Faith; for ſuch as are Scepticks in Religion will never prove Martyrs for the ſake of Religion. *Obſerve*, The Univerſality of that Tender, which by the preaching of the Goſpel is made unto all Sorts of Sinners, of Reconciliation with God, and Acceptance through Chriſt, *which* Goſpel *was preached to every Creature under Heaven*; that is, to loſt Mankind, to ſome of all Sorts; not in *Judea* only, but amongſt the Gentiles alſo, to every Humane Creature, no Perſon, no Nation being refuſed or paſſed by, plainly intimating, that an indefinite and univerſal Tender of Reconciliation with God, and Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, is made unto all Perſons by the preaching of the Goſpel. Happy they whoſe Hearts are inclined and diſpoſed to accept of and comply with them, who in the Day of the Goſpel's Viſitation do know the things of their Peace.

24 Who now rejoice in my ſufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake, which is the church:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I am not only contented with, but I greatly rejoiced in, my Sufferings for you converted Gentiles, and help, as much as in me lies, to fill up ſome Part of that which is by God's Decree behind unfulfilled of the Sufferings of Chriſt in my Fleſh, for his Body's ſake, which is the Church. *Note* here, (1.) That Almighty God has decreed ſuch a Meaſure of Sufferings to his Church, whereof Chriſt as the Head underwent a conſiderable Part and Proportion when he was here upon Earth, in his Poverty, in his Labours, in his Suffering, both in Life, and at his Death. *Note* (2.) That there is yet a Remainder of Sufferings aſſigned over by Chriſt unto his Members, which muſt be filled up by them, whereof St. *Paul* had a great Share, and every Believer muſt have ſome Share, for as long as Chriſt has a Member upon the Earth, there will be ſomething for that Member to ſuffer. *Note* (3.) That thoſe Sufferings which Chriſt's Members ſuffer, are the Sufferings of Chriſt, the Sufferings of the Members are the Sufferings of the Head, being undergone for the ſake of the Head. Chriſt in his natural Body conſidered can ſuffer no more; but in his Myſtical Body, in his Members, he daily ſuffers, and will ſuffer till the Meaſure of Sufferings is filled up which God hath determined. *Queſt.* But why are Chriſt's Sufferings in and by his Members thus to be prolonged, yea, perpetuated? *Anſw.* Not by Way of Satiſfaction for Sin, nor in order to Reconciliation with God, but in order to the Converſion of the World, for Example to others, for perfecting of their own Graces, and for the encreaſing of their Glory.

25 Whereof I am made a miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God: 26 *Even* the myſtery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifeſt to his Saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles; which is Chriſt in you, the hope of glory:

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words ſeems to aſſign a Reaſon why he underwent the Sufferings, mentioned in the former Verſe, ſo chearfully, as even to rejoice in them, namely, becauſe he was a Miniſter of the Church, by the ſpecial Diſpenſation of God, to preach the Myſteries of the Goſpel to the Gentile World. Learn thence, that ſuch as are Eminent in the Church and as Miniſters of this Goſpel do lay out themſelves more abundantly in the Churches Service, they muſt expect to meet with a Meaſure, and a full Meaſure of Sufferings beyond others. There are no ſuch Enemies to the Devil's Kingdom as the zealous and faithful Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*; therefore he will be ſure to revenge the Ruins of his own Kingdom. *Obſerve* farther, what it was that St. *Paul* was appointed by God to preach to the Gentiles, namely, that great Myſtery of their Vocation and Calling; this he calls here a Myſtery, a rich Myſtery, a glorious Myſtery, a Myſtery hid from Ages, but now made manifeſt. Learn hence, That the Doctrine of Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as a Redeemer, was long hid from the Knowledge of the Gentiles, and that at laſt they were brought to the Knowledge of Chriſt, and the Participation of Goſpel Privileges, was a great Myſtery awfully to be admired, and a glorious Mercy with all Thankfulneſs to be acknowledged, *to whom God would make known what is the Riches of the Glory of this Myſtery among the Gentiles,* -----*which is Chriſt in you the Hope of Glory*; ----- which Goſpel preached amongſt you, and received and entertained by you, is an Earneſt and Ground of yonr Hope of Glory. *Note* here, (1.) That Chriſt is in, and among Believers; he is among them by the Preaching of the Goſpel, he is in them by the Inhabitation of his Holy Spirit. *Note* (2.) That all True Believers, whilſt here on Earth, have an Hope of Glory. (3.) That Chriſt's indwelling Preſence in the Souls of Believers by his Holy Spirit, is an Earneſt of that Glory, and an evident Demonſtration of their Hope of it: Believers have in them a glorious Hope, they have before them a Glory hoped for; Chriſt is the Ground of both, by him we attain the End of our Hope, even the Salvation of our Souls.

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wiſdom; that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus: 29 Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Obſerve here, (1.) What was the principal Subject of the Apoſtle's Preaching, it was Chriſt, *whom we Preach:* Chriſt was the Matter of his Preaching, and the great End of his Preaching. *Obſ.* (2.) The Manner of St. *Paul*'s Preaching; it was by informing the Underſtanding and Judgment, by directing the Practice, *warning* Men of the Evil of Sin, and of the Danger of continuing in it. *Obſ.* (3.) The End of his Preaching, it was to preſent every Man *perfect* in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, to render them compleat both in Knowledge and Obedience. *Obſ.* (4.) The undefatigable Pains and Diligence uſed by the Apoſtle in that Work of Preaching intimated in the Word Labouring and Striving, *whereunto I alſo Labour, Striving.* *Obſ.* (5.) The Gracious Help and Bleſſed Succeſs which he had in his Preaching, humbly and thankfully acknowledging, and aſcribing unto God, according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. From the whole learn, (1.) What was the Sum of St. *Paul*'s Preaching, and ought to be of ours alſo, to bring Men to Repentance, and Faith in Chriſt, to advance them towards a Perfection in Knowledge and Obedience, by informing their Judgments, and directing their Practice. Learn (2.) That the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt do judge no Labour and Pains too great, no Strivings or Sufferings too much, no contending with the Errors and Sins of Men ſufficient, in order to the bringing of them unto God by Converſion and Repentance. Learn (3.) That ſuch Miniſters as thus indefatigably Labour and Strive for the good of Souls ſhall not Labour and Strive alone, they ſhall be accompanied with Divine Aſſiſtance: Chriſt will ſtrive with them, and work with them, *ſtriving according to his working.* (4.) That when Miniſters have met with Succeſs in their Striving, by Chriſt working with them, they muſt aſcribe nothing of Praiſe to themſelves, to their own Piety, Parts, or Pains, but aſcribe all to him that ſtriveth by them, and *worketh in them mightily.*

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Chapter declared that the Doctrine preached to the Coloſſians *by* Epaphras *was according to Truth, and exhorted them to continue Grounded and Settled in the ſame; in this Chapter he cautions and warns them againſt all ſuch Corrupt Doctrines as any Sort of falſe Teachers might be ready to obtrude upon them: Whether they were the Gentile Philoſophers who attempted to draw them to the Worſhipping of Angels; or the Judaizing Doctors whoſe Endeavour it was to bring them under the Yoke of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, long ſince aboliſhed by the Death of Chriſt: To fortifie the* Coloſſians *againſt both is the Deſign of this Chapter, in which our Apoſtle thus beſpeaks them.*

FOR I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Holy Agony which our Apoſtle was in, and the Mighty Conflict he had with himſelf upon the Account of the *Coloſſians*; *I would that ye knew what great Conflict I have for you*; namely, by Prayer, Care, Study and Endeavour to do you good; here we ſee how paſſionately good Men long for the good of thoſe whom they never ſaw; as Members of the Catholick Church they wiſh well to the Whole, and to every Part. *Obſerve* (2.) What was the Ground and Occaſion of St. *Paul's* inexpreſſible Agony and Concern of Spirit for and on the Behalf of theſe *Coloſſians*, namely this, there was a Number of Men riſen up, who began very early to corrupt the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel, and the Chriſtian Religion: A Sort they were of partly Judaizing, and partly Paganizing Chriſtians, the former joined the Jewiſh Ceremonies, the latter the Gentiles Impurities, even in Worſhip, with the Chriſtian Religion. Now the Urgency of this Caſe put the Sollicitous and Concerned Spirit of this great Apoſtle into an inexpreſſible Agony, as his Words here intimate; *I would you knew what Conflict I have for you*, and your near Neighbours of *Laodicea, and for as many as have not ſeen my Face in the Fleſh.* The Men of the World little underſtand, and leſs conſider, what Burthen of ſollicitous Care lies upon the Miniſters of Chriſt, for and on Behalf of the whole Church of Chriſt in general, which is continually in Danger of being corrupted by Falſe Teachers, who every where lie in wait to deceive.

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt;

Our Apoſtle having diſcovered in the former Verſe that inward Anxiety of Mind which he laboured under, on the Behalf of theſe *Coloſſians*, doth in theſe Words propoſe an Expedient how the threatning Danger might be Averted, namely, by mutual Love to one another, and by a clear and efficacious Faith of the Goſpel; by theſe he reckons they would be ſo cloſely compacted together as that no Subtilty or Violence could endanger them: If by Faith they did cleave cloſe to God and Chriſt, and by Love keep cloſe to one another, he firmly believed they would give no Enemies an Opportunity, either to be the ſucceſsful Authors, or the delighted Spectators of their Ruin. Learn hence, that the maintaining of ſincere Love amongſt Chriſtians, and the improving of their Faith to greater Meaſures of Certainty and Efficacy, in reference to the Subſtantials of Chriſtianity, are the beſt Means to Unite, Eſtabliſh and Preſerve them againſt the fatal Danger of a Ruinous Apoſtacy. *That their Hearts may be Comforted, being knit together in Love, &c.*

3 In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.

That is, in Jeſus Chriſt, and in his Goſpel, are all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge laid up as in a Storehouſe, and from thence only are they to be expected and derived. The Knowledge of Chriſt and his Goſpel is an extenſive and comprehenſive Knowledge, a rich and inriching Knowledge; the chiefeſt Gain is Loſs, and the richeſt Treaſure is Dung, when Chriſt's Riches are diſplay'd; and after all that we have, or can attain unto, of the Knowledge of Chriſt, his Work is unſearchable, no Infinite Underſtanding can reach the Depth thereof, for in him *are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.*

4 And this I ſay, leſt any man ſhould beguile you with inticing Words. 5 For though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt.

Note here how exceedingly deſirous the Apoſtle was that the *Coloſſians* might continue ſound in the Chriſtian Faith, and be preſerved out of the Hands of falſe Teachers, who by falſe Arguments and enſnaring Perſwaſions ſought to beguile them: In Matters of Religion we are in greater Danger from the Subtile Seducer than we are from the fiery Perſecutor: Sophiſtical Arguments, and Inſinuating Perſwaſions, captivate thoſe Perſons whom Violence could never have brought over to their Party; therefore is our Apoſtle ſo earneſt with the *Coloſſians* that none ſhould *beguile them with enticing Words.* *Note* farther, how our Apoſtle gives another Reaſon of this his Sollicitous Care for them, namely, his fervent Affection towards them, notwithſtanding his great diſtance from them; for though not in Body, yet in Mind, he was preſent with them, and having received from *Epaphras* an account of the good Order and Government of their Church, and of the Stedfaſtneſs of their *Faith in* Chriſt, the notices thereof were Matter of exceeding Joy and Rejoicing to him: *Though abſent in the Fleſh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying, &c.* Learn hence, that a Church's Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith of Chriſt, and Unity amongſt themſelves in Goſpel-order, doth render a Church a joyful Object to all Beholders, and particularly to the Miniſters and Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, who greatly rejoice therein.

6 As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, *ſo* walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving.

That is, as you have received the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord by the Preaching of *Epaphras*, and therein have embraced Chriſt by Faith, ſo do you conſtantly adhere to that Doctrine, conforming your Lives thereunto; and ſeeing you are thus implanted into Chriſt, be like Trees well and deeply Rooted in him, or like an Houſe firmly built upon him as the only ſure and abiding Foundation. Learn, That ſuch as have received the Grace of God in Truth, ought to labour after Stability in Grace, and Eſtabliſhment in the true Religion, that they may ſtand like a Rock, immoveable in Aſſaults, and unſhaken amidſt all the Batteries that may be made upon their Faith by Hereticks and Seducers.

8 Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt:

Our Apoſtle comes now in a particular and ſpecial Manner to warn the *Coloſſians* that they beware of all the Enemies of Chriſtianity, whether Pagan or Jewiſh, for Chriſtianity was oppoſed by both; the Heathen Philoſophers and Wiſe Men did amuſe the Chriſtians with their vain Speculations. The Jewiſh Teachers were for impoſing upon them the Levitical Rites, which he calls Rudiments or Elements fitted for the Infancy of the Church; but theſe things were not now after Chriſt, that is, not according to the Doctrine and Mind of Chriſt. *Beware leſt any Man ſpoil you thro' Philoſophy and vain Deceit*, &c. Where *Note*, That it is not Philoſophy, as ſuch, which St. *Paul* warns them againſt; for true and ſound Philoſophy is the Improver of our Reaſon, the Guide of our Faculties, and teaches us the true Knowledge of God and our ſelves, and is no Hinderance, but a great Help to Religion; but it was the Philoſophy of the Greeks at that Day which is here condemned, becauſe it was Vain and Empty, Fallacious and Deceitful; it was vain becauſe it conduced nothing to True Piety, and making them better; it was deceitful becauſe it hazarded their Souls, and robbed them of Happineſs. *Note* farther, that the Moſaick Rites and Legal Ceremonies, as they were preſcribed by God, and adapted to the Infant State of the Jewiſh Church, had a Goodneſs, yea, an Excellency in them; but the Obſervation of them, ſince the coming of Chriſt, is ſinful, as being an implicit Denial that he is come in the Fleſh; accordingly he warns them to beware of the Philoſophy of the *Greeks*, and the Ceremonial Rites of the Jews; neither of which, he tells them, were after Chriſt, that is, not according to the Inſtitution or Injunction of Chriſt, but did draw away the Heart from him, therefore they were both unwarrantable and unſafe.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Here St. *Paul* gives a Reaſon of the foregoing Caution againſt Philoſophy, for *in him*, that is, in Chriſt dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily; as if he had ſaid, let no Man impoſe upon you by a lame and imperfect Philoſophy, there is no need of that, for now there is introduced an abſolute and Compleat Doctrine, namely, that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which has the fulneſs of all Divine Wiſdom in it, and the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling Bodily in himſelf, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially. Where, *Note*, That the Apoſtle ſays not that the Godhead is Aſſiſtant to Chriſt, but that it reſideth or dwelleth in him; as the Deity dwelt in the Ark Symbolically, ſo it dwelt in Chriſt Bodily. *Note* farther, That Chriſt is not here ſaid to be filled with the fulneſs of God, as the Church is ſaid to be, *Eph.* 1. 23. in regard of the Gifts and Graces which ſhe had received from him; but the whole fulneſs of the Godhead is here ſaid to reſide in him, which can argue him to be no leſs than really and truly God, his compleat Eſſence dwelleth in him. Well might the Apoſtle therefore add, *v.* 10. *Ye are compleat in him*, wanting no requiſite to Salvation; ye need not go to the Philoſophers for Knowledge, for in Chriſt you have compleat Wiſdom, he is above all Pagan Philoſophers and Jewiſh Rabbies; nay, he is the *Head of all Principalities and Powers*, that is, above the higheſt Angel in Heaven. Here *Obſerve*, that it was the Opinion of the Paganiſh, as it is now of the Popiſh Part of Mankind, that Almighty God was too high to be immediately approached, and therefore they applied themſelves to Angels as Mediators betwixt God and them; but the Apoſtle here acquaints them that the Angel-mediatorſhip is vain, ſince Chriſt is alſo their Head and Lord.

11 In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion made without hands, in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the circumciſion of Chriſt:

The Apoſtle had aſſerted before that we are compleat in Chriſt, he proves it now thus; we want not Circumciſion; why? Becauſe we have in Chriſt the thing ſignified by Circumciſion, namely, the Spiritual Circumciſion of the Heart, which conſiſts in putting off, by the Power of Chriſt's Spirit, the Body of Natural Corruption, which done, there was no need of the outward Circumciſion made with Hands, or the cutting off the Fleſh of the Foreſkin. *Obſerve*, Original Corruption is a Body, or as a Body to us, it cleaves as cloſe to the Soul as the Fleſh to the Bones. This Body with all its Members we muſt be cutting daily by Spiritual Circumciſion or real Mortification; and where that is done God is well pleaſed; he regards not that Circumciſion which is outward in the Fleſh, which is made with Hands, but that which is inward, the Circumciſion of the Heart, and of the Spirit, whoſe praiſe is not of Man, but of God.

12 Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.

Our Apoſtle here compares Chriſtian Baptiſm with the Jewiſh Circumciſion, and ſhews that the Signification and Spiritual Intention of both was one and the ſame, obliging all Perſons who took the outward Sign upon them to put off the old Man, and put on the New; to Die unto Sin, and Live unto God. Accordingly the Ancients made uſe of divers Ceremonies in Baptizing adult and grown Perſon; hereby to repreſent the Death, Burial and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, as Immerſion, or putting the Perſons Three times under Water, either as our Saviour was under the Earth Three Days, or in Alluſion to the Three Perſons in the Trinity, in whoſe Name we are Baptized; and likewiſe Emerſion, their coming up out of the Water, reſembling our Lord's ariſing out of his Grave. *Note* here, (1.) That Baptiſm under the New Teſtament ſucceeds Circumciſion under the Old, and is a Rite of Initiation to Chriſtians, as Circumciſion was to the Jews: for the Apoſtle here proves, that by Vertue of our Spiritual Circumciſion in Baptiſm, we have no need of the outward Circumciſion in the Fleſh. *Note* (2.) That Baptiſm is undoubtedly Chriſt's Ordinance for Infants of believing Chriſtians, as Circumciſion was of Old for the Infants of believing Jews; For if under the Goſpel Infants be not received, by ſome Federal Rite, into Covenant with God, they are in a worſe Condition than Children under the Law; and the Apoſtle could not truly have ſaid we are compleat in Chriſt; that is, as compleat without Circumciſion, as ever the Jewiſh Church was with it, if we had not an Ordinance, to wit, Baptiſm, as good as their abrogated Ordinance of Circumciſion. And the Jews would certainly have objected it to the reproach of Chriſtianity, had not the Chriſtians a Right of Initiation for their Children, as they had of Circumciſion, which Sealed the Covenant to themſelves, and their little ones, and was the Door by which all Perſons entred into the Jewiſh Church. *Note* (3.) The Spiritual Fruits and Effects of Baptiſm, namely, Mortification in Sin, and Vivification in Grace, by Virtue of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, apprehended by ſuch a Faith as is of the Operation of God, that is produced by the Energy of the Goſpel, and the Efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Learn hence, That neither Sacraments, nor the Death or Reſurrection of Chriſt, in themſelves, will avail to the Mortification of Sin, and the Quickening of Grace, if Chriſt himſelf be not applied to by ſuch a Faith, as is of the ſpecial Operation of God, the Faith of his Working, and of his Approving. This alone will effectually enable us to Die unto Sin, and Live unto God.

13 And you being dead in your ſins, and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes, 14 Blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances which was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs: 15 And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in proving that we are compleat in Chriſt, and that the *Coloſſians* had no need of Circumciſion in the Fleſh, having all in Chriſt that was neceſſary for Juſtification as well as Sanctification to ſatisfie them herein. *Obſ.* (1.) He acquaints them with their deplorable Condition by Nature, *you being Dead in your Sins*, without any Hopes of Spiritual Life, and by reaſon of *Uncircumciſion in your Fleſh*, Aliens from the Church of God, (and Strangers to all the Promiſes made unto it) hath he Quickened and Pardoned, having freely *forgiven you all your Treſpaſſes.* O bleſſed Privilege of Juſtification, to have Sin forgiven, Treſpaſſes forgiven, all Treſpaſſes univerſally forgiven, all Treſpaſſes freely forgiven. *Obſerve* (2.) What it coſt Chriſt to purchaſe Pardon for us, to diſcharge us from our Obligation to Wrath, and our Obnoxiouſneſs to the Curſe and Condemnation of the Law; no leſs than his precious Life laid down upon the Croſs; *blotting out the Handwriting of Ordinanances againſt us and contrary to us*, &c. An Alluſion to a Practice amongſt Men, who Cancel Bills and Bonds, and all Obligations, wherein they ſtood bound, when once the Debt is ſatisfied. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, your

Debt of Sin is paid to the Juſtice of God by the Death of Chriſt, and ſeeing the Obligation is Cancelled, it would be Madneſs and Impiety to renew it again, as thoſe do who plead for Circumciſion, and practice the legal Ceremonies. *Note* here, There was an Obligation upon every Man to undergo the Curſe of the Law, for violating the Commands of the Law, there was *an Hand-writing* againſt us. This Obligation muſt be Cancell'd before the condemning Power of the Law can be Aboliſh'd, and Sin Pardoned: none but Chriſt could Cancel this Obligation, and not he neither, without paying the full Sum payable from us; Chriſt when hanging on the Croſs did *Nail this Hand-writing* to his Croſs, which ſhall never be produced in Judgment againſt the Penitent Believer; but this Obligation remains upon the File uncancelled, with reſpect to all Sinners who Live and Die in their Sins, and they ſhall always lie in Priſon, ever ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfie this Obligation. *Obſerve* (3.) That Chriſt hath not only by his Death Cancelled this Hand-writing, and Nail'd it to his Croſs, but has Vanquiſh'd and Triumph'd over all our Spiritual Enemies Satan and all the Powers of Hell; are led as ſo many pinion'd Captives before the Triumphant Chariot of his Croſs, making them a Spectacle of Scorn and Shame in the Eyes of God, Angels, and Men; *having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a ſhew of them openly*, &c. *Note* here, (1.) Chriſt's Bloody Croſs was a Chariot of Triumph unto him. Lord, whilſt thou wert Bleeding and Racking upon the Gibbet for us, thou wert then Rejoicing and Triumphing for the Benefits redounding to us! *Note* (2.) That Satan, that great Conqueror, was Conquered by Chriſt, and led in Triumph before the Chariot of the Croſs. Oh Satan, thou wert never thus Baffled, Befooled, and Diſappointed before! When thou and thy Agents were ſpoiling Chriſt, even then was he ſpoiling Principalities and Powers, and triumphing over them, when they were inſulting over him; the Serpent now bruiſed our Lord's Heel, but had his own Head and Power for ever broken; *triumphing over them in it*, that is, in and by his Croſs.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath-*days*: 17 Which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body is of Chriſt.

Here we have an Inference or Concluſion drawn by our Apoſtle from the foregoing Argument, that ſeeing the Ceremonial Law was now Aboliſhed, therefore none ſhould take upon them to Judge or Condemn another for not obſerving any of the Legal Ceremonies, either thoſe that related to Meats, that is, the Difference to be obſerved in Meats, the other relating to the Difference to be obſerved in Days. Here *Note*, That the Days obſerved amongſt the Jews were of Three Sorts, Anniverſary, which returned every Year, called here an Holy-day; Lunary, which returned every Month, the firſt Day of every New-Moon; Weekly, which returned every Week, and on the Seventh Day of the Week: All which are abrogated, even the Jewiſh Seventh-Day Sabbath, and the Lord's-Day, or the Chriſtian Firſt Day Sabbath ſubſtituted in its Place, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That there is both a Sinful and a Lawful Abſtinence from Meats; that Abſtinence is Sinful when Men abſtain from ſome Meats upon pretence of Holineſs and Conſcience, as if ſome Meats were unclean, or leſs holy in their own Nature, than others, 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. or as if ſimple Abſtinence at any time were a thing acceptable to God in its ſelf, without reſpect had to the End for which it is ſometimes required. But there is a Threefold Abſtinence from Meats which is lawful, Political injoined by the Magiſtrate for Civil Ends; Medicinal, preſcribed by the Phyſician for Healths Preſervation; Eccleſiaſtical, when God by his Providence, and the Voice of his Church, calls his People to faſting. *Obſ.* (2.) The Reaſon alledged by the Apoſtle why Chriſtians ſhould not Judge one another, with reſpect to Meats and Drinks, Times and Seaſons, namely, becauſe thoſe Legal Ceremonies were but dark Shadows of things to come, but the Body and Subſtance, repreſented by thoſe Shadows, is Chriſt come in the Fleſh; and conſequently, to obſerve theſe Ceremonies and regard theſe Shadows under the Goſpel, is in Effect to ſay that Chriſt the Body is not yet come. Here *Note* (1.) The Title given to the Ceremonial Worſhip, it is ſtiled a Shadow, becauſe it was a dark and imperfect Repreſentation of the Truth; what is a Shadow but the coming of a thick Body between us and the Sun? The Legal Ceremonies were interpoſed between Chriſt the true Light and us, and ſo caſt a Shadow of him. *Note* (2.) The Title given to Chriſt with reſpect to the Shadows of the Ceremonial Law, he is the Body, and the Subſtance of them; now as the Shadow vaniſhes when the Subſtance is come, ſo theſe Ceremonial Ordinances were to ceaſe upon the coming of Chriſt; and to obſerve them now under the Goſpel is in Effect to ſay that Chriſt is not yet come in the Fleſh. *Note* (3.) That the Jewiſh Sabbath was a Ceremonial Ordinance, and part of that Hand-writing of Ordinances which was to be blotted out by Chriſt, and conſequently the Chriſtian is not obliged to obſerve it; as the Diſtinction of Meats and Drinks, and the Obſervation of the New-Moons, was confeſſedly Ceremonial, ſo was alſo the Jewiſh Sabbath, which with the reſt was equally Cancelled by Chriſt, as a Part of the Hand-writings of Ordinances; ſo that to obſerve the Jewiſh Sabbath, or to condemn the Chriſtian for not obſerving it, is as much a denial that Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, as to obſerve Circumciſion, or any other part of the Ceremonial Law.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puft up by his fleſhly mind; 19 And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.

Our Apoſtle, having warned the *Coloſſians* againſt the Errors of the Judaizing Teachers, comes next to warn them againſt the Practice of the Paganizing Chriſtians, who were directed by their Guides to worſhip the Angels, covering their Error with a plauſible ſhew of Humility, pretending it was preſumptuous to go to God immediatly without the Mediation of thoſe excellent Creatures; but this the Apoſtle tells them was a bold intruding into things they knew nothing of, God having neither Revealed nor Taught any ſuch thing, and argued that they were vainly puft up with the fooliſh Imaginations of their own fleſhly Minds. Next he ſhews, that theſe Angel-Worſhippers do not acknowledge Chriſt for the Head of the Church, while they apply themſelves to Angels as Mediators; whereas he alone diſcharges the Office of the Head, compleatly giving Life and Growth to his whole Church, and to every Member thereof, which Members being furniſhed with Spiritual Life from him, and knit to him and one another by the Joints and Bands of Charity, and other Graces, they grow and encreaſe with ſuch an Encreaſe of Holineſs as is from God, and tends to his Glory. *Note* here, (1.) That the Nature of Man is prone, extreamly prone, to Idolatry and falſe Worſhip. (2.) That it is as really Idolatry to worſhip an Angel, as it is to Worſhip a Woman, for Divine Worſhip is only due to a Divine Perſon. *Note* (3.) That it is a renouncing of Chriſt to make uſe of Angels, or any other Mediators beſides Chriſt, unto the Father, *not holding the Head*; it was a Notion, and that early, and indeed univerſally poſſeſt the Mind of Mankind, that God was not to be immediately approach'd to by Sinful Men, but that their prayers were to be preſented by certain Mediators and Interceſſors, who were to procure for them the Favour of God, and the Acceptance of their Prayers. Hence they Worſhipped Angels, and the Souls departed of their Heroes, whom they Canonized and Tranſlated into the Number of their Inferior Gods, by whom they addreſſed their Supplications to their Superior Gods. With this Notion Almighty God was pleaſed to comply ſo far, as under the Jewiſh Inſtitution to appoint *Moſes* a Mediator betwixt him and them, and now under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation to appoint Jeſus Chriſt to be the only Mediator betwixt God and Man. *Note* (4.) That it is uſual for Idolaters, and falſe Worſhippers, to cover themſelves with a more than ordinary ſhew of Humility; *let none beguile you in a voluntary Humility.* True it is that all Duties of Worſhip ought to be voluntary, as Voluntary is oppoſed to Conſtrained; but they muſt not be voluntary, as Voluntary is oppoſed to Inſtituted or Appointed; God doth no more approve of that Worſhip we give him according to our Will, than he doth approve of our neglect of that which is according to his own Will. But Man, vain Man, likes any Way of Worſhipping God which is of his own framing, much better than that which is of Gods own appointing.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances? 21 (Touch not, taſte not, handle not: 22 Which all are to periſh with the uſing) after the comandments and doctrines of men: 23 Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.

Our Apoſtle being now in the cloſe of this Chapter, returns to expoſtulate, and argues the Caſe with thoſe who were willing to ſubject themſelves to the Obſervation of the Old Jewiſh Rites and Ceremonies. He argues thus, If, ſays he, you profeſs your ſelves in your Baptiſm to be ſpiritually Dead with Chriſt, and to be freed by his Death from the Levitical Ordinances, why are ye ſubject to thoſe Ordinances? Such are, *touch not, taſte not, handle not*; touch not any unclean Thing, taſte not any forbidden Meat, handle not any conſecrated Veſſel; all which Obſervances were to periſh neceſſarily with the very uſing; and whereas they were ſet off with a ſpecious ſhew of Wiſdom, as if they were voluntary Services, and free-will-offerings to God, he acknowledges that they had indeed a ſhew of Wiſdom, a ſhew of Humility, and a ſhew of Mortification and Auſterity to the Body, and not ſeeming to give any Honour to the ſatisfying of the Fleſh, but all this had nothing of ſpiritual Devotion and Piety in it. Learn hence, (1.) That ſuch as do by Baptiſm profeſs themſelves to be Dead with Chriſt to the Ceremonial Law, may certainly conclude, that the Jewiſh Ceremonies have no more any Power over them or that they ought to yield themſelves to the Obſervation of them; *if ye be dead with Chriſt, why are ye ſubject to Ordinances*? Learn (2.) That tho' God approveth and accepteth Willing-worſhip yet not Will-worſhip; what fair ſhew ſoever it may ſeem to have, either of Wiſdom, Humility, or Mortification; whatever is the Product of our Fancies is a very Fornication in Religion, and an Abomination in the ſight of God, how pleaſing ſoever it may be in the ſight of Men; and yet Men are moſt forward to that Service of God which is of Man's finding out and ſetting up; Man likes it better to Worſhip a God of his own making, than to Worſhip the God that made him, and likes any way of Worſhipping God, which is of his own framing, more than that which is of God's appointing. Ah! wretched Heart of Man, which whilſt it ſeems very zealous to Worſhip and Honour God, hath no Zeal to do it any other way than in that which reflects the higheſt Diſhonour upon him.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle in this Epiſtle (as his manner is in all the reſt) having laid the Doctrine of the Goſpel for a Foundation, and rectified ſome Errors both in Doctrine and Practice amongſt the Coloſſians, *he comes now to the practical Part of this Epiſtle, exhorting them to a Converſation in all things anſwerable to the Doctrine of Chriſt; and the firſt Duty he excites them to the Practice of is, that of an Heavenly Converſation, expreſt by ſeeking of, and ſetting their Affections upon things above, and not on things below.*

IF ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Nature of the Duty to which we are exhorted; this is expreſt both Affirmatively and Negatively; affirmatively, *Seek the things above, and ſet your affections on them*; negatively, *not on the things here on earth*; it being impoſſible to ſeek and ſet our Affections upon both in an intenſe Degree. *Queſt.* But what is it to *ſeek* thoſe things that are above, and to *ſet our Affections* upon them? *Anſw.* In theſe Two Words Four things are comprehended. (1.) An Act of our Underſtanding, that we know the worth of theſe things. (2.) An Act of the Will to chuſe theſe things, and with the Ardour and Vehemency of our Affections to love them. (3.) An Act of Induſtry and Endeavour in the Purſuit of theſe things, if by any Means we may attain them. Our Affections are ſo many Springs of Motion to ſet our Endeavours on work for the obtaining of what we Love and Deſire. (4.) It implies a clear Preference of the things above to things below, when they come in Competition; ſet your Affections more on things above than on the things below, and ſhew it by your readineſs to part with theſe things. *Obſerve* (2.) What is the Object of this Act, or what it is that we are to ſeek and ſet our Affections upon, namely, the *things which are above*: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, together with the Bleſſed State, and Condition of Heaven, and the Happineſs above; as alſo thoſe Diſpoſitions and Qualifications which are requiſite for the obtaining of this Happineſs, and bringing us to the Fruition of it; all theſe are comprehended in the Latitude of the Object, the things which are above. *Obſerve* (3.) The Arguments which our Apoſtle uſes to excite us to this Duty. (1.) *If ye be riſen with Chriſt*, that is, if ye believe that Chriſt is riſen, and if ye will bear a Conformity and Reſemblance to him in his Reſurrection, and be made Partakers of the Power and Virtue of it; for Chriſt's Reſurrection is not only a Pattern, but a Principle; it has a Power and Efficacy in it to raiſe us to a ſpiritual Life; if then ye be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above. (2.) A ſecond Argument is drawn from Chriſt's Exaltation in Heaven, He *ſitteth at the right hand of God*; which Words declare the Exaltation of his Human Nature, and his being advanced to be the ſupream King and Governour of his Church. Now the Force of this Argument lies in the Relation that is between the Head and the Members, between Chriſt and Chriſtians, as the Head has an Influence upon the Members, ſo the Members have an Affection for the Head, which makes them aſpire Heavenwards, where their Head is, becauſe their glorified Saviour, ſitting at the right Hand of God, by the Power of his Spirit, draws out their Affections towards him; *if ye be riſen with Chriſt ſeek the things above.* As if St. *Paul* had ſaid, is Chriſt our Head riſen, and aſcended into Heaven; let us in our Hearts and Affections follow him thither, and patiently wait till he receive our Souls, and raiſe our Bodies, and take us wholly to himſelf, that we may be for ever with the Lord.

3 For ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Chriſt in God.

Here we have a freſh Argument to enforce the foregoing Exhortation, ſeek the things above, *for ye are dead*, that is, Dead to Sin, Dead to the World, therefore be not over eager in the Purſuit of the things below. How affrighting a ſight would it be to ſee a Dead Man riſe out of his Grave, and Converſe with the World, and follow the things here below? As affecting is it to ſee Chriſtians, who by Baptiſmal Profeſſion do own themſelves to be Dead to the World, yet Buried in the World, and inſtead of ſetting their Affections on things above, purſuing with the full Bent of their Deſires the things below. *Ye are Dead* ------ it follows, ------ your Life is hid with Chriſt in God; ------ *your Life*, that is, your Spiritual Life of Grace, and your Eternal Life of Glory, they are both hid with Chriſt, now with God in Heaven. Hid in Chriſt, (1.) As the Effect is in the Cauſe, as the Life of the Branches is hid in the Root, ſo is the Life of a Chriſtian hid in Chriſt; he is our Root. Again, Hid in Chriſt, that is, (2.) Depoſited and laid up with Chriſt, committed to his Care and Cuſtody, ſecurely put into his Hands. (3.) *Hid with Chriſt*, that is, diſpenſed by him, and derived from him at his Pleaſure; of his Fulneſs we receive, when and in what Meaſure he pleaſeth. *Note* here, (1.) Our Life of Grace only deſerves the Name of Life, our natural Life, ſhort and uncertain in itſelf, and common to us with the Brutes, deſerves not, comparatively, the Name of Life. *Note* (2.) That Chriſt is the Believer's Life, he is both the Author and efficient Cauſe of it, the meritorious Cauſe of it, and the exemplary Cauſe and Pattern of it. *Note* (3.) That the Chriſtian's Life is *hid with Chriſt*. The Phraſe imports, (1.) Security and Safety; what is hidden in Chriſt, and with him, muſt be ſafe, and out of the reach of Danger; Grace is incorruptible Seed that ſhall never Die: The World, Satan, and Sin may aſſault, but ſhall not overcome; neither Luſt within, nor the Devil, nor the World, ſhall be able to vanquiſh that Life which is hid in Chriſt. (2.) It imports Obſcurity, what is hidden is concealed; the Life of Grace is totally hidden from the Wicked, and hid, in ſome ſort, from the Believer himſelf, under Spiritual Deſertions, under the Winnowings of Temptation, under the Prevalency of Corruption; much more is the Life of Glory hidden, it doth not yet appear; we can no more conceive of it by all we have heard, than we can conceive what the Sun is by ſeeing of a Glow-worm. (3.) Our Life being hid with Chriſt, it imports Plenty and Abundance; *I am come, that they may have Life more abundantly*, *John* 10. 10.

4 When Chriſt, *who* is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.

That is, when Chriſt, who is the Author, and Purchaſer, and Preſerver of our Life, ſhall appear to Judge the World at the great Day, then ſhall all Believers, who have received ſpiritual Life from him, be ſharers in Glory with him. Here *Note* (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt, by whom Believers Live a Life of Grace, and from whom they expect a Life of Glory, ſhall certainly appear, yea, and have a very glorious Appearing; he ſhall be glorious in his Perſon, glorious in his Attendants, glorious in his Authority, *&c.* *Note* (2.) That when Chriſt appears in Glory to Judge the World, then it is that all Believers ſhall enjoy a full Glorification with him. *Note* (3.) That the Faith of approaching Glory at Chriſt's Second Appearance, is a ſtrong Argument to take off our Affections from things below, and place them on things above. St. *Paul's* Argument is to preſs the *Coloſſians* to ſet their Affections on things above, becauſe Chriſt is above, and when he appears they ſhall *appear with him in Glory*.

5 Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry:

Note here (1.) That altho' the Apoſtle told them in the Third Verſe, that they were Dead to Sin, yet here in the Fifth Verſe he bids them mortifie Sin; intimating, that the Work of Mortification, at the beſt, is but imperfect, and muſt be carried on daily, and progreſſively, they were mortified but in Part; the Old Man has a ſtrong Heart, and is a long Time a Dying, after it has received its deadly Wound; Sin lives a dying Life, and dies a lingring Death, mortifie therefore. *Note* (2.) What it is they are called upon to mortifie, *their Members upon Earth*; where, by Members, we are to underſtand all the Luſts and Corruptions of our Hearts and Natures, all the Relicks and Remains of Sin unſubdued and unpurged out of the Soul; he inſtances in Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affections and Deſires, and Covetouſneſs, which loveth the World above God, and is therefore no better than Idolatry. But why are theſe called *Members*, and Members *upon Earth*? *Anſw.* They are called Members in alluſion to what St. *Paul* had called Sin before, *Ch.* 2. 11. namely, a Body of Sin, therefore he calls particular Luſts Members of that Body; and alſo becauſe they require and call for the Members of the Body, as Inſtruments to bring them into Act; likewiſe becauſe theſe Luſts are naturally as dear to Man as their bodily Members; they can as ſoon part with a Right-Hand, or a Right-Eye, as with a Boſom and Beloved Luſt; they are alſo called Members upon the Earth, becauſe they are converſant about Earthly things, becauſe they will cleave to us as long we live upon Earth, and to intimate that none of theſe muſt be carried to Heaven with us, but be mortified on the Earth. But what is it to mortifie theſe Members? *Anſw.* To mortifie Sin is to deny our Conſent to the Solicitations of Sin, to ſuppreſs the firſt motions of Sin, to enervate the Power and Activity of Sin. Learn hence, (1.) That in the holieſt and beſt of God's Children and Servants there are Relicks and Remains of Sin to be daily Mortified, and gradually Subdued. Learn (2.) That after God has brought a Perſon into a State of Grace, it is his Duty, and ought to be his Endeavour daily to mortifie Sin, and all the Remains of unſubdued Corruption. A Caution, take heed of concluding Sin is mortified, becauſe it is reſtrained, becauſe the Acts of Sin are intermitted, becauſe ſome particular Sins are ſubdued; Is all Sin hated of thee, loathed and left by thee? 'Tis more to loath a Sin, than it is to leave a Sin; Sin may be left, and yet be loved, but no Man can loath Sin and love it at the ſame time. Learn (3.) That Covetouſneſs is a Sin, which above others a Chriſtian ſhould ſet himſelf againſt, and endeavour to mortifie and ſubdue, it having a ſort of Idolatry in it, drawing our Love, our Truſt, our Fear, our Joy from God, and placing the Supremacy of our Affections in and upon the Creatures. True, the Covetous Man doth not believe his Money to be God, but by his inordinate loving of it, and fiducial truſting in it, he is as truly guilty of Idolatry, as if he bowed his Knee unto it; for God more regards the internal Acts of the Mind, than he doth the external Acts of the Body. In like manner, the Papiſts do not believe the Saints and Angels to be Gods, but by praying to them, and truſting in them for Relief and Help, they give them the inward Worſhip of the Soul, and conſequently they are as guilty of Idolatry as if they did believe them to be God.

6 For which things ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience: 7 In the which ye alſo walked ſometime, when ye lived in them.

Here our Apoſtle backs his Exhortation to mortifie Sin with ſtrong Arguments and Motives; the firſt is taken from the Wrath of God, which in its diſmal Effects falls upon thoſe who continue in and under the Power of thoſe Sins: *For which things ſake*, that is, for the committing of which things, and for continuing impenitent after the commiſſion of them, the Wrath of God cometh upon them. Here *Note* God's Wrath is the due deſert of Man's Sin, yet is it not ſo much Sin, as Obduration and Impenitency in Sin, that draws down Wrath. *Note* (2.) That Believers themſelves do ſtand in need of Arguments drawn from the Wrath of God to make them afraid of Sin, and to excite them to mortifie and ſubdue it, for here the Apoſtle propounded the Terror of Divine Wrath to theſe believing *Coloſſians*. The Second Argument is taken from their former Continuance, yea, long Continuance in theſe Sins; *in which ye alſo walked ſometime, when ye lived in them*; that is, in the forementioned Sins, ye your ſelves alſo walked before your Converſion, *when ye lived in them*, and were found in the delightful Practice of them. Learn hence, That no Argument will prevail more with a Chriſtian to follow on the Work of Mortification cloſely, for time to come, than the Remembrance of his long continuance in Sin in time paſt; *in which Sins ye walked ſometime, when ye lived in them*, now Mortifie therefore, *&c.*

8 But now you alſo put off all theſe, anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lye not one to another, ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds: 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

In the foregoing Verſes St. *Paul* exhorted the *Coloſſians* to mortifie external and outward Sins, as Fornication and Uncleanneſs; here he preſſes them to mortifie internal and ſpiritual Sins, ſuch are Anger, Wrath, and Malice, Sins of the Heart. The Axe of Mortification muſt be laid to the Root of inward Corruption, Spiritual Sins, Heart Sins; though they are *minoris Infamiæ*, of leſs Infamy and Reproach before Men, yet are they *majoris Reatus*, of greater Guilt in the ſight of God; therefore a ſincere Chriſtian has a ſpecial Reſpect to theſe in the Work of Mortification; *put off all theſe*, Anger, Wrath, Malice. Anger, or the ſudden Motions and Riſings of Paſſion; Wrath is as Anger advanced to an height, and Malice is Anger accompanied with Deſires of Revenge, a rooted Diſpleaſure; as Jealouſie is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice is the Rage of the Devil, 'tis the very Soul and Spirit of the Apoſtate Nature. No Sin renders a Man ſo like to Satan as Wrath and Malice. A malicious Deſire of Revenge is ſo far beneath a Chriſtian, that it is the Baſeneſs of a Man, yea, the Spawn of a Devil. This Sin indulged deſtroys the Soul, as well as Murther; yea, 'tis no leſs than Murther in the Account of God, 1 *John* 3. 15. He that *hateth his Brother is a Murtherer*. *Obſerve* next, The Apoſtle exhorts the *Coloſſians* to guard againſt the Sins of the Tongue, as he had done before againſt the Sins of the Heart. Put off *Blaſphemy, filthy Communication, and Lying*; that is, Evil-ſpeaking, Filthy-ſpeaking, and Falſe-ſpeaking. Sins of the Tongue are to be Guarded and Watched againſt, as well as Sins of the Heart, they are moſt ſcandalous, they diſhonour God, and diſcredit Religion, and wrong our own Souls. The Sins of the Tongue are little conſidered, their great Guilt not apprehended, but Men muſt account for their open Reproaches, ſecret Backbitings, Scoffings, Deriſions, whereby they endeavour to fix an Ignominy upon their Neighbour; and particularly the Sin of Lying is here cautioned againſt, *Lye not one to another.* All Lying is here Condemned, the officious Lye, tending to our own or our Neighbour's Profit. the pernicious Lye, tending to our Neighbour's Prejudice, the Jocolar and Jocoſe Lye, tending to Recreation and Sport. The Scripture condemneth all without Reſtriction, *Rev.* 21. 8. *All Lyars ſhall have their Part in that Lake which Burns with Fire and Brimſtone, Rev.* 22. 15. *Whoſoever loveth and maketh a Lye.* Lying makes a Man like the Devil, who was a Lyar as well as a Murtherer from the beginning. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Argument to enforce the Exhortation to mortifie a Sin, the *Sins* of the Heart, the *Sin* of the Tongue, the *Sins* of the Life, and that is drawn from the Conſideration of their preſent State; they had in their Baptiſm made a Profeſſion to put off the Old Man with his Deeds, that is, their Old ſinful Nature, and put on the New Man in Baptiſm, which being renewed by Illumination and Divine Knowledge, and ſo conformed to the Image of God, rendred them now the Objects of his ſpecial Love. *Note* here, That there were many Ceremonies in Baptiſm uſed in the Primitive Church, to which St. *Paul* alludes in ſeveral places in his Epiſtles; as Drenching in Water, ſo as to ſeem buried in and under it; *Col.* 2. 12. *Buried with him in Baptiſm*; likewiſe putting off their Old Cloaths at going in, and putting on New at their coming out of the Water, to which St. *Paul* alludes here, when he tells them they had, namely, in their Baptiſm, put off the Old Man, and put on the New. Whence Learn, That there is no Argument more moving and effectually exciting unto Holineſs of Life, than that which is taken from our Baptiſmal Vow and Profeſſion; the Obligation of this is very ſtrong, if duly conſidered. The Apoſtle makes uſe of it here as a potent Argument to quicken them to the mortification of all Sin, ſeeing they had in Baptiſm put off the Old Man, that is, profeſſed and ſolemnly engaged ſo to do, and had put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Chriſt is all, and in all.

Where, that is, in which State of Renovation, or under the preſent Goſpel Diſpenſation, there is found with God no reſpect to any Man's Perſon or Nation, as before there was under the legal Diſpenſation; now Jew and Gentile Male and Female, Bond and Free, Circumciſed and Uncircumciſed, every one that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of God through Chriſt, who is all, in all things, to all Believers: But how is Chriſt all in all unto his People? Thus, his Teaching is all in the Work of Illuminataion, his Spirit is all in all in the Work of Converſion, his Death is all in the Work of Satisfaction, his Righteouſneſs is all in all in the Matter of our Juſtification, his Grace is all in our Sanctification, his Interceſſion is all in our Acceptation, his Peace is all in our Conſolation, his Power is all in all in our Reſurrection, his Preſence is all in our Glorification. Oh Bleſſed Jeſus! Art thou thus all to me? I will labour to be ſo to thee; I will give thee all that I am, my Soul with all its Faculties, my Underſtanding, my Heart and my Affections, particularly my Love and my Hatred, my Joy and my Sorrow, my Hope and my Fear, my Body with all its Members: For thou haſt Created, Redeemed, and wilt glorifie the Body, as well as the Soul; and therefore will I glorifie thee with my Body, and with my Spirit, which is thine; I will alſo give thee all that I have, by conſecrating it all to the Service of Chriſt, and reſigning up all to the Will of Chriſt, and will intitle thee to all that I do, by making thy Word my Rule, and thy Glory my End, in all my Actions and Undertakings.

12 Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo *do* ye.

Our Apoſtle having now finiſhed his Exhortation to the Practice of that great Duty of Mortification of Sin, called here a putting off the Old Man, comes next to mention ſeveral Graces and Virtues, which he exhorts them to be found in the Practice of; and this he ſtiles a putting on the New Man, teaching us hereby, that a negative Holineſs is not ſufficient to Salvation; it is not enough that we ceaſe to do Evil, but we muſt learn to do Well; a Man may go to Hell for not doing good, as well as for doing wickedly. *Obſerve* farther, the particular Graces and Virtues which they are exhorted to put on. (1.) Bowels of Mercy and Kindneſs, that is, a tender Pity towards, and an inward Sympathy with thoſe that are in Miſery; and this expreſt in outward Acts of Succour and Relief, according to our Ability. There is a natural Pity which Man can hardly put off, it is ſeated in the very Nature of Man, and accordingly Unmercifulneſs is a Sin againſt the Light of Nature, as well as againſt the Law of God: But there is, beſides this, a Spiritual Pity, which flows from pure Love, and that a Divine Love; now this is more an Act of Grace than of Nature; this the Apoſtle here exhorts the *Coloſſians* to *put on bowels of Mercy*; they who have put on, and are cloathed with Garments of Holineſs, will alſo put on Bowels of Mercy as a Garment. (2.) *Humbleneſs of Mind*; whereby a Man ſenſible of God's Goodneſs, and his own Infirmities, hath an humble Apprehenſion, and a modeſt Eſtimation of himſelf; the more Holineſs any Perſon has, the more Humility he has; Humility is a certain evidence of our Holineſs, becauſe it is a great Part of our Holineſs, (3.) *Meekneſs and Long-ſuffering*, which moderates Anger, and enables us to put up Affronts and Injuries. This is a Spirit and Temper Divine, and truly Chriſt-like; None ſo abuſed and affronted as he, but being reviled he bleſt, and committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly. When another hurts thee by unjuſt Provocation, why ſhould'ſt thou hurt thy ſelf by ſinful Paſſion? Chriſt was a Lamb for Meekneſs, it doth not become any of his Followers to be like Lions for Fierceneſs. (4.) Forbearance and mutual Forgiveneſs; *Forbearing one another, forgiving one another.* No Chriſtians are ſo perfect but they are liable to offend one another; he muſt have no Friends that will have a Friend with no Faults, and conſequently they ſtand in need of Forgiveneſs from each other. Learn hence, (1.) That Chriſtians are obliged by the Laws of their Holy Religion to forbear and forgive one another. (2.) They are obliged to imitate Chriſt in this Duty of Forgiveneſs; Chriſt forgives us Univerſally, Freely, Sincerely, ſo as never more to upbraid us with the Fault he has forgiven us; ſuch a Forgiveneſs are we to exerciſe towards our Brother. *As Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* *Obſerve* laſtly, The Argument which St. *Paul* makes uſe of to preſs the *Coloſſians* to the Practice of the forementioned Duties, and that is drawn from their Election and Vocation; *Put on, as the Elect of God, Bowels of Mercy.* You that had the favour to be choſen of God out of the Heathen World, to be his Church and People, and are now *Holy* and *Beloved* of God, let the Senſe of this Divine Favour oblige you to Humility and Meekneſs, to Long-ſuffering and mutual Forgiveneſs, yea, to the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs.

14 And above all theſe things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.

Still our Apoſtle makes uſe of the former Metaphor, comparing the Graces of the Holy Spirit to Garments, which he exhorts Chriſtians to put on; he had mentioned the putting on of Mercy, Meekneſs, Humility, *&c.* before, now he adviſes to *put on* Charity, or the Grace of Love, as the upper Garment over and above all the reſt, comparing it to a Bond or Ligament which ties and knits all the Members of the Church together. *Queſt.* But what is this Grace of Charity? *Anſw.* It is a Brotherly Affection which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow-Members in Chriſt for Grace ſake, or a Gracious Propenſity of Heart towards our Neighbour, whereby we will, and to our Power, procure all Good for him. *Queſt.* But why doth St. *Paul* compare Charity to an upper Garment? *Above all put on Charity.* Becauſe, (1.) The upper Garment is larger and broader than the reſt, ſo ought Charity to extend itſelf to all Perſons, and upon all Occaſions. (2.) The upper Garment is uſually fairer than the reſt, ſo doth Charity ſhine brighteſt amongſt all the Graces. (3.) The upper Garment diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral Orders and Degrees of Men; thus Chriſtians are known by Love as by a Livery; 'tis the Body that Chriſt's ſincere Diſciples wear. *Queſt.* But how is Charity the Bond of Perfectneſs? The meaning is, that it is the moſt perfect Bond of Union among Chriſtians, it Knitteth together all the ſcattered Members of the Church, and makes their Graces and Gifts ſubſervient to the Good of one another, ſo that the Church is hereby made a compleat intire Body, which was lame without it: In this Senſe Charity is called the Bond of Perfectneſs.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, let that Peace which God has given you within, and calleth you to exerciſe without, govern your Lives, and direct you in all your Actions towards Men, and live in continual Thankfulneſs to God. Here *Note*, that the Original Word to *Rule* in the Heart ſignifies to Umpire, or to Act the Part of an Umpire, in appeaſing Strife. Now this Peace, (1.) Inwardly it huſhes and ſtills all in the Soul, when tumultuous Affections are up, and in an hurry: When Anger, Hatred, and Revenge, begin to ariſe in the Soul, this calms and compoſes all. (2.) Outwardly Peace of Conſcience produces Peaceableneſs of Converſation; where the Peace of God rules in the Heart, it diſpoſes to Peaceableneſs in the Life. Now this conſiſts in theſe things, namely, in an unwillingneſs to provoke others, in an Unaptneſs to be provoked by others, in a readineſs to be reconciled when provoked, and in a forwardneſs to reconcile others that are at variance.

16 Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly, in all wiſdom:

Theſe Words come in by way of Direction and Advice to help the *Coloſſians* in the Exerciſe of the foregoing Graces; ſeeing it is the Word of Chriſt, or the Holy Scriptures, which teach the forementioned Duties, he adviſes that the Word of God may dwell in, and take up its abode with them, Richly and Plentifully, that they may be furniſhed thereby with all true and ſound Wiſdom. *Note* here, (1.) The Title given to the Holy Scriptures, they are the Word of Chriſt, becauſe they have *Chriſt* for their *Author*, *Chriſt* for their *Object*, and *Chriſt* for their *End*. *Note* (2.) The Advice given with reſpect to the Word of Chriſt, *let it dwell*; not come for an Hour, but to tarry; not tarry for a Night, but to take up its fixed Reſidence and Abode. *Note* (3.) Where it ſhould dwell, not in the Ear, not in the Head only, not in the Memory barely, nor in the Affections, but in the Heart and Soul, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not ſin againſt thee. The Law of God is in his heart, none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide*, Pſal. 37. 31. *Note* (4.) How the Word ſhould dwell in us, Richly, Copiouſly, and Plentifully, in its Commands, in its Promiſes, in its Threatnings; let the Word, the whole Word dwell in you, being diligently Searched, heartily Received; and carefully Obſerved. *Note* (5.) The Perſons to whom this Advice is given by the Apoſtle, all the Saints at *Coloſſe*; the whole Body of the People are injoined an Holy Familiarity with the Bible, it is to be in their Houſes, in their Hands, and in their Hearts, that it may dwell richly in them. Why then, and with what Face dare the Church of *Rome* forbid the common People to read the Bible, calling it an Heretical Book? For a Reaſon they very well know; namely, becauſe it is the moſt dangerous Book againſt Popery that ever was written in the World.

16 —— Teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Here our Apoſtle declares one ſpecial Benefit which the *Coloſſians* would receive by having the Word of Chriſt dwell richly in them; it would enable them to teach and admoniſh one another, and alſo to excite and ſtir up the Affections of each other, by ſinging thoſe *Pſalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* therein contained, or ſuch others as were compoſed by the Inſpiration and Direction of the Holy Spirit of God, always remembring not to ſing Gracefully only, but with Grace, that is, with Attention and Devotion in our Hearts to the Lord. Learn hence, That ſinging of Pſalms, both in Publick Aſſemblies and Private Families, and therein Praiſing and Bleſſing God for Mercies received, it is a great and neceſſary Duty, to be jointly performed by all Perſons capable of it. Learn (2.) That in Singing a ſpecial Regard muſt be had, that there be an inward Harmony, and gracious Melody in the Soul, by the Exerciſe of the Underſtanding, and the orderly Motion of the Affections; if the Heart and Affections be not ſtirred up in this Duty, the outward Grace, though never ſo Graceful, availeth nothing.

17 And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Here our Apoſtle lays down a general Rule for the right Management of all our Words and Actions in the whole courſe of Life, whatſoever ye do, do all in the Name of our Lord Jeſus, giving Thanks to God for all the Mercies you receive by Jeſus Chriſt. Learn hence, (1.) That all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, muſt and ought to be done in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that is, to do all by the Authority and Command of Chriſt, to do all in the Power and Strength of Chriſt, to do all for the Honour and Glory of Chriſt, to do all after the Pattern and Example of Chriſt. Learn (2.) That all Prayers and Thankſgivings, as they are only due to God, ſo they muſt be performed by us thro' Jeſus Chriſt, that ſo they may find Acceptance with God; *giving Thanks to God and the Father by him.*

18 Wives, ſubmit your ſelves unto your own huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Obſerve here, (1.) That St. *Paul* in the former Part of this Chapter having laid down general Exhortations to Live ſuitably to the Goſpel which the *Coloſſians* had received, comes now in the cloſe of the Chapter to exhort them to the Practice of particularly Duties in their reſpective Places and Relations, as Huſbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants. Learn hence, That the Doctrine of the Goſpel lays the higheſt and ſtricteſt Obligations upon all thoſe to whom it is revealed, to perform every perſonal and relative Duty in an Holy and Acceptable Manner both to God and Man. *Obſerve* (2.) The Wives Duty of Subjection here required; *ſubmit your ſelves to your own Huſbands.* This implies and comprehends in it a reverend Eſteem of them, an affectionate Love unto them, ſpeaking reſpectfully of them and to them, and yielding Obedience to their Commands. *Obſerve* alſo the Qualification and Manner of this Subjection, as it is in the Lord, that is, in all Lawful things, and in Obedience to the Lord's Command, and not in any thing contrary to his Will. Thus obeying, the Woman's Subjection is Service done to Chriſt, which may comfort her in caſe of any unkind Returns from her Huſband to her.

19 Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them.

Obſerve (1.) The general Duty of the Huſband declared, to love his Wife with a Special, Peculiar, Conjugal Affection, and to diſcover this Love by a tender Care over her, an affectionate Regard to her, Cohabitation with her, Contentment and Satisfaction in her, a patient bearing with her Weakneſſes, or prudential hiding of her Infirmities, a chearful ſupplying of her Wants, a readineſs to Inſtruct and Direct her, a willingneſs to pray for her and with her; where true Love is found theſe Duties will be performed. *Obſerve* (2.) A particular Sin which all Huſbands are to avoid in their Converſation with their Wives, and that is being *bitter againſt them*; not bitter in Affection towards them, that is, cold and indifferent in their Love to them; not bitter in Expreſſion towards them, ſpeaking reproachfully to them: not bitter in their Affections towards them, giving them bitter Blows, which is contrary to the Law of God and Nature. Learn hence, That it is the Will and Command of God, that Huſbands ſhould not behave themſelves Churliſhly, Sowrely or Imperiouſly towards their Wives; not ruling with Rigour, or being Moroſe and Rough, Stern and Severe in their Carriage towards them, but to treat them with that endearing Familiarity that is due to them, as Part of our ſelves.

20 Children obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleaſing unto the Lord.

Obſerve here the Duty bound upon all Children, and that is Obedience to their Parents; this implies inward Reverence, outward Obſervance, a Pious Regard to their Inſtructions, a following their good Examples. *Obſerve* (2.) The Object of this Duty, *obey your Parents*, that is, both Parents; as Obedience is due from all Children, ſo 'tis payable to all Parents, to Mothers as well as Fathers; nay, *Lev.* 19. 3. the Mother is named Firſt, becauſe in Regard of the Weakneſs of her Sex ſhe is moſt liable to Contempt. *Obſerve* (3.) The Extent of the Duty, *in all things*, that is, in all lawful things, and in all indifferent things; in every thing that is not Sinful; tho' to the Child it may ſeem unneceſſary or unreaſonable, yet the Parents Command is to be Obeyed. *Obſerve* (4.) The Argument or Motive to excite and quicken to this Duty, *It is well pleaſing unto the Lord*; hereby they do acceptable Service unto the Lord, who will reward it with long Life on Earth, and eternal Life in Heaven. God takes a mighty Pleaſure in the Performance of relative Duties; they are not only pleaſing, but well pleaſing to him; we are no more really than what we are relatively in the Account of God, that which we call the Power of Godlineſs conſiſts in the conſcientious Performance of relative Duties.

21 Fathers provoke not your children *to anger*, leſt they be diſcouraged.

Here the Parents Duty, that is, the Duty of both Parents is laid down, *provoke not your Children to Wrath*, that is, abuſe not your Power and Authority over them, by being too ſevere unto them; imbitter not their Spirits againſt you, by denying them what is convenient for them, by inveighing with bitter Words againſt them, by unjuſt, unſeaſonable, or immoderate Correction of them, give them no juſt Occaſion to be angry. The Reaſon is added, *leſt they be diſcouraged*, either diſſpirited and heartleſs, or deſperate and hardned; leſt by Dejection of Spirit they become Stupid. A Parent's Conduct muſt be moderated with Prudence, ſhunning the Extreams of too much Indulgence on the one Hand, and too great Rigour and Severity on the other.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* maſters according to the fleſh; not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatſoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing, that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the Inheritance: for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The general Duty incumbent upon all Servants, and that is Obedience to ſuch as are their Maſters according to the Fleſh, execute all their lawful Commands; ſuch as are God's Freemen may be Servants to Men, tho' not the Servants of Men. *Obſerve* (2.) The Qualifications and Properties of this Obedience which is Due and Payable from Servants to Maſters, it muſt be in *Singleneſs of Heart*, in great Simplicity and Sincerity of Spirit, and with an Eye to their great Maſter in Heaven; with an Eye to the Command of their great Maſter, with an Eye to the Preſence of their great Maſter, to the Aſſiſtance and Acceptance of their great Maſter, and to the Honour and Glory of him alſo; and it muſt be done Heartily, and with Good-will, as to the Lord, and not to Men. Learn hence, That the meaneſt and baſeſt Services in the Place and Station in which God ſets us, being done with right Qualifications, and from ſincere Motives, and for ſincere Ends, it is Srevice done to Chriſt, and as ſuch ſhall be accepted and rewarded by him. *Obſerve* (3.) The mighty Reward which the Spirit of God propounds as an Encouragement to poor Servants in their Obedience to their Maſters; *of the Lord ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance.* No Service ſo mean but ſhall be rewarded, if conſcientiouſly performed; no Diſtinction in Heaven between Servants and Sons, all ſhall receive the Inheritance there, who have done faithful Service here; and as the meaneſt Service done with right Qualifications is Service done to Chriſt, ſo ſhall it be accepted of him, and rewarded by him. *Knowing of the Lord ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt.*

25 But he that doeth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no reſpect of perſons.

That is, ſuch Servants as have wronged their Maſters, or ſuch Maſters as have oppreſſed their Servants, God who reſpects no Man's Perſon, and regardeth the Rich no more than the Poor, will take his time to revenge the Injuries and Wrongs done by either to each other. *Note* here the Severity and Impartiality of Divine Juſtice, God the righteous Judge will revenge the Wrong, every Wrong, whenſoever, and by whomſoever it is done, he will revenge it impartially, he will revenge it proportionably; a juſt Retribution according to the Wrong done ſhall be rendred to every one by the righteous and juſt God; *he that hath done Wrong ſhall receive for the Wrong which he hath done; and there is no reſpect of Perſons.*

CHAP. IV.

1 MAſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a maſter in heaven.

Our Apoſtle concluded the foregoing Chapter with an Exhortation to Servants, to diſcharge their Duty with all Fidelity to their Maſters, remembring that whatever Wrong is done by them ſhall ſooner or later be revenged by God; he begins this Chapter with Advice to Maſters to give unto their Servants *that which is Juſt and Equal*, that which is *Juſt*, or that which is according to Compact and Agreement, either explicitly or implicitely made, as Work, Wages, Food, Cloathing, and all fitting Accommodations; alſo that which is *Equal* in Reaſon and Charity, as to oblige them to ſerve God faithfully, to ſerve their Maſtets chearfully, not exerciſing a Magiſterial, much leſs a Tyrannical Power over them; and the Argument to enforce it is ſtrong, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven*, remembring they have one above them, from whom they muſt expect the like. Learn hence, that Juſtice is to be obſerved towards poor Servants, and that there are ſeveral Offices of Humanity and Charity which are due unto them by the Command of God. Such are theſe, (1.) That we look upon them not barely as Servants, but as Brethren, Partakers of the ſame common Nature, and capable of the ſame Grace with our ſelves, conſequently not to treat them as vile Perſons. (2.) That we wink at ſome of their Miſcarriages which are not apparently ſinful, and do not puniſh every Tranſgreſſion committed by them; he muſt keep no Servant that will have a Servant with no Faults. (3.) That we do not Rule with Rigour, without giving ſome Reaſon for what Commands ſeem hard and difficult, and that we permit them to plead their Cauſe, and to defend their Right, provided they do it with Humility, not contradicting, or refuſing to execute the Command of their Maſter. (4.) That to well-deſerving Servants we give ſomething above their Wages, allowing them all fitting Encouragement whilſt they are with us, and when they go away not ſuffering them to go empty from us. Thus doing, Maſters will *give unto their Servants that which is Juſt and Equal*; but how ordinary is it for them that are a little above others to forget that there is one above them?

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving;

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty exhorted to, and that is Prayer, a tranſcendent Privilege as well as an important Duty. *Obſerve* (2.) The Manner of the Duty, and how it muſt be performed, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance (1.) *Continue in Prayer*, that is, continue Inſtant in Prayer; not that every other Duty is to be neglected that we may always perform this, but we are alway to keep our Hearts in a praying Frame, and be found in the Practice of the Duty at all fitting Seaſons; we are then ſaid to do a thing continually when we do it ſeaſonably; what a Man does out of Conſcience he will do with Perſeverance. Nature will have her good Moods, but Grace is Steady. (2.) Watchfulneſs in Prayer is here directed to, *watch in the ſame*; particularly we ought to watch for the Duty, in the Duty, and after the Duty, to watch for the fitteſt praying Seaſon, to watch our Hearts in the Seaſon of Prayer, that our Thoughts do not wander, nor our Affections flag; to watch after the Duty, that our Hearts be not lifted up by any Aſſiſtances received in the Duty, nor be too much dejected upon the Score of thoſe Infirmities that mingle themſelves with our Prayers, but direct the Eye of our Faith to Chriſt as our Interceſſor, who pleads for the gracious Acceptance both of our Perſons and Services, notwithſtanding the Imperfections of them both. *Obſerve* Laſtly, what muſt always accompany Prayer for Mercies we want, namely, Thankſgiving for Mercies received; *watch in the ſame with thankſgiving.* There is no ſuch effectual Way of begging as Thankſgiving; God is offended when we are Loud and Clamorous in asking Favours, but Dumb and Tongue-tied in returning Thanks: Need will make us Beggars, but Grace only Thankſgivers.

3 Withal, praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt, for which I am alſo in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak.

Our Apoſtle having directed the *Coloſſians* to the Duty of Prayer in general, here he requeſts an Intereſt in their Prayers for himſelf, and all the Miniſters of Chriſt in particular. Whence *Obſerve*, (1.) That the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt are, and ought in an eſpecial manner to be remembred in the Saints Prayers. *Obſerve* (2.) The Mercies he deſires may be prayed for on his Behalf, namely, Utterance and Boldneſs; Miniſters depend upon God, as for other Miniſterial Gifts, ſo particularly for the Gift of Utterance, and it is their Peoples Duty to be Earneſt and Inſtant with God for the ſame; and as for Utterance in delivering their Meſſage, ſo for Boldneſs in ſuffering for it when called to it. No Prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the Hands, and encourage the Hearts of the Miniſters of Chriſt unto an holy Boldneſs, who ſuffer Perſecution for what they preach; therefore is St. *Paul* ſo Earneſt here with the *Coloſſians*, as he was before with the *Epheſians, Chap.* 6. 18. and with the *Romans, Chap.* 15. 30. deſiring *them* to ſtrive together in their Prayers for him; where, by the Way, remark, that the Apoſtle thus paſſionately deſiring the living Saints to pray for him, but never deſiring once the Prayers and Interceſſions of the Saints departed, nor of the Virgin *Mary*, is an Evidence that he approved not of their Prayers, or look'd upon them as Mediators and Interceſſors with God then, as the Church of *Rome* does now.

5 Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without, ——

By them without are meant the Heathen, who are yet without the Pale of the viſible Church; to walk *in Wiſdom towards them* is a Duty of great Latitude, but imports particularly here an Endeavour to the utmoſt to promote their Converſion and Salvation, by begetting in them a due Veneration for the Goſpel, and a Love and Liking of the Chriſtian Religion. Learn hence, That private Chriſtians by walking wiſely before them that are yet unconverted effectually to Chriſtianity, may be exceeding helpful to promote the Entertainment of the Goſpel amongſt them. They may pray, and pray in Faith, for their Converſion, and the farther ſpreading of the Goſpel in order to that End. The Ardent Devotions, and the holy Converſations of private Chriſtians, are excellent Means to recommend the Goſpel and the Chriſtian Religion, and to repreſent them as moſt Amiable and Deſirable.

5 —— Redeeming the time.

Having in the former Part of the Verſe directed the *Coloſſians* to walk wiſely before the unconverted Gentiles that were amongſt them, in this latter Part of the Verſe he adviſes them to redeem every Opportunity, for gaining over thoſe Infidels to the Chriſtian Religion. A Chriſtian that knows the worth of Time will Redeem it, will Improve it for the Soul, for the Benefit of his own Soul, and for the Advantage of others; how this is done, ſee the *Note* on *Eph.* 5. 16.

6 Let your ſpeech be alway with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.

A Direction is here given to all Chriſtians for the right government of the Tongue, and well ordering of the Speech, that it be not Corrupt and Rotten, Filthy or Frothy, Vain and Unprofitable, but Mild and Courteous Savoury and Gracious, Wiſe and Diſcreet. *Note* here (1.) That we are not left at Random in our ordinary Diſcourſe, to let our Tongue run Riot, and talk what ye pleaſe, without any Regard to the Edification of others. *Note* (2.) That there ought to be both a Gracefulneſs and Grace in our Speech, ſome Savour of Piety, ſomething that may teſtifie there is Grace wrought in our ſelves, and tend to the working of Grace in others. *Note* (3.) That our Speech may be thus Savoury at all times, it muſt be *ſeaſoned with Salt.* (1.) With the Salt of Truth; there muſt be an Agreement betwixt the Thing and our Words, without Falſhood, and an Agreement betwixt our Tongue and our Hearts, without Diſſimulation. (2.) With the Salt of Wiſdom and Prudence; this will teach us the Time when, the Manner how, and the Meaſure how much to ſpeak; thoſe Words muſt needs be unſavoury that have neither Truth nor Prudence in them. The People wondered of Old at the gracious Words which came out of Chriſt's Mouth, and we may juſtly wonder at the graceleſs Words which come out of the Mouth of many that are called Chriſtians.

7 All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved Brother, and a faithful miniſter, and fellow-ſervant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort you hearts: 9 With Oneſimus a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They ſhall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

Obſerve here, (1.) That altho' St. *Paul* had now with him but a few Friends at *Rome* to comfort him in his Bonds, yet he ſpares Two of them to Viſit and Comfort theſe *Coloſſians*; ſee the publick Spirit of our Apoſtle, who preferred the common Good of the Church at *Coloſſe* before his own Comfort at *Rome*. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſons whom St. *Paul* ſent to them, *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus*, whom he ſtiles Brethren, faithful Brethren, beloved Brethren; nothing endears Perſons ſo much to one another as Religion and the Grace of God. Theſe Ties are ſtronger than thoſe of Nature: no ſuch Love as Likeneſs occaſions, eſpecially Likeneſs to God. *Obſerve* (3.) The Deſign and End of St. *Paul*'s ſending theſe Two Perſons to them, namely, (1.) *To make known to them all things done at Rome*; mark all things without exception, both his Doings and Sufferings, both in publick and private, the Apoſtle was aſhamed of neither. Happy is it when the Converſation of Chriſt's Miniſters is ſuch, both in publick and private, that they need not be aſhamed to have it known, or that the Church may underſtand it. (2.) That he might comfort their Hearts; but how could *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus* do this? (1.) By making known to them the true Cauſe of his Sufferings, that it was for the Goſpel's ſake. (2.) To keep them from Diſcouragement at the Report of his Sufferings, that they *might* not be offended at his Chain, nor ſink under the Burthen of immoderate Sorrow upon his Account. (3.) To comfort their Hearts with the Report of that holy Joy and Chearfulneſs which the Apoſtle had in his own Spirit under the preſent Burthen of his Sufferings. See on *Eph.* 6. 22.

10 Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and Marcus ſiſters ſon to Barnabas, (touching whom he received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him,) 11 And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion. Theſe only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Our Apoſtle coming now to the Concluſion of his excellent Letter, ſendeth (as his Manner was) particular Salutations to whom he wrote. Theſe Salutations were both from others and himſelf. Here we have Three of St. *Paul's* Companions ſending Salutation to the Church at *Coloſſe*, namely, *Ariſtarchus*, a Fellow-Priſoner, *Mark*, Siſters Son to *Barnabas*, who though he did deſert St. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and went not with them to the Work, yet returning to his Duty he is recommended to the Churches Reception, and *Jeſus*, who was called *Juſtus*, poſſibly from his juſt Converſation. *Jeſus* is the ſame with *Joſhua*, ſignifying a Saviour: However, we do not find that any Chriſtians, ſince their Lord's Reſurrection, did ever give their Children the Name of *Jeſus*, out of a due Reverence to their Lord and Maſter, who is God-Man Bleſſed for evermore. Now we Learn, That neither diſtance of Place, nor length of Time, ought to cool that Love and Good-will, that Hearty and Sincere Affection, which Chriſtians ſhould bear one to another. *Note* farther, That as in that large Catalogue of Salutations which St. *Paul* wrote to the Saints at *Rome*, *Rom.* 16. in which particular Perſons are mentioned, St. *Peter*'s Name is not once named: So here in this Catalogue of Salutations ſent from *Rome*, no mention is made of *Peter*'s Name neither; doubtleſs had he been now at *Rome* he had ſent Salutations as well as the reſt; here are Salutations from *Ariſtarchus*, *Mark*, and others, none from

Peter. Behold here the weak Ground which the Pope builds his pretended Supremacy and Headſhip upon, namely, that he is St. *Peter*'s Succeſſor, who was Biſhop of *Rome*; now though it can never be proved that St. *Peter* exerciſed any Supremacy over the reſt of the Apoſtles, it can leſs be proved that ever he was Biſhop of *Rome*; nor is there any Word in Scripture to prove that ever he was at *Rome*, but rather the contrary; it is certain he was not at *Rome* when St. *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle, there being only theſe, he ſays, whom he mentions, who are his Fellow-Labourers to the Kingdom of God.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a ſervant of Chriſt, ſaluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may ſtand perfect, and compleat in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Our Apoſtle next mentions the particular Salutation ſent from *Rome* to the Church at *Coloſſe* by *Epaphras*, who is deſcribed from his Country; he is *one of you*, that is, a Citizen of *Coloſſe*; by his Office *a Servant of Chriſt*, that is, a Miniſter of the Goſpel; by his Fervour of Affection towards theſe *Coloſſians*, evidenced by his Prayers for them, he *labours fervently for you in his Prayers.* The Word ſignifies to ſtrive as in an Agony, pointing out our Miniſterial Duty to us, not only to preach unto, and to pray with, but fervently to pray for our People; God forgive our Forgetfulneſs of, our Backwardneſs to, our Remiſſneſs in, this Part of our Duty: Too ſeldom do we bear our People upon our Hearts when we go in and out before the Lord; Oh how far are we from praying our ſelves into an Agony for them, when our Petitions frieze within our Lips, which we put up for our own Souls! One thing might here be noted farther concerning *Epaphras*, he was Miniſter of, ſome think Biſhop at *Coloſſe*, yet was he Born there, he is *one* of you, that is, of your City. Now Chriſt tells us a Miniſter is in Hazard to meet with Diſreſpect in his own Country, he is uſually of no Honour there: However *Epaphras* being called to the Work of God in the Place where he was Born embraces it, and God gives him Reputation with the People for his Faithfulneſs in his Place. *Obſerve* laſtly, what was the ſubject Matter of *Epaphras* his Prayer for his People at *Coloſſe*, namely, *that they might ſtand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God*; it is the Deſire and Prayer, the Care and Endeavour, of every faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, that his People may ſtand faſt in their Obedience, in univerſal Obedience, in perfect and compleat Obedience to the Will, the whole Will of God, in all things; yet one thing more is obſervable in *Epaphras*, he had not only a great Zeal for his own People at *Coloſſe*, but for them at *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*, which are Neighbouring Churches. Learn thence, That the Miniſters of Chriſt are to look upon themſelves as Miniſters of the whole Church, and altho' they take Care of a particular Congregation; yet it is their Duty to deſire and endeavour, that all Chriſtians within the Reach of their miniſterial Labours may find ſome ſpecial Benefit and Advantage by them. *Epaphras* had a fervent Zeal for the Churches in *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*, as well as at *Coloſſe*, and it was his Commendation that he had ſo.

14 Luke the beloved phyſician, and Demas greet you.

Still the Apoſtle is ſending Salutations from *Rome* to the *Coloſſians.* (1.) From St. *Luke*, who of a Phyſician for the Body, becomes a Phyſician for the Soul, as *Matthew* of a Publican became a Preacher. *Luke* well deſerved the Title here give him of Beloved, in that he undertook the Miniſtry at a time when Civil Authority did allow no Maintenance for Miniſters, and when his Imployment as a Phyſician would probably have advantaged him much more, *Luke the beloved Phyſician, greet you.* (2.) *Demas* alſo, who when Perſecution grew Hot, his Affections grew Cold; yet now he ſends Salutations with the firſt to the Church at *Coloſſe.* St. *Paul* complains of his forſaking of him. 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. for the ſake of this preſent World; let no Profeſſor judge of himſelf by his external Profeſſion, by his Performance of outward Duties, by his aſſociating himſelf with the People of God, nay, by his Sufferings with the Servants of God; (*Demas* did all this) but by their ſincere Love to Chriſt, and perſevering Faithfulneſs in the trying Hour of Temptation; we know not what we are till Sufferings appears.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his houſe.

Our Apoſtle had ſent the Salutations of others to them before, he ſends his own now. (1.) Generally to all the Chriſtian Brethren which were in *Laodicea*, to whom he directs this Epiſtle to be read in the next Verſe. Now to prepare them to hear it with greater Attention he ſends Salutations particularly to them, *Salute the Brethren in* Laodicea. No particular People muſt deſire or expect to monopolize and engroſs the whole of a Miniſter's Affections to themſelves; but as he is the Miniſter of the Catholick Church, ſo it is both his Duty and Deſire, that all particular Churches, yea, individual Chriſtians, ſhould ſhare in his affectionate Love towards them, in his Care and Concern for them. (2.) He ſalutes *Nymphas* in particular, a Perſon perhaps very Eminent for Piety and Charity, as may be gathered from the following Words, *And the Church which is in his Houſe.* By which, (1.) Underſtand his Family and Houſhold, who were ſo piouſly inſtructed, ſo religiouſly governed, ſo devoutly diſpoſed, as if they had been a Church. Learn thence, that Maſters of Families ſhould train up their Houſhold in Religion and Godlineſs, inſtructing, reproving, exhorting all that are under their Care, that their Houſe may deſerve the Name of a Church; *The Church which is in his Houſe.* (2.) Some by the Church in his Houſe underſtand a material Houſe, or ſome particular Room in his Houſe, which he had given to a certain Number of Chriſtians for a Place of publick Worſhip. Although the Church in the Apoſtles Times had not the Countenance of civil Authority to provide either Places for Worſhip, or Maintenance for Miniſters; yet ſuch Fervour of Zeal was found in the Breaſts of Chriſtians, that then ſuch as were of Ability wanted not for Inclination to contribute largely and freely unto both; Charity moved to give more then, than Force of Law can compel and conſtrain now; *Nymphas* gives his Houſe to be a Place of publick Worſhip to the Church. See the Learned Mr. *Mede* on 1 *Cor.* 11. *v.* 22.

16 And when this epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans; ——

Here St. *Paul* directs to the reading of this Epiſtle themſelves, which the Spirit of God had directed him to write unto them; *Let this Epiſtle be read amongſt you.* All holy Scripture is to be read and peruſed by every private Chriſtian; the ſame Spirit that did indite the Scriptures, requires the reading and underſtanding of them. And farther, St. *Paul* deſires this Epiſtle, being read amongſt the *Coloſſians*, ſhould next be read *in the Church of Laodicea*, who being their Neighbours, received the ſame Poyſon or Errors from the falſe Teachers, crept in amongſt them, and conſequently ſtood in need of the ſame Antidote. That Doctrine which is directed to ſome particular Church, or Perſon recorded in Scripture, was of univerſal Uſe then, and may be now to all particular Perſons and Societies.

16 —— And that ye likewiſe read the epiſtle from Laodicea.

Much Controverſie has ariſen in the Church about this Epiſtle from *Laodicea*, ſome have affirmed that it was written by St. *Paul* to the *Laodiceans*, but loſt, from whence they would infer that the Canon of the Scripture is not Intire; but ſuppoſing it were ſo, yet it follows not but that we have all things neceſſary to Salvation in the holy Scriptures it is very probable that St. *Paul* himſelf, and ſeveral other Apoſtles, wrote more Epiſtles than are in the Bible: What then? We have what the Wiſdom of God thought fit to hand down to us, and what is ſufficient to make the ſerious Reader of it Wiſe unto Salvation. Surely Almighty God was not bound to bring down all that they wrote to us, but only what his own Wiſdom ſaw fit and neceſſary for us. Others underſtand it of an Epiſtle from *Laodicea*, to St. *Paul*, and that he anſwered it fully in this Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, and ſending it back deſired the *Coloſſians* might read it, for better clearing of ſome Paſſages in his Epiſtle to them. Laſtly, ſome underſtand it of the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, *Epheſus* being the Metropolis, or the chief City of *Laodicea*, and accordingly ſome called the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians* the Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*: The Truth is, there is a very great Affinity betwixt the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, and this to the *Coloſſians*: The Doctrines, Exhortations, and many Expreſſions are the very ſame; ſo that it is no Wonder if he deſired they ſhould be both read at *Coloſſe*, to let them ſee that he wrote the ſame Doctrine to other Churches, which he had done to them.

17 And ſay to Archippus, Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

This *Archippus* is, with good reaſon, ſuppoſed to be the Miniſter at *Coloſſe*, in the room of *Epaphras*, now with St. *Paul* at *Rome*; ſome think that in the Abſence of *Epaphras* he was grown ſomewhat Remiſs and Slack in his Miniſterial Duty, he directs therefore the *Coloſſians* to admoniſh him to the Exerciſe of greater Diligence in diſcharging all the Parts of his Truſt committed by Chriſt unto him; *Say unto Archippus, Take heed*, &c. *Obſerve* here a double Charge, (1.) A Charge of Meſſage, *Say unto Archippus*, the *Coloſſians* muſt ſay; St. *Paul* could have wrote a private Letter to him, but they muſt excite him, yet ſay to him to his Face, not of him, behind his Back. 'Tis the Peoples Duty to ſtir up their Miniſters to the faithful Performance of their Duty; the Fire of our Miniſterial Zeal doth not burn ſo Bright but we may need our Peoples Bellows to inflame it; but this muſt be done with Prudence by the People, in a Way of Exhortation, not by Way of Exprobation, ſo ſtir up their Miniſter to his Duty, that you forget not your own. *Obſerve* (2.) The Charge of an Office, *Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.* Here *Note* (1.) A Duty injoined, to *fulfil the Miniſtry*; But what is that? Negatively, not to ſecure the Succeſs of our Miniſtry, we may deliver our own Souls, tho' our Peoples be not delivered; the Nurſe is not charged with the Life of the Child, but with the Care of the Child, ſhe ſhall be paid whether it live or die; nor is it abſolutely to perform every Part of our Miniſterial Duty without the leaſt Deficiency; no, we rejoice in the Teſtimony of our Conſcience that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity we have done our Duty; poſitively, to fulfil the Miniſtry is to perform all the Parts of our Duty with Care and Faithfulneſs, perſevering Diligence, particularly publick Preaching and private Inſpection. A non-preaching Miniſter is no Miniſter, a breathleſs Nurſe, a murtherer of Souls, a Bell without a Clapper, a Crier without a Voice; yet doth not his Works lie all in the Pulpit, but the greateſt part out of it; he is ſtiled a Watchman, for what! Becauſe he is to watch one Hour with his People in a Week? No ſurely, but becauſe he is to watch over them and converſe with them all the Week upon Occaſion. Is not the Phyſician to viſit his Patient as well as to preſcribe his Phyſick? Doth the Husbandman caſt his Seed into the Ground, and never come into his Fields to ſee whether it comes up, and how it grows? Verily our People are great Gainers by our profitable Converſe with them, and we ſhall be Gainers by them too. We may gain more experimental Knowledge by an Afternoons viſiting our People, than by a Weeks Study. *Note* (2.) The means here directed to for the fulfilling of the Miniſtry, *Take heed to the Miniſtry*; what doth that import? (1.) Take heed to thy Study; Miniſterial Abilities are not rained down like Manna upon us; the Apoſtles did not ſtudy indeed, but one Reaſon was, they had no time to ſtudy, they were itinerary Preachers. (2.) Take heed to thy Doctrine, that it be the pure Word of God, and delivered purely; not only in Oppoſition to Error, but in Oppoſition to Levity. (3.) Take heed, that is, to thy Life and Practice, that we tread out the Steps before our People, which they are to take towards Heaven. *Note* (3.) The Motive to ſtir up us all to the fulfilling of our Miniſterial Truſt. (1.) We have received it; there is the importance of a ſpecial Favour, and alſo the Importance of a ſtrict Account, what we have received we muſt give an Account for. (2.) We have received it of or from the Lord, this implies Aſſiſtance, that God that has called us to it will aſſiſt us in it; Lo, I am with you always to to the End of *the World*, with you to aſſiſt, with you to ſucceed, with you to reward. Let *Archippus* then, every one in the Work of Chriſt, take heed to the Miniſtry which he has received of the Lord, that he fulfil it.

18 The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my Bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Here our Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with a general Salutation under his own Hand, intimating thereby, that he had wrote the whole with his own Hand. He begs them to remember his Bonds, That is, (1.) To ſympathize with him in his Bonds. (2.) To pray for him in his Bonds. (3.) To receive the Word of God, which he had written to them in his Bonds. (4.) To prepare for Sufferings themſelves, *his* Bonds being but the Forerunners of their Bonds. Thus is it the Peoples Duty to remember the Pious Miniſters in their Bonds. He adds, *Grace be with you*, wiſhing them an abiding Intereſt in the ſpecial Favour of God, with a multiplied Encreaſe of all ſpiritual Bleſſings flowing from thence; Encreaſe of all Grace, to enable them to glorifie God on Earth, and to prepare them for Glory with God in Heaven. *Amen.*

THE
Firſt Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

This Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, *tho' placed Laſt, yet is ſuppoſed to have been written Firſt by St.* Paul *to this particular Church, and not without Probability, becauſe the Goſpel was more early Preached at* Theſſalonica *than either at* Rome *or* Corinth, *as appears by the Acts of the Apoſtles.*

Theſſalonica *was a chief City in* Macedonia, *whither* St. Paul, *in a Viſion, was directed to go and Preach the Goſpel; accordingly he went,* Acts 16, *and* 17, *and laid very early the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church in this City, which conſiſting partly of* Jews *and partly of* Gentiles, *they were ſeverely Perſecuted by both. Now the Apoſtle hearing what hard things the* Theſſalonians *ſuffered, writes this Epiſtle to confirm them in the Faith, and to prevent their being ſhaken by thoſe Perſecutions.*

To encourage them to Perſeverance in the Faith, and Patience under their preſent Perſecutions, he firſt informs them, that it was nothing ſtrange that they ſhould thus ſuffer from thoſe Jews *and* Pagans, who had killed the Lord Jeſus, and their own Prophets, and were contrary to all Men; *and then puts them in mind of the tranſcendent Reward laid up for them, and the ſevere Puniſhments that were prepared for their Perſecutors. And laſtly, He Animates and Encourages them, by the Example of his own Conſtancy, to perſeverance in their Holy Profeſſion, and concludes his Epiſtle to them with particular Exhortation to Holineſs of Life, and Unblameableneſs in Converſation.*

CHAP. I.

1 PAUL, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

St. *Paul* begins this Epiſtle, as he does the reſt, with a very Kind and Gracious Salutation, in which we have obſervable, the Perſons ſaluting, the Parties ſaluted, and the Salutation itſelf. *Note* (1.) The Perſons ſaluting, *Paul, Sylvanus,* and *Timotheus*; *Paul* only was the inſpired Writer of the Epiſtle, the other Two were his Aſſociates and Aſſiſtants, Inſtruments with him in converting the *Theſſalonians* to Chriſtianity, and whom they had a deſervedly great Affection for; he joins them therefore with himſelf as Aſſerters and Approvers of the Truth, contained in this his Epiſtle, that ſo he might procure the greater Reſpect to the Doctrines contained; he therefore names them with himſelf, *Paul, Silvanus,* or *Silas,* as he is called, *Acts* 17. and *Timotheus*; But why not *Paul an Apoſtle*, or *Paul a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*, as in other Epiſtles, but bare *Paul* only? *Anſw.* Becauſe his Apoſtleſhip was not at all queſtioned by them; the *Theſſalonians* had a Seal of it in their Hearts, and there were no falſe Apoſtles amongſt them that denied his Apoſtleſhip, as the *Galatians* and other Churches had. The Prudent and Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt know, both how and when to uſe thoſe Titles of Honour and Reſpect which God hath given them, and alſo when it is convenient to forbear the aſſuming of them. *Note* (2.) The Perſons ſaluted, *The Church of the Theſſalonians: Theſſalonica* was the Metropolis, the Mother City of *Macedonia*, where a Chriſtian Church was Planted by the Miniſtry of *Paul* and *Silas*, but with great Oppoſition from the Jews, who forced *Paul* to fly to *Berea* for his own Safety, *Acts* 17. and *Jaſon*, with others that entertained him, had like to have been Sacrificed in their own Houſes, yet there, in deſpight of the Devil's Rage, and Perſecutors Malice, doth God erect a Glorious Church, a Chriſtian Church, in Honour of his Son, who Purchaſed it with his Blood. Learn hence, that when and where God will gather to himſelf a Church, no Oppoſition either of Men or Devils ſhall be ſufficient to hinder it; at *Rome* itſelf, nay, in the Court of *Nero*, under the very Noſe of that bloody Tyrant, was a Church Collected, *Phil.* 4. 22. no wonder the Devil Struggles when the Kingdom Totters; it follows, *which* (Church) *is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, Eſtabliſhed in the Knowledge, Faith, Worſhip, and Obedience of God the Father; they were Gentiles, called off from their Dumb Idols, to ſerve the Living and True God, and were diſtinguiſhed from all other Societies and Communions whatſoever; they were in *God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, they injoyed a bleſſed Union with Jeſus Chriſt by Faith, and a ſweet Communion and Fellowſhip both with Father and Son, by the Bond of the Spirit. Behold the high Dignity and glorious Priviledge of the Chriſtian Church, to be thus knit and united, both to the Father and the Son, by the Agency of the Holy Spirit! *To the Church of the* Theſſalonians, *which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Note* (3.) The Salutation itſelf, *Grace be unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where *Obſerve*, (1.) The Option or Bleſſings wiſhed, *Grace* and *Peace*; *Grace* in Scripture ſignifies firſt the gracious Favour of God towards us, and next all the Gifts of Grace, all Benefits and Bleſſings iſſuing forth and flowing from thence; Peace uſually ſignifies in Scripture Language, all manner of outward Proſperity and Happineſs. (2.) The Author and Fountain from whence theſe Bleſſings flow. (1.) From *God the Father.* (2.) From the Mediator, *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; intimating, that whatever Spiritual Grace or Temporal Bleſſing we now receive from God, is from him not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, a gracious Father in Chriſt, in whom he pours out the Immenſity of his Love upon us, and thro' whom he conveys all Kind of Bleſſings unto us.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our Prayers, 3 Remembring without ceaſing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſight of God, and our Father:

Note here, (1.) The holy Wiſdom of our Apoſtle, who being about to Magnifie and Extol the Graces of the Spirit wrought in the *Theſſalonians*, particularly their Faith, their Love, their Patience and Hope, inſtead of commending *them* for theſe Graces, he breaks forth into Thankſgivings unto *God* for them; *We give thanks to God always for your Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope:* His Buſineſs was not to celebrate and commend them, but to admire the ſpecial Grace of God conferred upon them, and conſpicuous in them. Learn hence, That it is our Duty, and will be our great Wiſdom, ſo to ſpeak of the Grace of God, which we ſee and obſerve in others, as that they may not be puffed up with any Conceit of their own Excellencies, but ſee Matter of Praiſe and Thankſgiving due unto God only, and nothing to themſelves. *Note* (2.) The ſpecial and particular Graces which St. *Paul* obſerved in the *Theſſalonians*, their *Faith*, their *Love*, their *Hope*, together with the Evidence of the Sincerity of thoſe Graces, their Faith was a working Faith, that is, fruitful in good Works; their Love was a laborious Love, promoting the Good of all the Saints; and their Hope in the Lord Jeſus, rendred them patient in and under all Tribulations for his ſake. There is no ſuch way to judge of the Truth of the inward Habits of Grace in the Heart, as by obſerving the Effects and Fruits of that Grace in the Life; the Apoſtle concluded they had true Faith, becauſe a fruitful Faith; true Love, becauſe a laborious Love; a good Hope in Chriſt, becauſe accompanied with Patience under the Croſs of Chriſt. *Note* (3.) St. *Paul*'s Offices, and Acts of Love performed on the *Theſſalonians* behalf, namely, *Thankſgiving* and *Prayer*. (1.) *Thankſgiving, we give thanks unto God always for you all.* But why, O bleſſed Apoſtle, art thou ſo thankful for the Graces of God's Holy Spirit wrought in theſe *Theſſalonians*? For thy own ſake, no doubt, as well as theirs; he ſaw in them an eminent Seal of his Apoſtleſhip, the happy Fruit and bleſſed Effect of his Miniſtry amongſt them. This, Oh! this it was that drew forth his very Soul in Thankſgivings to God. Learn, That the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt rejoice greatly at the Sight and Appearance of the Grace of God in any Perſon; but when they ſee it in their own People, as the Seal of their Miniſtry, and the bleſſed Fruit of their own painful Endeavours amongſt them, this carries them out into Tranſports of Thankfulneſs; verily, the Joy of their Hearts is too big to come out at their Mouths; they give Thanks for ſuch a Mercy without ceaſing. Yet (2.) he ſubjoins Prayer with his Praiſes, adds Supplications to his Thankſgivings, *making mention of you always in my Prayers*, to let them know that there was ſtill much Grace wanting in *them* to keep them Humble as well as great Grace in them to make *him* thankful: our Prayers for Grace muſt be thankful Prayers, or accompanied with Thankſgiving; when we pray to God for more Grace, we muſt ever be thankful for what we have received; and when we return Thanks for Grace received, we muſt be earneſt and inſtant with God for further and freſh Supplies of Grace wanted. *Note* (4.) The Frequency, yea, Conſtancy of our Apoſtle in performing theſe Duties of Prayer and Thankſgiving on the Behalf of theſe *Theſſalonians*, we give *Thanks to God always for you, remembring you without ceaſing in the ſight of God and our Father*; that is, as often as we appear before God our Father, we inceſſantly pray for you, and as conſtantly praiſe God on your Behalf. Where *Obſerve*, the comfortable Relation in which the Saints of God do approach and draw near unto God in Prayer, they come to him as a *Father*, yea, as their *Father, in the ſight of God our Father*. The Holy Spirit of God vouchſafed to Believers under the Goſpel, enables them to come before him in Prayer with a full Aſſurance of his Fatherly Affection towards them, as being the Sons of God through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and it enables them to cry, *Abba, Father*, and they are very careful to improve this their Relation to God, and Intereſt in him, as a Father in Prayer, on behalf of themſelves, and all their Fellow Brethren and Members in Chriſt. Thus St. *Paul* here, *we give thanks for you, and remember you without ceaſing, in the ſight of God and our Father.*

4 Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. 5 For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake.

Obſerve here, (1.) One ſpecial Ground and Reaſon aſſigned, why the Apoſtle's Heart was thus extraordinarily carried out in Praiſe and Thankſgivings unto God on the *Theſſalonians* Behalf, and that was the *Knowledge* of their *Election*, *knowing your Election of God*; that is, knowing certainly and infallibly, by your Proficiency in the forementioned Chriſtian Graces of Faith, Love, and Hope, that God had certainly choſen you out of the Gentile World to be a Church and People to himſelf, and that it was the good Pleaſure of God to gather a Chriſtian Church at *Theſſalonica*; and alſo he did know and believe with a Judgment of Charity, that Almighty God had choſen them to eternal Life alſo, to be a Part of his Church Triumphant in Heaven, as well as of his Church Militant upon Earth, the Preaching of the Goſpel having met with ſuch viſible Succeſs amongſt them; it is our unqueſtionable Duty, and we learn it from St. *Paul's* Example, in Charity to number them amongſt God's Choſen, in whom we ſee, as much as Man may ſee, the Fruits and Signs of God's Election. *Obſerve* (2.) The Ground which St. *Paul* had to build his Confidence upon, that the *Theſſalonians* were a People choſen of God, and that was rational Evidence, *knowing your election of God, for our Goſpel came to you not in Word only, but in Power.* Where note the Piety and Prudence of St. *Paul's* Charity, it was not weakly, credulous, but guided by reaſonable Evidence; Charity hopeth all things, that is, all things which it has a good ground to hope, but nothing more than what probable Evidence may induce it to Hope. St. *Paul*, when he ſaw the Apoſtacy of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* into Error and Vice, without Cenſoriouſneſs or Uncharitableneſs, pronounces that they had made Shipwrack of the Faith, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. For he had ſufficient reaſon to believe, there could be no Faith where there was no Holineſs. There are a Generation of Men amongſt us, who Brand the Miniſters of God with Cenſoriouſneſs, and raſh judging the preſent State of Men, tho' they judge by their Lives and Actions; they would have us hope well concerning them againſt Hope, and judge quite contrary to rational Evidence; we muſt believe them to have Faith when they have no Knowledge, that they are right Penitents, and ſorrowful for their Sins, when they make a ſport of Sin; that their Hearts are Chaſte, when their Mouths foam out nothing but Filthineſs; but let them know we dare not bring a Curſe upon our ſelves, by calling Good Evil, or Evil Good; our Charity, tho' not cauſleſly Suſpicious, yet neither is it fooliſhly Blind. *Obſerve* (3.) The particular and ſpecial Evidence which the Apoſtle had of the *Theſſalonians* Election, and that was the great and gracious Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt them. *Our Goſpel came,* --------- But how *our* Goſpel? Not as if he were the Author of it, but the Diſpenſer only; not our Goſpel by Original Revelation, but by Miniſterial Diſpenſation only. But how did the Goſpel come amongſt the *Theſſalonians*? Not *in Word only*, ſounding in the Ear, or reaching and reſting in the Underſtanding only, as a Light to gaze upon, but in Power, that is, accompanied *then* with the Power of Miracles, *now* with a convincing, terrifying, humbling, renewing, and reforming Power. It follows, *and in the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, the Preaching of the Word was at that time attended as with a mighty Power of Miracles, ſo with an extraordinary Effuſion and Pouring out the Holy Ghoſt upon them that heard it, prevailing upon them to embrace it, and to ſubmit themſelves unto it. With this miraculous Power of the Holy Ghoſt was the Preaching of the Word accompanied *then*, with an inlightning, quickning, regenerating, and ſanctifying Power *now*; the Miniſtry of the Word is the great Inſtrument in the Hand of the Spirit, for the Converſion of Sinners, for the Edification of Saints, and for the Salvation of both. Again, the Apoſtles Miniſtry came upon them *in much Aſſurance*, that is, with a full Conviction both to *them* and *him*? to them with an evident Conviction of the truth of his Doctrine, and to *him* it was a full Perſwaſion, yea, a firm Aſſuranee that God had choſen them to be a Church and ſpecial People to himſelf. And laſtly, As to his own Conduct and Converſation amongſt them, he appeals to them, and to their own Knowledge, whether it was not anſwerable to the Doctrine delivered by him; *ye know what manner of Men we were among you for your ſake.* Happy is it when the Pious and Prudent Converſation of a Miniſter amongſt his People is, and has been ſuch, that upon a fit Occaſion he can and durſt appeal to God and them as the Witneſſes and Obſervers of it; *ye* *know what we were among you; ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved our ſelues among you, Chap.* 2. 10. an Heterodox Converſation will carry an Orthodox Preacher to Hell; there is a Preaching Life, as well as a Preaching Doctrine; if Religion be taught by the firſt, and Irreligion by the latter, we ſadly diſappoint the End of what is ſpoken; tho' like a crackt Bell we may be Inſtrumental to Ring others to Heaven, yet for our ſelves there is no Remedy, but to the Fire we muſt go, either for our Refining, or for our Condemnation. The Throne and the Pulpit above all Places call for Holineſs, the Prince and the Preacher above all Perſons are moſt accountable to God for their Example; *ye know what manner of Men we were among you.*

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the holy Ghoſt: 7 So that ye were enſamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle gives us another probable Evidence that the *Theſſalonians* were undouhtedly choſen of God, namely, becauſe they were active and operative Chriſtians, they did in their Life and Practice conform themſelves to that excellent Pattern and Example held forth unto them by their Preachers; *ye became Followers of us.* Where *Note*, That there ought to be ſomething worthy of Imitation in the Lives of Miniſters, ſomething which their People may ſafely follow; and it is the Peoples Duty, not only to lend an Ear to their Doctrine, but an Eye to their Pious Converſation; it is added, Followers of us *and of the Lord*; Followers of Chriſt, abſolutely, as an unerring Pattern of his Miniſters; conditionally, ſo far as they followed Chriſt; but Followers of the Lord here ſeems to import their following of him in Sufferings and Afflictions, as appears by the next Words, *having received the Word in much Affliction.* Such as are ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians are Followers of Chriſt in his Sufferings as well as in his Example; they follow him in the Sharp and Thorny Path of Affliction, in which he went before them; they are willing to bear his Croſs as well as to wear his Crown, to ſuffer for him as well as to be glorified with him. *Obſerve* next the patticular Inſtance wherein the *Theſſalonians* became Followers of the Apoſtles; it was this, that they Preached the Word to them with great Deſire, Delight and Joy, tho' at the ſame time they endured a great fight of Afflictions, contending with the Oppoſition both of Men and Devils, in Preaching the Word unto them; in like Manner did they receive the Word with much Affliction, and adhere to it in the midſt of Perſecution, and all this accompanied with ſuch inward Joy, as none but the Holy Ghoſt could be the Author of in them: *Ye received the Word in much Affliction, with Joy of the Holy Ghoſt.* Learn hence, that upon the Preaching of the Word, to have an Heart open to receive it with Affliction, with much Affliction, and yet with Joy and Rejoicing, with a chearful Spirit, and ſuch a Joy as the Holy Spirit of God is the Author and Producer of, is a good Evidence that a Perſon is choſen of God, and has a Title to the everlaſting Inheritance. *Obſerve* farther, our Apoſtle in a juſt and deſerved Commendation of theſe *Theſſalonians*, tells them, to their great and ſingular Honour, that as they were followers of them (the Apoſtles) in Sufferings, in Patience, and Chearfulneſs, ſo they were themſelves living Patterns, and lively Enſamples of Courage and Conſtancy under their Sufferings to all the Neighbouring Churches in *Macedonia* and *Achaia.* Then is the Grace of God received by us, a Mark and Evidence of our Election of God, when we have advanced to ſuch a conſiderable Proficiency and Growth in it, as to become Patterns and Examples of Piety to all that are round about us. Thus the *Theſſaloniaus* here, *ye are become Enſamples to all that believe in* Macedonia *and* Achaia.

8 For from you ſounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia, and Achaia, but alſo in every place your faith to God-ward is ſpread abroad, ſo that we need not to ſpeak any thing. 9 For they themſelves ſhew of us, what manner of entring in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from Idols, to ſerve the living and true God,

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in a copious Commendation of theſe *Theſſalonians*, or rather in a thankful Admiration of the Grace of God ſhining in them; he tells them (and that without Flattery) that the Fame and Report of their Graces was ſpread abroad far and near, inſomuch that the Foreign Churches, amongſt whom he Converſed, were able to give him a perfect Account how the Apoſtles Entrance amongſt them at *Theſſalonica* was, tho' not Pompous, yet very Proſperous, ſtrangely Succeeded, and ſingularly Bleſſed, to the turning of them from Dead Idols to ſerve the Living and True God. Learn, That where true Grace is rooted in the Heart, tho' it be not immediately ſeen, yet it cannot long be hid, but will diſcover it ſelf in the genuine Fruits, and vital Effects of it, to the deſerved Admiration, and wiſh'd for Imitation, of all Beholders whatſoever; *from you ſounded forth the Word of the Lord*, &c.------- And *how* you turned from Idols, that is, how readily and ſpeedily, how ſincerely and heartily you turned from Idolatry, your former Idolatry, in which you had been educated and brought up; yet upon the Preaching of our Goſpel ye left it, and turned with Indignation from it to ſerve God, *the Living God*, ſo called in Oppoſition to their Dead and Dumb Idols, and *the true God* in Oppoſition to falſe Gods. Theſe Words of the Apoſtle teach us how to expound thoſe Words of our Saviour, *John* 17. 3. *This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God*; teaching us that the Father is called the only true God, not in Oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Socinians* would inſinuate, but in Oppoſition to Idols and falſe Gods only. Now from this Effect which the Goſpel had upon the *Theſſalonians*, to turn them from Idols, to ſerve the living God, we Learn, That as every Man naturally bears an Idol in his Heart, that is, ſets up ſomething there in God's ſtead, which attracts and draws off the chief of his Affections from God, ſo where-ever the Goſpel is heartily received and entertained, there will be an abandoning of, and turning from whatſoever did uſurp God's Throne in the Soul, and the Perſon hereafter will only Love and ſerve the Living and True God:------*you turned from Idols, to ſerve the Living and True God.*

10 And to wait for his ſon from heaven, whom he raiſed from the dead, *even* Jeſus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Here the Apoſtle produces a farther Evidence of theſe *Theſſalonians* Converſion, namely, that they did not only turn from Idols to ſerve God the Father, but did alſo believe in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son; this Act of Faith is expreſt by waiting, they waited for his Son from Heaven, that is, by Faith they expected that Chriſt, whom the Apoſtle had preached to them, and was gone to Heaven, would certainly come again from thence, to deliver his redeemed ones from Wrath to come, that is, from the Puniſhment and Vengeance eternally due unto them for Sin. And the Ground of this their Expectation was Chriſt's Reſurrection from the Dead; *to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raiſed from the Dead. Note* here, (1.) A Deſcription, an Heart-affecting, yea, a Soul-affecting Deſcription of that Wrath which doth await every Wicked and Impenitent Sinner; 'tis a Wrath to come after Thouſands, yea, Millions of Years that Sinners have lain under it, ſtill it is a Wrath to come, and they are as far from being delivered from it, as the firſt Hour they fell under it. *Note* (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt delivered up himſelf to Death that he might be a Saviour and Deliverer to his People from this Wrath; let it break forth when it will, not a Drop of it ſhall ever fall upon any of them. *Note* (3.) That Believers may warrantably expect Deliverance by Chriſt from this Wrath, ſeeing God has raiſed him from the Dead. *Note* (4.) Therefore may and ought they to wait and wiſh, too look and long for his coming from Heaven, when Deliverance from Wrath will be Perfected and Compleated.

CHAP. II.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in the Chapter now before us, is to acquaint the Theſſalonians *with the Sincerity and Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt them; as alſo to put them in Remembrance of his Meek Deportment towards them, even as a Nurſe amongſt her Children, and from the gracious Succeſs which God had given him in his Miniſterial Services for them, he concludes that theſe his Converts to Chriſtianity, the* Theſſalonians, *would certainly be his Joy, and Crown of Rejoicing, in the Day of the Lord Jeſus.*

FOR your ſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

Obſerve here, how our Apoſtle did and durſt appeal to the *Theſſalonians* themſelves, as touching the Sincerity and Succeſs of his Publick Miniſtry amongſt them: *Ye your ſelves know.* It is not ſufficient to a Miniſter's Comfort that he be well reported of amongſt Strangers for his Zeal and Diligence, for his Sincerity and Faithfulneſs, unleſs he can and dare appeal to the Conſciences of his own People, and call them to Vouch and bear Witneſs to his Integrity; ye your ſelves know *that our entrance in unto you was not in vain. Our Entrance in unto you*; that is, our firſt Preaching amongſt you, *was not in vain*; that is, ſay ſome, it was not vain in the Matter, we did not Preach about Vain, Uſeleſs, and Unprofitable Niceties and Speculations; but our Preaching was Subſtantial, Sound, and Solid; it was not vain in the Manner, ſay others, it was not undertaken Raſhly, and without a Call, nor managed in ſlight and vain Manner: But the Word *in vain* here ſeems to point at theſe Two things. (1.) That it did not want Power and Energy, but had the Demonſtration of Divine Aſſiſtance to confirm *them* in the Faith that *Heard* it, and alſo thoſe that *Preach'd* it, in Expectation of Succeſs. (2.) It was not in vain; that is, it did not want Fruit, it was not without a great and gracious Succeſs; for the Word *Vain*, when it is applied to the Meſſage which the Miniſters of God bring, ſignifies the not accompliſhing the great Ends for which it was deſigned, *Iſa.* 55. 11. *The Word that goeth out of my Mouth ſhall not return unto me in Vain*, but Proſper, *&c.* Hence Learn, That where a Miniſter is regularly called to, and faithfully diſcharges his Duty amongſt a People, both by publick Preaching and private Inſtruction, his Labours ſeldom, if ever, want Fruit, in ſome Degree or Meaſure, either Sooner or Later, either Manifeſt or Secret, either for Converſion or Edification. We have the Promiſe of Chriſt's Preſence with us, *Mark* 28. 20. And if the Fault be not ours we ſhall certainly experience it, both the Preſence of his Power, to ſtrengthen us, and the Preſence of his gracious Spirit to ſucceed us. Poſſibly we do not ſee any viſible Succeſs at preſent, but this may comfort us, there is more good done by the Miniſtry of the Word than we are aware of, and if we reap not the Fruit of the Seed we ſow, they who come after us may; but if neither they nor we reap Fruit, our Miniſtry ſhall not be *in vain* with reference to our ſelves, yet ſhall we be glorious, though *Iſrael* be not gathered. But Oh! that our poor People might ſhare in that Glory with us, and alſo ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever! God grant we may never be called forth by Chriſt to give a judicial Teſtimony againſt any of them at the Bar of God for not *believing our Report.*

2 But even after that we had ſuffered before, and were ſhamefully intreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God with much contention.

Here St. *Paul* diſcovers to the *Theſſalonians* the great Difficulties and Dangers which he breaks through at his firſt entrance amongſt them to Preach the Goſpel; he acquaints them with the Reproach and Diſgrace he underwent at their Neighbouring City *Philippi*, and the Sufferings there indured for the Goſpel, which are Recorded, *Act.* 16. 23. But nothing of that Nature could diſcourage him, but that he rather waxed more bold in Spirit, reſolving to Preach *the Goſpel of God*, tho' *with much Contention* and Oppoſition from the unbelieving Jews. Where mark, That the Apoſtle calls his Boldneſs a Boldneſs *in God*, becauſe a Boldneſs for God, and from God: it was not barely the Fruit of a natural courage, but it was a zealous Boldneſs in the Cauſe of God, and proved a convincing, as well as a couragious Boldneſs; it is one neceſſary Requiſite and Qualification in the Miniſters of God, in order to the rendring their Miniſtry fruitful and ſucceſsful, that a Wiſe, Humble, Zealous, and Convincing Boldneſs be found with them in their delivering the Truths of God unto their People; *we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the Goſpel of God*,

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Here our Apoſtle aſſigns a ſubordinate Reaſon why his Preaching was ſo ſucceſsful amongſt the *Theſſalonians*, namely, becauſe it was very ſincere; there was both Sincerity in the Doctrine peeach'd, and alſo in the Preacher of that Doctrine. Where *Note*, (1.) St. *Paul* calls his Preaching an *Exhortation*, doubtleſs becauſe a great Part of his Preaching was, as ours ought to be, Applicatory and Exhortatory, earneſtly and affectionately exciting the Hearers to cleave unto the Truths, whether Doctrinal or Practical, delivered to them. *Note* (2.) How St. *Paul* removes from himſelf the Oppoſites of Sincerity, ſome of which point at the Sincerity of the Doctrine preach'd by him; *it was not of Deceit*, or of inſnaring and ſeducing Error, not ſuited to the corrupt Opinions and wicked inclinations of Men; *nor of Uncleanneſs*; nothing that he either Preach'd or Practiſed did countenance and encourage Men in their filthy Luſts, as did the falſe Preaching of the falſe Apoſtles, and the Gnoſticks; *nor in Guile*; this points at the Sincerity of his own Heart in Preaching, his Exhortation was not in Guile; that is, he did not ſeek himſelf under a Pretence of acting for God and his Glory, nor propound his own worldly Advantage as his ultimate End. Learn hence, it is the Duty of Chriſt's Miniſters not only to preach the pure Word of God, but to preach it purely in Simplicity of Heart, and with a ſingle Eye at God's Glory, without looking at, or having any Regard unto baſe, ſiniſter Ends, or bye Reſpects. *Note*, (3.) That St. *Paul* having vindicated his Miniſtry from all Suſpicion of Inſincerity, next aſſures them of his great Uprightneſs in all his Miniſterial Performances, making it his chief Deſign to approve himſelf unto God, and to be approved of him, not in the leaſt regarding to *pleaſe Men*, but only in Subordination to God. *Note* (4.) The Arguments or Motives inclining him thus, in much Sincerity, to approve himſelf to God in all his Miniſterial Services, namely, (1.) The Conſideration of that high Favour and honourable Truſt which he had received from God; *we are allowed of God to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel*; God did fit him for this Truſt, and then intruſted him with it, and he look'd upon both as a Favour and Honour from God. (2.) The Conſideration of God's Omniſciency and All-ſeeing Eye, *who trieth our Hearts*; The Apoſtle well knew that Almighty God was both a Witneſs of his Doctrine and Converſation, and alſo privy to his Intentions and Purpoſes, his Aim and End, as being a God that ſearched the Heart, therefore he ſo preach'd, *not as pleaſing Men, but God:* Learn from both, That nothing doth more effectually conſtrain the Miniſters of Chriſt to the faithful Diſcharge of their whole Duty, than the Conſideration of the Honour and Weight of that Truſt which God has conferr'd on them, and the Remembrance that the Eye of an All-ſeeing and Heart-ſearching God is both upon and within them alſo; *we ſo ſpeak*, being put in *Truſt* with the Goſpel by *God*, who *trieth* our *Hearts.*

5 For neither at any time uſed we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetouſneſs, God *is* witneſs. 6 Nor of men ſought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burthenſome, as the apoſtles of Chriſt.

Still our Apoſtle ſees fit to proceed in avouching his own Sincerity in preaching the Goſpel, and diſowning all Flattery, Covetouſneſs, and Vain-glory, to have any Influence upon him in the Diſcharge of his Miniſterial Truſt. Firſt, He uſed not flattering Words, that is, Speeches fitted to gratifie the Luſts and Humours of Men, or for gaining their Favour, and courting their good Opinion. Flattery in any is Odious, in a Miniſter 'tis Monſtrous, both becauſe ſpiritual Men ought to be moſt plain-hearted, and alſo becauſe Flattery about ſpiritual Things is moſt Fatal and Pernicious, both to the Giver and Receiver. *Secondly*, He uſed not a *Cloak of Covetouſneſs*, that is, he had no covetous Deſign in his Miniſtry; his great End in that Adminiſtration was not worldly, or outward Advantage to himſelf; and becauſe a covetous Deſign is ſecret, and Man cannot judge of it, he appeals ſolemnly to God that ſearcheth the Heart, as a Witneſs of his freedom from that Deſign; *I uſed no flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of Covetouſneſs, God is witneſs*; as if he had ſaid, had I uſed flattering Words you might witneſs it, but I could have worn a Cloak of Covetouſneſs ſo cloſely that you could not have ſeen it, but God could; he can judge thro' the darkeſt Cloud, and ſee thro' the thickeſt Cloak and Covering; but I appeal to him whether I have put on ſuch a Cloak or no; an Oath then is lawful to a Chriſtian; he may ſolemnly appeal to God, and call him to witneſs the Truth of what he ſpeaks, in and upon a juſt and great Occaſion; thus St. *Paul* here, by Oath, purges himſelf from Covetouſueſs of Spirit. *Thirdly*, He purges himſelf from all Oſtentation and Vain-glory; he tells them plainly, he did not hunt after Applauſe from others, nor ſought ſo much as due Reſpect in a fitting Maintenance from themſelves, tho' herein he aſſures them he did remit of his Right, ſeeing, as an Apoſtle of Chriſt, he might have been *burthenſome*, that is, Chargable to them, by exacting Maintenance from them. Learn, Tho' every Man may (much more a Miniſter) have a due Reſpect to his own Honour and juſt Reputation, yet to hunt after Reſpect and Eſteem, and to ſeek it with the full Bent of our Deſires, doth ſavour of Vanity and Vainglory. Learn (2.) Tho' the Miniſters of the Goſpel have an undoubted Right to an honourable Maintenance, yet it may be a Pious Prudence in them, at a particular time, to remit their Right; and when they do ſo with an Eye at the Glory of God, the Advantage of the Goſpel, God will recompence it to them.

7 But were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children: 8 So being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.

St. *Paul* having cleared himſelf and his Miniſtry in the foregoing Verſes from the Charge and Imputation of thoſe foul Vices of Flattery, Fraud, and Covetouſneſs, which the falſe Teachers were guilty of, he next gives an Account of his holy and humble, meek and gentle, courteous and affable Behaviour amongſt them, performing all Duties towards them from a Principle of tender Love, even ſuch as is found in a Nurſe to her Babe, which makes her ſtoop to the meaneſt Offices for it; *we were gentle among you as a nurſe*, not an hired Nurſe, but a Mother-Nurſe, who takes nothing for Nurſing, who beſtows all her Time and Pains in Nurſing, who draws forth her Breaſts, and gives down her Milk with Pleaſure to her Nurſery, lodging it in her Boſom, carrying in her Arms, with all poſſible Demonſtrations of a tender Affection towards it, eſpecially bearing with its Frowardneſs and manifold Infirmities; intimating to us, with what Tenderneſs of Affection a Miniſter ſhould be devoted to his People, bearing with them, and forbearing of them, and exerciſing all that Indulgence towards them, which may mutually endear them to each other. *Obſerve* farther, our Apoſtle having reſembled himſelf in general to a Nurſe cheriſhing her Children, next inſtances in particular wherein he ſtood ready to expreſs, like a Nurſe, his indulgent Care over them. Thus, (1.) As the Nurſing-Mother, if ſhe be but a ſhort time abſent from her Children, doth moſt vehemently long to ſee them, and draws forth her Breaſt towards them with the utmoſt Deſire and Delight; in like manner was our now abſent Apoſtle moſt affectionately deſirous of ſeeing and injoying his beloved *Theſſalonians*. (2.) As the Nurſing-mother, when ſhe gets to the Child, with unſpeakable Delight feeds it with her own Blood, concocted and turned into Milk, ſo was the Apoſtle deſirous to impart not the Goſpel only, but *his own Soul*, that is, his Life; implying, how ready he was to ſeal the Goſpel with his Blood, and to confirm the *Theſſalonians* in the Faith of Chriſt. (3.) As the moving, impelling, and impulſive Cauſe of the Nurſe's indulgent Care and indefatigable Pains, is pure Love, motherly Affection, and no hope of Gain, ſo was likewiſe the Caſe of St. *Paul* here towards theſe *Theſſalonians*; *we were willing to impart unto you our own Souls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.* Learn hence, That there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection, between any Relations upon Earth, than between thoſe Miniſters of Chriſt, and their beloved People, whom they have been Inſtrumental to convert to God.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God. 10 Ye *are* witneſſes, and God *alſo*, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved our ſelves among you that believe:

Notwithſtanding our Apoſtle was free, wholly free from all ſhadow and appearance of Covetouſneſs in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, yet it may ſeem as if ſome Perſons (probably the falſe Apoſtles) did, tho' with the higheſt Injuſtice, charge him with it; accordingly to clear himſelf from that Imputation, here he tells the *Theſſalonians*, he laboured Night and Day in the Buſineſs of his Calling, making Tents to maintain himſelf, that ſo he might not be *chargeable* or burthenſome to any of them, or any ways retard and hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel amongſt them, *labouring night and day, that we might not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Goſpel of God freely.* Yet *Obſerve*, this was only a Caſe of Neceſſity, for at other Times, and in other Places, we find our Apoſtle aſſerting his own Right, and God's Appointment, that every one that preacheth the Goſpel ſhould live of the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* 9. 14. Next our Apoſtle calls upon them to *remember* his *Labour and Travel*, that is, his Pains and Diligence in preaching the Goſpel; the Words ſignifie Labour unto Wearineſs, and Labour after Wearineſs, his Painfulneſs both in his Preaching, and in his ſecular Calling; and from his calling upon the *Theſſalonians* to remember this, he learns us this Leſſon of Inſtruction, namely, that it is the ſtanding Duty of a People to keep in their conſtant Remembrance the great Labour and Pains which the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt do take amongſt them, that ſo they may be duly thankful both to God and them, and put a juſt Value upon that ſpiritual Good which at any time they have experienc'd and receiv'd from them, *Remember, brethren, our labour and travel.* *Obſerve* again, having aſſerted his laboriouſneſs in Preaching to them, he next puts them in remembrance of his Exemplarineſs in Converſation amongſt them, how *holily*, *juſtly*, and *unblameably*, *we behaved our ſelves among you*, that is, performing his Duty with great Integrity and Uprightneſs towards God and Man, ſo that none juſtly could blame him for Neglect amongſt them; and for the Truth of this he appeals to God as a Judge, and to themſelves as Witneſſes, *ye are witneſſes, and God alſo.* Learn hence, that it is a great Happineſs, and unſpeakable Conſolation, both to Miniſters and People, when the Duties of Religion relating to both Tables, are performed with ſuch Exactneſs, that they can and dare appeal to one another, as to their holy and unblamable Converſation, and to God himſelf, as to the purity of their Aim and ſincerity of Intention.

11 As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father *doth* his children.) 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Obſerve, That ſtill our Apoſtle appeals to their own Conſciences for his good Behaviour amongſt them: *Ye know*; happy Miniſter that has a Throne in the Conſciences of his People, unto which he can, and durſt at all times appeal for the clearing of his Innocency and Integrity, in and before the Face of the whole World! *Obſerve* next, that having compar'd himſelf to a Nurſe before, he reſembles himſelf to a Father now, *we exhorted you as a Father doth his children*; as it is the Office of a Father to direct and inſtruct, to counſel and exhort his Children, ſo the Apoſtle did exhort, comfort, and charge the *Theſſalonians*, that they be ſtrictly Conſcientious in the faithful Diſcharge of their whole Duty, both to God and Man, and patient under all, and all manner of Trials and Afflictions whatſoever, which they did or might meet with in the Way of Well-doing. Where *Note*, That a mixture of Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, accompanied with Authority and Gravity, is an excellent Compoſition in the Miniſters of the Goſpel: St. *Paul* having ſhewn, that for Gentleneſs he was a Nurſing-mother, he cleareth here that for Authority and Gravity he was an inſtructing Father. *Obſerve* laſtly, the great Duty which he did direct them in, and exhort them to, namely, *to walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his Kingdom and Glory.* *Note* here, (1.) The Duty exhorted to, namely, to walk worthy of God: How ſo? Not with a Worthineſs of Merit, but with a Worthineſs of Meekneſs, to walk as becomes them who profeſs the Name of God, who bear the Image of God, anſwerable to the high and holy Privileges receiv'd from God. *Note* (2.) The Reaſon or Argument enforcing the Duty, *he hath called you to his Kingdom and Glory*, that is, to Grace and by Grace here, to Glory hereafter; ſuch as are called to the one are called to both; Grace is a certain Pledge and Earneſt of Glory, a low Degree of Glory, and Glory the higheſt Degree of Grace; ſuch as walk worthy of God now, ſhall live with him e're long, to eternal Ages.

13 For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe. 14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus: for ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews.

Our Apoſtle's great Deſign in this Chapter being to ſet forth the wonderful Succeſs which the preaching of the Goſpel had amongſt the *Theſſalonians*, and alſo to aſſign the Cauſes of that Succeſs, he having in the former Verſes given the Reaſon of this Succeſs on his own Part, namely, his Sincerity in preaching it, and his Pious Converſation in all things ſuitable to it, now he comes to ſhew the Reaſon on their Part, with all Thankfulneſs to Almighty God for the ſame, firſt they heard it, ſecondly they receiv'd it, thirdly, they examin'd it, and found it no Fable but the Word of God; and as ſuch entertain'd it with a Divine Faith; fourthly, the Word thus receiv'd did work with a mighty Power and Efficacy in them that believ'd, that is, was accompanied with Miracles and miraculous Operations of the Holy Spirit, then to confirm them in the Faith of what they did believe; and the Word has alſo *now* an efficacious Energy and divine Efficacy accompanying it in the Hearts of Believers, working upon the Will, not in a Way of Compulſion, but in a Way congruous to the Nature and Liberty of the Will, by a divine Influx, *tollendo reſiſtentiam non voluntatis libertatem*, as the great St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks. *Obſerve* next, St. *Paul* farther proves the efficacious Succeſs which the Word had amongſt the *Theſſalonians*, from their Conſtancy and Patience under the ſharpeſt Sufferings for the Word's ſake; *ye have ſuffered like things of your own Countrymen*; as if he had ſaid, you of the Chriſtian Church in *Theſſalonica* have ſhewed your ſelves like to the Chriſtian Churches in *Judea*, in patient ſuffering Perſecution from your Friends and Kinsfolks, from your Countrymen and Fellow-Citizens, as they did from the unbelieving Jews. *Note* thence, That where the Word is efficaciouſly received, it makes the Imbracer of it endure the hardeſt Trials and Sufferings rather than renounce it. *Note* (2.) That there neither is, nor can be, any better Evidence that the Word of God is effectually received, than when it enables Chriſtians to bear Afflictions, and undergo Perſecutions with Chriſtian Courage and Holy Reſolution; *ye have ſuffered like things*, but of whom? *Of your own Countrymen*, at *Theſſalonica*, as the Churches in *Judea* did of the Jews. Learn thence, That ſuch is the Fury of a perſecuting Spirit, that when Men are judicially given up of God unto it, they will break all Bonds, both Natural, Civil, and Religious, and turn Barbarous and Savage, like Wolves and Tigers, towards thoſe of their own Fleſh, who dare not deny the Truth, which they perſecute and oppoſe. Here the Churches in *Judea* and *Theſſalonica* were perſecuted alike by their own Countrymen ----- *Ye have ſuffered like things of your own Countrymen, even as they of the Jews.*

15 Who both killed the Lord Jeſus, and their own prophets, and have perſecuted us; and they pleaſe not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles, that they might be ſaved, to fill up their ſins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt.

Our Apoſtle's Deſign being to encourage the *Theſſalonians* to Patience and Conſtancy under their Perſecutions for Chriſtianity, he acquaints them that they did not walk alone in this thorny Path, but that Jeſus Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles went before them, and every Step they took in it up to the Knees in Blood; *they killed the Lord Jeſus*, &c. Where *Obſerve*, The bitter and bloody Perſecution which the Jews were guilty of, they killed the Lord Jeſus, and before him their own Prophets, called their own, becauſe of their own Nation, and ſent with a peculiar Meſſage to them; and now they perſecuted, baniſhed, and drove away St. *Paul* and the reſt of the Apoſtles; they *pleas'd* not God, that is, they highly diſpleas'd him, dreadfully provok'd him, they were Haters of God, hateful to him, now hated of him, and laſtly rejected by him; *contrary to all Men*, that is, to the common Intereſt of all Men, by endeavouring to obſtruct the preaching of the Goſpel, which bringeth Salvation to all Men, *forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles*, that is, to preach the Goſpel to the Gentiles, and conſequently obſtructing, what in them lay, the Salvation almoſt of all the World; *filling up the meaſure of their ſins*, till at laſt the Wrath of God came upon them to the utmoſt, in their judicial Obduration, and the final Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*, after which the Jews have been no more a People, but ſcattered abroad thro' the Face of the Earth. From the whole learn, (1.) That it is a ſingular Support to a ſuffering Saint to conſider, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſuffer'd before them, and by his Sufferings has ſanctified a State of Affliction and Perſecution to them. Learn (2.) That a Spirit of Perſecution ſeems oft-times to run in a Blood, and paſſes from Parent to Child thro' many Generations; Perſecution became, as it were, Hereditary and in a ſort, tranſient from one Generation to another among the Jews, they *killed* Chriſt, *ſtoned* the Prophets, and *perſecuted* the Apoſtles. *Note* (3.) How St. *Paul* ranks and reckons them that are Enemies to the preaching of the Goſpel with the obſtinate Shedders of Chriſt's Blood; they are enroll'd amongſt the capital Enemies of Mankind; *they killed the Lord of Life, forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles*; ſuch as are Enemies to the preaching, are Enemies to the Souls of Men. *Obj.* But what need ſo much Preaching amongſt us, who are converted from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity? *Anſw.* It is one thing to be converted from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity, and another thing to be converted from Sin to God. *Obj.* But we have the Bible for that End, and can make uſe of that? *Anſw.* Obſerve it, and you will find, that ſuch as are no Friends to the Pulpit, are uſually none of the beſt Friends to the Bible, follow them to their Families, how doth the Bible lie by as a neglected Book amongſt them? And it muſt be a large Charity that can judge it is conſcientiouſly uſed in the Cloſet, when it is careleſly neglected in the Family.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a ſhort time, in preſence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to ſee your face with great deſire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindred us.

Obſerve here, that St. *Paul* having all along, in the Chapter before us, compar'd himſelf to a tender Father and Nurſing-mother, for his affectionate Love unto, and his ſollicitous Concern for theſe Chriſtian Converts, he doth in the Words before us declare, that his conſtrain'd Abſence from them occaſion'd him no leſs Grief than that of a tender Father when bereft of his beloved Children, or that of an indulgent Mother when the Child ſhe loves as her own Soul is taken violently from her. *We, brethren, being taken from you*; the Word intimates ſuch a Separation as Death makes between a Father and a Child, which rends the Parents Heart in ſunder, and is like cutting off a Limb or Member from his Body, exquiſitely painful; intimating, that the enforced Abſence of a Paſtor from his beloved People, tho' but for a ſhort Seaſon, is very afflictive. Ah! how heart-rending then is a total and final Separation from each other, occaſion'd either by natural or civil Death? *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul* tells them, that tho' Perſecutors had depriv'd them of his bodily Preſence, yet not of his Heart, for tho' not in Body, yet in Mind he was preſent with them; Miniſter and People, like true Lovers, are preſent with each other in Soul, when ſeparated in Body. It is a ſingular Comfort to Chriſtians under Perſecution, that their

Enemies can neither deprive them of the Preſence of God, nor the Prayers of their faithful Miniſters; their Prayers may meet when their Perſons are diſtant, and they may be preſent in Spirit, in Heart and Affection, when at the Ends of the Earth. *Obſerve* (3.) How he expreſſes his Deſire and Endeavour, his fervent Purpoſe and fixed Reſolution to come unto them, to ſee their Face, to refreſh them, and be refreſhed by them. *I endeavoured abundantly to ſee your Face, but Satan hindred*; that is, his Inſtruments, Perſecutors, lay in wait for him on the one hand, and ſome cauſed Diſſentions in other Churches, which detain'd him from coming to them on the other hand; *Satan hindred.* Learn thence, that ſuch as obſtruct the preaching and propagating of the Goſpel, and perſecute the Promoters of it, they are Satan's Inſtruments and Miniſters. (2.) That ſuch as do Satan's Work, it's fit they ſhould bear his Name. Thus, *Rev.* 2. 10. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon*, that is, his Servants; it is fit that Maſter and Servant ſhould have both one Name.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Here, in the cloſe of the Chapter, St. *Paul* acquaints the *Theſſalonians* with the true Reaſon why he had ſuch an endearing Affection for them, and ſuch a fervent Deſire to be preſent with them, they were his *Hope*, his *Joy*, his *Crown* of Rejoicing; that is, they were then the Cauſe of his Hope, not the Ground and Foundation of his Hope, that Chriſt alone was; but their Converſion by his Miniſtry was, in Concurrence with other things, a good Ground of Hope concerning his own Salvation; ye are now my *Hope*, my *Joy*, and *Crown of Rejoicing*. Where *Note*, a very remarkable Gradation in the Words; he calls them his Hope, his Joy, and his Crown of Rejoicing: His *Hope*, that is, the Matter of his Hope, that they ſhould be ſaved; his *Joy*, that is, the Occaſion of his Joy, in their Converſion by his Miniſtry; and his *Crown of Rejoicing* in *Chriſt*'s *Preſence* at his *coming*, that is, the Fruit and Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt them would add to his Crown, and redound to his Glory in the Day of Chriſt. Learn hence, (1.) That there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven, probably according to the Meaſures and Degrees of Service we have done for God on Earth; there is, no doubt, an Equality of Glory there, as to the Eſſentials, but not with reſpect to the Accidentals; beſides the Joy and Satisfaction which the Miniſters of Chriſt are Partakers of in Heaven, in common with other glorified Saints, they have an additional Joy and Glory from the Succeſs of their pious and painful Labours, which God has crown'd with the Converſion and Edification of many Souls. Lord! Who would not Study, ſpend and be ſpent in the Service of ſuch a Maſter? Is it not worth all our Labour and Sufferings to appear in the Preſence of Chriſt, accompanied with all thoſe Souls whom we have inſtrumentally either brought home, or built up in the moſt Holy Faith, either converted, comforted, or confirmed in the Way to Heaven? To hear one Spiritual Child ſay, Lord, this is the Inſtrument by whom I believed; another, this is the Miniſter by whom I was eſtabliſh'd; a third, this is he that quicken'd me by his Example, and provoked me to Love and to Good Works. O bleſſed be God that ever I ſaw his Face, and heard his Voice: But, Lord! What will it be to hear thy bleſſed Voice ſaying to us, Well done good and faithful Servants, enter into the Joy of me your Lord; I have kept an exact Account of all your fervent Prayers for your People, of all your inſtructive and perſwaſive Sermons, of all your Sighs and Groans poured forth before me, on Behalf of thoſe whom you would have perſwaded to be Happy, but could not? Every Tear from your Eye, and Drop of Sweat from your Face, ſhall now meet with an eternal Recompence; you ſhall now find me according to my Promiſe, not *unrighteous to forget your work and labour of Love.* O what a Maſter do the Miniſters of Chriſt ſerve! Who would not ſacrifice all that is dear for him, who has the Aſſurance of ſuch *an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory* from him? Learn (2.) That the Saints of God in Heaven will know one another there: Why elſe doth St. *Paul* here comfort himſelf, that theſe *Theſſalonians*, whom he converted to Chriſt, would be his *Crown of Rejoicing* in the Day of Chriſt? Surely this muſt needs ſuppoſe and imply his diſtinct Knowledge of them in that Day; if he did not know them, how could he rejoice in them? Doubtleſs we may allow in that State all that Knowledge which is Accumulative and Perfective, whatever may heighten our Felicity, and encreaſe our Satisfaction, as this muſt needs be allow'd to do. Lord make us Faithful to the Death, Faithful to Thee, Faithful to our own Souls, Faithful to our People, and then as they are now our Hope and Joy, ſo will they be our Crown of Rejoicing in the Preſence of the Lord Jeſus at his coming. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

The Deſign of our Apoſtle in this, is the ſame with that of the foregoing Chapter, namely, to give the Theſſalonians *the higheſt Aſſurance poſſible of his affectionate Regard unto them, of his ſolicitous Care and Concern for them, and of his utmoſt Endeavours to confirm and ſettle them in the Faith of Chriſt, what Afflictions and Perſecutions ſoever it might expoſe them to; and accordingly he thus beſpeaks them.*

WHerefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone: 2 And ſent Timotheus our brother and miniſter of God, and our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt, to eſtabliſh you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

At the latter end of the foregoing Chapter St. *Paul* acquainted the *Theſſalonians* with his Deſires and Intentions, to come once and again unto them, but was always providentially hindred. Now here he gives them to underſtand, that ſuch was the Fervour of his Affection towards them, that altho' he could not come, yet he could not forbear to ſend to them, tho' he left himſelf alone, preferring their Neceſſity before his own Conveniency; *when we could no longer forbear*; that is, when I could no longer ſatisfy myſelf without knowing your State and Condition, I choſe, tho' with much Inconveniency to myſelf, rather to be left at *Athens* alone, in the midſt of my Afflictions and Tribulations, than that you ſhould be longer deſtitute of one to ſupply my Abſence in order to your Confirmation and Comfort. See here a ſpecial Inſtance of Miniſterial Love and Affection in St. *Paul*, preferring the Churches Good before his own Comfort, and poſtponing his own Conveniency to their Neceſſity; tho' *Timothy*'s Company was very deſirable, very neceſſary and uſeful for him, yet he denies himſelf to ſerve them; *we thought it good to be left at Athens alone.* *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon ſent by him, *Timothy*, with his deſerved Character and Commendation, a *Brother*, that is, a Chriſtian, a Believer, a Brother in Chriſt, *a Miniſter of God*, that is, a Preacher of the Goſpel, his *Fellow-labourer*, or one that joined Heart and Hand with him in the preaching of the Goſpel from place to place. See here a ſpecial Inſtance of St. *Paul*'s Apoſtolical Care for the Churches of Chriſt, when he could not viſit them in Perſon, he ſends to them, not any one he could come at, but the fitteſt he could get, one who was moſt likely, thro' God's Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing, to carry on the Work he was ſent about. *I ſent you*, Timotheus, *my Brother*. *Obſerve*, (3.) The great End for which he was ſent unto them, it was to confirm them, and to comfort them, to confirm them in the Faith of Chriſt, and to comfort them under all their Sufferings for the ſake of Chriſt. The ſtrongeſt Faith needs Confirmation and Eſtabliſhment, and it is the Miniſter's Duty, in trying Times eſpecially, to guard his Peoples Faith, upon the Stability whereof their Strength and Safety doth depend.

3 That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions: for your ſelves know, that we are appointed thereunto.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, one great End why I have ſent *Timothy* among you is this, leſt either upon the Account of your own Afflictions, or my Sufferings, you ſhould be moved from your Stedfaſtneſs, either drawn away by Fraud and Flattery, or driven away by Force and Terror; *that no Man be moved by theſe Afflictions.* *Obſerve* alſo the Argument to confirm them in the Faith, amidſt all their Sufferings and Afflictions, and that is drawn from the Pleaſure and Purpoſe, the Ordination and Appointment of God concerning their Afflictions; *ye your ſelves know, that we are appointed thereunto.* Learn hence, (1.) That the beſt of Saints are ſubject to be moved by their Afflictions. (2.) That it is the high Commendation of a Chriſtian not to ſtir or be moved from his Stedfaſtneſs by the heavieſt Shock of Afflictions that may fall upon him; *that no Man be moved by theſe Afflictions.* Some render the Word *appointed*, ſet as a Mark to be ſhot at; ſome Saints, with Holy *Job*, are ſet on purpoſe as a Mark for the Arrow of Affliction to be levell'd at, yet then are they to keep their Ground, and ſtand Immovable; we honour God abundantly when we are Immovable in our active Obedience, and we glorifie him eminently when we are Immovable in our paſſive Obedience, when we ſtand to it in the midſt of Sufferings, and are no more moved either by Cowardice or Impatience, than a Poſt that is ſhot at. This is the Glory of a Chriſtian, and his great Duty, and it is the Glory of God, and his certain Due. Learn (3.) That Believers are under a Divine Appointment from God himſelf, to Trouble and Affliction. The ultimate Deſtination of Believers is to Reſt, (God hath not appointed them unto Wrath, but to obtain *Salvation*) but the intermediate Deſtination of them is to Trouble and Affliction in order unto Reſt, and to prepare them for that Reſt. Seeing then that Afflictions are appointed to us, and we appointed to them, ſeeing there is a Decree of God concerning them, a Decree as to the Matter of them, as to the Manner of them, as to the Meaſure of them, as to the Time of them, when they ſhall commence, how far they ſhall advance, how long they ſhall continue, ſeeing every thing in Affliction is under an appointment, how Meek and Humble, how Patient and Submiſſive ought the Chriſtian's Spirit to be under them? And with what Stedineſs of Expectation may and ought he to look up to Heaven for a ſanctified Uſe and Improvement of them. Let no *Man be moved by Afflictions, knowing we are appointed thereunto.*

4 For verily when we were with you, we told you before, that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation; even as it came to paſs, and ye know.

Our Apoſtle informed the *Theſſalonians*, in the foregoing Verſe, with the Purpoſe and Decree of God concerning the Afflictions which were before them, in this Verſe he appeals to themſelves, as to his own Sincerity, in acquainting them at their firſt Converſion, that they muſt thro' many Tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God, and it came to paſs accordingly; *when we were with you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *we told you before it came to paſs, that we ſhould ſuffer Tribulation*, and it ſhortly after *came to paſs*, as we told you. Learn hence, That it is the Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt to give timely Warning of, and to acquaint young Converts early with the Pleaſure of God to exerciſe all that belong to him with the Croſs, with Variety of Afflictions, Trials, and Sufferings, before they come, that ſo they may not ſtumble, nor be offended at them when they come. The Sincerity of our Apoſtle is here very remarkable; when he came firſt to preach the Goſpel at *Theſſalonica* he did not flatter them with the Expectation of an earthly Paradiſe of Pleaſure, but told them plainly, that Criſtianity had a Croſs attending it, that a ſuffering Hour would come, and they muſt expect it; *when we were with you, we told you that we ſhould ſuffer Tribulation.* Learn (2.) That when Chriſtians have had timely Notice from the Miniſters of God, and from the Word of God, of approaching Trials and Troubles before they come, they ought to fore-arm themſelves, and not to faint or ſink under them when they come, much leſs to forſake Religion becauſe of them, but to continue Stedfaſt, knowing that the Heavier their Croſs is, the Weightier will their Crown be; for Affliction there is Glory, for light Affliction a Weight of Glory, and *for light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

5 For this cauſe, when I could no longer forbear, I ſent to know your faith, leſt by ſome means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. 6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, deſiring greatly to ſee us, as we alſo *to ſee* you:

Obſerve here, (1.) One ſpecial End why St. *Paul* ſent *Timothy* to *Theſſalonica*, it was to know their Faith, that is, their Conſtancy in the Faith, for he had a Fear upon him leſt Satan the Tempter had taken Occaſion from the preſent Perſecution they were under, to turn them from Chriſtianity, and that by their yielding to his Temptation, and apoſtatizing from the Faith, his Labour in the Goſpel had been in vain amongſt them. Here *Note*, that the Saints Perſecutions are called Temptations, and aſcribed to Satan the Tempter, who by his Miniſters and Inſtruments endeavour to hinder the Progreſs of the Goſpel, and by Perſecutions to terrifie and turn Men from the Profeſſion of it. *Note* farther, That there is an holy Jealouſie in the Minds of the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, who tho' they hope the beſt, yet are apt to fear the worſt, with reference to the poor People, leſt they ſhould run in vain, and labour in vain amongſt them; for tho' their Labour ſhall not be in vain, with reſpect to themſelves, their Reward is with the Lord (the careful Nurſe ſhall be paid tho' the Child dies at the Breaſt) yet with reſpect to their People they may be in vain, yea worſe, for a Teſtimony againſt them, St. *Mark* 6. 11. *Obſerve* (2.) How happily the Apoſtle's Fear was prevented, touching theſe *Theſſalonians*, by the return of *Timothy*, and the good Tidings which he carried along with him of the Stedfaſtneſs of their Faith, of the Fervency of their Charity, of their particular Reſpect to himſelf, having always Remembrance of him in their Prayers, and making a reſpective mention of his Miniſterial Labours and Diligence, and this always when they had occaſion to ſpeak of him. And laſtly, by their paſſionate and impatient Deſire to ſee him, (ſo much the original Word ſignifies) to which he adds, that his Deſire was no leſs Ardent to ſee them, tho' the Providence of God had hitherto hindred him. Learn hence, That the beſt *Tidings* which can be brought to the Ear of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is this, that his People are Sound and Stedfaſt in the Faith, Maintainers of Charity, and Promoters of good Works, and do account highly of, and honourably eſteem the Miniſters and Ambaſſadors of Jeſus Chriſt: Timothy *brought us good Tidings of your Faith, Charity, and kind Remembrance of us.* Learn further, from the *Theſſalonians* fervent Deſire to ſee St. *Paul*, and he to ſee them, that Chriſtian Love doth earneſtly long to evidence itſelf in Chriſtian Fellowſhip, and paſſionately deſire the Communion of Saints, for the mutual Comfort and ſpiritual Advantage of each other; the ſweeteſt Privilege, next to Communion with God, is Communion with his Saints. Oh! What a Pleaſure is it to behold the beautiful and bleſſed Graces of the Holy Spirit of God ſparkling and ſhining in each other, exciting and quickning one another, acquainting each other with their Experiences, and making known to each other their Griefs, their Doubts and Fears; no wonder then that the *Theſſalonians* deſired ſo paſſionately to ſee St. *Paul*, and he as earneſtly to ſee them.

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and diſtreſs by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God,

In theſe Words our Apoſtle declares the tranſcendent Joy, and overflowing Comfort which was found in his Soul upon the Knowledge he had received of the Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs of the Faith of theſe *Theſſalonians*; *we were comforted in our Affliction by your faith*: of all Comforts which the People of God can afford to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, there is none comparable with that which reſults from their unfainting Perſeverance in the Faith, and the unblamable Holineſs of their Life. No Comfort can be greater than our Peoples gracious Demeanour; this put a kind of new Life into St. *Paul*, in the midſt of all the Sorrows and Sufferings, the Afflictions and Perſecutions he underwent. *Now we live*, ſays he, *if we ſtand faſt in the Lord*, that is, a Life of Joy and Comfort; or we live, that is, it will be a Means to prolong our Life, as well as add to the Comfort of it; and the contrary tends to the ſhortning of our Days. Thoſe that do impair the Chearfulneſs of their Miniſters Lives, ſuch as deaden their Spirits and break their Hearts, by their obſtinate non-compliance with the Rules of the Goſpel, they are no better than Murtherers in the Account of God. If Miniſters may, as all other Perſons do, value their Lives by the Joy and Comfort of them, then may they ſay, with this great Apoſtle, *we live* as we ſee any of our People ſtand faſt in the Lord, and we die as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their Sins. *Obſerve* farther, how highly thankful the Apoſtle was to God, and what unſpeakable Praiſe he renders to him, for adminiſtring to him this Occaſion of Joy, by the Conſtancy and Perſeverance of the Chriſtians Faith at *Theſſalonica*; *what Thanks can we render to God for you, and for all the Joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes.* The faithful Miniſters of Chriſt think that their Hearts can never ſufficiently be carried forth in Thankfulneſs to God, for the Succeſs of their Labours, in the Lives of their People; *what Thanks can we render?* As if he had ſaid, I can never be ſufficiently thankful, or I can never fully expreſs my Thankfulneſs to God for this Honour, this Favour, this Benefit, that any one Soul ſhould be brought home to God by my Miniſtry, much more that a Chriſtian Church ſhould be planted by my Endeavours at *Theſſalonica*, and that God ſhould keep them Steady and Steadfaſt in ſhaking Times, and ſupport them under ſuch Perſecutions and Trials as would ſhock an ordinary Patience and Conſtancy of Mind: Oh! *What Thanks can I render to God for this Joy?*

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might ſee your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Obſerve here how Abounding St. *Paul* was in the Duty of Prayer for the *Theſſalonians*, his Prayer was Aſſiduous and Conſtant *Night* and *Day*; it imports Frequency and Conſtancy in Performance of the Duty, *Luke* 3. 37. His Prayer alſo was very Fervent and Affectionate, *praying exceedingly*, exceſſively, as the Word will bear: ſpiritual Affections are ſtrong and Vehement. *Note* here, the admirable Pattern which St. *Paul* ſets before all the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church to the End of the World, namely, to be much, very much in Prayer, to abound in this Duty. *Obſerve* farther, the ſubject Matter of St. *Paul*'s Prayer, *that he might ſee their Face, and perfect what was yet lacking in their Faith.* Here *Note*, that St. *Paul*'s ſhort Stay amongſt the *Theſſalonians*, when he firſt planted the Goſpel, did not permit ſo full and compleat an Explication of the Matters and Myſteries of Chriſtianity as the Apoſtle did deſire; he therefore prays that God would bring him again amongſt them, that he might ſupply what was wanting in their Faith, that he might encreaſe their Knowledge, confirm their Faith, inflame their Love, excite their Deſires, quicken their Endeavours, and carry on that good Work to Perfection in them, of which God had laid the Foundation by him. Learn hence, (1.) That even in the Faith of the moſt renowned, as well as of the new converted Chriſtians, there is ſome Deficiency and Defect. (2.) That one great End of the Miniſtry of the Word is to help Faith forward towards Perfection; that which was the Inſtrument to beget Faith, is alſo the Means of encreaſing and confirming it, namely, the Ordinances of God in general, and the Miniſtry of the Word in particular. As Faith cometh by Hearing, ſo is it confirmed by Hearing alſo; longing to ſee your Face, that we might perfect what is lacking in your Faith.

11 Now God himſelf and our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt direct our way unto you.

Obſerve here, (1.) an implicit Acknowledgment that our Journeys intended, and Viſits deſigned to be given to our Friends, are not in our power, but under the Direction of God; we cannot viſit a Friend when we pleaſe, but when God will give us leave; we are not in our own Diſpoſe, but God's. Accordingly here St. *Paul* begs of God to *direct* his *Way* unto *them*, that all Obſtacles and Impediments being removed, the Providence of God might direct him, as in a right Line, unto them, as the Original Word imports. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſons whom he directs his Prayers to for this Mercy, to God and Chriſt. Where *Note*, that Chriſt is invocated as well as the Father, he is therefore God as well as the Father; becauſe this Invocation of him by all Perſons proves him Omniſcient, ſearching the Hearts of Men, and alſo Omnipreſent, being with his People in all Places; and conſequently proves our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be truly and undeniably God.

12 And the Lord make you to encreaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you:

Still our Apoſtle perſeveres in Prayer on the Behalf of his beloved *Theſſalonians*; and the particular Mercy he prays for is their abundant Encreaſe in the Grace and Duty of Love, firſt amongſt themſelves and their Fellow-brethren in Chriſt, all Chriſtians far and near; next towards all Men, Heathens and Infidels, their bitter and bloody Perſecutors not excepted. Where *Note* the true Property of Chriſtian Love; it is, (1.) A Brotherly Affection, which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow-members in Chriſt for Grace ſake; and, (2.) A gracious Propenſity of Heart, which a Chriſtian bears for God's ſake to all Mankind, whereby he wills, and to his Power procures, all Good for them.

13 To the end he may ſtabliſh your hearts unblameable in holineſs before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all his ſaints.

Here a particular and ſpecial Reaſon is aſſigned why he prayed ſo fervently for their Abounding in Love, namely, in order to their Eſtabliſhment in Faith and Holineſs; teaching us, that as true Love evidences the Co-exiſtence of all Graces, ſo it gives Stability and Eſtabliſhment to all Graces. Learn hence, (1.) That Growth in Grace is accompanied with Stability both in Faith and Holineſs. (2.) That a general and abounding Charity being that by which we become moſt like unto God, tends exceedingly to our Eſtabliſhment in all Grace, and renders us unblameable before God at the Appearance of Chriſt. Learn (3.) That there will be no Poſſibility of appearing unblameable before Chriſt at his Coming, without the Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs in our Chriſtian Courſe. Learn (4.) That the perfecting of a Saint's Graces, and rendring him altogether unblameable, without Spot or Imperfection in Grace and Holineſs, is reſerved till Chriſt's Coming. Then, and not till then, ſhall our Holineſs be perfected, our Love improved to a Seraphim's Likeneſs, all burning; then ſhall we obey with Vigour, praiſe with Chearfuneſs, delight in God above Meaſure, fear him without Torment, Truſt him without Deſpondency, ſerve him without Laſſitude and Wearineſs, without Interruption or Diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him, as well in Holineſs as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality.

Come then, Lord, down to me,
Or take me up to thee.

CHAP. IV.

Our Apoſtle having in the Three foregoing Chapters, exhorted the Theſſalonians *earneſtly to contend for, and courageouſly to perſevere in that Holy Doctrine of Faith, which he had preached to them, and planted amongſt them, notwithſtanding all the Storms of Perſecution raiſed againſt them by the unbelieving Jews and oppoſing Gentiles, he comes now in the remaining Part of this Epiſtle to recommend to them ſeveral Duties and Graces, with which, as with ſo many Jewels of invaluable Price, they were to adorn their Chriſtian Converſation; and accordingly he thus beſpeaks them in the Chapter now before us,* V. 1.

FUrthermore then we beſeech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more.

In theſe Words we have a general Exhortation given to the *Theſſalonians*, that according to the Doctrine and Injunctions formerly given them for an Holy Converſation ſuitable to the Goſpel, they would make it their Care and Endeavour to abound more and more in the Exerciſe of Piety, and outſtrip themſelves in doing their Duty towards God and one another. *We beſeech you, Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus*, &c. Where *Note*, (1.) With what great Condeſcention and Earneſtneſs St. *Paul* applies himſelf to them, he ſtiles them his *Brethren*, and *exhorts* and *beſeeches* them; the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt not only be Teachers, but Beſeechers alſo, meekly and affectionately intreating Perſons to be kind to themſelves, and comply with their preſent Duty. Yet *Obſerve* (2.) With what Authority he backs his Intreaty, he beſeeches and exhorts *by the Lord Jeſus*, that is, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by his Authority, and for his Sake; ſo that he that deſpiſeth the gentle Exhortations of Chriſt's Miniſters, deſpiſeth not Men, but God, as the Authority of a Prince is deſpiſed, when his Meſſage by his Ambaſſadors is rejected. *Note* (3.) The general and comprehenſive Duty which they are exhorted to, namely, to walk ſo as to pleaſe God in their daily Converſation, to be found in the Practice of all the Duties and Virtues of a good Life. Where *Note*, That St. *Paul*, in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, did not only explain and unfold Goſpel-Myſteries, but urge and enforce Moral Duties; *ye have received of us how ye ought to walk*. This muſt be a Miniſter's Care to acquaint his People, that as the Privileges of Chriſtianity are very great, ſo the Duties it requires are ſtrict and exact, and thoſe which we call Moral Duties are an integral Part of our Religion; he that is not a Moral Man is no Chriſtian; let us Preach and Preſs Second-Table Duties, with Arguments drawn from the Firſt, namely, that they be performed in humble Obedience to the Command of God, and with a ſingle Eye at the Glory of God, and from an inward Principle of Love to God, and then we can never Preach up Morality too much, nor our People Practice it too much. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Apoſtle exhorts them to abound more and more, that is, in Grace and Holineſs; Chriſtians are to be thankful for, but not ſatisfied with their preſent Meaſures of Grace received; God allows us liberty to enlarge our Deſires after an abundance of his Grace; and happy is it where there is found an Holy Covetouſneſs going along with the Grace of God, as there is an inſatiable Covetouſneſs going along with the Gold and Treaſure of this World. This, ſays the Apoſtle here, will pleaſe God, when ye abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you, by the Lord Jeſus.

Here our Apoſtle ſubjoins a Reaſon to inforce his foregoing Exhortation; what he now required of them was nothing but what at their firſt Converſion to Chriſtianity he had commanded them, and that in the Name, and by the Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, to be performed by them, ſo that they were not his Commands, but Chriſt's by him, and as ſuch to be eſteemed of them. Learn thence, That the Inſtructions and Rules for an Holy Life laid down by the Apoſtles before the Churches, are to be lookt upon as the Commandments of Chriſt, as being dictated by his Spirit, and delivered by his Authority, and as ſuch to be received of them, and obeyed by them.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication: 4 That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour; 5 Not in the luſt of concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification; that is, this is the Will of God, eminently and emphatically revealed in his Words, that Chriſtians ſhould be Holy and Pure, Chaſte and Clean, not indulging themſelves in thoſe impure and filthy Luſts of the Fleſh, Fornication, and all manner of Uncleanneſs, which the Gentiles who knew not the true God ſavingly were addicted to, and in a moſt beaſtly manner guilty of, but that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs and make uſe of his Body, and all its Members, as the Veſſel and Inſtrument of the Soul, in Holineſs and Honour. *Obſerve* here (1.) How the Apoſtle deſcends from General to Particular Duties, he exhorted the *Theſſalonians*, *ver.* 1. in the General to walk ſo as to pleaſe God. Here he exhorted them in particular to Purity and Chaſtity, both of Heart and Life, and to watch againſt all the violent Eruptions of Concupiſcence in their earthly Members; *teaching us*, that the Miniſters of God muſt not ſatisfie themſelves with giving general Exhortations to a good Life, but muſt treat of particular Sins and Duties, and endeavour to put Men upon the practice of the one, and to reclaim them from the other; thus doth our Apoſtle here. *Obſerve* (2.) The particular Duty exhorted to *Sanctification*, a comprehenſive Word, and of large Extent; in the General it conſiſts in a Conformity of our Natures to the Nature of God, and in a Conformity of our Lives to the Will of God. In particular, *Sanctification* here ſtands in Oppoſition to all bodily Uncleanneſs, as the next Words do plainly ſhew, *that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication*, that is, all Filthineſs and Uncleanneſs contrary to Chaſtity; intimating to us, that as there are no Sins that Human Nature is more inclined to than the Luſts of the Fleſh, ſo there are no Sins that a Chriſtian ſhould more guard againſt, and ſtrive to mortifie and ſubdue, as being contrary to that Purity of Nature and Life which the Goſpel directs, and the Holy Spirit aſſiſts unto. *Obſerve* (3.) The Argument which our Apoſtle here uſes to enforce his Exhortation to Purity and Holineſs, *this is the Will of God*; 'tis both the Command of God that we ſhould be Holy, and the Will of God to make us Holy; now the Signification of God's Will ought to be a ſufficient Inducement to us to deſire it, and endeavour after it. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication.* *Obſerve* (4.) The Remedy preſcribed againſt all bodily Uncleanneſs, and that is a careful preſerving the Veſſel of the Body free from all fleſhly Pollution, and in that Meaſure of Purity and Chaſtity which is ſuitable to the Honour put upon it by God, in being made a Temple for the Holy Ghoſt, *that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour.* Where *Note*, The Title given to our Bodies, it is called a Veſſel; it is firſt the Spirit's Veſſel, he reſides in it as in his Temple; and accordingly it ſeems to be an alluſion to the Conſecrated Veſſels of the Temple, in which a more than ordinary Cleanneſs and Purity was found. Secondly, It is the Soul's Veſſel, 'tis its Veſſel or Receptacle, in which, for a time, it is preſerved, and 'tis the Inſtrument of the Soul, by which it acts and performs its Office and Function. Now it is every Perſons, every Man and Woman's Duty to poſſeſs their Body, and to be Maſters of it; not to be poſſeſſed by it, or enſlaved to it, but to keep it in ſubjection to, and as the Inſtrument of the Soul; the Body is God's curious Workmanſhip, 'tis Chriſt's precious Purchaſe, 'tis the Soul's Receptacle, 'tis the Holy Ghoſt's Temple, therefore to be kept Holy, Pure, and Clean, like the Conſecrated Veſſels of the Temple. *Obſerve* (5.) Our Apoſtle exhorts the *Theſſalonians*, not only to abſtain from the outward Act of Uncleanneſs, but to mortifie and ſubdue the inward *Luſt of Concupiſcence*, ver. 5. Or as the Word ſignifies, the feveriſh Fit or violent Paſſion of burning Deſire, which boileth within, thro' all the Members of the Body without. There is a Divine Art in the Exerciſe of Chaſtity, and no ſmall Skill required to keep a Man's Soul and Body free from fleſhly Uncleanneſs, in order to which, inordinate Deſires muſt be reſiſted, the outward Senſes guarded, enticing and enſnaring Objects avoided, wanton Company declined, Meat, Drink, and Sleep ſoberly uſed, our lawful Callings diligently followed, the firſt Motions to Uncleanneſs ſuppreſſed, Prayer to God renewed, and if theſe prevail not, Marriage, God's ſpecial Remedy, holily made uſe of. Thus may Chriſtians poſſeſs their Veſſels in Sanctification and Honour, *not in the Luſts of Concupiſcence.*

6 That *no man* go beyond, and defraud his brother in *any* matter; becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch, as we alſo have forewarned you, and teſtified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs. 8 He therefore that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God, who hath alſo given unto us his holy Spirit.

Here we have another poſitive Duty preſt upon the *Theſſalonians*, in which a great part of their Sanctification or Holineſs would diſcover itſelf, namely, Juſtice and Equity in all their Dealings, Man with Man. *Theſſalonica* was a City of great Trade and Merchandiſe, therefore the Apoſtle directs them in their Traffick and Commerce, neither by Fraud nor Force to over-reach and go beyond one another; and the Apoſtle's ſaying, let none go beyond or defraud his *Brother*, that is, his Fellow-Chriſtian, doth not ſuppoſe it lawful to defraud ſuch as were not their Brethren, but only lets them ſee, that for Chriſtians to defraud and cheat, to over-reach and go beyond one another, would be a very great Aggravation of their Crime, ſeeing the Laws of their Religion, as well as the Light of Nature, condemns all ſuch Injuſtice and Diſhoneſty. And accordingly the Apoſtle adds a Reaſon to enforce his Exhortation, drawn from the dreadful Effect of all ſuch Sins, namely, That it expoſes and lays open the guilty Perſon to the direful Vengeance of God; the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch. Learn hence, (1.) That the Wiſdom of God has variouſly diſpenſed the Gifts of Providence to Mankind; to ſome more, to others leſs, to ſome in one Kind, to others in another, ſo that Men cannot live without mutual Commerce one with another. Learn (2.)

That there is ſuch a covetous and inſatiable Deſire of Wealth in the Heart of Man, that little regarding the Meaſure of wordly Things, which God has diſpens'd unto him, he lies at Catch to take all Advantages of his Neighbour in matter of Commerce, and by defrauding and over-reaching him, ſeeks to encreaſe his own wordly Eſtate with impairing of others; *Let no man go beyond his Brother.* The Apoſtle by forbidding this Evil, plainly ſuppoſes Man very prone and ready to fall into it. Learn (3.) That the Sin of Injuſtice in Traffick and Commerce, is ſo very heinous in the ſight of God, that ſuch Men as are guilty of it, without Repentance, muſt never expect to eſcape the Vengeance of God, either here or hereafter; God is the Avenger of all ſuch. *Obſerve* next, The Reaſons urged by St. *Paul* to enforce his foregoing Exhortations to Purity and Juſtice. The firſt is taken from the Deſign of God in their Vocation; when called out of their Heatheniſh State to Chriſtianity, they were called not to Uncleanneſs, but out of Uncleanneſs unto Holineſs. The ſecond is taken from the heinouſneſs of their Sin, who ſhall deſpiſe or reject the Commands here given for Holineſs and Sanctification; *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God*; to diſpiſe the Miniſter of God in a Command which he delivers from God, is to deſpiſe God himſelf; the Apoſtle gave theſe Commands by the Direction of the Holy Spirit, which was given him for that End, *who hath alſo given unto us his Holy Spirit:* Therefore ſays he, *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man, but God.* Where *Note,* That altho' the reaſon here given why ſuch as deſpiſed the Apoſtle, deſpiſed God himſelf, be peculiar to St. *Paul*, who had the Holy Spirit to guide him infallibly; yet ſo far as the ordinary Miniſters of Chriſt do follow the Apoſtle's Steps, and deliver nothing but what is agreeable to the Word of God, the Contempt of their Meſſage is a deſpiſing of God himſelf; *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God.*

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye your ſelves are taught of God to love one another. 10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beſeech you, brethren, that ye encreaſe more and more:

Our Apoſtle proceeds from an Exhortation to Chaſtity and Juſtice, to preſs that of Love, called here *Brotherly Love*, becauſe it has all Chriſtians, all our Fellow-Members in Chriſt for its Object; and he perſwades to the Practice of it by a winning Inſinuation, that he need not ſay much upon this Argument, becauſe they were taught of God, that is, by the Goſpel of God, and influenced by the Spirit of God, to love one another. And *Obſerve* we farther, the Extenſiveneſs of their Love, it was not confined to a Party, only to them in *Theſſalonica*, but throughout all *Macedonia*; however, he deſires them to extend it ſtill further, *to abound more and more*, that is, firſt in the Extent of it; let it reach not only the Saints throughout *Macedonia*, but even to them at the Ends of the Earth. Secondly, In the Meaſure of it, to excel even themſelves in the Degrees of their Love. Learn hence, That neither *Brotherly Love*, nor any other Chriſtian Grace, doth advance to ſuch an Heighth in any Saint here, but it is ſtill capable of farther Augmentation and Encreaſe, both intenſively, by advancing to farther Meaſures, and higher Degrees of Perfection, and extenſively, reaching to more Objects, who ought to be Sharers in our Love.

11 And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you,)

It is ſuppoſed by ſome, that the Charity and Bounty of theſe *Theſſalonians*, mentioned in the foregoing Verſes, occaſioned ſome Perſons to be Idle, and carry Tales from Houſe to Houſe, ſeeking by ſuch Flatteries and Inſinuations to maintain themſelves without Working; the Apoſtle therefore commands every Man to work at ſome Calling, that they neither be a Burthen to the Church, nor give a Scandal to the Heathen. *Study to be Quiet*, that is, to be of a peaceable Spirit and Temper; and the original Word imports an ambitious Study; it ought to be our ambitious Deſire to live quietly and peaceably with all Men; and to live ſo with ſome Men will require Study, and earneſt Endeavour: *If it be poſſible, live peaceable with all men*, ſays St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 12. 18. implying, that there are ſome Men that it is impoſſible to live peaceably with; and whereas he adds, *doing our own Buſineſs, and working with our Hands*; that Apoſtolical Injunction requires, that every Perſon be well imployed, and found in the Way of an honeſt and induſtrious Diligence, for no Man is ſent into the World to be Idle; and as it is every Man's Duty, ſo is it alſo his Privilege to have a Calling; the want of which expoſes to innumerable Temptations, for the Devil finds an idle Perſon always ready to run of his Errand.

12 That ye may walk honeſtly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Our Apoſtle having exhorted the *Theſſalonians* to Induſtry and Diligence in the foregoing Verſe, he preſſes it with a double Argument in this Verſe. (1.) Hereby they ſhould walk honeſtly towards them that are without, that is, in a decent and ſeemly manner in the Eyes of unconverted Pagans, who are ſaid to be without, becauſe without the Pale of the viſible Church; and, (2.) Becauſe, by God's Bleſſing upon their Induſtry, they would attain to ſuch a Competency of the things of this Life, as to lack nothing which the Wiſdom of God ſaw fit and convenient for them, ſo that by an induſtrious Diligence we pleaſe God, we profit our ſelves, are ſerviceable to the Publick, we ſilence and ſtop the Mouths of the Enemies of Religion, and beautifie our Profeſſion with a becoming Converſation.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

Our Apoſtle, from this Verſe, to the end of the Chapter, exhorts the *Theſſalonians* to moderate their Grief and Sorrow for their Friends who died in Chriſt, many of which, no doubt, were Martyrs for the Truth in thoſe Days of Perſecution: He lays down many conſolatory Arguments, as ſo many Sovereign Antidotes againſt immoderate Sorrow for the Death of Pious Relations; and firſt he acquaints them, that ſuch Sorrow as is exceſſive, would be more like Pagans than Chriſtians, who mourn without Hope of any Life after this, that is, of a Reſurrection from the Grave and a State of future Immortality. Our Apoſtle doth not forbid Sorrow for the Dead abſolutely, which Chriſt ſhewed for *Lazarus*, and the Church for *Stephen*, but it is exceſſive Sorrow only that is here condemned. Learn hence (1.) That all Sorrow for the Death of Friends is not unlawful, or forbidden to Chriſtians; Chriſtian Religion doth not deſtroy natural Affections, but teaches us to moderate them. Learn (2.) That there is a mighty Difference between the Chriſtian's Sorrow for the Dead, and theirs who are Strangers to Chriſtianity; the Sorrow of the Heathen was extravagant and exceſſive in the Meaſure, fooliſh, cruel, and impious in the manner; they tore their Hair, beat their Breaſts, cut their Fleſh, and ran howling up and down in the moſt deſperate manner; but the Chriſtian's Sorrow is ſober, ſilent, moderate, free from Oſtentation under the Government of Reaſon and Religion. Learn (3.) That the Belief of a future State, and the Hope of a joyful Reſurrection, is the Cauſe of this great Difference; it is Ignorance of the Happineſs of glorified Saints in Heaven which is the Cauſe of our immoderate Sorrow for their Death here on Earth.

14 For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.

St. *Paul* having, in the foregoing Verſe, diſſwaded from immoderate Grief and Sorrow for the Death of Relations, comes now to lay down ſeveral Conſiderations, or conſolatory Arguments in order to it. The firſt Word of comfort is this, that our Relations over whom we mourn are but fallen aſleep; the Grave is a Bed in which the Saint is laid to reſt, his Body reſts in a Bed of Duſt, as in a ſafe and conſecrated Dormitory, till the Morning of the Reſurrection: and if the Night be long the Morning will be the more Joyous. The ſecond Comfort is, they ſleep in Jeſus, that is, in Union with Jeſus, as Members of his Body; in the Faith of Jeſus, that is, in ſuch a Belief of the Doctrine of Chriſt as is accompanied with an holy Obedience to the Commands of *Chriſt*. The third conſolatory Word is this, God will come, that is, to Judgment, and when he cometh will bring his ſleeping Saints with him, that is, he will bring their Souls from Heaven, their Bodies from the Grave: Body and Soul united he ſhall take up to himſelf into the Clouds, and then carry all his Saints back with him into Heaven. A Fourth is this, our Relations are not alone in Death; *Jeſus died*, the Captain of our Salvation march'd before us thro' the black Regions of Death and the Grave, and has perfumed the Bed of the Grave by his own lying in it. *Note* here the Apoſtle ſays, *Jeſus died*, the *Saints ſleep*; a Believer's Death is called a Sleep; I do not find that Chriſt's Death is called a Sleep; no, his Death was Death indeed, Death with a Curſe in it; but the Believer's Death is turn'd by Chriſt into a ſweet and ſilent Sleep. Again, Jeſus died and *roſe again*, that's a comforting Conſideration, he was laid, but not loſt in the Grave; he roſe by his own Power, he roſe as our Head and Repreſentative, and accordingly all his Saints are riſen in him, and ſhall riſe after him; becauſe I live, ſays Chriſt, you ſhall live alſo.

15 For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep.

In this Verſe St. *Paul* obviates an Objection, ſome might ſay, that the Saints found alive at the laſt Day might be ſooner happy than the dead Saints; no, ſays the Apoſtle, they that are alive ſhall not prevent them that ſleep, they ſhall not prevent their riſing, nor ſhall they get the Start of them, or get to Heaven before them, or have any Advantage above them; the living Saints ſhall not be made happy without them, nor one Moment before them. Learn hence, That the Reſurrection which the Saints that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall be made Partakers of, ſhall put them into as full a Capacity of the Glory of Chriſt's coming, as if they had remained Alive in the Body till that bleſſed Hour: Nay, the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, that is, the Saints who ſleep in the Grave at Chriſt's coming ſhall be ſo far from being made leſs Happy, or later Happy, than the Saints who ſhall be found Alive, that they ſhall be firſt remembred; Chriſt's firſt Care will be about his dead Saints; they that have ſlept ſo long in their Bed of Duſt ſhall be firſt awakened before any thing be done about them that never ſlept; if there be any Privilege, any Joy, any Triumph, greater than others, ſuch as ſleep in Jeſus, and eſpecially ſuch as have ſuffered for Jeſus, ſhall be Partakers of it at that great Day.

16 For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt.

Theſe Words give us the Aſſurance of the Certainty of Chriſt's Second Coming, and of the ſolemn Manner of it, and of the Conſequent of it. *Obſerve* (1.) The Certainty of our Lord's Coming, *the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven*, that is, the Lord Jeſus, the Mediator; he will not depute an Angel, but deſcend himſelf to finiſh that laſt Part of his Mediatorial Office. Chriſt will come perſonally, for the Judgment will be managed viſibly; and for the Recompence of his Abaſement it is requiſite that he that was judged by the World ſhould come and judge the World; Reaſon ſays, he may come and judge the World, for he made it; Faith ſays, he muſt and ſhall come to judge the World, for he has promiſed it, *Joh.* 14. 2. Let us then keep up our Faith, and our Faith will keep up our Hearts. *Obſerve* (2.) The awful and ſolemn Manner of our Lord's Coming, and that is Threefold. (1.) He ſhall deſcend with a Shout; the original Word ſignifies ſuch a Shout as is heard amongſt Seamen when they deſcry the Haven, and with united Voices cry out, a Shore, a Shore. (2.) With the Voice of an Archangel; probable it is that Chriſt himſelf ſhall give the Word of Command, both to the Quick and Dead, to appear before him, and that this Command ſhall be proclaimed by an Archangel. (3.) With the Trump of God; the Angel's Proclamation ſhall be confirmed by Sound of a Trumpet, which will be heard far and near, even by thoſe who are in the Graves, and in the Depth of the Sea. Learn hence, that our Lord's Second Coming at the great Day to judge the Quick and the Dead ſhall be attended with ſuch Solemnity, that all the Terror, Majeſty, and dreadful Reverence, which has been ever ſeen upon the Earth, ſhall fall infinitely ſhort of it; great was the Terror on Mount *Sinai* at the giving of the Law, but far greater will the Terror be at the Day of Judgment, when Chriſt comes to puniſh the Tranſgreſſors of that Law, and the Diſobeyers of his Goſpel, *Obſerve* (3.) The bleſſed Conſequence of his coming, namely, the Reſurrection of the Saints: *The Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*; the Saints ſhall riſe with the very ſame Bodies which they laid down in the Grave; and they ſhall riſe firſt, that is, before thoſe who are alive ſhall be changed, tho' it is very probable that there will be no conſiderable Difference of time between the Glorification of the raiſed Saints and thoſe that are alive at Chriſt's coming‘ yet it ſeems evident that the Dead Saints ſhall be raiſed, and in their bodies be glorified, before them that are alive ſhall be changed.

17 Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Triumphant Aſcenſion both of the Living and Sleeping Saints, together into the Clouds; *we which are alive ſhall be caught up together with them into the Clouds.* This Aſcenſion ſhall be effected by the Power of Chriſt, by the Miniſtry of Angels, and by the Spirituality of the Saints own Bodies. Learn hence, That the Deſcent of the Saints of God into the Grave is not with ſo much Weakneſs, Ignominy and Abaſement, as their Aſcent after the Reſurrection, to meet their Lord in the Air, ſhall be with Power, Triumph and Glory; Chriſt ſhall draw them, Clouds ſhall carry them, Angels ſhall conduct them. *Obſerve* (2.) The bleſſed meeting of all the Saints together in one Body, to take their Flight together to meet the Lord Jeſus, who comes from the Third Heaven to meet them in the loweſt Region of the Air, when Chriſt will own them in their Perſons, own them in their Services, own them in their Sufferings, and they ſhall receive their full and final Benediction from *the Mouth* of Chriſt, and take an everlaſting Poſſeſſion of the Heavenly Kingdom, together with Chriſt. *Obſerve* (3.) The Saints Cohabitation and Fellowſhip with Chriſt, together with its Extent and Duration, they ſhall for ever be with the Lord; this implies the Saints Preſence with Chriſt, their Viſion and Sight of him, their Fruition and Injoyment of him, their Delectation in him, their Conformity to him. Learn hence, that the Top and Height of the Saints Bleſſedneſs in Heaven conſiſts in this, that they ſhall for ever be there with Chriſt.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.

That is, draw Matter of Conſolation to your ſelves, from the foregoing Conſiderations, againſt the Loſs of your deceaſed Friends, intimating, that the beſt and choiceſt of Comforts, for ſupporting the Spirits of Men under Afflictions in general, and the Loſs of dear Relations in particular, are drawn from the Holy Scriptures; *comfort one another with theſe Words*, that is, with ſuch Scriptural Words as he had now written.

CHAP. V.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapter treated of Chriſt's Second Coming to Judgment, and fore-ſeeing that ſome curious Perſons might take Occaſion from thence to enquire into the Time when the General Reſurrection and fnture Judgment ſhould be, in this Chapter he makes it his Buſineſs to divert them from all ſuch Enquiries, and to put them upon the Practice and Performance of ſuch Duties as would prepare and fit them for that ſolemn Time. Where Note, *That it was revealed to St.* Paul, *wheu he wrote this Epiſtle, that there ſhould be a Second Coming of Chriſt to Judgment, and that it ſhonld be very ſudden and unexpected, but that it ſhould not be till the Departing from the Faith, till the Revelation and Deſtruction of Antichriſt,* 2 Theſ. 2. 3. *This it ſeems was an After-Revelation, for the Lord did not at Once reveal all his Secrets to his Servants, but by Parcels.*

BUT of the times and the ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For your ſelves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they ſhall ſay, peace and ſafety; then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they ſhall not eſcape.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, altho' I have told you that there will be a General Reſurrection and future Judgment, when Chriſt will certainly come in the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, yet I ſuppoſe you do not expect that I ſhould write to you of the particular Time of his Coming; for you have been told, that his coming will be like the coming of a Thief, without Warning, and without Noiſe, when Perſons are moſt ſecure, leaſt ſuſpecting, and wholly unprovided for it, yea, as the Pains of a Woman in Travail, which are unavoidable; the Thief may perhaps not come, but the Pains of Child-birth muſt come, and alſo be painful when they come. Learn hence, (1.) That the Wiſdom of God has thought fit to conceal and keep ſecret the determinate Time of Chriſt's coming to Judgment, and yet there is an itching Curioſity in Man's Nature to ſearch and pry into that profound Secret, tho' the Knowledge of it is not only impoſſible, but would prove unprofitable and hurtful to Mankind, making the World ſecure and careleſs, whereas not knowing the Hour when our Lord cometh, ſhould oblige us to be upon our Watch every Hour. *Note* then, that our Lord will certainly come at one Hour or other, but at what Hour he will come, cannot certainly be known, yet is there no Hour when we can promiſe ourſelves that he will not come. *Note* laſtly, That the Pain and Sorrow, the Trouble and Horror which the Day of the Lord will bring upon ſuch as are unready and unprepared for it, no Tongue can utter, no Heart can conceive; the greateſt of Earthly and Bodily Torments and Sorrows, ſuch as the Pangs of a Woman in Travail, being but weak Shadows, and ſlender Repreſentations of it; the Day of the Lord cometh *as travail upon a woman with child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs, that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs.

Note here, the Wiſdom and holy Caution of our Apoſtle in his Application to the *Theſſalonians*; he had in the foregoing Verſes aſſerted the Certainty and Suddenneſs of Chriſt's coming, namely, to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, and to Judge the World. Now leſt theſe Chriſtians ſhould be terrified in their Minds, and ſhaken with Apprehenſions of Fear from that ſudden Deſtruction he had mention'd, he caſts in a ſeaſonable Word of Comfort here in the Words before us, aſſuring them that were ſincere Chriſtians amongſt them, that how ſudden ſoever the Coming and Appearance of Chriſt might be, yet it ſhould not find them unready and unprepared for it, becauſe they were not in Darkneſs, but in the Light, and were not Children of the Night, but of the Day; that is, they were not now in a ſtate of Heatheniſm, but Chriſtianity; they were not any longer in their groſs and natural Ignorance of God, as they were before Converſion, but they were the Children of the Light, and of the Day, Living and Walking in the Light of the Goſpel, and in all Holineſs of Converſation. Learn hence, That as ſincere Chriſtians are freed from the groſs Darkneſs of their Natural State, from the Darkneſs of Ignorance and Sin, and [illegible] walk in the Light of an Holy Converſation, ſo their Knowledge and practical Holineſs will be a good Security againſt the Terror of ſurpriſing Afflictions, and particularly againſt the Dread and Terror of the Day of Judgment, *ye are not in darkneſs, that that Day ſhould overtake you as a thief.*

6 Therefore let us not ſleep as *do* others; but let us watch and be ſober. 7 For they that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be ſober, putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation.

The Apoſtle having acquainted the *Theſſalonians* with the Privilege of their converted State, that they were the Children of the Light, having receiv'd a Light of Knowledge, a Light of Grace and Holineſs, and a Light of Joy and Comfort from the Goſpel, he comes next to infer the Duties proper and ſuitable to Perſons in ſuch a State: Firſt, Negative, *let us not ſleep as do others*; Sleep is not proper for the Day, but the Night, the Sleep here intended is the Sleep of Sin, and of ſinful Security, whereby all the Spiritual Senſes of a Man are bound up, ſo that he is both unapprehenſive of his Duty, and regardleſs of his Danger. *Secondly*, Poſitive, *let us watch and be ſober*; that is, let us be always ready and prepared for Chriſt's Coming; and that we may be ſo, let us be found in the daily Exerciſe of Sobriety, at no time overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and that Day overtake us unawares; the Exerciſe of theſe two Graces, Watchfulneſs and Sobriety do beſt together, and can hardly be ſeparated one from another; he that is not Sober cannot be Watchful, and he that is not Watchful can never be ready for Chriſt's Coming, let us therefore (ſays the Apoſtle) *watch and be ſober*. *Obſerve* next, Our Apoſtle ſubjoins a Reaſon to enforce his Exhortation to Watchfulneſs and Sobriety, becauſe Sleep and Drunkenneſs are Works of Darkneſs, performed in the Night, and not ſuitable for the Children of the Day. *They that ſleep, ſleep in the night, and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night.* The Old Heathens had their *Bacchanalia*, their drunken Feaſts in the Night; and in the Apoſtles Times Drunkenneſs was ſo ſhameful a Vice, that Men were aſhamed to be ſeen drunken in the Day-time; but, Lord, to what an height of Impudence is the Intemperance of our Age arriv'd at, when Chriſtians bluſh not to do that at Mid-day, which Heathens were aſham'd of at Mid-night. *Obſerve* farther, another Reaſon ſuggeſted, why we ſhould be thus *Sober* and *Watchful*, namely, becauſe our Life is a Spiritual Warfare: 'Tis now a time of Fighting, therefore not of Sleeping, and intemperate Eating and Drinking; Soldiers muſt be upon their Guard, and well armed; accordingly St. *Paul* directs to the Two principal Pieces of Spiritual Armour, to Guard the moſt Noble and Vital Parts, namely, the Head and the Heart, the Helmet for the Head, the Breaſt-plate for the Heart; for theſe Two being the chief Fountains of Life and Senſation, the preſerving of them ſafe, is, in effect, the preſerving of the whole Man; and accordingly the Soldiers that were upon their Watch, and kept Sentinel, never ſtood without their Helmet and Breaſt-plate. In Alluſion to which our Apoſtle here directs us, as Chriſtian Soldiers, to put on the Breaſt-plate of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation, without which we can never be rightly and duly prepared for our ſpiritual Warfare. *Note* here, of what admirable uſe Faith, Love, and Hope are to a Chriſtian; Faith fortifies againſt deſtructive Temptations, Love will preſerve from Apoſtacy and Revolting, and Hope will be of univerſal uſe unto us in the Exerciſes of our Chriſtian Courſe; it will be a Cordial to comfort us, a Spur to quicken us, a Staff to ſupport us, a Bridle to reſtrain us, an Helmet to defend us; *therefore let us who are of the day, be ſober, putting on the breaſt-place of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of ſalvation.*

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 10 Who died for us, that whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort your ſelves together, and edifie one another, even as alſo ye do.

Obſerve here, (1.) A Reaſon enforcing the Apoſtle's Exhortation to Holineſs of Life, for, or becauſe *God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt.* *Note* here (1.) What a Chriſtian is not appointed to; he is not appointed to Wrath. (2.) What he is appointed to, namely, to obtain Salvation. (3.) The Means by whom a Chriſtian doth obtain Salvation, and that is by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Learn hence, That God's Ordination and Appointment of us to Happineſs and Salvation doth not diſcharge us from Care and Endeavour after the Practice of univerſal Holineſs; it is the greateſt Piece of Folly imaginable, from the Appointment of the End, to infer the Refuſal or Neglect of the Means. Learn (2.) That our Lord Jeſus

Chriſt is the Perſon appointed by God the Father, by whom alone all Believers ſhall obtain Salvation. Learn (3.) That nothing ſhort of the Death of Chriſt was ſufficient to purchaſe Salvation for us, *we obtain ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us.* Learn (4.) that the great End deſigned by Chriſt in dying for us, was our living to him, in order to our living with him; a Life of Grace on Earth is our Evidence for a Life of Glory in Heaven; *whether we wake or ſleep we ſhould live together with him.* *Obſerve* laſtly, The great and important Duty which he exhorts the *Theſſalonians* to perform mutually to each other, and that is, to comfort themſelves together with this Hope, and to edifie and build up one another in Faith and Holineſs; *wherefore comfort yourſelves together, and edifie one another, as alſo ye do,* implying, that as it is the Duty, ſo it ought to be the Endeavour of Chriſtians to edifie one another, both in their Graces, and in their Comforts.

12 And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you; 13 And to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake. *And* be at peace among your ſelves.

In theſe Words have we declar'd both the Miniſter's Office, and the People's Duty; the Miniſter's Office, with reſpect unto his People, and the Peoples Duty both towards their Miniſters, and one towards another. The Miniſterial Office and Function is here deſcribed, and conſiſts of Three Parts, publickly to *Labour*, privately to *Admoniſh*, miniſterially to *Rule*. To *Labour* in the Word and Doctrine, the Word ſignifies a Labour unto Wearineſs. Our Work is the moſt weighty Work, and, bleſſed be God, the moſt worthy Work too. *Admonition* conſiſts of Two Parts, reproving of Sins committed, and exhorting to Duties neglected; rightly to do both requires that the Miniſter be a Perſon of Knowledge and Underſtanding, of Prudence and Diſcretion, of Courage and Reſolution, of Integrity and Unblamableneſs of Converſation. To *Rule*, not Magiſterially, much leſs Tyrannically, but in Love, and with a Spirit of Meekneſs, executing that Power which Chriſt has given for Edification, and not for Deſtruction. Such a Power as the Shepherd has over the Flock to Guide and Conduct it, as the Head has over the Members to Influence and Quicken them, as the Father of the Family has over the Houſhold to take Care of it, and provide for it. *Obſerve* (2.) The People's Duty to their Paſtors, or ſpiritual Guide declared; and this is Twofold. (1.) They are to know them, and this with a Knowledge of Obſervation, with a Knowledge of Approbation, and with a Knowledge of Imitation. (2.) They are highly to eſteem them, paying Honour to the Function, Reverence to their Perſons, and all this in Love, and for their Work ſake. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Peoples Duty one towards another, *and be at peace among your ſelves*; ſuch a People can never join Hearts in Duty that cannot join Hands in Love; Chriſtian Love is a Nurſing-mother to all Graces, and tends exceedingly to make the Work of the Miniſtry ſucceſsful; but when Strife and Diſſention, when Diſcord and Diviſion prevails, either amongſt the People themſelves, or betwixt Miniſter and People, farewel all Expectation of Succeſs from the ableſt Miniſtry upon Earth.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, ſupport the weak, be patient toward all men.

Here our Apoſtle directs the Miniſters of Chriſt how to carry themſelves towards their People, namely, that they ſhould *Admoniſh* thoſe that are Unruly, and walk Diſorderly, that they ſhould *Comfort the feebleminded*, ſuch as are diſpirited by, and dejected under their Afflictions, that they ſhould bear with the weak in Faith, and be Patient towards all Mankind. *Note* hence, That the Church of Chriſt here on Earth is like an Hoſpital of ſickly and infirm Perſons, labouring under great variety of ſpiritual Diſeaſes, and conſequently fit Objects for Chriſt's Miniſters to exerciſe their Patience and Pains upon; ſome unruly, ſome weak, ſome feebleminded; every Perſon, every Member of the Church is a Patient, and every Patient has his particular Diſtemper, which calls for indefatigable Diligence, and invincible Patience, from ſuch as are Spiritual Phyſicians.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever follow that which is good, both among your ſelves, and to all men.

Our Apoſtle from this Verſe cloſes his Epiſtle with a general Exhortation to all Chriſtians to be found in the Practice of ſeveral neceſſary and important Duties, the firſt of which is to abſtain from all Revenge, *render to no man evil for evil*; a malicious Deſire of Revenge is ſo far beneath a Chriſtian, that it is the Baſeneſs of a Man; let him that does the Wrong look to it, could an Heathen ſay; not only Revenge in the Action, but in the Affection, is greatly ſinful before God, and deeply Penal alſo; as Jealouſie is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice and Revenge is the Rage of the Devil, 'tis the very Soul and Spirit of the Apoſtate Nature.

15 ----But ever follow that which is good, *&c.*

By *Good* here, as it ſtands in oppoſition to rendring Evil, muſt be underſtood Good-will and Beneficence, or doing Good to Enemies, and this the Apoſtle will have us *follow*, or, as the Word ſignifies, purſue with Eagerneſs, as the Hunter doth his Game, and this continually. *Ever follow that which is Good*, without Interuption, notwithſtanding a multiplication of Injuries; and this not only among themſelves, who were Chriſtian Profeſſors, but even amongſt Heathens, (with whom they lived) tho' bitter Enemies to Chriſtianity. Learn hence, That a Chriſtian muſt not turn Vindictive and Impatient, or incline to any Deſires or Motions towards private Revenge, notwithſtanding the malicious Temper of his Adverſary continues, but inſtead of being *overcome of evil*, muſt labour to *overcome evil with good*; *render to no Man evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good, both among your ſelves and to all men.*

16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceaſing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.

Obſerve here (1.) Three very extenſive and comprehenſive Duties, which our Apoſtle exhorts unto, all which have a kind of Univerſality annext unto them; now the more comprehenſive any Duty is, the greater its Obligation is; *the firſt* Duty is to *rejoice evermore*, that is, to carry ourſelves ſo holily towards God, and ſo circumſpectly and unblameably before Men, that we may always have Cauſe for Rejoicing, and in the midſt of Temptations, and in the midſt of Poverty and Affliction may actually rejoice in the Expectation of preſent Advantage by them, and in the Hope of the Glory of God, as the Reward of them. Learn hence, That the Children of God ought to make Conſcience of Rejoicing in God at all Times, and in all Conditions: but is not there a time to Mourn as well as to Rejoice? Yes, but it is no where ſaid, Mourn evermore; nay, Holy Mourning has the Seed of ſpiritual Joy in it; it directly tends to it, and will certainly end in it; Mourning is but a Temporary, Rejoicing is an Eternal Duty; *rejoice evermore.*

17 Pray without ceaſing.

Note from the Connexion, that he that would Rejoice evermore, muſt Pray evermore; ſeldom Praying and conſtant Rejoicing will never ſtand together; according to our Conſtancy in Prayer, ſuch will be the Conſtancy of our Joy. *Note* (2.) That frequent and conſtant Prayer to God is a Duty requir'd of all Chriſtians; we are then ſaid to do a thing continually when we do it ſeaſonably, when we Pray at ſtated Times, Morning and Evening every Day, when upon extraordinary Occaſions we perform the Duty in an extraordinary Manner, and when we perform it with unfainting Perſeverance, both frequently and fervently, tho' we receive no preſent Anſwer to our Prayers; and, in a word, when the Heart is always kept in a praying Frame, this is to pray continually; and the Reaſon for it is, becauſe we ſtand in continual need of God, we want him continually, we ſin againſt him continually, we are ſurrounded with Temptations continually, we are expoſed to Troubles and Afflictions continually, and we ought to glorifie God continually, and if ſo, we muſt Pray continually; not that a Man ſhould do nothing elſe but Pray; for tho' we may do nothing without Prayer, yet we muſt do many things beſides Praying.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.

Obſerve here (1.) The Duty requir'd, and that is Thankſgiving. (2.) The extent of the Duty, *in every thing give thanks*, that is, be thankful in every Condition, and for every providential Diſpenſation, both proſperous and adverſe. *Queſt.* Should Chriſtians be thankful for Afflictions? Yes, becauſe they are Fruits of Fatherly Love, becauſe they conform us unto Chriſt, becauſe they prevent Sin, and purge out Sin, becauſe they fit us for Glory, and will add to our Crown of Glory at the Great Day. *Queſt.* But ſhould Chriſtians be thankful for Sin, or when they fall into Sin? By no means. *Rule*, What we muſt not pray for, we may not give thanks for; we muſt pray to be kept from Sin, therefore may not give Thanks when we fall into Sin; Sin diſhonours God, diſrobes our ſelves, expoſes to God's Wrath and Curſe, is the Ground of our juſt Deteſtation, therefore cannot be the Ground of Thankſgiving; yet when we obtain Pardon of Sin, or get any good by Sin, we may and ought to rejoice in it. *Obſerve* (3.) The Grounds and Reaſon of the Duty. (1.) It is *the Will of God*, his revealed Will; this the Law of Nature directs to, and the Light of Scripture calls for, and he that performs it ſpiritually, glorifies God abundantly. (2.) It is the Will of God in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, this Part of God's Will is eſpecially reveal'd to you by the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, and by the Example of Chriſt Jeſus; Chriſt was both a great Pattern and Preſident of Thankfulneſs all his Life long: he thanked God frequently and fervently, and has made Thankfulneſs a conſiderable Part of our Goſpel-Service, *Heb.* 13. 15.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

Still *Obſerve* (1.) The Coherence and Connexion, he that would *rejoice evermore*, muſt *pray without ceaſing*; and he that would rejoice in every thing, muſt be thankful in every thing; and he that would rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually, muſt evermore keep the Spirit unquenched; the way to keep ones ſelf warm is to keep the Fire burning; *Quench not the Spirit*, that is, neither the Graces of the Spirit, nor the Motions of the Spirit. *Note* here, (1.) That the Holy Spirit of God in Man is of the Nature of Fire, as Fire it inlightneth, it inliveneth, it warmeth, it conſumeth, it purifieth and refineth, it aſcendeth upward. *Note* (2.) That this Holy Fire of the Spirit may be quenched; the Gifts, Graces, Motions, and Comforts of the Holy Spirit are of ſuch a Nature, that if they be not cheriſhed they are quenched; Fire will go out as well by neglecting it as by caſting Water upon it. *Note* (3.) That it muſt be a Chriſtian's ſpecial Care that the Graces of God's Holy Spirit be not quenched in him, nor any of its Motions reſiſted by him. Sin in general quenches the Spirit as Water quenches Fire; particularly, Sins committed againſt Knowledge and Conſcience, inordinate Love of the World, quenches the Spirit, as Earth will extinguiſh Fire as well as Water. A cold, cuſtomary, formal Performance of Holy Duties, without the exerciſe of lively Faith and holy Love in the Performance of them, will grieve and quench the Spirit, eſpecially ſenſual Luſts indulged, and Anger, Malice, and Revenge harbour'd in the Heart; the Holy Dove will not reſt upon that Man that has the Heart of a Vulture in his Breaſt and Boſom; and let us always remember, if we quench the Spirit in his Motions, he is alſo quenched by us in his Offices; he doth us many good Offices, in Prayer he is our Helper, our Aſſiſtant, he quickens to the Duty, and in the Duty, and helps our Infirmities, and makes Interceſſions for us in our Chriſtian Courſe, he Guides us, Comforts us, and bears Witneſs to our Integrity in us; all theſe good Offices will he ceaſe to do for us if he be quenched in us.

20 Deſpiſe not propheſyings.

Note here (1.) How cloſe this Duty is coupled with the former, *Quench not the ſpirit, deſpiſe not propheſying*, plainly intimating to us, that the Spirit is then dangerouſly quenched, when Propheſying, or the Preaching of the Word is ſinfully neglected. *Note* (2.) That by Propheſying here, is not meant foretelling things to come, but the Interpretation and Application of the Holy Scriptures, which we call Preaching. *Note* (3.) That by not deſpiſing it we are to underſtand, that it is our obliged Duty to put an high Value and Eſteem upon it, to attend to it, and have a great Regard for it, to Honour the publick Miniſtry as an Ordinance of God for Inſtruction, Converſion, and Edification. Learn, That it is not ſufficient that we do not ſlight the Ordinance of Preaching, nor declaim againſt it as vain and uſeleſs, (as the manner of ſome is) but we are to have an honourable Eſteem of it, and evidence that Eſteem by a due Attendance upon it; more is intended by the Holy Ghoſt than is here expreſſed; for tho' he only forbids the Sin, he intends the Duty or Grace in ſtrict Oppoſition to the Sin, namely, that Chriſtians ought to be ſo far from deſpiſing, that they ought to be very forward in embracing the Miniſtry and Preaching of the Word, *Deſpiſe not Propheſyings.*

21 Prove all things: hold faſt that which is good.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſons to whom this Advice is given, to the Church of the *Theſſalonians*, not to the Miniſters, but to the People; *v.* 12. know them that labour among you, *&c.* *Obſerve* (2.) The Advice itſelf, *prove all things*; examine, try, and approve them, with a Judgment of private Diſcretion, not of publick Diviſion. Learn (1.) That it is the Duty of all Chriſtians to examine the Grounds of their Faith and Religion, and not to take them upon Truſt; otherwiſe their embracing the beſt Religion in the World is rather the reſult of Chance than of Judgment and Choice. Learn (2.) That altho' all Doctrines and Opinions muſt be tried, yet only that which is good muſt be retained. Learn (3.) That nothing is to be held faſt but what is firſt tried; ſuppoſe we hold that which is good, yet if we have not tried and proved it to be good, 'tis no better to us than that which is Evil; to Approve before Trial is not good, tho' the thing approved be never ſo good. Inference, That this is a ſtrong Argument for the Perſpicuity and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, and againſt the Neceſſity of a living Judge; for he that muſt try all things, muſt alſo try the Doctrine of this Living Judge; and therefore till he has made this Trial, muſt not admit his Doctrine as an Article of Chriſtian Faith, for theſe Words plainly teach, that what we hold faſt muſt be firſt tried; *try all things, and hold faſt that which is good.*

22 Abſtain from all appearance of evil.

This Advice genuinely follows upon the former; after we have tried all things, we muſt hold faſt that which is good, and abſtain from Evil. Where note, the Gradation uſed by our Apoſtle, we muſt abſtain from Evil, from all Evil, from all appearance of Evil. Yet *Obſerve*, it is not the Apoſtle's Meaning that we abſtain from that which appears Evil to others, for that would be to deſtroy our Chriſtian Liberty in things indifferent, and create in our Minds continual Perplexities; there is nothing almoſt we can do, but may appear Evil to ſome. But St. *Paul* here enjoins us to abſtain from every thing, which, after Trial, ſeems Evil to our ſelves, and is judg'd by us ſo to be; yet is it our Duty not to give any juſt occaſion of Scandal to any, but to live not only *ſine crimine*, but *ſine labe*, not only without Fault, but, if poſſible, without Flaw, that the World may have nothing to ſpot us withal.

23 And the very God of peace ſanctifie you wholly: and I *pray God* your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) That our Apoſtle having exhorted the *Theſſalonians* to labour after the higheſt Meaſures of Sanctification, breathes out his Soul here in a moſt affectionate Prayer to God to Sanctifie them throughly and throughout; teaching us, that Inſtruction and Supplication ſhould go together; after we have been inſtant with our People, we muſt be earneſt and inſtant with God for them. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon whom the Apoſtle directs his Prayer for Sanctification to, *the God of peace:* But why doth he not ſtile him the God of Grace? Becauſe Peace and Unity is one very eminent Part of that Sanctification the Apoſtle had prayed for, and had exhorted them before unto, *v.*13. *be at peace among your ſelves.* Now this Grace once well rooted, all the other Parts of Sanctification thrive the better. *Obſerve* (3.) How thorough and prevailing a Work of Sanctification the Apoſtle prays for, namely, that God would ſanctifie them wholly, in Spirit, Soul, and Body. By Spirit underſtand the ſuperior Faculties, the Underſtanding, the Will and Conſcience; by Soul, the inferior Faculties, the Paſſions, Affections, and ſenſitive Appetite; and by Body the outward Man, the Tabernacle of the Soul. Now the Apoſtle prays, that all theſe may be ſanctified, becauſe they are all defiled. Bleſſed be God Regenerating Grace is as univerſal a Principle as Original Sin was; it is in the Underſtanding by Illumination, in the Will by Renovation, in all the Affections by Sanctification, reducing thoſe rebellious Powers under the Government and Dominion of Reaſon and Religion. *Obſerve* (4.) Our Apoſtle doth not only pray for their Sanctification, but for their Preſervation alſo, that they may be *preſerved blameleſs to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, preſerved in a State of Grace and Holineſs unto the End; all the ſanctified are preſerved; Inſtability is an Argument of Inſincerity; within a while all Poſſibilities of Falling will be removed; in the mean while take heed of Falling, by thinking it impoſſible to fall, for none ſo near Falling, as thoſe who are moſt confident of their own ſtrength and ſtanding.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it.

Here our Apoſtle comforts the *Theſſalonians* with the Aſſurance that God, who had called them to the Knowledge of Chriſtianity, would do what he had prayed for, namely, Sanctifie them wholly, and Preſerve them blameleſs, and this becauſe *God is faithful*, that is, always the ſame, true to his Word. God will certainly do his Part in and towards the Work of Sanctification and Preſervation; but in a way of Concurrence with our Care and Induſtry he will do nothing without us, as we can do nothing without him; God's Faithfulneſs is a Pledge to us of the Performance of all his Promiſes, and will moſt certainly put him upon the Performance of them; but his Promiſe to us always ſuppoſes, yea, exacts from us the uſe of all Means, and particularly the exerting of our own Endeavours, in order to our preſervation in Grace, and perſeverance in Holineſs: *Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it.*

25 Brethren, pray for us.

Obſerve who it is that begs Prayer, a great Apoſtle, St. *Paul* himſelf; and who it is he begs Prayer from, the Brethren, Chriſtians, and Fellow-Members of the Church at *Theſſalonica*. Thoſe that are moſt eminent for Gifts and Graces, are greatly deſirous of the Saints Prayers; particularly the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as they ſtand moſt in need of, ſo are they moſt importunate for this ſpiritual Alms, which they crave as earneſtly as ever Beggar did Bread at a Rich Man's Gate. See on 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 1.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs.

Our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with Salutations to all the Brethren and Members of the Church, without Exception, Poor and Rich, adviſing them to manifeſt and teſtifie their Affection one to another by a Kiſs given to each other, a Ceremony of Civility much in Uſe in thoſe Eaſtern Countries; yet requires that it ſhould not be a wanton, but an holy Kiſs; intimating to us, that our Civil Actions ſhould have a Reliſh and Savour of Holineſs. Hence it is that St. *Paul* is ſo careful to give particular Directions for the right ordering of our Speech and Diſcourſe in common Converſation, that is, be Grave and Savoury, *Col.* 4. 6. of our Apparel, that it be ſuch as becomes thoſe that profeſs the Goſpel; and here, that our courteous Salutations of each other ſhould be Chaſt, and Holy, *greet one another with an holy kiſs*; their Kiſs of Love and Peace muſt truly ſignify what it makes ſhew of, that neither Treachery, nor Cruelty, nor Hypocriſy, nor Luſt, may inſinuate itſelf into ſuch a Symbol of Holy Love.

27 I charge you, by the Lord, that this Epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Our Apoſtle having now finiſh'd his Epiſtle, gives a ſtrict Charge for the Peruſal of it. In which *Obſerve* (1.) The Duty enjoin'd, with the Matter of it, namely, the reading of this Epiſtle, and for the ſame reaſon all the reſt, which had the like Stamp of Divine Authority upon them. *Obſerve* (2.) The Object or Parties to whom this Epiſtle is to be read, to the Brethren, *to all the Brethren*. *Obſerve* (3.) The Solemnity of the Injunction, *I charge you*, not, I exhort, beſeech, or intreat, but charge and enjoin you; nay, the Word ſignifies, I adjure you; it has the force of an Oath, and that under a Curſe: as if he had ſaid, I oblige you, under the Penalty of God's Curſe, that this Epiſtle be read. Learn hence, (1.) That the Scriptures ought to be in a known Tongue, that they may be read unto, and read by the common People. (2) That to confine the reading of the Scriptures to the Clergy, and exclude the Laity or common People from the reading of them, is a very grievous Sin, contrary to the Intent and Deſign of God in the firſt Penning and Compoſing of them. (3.) That it doth in a ſpecial manner concern the Miniſters and Spiritual Guides to take a particular Care that the Holy Scriptures be publickly read to, and privately read by all their People; and, in order thereunto, to excite Parents to read them daily in their Families, *Deut.* 6. 9. and in their Cloſets, *Col.* 3. 16. And alſo is it a great part of the Miniſter's Duty, to look after the putting forth the Children of poor Parents to School, that they may learn to read the Scriptures for their Inſtruction and Comfort. Lord, what a Reproach is it to this Chriſtian Nation, that in Thouſands of Families the Bible ſignifies no more than a Chip, not a Soul amongſt them able to read a Letter in it! This is a Lamentation, the Lord put it into the Hearts both of Miniſters and People to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to rowl away this Reproach from us.

28 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you. Amen.

Thus concludes our Apoſtle his excellent Epiſtle, with his uſual Valediction or farewel Wiſh, deſiring, that tho' the *Theſſalonians* had been large Partakers of the Grace and Spirit of Chriſt, that yet they might receive freſh, farther, and fuller Supplies from himſelf, the Fountain of all Grace and Goodneſs. From whence *Note*, That ſo inexhauſtible is the Fountain of Divine Grace, and ſo copious the Streams of Spiritual Bleſſings flowing from it, that no ſuch Meaſures can be attained, but as more is wanting more may be had, more is provided, more is allowed, more is to be thirſted after, and laboured for. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt, that overflowing, that neverfailing Fountain of Grace and Comfort, in whom all Fulneſs dwells, that of his Fulneſs all his Members may receive, farther receive, Grace for Grace. *Amen.*

THE

THE
Second Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

This Second Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians *is believed very probably to have been written by* St. Paul, *ſoon after the Firſt, becauſe the ſame Perſon,* Sylvanus *and* Timotheus, *were ſtill with him when he writ it, as they were at the writing of the Firſt Epiſtle.*

Having, in his former Epiſtle, expreſs'd his longing Deſire to viſit them, and finding by the Intervention of other Affairs, that he was from time to time Providentially hindred from coming to them, he ſends this ſecond Epiſtle to them, to ſupply the want of his Preſence amongſt them.

In which he firſt Congratulates their Conſtancy in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, exhorting them to Growth in Grace, and Perſeverance in Religion.

Next he rectifies a Miſtake which they lay under, concerning the coming of Chriſt to Judgment, as if, that Day were then at hand, when it was very far off, there being a General and Grand Apoſtacy to precede it, comforting the Theſſalonians *againſt the Dread and Terror of it.*

Laſtly, *He recommends divers Chriſtian Duties to them, requiring them to Admoniſh and Cenſure ſuch Idle Perſons amongſt them who did not Work, but live upon other Mens Labours; and ſo concludes his Epiſtle with particular Recommendations of them to the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 2 Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe two Verſes contain the Inſcription of this Epiſtle in the very ſame Words with the former, in the foregoing Epiſtle. In which *Obſerve*, (1.) The Writer of the Epiſtle, St. *Paul*, joining with him his two Aſſociates, *Sylvanus* or *Sylas*, and *Timotheus* or *Timothy*. (2.) To whom it was written, *to the Church of the* Theſſalonians, *in God the Father*, that is, eſtabliſhed in the Knowledge of God the Father, and in the Faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. (3.) The uſual Salutation, *Grace and Peace*, under which are comprehended all Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings; and theſe are ſet forth as flowing to us; Firſt, from their Fountain, *God the Father*: Secondly, from their Means of Conveyance, *Jeſus Chriſt* as Mediator, intimating, that whatever Spiritual Grace, or Temporal Bleſſing we now receive from God, we have it from him, not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, as a Gracious Father in Chriſt, in and thro' whom all kind of Bleſſings are conveyed to us. Now, (1.) From St. *Paul*'s uſing the very ſame Form of Words in this Epiſtle, which he had made uſe of in the former, we may *Obſerve*, That the Holy Spirit of God, in inditing of the Scriptures, did not ſo much regard variety of Words and Stile, as the Purpoſe intended by thoſe Words; and accordingly the Miniſters of Chriſt, in the Expounding and Explaining of the Scriptures, ſhould rather ſtudy Solidity of Matter, than Variety of Expreſſion, or Elegancy of Stile; it was none of the Apoſtle's Buſineſs, God grant it may be none of ours, to pleaſe the Wanton Wits, and gratifie the Luxuriant Fancies of Men, with a pompous ſound of Words, but Solidly to inſtruct them in the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and to furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt Arguments and Motives to a good Life, Plain Truths, without any Art or Varniſh, may be conveyed with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience, than all the Charms of Human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue. But tho' we muſt come in Plainneſs, yet not in Rudeneſs of Speech. *Note* (2.) From St. *Paul*'s writing this Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, when he was providentially hindred in his Purpoſe of coming to them, and Preaching amongſt them, we may learn, That as the Wiſdom of God has appointed ſeveral Means for the Edification of his Church, ſometimes Preaching, at other times Writing, ſo the Miniſters of Chriſt are obliged and bound to endeavour the Church's Edification by all Means, when they cannot do it by publick Preaching, to endeavour it by Writing, and when they can by both; their Labours from the Preſs, and from the Pulpit, ſhould be jointly employed in the Church's Service.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth: 4 So that we our ſelves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions and tribulations that ye endure.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Holy Wiſdom and Pious Prudence of our Apoſtle, who being about to Magnifie and Extol the Graces of the Spirit wrought in the *Theſſalonians*, particularly their Faith and Charity, inſtead of commending *them* for theſe *Graces*, he breaks forth into Praiſes and Thankſgivings *unto God* for them; we thank God that your Faith groweth exceedingly, *and that the Charity of every one of you aboundeth.* His Buſineſs was not to celebrate the Praiſes and Commendations of them, but to admire the ſpecial Grace of God conferr'd upon them, and conſpicuous in them. Learn hence, That as it is our Duty, it will be our great Wiſdom and Prudence, ſo to ſpeak of the Graces of God, which we ſee and obſerve in others, as that they may not be puffed up with any Conceit of their own Excellencies, but ſee Matter of Praiſe and Thankſgiving due unto God only, and nothing to themſelves. *Note* (2.) The ſpecial and particular Graces which St. *Paul* obſerved in the *Theſſalonians*, their *Faith* and their *Charity*, together with the Evidence of the Sincerity of theſe Graces, namely, that their Faith was a growing Faith, their Love an abounding and overflowing Love; *your Faith groweth exceedingly, and your Love aboundeth*

boundeth. Learn hence, That as the ſaving Graces of Faith and Love do admit of Degrees, and do not come to their Heighth and Perfection at once; ſo all other Graces do either Increaſe or Decreaſe, Grow or Fade together with theſe; the Vigour or Decay of theſe Cardinal Graces have an anſwerable Influence upon all our other Graces. But how did St. *Paul* know that their Faith did thus grow? *Anſw.* He knew the Increaſe of their Faith by their Conſtancy in Sufferings. *Note* (3.) Our Apoſtle doth not barely commend theſe Graces of *Faith* and *Love*, which were found in the *Theſſalonians*, but he makes an Holy Boaſt of them, he glories in them, and excites other Churches to a praiſe-worthy Imitation of them; *we glory in you in the Churches of God.* But for what? Even for your Courage and Patience under Sufferings, Perſecutions and Tribulations, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, and for your Conſtancy in the Faith of Chriſt. Learn hence (1.) That Perſecutions, Afflictions, and Tribulations, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, (when maintained, eſpecially in the Power of it) are the common Lot of God's faithful Children and Servants. Learn (2.) That 'tis the higheſt Glory of a Chriſtian to bear Afflictions, and undergo Perſecution for the ſake of the Goſpel, with an undaunted Courage, and an invincible Patience. Learn (3.) That it is not unlawful, but ſometimes neceſſary and expedient, for a Miniſter to glory in his People; not in their Multitude, not in their Riches, not in their Greatneſs, not in their high eſtimation of his Perſon and Abilities, but in the eminent Graces of God's Holy Spirit in them, and in the great Services and Sufferings undergone by them; *we glory in you for your Patience and Faith in and under all the Perſecutions and Tribulations that ye endure.*

5 *Which is* a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer;

As if he had ſaid, Which Tribulations and Perſecutions, or which Patience under your preſent Perſecutions, is a Sign and Token, yea, an Evidence and Manifeſtation, that God, the righteous Judge, will reward you with a Part and Share in that Kingdom for which you Suffer, being, in his Account worthy of it; not with a Worthineſs of Merit, but with a Worthineſs of Meekneſs, they being made mete and fit for Heaven hereafter by their Patience and Conſtancy under Sufferings and Perſecutions here. Learn hence, That as none can enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven by meriting Heaven, but by being made mete for Heaven, ſo Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches, under Perſecutions and ſharp Trials, is a ſpecial Qualification to make us mete for the Injoyment of that glorious Kingdom; that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer.

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you:
7 And to you who are troubled, reſt with us,

Our Apoſtle had ſhewn in the foregoing Verſe, that their Patience under Perſecution was a manifeſt Evidence of God's intending them a Portion in that Kingdom, for which they ſuffer'd Perſecution; now in this Verſe he denounces the Perſecutors Doom upon them, namely, that the righteous Nature of God did oblige him to recompence Tribulation, and to repay Trouble to all ſuch as did Trouble them, and unkindly perſecute them for Righteouſneſs ſake. Learn thence, That as Perſecutors generally do continue finally impenitent, ſo the heavieſt Stroke of Divine Vengeance ſhall fall on ſuch in the Day of God's moſt righteous Judgment; *it is a righteous thing with God to render Tribulation to them that trouble you.*

7 And to you who are troubled, reſt with us, ———

That is, As God will certainly puniſh your Perſecutors, ſo he will, e're long, give Reſt to you his Sufferers, together with *us* who are Companions with you in the ſame Sufferings, you that are troubled ſhall have Reſt with us his perſecuted Apoſtles, you ſhall have Reſt as well as we, and you ſhall have Reſt together *with us.* Bleſſed be God that there is a Day undoubtedly coming, when all the Troublers of his People ſhall be troubled indeed, and all his ſuffering Saints ſhall be fully and finally rewarded for all their Services and Sufferings; and this Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments ſhall be in the Preſence of the whole World at the great Day, for the Glory of Divine Juſtice. Then all thoſe that doubt or complain of God's Juſtice ſhall awfully admire and adore it; *to you that are troubled, reſt with us.* Where *Note*, (1.) That the preſent Time is a Time of Trouble to the People of God; their Time of Reſt is hereafter. (2.) That Almighty God alloweth his troubled Saints a liberty to comfort themſelves with the Expectation and Hope that their Troubles ſhall ſhortly end, and their everlaſting Reſt begin. (3.) That it addeth much to the excellency of that Reſt which the troubled Saints expect, that it ſhall be enjoyed, not by a few of the moſt eminent Sufferers, but by all of them; *all* you *that are troubled ſhall reſt with us*; with us Apoſtles, with all the Prophets and faithful Servants of God. Hail, happy Day! when all the Saints ſhall Sing and Rejoice together; when there ſhall not be one wicked Perſon among them to damp their Mirth, to diminiſh their Joy. How deſirable is the Communion of Saints here! How happy do they eſteem themſelves when they can get together by themſelves! But how joyful will the Time and Place be when they get to Heaven, where none ſhall interupt their Quiet, nothing ſhall diſturb their Reſt? *God will recompence tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, reſt with us.*

7 ——— When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,

In theſe Words we have an awful Deſcription of the Day of Judgment, and of the Proceſs of that Solemn Day. Where *Obſerve* (1.) The Judge deſcribed, *the Lord Jeſus*, he ſhall be *revealed from Heaven*; ſince his Aſcenſion the Heavens have contained him, and concealed him alſo from our Sight and Senſes; but he ſhall then viſibly appear, and locally deſcend from the higheſt Heaven into the Region of the Air, *he ſhall come in the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him.* *Obſerve* (2.) His noble Attendants, the *mighty Angels*, every one ſtronger than an Hoſt of armed Men. As the Work, Chriſt comes about, is a great and mighty Work, ſo he will have Inſtruments ſtrong and mighty, ſufficient for that Work; yet doth Chriſt make uſe of the Angels, not for Neceſſity, but for Majeſty, he can do his Work without them. *Obſerve* (3.) The manner of his Coming, in flaming Fire, by which the Heavens and the Earth ſhall be burnt up, and in which the Damned ſhall be eternally tormented. *Obſerve* (4.) The End of his Coming, to take Vengeance on the Ignorant, and on the Diſobedient, on ſuch as know not God, and on them that do know, but obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus. Learn hence, (1.) That it greatly tends to the Comfort and Support of perſecuted Chriſtians, that Chriſt their Righteous Judge will come; *he ſhall be revealed*, and nobly attended; he ſhall come as an Exalted King, accompanied with a glorious Train of *mighty Angels.* Learn (2.) That the Dread and Terror of the Day of Judgment will be Matter of Comfort to the Godly, no ways terrifying. Thoſe very Flames which ſhall ſet the Heavens and the Earth in a Blaze, and occaſion dreadful Conſternation and Fear to the wicked and impenitent World, ſhall be a comfortable Sight to the Godly, and the Fore-thoughts of them may and ſhould yield Comfort to them under their preſent Troubles. Learn (3.) That Ignorance, whether in Pagans or in Chriſtians doth very much, but Diſobedience to the Goſpel doth much more expoſe Perſons, and lays them open to the Vengeance of the great Day; if Chriſt will render Vengeance to them that know him not, much more to them that do know, but *obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus.*

9 Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Obſerve here the tremendous Dreadfulneſs of that Wrath and Vengeance which at the great Day will be inflicted on the Ignorant and Diſobedient Part of Mankind; to denote the Greatneſs of it, 'tis called *Deſtruction*, not as if it were an Aboliſhing of their Nature, and utter Extinction of their Being, as the Deſtruction of Beaſts is, but a loſs of their Happineſs and Well-being, as the Deſtruction of the fallen Angels was; and to ſet forth the Duration of it, 'tis called *everlaſting Deſtruction*, a dying Life, and a living Death;

their Debt will never be paid, they ſhall never come out of Priſon; they will be always ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice. And *Obſerve* farther, as their Puniſhment of Senſe is here deſcribed, ſo we have their Puniſhment of Loſs declared, they ſhall be baniſhed from the Preſence of the Lord, that is, for ever excluded from the Sight of his bleſſed Face, and the Enjoyment of his gracious Preſence; the Preſence of his Favour they ſhall never find, the Preſence of his Fury they ſhall ever feel. Lord, How is thy Preſence here on Earth, Life, Light and Joy to thine own People! How much more will it be ſo in Heaven? But how terrible and dreadful will thy Preſence be to the Wicked at the great Day, even everlaſting Deſtruction! Lord, where ſhall the Ungodly and Sinner appear when thou appeareſt! Thy very Preſence ſhall Puniſh and Torment them, and thy glorious Power drive them away to the Place of Torment prepared for them; *they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power*; that is, Deſtruction ſhall come forth immediately from the Preſence and glorious Power of Chriſt upon them, and that without any Meaſure or Mitigation; the Sentence denounced will be inſtantly executed, and the Sinner that is baniſhed from Chriſt's Preſence ſhall be everlaſtingly tormented by his Power.

10 When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed) in that day.

The former Verſes repreſented to us the great End of Chriſt's Appearance to Judgment with reſpect to the wicked, it was for Puniſhment, they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, *&c.* Now here we have aſſigned the gracious Deſign of Chriſt's Coming with Relation to the Godly, he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints. Where *Note*, (1.) The Character of Chriſt's ſaved ones, they are *Saints*, all ſuch, and only ſuch; not by viſible Profeſſion barely, but by inward Sanctification, and Holineſs of Converſation alſo, and called alſo *Believers*, who are endued with the Grace of ſaving Faith. *Note* (2.) The End of Chriſt's Coming, with reference to his own Children. (1.) To be *glorified* in his *Saints*; mark, not to be glorified by them, but to be glorified in them; the Head will not only be glorious in himſelf, but glorified in his Members; the Glory God gave the Son, he hath given the Saints, and will put ſuch a Glory upon them in Soul and Body as he himſelf ſhall be thereby glorified. (2.) *Admired in all them that believe*, that is, he will do ſuch things for Believers as will be to their own and others Admiration; things that will not only exceed their Unbelief, but their Faith too. Plainly thus, the Lord Jeſus at the great Day will put ſuch Glory upon Believers as never was expected either by themſelves or others, and conſequently ſhall be admired, greatly admired, eternally admired by all Beholders. But, Lord, if the Glory put upon thy Saints ſhall be thus admired, how much more ſhall thy ſelf be admired, the Beſtower of that Rich and Tranſcendent Glory! The Glory of thy Juſtice in the Damnation of the wicked will be admired, but not comparably with the Glory of thy Mercy in the Salvation of Believers. Oh! how will this ſtrike the Adoring Angels into an Ecſtaſie of Holy Admiration, and tranſport thy admiring Saints into an eternal Rapture, when thou ſhalt come to *be glorified in the Saints, and admired in all them that believe*!

11 Wherefore alſo we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleaſure of *his* goodneſs, and the work of faith with power.

In theſe Words St. *Paul* aſſures the *Theſſalonians*, that altho' he could not come to them, that yet he prayed fervently for them; *we pray always for you*; the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt can as ſoon forget themſelves as their People in their Prayers to God. *Obſerve* next, what he prayed for on their Behalf. (1.) That God would count them worthy, that is, fit and meet for *this Calling*, that is, for the forementioned Glory, which they were called to the Expectation of, for they were already called; and therefore calling here muſt denote that unto which they were called, even the Kingdom of Glory. (2.) That in order to this God would fulfil, fully perform and accompliſh his whole Purpoſe, called here his *Pleaſure*, and the *Pleaſure* of his *Goodneſs*, to ſhew that nothing but his own Goodneſs was the Cauſe of his own Purpoſe. (3.) He prays that God by his own Power would ſtrengthen the Work of Faith in them; *and the Work of Faith with Power.* Where *Note* (1.) That we are not only ſaved by God's good Pleaſure, but by Faith. (2.) That there is no ſaving Faith, but is a working Faith. (3.) That Faith is wrought by a wonderful Power, which doth produce wonderful Effects.

12 That the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle declared at Verſe 10*th* how Chriſt ſhould be glorified in his Saints hereafter; now he prays that the Name of Chriſt may be glorified in them here. Where *Note*, that ſanctifying Grace maketh Chriſtians a Glory to the Name of Chriſt, not by adding any Glory to him, which before he had not, but by ſetting forth that Glory which he already hath. *Note* alſo, that as the Name of Chriſt is glorified in the Saints now, ſo they ſhall be glorified in him then, and glorified with him and by him. The ſame Glory, for Kind, ſhall be put upon the Head and Members; Grace is the only Way to Glory, and Glory will be the certain Reward of Grace.

CHAP. II.

The former Chapter was ſpent in a Conſolation againſt Trouble, this in a Caution againſt Errors, or to rectifie their Judgments concerning the Time of Chriſt's Second Coming. An Error had crept in amongſt the Theſſalonians, *concerning the ſpeedy and immediate Coming of Chriſt to Judgment whilſt they were yet Alive, which Error Satan had ſet on Foot to ſubvert their Faith, and expoſe the whole Chriſtian Doctrine to Contempt: Therefore to guard them againſt this fabulous Error he thus beſpeaks them.*

NOW we beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Brethren, we beſeech you as you aſſuredly expect the Coming of Chriſt, and do love, look, and long for that Day when it ſhall go well with you, and Chriſt will appear to your Glory, that you be not troubled, *&c.* Learn hence, that the Coming of Chriſt to Judgment is a Truth well known, firmly believed and earneſtly deſired by all true Chriſtians; well *known*, becauſe the Apoſtles, when they went abroad to proſelyte the World uſually began with this Point; firmly *believed*, for a Day of Judgment was never denied by any, but thoſe whoſe Intereſt it was that there ſhould be none; and earneſtly *deſired*, in Reſpect of Chriſt our Judge and Saviour, and in Reſpect of our ſelves, who ſhall be Sharers in the Happineſs of that Day. *Obſerve* (2.) the Apoſtle calls the Coming of Chriſt a gathering together unto him; intimating, that when Chriſt ſhall come, all the Saints ſhall be gathered together unto him; at the Day of Judgment there ſhall be both a Congregation and a Segregation: A *Congregation* of all Believers, to make up the Number of Chriſt's Train and Attendants, and that in one Troop they may be brought into his heavenly Kingdom; and a *Segregation*, he ſhall ſeparate the Sheep from the Goats, and ſever the Wicked from among the Juſt: St *Matth.* 13. 44.

2 That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand.

Note here, (1.) The Error which the Apoſtle diſproves, namely, that the Day of Chriſt, that is, the Day of Judgment, was then at Hand, to come in a few Years, which was very True with Reſpect to his Coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, but not as the final Judgment. Learn thence, that the Time of Chriſt's Coming to Judgment muſt be patiently expected, but not poſitively determined. *Note* (2.) The Effect which this Error might produce, namely, Trouble and Unſettledneſs of Mind; that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in Mind or troubled; *Implying*, (1.) That Errors breed Trouble, and Diſquietude of Mind. (2.) That Chriſtians ſhould be ſo eſtabliſhed, and have ſuch Conſtancy of Mind, that they ſhould not be eaſily ſhaken and moved from the Faith. *Note* (3.) A Removal of all the ſuppoſed Foundations of this Error, or the Means which theſe Impoſtors uſed to intice the *Theſſalonions* to embrace; and they are three, namely, Spirit, Word and Letter; ***not by Spirit***, that is, be not ſhaken in Mind by any Pretence of Spiritual or Divine Revelation; ***nor by Word***, by any pretended Meſſage or Word from us; ***nor by Letter***, that is, not by any thing contained in our former Epiſtle, or in any ſpurious and counterfeit Writings paſſing under the Apoſtle's Name, mentioning as if Chriſt ſhould come in that Age wherein they lived: we need not wonder that St. *Paul* is ſo careful to obviate this Error of the preſent Coming and Appearance of Chriſt, becauſe ſhould the *Theſſalonians* have depended upon it and found themſelves deceived in their Expectation of it, it might have cauſed great Trouble to them, and even ſhaken their Steadfaſtneſs in the Faith.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day ſhall not come*, except there come a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be revealed, the ſon of perdition:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, let no Man deceive you in this Article of your Faith, by any Pretence whatſoever; for before Chriſt's Coming there ſhall come a great falling away from the Catholick Faith, and by that Means the Man of Sin will be revealed, who is the Son of Perdition. *Note* here, (1.) Such a Proneneſs there is in the Nature and Mind of Man to embrace and entertain Error, when once vented, that there is need of repeated Diſſwaſives from it, and to guard Perſons againſt the Poiſon and Infatuation of it. *Let no Man deceive you by any Means.* *Note* (2.) A general Apoſtacy or Defection of the viſible Church from the Faith of Chriſtianity muſt be before Chriſt's Coming to Judgment, *except there come a falling away firſt*; it is foretold as a thing that would certainly come to paſs. *Note* (3.) The Revelation of Antichriſt declared, *that Man of Sin ſhall be revealed, the Son of Perdition*; where by the Man of Sin underſtand not a particular and individual Perſon, but a Society and Succeſſion of Men, ſuch as is found in and amongſt the Papacy, where the Sodomy, Blaſphemy, Inceſt, Adulteries, Sorceries, Murders, Treaſons, which are not only committed, but countenanced, not only acted, but authorized, do moſt evidently declare that there never was ſuch an Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity ſince it had a Being in the World, as is found amongſt them. *Note* (4.) This Man of Sin is alſo ſtiled the Son of Perdition. (1.) Actively, a deſtroying Son, one that brings others to Deſtruction. (2.) Paſſively, a Son that ſhall be deſtroy'd; Antichriſt and all his Adherents ſhall be deſtroyed, utterly deſtroyed by Jeſus Chriſt, and his Kingdom ſhall periſh without any Hopes of Recovery, firſt deſtroying, and at laſt deſtroyed. Where *Note*, that our Apoſtle at the firſt, the very firſt mentioning Antichriſt, doth declare his Deſtiny; at his firſt riſing he declares his Fall and Ruin.

4 Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he, as God, ſitteth in the Temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.

Our Apoſtle proceeds in the farther Deſcription of this Man of Sin by a twofold Note of Diſtinction, namely, by his Enmity and Oppoſition, and by his Dignity and Exaltation. *Obſerve* (1.) His Enmity and Oppoſition: *He oppoſeth himſelf*, that is, againſt Chriſt, as his Name Antichriſt ſignifies, oppoſing him in his Doctrine, in his Offices, in his Members, corrupting his Doctrine, debaſing his Offices, perſecuting his Members. *Obſerve* (2.) His Dignity and Exaltation, which conſiſts of Two Parts. (1.) *He exalteth himſelf above all that is called God: or is worſhipped*, that is, he exalteth himſelf above all Magiſtrates, Emperors, Kings and Princes, who are called Gods, becauſe repreſenting his Perſon, as his Vicegerents, uſurping a Power over all civil Authority, inthroning, and dethroning Princes at his Pleaſure. (2.) His Arrogance is ſet forth in Relation to God himſelf, that as *God he ſitteth in the Temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* By the Temple of God underſtand the Church of God, the external viſible Church which profeſſeth the Faith of Chriſt, and bears his Name; in this Temple of God he *ſitteth* as an Officer or Biſhop; and ſits as *God*, that is, as a God upon Earth, whom all muſt adore, Kings kiſſing his Feet, Emperors holding his Stirrup, and claiming the ſame Power that Chriſt hath in and over the Church, namely, an univerſal Supremacy, an abſolute Authority, and an unerring Infallibility. And the uſurped Titles given to him declare that he *ſheweth himſelf that he is a God*, he is called *ſupremum numen in terris*, the chief God upon Earth, and that from him it is affirmed that no Appeals are to be made, no, not to God himſelf, that he can change the Sacraments delivered by Chriſt, and decree contrary to Scripture. Now to accept of theſe flattering Titles, and to pretend to ſuch an unlimited Power, is to *ſhew himſelf that he is God.*

5 Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you theſe things?

Obſerve here, that the Doctrine of the Riſe and Ruin of Antichriſt is neceſſary to be made known; for tho' theſe were not to come to paſs in their Days, yet St. *Paul* taught them before when preſent, and now repeateth it again when abſent, to faſten it upon their Mind and Memories; it is neceſſary to deliver this Doctrine, both to warn the Faithful againſt Deluſion, and to fortifie the Faithful againſt Perſecution, and to keep them Patient under it; for when Antichriſt is diſcovered, Chriſtians under his Tyranny ſubmit to Sufferings more cheartully; ſuffering under Antichriſtian Perſecutors is Martyrdom and Suffering for Chriſt as well as under Pagan Perſecutors.

6 And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

Obſerve here, (1.) How our Apoſtle intimated to the *Theſſalonians* that Antichriſt was not then revealed, and conſequently that they were not then to expect the Coming of Chriſt to Judgment. *Obſerve* (2.) The Impediment that then hindred his *Revelation*; *now ye know what withholdeth*; by which the *Roman* Empire is generally underſtood; the Man of Sin could not riſe to his Greatneſs ſo long as the *Roman* Empire ſtood in its Grandeur; for this Seat could not be filled with Two Imperial Powers at once; whilſt the *Roman* Emperor poſſeſt *Rome* the Seat was Full, and till it was void it could not be the Seat of Antichriſt: But why did not the Apoſtle name it then? ***Anſw.*** That he might not incenſe the *Roman* Emperors againſt the Chriſtians, as he muſt have done had he openly ſaid, Antichriſt ſhall not come till the *Roman* Emperor is deſtroyed, he therefore covertly ſays, ye know what withholdeth.

7 For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

That is, the Beginnings of Antichriſtianity are ſecretly and myſteriouſly already working, which will bring Antichriſt himſelf forth in time, even Antichriſtian Doctrines, and the affecting of Antichriſtian Dominion, only the Empire that now hindreth muſt be removed and taken out of the Way. *Note* here, ſo great an Enemy is Satan to the Salvation of Mankind, that no ſooner did Chriſt erect a Kingdom in the World for ſaving Sinners, but the Devil ſet up his Enſign in Oppoſition thereunto. Antichriſtianiſm is almoſt as Old as Chriſtianity; the Myſtery of Iniquity ſoon appeared after the *Revelation* of the Myſtery of Godlineſs; tho' Truth be Error's Elder, yet Error is not much Truth's Younger; *The Myſtery of Iniquity doth already work.* And from theſe Words, *he that letteth will let, till taken out of the Way.* Learn, that the greateſt Empire and Monarchies upon Earth have their final and fatal Periods determined by God, beyond which they ſhall not ſtand; the *Roman* Empire that letteth ſhall be taken out of the Way.

8 And then ſhall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the Spirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming.

Theſe Words contain both the Riſe and Ruin of Antichriſt, his Revelation and Deſtruction. *Obſerve* (1.) The Title given to him ὁ Ἄνομος, the lawleſs One, he that boaſts himſelf to be above all Law, and aſſumes to himſelf a Power to diſpence with all the Laws of God, as we well know who does. *Obſerve* (2.) His Revelation, *Then ſhall that Wicked be revealed*; God has revealed Antichriſt to the World, let none wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt him, but let him be ſhunned and abhorred; if his Adherents will not fall off from him, but be Partakers with him in his Sins, let them expect to be Partakers alſo with him in his Plagues; to continue his Adherents is dangerous, but to turn his Diſciples is more dangerous; for that is a downright Apoſtacy, and flat Revolt from Chriſt to Antichriſt. How Almighty God may diſpence mercifully with Errors imbibed in our Education we know not, but to turn our Back on the Truth wherein we have been educated and inſtructed, maketh it more dangerous to our Salvation. *Obſerve* (3.) Antichriſt's Ruin, *whom the Lord ſhall conſume and deſtroy.* Here *Note*, That the Apoſtle had no ſooner diſcovered Antichriſt's Riſe but he preſently declares his Ruin; the Lord ſhall deſtroy him; that is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall conſume him gradually, he ſhall waſte away by little and little; as his Riſe was, ſuch ſhall his Ruin be; deſtroyed and conſumed he ſhall be, but not preſently; becauſe God has an Uſe for him, Work to do for him, to ſcourge his People, to try his People, to unite his People. *Obſerve* (4.) How Antichriſt's Ruin is accompliſhed. (1.) *With the Spirit of his Mouth*, or the Breath of his Mouth: The Expreſſion denotes, (1.) The Facility and Eaſineſs of his Deſtruction, 'tis done with a Breath: The Breath of God will leave him Breathleſs; as he hath ſtood by the flattering Breath of Men, ſo he ſhall fall by the conſuming Breath of God. (2.) The Breath of God here denotes the preaching of the Goſpel, and intimates, that Antichriſt's Deſtruction ſhall be by the Miniſtry of the Word, and the victorious Evidence of Truth; but beſides this miniſterial Word, there will be a providential Word, which God will make uſe of for Antichriſt's Deſtruction: the former Means we are to uſe, the latter God is to make uſe of. Again, (2.) The Deſtruction of Antichriſt ſhall be by the *Brightneſs* of *Chriſt's Coming*; at Chriſt's Coming to Judgment the final Ruin and utter Deſtruction of Antichriſt ſhall be accompliſhed; let not the Church then he diſcouraged, though Antichriſt remains after all Endeavours uſed for his Ruin, it is ſufficient that we are aſſured that Antichriſtianiſm ſhall be finally deſtroyed; for the Time leave we that to God; if it be not till the Day of Judgment, or Chriſt's final Conqueſt over all his Adverſaries, why ſhould not we be contented to tarry for it, ſeeing infinite Wiſdom determines the Time as well as the Thing itſelf?

9 *Even him*, whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders,

An Account is here given how Antirhriſt doth acquire, and keep up his Power in the World; the firſt and great Inſtrument is Satan; after the working of Satan is as much as by the working of Satan, denoting not only his Pattern, but his Influence: the Devil has a great Hand over wicked Men in the World, his Way of dealing with them is moſt efficacious and powerful, he is certainly the firſt Founder and main Supporter of the Antichriſtian State. *Obſerve* (2.) The ſubordinate inſtrumental Means by which Antichriſt gain'd his Power in the World, namely, by pretended Miracles, *with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders*; Miracles are called Powers, becauſe the Effects of extraordinary Power; Signs, from their Uſe, becauſe they ſealed the Doctrine to which they are applied; Wonders, becauſe they breed Aſtoniſhment in the Minds of Beholders; now Antichriſt pretends to all theſe, but his are lying Powers, lying Signs, and lying Wonders, becauſe the greateſt of his pretended Miracles are Fables, Forgeries, Impoſtures, Diabolical Deluſions: Learn hence, That Antichriſt doth uphold and ſupport his Kingdom by a falſe Shew of Signs, Wonders, and mighty Deeds? they are *mira*, but not *miracula*; what he cannot prove by the Oracles of God, he endeavours to prove by the Miracles of Satan.

10 And with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.

Here we have a threefold Deſcription given of the Subjects of Antichriſt's Kingdom; they are deſcrib'd, (1.) By the Ways and Means how they are drawn into this Apoſtacy and Defection, and that is with all *Deceivableneſs* of *Unrighteouſneſs*; where by Unrighteouſneſs underſtand his falſe Doctrine and wicked Laws, which tend to the making his Diſciples and Followers Injurious to God, Unjuſt to Men, and Cruel to themſelves; and by Deceivableneſs is meant all Manner of Deceits, and Wiles, Tricks, and cunning Perſwaſions, to make the World believe his Unrighteous Errors to be pure and innocent Truths. Learn, That ſuch as are Ring-leaders to Error are Men of no Conſcience, but find out all unrighteous Ways and Means to make their Tenets Plauſible, and paſs for Truth; they come with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs. Again, (2.) They are deſcribed by their Doom and Miſery which doth wait them; they are *ſuch as periſh*; that is, ſuch as are in an actual State of Perdition, and without haſting out of it, are undone for ever. Learn hence, That the Subjects of Antichriſt's Power and Seduction are thoſe that periſh. And, (3.) They are deſcribed by their Sin, which is the Cauſe and Reaſon of this Doom; *becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved.* Where mark, it is not enough to receive the Truth in the Light of it, but we muſt alſo receive it in the Love of it, or it will do us no Good; to make Truth Operative there is required beſides Knowledge, Faith and Love; there may be Knowledge without Faith, and there may be Faith without Love, that is, without any Affection to the Truth believed; it was therefore a Pious Prayer of St. *Auſtin, fac me, Domine, &c.* Lord, make me taſte that by Love which I taſte by Knowledge; as the Certainty of Truth calls for Faith, ſo the Amiableneſs of Truth calls for Love; if Truth be not received into the Heart as well as the Head, it will not ſecure againſt Apoſtacy, nor prevent Periſhing.

11 And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lye: 12 That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

The Sin of thoſe that are ſeduced by Antichriſt was mentioned in the foregoing Verſe, the Judgment of ſuch is here declared in theſe Verſes, which is twofold, Deluſion in this World, and Damnation in the next. (1.) Deluſion in this World. Here *Note*, (1.) The Author of this Judgment, God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions; as it is a Sin, God has no Hand in it, but as it is a puniſhment God has to do in it; there is a judicial Tradition or delivering them up to a Spirit of Error, who do not receive the Truth in the Love of it, and this without the leaſt Shadow of Unrighteouſneſs, puniſhing Sin with Sin. *Note* (2.) The Degree or Nature of the Puniſhment, Deluſions, *ſtrong Deluſions*; given up to the Efficacy of Error, which is diſcovered by the Abſurdity of thoſe Errors which they cleave unto, and by the Obſtinacy wherewith they cleave unto them. Learn hence, (1.) That ſtrong Deluſions may be, and ſometimes are of God's own ſending. (2.) That by God's juſt Judgment there is an Infatuation upon the Followers and Abettors of Antichriſt, that they ſwallow the groſſeſt Errors, and believe the ſtrongeſt Deluſions, to their own Deſtruction. *Note* (3.) The Iſſue and Reſult of this Puniſhment, *that they ſhould believe a Lye*; falſe Doctrines are often called a Lye in Scripture; all the Doctrine of the Man of Sin, with which he hath deceived the World, under the Notion of Truth, is one great Lye; but beſides this, he approves and applauds the Doctrine of Equivocation, and teaches that in many Caſes it is neceſſary, and in ſome very lawful, to lye; theſe they call Pious Frauds, but they are indeed Diabolical Forgeries. *Note* (4.) Their dreadful Puniſhment in the other World, that they all might be Damned, *&c.* Where mark, the Puniſhment itſelf, Damnation, for filling up the Meaſure of their Obduration, together with the Juſtice and Equity of it; expreſſed negatively, they believed not the Truth, received it not with a Simplicity of Mind, to be inſtructed and directed by it; poſitively, they had a Pleaſure in *Unrighteouſneſs*, in unrighteous Doctrines and Practices. Learn hence, (1.) That Errors in Judgment, as well as Sins in Practice, may bring Damnation upon the Souls of Men; Error is as Damnable as Vice, for it is as contrary to the Law of God as Vice is. Learn (2.) That though all Errors may bring Damnation upon Mens Souls, yet ſome may be ſaid more eſpecially than others to be damning Errors; ſuch are the Errors of Antichriſt the Man of Sin. Oh! How dangerous then is it to be found amongſt his Followers? To be Sharers with them in their Sins will render us Partakers of their Plagues.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth.

Our Apoſtle, having in the foregoing Verſes ſet forth a fatal Apoſtacy from the Sinceriry of the Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip, here in this Verſe exempts the *Theſſalonians* from the Number of thoſe that were endangered by it; and this he makes mention of to their great Comfort, and with Thankſgivings to God; we are bound to give Thanks, *&c.* *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Titles given to the *Theſſalonians* by our Apoſtle, *Brethren*, and *Beloved of the Lord*; not Beloved of the Apoſtle only, but of the *Lord alſo*, both with an Antecedent Love, beſtowing Grace upon them, and with a conſequent Love, believing in his Name, and ſuffering for his ſake. *Obſerve* (2.) His Obligation to bleſs God on their Behalf, he gave *Thanks*; this ſhewed his Eſteem of the Bleſſing, he gave Thanks *always*, which ſhewed how deeply he was affected with the Bleſſing, and he owns it as a Debt which was Due unto them; we are *bound* to give *Thanks*, &c. *Obſerve* (3.) The Matter of his Thankſgiving, or the Mercy which he was thus thankful for, and that was their Election to Salvation; *we are bound to give Thanks becauſe God hath choſen you.* Whence Learn, that God's Election either of our ſelves or others to Salvation is and ought to be great Matter of Thankſgiving unto God. *Obſerve* (4.) Their Election is amplified, (1.) By the Antiquity of it, from the *Beginning*, that is, from all Eternity. *Joh.* 1. 1. *In the Beginning was the Word*, that is, before the Beginning, before God began to create any thing, the Word was. (2.) From the Means of its Accompliſhment; and they are two, one on God's Part, the *Sanctiſication* of the Spirit; the other on their Part, the *Belief* of the *Truth*. Where *Note*, that Election is to the Means as well as to the End; and without the Means can the End never be attained; he that hath choſen us to Salvation, hath choſen us to be Holy, and to believe the Truth, in order to Salvation. *Note* (2.) That Sanctification and Holineſs is not the Cauſe of our Election, but the Effect and Fruit of it. *Note* (3.) That Sanctification being the Fruit, it is alſo the Evidence of our Election: *Sic ſe aperit decretum*, thus the Decree of God is made evident to us; the Election of God is a Secret in the Boſom of God, it is only manifeſted to us by the Effects, which are Sanctification by the Spirit, and a ſound Belief of the Goſpel: Where mark, a bare Belief of the Doctrine of the Goſpel ſaves none, unleſs accompanied with the Sanctification of the Spirit. *Note* (4.) The neceſſary Connexion between the Sanctification of the Spirit and the Belief of the Truth, even as between the Cauſe and the Effect, and they do alſo accompany one another; the Goſpel was a ſupernatural Doctrine, and it was fit that it ſhould be accompanied with a ſupernatural Operation, how elſe ſhould it be known to be of God? The Goſpel and the Spirit are inſeparable Companions; where the Goſpel is little known, there is little of the Spirit found; *he hath choſen you to Salvation, through Sanctiſication of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.*

14 Whereunto he called you by our goſpel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The Apoſtle comforted the *Theſſalonians* in the former Verſe from their Election, in this from their Vocation; *whereunto*, that is, to which Salvation, Sanctification, and Belief of the Goſpel, *God hath called you*, by our preaching of the Word, to the *obtaining* of the *Glory* purchaſed, and conferred by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Note* here, (1.) The Author of the *Theſſalonians* Vocation. God the Father, *he called you*, that is, God who from the Beginning choſe you to Salvation; none but God, (1.) Hath Authority to call; he only is our proper Lord, and rightful Sovereign, our Creator, and our Owner, therefore he has a Right to call us to Duty, and to require Duty from us. *Jam.* 4. 12. *There is one Lawgiver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* None but God, (2.) Hath Power to call; for to effectual Calling there is required not only the Invitation of the Word, but alſo the effectual Operation of the Spirit; it is a Work of Divine Power to give Grace to graceleſs Souls. *Note* (2.) The Means, that is, the external and outward Means by which they were called; *by our Goſpel*, that is, by our preaching of the Goſpel to you. The Miniſtry of the Word is the great Inſtrument in the Hand of the Spirit for a Sinners effectual Vocation, and bringing Home to God. But why doth our Apoſtle call it *our* Goſpel? Doth not that derogate from the Authority of it to appropriate it to any Man? No: He calls it not his Goſpel by Way of Revelation but in regard of Diſpenſation only; and his Goſpel, importing the great Pains which he took in preaching of the Goſpel, and the Hazard he ran in diſpenſing of the Goſpel to them. It is alſo a Word of Eſteem, Love, and Affection, what we love we call ours. *Note* (3.) The End of this Calling, which is Twofold, (1.) Ultimate, to obtain the *Glory* of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, the Glory of Heaven, and of the whole Man, Soul and Body in Heaven, called the Glory of Chriſt, becauſe purchaſed for him, promiſed by him, prayed for by him, conferred by him, and enjoyed eternally with him. (2.) Subordinate, they are called to Faith and Holineſs in order to Salvation; for there muſt be a Likeneſs between the Perſon calling, and the Perſons called; without Likeneſs to him we can never love him, and without loving of him muſt never expect to live with him: From the whole learn, that ſuch as are elected and choſen of God, are in time effectually called by Faith and Holineſs to obtain eternal Glory and Happineſs.

15 Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epiſtle.

Our Apoſtle, having abundantly comforted the *Theſſalonians* in the former Verſes, from their Election and Vocation, he cloſes the Chapter with an Exhortation to them to Perſeverance and Conſtancy in the Truth; *therefore, Brethren, ſtand faſt.* *Obſerve* (1.) The illative Particle *therefore*, that is, becauſe God hath Choſen and Called you, and given you ſuch Aſſurance of his Favour, and ſuch Advantages againſt Error and Seduction, therefore let it be your Care to perſevere; Aſſurance of Salvation doth not encourage Negligence, but engage to greater Diligence. *Obſerve* (2.) The Duty inferr'd, *ſtand faſt*; it is a Military Word, uſed by Captains to their Soldiers, to prevent a Cowardly and Treacherous Revolt; he had been deſcribing a great Apoſtacy that would come, now bids them be upon their Guard and ſtand faſt. *Obſerve* (3.) The Means directed to in Order to their Stedfaſtneſs and Perſeverance, namely, to hold the Traditions which they had been taught, either by Word, or by Epiſtle. Here *Note* the Act, (1.) *Hold* with a ſtrong Hand hold againſt all Aſſaults, whether of Error or of Perſecution. (2.) The *Object*, The *Traditions Taught* either by *Word* or by *Epiſtle.* Where mark, That all the Apoſtle's Doctrine, whether Preached when amongſt them, or Written to them in his Abſence from them, he calls *Traditions*, ſo that holding the Traditions here is nothing elſe but Perſeverance in Apoſtolical Doctrine. From the whole *Note* (1.) That what Aſſurance ſoever we have of God's preſerving us in the Truth, yet are we bound to uſe all poſſible Care and Caution in order to our own Preſervation. *Note* (2.) That our Duty is to ſtand faſt in the Faith of Chriſt, and Profeſſion of Godlineſs, whatſoever Dangers of Temptations we may be expoſed to. *Note* (3.) That the Doctrine of Chriſtianity taught by the Apoſtles is a Tradition, and that holding this Tradition is the beſt Means for ſtanding faſt in the Faith of Chriſt. *Note* (4.) That whilſt the Apoſtles were in Being there were Two ways of delivering the Truth, namely, by Word of Mouth and Writing, *whether by Word or our Epiſtle.* *Note* (5.) That now when they are long ſince Dead, and we cannot receive the Doctrine of Life from them by Word of Mouth, we muſt ſtick to the Scriptures and written Word, againſt all Pretences to unwritten Traditions, or pretended Revelations, becauſe the Scriptures are a perfect Rule both for our Faith and Practice.

16 Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work.

Our Apoſtle having abundantly comforted, and affectionately exhorted the *Theſſalonians* in the former Verſes, now concludes with fervent Prayer for them. Where *Obſerve* (1.) The Perſons prayed to, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and God our Father. Where *Note*, (1.) That Prayer muſt be made to God alone, he only knows all our Wants, and he alone is capable of hearing and helping us. *Note* (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt is here Invocated together with God the Father; ſurely his Godhead is hereby proved, for he that is the Object both of internal and external Worſhip is God, *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father*, &c. *Obſerve* (2.) The Ground of Audience and Succeſs in Prayer, *which* hath *loved* us, and *given us everlaſting Conſolation*, and *good Hope through Grace*. Where *Note*, (1.) That God's Love to Sinners, manifeſted in their Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, giveth great Boldneſs and Encouragement in the Duty of Prayer. *Note* (2.) That God hath given all Believers ſolid Ground of Subſtantial and Perpetual Conſolation, he hath given us *everlaſting Conſolation*. *Note* (3.) That God has given all Believers Hope, a good or well-grounded Hope of eternal Life, and this Hope is a great Encouragement to the Duty of Prayer. *Obſerve* (3.) The Bleſſings prayed for, Encreaſe of Comfort and Perſeverance or Eſtabliſhment. (1.) The Apoſtle prays for Encreaſe of Comfort; *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and God our Father comfort your Hearts*. Where *Note*, That all true Comfort flows from God, and that the Heart is the proper Seat of Spiritual Comfort: *Pſal.* 4. 7. *Thou haſt put gladneſs into my Heart.* (2.) For Eſtabliſhment and Perſeverance---And ſtabliſh you in every good *Word* and *Work*: By every good Word is meant ſound Doctrine, by every good Work Holineſs of Life. Learn hence, that Eſtabliſhment in Faith and Holineſs is a great and neceſſary Bleſſing, earneſtly to be ſought of God in Prayer; as at all Times this Bleſſing is to be ſought, ſo eſpecially in unſettl'd Times, that when we are moſt in Danger of falling by Temptation, we may be kept by the mighty Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle cloſed the foregoing Chapter with a fervent Prayer for the Theſſalonians; *he begins this Chapter with requeſting their Prayers for him; it is a Mutual Duty which Miniſters and People owe to each other, to pray one for as well as one with another; though St.* Paul *was an Apoſtle, and one that gave himſelf unto Prayer, yet he found need of the Help and Benefit of the* Theſſalonians *Prayers, and accordingly thus beſpeaks them.*

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* courſe, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you;

Obſerve here, (1.) A Courteous and Loving Compellation, *Brethren*. There is a Threefold Brotherhood; which the Scripture takes notice of; betwixt Chriſt and Believers, betwixt Believers themſelves, and betwixt the Miniſters of Chriſt and their Beloved People. *Obſerve* (2.) St. *Paul*'s paſſionate Requeſt and Supplication, *Brethren, pray for us.* Learn hence, That an Intereſt in the Prayers of all thoſe that have an Intereſt in God, is the paſſionate Deſire and earneſt Requeſt of all the faithful Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt; there is nothing that the Miniſters of Chriſt do more want and need, nothing that they ſo much deſire and crave, as the ſpiritual Alms of their Peoples Prayers; their Work is a Work of the greateſt Weight, of the greateſt Labour, of the greateſt Difficulty and Oppoſition, and alas, their Shoulders are no ſtronger than other Mens to ſtand under the weight of this Burthen; wonder not then they cry out ſo importunately for the Help and Benefit of their Peoples Prayer. *Obſerve* (3.) The Subject Matter which he deſires them to pray for, that the Word of the Lord may have a free Courſe, and be glorified; in the Original that the Word may run and be glorified; a Metaphor taken from a Watercourſe, where the Current flows freely without Interruption or Obſtruction. *Queſt.* When may the Word be ſaid to have free Courſe? *Anſw.* When it is freely Preached, and ſucceſsfully Preached; when it is Preached without external Oppoſition, and accompanied with the Spirit's internal Operation. Learn hence, That it is the ſtanding Duty of the People of God to wreſtle with God at the Throne of Grace for the free Courſe of the Word in the Labours of his Miniſters; pray that the Word of the Lord may have free courſe---and be glorified; but when may the Word be ſaid to be glorified? *Anſw.* When God is glorified in and by the Word, by the Converſion of Sinners, by the Exemplary Converſation of Believers, then is God glorified when his Word is entertained. *Obſerve* (4.) The Argument to excite the *Theſſalonians* to pray for the Succeſs of the Word amongſt others, namely, the great and good Succeſs which God had given it amongſt them---that it may be glorified *as it is with you.* Thence Learn, that ſuch as have felt the Power of the Goſpel themſelves, to their Converſion and Salvation, ſhould pray that others may partake of the ſame Benefits by it and from it together with themſelves; herein they ſhew their Love to God, and Charity to the Souls of Men.

2 And that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.

In the former Verſe St. *Paul* deſired the *Theſſalonians* Prayers with Reference to the *Word*, here he requeſts it with Relation to *Himſelf*, that his Perſon might be preſerved as well as his Preaching proſper; that ſo long as God had any Work for him to do he might be preſerved from the Rage and Fury of the unbelieving Jews, and perſecuting Gentiles, who followed him from Place to Place to give him Trouble; *that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked Men.* Where *Note*, the odious Character with which the Apoſtle brands the Enemies of his Miniſtry, he calls them *unreaſonable* Men, whom no Reaſon or Argument could convince and ſatisfie, and *wicked* Men of vicious Lives and debauched Practices; they are uſually the vileſt and worſt of Men, the very Dregs of Mankind, who ſet themſelves to perſecute the Preachers, and oppoſe the Preaching of the Goſpel. Next he ſubjoins a Reaſon why he did ſo earneſtly deſire their Prayers for Deliverance from Dangers, becauſe *all Men have not Faith*, neither Fidelity, nor Faithfulneſs, much leſs ſincere Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for then they would not oppoſe his Goſpel, nor perſecute us from Place to Place, for the plain and perſwaſive Preaching of it. Where *Note*, that what Profeſſion ſoever a Perſon makes of Godlineſs and Religion, and how high ſoever his Pretences are for external Devotion, yet if he oppoſes the Goſpel, in the Power, Purity, and Progreſs of it, they are, and may be deſervedly ſtiled unreaſonable and wicked Men, who want Fidelity, moral Honeſty, and real Vertue, and act only for their own Intereſt, and to pleaſe a Party.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall eſtabliſh you, and keep *you* from evil.

Our Apoſtle had prayed for the *Theſſalonians* Eſtabliſhment before, *Chap.* 2. 17. he aſſures them of it now; God will eſtabliſh you, and keep you from Evil, from all Evil, and particularly from the Evil of Apoſtacy; and the Argument for Aſſurance is drawn from the Fidelity of God, and his Faithfulneſs in all his Promiſes; *the Lord is Faithful, who ſhall eſtabliſh you.* Learn hence, that the Chriſtian's Eſtabliſhment in Grace, his Perſeverance in Holineſs, and Preſervation from Sin, depends upon the Power and Faithfulneſs of God, in Concurrence with their own united Endeavours to eſtabliſh and preſerve themſelves from falling; *the Lord is Faithful*, &c.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, although I gave you the Aſſurance of God's faithful Readineſs according to his Promiſe to do every thing that is Requiſite on his Part, in Order to your Eſtabliſhment in Holineſs, and Preſervation from Sin, yet you muſt not, you cannot expect the Aſſiſtance of God, except you alſo add your own Endeavours as I have commanded; and accordingly I have good Confidence that what I command you in the Lord, or by the Authority of the Lord, both now and hereafter at all times, ſhall be performed by you. Where *Note*, the Character of that Obedience which the Goſpel directs; it muſt be Univerſal and Perpetual; ye do all the things that I commend you, and I have Confidence that ye will do.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and in the patient waiting for Chriſt.

As if he had ſaid, that we may not be miſtaken in this our Confidence, we pray that the Lord would direct your Hearts into the Love of God, which will conſtrain you to this Obedience. Where *Note*, that to direct Man's Heart aright into the Love of God, it is the Work of God, *the Lord direct your Hearts into the Love of God.* *Note* farther, that theſe *Theſſalonians* did love God already, for the Apoſtle had before commended their Work of Faith, their Labour of Love, and yet here he prays that their Hearts may be directed into the Love of God, *&c.* Learn thence, that the Hearts of the holieſt and beſt of Saints do ſtand in need of a more perfect and conſtant Direction into the Love of God; as Ships that are beſt rigg’d need a Pilot, ſo they that love God moſt need to have their Love ordered and directed to the beſt Advantage of his Glory. *Obſerve* farther, from the Phraſe here uſed (*direct*) that God works upon Man as a rational Creature; he changeth the Heart indeed, but he doth it by Direction, not by Violence and Compulſion; the Spirit’s Conduct is ſweet, yet powerful, it changes the Will, but without offering Violence to the Freedom and Liberty of the Will; we are not *forced*, but *directed*, the Lord direct your Hearts---- Again, the Lord direct your Hearts, it implies there are many things that would wreath, and bend, crook and turn our Hearts another Way, and divert our Love to a contrary Object, to the World and the Fleſh; therefore we had need pray with Earneſtneſs, *the Lord direct your Hearts into the Love of God*; it follows,---*And into the patient Waiting for Chriſt*. *Note* here, (1.) The true Character of a ſincere Chriſtian, he waits for the Coming of Chriſt; ſuch as love Chriſt fervently, long for his Coming greatly. *Note* (2.) How Patience qualifies thoſe holy Ardours and longing Deſires which the Saints have to be with Chriſt; though Love ſets us upon the Wing to be gone, yet Patience commands us to wait Chriſt’s own Time for going; vehement Love needs the Allay of Patience; moſt need much Patience to die, but ſome need as much Patience to live; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *the Lord direct your Hearts into a patient waiting for Chriſt*; intimating, that the Saints of God have great need of Patience to enable them to endure that State of Diſtance and Separation from Chriſt ſo long as they muſt endure it in this World; well might the Apoſtle then pray on Behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, *the Lord direct your Hearts into the Love of God, and patient waiting for Chriſt*.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw your ſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Our Apoſtle here enters upon a new Subject, namely, that of Church Diſcipline, not only exhorting, but commanding and requiring them to excommunicate from their Society every Brother or Chriſtian Profeſſor walking diſorderly, and not after the Tradition, or Doctrine delivered by him againſt ſuch Perſons. *Note* here, (1.) That though the Apoſtle did often-times entreat and beſeech, yet he had Authority to enjoin and command, we command you, Brethren. *Note* (2.) That this Authority to command he had not of himſelf, but from Chriſt, *we command you in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*. A Miniſter muſt look that his Commands be grounded upon the Authority of Chriſt, or elſe they will lie with ſmall Weight upon the Conſciences of his People. *Note* (3.) The ſpecial Duty he commanded them to the Practice and Performance of, namely, to excommunicate ſcandalous and diſorderly Perſons from their Communion and familiar Society; *that ye withdraw your ſelves*. A Man that is Guilty of a notorious ſcandalous Sin ought to be ſuſpended from familiar Converſe and Society with the Saints, to ſhame him into Repentance, before a publick Declarative Excommunication caſts him out of the Church; we command you to withdraw your ſelves from *every Brother*. *Note* (4.) The Offender deſcribed, a Brother: that is, a Profeſſor of Chriſtianty, be he who he will, and let his Rank and Station be what it will, if he walks diſorderly like a Soldier that keeps not Rank and File, as the Word ſignifies, if he walks not after the Tradition which he has received of us, that is plainly, according to the Rule and Direction of the Goſpel, let him be avoided. Hence Learn, that there is no Church-Member, whoſe Rank and Station, whoſe Quality and Condition, doth exempt his diſorderly ſcandalous Walking from Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure; *withdraw from every Brother that walketh diſorderly.*

7 For your ſelves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not our ſelves diſorderly among you, 8 Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not becauſe we have not power, but to make our ſelves an enſample unto you to follow us.

In theſe Verſes the Apoſtle plainly intimates whom he meant by the *diſorderly Brother* mentioned in the foregoing Verſe; it is the idle Perſon, called *diſorderly* for this Reaſon, becauſe Almighty God having fitted Man for, and ordained him to labour, he that will not do ſo, deſerts the Order in which God has placed him, and thus renders himſelf diſorderly. To condemn which Practice St. *Paul* propounds his own Example to their Conſideration and Imitation, declaring that he did not eat any Man’s Bread before he earnt it, but wrought with his own Hands in the Day-time, and ſometimes Part of the Night at his Trade of Tent-making, that he might not be chargeable to any of them; not but that he had Power to demand Maintenance for his Miniſtry, but he choſe rather to depart from his Right, and to labour in his Calling, to excite others to do the like. *Note* here, (1.) That had not St. *Paul* laboured in his Calling of Tent-making he had not been a *diſorderly* Perſon, but leſt any ſhould think ſo, he takes away, and cuts off all Occaſion of Suſpicion by working with his Hands; his Miniſterial Office would have freed him from the Charge and Imputation of Idleneſs, and made Maintenance from the Church his Due; but Idleneſs the Apoſtle obſerved was a growing Sin, which needed an Example as well as Doctrine to ſubdue it, and accordingly the Apoſtle ſets one, *I behaved not myſelf diſorderly* or idlely amongſt you, but wrought with Labour and Travel Night and Day. *Note* (2.) It is commendable to follow good Examples, but much more to ſet a good Example; as Miniſters ought to be Patterns, ſo People ought to be Followers, and their Sin will be much the greater, and their Puniſhment much the ſorer, who do not follow their Miniſters Doctrine when they have ſeen it exemplified in their Converſation. *Note* (3.) There have all along been ſome Perſons in the World who have look’d upon the Work of the Miniſtry as a very eaſie Calling, yea, as an idle Calling, that a little Time, a little Pains and Labour is enough for it; whereas the Labour of the Miniſtry in the Exerciſe of the Mind may juſtly be eſteemed the greateſt of Labours; yet we ſee People all along have not judged it ſo, but the Miniſters of Chriſt find it ſo. *Note* (4.) From the Poverty of St. *Paul’s* Condition, that he had nothing beforehand, but was forced to earn his Bread before he eat it. Learn, that it pleaſes God ſometimes to meaſure out a very hard Lot to his own Children, and to give but little of Earth to thoſe who glorifie him moſt upon Earth; and thoſe upon whom he intends to beſtow extraordinary Meaſures of Glory in Heaven, are cut ſhort, very ſhort, of thoſe outward Comforts. Here behold St. *Paul* a choſen Veſſel, one of the Holieſt Men, and the moſt Serviceable Man that lived in the World in his Time, yet without a Peny in his Purſe, but what he wrought for with his Hands, nay, working Night and Day for Bread. Lord! How Endearing are thy Childrens Obligations to thy Goodneſs for their eaſie and plentiful Circumſtances in the World; what a Favour is it to have Fulneſs upon Earth whilſt we live, and the Aſſurance of thine everlaſting Fruition when we die?

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat. 11 For we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are buſie-bodies. 12 Now them that are ſuch, we command, and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſolemn Charge given by the Apoſtle for every Man to follow ſome lawful Calling, and to be found in the Way of an induſtrious Diligence; if any (being able) will not work, let him not eat (any Part of the Churches Charity) ſo that the Sin of Idleneſs was directly contrary to the Apoſtle’s Command, and to the Apoſtle’s Example. Mark, it is not thoſe that cannot work, but thoſe that will not, whom the Apoſtle excluces from the Churches Charity; poor Men that will not work when they can, do forfeit the Bread of Charity from Men; the rich Men that live Idlely, do by that Sin forfeit their Food to God, yea, even their Lives and their Souls too; if *any Man would* not work, neither ſhould he eat. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle exhorts every Man to eat his *own Bread*, implying, that the Bread of Idleneſs is ſtolen Bread; but none of our idle Perſons ſhall be judged as Thieves, though they eat that which was freely given them: Drones deſerve no Honey, what they eat is ſtolen from the induſtrious Bee; that is truly our Bread which we labour for our ſelves, or recompence thoſe who get it for us by their Labour: God has ſent no Man into the World to be Idle; but as the Providence of God diſpoſes of every Man, though he has never ſo much worldly Wealth, yet he muſt be ſome Way uſeful and ſerviceable in his Generation. *Obſerve* (3.) One of the bad Effects of Idleneſs, pointed at by our Apoſtle; namely, an intermedling (as Buſie-bodies) in other Mens Matters; an idle Perſon that doth nothing to any good Purpoſe, yet has a deal of Buſineſs to anſwer for, done to very bad Purpoſe; not for labouring, but buſie trifling; the Buſie-bodies Buſineſs is very unprofitable Buſineſs; the Mind of Man cannot be wholly Idle, but muſt be imployed in ſomething, if not in doing Good, of Neceſſity in contriving Evil; uſually none are ſo Buſie in other Mens Matters as they that neglect their own; theſe diſorderly Perſons, who did not *work at all*; yet *were Buſie-bodies*, and as ſuch cenſured by our Apoſtle; *I hear there are ſome among you diſorderly, working not at all, but are Buſie-bodies.*

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this Epiſtle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed. 15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admoniſh *him* as a brother.

Obſerve here, (1.) How far St. *Paul* was from the Cenſoriouſneſs and Uncharitableneſs of thoſe Men who condemn a whole Society, a Communion, a Church in general, for the Miſcarriages of ſome particular Perſons in it, I hear, ſays he, there are ſome that walk diſorderly; *but ye, Brethren* are Free from theſe Miſdemeanours, you are Painful in your Imployments, Diligent in your Callings, Charitable in your Diſtributions, be not weary in theſe Inſtances of your Duty, but perſevere *in Well-doing*; when the Miniſters of Chriſt reprove the Stubborn and Diſobedient for the Neglect of their Duty, they forget not to encourage and exhort the Faithful and Obedient to a perſevering Diligence in their known Duty. *Obſerve* (2.) He directs them how to manage Refractory Perſons, ſuch as remained Contumacious and Diſobedient to the Admonitions given by this Epiſtle; continuing diſorderly, and refuſing to labour: his Advice is Twofold, he tells them what he would have them not do, and what he would have them do to ſuch. (1.) Negatively, what they ſhould not do; namely, not to cut them off from the Church by Excommunication, deſpairing of their Repentance and Reformation; extream Rigour is Offenſive to God and Injurious to the Church, as well as too much Lenity and Forbearance. (2.) Poſitively, he exhorts that they conſider them as lapſed Brethren, and treat them accordingly, as thoſe that deſire and endeavour to reduce and reform them; in order to which he directs, (1.) To note or mark the diſorderly Perſons, that is, to ſet a Note of Shame upon them. Next to avoid all Intimacy and Familiarity with them. Laſtly, to admoniſh them of their Duty, that they may be brought, if poſſible, to Repentance.

16 Now the Lord of peace himſelf give you peace always, by all means.

Our Apoſtle, being now to take his leave of the *Theſſalonians*, cloſes his Epiſtle with Prayer. Where *Note* (1.) The Mercy prayed for, *Peace*; Peace with God, Peace with Conſcience, Peace and Unity amongſt themſelves as Chriſtians; Peace with the Men of the World, Strangers, yea, Enemies to Chriſtianity. *Note* (2.) The Perſon prayed to, *the Lord of Peace*; underſtand Jeſus Chriſt, the Prince of Peace, the Purchaſer of Peace, the Procurer of Peace, the Preſerver of Peace. *Note* (3.) The Perpetuity of the Mercy prayed for, the Lord give you Peace, not for a ſhort Time, but for Continuance, *always*, that is, at all times, and in all Places, and with all Perſons. *Note* (4.) The Way and Manner of obtaining this and all other Bleſſings, it muſt be in the Uſe of Means; the Lord give you Peace by all Means, that is, in the Uſe of all lawful and laudable Means. Learn hence, (1.) That the Lord himſelf is the Author, Procurer and Preſerver of all that Peace which his People enjoy; and therefore his People may boldly truſt him for Peace and Safety, who is, and will be ſtiled the Lord of Peace. Learn (2.) That ſuch as will obtain this Bleſſing of Peace muſt pray for it, and endeavour after it, in a diligent Uſe of all lawful Means, which is the uſual Way and Method in which God diſpences it. Learn (3.) That it is a laſting Peace, a Peace *always*, amongſt all Perſons, and at all Times, that a Chriſtian ſhould pray for and endeavour after, that it may be injoyed without Ceſſation, and without Interruption; *the Lord of Peace himſelf give you Peace always, by all means.*

16——The Lord *be* with you all. 17 The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epiſtle; ſo I write: 18 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

Obſerve here, (1.) That in the former Part of the Verſe he had prayed for Peace on Behalf of theſe *Theſſalonians*, and this Prayer was put up to Jeſus Chriſt; *The Lord of Peace give you Peace*; which, by the Way, is a ſtrange Argument for the Divinity of Chriſt, for none but God is to be prayed to, none but God can give Peace, *Iſa.* 57. 19. *I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace.* Our Apoſtle now, having prayed for Peace, next prays for the Preſence of God; *the Lord give you Peace, the Lord be with you all.* Learn thence, that God's gracious Preſence with his People in any plentiful Meaſure, is annexed to their peaceable Frame of Spirit, and to their ſerious endeavours after Peace and Love, after Unity and Concord amongſt themſelves; and the contrary Spirit and Temper grieves the good Spirit of God, and provokes him to withdraw his quickning and comforting Preſence from his People; for theſe Two Petitions ſeem to have a mutual Dependency upon each other, *the Lord give you Peace, and the Lord be with you all.* *Obſerve* (2.) That the Salutation written with his own Hand reſpects his own Writing, which did ſerve as a Token or certain Mark whereby his own Epiſtles were diſtinguiſhed from all Counterfeits. The ſending of Salutations, either by Word or Writing, that we may thereby teſtifie our ſincere Affection to abſent Friends, is not a Matter of Decency only, but of Duty, not of Complement barely, but of Conſcience: The Salutation of me *Paul* with my own Hand. *Obſerve* (3.) His uſual Valediction and farewel Wiſh, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all. Amen.* As if he had ſaid, may the gracious and undeſerved Fovour of God in Chriſt, with all the Fruits and Effects, the Benefits and Advantages of it, be conveyed to you all without Exception, and be the Portion and Privilege of every Soul of you; and in Teſtimony both of my affectionate Deſire, and aſſured Confidence, I ſay *Amen*, ſo be it, ſo let it be. Learn hence, that there is an inexhauſtable Fountain of rich Grace in Chriſt, and ſo Copious the Streams of Spiritual Bleſſings which flow from it, that wiſh we never ſo much to others, yet there ſtill remaineth enough for our ſelves. St. *Paul*, who wiſheth all Grace to the *Theſſalonians*, knew very well there was enough both for himſelf and them; and that how large a Meaſure ſoever was beſtowed upon them, there would not be the leſs remaining for himſelf; therefore doth he thus cloſe and conclude his Epiſtle, ſaying, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.* Amen.

THE
Firſt Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO
TIMOTHY.

Timotheus *or* Timothy *is the Name of the Perſon to whom St.* Paul *directs this and the following Epiſtle; a Name given him by his Parents to teſtifie their Pious Deſire that this their Son ſhould* Fear *and* Honour God, *according to the ſignification of his Name.*

His Grandmother Lois, *and his Mother* Eunice, *bred him up in Knowledge of the Scriptures from a Child; he became firſt the Diſciple, and then the Companion of St.* Paul, *was ordained by him, was very aſſiſting to him, and inexplicably dear to this great Apoſtle, who knew how to value true Worth in what Age ſoever he fonnd it; inſomuch that St.* Paul *ſeldom mentions his Name but with a Mark of Honour and Eſteem, calling him his* Son, *his* Dearly Beloved Son, *his* Faithful Fellow-labourer, &c. *He was a Perſon of eminent Gifts, and of a gracious Diſpoſition, but of a ſick and weakly Conſtitution, and being enter'd very Young into the Work of the Miniſtry, St.* Paul *thought fit in his Abſence from him to write Two Epiſtles to him, and to all ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel after him, directing how to demean and behave themſelves in their Miniſterial Function.*

In theſe Two Epiſtles, and that to Titus, *we have a Collection of Canons truly Apoſtolical, directing all Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church how to Govern themſelves, and how to Guide their People.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *which is* our hope;

Obſerve here, (1.) St. *Paul* aſſerts his Apoſtolical Authority, calling himſelf *an Apoſtle*; not that *Timothy* queſtioned it, but he writes it for their ſakes over whom he was now preſiding at *Epheſus*, that neither Miniſters nor People might deſpiſe what *Timothy* did, it being enjoined both him and them by ſo great an Authority as was that of an Apoſtle; *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt.* *Obſerve* (2.) What Authority St. *Paul* had for executing this Office of an Apoſtle, it was by the *Commandment* of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that is, by the Appointment, Injunction, Ordination and immediate Commiſſion of the Father and of Chriſt, by his Voice from Heaven, as the reſt of the Apoſtles were called by a Voice from Chriſt on Earth; in 1 *Cor.* 1. 1. he is ſaid to be called by the Will of God; not by his permiſſive Will barely, but by his preceptive Will particularly. *Obſerve* (3.) The Title given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is ſtiled *our Hope*, that is, the Author of our Hope, the Object of our Hope, the Purchaſer of what we Hope for, the Declarer to us of the Hopes of Glory expected by us. Where *Note*, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is undoubtedly and undeniably God, becauſe he is our Hope and Truſt; now if he were no more than a Man, though never ſo excelling, to make him our Hope would be to make our ſelves miſerable; *for curſed is the Man that truſteth in Man, and maketh Man his Hope*, Jer. 17. 5.

2 Unto Timothy *my* own ſon in the faith: grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Obſerve here, (1.) The endearing Title which our Apoſtle gives to *Timothy*, he calls him his *Son*, his own *Son*, his own Son in the *Faith*; becauſe, as ſome think, Converted by him to the Chriſtian Faith; others, that he was more thoroughly Inſtructed, Edified and Encouraged by St. *Paul*, but Converted before poſſibly; alſo he may call him his Son, becauſe he was as aſſiſting to him, as obſequious and obſerving of him, as a Son is to a Father, he being a Young Man, and the Apoſtle now Aged; or it may be he calls him his Son becauſe he reſembled him in Faith and Doctrine, in Preaching and Converſation, as a Son reſembles a Father in Face and Manners. Conſider *Timothy* as a ſpiritual Son to St. *Paul*, begotten to the Faith by him, and then the Note is this, that the Miniſters of Chriſt cannot but bear a fervent and affectionate Love to thoſe that are their Spiritual Children, their Sons in the Faith, and Converted to Chriſt by their Miniſtry; conſider him as an Aſſiſtant to St. *Paul*, a Co-worker and Fellow-labourer with him in the Work of the Goſpel, and thus affectionately Beloved by him, and we may Learn for our Inſtruction how fervently the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould Love one another, ſpeak Reſpectfully of each other, ſecure the Reputation one of another, ſtrengthen each other's Hands, encourage each other's Hearts in the Work of God; we have little, God knows, very little Love from the World: Lord! how ſad is it that we ſhould yet have leſs one for another? See how the Heart of St. *Paul* and his Aſſiſtant *Timothy* were Knit together in Love, like Father and Son, to the great Reputation, as well as the ſucceſsful Furtherance of the Goſpel.

3 As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine,
4 Neither give heed to fables, and endleſs genealogies, which miniſter queſtions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith: *ſo do.*

Note here, (1.) The tender Care which St. *Paul* took of the new-planted Church at *Epheſus*; when his Office called him into *Macedonia*, he leaves *Timothy* behind him at

Epheſus, to water what he had planted, and to build upon that Foundation which he had laid; *when I went into* Macedonia *I beſought thee to abide ſtill at* Epheſus. *Note* (2.) The Charge and Command which St. *Paul* left with *Timothy* at his Departure from him, to take care that no new or ſtrange Doctrine be taught, or any other Doctrine received by the Church, than what was deliver'd by him; *charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine.* But who are theſe? Very probably they were the Judaizing Teachers, who ſtrenuouſly endeavour'd to corrupt the Purity, and deprave the Simplicity of the Goſpel. Thence learn, (1.) That though the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles was abundantly ſufficient to Salvation, yet the Church of Chriſt, even in the earlieſt Days of Chriſtianity, were in very great Danger of being corrupted early by other Doctrines than thoſe deliver'd by them. Learn (2.) That it is the great Duty, and ought to be the ſpecial Care of the Miniſters of God, that no new or ſtrange Doctrine be broach'd in the Church of Chriſt; *I beſought thee ----- that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach no other doctrine.* But a farther and more particular Charge is given, *verſe* 4. That the Church at *Epheſus* give no heed to *Fables* or *endleſs Genealogies*, which rather occaſion wrangling Diſputes, than tend to Edification in Faith and Holineſs; by *Fables* we may underſtand vain and idle Speculations, Jewiſh Scruples, frivolous Obſervances; whatſoever in Preaching is deliver'd by us, which doth not anſwer the great End of Preaching, namely, to build up Men in Faith and Holineſs, it is Trifling, and not Preaching; what we deliver it ſignifies no more than a Fable, or an imaginary Tale that is told. But what were theſe *endleſs Genealogies* here ſpoken of? *Anſw.* Not Scripture Genealogies, for thoſe are not vain, but uſeful, not endleſs, but determinate; but theſe were Endeavours of ſome particular Perſons, who, that they might have a Pretence to claim Kindred with Chriſt, did make their Genealogies endleſs, drawing down their Line of Deſcent from *David*, &c. Or elſe endeavours to prove themſelves Sons of *Abraham* and *Iſaac*, Privileges which they highly valued themſelves upon, and reſted in, ſaying, *We have Abraham to our father.* Whatever they were, our Apoſtle charges *Timothy*, that the Church at *Epheſus* give no heed to them, nor to the Preachers of them, and the Reaſon is given, becauſe they only occaſion Diſputes, and tend not to Edification.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide unto vain jangling; 7 Deſiring to be teachers of the law, underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle ſmartly reflects upon the Judaizing Teachers, who were ſo zealous for the Ceremonial Law, that they mingled Works with Faith in the Point of Juſtification; the Apoſtle tells them, that the End of the Law, ay, and of the Goſpel too, is Love; the End, that is, the Aim, the Scope, the Deſign, the Perfection and Conſummation, the perfecting End; the Senſe is, That all the Duties which the Law of God, and the Goſpel of Chriſt doth enjoin, are deſigned only as means to advance and perfect our Love both to God and Man; the End of all Chriſt's Doctrine is Charity, or the bringing of Men to Love God and their Neighbour. *Obſerve* next, The Apoſtle deſcribes the Nature and Quality of that Love, which is the End and Deſign, the Intention and Perfection of the Law, and the Fountain from whence this Love muſt ſpring and flow, namely, from a pure Heart, or a Heart purified by the Spirit of Chriſt, from a *good Conſcience*, or a Conſcience purified by the Blood of Chriſt, and from a Faith unfeigned: *Implying*, That Love either to God or Men is not ſincere, unleſs it proceed from a clean Heart, and is accompanied with an Holy and Innocent Life, and has Faith for the Root and Principle from which it flows. *Obſerve* laſtly, How he taxes theſe Judaizing and Falſe Teachers with ſwerving from Charity, Purity, and Faith, and turning aſide to vain Janglings; and that whilſt they affect to be thought Learned Teachers and Expounders of the Law, they betray their own Ignorance, not underſtanding either what they ſay, or whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man uſe it lawfully;

Leſt any ſhould have apprehended, from the Reflection he made upon the Teachers of the Law in the foregoing Verſe, that he did diſparage and undervalue the Law itſelf, our Apoſtle in this Verſe declares, that the Law rightly underſtood and preached was very *good*, given for, and ſerves unto excellent Purpoſes, if we uſe it *lawfully*, that is, as we ought to uſe it, as God intended it, namely, as a perfect Rule of Life to direct us in our Obedience to God; but not ſo good as to expect Juſtification by it; not good in Oppoſition to the Goſpel, but in Subſerviency to the Goſpel; *the Law is good if uſed lawfully.* *Obſerve* here, (1.) Something implied, namely, that the Law of God may be uſed unlawfully: But how, and when, may it be ſaid ſo to be? *Anſw.* When it is converted to unprofitable Diſputes, as was the Caſe here, when Men oppoſe it to Chriſt, when they ſeek Juſtification by it, and the like. *Obſerve* (2.) ſomething expreſt, namely, That the Law of God, conſider'd in itſelf, is good and excellent; 'tis good in regard of its Author, it hath the Authority of God inſtampt upon it; good in regard of the Matter contain'd in it, good in regard of the End of it, to lead us unto Chriſt, *Rom.* 16. 4. *Chriſt is the End of the Law*; good in regard of the Uſe of it, and that (1.) to the Ungodly, to reſtrain them from Sin, to convince them of Sin, to condemn them for Sin. (2.) To the Godly, to diſcover Sin more clearly and more fully, to drive them out of themſelves, and from all Expectation of Righteouſneſs and Juſtification by any thing in themſelves, or done by themſelves; to cauſe them to put the higher Value, Eſteem, and Price upon Jeſus Chriſt, and the Benefits receiv'd by him. Thus the Law is Good; and if ſo, wo to the *Antimonians*, who deny the Uſe and Excellency of the Holy Law of God, who vilifie it, trample upon it, and becauſe it is not good for Juſtification, affirm it is not good at all: What, is not Gold good becauſe you cannot eat it for Food? It was never intended for that Purpoſe: Is not Obedience to the Law as an eternal Rule of Holy Living, and Good Works agreeable to the Demands of the Law, neceſſary and good, tho' they never had the Impreſs of God's Ordination for our Juſtification in his ſight, he having provided a perfect and ſpotleſs Righteouſneſs for that Purpoſe, which is highly pleaſing to him? Lord! in the Day when thou ſhalt come to plead with the World for tranſgreſſing thy Law, how ſhall theſe Men, who with Tongue and Pen have cried down the Uſe and Excellencies of thy Law, ſhew their Heads before thee!

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly, and for ſinners, for unholy and prophane, for murtherers of fathers, and murtherers of mothers, for manſlayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for liars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to ſound doctrine,

Our Apoſtle here declares the Perſons (1.) Whom the Law was not made for, and then for whom it was made; it was not made for a Righteous Man, that is, ſay ſome, it was not made for him as a Burthen, to be an uneaſineſs to him, becauſe he has a Love to it, a Delight in it, and does voluntarily conform himſelf to the Obſervations of it; others ſay thus, the Law was not made for a Righteous Man, that is, the Righteous Man is not under the Coercive, or Vindictive, but Directive Power of the Law only; they are not under the Curſe of the Law actually, tho' all are under it meritoriouſly; and accordingly the Law was never made to terrify, and affrighten, and condemn them. Next the Apoſtle declares for whom, for what Perſons, and for what Purpoſes the Law was made, intended, and deſigned; namely, for reſtraining and condemning firſt in general all lawleſs Perſons, Sons of *Belial*, as the Scripture calls them, that is, Men without Yoak; the Moral Law in general as a Rule of Holy Living, and the Goſpel in particular is Chriſt's Yoak; now ſuch as will not wear the Yoak of Chriſt, muſt expect no Benefit by the Croſs of Chriſt: Then he inſtances in particular, what and whom the Law was made for, namely, to deterr and reſtrain Perſons from all Impiety and Prophaneneſs, from all Diſobedience and Stubbornneſs, from Murder and Manſlaughter, from Sodomy, from Whoredom, and all manner of Uncleanneſs, either natural or unnatural, from

Theft, from Perjury, from Lying and Falſhood, and ſummarily, to curb and reſtrain wicked Men from the Practice of every thing which is contrary to the Pure and Holy Nature of God. Learn hence, That there is ſuch a Propenſity and Inclination in the corrupt and depraved Nature of Man to the Practice of all Sin, even the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt of Sins, that the Law of God, with all its threatned Puniſhments is not ſufficient to deterr, to terrify, to reſtrain Sinners from the Commiſſion of them; but ſuch as will not be under the Reſtraining, muſt lie under the Condemning Power of the Law.

11 According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt. 12 And I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry;

Note here (1.) The Title given to the Goſpel, it is called *the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God*; partly becauſe the glorious Attributes and Excellencies of God are more reſplendent in the Goſpel, than in the Law of God; as alſo becauſe the Goſpel brings more Honour and Glory to God than all the Works of Creation put together. *Note* (2.) He ſtiles God the Giver of this Goſpel, *The bleſſed God*, to ſignify thereby unto us his tranſcendent Mercy and excelling Goodneſs, in that being infinitely happy in the Enjoyment of himſelf and his Divine Perfections, and uncapable of any Profit from, or Advantage by his Creatures, he was yet pleaſed to give us his Son, his Goſpel, his Holy Spirit, to qualify us for, and bring us to the Enjoyment of Himſelf; *according to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God. Note* (3.) What humble and thankful Returns St. *Paul* makes to Chriſt for the high Honour, the rich and ſpecial Favour conferred upon him in calling him to diſpence this glorious Goſpel, in calling him to it, in enabling him for it, and rendring him faithful and ſucceſsful in it; *I thank Chriſt Jeſus who enabled me, that counted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry.* Where *Note*, That all the Fidelity, Ability, Zeal and Courage, which the Apoſtle had exerciſed in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, is attributed and aſcribed unto Chriſt, and not to himſelf; his Faithfulneſs was not the Cauſe or Motive, but the Effect and Fruit of the Grace of God in calling him to the Miniſtry, 1 *Cor*. 7. 25. having obtained Mercy to be faithful; had our Saviour only diſcovered this Faithfulneſs in him, and not conferred it upon him, there had not been ſuch Reaſon for this affectionate Thankſgiving which here we find from our Apoſtle, *I thank Chriſt who hath enabled me, counting me faithful.*

13 Who was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief:

Note here, (1.) What a prodigious Sinner St. *Paul* repreſents himſelf before Converſion, *I was a perſecutor, blaſphemer, and injurious*; a *Blaſphemer*, the higheſt Sin he could commit againſt God; a *Perſecutor*, the higheſt Sin he could commit againſt the Saints; *Injurious*, the higheſt Wickedneſs towards Mankind; Sins of ſuch an aggravated and accumulated Guilt, that they wanted but one Ingredient, namely, ſufficient Knowledge, to render them the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Be aſtoniſhed, O Heavens, at the great and infinite Mercy of God towards great Sinners! Even Perſecutors and Blaſphemers may be, and ſometimes are Converted and brought home to God. *Note* (2.) The Reaſon aſſign'd by him, why ſuch diſtinguiſhing Mercy was diſpenced to him, he obtained Mercy *becauſe* he did it ignorantly in *Unbelief*; the Word *becauſe* doth not import or imply, that Ignorance in the Apoſtle was the proper Cauſe of Mercy in God, but that it made St. *Paul* a more capable Subject for receiving Mercy, than he ſhould have been if he had maliciouſly Sinned againſt Knowledge; not that St. *Paul* by leſs Sinning did merit the Mercy of God, but his Ignorance and Unbelief being in a ſort invincible, through the Prejudices of Education, they did much abate the Malignity of his Sin, for he was a bred Phariſee, which was a Sect that had an implacable Enmity againſt Chriſt and his Holy Religion. *Obſerve* laſtly, The End and Deſign of St. *Paul* in relating that his bitter Perſecution of Chriſtianity was in the time of his Ignorance, and not done deliberately, knowingly, and maliciouſly; partly to juſtifie the Divine Mercy and Free Grace of God, which pardoned his Fury, his Rage and Madneſs againſt Chriſt and his Saints; for had he done thus deliberately and maliciouſly, for ſecular Ends and worldly Advantages, it had been the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which was unpardonable; and partly he mentions his Ignorance to prevent the Abuſe of the Divine Mercy in Men, and to let the World know, that none might or ought to take Encouragement from his Example, to be of a perſecuting Spirit, and yet hope for Mercy, when at the ſame time they Sin againſt Light and Knowledge. I would to God the perſecuting Spirit amongſt us would conſider this, which is as bitter as ever in the Breaſts of ſome againſt their Proteſtant Brethren, but bleſſed be God legally reſtrained; they cannot now afflict thoſe whom they do not affect, yet it is evident they do not rejoice, and are not ſo thankful for their own Liberty as they ſhould, becauſe thoſe whom they hate enjoy theirs; their Caſe is vaſtly different from our Apoſtle's, they cannot pretend to do it ignorantly, though through Infidelity in ſome ſort they may.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith, and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Still our Apoſtle goes on magnifying the tranſcendent Mercy, and abundant Grace of God, that called him firſt to be a Chriſtian, and then an Apoſtle; and he ſhews, that this great Mercy of God had great Effects in him of Faith and Love, both towards God and his Saints. Where *Note*, How St. *Paul* after his Converſion abounded and excelled in thoſe Graces which were oppoſite and contrary to the Sins committed in his carnal and unregenerate State; he abounds in *Faith*, in oppoſition to his former *Unbelief*; and in *Love*, in oppoſition to his former *Rage and Cruelty:* a Chriſtian's Fruitfulneſs in Grace and Holineſs after his Converſion, ought to bear ſome Proportion to his Unfruitfulneſs in a ſinful State before Converſion; the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love; he now glorifies God by excelling in thoſe Graces which were oppoſite to his former Sins.

15 This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief.

Obſerve here, (1.) What an humble apprehenſion this great Apoſtle had of himſelf, tho' then the greateſt of Saints, in the Eſteem of others, yet the chiefeſt of Sinners in his own Account; for he doth not ſay, I was the chief of Sinners, but *I am ſo*; notwithſtanding his Repentance and Remiſſion ſtill he reflects upon his former unregenerate State and ſinful Condition. Learn hence, That when Sin is mercifully pardoned, and caſt behind God's Back, the Penitent Sinner will, and ought to ſet it continually before his own Face, to keep him humble, ſenſible of, and thankful for the rich Grace of God diſpenced to him, and received by him; *Sinners, of whom I am chief. Obſerve* (2.) A moſt comfortable Revelation made by the Goſpel concerning the Redemption and Salvation of a loſt World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *he came into the world to ſave ſinners.* Where *Note*, That the promiſed *Meſſiah* is come into the World, that Jeſus Chriſt is *that* promiſed *Meſſiah*; therefore he was before he came, his Divine Nature pre-exiſting from all Eternity; and in the Fulneſs of Time he aſſum'd the Human Nature into an Union with his Godhead. *Note* farther, That the Deſign of his Coming was to ſave Sinners; therefore if Man had not Sinned, Chriſt had not come into the World; What need of a Mediator had there been no Breach? No need of a Phyſician had there been no Diſeaſe. Farther, It was not abſolutely neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould come into the World to ſave Sinners; but ſuppoſing God's Purpoſe of ſaving Sinners by way of a Price and Satiſfaction, Chriſt's coming into the World was indiſpenſably neceſſary, for no meer Creature could lay down a Price ſatiſfactory for the Salvation of Loſt Man. *Obſerve* (3.) The Truth and Certainty, together with the Worth and Excellency of the Goſpel-Revelation, *this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation*; for what is the Goſpel but a Revelation of Pardon to condemned Malefactors, a Declaration of Peace to proclaimed Enemies, a Proclamation of Liberty to enſlaved Captives, an offer of Cure to diſeaſed Perſons? Oh! with what fervent Zeal ſhould this acceptable Doctrine be preached by us, and embraced by our People; *That Jeſus Chriſt is come into the world to ſave ſinners.*

16 Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.

Note here, That God is pleaſed ſometimes to magnifie his Mercy in the Converſion and Salvation of the moſt notorious Sinners, that ſo the greateſt of Sinners may take Encouragement from thence to Hope and Truſt in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for pardoning Mercy: Thus here, this great Blaſphemer and Perſecutor was received to Mercy, for a Pattern and Example to all ſuch Sinners as ſhould hereafter forſake their Evil and Wicked Ways, and give up themſelves ſincerely to the Obedience of the Goſpel, *for this cauſe I obtained mercy*; ſuch a conſpicuous Example of Chriſt's Clemency and Grace towards ſo great a Sinner, whom he not only pardoned, but preferred to the Dignity of an Apoſtle, and ſent forth to preach the Goſpel to the Gentiles, would be a ſtrong Motive to the Gentiles to receive the Goſpel with Faith and Obedience; there could be no Reaſon for any of them to deſpair of Mercy when they ſaw ſuch a Pattern, ſuch an illuſtrious Inſtance of pardoning Mercy before their Eyes; *in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt ſhewed forth all long-ſuffering, for a Pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him.*

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle being raviſhed with a ſweet ſenſe of the Greatneſs of God's pardoning Mercy towards himſelf, concludes this whole Matter with a Pathetick Doxology and an affectionate Thankſgiving unto God. As if he had thus ſaid, The ſenſe of the forenamed unſpeakable Mercy calleth up my Soul to ſpeak with Joy the Praiſes of our God, who is Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only God, abſolutely Wiſe, over Angels and all Creatures, to him be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy, ——

What Charge? To ſtay at *Epheſus*, ſay ſome, for the Benefit of the Church there; to charge the falſe Teachers not to give heed to Fables, ſay others; to keep the Doctrine committed to him by St. *Paul* as a faithful Miniſter and Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt, againſt all Oppoſition; theſe were the Charges given.

18 —— According to the propheſies which went before on thee, that thou by them mighteſt war a good warfare,

Here St. *Paul* encourages *Timothy* to go on in the Courſe of his Miniſtry with Courage and Faithfulneſs, according as it had been foretold or propheſied he ſhould do. Here *Note*, That amongſt the Gifts of Prophecy, which were found in the Apoſtle's Time, and the diſcerning of Spirits, this was one, to foretel and chuſe out Perſons meet and fit to do God Service in the Miniſtry. *Timothy* was thus choſen by Prophecy, that is, by the Direction of the Spirit of God, he was deſigned and notified by the Spirit of Prophecy, and therefore the Apoſtle bids him, as it had been foretold he ſhould be, a faithful Miniſter, to approve himſelf to be ſuch; *according to the Propheſies which went before on thee, War a good warfare.* Learn hence, that young Miniſters ought to take heed, that what Hopes, Expectations, and good Opinions others have had of them, and what Prayers, Promiſes and Engagements have been made for them, may not be made Void, but made good by them in the future Courſe of their Miniſtry.

19 Holding faith and a good conſcience, which ſome having put away, concerning faith have made ſhipwrack.

St. *Paul* had exhorted *Timothy* in the foregoing Verſe to *War a good warfare*, here he directs him to two Weapons which he would have him uſe in that Warfare, namely, *Faith and a good Conſcience*; neither will do alone: not Faith without a good Conſcience, nor a good Conſcience without Faith; hold both, Faith in thy Teaching, and a good Conſcience in thy Practice; hold them faſt, for Faith ſtands with a good Conſcience, and falls with a bad one. Learn hence, That in the moſt perillous Times, when ſome loſe their Graces and Comforts, their preſent Peace and future Hopes, that we may not loſe what we have on Earth, and what we look for in Heaven, our continual Care muſt be to get and keep, to have and hold Faith and a good Conſcience. And mark, the Encouragement given to Exerciſe this Care, ſome through the Neglect of it *concerning faith have made ſhipwrack*; our Life is a Seafaring Condition, a good Conſcience is the Ark in which we are ſecure, made by God's own Direction, (as was that of *Noah*) and pitched within and without, as was his; a Window it has in the top to let in the Light of Heaven, but not the leaſt Crack or Crevice below to let in a Drop of Guilt to endanger its own Safety; it ſhoots off all the Showers that fall downwards, and all the Floods that rage upwards; ſuch a Security is an innocent Mind and a clear Conſcience; but if we do not hold faſt a good Conſcience, but let it go, we have ſeen the laſt of Faith, it ſinks, it ſhipwracks preſently; *concerning faith they have made ſhipwrack.*

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, ——

That is, of the Number of thoſe who have made Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience are theſe Two Men, they made Shipwrack of Faith; but how? By renouncing Chriſtianity expreſly? No: But implicitly, by denying the Reſurrection, and maintaining ſuch Doctrines as utterly ſubverted, and totally overthrew the Faith.

20 —— whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.

That is, whom I have inflicted the Church's Cenſure of Excommunication upon, caſt them out of the Church, and delivered to Satan as God's Executioner, who oft-times tormented the Perſon with grievous Diſeaſes, and Bodily Pains, called elſewhere *the deſtruction of the Fleſh*, 1 Cor. 5. 5. Learn thence, That Excommunication rightly Adminiſtred is a very ſolemn Ordinance, a ſhutting out of Heaven him who is juſtly caſt out of the Church's Communion here on Earth. But *Obſerve* the Charitable Intention of the Apoſtle in denouncing this Sentence of Excommunication, it was, *that they might learn not to Blaſpheme.* Mark, it was none of Satan's Deſire, but the Apoſtle's, that they might learn not to Blaſpheme; Satan was then God's Executioner, when the Church wanted the Countenance of the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, and his Deſign was Deſtruction, but the Apoſtle's was Reformation; not to Ruin but Reclaim. Learn, That the End of the Church's Cenſure, in particular of Excommunication, is not to ſerve to the Deſtruction of the Cenſured, much leſs to the private Revenge of the Cenſurer, but to reform and reclaim the Offender, that others may be warned, and the Infection ſtayed; of whom is *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to Blaſpheme.

CHAP. II.

The Firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle acquainted us that Timothy *was left by St.* Paul *at* Epheſus, *to manage and ſuperintend the Affairs of the Church in that City, whilſt the Apoſtle was abſent from them, Planting and Propagating the Goſpel in other Places; this Second Chapter directs* Timothy *to the Management of his Duty: And firſt, he exhorts him to take ſpecial Care that Prayers and Supplications be publickly made, and ſo far as it was in his Power, privately alſo for all Men. Whence we may Learn, That the Religious and conſtant Performance of the Duty of Prayer by all Perſons, publickly and privately, ought to be a ſpecial Part of a Miniſter's Care and Concern: his Endeavour muſt be to bring his People to a great Senſe of this Part of their Duty to God their Maker, to bow their Knees in publick, Private and Secret before him; for to live without Prayer, is to live without God in the World.*

I Exhort therefore, that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men: 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Duty which *Timothy* is exhorted to take care of, and that is of the Duty of publick Prayer; I exhort thee, that Supplications, Prayers, and Interceſſions, with Thankſgivings, be publickly made: Prayer being a ſpecial and principal Part of Publick Worſhip, the Miniſter of God muſt be aſſiduous and conſtant in it; Deprecating Evils threatned, Supplicating for Mercies wanted, Interceeding on the Behalf of others, and giving Thanks for Bleſſings received. *Obſerve* (2.) For whom we are to pray, in general *for all Men:* Becauſe we cannot Pray acceptably for our ſelves, if we pray only for our ſelves: This is the Nobleſt Exerciſe of Charity, and which God has put in the Power of the pooreſt Man upon Earth to exerciſe; let *Supplications* and *Prayers be made for all men.* *Obſerve* (3.) For whom we are more eſpecially, and in the firſt place to pray for *Kings,* and all in *Authority,* who then were Pagans and Perſecutors. Mark! He ſays not for lawful and rightful Kings, but for ſuch as have the Preheminence and Power in their Hands, for all Power is of God, *and the powers that be are ordained of God,* Rom. 13. 2. But why *firſt for Kings?* Becauſe they are ſuch great Inſtruments of Good to Mankind, becauſe they muſt want our Prayers, as they encounter with more Difficulties, are expoſed to more Dangers, and are liable to greater Temptations than other Men. *Obſerve* (4.) The Argument which the Apoſtle offers to engage us to the Duty, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty;* that is, that we may be ſecured in the quiet and peaceable Poſſeſſion of our Civil Rites and Intereſts, and that we may be protected in the free Exerciſe of our Religion, and in the Practice of Godlineſs; for tho' no Prince can take our Religion from us, if we reſolve to keep it, yet they may diſturb us in the quiet and peaceable Enjoyment of it, and therefore it is our Intereſt as well as our Duty to pray *for kings, and all that are in authority.*

3 For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour: 4 Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Our Apoſtle ſubjoins his Reaſons for our praying *for all men,* becauſe Chriſt came into the World to ſave all Men, *Chap.* 1. 15. becauſe it is the Deſire of God, as well as the Deſign of Chriſt, that all Men ſhould be ſaved, and becauſe ſuch Prayers are good and acceptable in the ſight of God. Learn hence, (1.) That to pray for all Men, as well Enemies as Friends, eſpecially and particularly for Rulers and Magiſtrates, is good, acceptable, and agreeable to Almighty God, as all Acts of Obedience to his commanding Will are; *this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God.* Learn (2.) That it is not only all ſorts of Men that God and Chriſt deſire ſhould be ſaved, but our Lord Willed, together with his Father, the Salvation of all Men in general, ſo far as to make a Sacrifice ſufficient for all if they Repent and Believe, and to offer a general Pardon to all on Condition of Acceptance, and to ſend his Miniſters amongſt all with the Word of Reconciliation accompanying it, with an hearty Deſire that all would accept of it; in ſhort, what Chriſt offereth to all, he undoubtedly purchaſed for all, but he offers to all Pardon and Life upon Condition of Acceptance, therefore he is ſo far willing that all Men ſhould be ſaved. Learn (3.) The Means and Method by which and in which God would have all Men to be Saved, namely, by coming to the Knowledge of the Truth; it is evidently falſe then, which ſome confidently affirm, that a Man may be Saved in any Religion: No, he cannot come to Salvation but by the Knowledge of the Truth; without the Knowledge of God, without Faith in Chriſt, where he has been Revealed, and without Obedience to the Goſpel, where it has been made known, there is no poſſibility of Salvation; God would have all Men to be Saved, by coming to the *knowledge of the truth.*

5 For *there is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus; 6 Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time.

The Apoſtle's Argument runs thus, We ought to pray for all, becauſe there is one God who is good to all, and one Mediator between God and Mankind, who took upon him the common Nature of all Men, and gave himſelf a ſatisfactory and ſufficient Ranſom for all, which was in due time Teſtified and born Witneſs to by us his Apoſtles. Learn here, (1.) That the only Way of friendly Intercourſe between God and fallen Man is by and through a Mediator; God cannot look upon fallen Men out of a Mediator, but as Rebels, Traitors, and Objects of his vindictive Wrath; nor can fallen Man, without a Mediator, look up to God, but as a provoked Majeſty, an angry Judge, and a conſuming Fire. Learn (2.) That there is no other Mediator between God and Man but Jeſus Chriſt, who was both God and Man; for tho' the *Apoſtle* calls him the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus, this is not added to exclude the Divine Nature from the Mediatorſhip, but emphatically to declare *that* Nature in which he gave himſelf a Ranſom for us; the Human Nature is the Matter of our Ranſom, the Divine Nature gave Worth and Value to it; Chriſt Suffered being Man, and Satisfied being God. Learn (3.) That this one Mediator Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf a Ranſom for all; whoever periſhes under the Goſpel, it is not becauſe no Ranſom was paid for him, nor becauſe it was not ſufficient for him, for it is moſt notorious that God has iſſued forth an univerſal Act of Grace, offering Pardon of Sin, and Eternal Salvation to all Men without Exception, living under the Goſpel, upon Condition of their Believing Acceptance; if they reject and refuſe it 'tis to their unutterable and inevitable Condemnation. Learn (4.) That Chriſt's Mediation and Interceſſion is founded upon his Redemption; becauſe he gave himſelf a Ranſom for all, therefore is he, and he only, qualified to interceed for all, in Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered for the Salvation of Mankind; therefore the Diſtinction of the Church of *Rome,* between a Mediator of Redemption, and a Mediator of Interceſſion is groundleſs; for who dares plead with an offended God as an Interceſſor on the Behalf of Sinners, that has not firſt, as a Redeemer, ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin? As there was no Redemption wrought by any, ſo there is no Interceſſion to be made by any but by Chriſt; as there is but *one God,* ſo but *one Mediator* between God and Man, the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apoſtle (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle declares his Authority to publiſh the Goſpel to the Gentiles, and his Integrity in the Publication of it; I was ordained an Apoſtle, a Teacher of the Gentiles in Faith and Verity. *Obſerve* (2.) That according to St. *Paul's* Commiſſion he gave Directions to all ſorts of Perſons for the Regular Performance of their Duty. And firſt concerning the Duty of Prayer; *I will*, that is, God by me declares his Will, that all *Men pray*, that they pray *every-where*, in the publick Aſſemblies, in their private Families and Apartments; *lifting up the hands*, in token of expecting to receive an Anſwer from Heaven; *lifting up holy hands*, let their Prayers be Holy, accompanied with Faith and Charity; *without wrath and doubting*, a peaceable Heart is as neceſſary in Prayer as a pure Hand, 'tis in vain to aſk in Prayer the Favour of God with Anger and Revenge in our Hearts againſt Man; to pray with Doubting is oppoſed to Faith, to pray in Wrath is oppoſed to Charity; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, pray both in actual Faith and Love; there muſt be Faith in Prayer, otherwiſe we cannot *lift up holy hands without doubting*; there muſt be Love, otherwiſe we cannot *lift up holy hands without wrath*; *therefore*, ſays the Apoſtle, *I will that men pray every-where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting*; he and his Service muſt be Holy that will ſerve God acceptably.

9 In like manner alſo, that Women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array; 10 But (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works.

The next Apoſtolical Precept here given, is to Women concerning their Apparel and Attire, that at all Times, but eſpecially in Publick Worſhip, they uſe ſuch Apparel as becometh Modeſt and Chaſte Women, expreſſing by their outward Garb, the inward Gravity and Modeſty of their Minds; not like proud and alluring Perſons, with embroidered Hair, Gold and Pearl to attract the Eyes and Hearts of the Simple. *Note* (1.) That the Attire which all Perſons wear ought to be ſuch as may anſwer the End for which Apparel was appointed, which was to hide and ſhrowd our Nakedneſs, for differencing and diſtinction of Sexes; as alſo for diſtinguiſhing between the Qualities and Ranks of Perſons; Garments alſo are for Defence and Protection, and for Decency and Ornament. *Note* (2.) That tho' Perſons of Quality are not prohibited to wear ſuch Garments, tho' coſtly, as becometh their Degree, yet none are to ſtudy the external adorning of the Body, ſo much as to neglect the Inner Man by Good Works. *Note* (3.) That all Attire, (1.) is forbidden which ſuſpected Women uſe, either to provoke to Luſt in others, or to ſhew Inclinations to it in themſelves. (2.) All ſuch Attire as by the Richneſs and Coſtlineſs of it ſhews Pride and Vanity of Spirit, and an Ambition to excel others; not but that there may be Pride under mean Apparel, and ofttimes is. (3.) All ſuch Attire as is unſuitable either to the Time or Place of Worſhip. *Note* (4.) That this Precept ought not to be ſlighted by Women, as of ſmall Moment, becauſe the two great Apoſtles St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* do both give it in Charge unto them. *Note* laſtly, That the Men are by no means to look upon themſelves as unconcern'd in this Apoſtolical Precept given to Women; it is much more inexcuſable in them to affect Gaiety and a gaudy Dreſs; for it is Vain and Fooliſh, Troubleſome and Uneaſie, the Nurſe of Idleneſs, attended with Luxury and Wantonneſs, and very often with Immodeſty and Lewdneſs; and it is the great Bane very often of Juſtice and Charity: How many are fine and gay, but at the Expence, and ſometimes at the Ruin, of the poor Tradeſman? And how oft is that ſpent in vain Decking, which ought to be laid out in the Poors Cloathing?

11 Let the woman learn in ſilence with all ſubjection. 12 But I ſuffer not a woman to teach, nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence.

Still our Apoſtle is directing *Timothy* how Perſons ſhould and ought to manage themſelves in the Publick Aſſemblies, and particularly how Women ought to behave themſelves at the Time and in the Place of Worſhip; let, ſays he, the Woman in your Aſſemblies learn in Silence with all Subjection to the better Sex; for *I ſuffer not a woman to teach* publickly, and *to uſurp authority over the man*, to whom God has given Authority over her, but rather, according to her Duty, let her learn in Silence. Here *Note*, (1.) That it is only Womens publick Teaching that is here forbidden, not their private Teaching their Children, or Servants, or the Younger Women, or even their Huſbands themſelves upon a fit Occaſion, *Acts* 18. 26. we find *Priſcilla* privately inſtructing *Apollo*. *Note* (2.) That none ought to Teach but who have Authority, and Teaching is Exerciſing that Authority, a Woman therefore Teaching publickly doth uſurp an Authority not due unto her. *Note* (3.) There were ſome Women in the Jewiſh Church endowed with extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, and particularly with the Gifts of Propheſying, who did Teach publickly; as *Miriam*, *Deborah*, *Huldah*, and *Anna*; and it is probable that the ſpeaking of theſe extraordinary Women encouraged others to do the like, whom the Apoſtle here directs his Speech againſt; *I ſuffer not a Woman to teach, nor to uſurp authority*, &c.

13 For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the tranſgreſſion.

Here St. *Paul* offers a double Argument to enforce the Duty of Subjection upon the Woman, and to prevent her uſurping of Authority over the Man, namely, becauſe the Man was firſt in the Creation; *Adam was firſt formed, then Eve*, and the Woman was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion; *Adam was not deceived*, that is, firſt and immediately deceived, *but the woman being deceived*, *was* firſt *in the tranſgreſſion*; ſhe was therefore guilty of her own and her Huſband's Tranſgreſſion, and accordingly, not only by the Law of her Creation, but as a Puniſhment for her Tranſgreſſion, God has placed her in a State of Subjection, and given the Man Authority over her, which Authority ſhe uſurps over him, whenever ſhe undertakes to be a publick Teacher of him: Theſe Two Conſiderations doth the Apoſtle make uſe of, to humble the Woman, and to keep her within the Sphere of her proper Duty.

15 Notwithſtanding, ſhe ſhall be ſaved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety.

Our Apoſtle having, in the precedent Verſe, acquainted us with the Woman's Sin, that ſhe *was in the Tranſgreſſion*, and firſt in the Tranſgreſſion, in this Verſe he informs the Woman of a part of her Puniſhment for that her Tranſgreſſion, and that is the ſevere Pain and extream Peril of Childbearing; he acquaints her, (2.) With her Comfort and Support under that Puniſhment, and that is an Hope of Salvation, *ſhe ſhall be ſaved in Childbearing*. (3.) With the Condition upon which that Hope of Salvation is grounded and bottomed, *if ſhe continues in faith, and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety*. Learn (1.) That Pain in Childbearing is a Part of that Puniſhment which was inflicted by God upon the Woman for her firſt Sin; and accordingly the Woman's Sorrow and ſenſible Feeling of the Pains of Childbirth ought to bring to her Remembrance her Original and Firſt Tranſgreſſion; ſurely when the Woman feels the Original Puniſhment, it ought to remind her of her Original Sin, as a Child ought to remember his Fault at that very Inſtant when he is under his Father's Rod. Learn (2.) That the Infliction of this Puniſhment (the Pains of Child-bearing) even unto Death, is and ſhall be no hindrance of the Woman's eternal Salvation, if there be found with her thoſe Holy Qualifications and Gracious Conditions which the Goſpel requires; partly in regard of the Relation which God ſtands in to her, partly in regard of the Covenant which God has made with her; a Child is as much a Child under the Rod as in the Boſom; neither the Father's Stroke nor the Child's Grief can diſſolve that Relation. Learn (3.) That Faith and Charity, Holineſs and Sobriety, with a Perſeverance therein, are the great Conditions of the Goſpel upon which the Woman's eternal Salvation in that hazardous Condition doth depend; *ſhe ſhall be ſaved in Childbearing, if ſhe continue in faith, and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety*: The Words may alſo refer to the Woman's Temporal Deliverance in the Time of Travail, and the Senſe runs thus; ſhe ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing, that is, ſhe ſhall go through the Pains of Child-birth with Safety, if ſhe continue in Faith, putting her Truſt in God for Deliverance, in Charity exerciſing Compaſſion to thoſe in the like Condition, and in the Exerciſe of Temperance, Sobriety, and Chaſtity, according to her Matrimonial Vow.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Deſign of our Apoſtle in this Chapter is to inſtruct Timothy *in one of the moſt important Parts and Duties of his Office, namely, to take great Care whom he did admit into the Sacred Function. And accordingly he gives him a Catalogue of ſeveral Qualifications, not fewer than Sixteen, which ought to be found in the Perſon whom he did Ordain for publick Adminiſtrations in the Church of God. Thus he ſpeaks,* ver. 1.

THIS is a true ſaying, if a man deſire the office of a biſhop, he deſireth a good work.

Obſerve here, (1.) Our Apoſtle acquaints *Timothy* with the Dignity, Honour, and Excellency of the Sacred Function; *he that deſireth the office of a biſhop*, that is, to Rule and Teach in the Church of God, *he deſireth a good work*, that is, an honourable Employment. As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, know, O *Timothy*, that as to the Office of a Biſhop, whoever deſireth it, doth deſire a very great and excellent Work; it is not a bare Name, Title, Dignity, a Place of Honour and Command, but a *Work*, a Work of vaſt Importance, Labour and Difficulty; take heed therefore whom thou doſt admit, and of thoſe that are alſo admitted into the Sacred Function, to conſider the great Weight of that important Service, to enterprize it with extraordinary Dread and Caution, looking upon their Office, not with aſpiring, but tremendous Thoughts; for *who is ſufficient for theſe things*?

2 A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, the husband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, apt to teach;

Here we have St. *Paul*'s poſitive Character of a Biſhop, and what he ought to be who is admitted into that high and honourable Office in the Church of God; he ought to be *blameleſs*, a Perſon free from Scandal, without any juſt ground of Blame; the Life of a Biſhop ſhould ſhine ſo bright that others may not only behold it, but admire it, and guide their Lives, by the Example of it: *The Husband of one wife*, that is, one at a time; not guilty of the Sin of having many Wives, or of putting away the Wife by Divorce, as the Jews frequently did for frivolous Cauſes. Here *Note* (1.) The Apoſtle's Command (that the Biſhop be the Husband of one Wife) doth not oblige him to marry, but it eſtabliſhes the Lawfulneſs of his Marriage, if he ſees ſufficient Reaſon for it. Nor, (2.) Does the Apoſtle here forbid ſucceſſive Marriages, as if when a Biſhop has buried one Wife, or more, he might not lawfully marry again, for this he elſewhere allows, 1 *Cor.* 7. 8. from this it may not be in a Man's Power to abſtain; many loſe their firſt, and ſometimes their ſecond Wives ſo ſoon, that were not After-marriages lawful, all the Ends of Marriage muſt be fruſtrate, as to them; yet may we ſuppoſe by theſe Words, and many others, that St. *Paul* propoſes a greater Degree of Chaſtity to Church-Governours than to other Perſons. *Vigilant*, very diligent and watchful in the performance of his whole Duty, not long abſent from his Flock, nor negligent when he is amongſt them; *Sober*, governing his Paſſions and Appetite, reducing thoſe Rebellious Powers under the Dominion of Reaſon and Religion; *of good Behaviour*, in his Words, in Habit and Garb, in his Deeds and Actions, neither Proud and Supercilious, nor Moroſe and Sowre, but Affable and Eaſie, Kind and Courteous, of a compoſed Temper and grave Behaviour, *given to Hoſpitality*, not to Senſuality; it is not the keeping of a Free Table, and an open Houſe for all Comers which St. *Paul* points at, but Charity in entertaining Strangers, poor Chriſtians that left their Country by Perſecution, or ſuch as travelled upon their lawful Affairs from Place to Place; the free Relieving of ſuch as are Neceſſitous, and expoſed to Want and Hardſhip, is the Hoſpitality pointed at by our Apoſtle. *Apt to Teach*, that is, both knowing and willing, able to Teach, and forward to it, having both Skill and Will, Ability and Dexterity, for that Part of his Duty, one that is neither ignorant of his Duty, nor negligent in the Performance of it.

3 Not given to wine, no ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

The negative Character of a Biſhop now follows, ſhewing what he muſt not be; *not given to wine*, that is, to much Wine, no inordinate Lover either of Wine or ſtrong Drink, no Wine-bibber, no ſitter at Wine in his own Houſe, much leſs at Taverns and Publick Houſes; *no ſtriker*, either with Hand or Tongue, no Quarreller, that cannot keep his Hand from Hurting, no Word-ſtriker, no ſtriker with his Tongue in Paſſion and Anger; a Word, we ſay, wounds deeper than a Sword; the Miniſters of God may wound the Conſciences of Men with the Sword of the Spirit, but they muſt not wound the Reputations of Men with their own wrathful Spirits; we muſt uſe our Tongues rather to heal than wound, or if at any time to wound, it muſt be in order to healing. *Not greedy of filthy lucre*, no inordinate lover of Money, which makes a Man baſe and ſordid, both in getting, keeping, and ſpending; *but patient*, meek and forbearing, not rigidly exacting his Due, not acting *ſummo jure*, but rather parting with ſomewhat which in ſtrictneſs may be his Right for Peace-ſake; *not a Brawler* or Contentious Perſon, often engaged in Law-ſuits, but of a mild and peaceable Diſpoſition; *not Covetous*, or inſlaved to the love of Wealth; poſſeſs he may the good things of this Life, but not be poſſeſſed by them.

4 One that ruleth well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?)

A Biſhop being a Ruler in the Church of God, *Timothy* is adviſed to chuſe ſuch a one to Rule in the Church that well and wiſely Governs his own Family, having his Children in due Subjection, and both he and they behaving themſelves with becoming Gravity; and S. *Paul* ſubjoins a Reaſon for this Apoſtolical Injunction, arguing from the leſs to the greater thus, the Church is a large Family, the Biſhop's Houſe a leſs; the former requires greater Skill in Governing *of it* than the latter; if then a Man cannot Rule a leſs Province, how ſhall he Manage a greater? if he cannot keep up his Authority with Decency and becoming Gravity in his own Family, how ſhall ſuch a one be thought fit to be entruſted with the Care of the Church of God? Great are the Obligations which lie upon the Miniſters of God, above all Men, to Guide and Govern their own Families, to keep their Children in due Subjection, and their Servants in great Order; becauſe their Family-Miſcarriages reflect greatly upon their Authority and Prudence, and the World will pronounce them unfit for Rule in the Church of God who cannot govern their own Houſe; *If a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?* Learn hence, That he who knows how to Rule his own Houſe well, is in a good poſture of Spirit for Publick Rule; the ſame Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Holineſs for Kind, but more extenſive, acts in either Sphere, and will regularly move both.

6 Not a novice, leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

A Novice ſignifies a young Plant, here a young, raw, unexperienc'd Perſon; yet not ſo much young in Years as in Knowledge, for *Timothy* himſelf was very Young; not a Novice in Religion then, not one that is unexperienced in the Myſteries of the Goſpel, undertaking to Teach others before they have learnt themſelves. And the Reaſon for this Injunction is weighty, *Leſt being puft up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil*; implying, that young, raw, and unexperienc'd Perſons, when put into publick Office, are in very great Danger of falling into the Sin of Pride, the Devil's Sin, and of expoſing themſelves to *Condemnation*, the Devil's Puniſhment, becauſe their Knowledge is weaker, and their Paſſions ſtronger, and their Graces feebler, and they want that Experience which ſhould conſolidate their Judgments, are therefore in great Danger of ſelf-exalting, for none ſo proud and confident as the Ignorant and Injudicious. *Note* here, That when St. *Paul* ſays, *Leſt he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, it is as if he had ſaid, leſt he be condemn'd for the ſame Sin that the Devil is condemned for, which was Pride; not that the Devil will condemn him for his Pride, for the more proud a Man is, the more the Devil approves him; nor is it the Devil's Office to condemn, but to execute; he is the Executioner, not the Judge; he will not condemn for Sin, but he will eternally torment them whom God condemns.

7 Moreover, he muſt have a good report of them which are without; leſt he fall into reproach, and the ſnare of the devil.

Note here, how needful it is for a Miniſter to be of an untainted Reputation, a Biſhop muſt be of good Report, ſaith St. *Paul*; it is neceſſary for his own Salvation that he be good, and for the Salvation of others, that he be accounted ſo; great is their Sin then who go about to blaſt a Miniſter's Reputation, becauſe ſomething of Reputation is abſolutely neceſſary to render his Miniſtry Succeſsful. *Note* farther, *He muſt have a good Report* of them that are *without*, that is, without the Church, the unbelieving Jews or Gentiles, with whom he formerly converſed, leſt becoming contemptible, and ſo not able to perform his Duty as he ſhould, he give Occaſion to the Heathen to blaſpheme Chriſtianity, and to reproach him for his former Courſe of Life.

8 Likewiſe muſt the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre,

Note here, (1.) That there are but Two Sorts of fixed Church-Officers mentioned by St. *Paul*, Biſhops and Deacons; as the Church had its own Biſhop, ſo likewiſe their own Deacons: Theſe were at firſt inſtituted for the Service of the Poor; the Alms of the Church were brought to the Altar, the Deacons received them, and diſtributed them among the Aged and Impotent from Houſe to Houſe; now becauſe they were thus employed, the Apoſtle adviſeth them to beware of thoſe Faults that are frequently committed in common Converſation, as light and vain Diſcourſe, ſaying one thing to one Perſon, and the contrary to another; *let the Deacons be grave*, not guilty of Levity, but ſerious and compoſed, Men of a modeſt and becoming Carriage; *not double-tongued*, not over-talkative Perſons, nor ſaying one thing to one Perſon, and the contrary to another, according to the Place or Company they fell into; *not given to much Wine*; not the Thing, but the Exceſs, is forbidden; *not greedy of filthy Lucre*, ſeeking to get Wealth by ſordid Ways and Means.

9 Holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.

That is, they muſt be ſound Believers, and of an upright Life, maintaining Truth of Doctrine, and Soundneſs of Faith, by Sincerity of Heart, and Integrity of Life.

10 And let theſe alſo firſt be proved; then let them uſe the office of a deacon, being *found* blameleſs.

Here *Timothy* is directed not to put any Perſons ſuddenly into the Office of a Deacon, but firſt to prove them for ſome conſiderable Time, and their Sufficiency being approved, let them be Ordained, and uſe the Office of a Deacon.

11 Even ſo muſt their wives be grave, not ſlanderers, ſober, faithful in all things.

In the Original it runs, *let the Women*; by which is meant either the Deacons Wives, or the Deaconeſſes, who were appointed to take Care of the poor Women, as the Deacons were of the Men, underſtand it of both; theſe Qualifications are very excellent and well becoming both; they ought to be Grave and Sober, not Light and Airy, no Slanderers, not Devils, ſays the Original; the Senſe is, not Railers, or falſe Accuſers, but diligent and faithful in all Buſineſs, and truſty in all Affairs: It is not enough and ſufficient that the Miniſters of the Goſpel themſelves be of a Grave and Sober Converſation, but their Wives alſo muſt and ought to take eſpecial Care that they demean themſelves anſwerably to their Place and Station, and ſuitably to the Character which their Huſbands bear; *ſo muſt their Wives be Grave.*

12 Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife, ruling their children, and their own houſes well.

That is, Let not any ſuch be admitted Deacon who has more Wives than one, or that have injuriouſly put away one, and Married another; and let them ſhew by the good Government of their own Children and Houſhold that they are fit to govern the Church of God. *Note* here, That the higher Officers of the Church were uſually choſen out of the Inferior, and accordingly the Qualifications for both Offices, namely, that of Biſhops and Deacons, are for the greateſt Part the ſame, both in this Epiſtle, and in that to *Titus*.

13 For they that have uſed the office of a deacon well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and great boldneſs in the faith, *which is* in Chriſt Jeſus.

That is, Altho' the Deacons be as Servants to the Biſhops, yet ſuch as uſe that Office well, according to the foregoing Rules, by ſo doing do purchaſe to themſelves a good Degree above the Vulgar, and alſo have farther Hopes of being advanced into the Church to higher Offices; and when they preach the Word (as did *Philip* and *Stephen*) they might do it with great Boldneſs, and with Expectation of Succeſs, living ſuitably to the Qualifications of their Function, and walking according to the Rule of the Goſpel, which they Profeſſed and Taught.

14 Theſe things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee ſhortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thy ſelf in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I do hope to come to thee very ſhortly, but if I tarry long, or be prevented at laſt, as I am uncertain, I write theſe things to thee, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to converſe in the Houſe of God, the Church of the Living God, in which thou art a Pillar and firm Buttreſs of the Truth; ſome by the *Pillar* here will underſtand the Church, as being the Foundation on which Truth is built, and giving it Authority: But ſhe is therefore the Church of Chriſt, becauſe ſhe holds the Truth, and it is eſſential to her Being to maintain and teach all neceſſary Truths; ſhe holds it forth, and publiſhes it to the World, ſuſtaining it, and ſuporting it as a Pillar doth the King's Proclamation; the Truth receives not its Authority from the Church, but the Church receives Authority by adhering to the Truth; others by the *Pillar* underſtand *Timothy*, and that St. *Paul* is here exhorting, that according to his Office *Timothy* ſhould be a Pillar and Buttreſs of Truth in the Church. Hence *Gal.* 2. 9. *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, are ſaid to be Pillars there, as is *Timothy* here; a Pillar in the Church ſignifies a Man that is well rooted, and grounded, and ſtrong in the Faith; this he exhorts *Timothy* to be. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Church's ſurpaſſing Dignity, ſhe is call'd the Houſe of God, in which he dwells: God is preſent in all Places, even in Hell itſelf, by the Immenſity of his Being, but the Church is his Palace, the Place of his peculiar Reſidence. *Obſerve* (2.) The Miniſters of the Church's important Duty, namely, as Pillars to ſupport, maintain, and uphold the Divine Truth, againſt all thoſe that ſeek to corrupt and ſuppreſs the ſame. Be thou, Oh *Timothy*! in the Church of God as the Pillar and Ground of Truth.

16 And without controverſie, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Our Apoſtle having exhorted *Timothy* in the preceeding Verſes to behave himſelf worthily in the Church of God, and as a Pillar, ſupporting, maintaining and upholding the Truths of God, in this Verſe he reckons up Six principal Heads of Evangelical Truths which are to be Aſſerted and Defended by him, uſhering them in with this Preface, without Controverſie, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs. *Learn*, That our Holy Faith, our Chriſtian Religion, it is a Myſtery, a great Myſtery, an unqueſtionable Myſtery, a Myſtery of Godlineſs, a Myſtery hidden in God, *Eph.* 3. 9. hidden in Chriſt, *Col.* 3. 3. hidden in the Scriptures, *Rev.* 3. 18. hidden in and under the Types and Shadows of the Ceremonial Law; nay, hidden even in the Goſpel itſelf; for we know but in Part: And if Chriſtianity be a Myſtery, then the Knowledge of it is the Effect of Divine Revelation and Supernatural Diſcovery; not to be known by the Light or Benefit of Nature; but God reveals it to us by his Spirit; farther, if it be a Myſtery, then the Diſpenſation of it is a ſpecial Favour, an Arbitrary and Voluntary Diſcovery of it to whom, when, and how far, God himſelf pleaſes; finally, if it be a Myſtery, then it is to be apprehended by Faith, and not to be fathomed by Reaſon; Faith looks at a *Revelation*, Reaſon calls for a Demonſtration, Faith embraces, like *Abraham*, what Reaſon laughs at, like *Sarah*; without Controverſie great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs. This is St. *Paul*'s magnificent Preface, which requires not only the Aſſent, but challenges the Obedience and Adoration of our Faith. *Obſerve* next, the Six principal Heads of Evangelical Truth here reckoned up, for *Timothy* to Study, to Preach, and to Defend. (1.) *God was manifeſted in the Fleſh*; that is, the Second Perſon in the Godhead appeared in our Human Fleſh and Nature; aſtoniſhing Myſtery! That the Creator of the World ſhould become a Creature, lodg'd in a Stable, and cradled in a Manger! The infinite Deity and finite Fleſh met in one Perſon, and yet the Godhead not humanized, nor the Humanity deified, but both indiviſibly conjoined; the human Nature was united to the Godhead Miraculouſly, aſſumed Integrally, united Inſeparably. (2.) Juſtified in or by the Spirit; that is, the Spirit was Chriſt's Witneſs that he was no Impoſtor or Deceiver, but the promis'd and expected *Meſſias*, working all his Miracles by the Power of the Spirit, raiſing himſelf from the Dead, and thereby declaring himſelf to be the Son of God with Power by the Spirit of Holineſs, and by ſending the Spirit, after his Aſcenſion into Heaven, down upon his Diſciples here on Earth; thus the Spirit juſtified Chriſt really and truly to be what he profeſſed himſelf to be, and ſealed his Doctrine to the World (3.) *Seen of Angels*; they Celebrated his Birth, and gave notice of it to the World, adminiſtred to him in the Wilderneſs, ſuccour'd him in the Garden, were preſent at his Reſurrection, accompanied him in his Aſcenſion: Seen of Angels. Lord! What a Stupendious Sight was this! For Man to ſee an Angel is wonderful, but for an Angel to ſee God become Man was Soul-amazing; they ſang their *Gloria Patri* at his Birth, they beheld and applauded his happy Victory over Satan in the Deſart. Oh! with what Eyes did they look upon his Bloody Sweat in the Garden! With what Officiouſneſs did they roul away the Stone in the Morning of the Reſurrection! And with what univerſal Triumphs and Acclamations did they accompany him to his Celeſtial Throne! (4.) *Preached to the Gentiles*, the Wall of Separation between Jew and Gentile being broken down, Chriſt was by his commiſſioned Apoſtles Preached to the Gentile World; the Jews were once Children, and we Dogs, theirs was the Bread, ours were the Crumbs; but now are we made Fellow-Commoners with them, Heirs of the ſame, Partakers of the ſame Glory. (5.) *Believed on in the World*; Chriſt came into the World in ſo deſpicable a Manner that he was diſregarded by the World, who are allured and taken with Pomp and outward Magnificence; therefore that any ſhould believe on him in the World is a juſt Wonder and a Myſtery of Godlineſs: though Chriſt be liberally Preached, yet is he ſparingly Received, *Iſa.* 53. 1. Who hath believed our Report? Chriſt is believed on in the World, but alas! comparatively but by few; Lord, enlarge the Number of thy Believers, and confirm that Number in Believing. (6.) *Received up into Glory*, where he ſits in his glorified Humanity united to his glorious Deity, with all that Blood and Gore wiped off with which he was beſmear'd in the Day of his Paſſion, and his Body ſhining brighter than Ten Thouſand Suns. This Body the Heavens muſt contain till the Reſtitution of all things, when he ſhall come from Heaven, as he went into Heaven, attended with glorious Angels, and Summon the whole Hoſt of Saints to meet him in the Air, that ſo they may ever be with their Lord: Oh! ſtrengthen our Faith in this deſirable Happineſs, and ſet our Souls a longing for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of it. *Amen.*

CHAP. IV.

The laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter having fully acquainted us with the great and myſterious Doctrines of Chriſtianity, namely, that the Son of God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtified in *and by* the Holy Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the World, *and at laſt* received up into Glory; *our Apoſtle comes in this Chapter to acquaint* Timothy *with (that he may forewarn the Church of) an Apoſtacy and Revolt from the Chriſtian Faith, though not in all Parts of it, yet from ſeveral Main and Fundamental Parts of it, yet withal aſſuring them, it was no more than what had been long foretold, for the Spirit ſpake expreſly that in the latter Times ſome ſhould depart,* &c. *Verſe* 1.

NOW the ſpirit ſpeaking expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils: 2 Speaking lies in hypocriſie, having their conſcience ſeared with a hot Iron: 3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving, of them which believe and know the truth.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, altho' the Myſtery of Godlineſs, the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, be ſo clearly revealed, and fully confirmed, yet the Spirit of Prophecy has very plainly foretold us, that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith once embraced by them, either in Whole or in Part, turning Apoſtates by giving heed to Impoſtures and Doctrines of Men, teaching Errors ſuggeſted by Devils, who cover their Lies with hypocritical Pretences, and are Men of hardned Hearts, ſeared Conſciences, profligate Lives, forbidding ſome whom they have ſeduced to Marry, and commanding them to abſtain from Meats, which God hath Created to be received with Thankſgiving by them which do believe and know the Truth. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That the Apoſtacy and Defection of a conſiderable Part of the Chriſtian Church in the latter Times was foreſeen and foretold very long before it came to paſs, by *Daniel*, ſay ſome, *Chap.* 11. 37, 38. *&c.* by St. *Paul*, ſay others; in his Second Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, and in his firſt Epiſtle to *Timothy*, the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſly, that ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, that is, from the Doctrine of the Faith received, which we know the Church of *Rome* has moſt notoriouſly done. *Obſerve* (2.) The Cauſe of this Apoſtacy and Defection from Chriſtianity, *giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils. Queſt.* But what is here meant by Doctrines of Devils? *Anſw.* Theſe (ſays our Reverend Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*) can be no other Doctrines than thoſe tending to Idolatry, which the Scripture every-where doth in a particular Manner aſcribe to the Devil as the Inventer and Promoter of; therefore he tells us that in ſome Ancient Copies the Words run thus, in the latter Times ſome ſhall Apoſtatize from the Faith, for they ſhall Worſhip the Dead, having Regard to Doctrines of Devils; ſo that the particular Kind of Idolatry, into which ſome Part of the Chriſtian Church ſhould Apoſtatize, is here pointed at, namely, that they ſhould Worſhip Souls departed, or the Spirits of dead Men, which was Part of the Heathen Idolatry, into which the People of *Iſrael* did frequently Relapſe: Theſe departed Souls were called Dæmons, and were eſteemed a middle Sort of Divine Powers, between the Supream Gods and Mortal Men, whoſe Office it was to be Agents and Mediators between the Gods above and Men below; thus is the Holy City trodden down by the Gentiles, that is, overwhelmed with the Gentiles Idolatry. *Obſerve* (3.) The Perſons revolting, who they are foretold to be; not all, but ſome only; in the latter days ſome ſhall depart from the Faith; not the whole viſible Church, but a very great and conſiderable Part of it. Learn thence, That the true Church of Chriſt was never wholly extinguiſhed, nor the Light of the Goſpel ever quite put out, no, not in the greateſt Darkneſs that ever was to overwhelm it; ſome (only) and not all, ſhall depart from the Faith. *Obſerve* (4.) The Perſons

ſons deſcribed who ſhould be the Occaſion of this Apoſtacy and Revolt, namely, ſuch as *ſpeak Lies in Hypocriſie*, and have *ſeared Conſciences*, that is, ſuch ſtupid Conſciences as have loſt the ſenſe of Good and Evil, and do no longer do their Office. Theſe Lies which the Apoſtate Church of *Rome* is guilty of, the Profound Mr. *Mede* ſtiles lying Miracles, fabulous Legends, of the Acts of Saints and Sufferings of Martyrs, counterfeit Writings, under the Name of the firſt and beſt Antiquity. Lord! Who could have coined or believed ſuch monſtrous Stuff as the Popiſh Legends are fraught with, but ſuch as are Cauterized, paſt all Feeling and Tenderneſs both of Conſcience and Senſe itſelf. *Obſerve* (5.) The Doctrines diſcovered which theſe Apoſtates would Teach, namely, the forbidding of Marriage to ſome, and injoining Abſtinence from ſome Meats as unlawful and unclean to others, both which are called Doctrines of Devils, that is, very wicked and deviliſh Doctrines. Learn hence, That the Popiſh Doctrine forbidding Marriage, not abſolutely to all, but with Reſtriction and Limitation to ſome, to wit, their Clergy, and all ſuch as ſhall enter into Holy Orders, it is a deviliſh and wicked Doctrine; for it forbids that which the Word alloweth, nay, in ſome Caſes commandeth, *Heb.* 13. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; if honourable in all, then ſurely lawful for all; under the Old Teſtament the Prophets, Prieſts and Levites, did Marry, under the New Teſtament the Miniſters of God had a Power to Marry; 1 *Cor.* 9. 5. *Have not we Power to lead about a Siſter, a Wife*? And that they made uſe of their Power is evident from the following Words, *as well as other Apoſtles, and Cephas*; the other wicked Doctrine concerning Meats is alſo found in the Church of *Rome*, who by a Law do oblige ſome Orders of Men, as Monks, to abſtain from certain Meats, reducing them thereby from their Chriſtian Liberty to a Conformity to the Legal Rites, which may well be reckoned as an Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Faith; for altho' St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 14. doth allow the Forbearance of ſome ſorts of Meats to avoid Scandal, yet he doth no where condemn the Eating of them as unclean; the Doctrines therefore of the Church of *Rome*, forbidding to Marry, and commanding to abſtain from Meats, is wicked and deviliſh.

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving: 5 For it is ſanctified by the word of God, and prayer.

Here our Apoſtle aſſigns a Reaſon why Chriſtians are forbidden, under the Goſpel, to abſtain from particular Meats, namely, becauſe the Diſtinction of Meats (clean and unclean) is taken away, and every Creature of God is good in itſelf, and clean to us, and nothing to be refuſed as unlawful or unclean if it be received thankfully from God's Hand; for it is ſanctified by the Word, that is, by the Goſpel; it is made clean to us, and lawful for us, *that* having taken off the Difference of Meats, and to the pure made all things pure. *Note* here, (1.) The Quality of all God's Creatures as they come from him, and are given to us, every Creature of God is good. *Note* (2.) The Uſe of God's Creatures conſiſting in their Lawfulneſs unto us, and our Liberty unto them, *nothing is to be refuſed*, ſo that there is no Sin in the Uſe of them, nor no Religion in the forbearing of them, or abſtaining from them; this Liberty was given us by God, and reſtored by Chriſt, therefore we muſt not ſuffer our Chriſtian Liberty to be impeached by Judaiſm. *Note* (3.) A Condition neceſſary on our Part, leſt the Creatures otherwiſe Good and Lawful, ſhould become unto us Evil and Hurtful, and that is Thankfulneſs: *if it be received with Thankſgiving*, with the thankfulneſs of the Heart expreſt by the Language of the Lips. *Note* (4.) The Way and Means by which the Creatures become clean and ſanctified to us, namely, by the Word of God and Prayer. (1.) By the Word of God; here *Obſerve* a Threefold Word of God by which the Creature is Sanctified, namely, the Word of *Donation*, the Word of *Benediction*, and the Word of *Promiſe*. By the Firſt he beſtows his Creatures upon us, by the Second he bleſſes the Creatures to us, and by the Third he confirms his Bleſſing in Chriſt, in whom and by whom we have a Covenant Right unto, and a Sanctified Uſe of all the Mercies which we do enjoy. (2.) By Prayer, namely, as it obtains from God, Firſt, A right Improvement, and, Secondly, A comfortable Enjoyment of all that we do receive; or thus, the Creature is Sanctified to us by Prayer in the Procurement of it, in the Fruition of it, in the Review and Recognition of it, and God's Mercy in it, with Thankſgiving and Praiſe, loving it after God, and for God, and in ſubordination to God. Thus *then is every Creature of God good, and nothing to be refuſed, being Sanctified by the Word of God, and Prayer.*

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou haſt attained. 7 But refuſe profane and old Wives fables, and exerciſe thy ſelf *rather* unto godlineſs.

Our Apoſtle proceeds from this Verſe to the End of the Chapter, to lay ſeveral Directions before *Timothy* with Reference to his Miniſterial Office. The firſt of which is, that he ſuggeſts unto, or puts the *Brethren in remembrance of thoſe things* which the Apoſtle had taught him, in Order to their Preſervation from the Peril and Poyſon of theſe Impoſtors; thus doing he would approve himſelf a good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, and one nouriſhed up with the ſincere Doctrine of the Goſpel. Here *Note*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are in the Firſt Place Miniſters or Servants of Jeſus Chriſt, ſecondarily and in ſubſerviency they are Miniſters of the Church; as a Nobleman's Servant imployed by him to diſtribute Wages, or appoint Work to the Inferior Servants is ſecondarily a Miniſter to the Servants, but primarily a Servant to his Lord. The ſecond Duty that *Timothy* is exhorted to, is the avoiding and rejecting the Doctrines of Abſtinence from Meats and Marriages, and to regard them no more than an Old Woman's Tale, and to exerciſe himſelf unto real Godlineſs. *Note* here ſomething that *Timothy* muſt forbear, and ſomething that he muſt follow after, he muſt forbear and refuſe prophane Old Wives Fables; if thou wilt not Swim down the Tide of thoſe Apoſtatizing Times, take heed of ſteering thy Courſe by Prophane, though Ancient Cuſtoms, refuſe them with Scorn, and reject them with Anger; one Way to prevent Apoſtacy is to refuſe ungrounded Antiquity: That which *Timothy* is exhorted to follow after is real Godlineſs; this is his Duty both as a Miniſter, and as a Member of Jeſus Chriſt; real Godlineſs ought to be minded as every Man's, eſpecially every Miniſters chief and principal Buſineſs; Religion muſt be our chief Occupation.

8 For bodily exerciſe profitteth little: but godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

By Bodily Exerciſe he meaneth Corporal Auſterities, Abſtinence from Meats and Marriage; all the external Exerciſes of Religion, theſe do profit a little, though but a little, in Compariſon of the Profit of Godlineſs. Where *Note*, That Faſtings, Humiliations and Watchings, with other Bodily Exerciſes, which ſerve to bring down the Pride and Wantonneſs of the Body, they have their proper and neceſſary Uſe, and are expreſſive of a juſt Revenge which a Sinner takes upon himſelf for former Exceſſes; they are, when wiſely managed, what God accepts, but the leaſt that God expects from us; *Bodily Exerciſe profitteth little.* But *Obſerve* the univerſal Uſefulneſs of Godlineſs to all the Purpoſes of Life; Godlineſs is profitable to all Things. (1.) 'Tis profitable to make a Man rich, to help him to get and encreaſe an Eſtate; becauſe it makes a Man Wiſe and Prudent, Diligent and Induſtrious, Thrifty and Frugal, (2.) 'Tis profitable to make a Man renowned as well as rich; it is the only way to attain a good Name and Reputation; the Godly Man is a worthy and excellent Man, and he is an uſeful and ſerviceable Man, and ſuch do ſeldom miſs of a good Reputation in the World; thoſe that want Goodneſs themſelves will yet commend it in others. (3.) 'Tis profitable for Pleaſure, as well as for Riches and Honour; for a Life of Religion doth encreaſe the Reliſh and Sweetneſs of all our ſenſible Enjoyments, ſo far is it from abridging us of any Earthly Delights: and beſides, it adds to us a World of Pleaſures of its own; thus Godlineſs is profitable unto Men in all things, having the Promiſes of Happineſs both in this Life, and that which is to come, annexed to it.

9 This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation: 10 For therefore we both labour, and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the ſaviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe.

Note that this Phraſe of *a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation*, uſed here, was uſed before, *Chap.* 1. 15. That Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners. Learn thence, That this Propoſition, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, and this, that ſuch Sinners as of Ungodly will become Godly, and perſevere in the Practice of Godlineſs, ſhall be happy in the Life that now is, and that which is to come; theſe Two Propoſitions are faithful and remarkable Sayings, worthy the Acceptation of all reaſonable Creatures. *Note* farther, That the Belief of this Propoſition, that Godlineſs has the Promiſe of this and the next Life, will cauſe all Chriſtians, as it did St *Paul*, to labour and ſuffer Reproach, to labour in the Work of God, and to ſuffer Reproach in the Cauſe of God, and this without Wearineſs and Fainting. *Note* laſtly, The Title given to Almighty God, *the Saviour of all Men*, that is, the Preſerver of all Men, but eſpecially of good Men, when their Temporal Preſervation conduces moſt to the Advantages of his Glory, and their Good; or if it be underſtood of eternal Salvation, we muſt take it thus, that he publiſhes and proclaims, offers and tenders Salvation to all Men, altho' Believers only are actually ſaved, becauſe they only accept the Offers and Conditions of Salvation.

11 Theſe things command and teach. 12 Let no man deſpiſe thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in farther Direction and Advice to *Timothy*, both as to his Preaching and his Practice, both as to his Doctrine and Converſation. (1.) As to his Preaching, he requires it be done with due Authority; *theſe things Command and Teach*, that is, theſe things Teach Commandingly, and with a neceſſary Authority; the Miniſters of God ſpeak from God, therefore may command for God. (2.) As to his Converſation he exhorts him to Exerciſe ſuch a becoming Gravity in his Deportment, that though he was very Young none might deſpiſe him or his Function becauſe of his Youth; where Piety and Modeſty meet in Young Miniſters it will preſerve their Youth from Contempt, and where Levity and Vanity are found it will expoſe not only Youth but gray Hairs alſo to Contempt and Scorn. (3.) He directs him to be not only a Preſident to all Miniſters, but a Pattern to all Believers; *be thou an Example of the Believers*, and that, (1.) *In Word*, or Speech, look that thy Diſcourſe be Wiſe and Inſtructive, not Idle and Impertinent, much leſs Frothy and Prophane, but let ſomething for Edification always drop from thy Lips. (2.) *In Converſation*, look that thy Gravity be beyond thy Years, make up in thy Deportment what is wanting in thy Age; obſerve a juſt Equality, neither be too aſſuming nor too proſtrate, behave not thyſelf either above or below thyſelf. (3.) *In Charity*, ſhew Benevolence, and exerciſe Beneficence, towards all Mankind, according to thy Ability and Opportunity, nothing gives a Miniſter a greater Advantage for the ſucceſs of his Labours than charitable Diſtributions; this gives us a Throne in the Hearts of our People when wiſely managed. (4.) *In Spirit*, that is, in Zeal and Warmth of Spirit, in fervency of Affection, in an active and ſpriteful Zeal for the Glory of God and the Good of Souls, ſuch a Zeal as may render thee Induſtrious in Feeding, Governing and Inſtructing thy Flock. (5.) *In Faith*, that is, in Fidelity to, and Conſtancy in the True Religion, not enduring either to be huffed or wheedled out of the Truth; for it is a Sacred *Depoſitum*, an Holy Treaſure, which we muſt Tranſmit to our Poſterity, as our Forefathers did to us with their precious Blood. (6.) *In Purity*, in Chaſtity and Cleanneſs, abſtaining from ſenſual Luſts, from Wantonneſs and Wordly-mindedneſs; chuſe ſpiritual Delights now, for they are the Entertainment which we muſt live upon to eternal Ages. By all this we ſee how much it is in a Miniſter's own Power to procure a due Eſteem to himſelf, at leaſt to prevent his own Contempt, ſince an holy exemplary Deportment, faithful and conſtant Labours, never fail to do that in ſome Meaſure: But if we fail here, what other Methods ſoever we uſe we ſhall find God making good his Threatning, 1 *Sam.* 2. 3, 30. that they which deſpiſe him *ſhall be lightly eſteemed*; nor will any Titles, Dignities, or Preheminencies above others, ſecure the Guilty from the Efficacy of this Curſe, which will cleave to their Perſons, yea, to their Memories, like a Girdle to their Loins.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

St. *Paul* being uncertain when he ſhould ſee this Young Labourer again, adds farther inſtructions to thoſe already given him. And here. (1.) He requires him *to give Attendance to Reading*, that is, be diligent in private Reading the Holy Scriptures, to enable them to Teach, Inſtruct and Exhort others, what they ought to believe and know, and what they ought to practice and do. Where *Note*, That the Illuminations and Teachings of the Holy Spirit muſt not take off any Miniſters from Reading and Studying the Holy Scriptures, but we muſt fit our ſelves the better thereby, to Exhort, Direct, and Inſtruct others. (2.) He ſtirs up and exhorts *Timothy*, not to neglect, but to excite, to uſe and diligently improve thoſe eminent Gifts which were given him by Prophecy, that is, according to the foregoing Propheſies concerning him, and by laying on of the Hands of the Preſbytery. when he was Ordained. Where *Note*, That the Ceremony of laying on of Hands in Ordination is very Ancient and Apoſtolical; not accidental or indifferent, but a very neceſſary Rite in the Performance of that Service; neglect not the Gift which was given thee, with the laying on of the Hands of the Preſbytery. *Note* (2.) That Perſons Ordained ought with great Care and Diligence to ſtir up the Gifts of God's Holy Spirit conferr'd upon them, for Negligence quenches the Spirit of God in them.

15 Meditate upon theſe things, give thy *ſelf* wholly to them; that thy profitting may appear to all.

He exhorted him to read the Scriptures before, now to meditate upon what he read. Where *Note*, That if thoſe who were inſpired, and Divinely qualified, muſt yet Read, Meditate, Study hard, and imploy their whole Time to fit themſelves for the Miniſterial Work, what ſhall we think of the Ignorance and Impudence of our Lay-preachers, who without any ſuch Divine Qualification, and without any Call or Commiſſion, without giving themſelves wholly to theſe things, dare preſume to teach the Scriptures, when they never underſtood them, can hardly read them? Meditate on theſe things, and *give thyſelf wholly to them*; be in them, ſays the Original, lay out thy whole Strength and Time in ſtudying God's Will, and making known thy Peoples Duty; Three things are here implicitly condemn'd in Perſons ſet apart for the Holy Function. (1.) Sloth and Negligence; 'tis a painful Service we are engaged in, and wo unto us if we be Slothful in Buſineſs, if we be ſparing of our Pains for fear of ſhortning our Days, and haſtning our End; verily the Lamp of our Lives can never burn out better than in lighting others to Heaven. (2.) Worldly-mindedneſs, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. feed the Flock, but not for filthy Lucre; the Spiritual Man muſt not ſo mind Earthly things as to make them his principal Aim and Scope; for if ſo, he will act accordingly, and defeat all the Ends of his Miniſtry. The Apoſtles had no ſettled Maintenance, but their Subſiſtence to ſeek, yet were wholly in theſe things. How much more ſhould we be ſo now who have our Maintenance legally ſecured? How ſhould we ſeek the Kingdom of God, and the Welfare of our Peoples Souls, ſeeing all other things are added to us in Meaſure, though not in Exceſs? (3.) Incumbrance by wordly Buſineſs; he that muſt give himſelf wholly to theſe things, what Leiſure can he find for Magiſtracy, for managing Law-Suits, for farming of Lands, and for Secular Concerns? We cannot make a Buſineſs of Two Things ſo widely Different from each other. Can we be ſpiritual Perſons, and yet meer Seculars in our Thoughts and Cares? Well therefore might St. *Paul* ſay to *Timothy*; but thou, Oh Man of God, flee theſe things, 1 *Tim.* 6. 11. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Reaſon which the Apoſtle ſubjoins why he would have *Timothy* do all this, *that his Proſitting may appear to all Men*; he muſt read, meditate, pray and ſtudy, that he may improve and profit himſelf; though he was inſpired, yet muſt he not rely upon the Spirit's Aſſiſtance without his own Endeavours; and his Improvement by Study muſt appear not barely to himſelf, but to others, to his People as well as himſelf, yea, to all Perſons; his Growth and Improvement by Study and Exerciſe muſt be ſo conſpicuous, that all his Flock may bear Witneſs to it, and bleſs God for it; *meditate on theſe things, and give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy Proſitiing may appear unto all Men.*

16 Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear thee.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, have a ſpecial Regard to the Piety of thy Life, and to the Purity of thy Doctrine, and this continually, ſo ſhalt thou do what lyeth in thee, to ſave both thine own Soul, and the Souls of all thy People. (1.) *Take heed unto thyſelf*; our Lives muſt be ſuch as become Miniſters of God, and Preachers of Righteouſneſs; for the Eyes of God and the whole World are upon us, the obſerving Eye of God, the cenſorious and inſidious Eye of the World, who will charge the Miſcarriages of a ſingle Perſon upon the whole Order, and condemn all for the Faults of one, therefore let every one take heed unto himſelf; the Honour of our Profeſſion requires it, the Conſcience of our Duty challenges it, a due Regard to the Glory of God and our own Reputation commands it. (2.) Take heed unto thy Doctrine that it be the pure and uncorrupted Word of God, expounded agreeably to the Senſe of the ancient Church, and of our own Church in particular, which has with the greateſt Care followed the ancient Pattern; many Errors are abroad in the Word which have adulterated the Truths of the Goſpel; it is therefore Prudential and Neceſſary that the Miniſters of God keep at a great Diſtance from every Opinion which looks like Heretical, and not to come within the reach of Suſpicion, 'tis not enough for us to be Innocent unleſs we appear ſo. *Note* farther the Order of the Words; St. *Paul* bids *Timothy* firſt to take heed to his Life, and next to his Doctrine; not firſt to his Doctrine, and then to his Life, *take heed to thyſelf, and to thy Doctrine*; becauſe the Succeſs of our Doctrine depends upon the Goodneſs of our Lives; 'tis this muſt render our Doctrine Operative and Effectual; this is the principal Thing; we muſt do as well as teach, for who will believe him in the Pulpit; who contradicts himſelf in his Converſation? Therefore take heed to thyſelf, and to thy Doctrine. *Note* laſtly, the great Benefit of this Courſe, and the bleſſed Advantage of it, we ſhall *ſave our ſelves*, deliver our own Souls by our Diligence and Care; for the faithful Nurſe ſhall be paid though the Child dies at the Breaſt; and not only our ſelves, but our People alſo, *them that hear us*; that is, we ſhall do our utmoſt, and all that lieth in us, to ſave the Souls that are committed to us, that they may be our Crown of Rejoicing in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his Coming; God will pronounce us Pure and Innocent from the Blood of all Men; and if our People Periſh their Blood will be upon their own Heads, which God avert for his Mercies ſake. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

REbuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren: 2 The elder women as mothers, the younger as ſiſters, with all purity.

Our Apoſtle here directs *Timothy* how to manage rightly that great and important Duty of Miniſterial Reproof; if aged Perſons, Elders in Office, or Elders in Age, do tranſgreſs, they muſt be rebuk'd, not Magiſterially, but Fraternally, with Humility and Gentleneſs, according to their Years; not with Auſterity and Roughneſs; *the elder Men as Fathers, the elder Women as Mothers*, both with juſt Deference and due Reſpect; the Younger alſo muſt not be treated with Contempt, but with Gentleneſs, *the younger Men as Brethren, the younger Women as Siſters*, both without Pride and Fierceneſs, and *with all Purity*; ſhunning all Levity and Wantonneſs, and eſchewing all that ſavoureth of Immodeſty or Unchaſtity in Thought, Speech, Look, or Behaviour. Learn hence, That altho' the Miniſters of God muſt not flatter or favour any Perſons to the Prejudice either of Truth or Holineſs, yet muſt they put a Difference between Perſons in their Reproofs; they muſt not deal with the Aged as they deal with the Younger, (when we ſpeak Reproof, we muſt alſo ſpeak Reſpect to the Ancient ſpiritual Fathers) no more than Natural Children muſt behave themſelves proudly againſt the Ancient, and Baſely againſt the Honourable.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children, or nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. 5 Now ſhe that is a widow indeed, and deſolate, truſteth in God, and continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day. 6 But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure, is dead while ſhe liveth. 7 And theſe things give in charge, that they may be blameleſs.

Our Apoſtle proceeds to give *Timothy* Directions concerning Widows, particularly thoſe who were to be maintained by the Church's Charity, and to live upon it. *Note* (1.) The Perſons who were to be relieved and ſupported by the Church's Charity, *Widows indeed*, that is, ſuch Widows as were deſolate, being deprived both of Huſband and Maintenance at once, and having neither Children, nor Grandchildren, nor near Relations, in a Capacity to relieve them, and they were alſo ſuch as were reſolved to continue in Widowhood, theſe he requires ſhould be Honoured, that is, have Reſpect ſhewn them, Maintenance allowed them, Employment provided for them, to viſit the Sick and Poor, and give Notice of their Wants to the Church, and to ſpend their Time in the Exerciſe of Devotion, truſting in God, *continue in Supplication and Prayer Night and Day*. *Note* (2.) That ſuch Widows as had Children or near Relations, were to be taken Care for by them, and not by the Church; *let them learn to ſhew piety at home*, that is, relieve their own Relations before they ſhew Kindneſs to Strangers, or before the Church be burthened with them; where the Original Word is very Emphatical and Significative, let them exerciſe *Religion* and *Godlineſs* towards their own Houſe; implying, that to extend our Charity to our neareſt Relations is a Duty in the firſt Place, and to perform it with Chearfulneſs is an Act of Religion and Godlineſs, and that it is in vain to pretend to Religion if we ſee a Relation in Want, and are able, but unwilling to relieve them. *Note* (3.) The Character which St. *Paul* gave of ſome Widows in his Time, they *lived in Pleaſure*; with the Cenſure which he paſt upon them, namely, that they were *Dead* whileſt they *lived*; ſhe that *liveth in Pleaſure*, that is, licentiouſly, ſportingly, wantonly, profuſely, to the Diſhonour of her Huſband's Memory, and her own Perſonal Diſgrace, ſhe is *Dead* in Sin, *Dead* to Chriſt and his Holy Religion, *whilſt ſhe lives* in the World, and ſo is not to be lookt upon by the Church as a vital Member of it, much leſs to be maintained by the Church's Charity. This is what St. *Paul* thought needful to give *Timothy* in Charge concerning Widows, that ſo they might be found Blameleſs, and without Scandal to Religion.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and ſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.

That is, if any profeſſing Chriſtianity, and having Ability, provides not for his own Kindred, but eſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, as Parents or Children, he liveth ſo contrary to the Chriſtian Faith, that in Effect he denies it, and is worſe than an Infidel, who ordinarily take Care of their Parents, and make Proviſion for their poor Relations: The old Heathens had this amongſt them as an univerſal Principle of Nature, to honour the Gods, and provide for their Parents; affirming, that no Man can do any thing more acceptable to the Gods than by heaping Favours upon their Parents, and that nothing can be a greater Evidence of Atheiſm and Impiety, than to deſpiſe and neglect them. Learn hence, That it is moſt unnatural to be hardned againſt thoſe to whom we ſtand engaged by near Relation or natural Bonds; the Light of Nature teaches Infidels much better.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number,
under threeſcore years old, having been the wife of
one man, 10 Well reported of for good works;
if ſhe have brought up children, if ſhe have lodged
ſtrangers, if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet, if ſhe
have relieved the afflicted, if ſhe have diligently followed
every good work.

Our Apoſtle had given Directions concerning ſuch Widows as were to be maintained by the Church's Charity in the preceeding Verſes; he ſpeaks now of ſuch Widows as were to be admitted into the Church's Service, under the Name of Deaconneſſes, whoſe Office it was to take Care of the Aged and Impotent, to be ſtay'd Monitors to the younger Women, to attend poor Women in Labour, and to aſſiſt at the Baptiſm of the Female Sex. St. *Paul* adviſes that none be admitted under Threeſcore Years of Age, and none that was divorced from one Huſband and married another; *let not a Widow be taken into the Number, that is, of Church-widows or Deaconneſſes, under Threeſcore Years Old, having been the Wife of one Man only.* Next St. *Paul* lays down the general and particular Qualifications of ſuch Widows as ſhould be elected into the Church's Service; the general Qualifications is Fruitfulneſs in good Works, if *ſhe has diligently followed every good Work.* Where *Note*, It is not her Age alone, nor her Poverty alone, but her Chriſtian Behaviour before all, that gave her a Right to the Church's Service and Maintenance: The particular Qualifications follow, if ſhe has *brought up Children* Religiouſly, *if ſhe has lodged Strangers* or Chriſtian Travellers Hoſpitably, if ſhe has condeſcended to the meaneſt Offices, not diſdaining *to waſh* the very Feet of poor Chriſtians in their Journyings, if according to her Ability ſhe has done all the good ſhe poſſibly could, though much ſhort of what ſhe deſired. *Note* here, That in thoſe hot Countries Perſons travelled on Foot, and without Shoes, wearing only Sandals, and having few or no Inns for Entertainment, or but little Money to defray travelling Charges, it was a very great Work of Pious Charity to entertain Chriſtian Strangers, to receive and lodge them in their Houſes, to waſh and cool, refreſh and cleanſe their Feet, and to adminiſter to their Neceſſities; ſuch Widows as are thus qualified he directs may be taken into the Church's Service, and partake of her Maintenance.

11 But the younger widows refuſe: for when
they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt,
they will marry: 12 Having damnation, becauſe
they have caſt off their firſt faith. 13 And withal,
they learn to be idle, wandring about from houſe to
houſe; and not only idle, but tatlers alſo, and buſie-bodies,
ſpeaking things which they ought not.
14 I will therefore that the younger women marry,
bear children, guide the houſe, give none occaſion
to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully. 15 For
ſome are already turned aſide after Satan. 16 If
any man or woman that believeth, have widows,
let them relieve them, and let not the church be
charged; that it may relieve them that are widows
indeed.

Next he tells them what Sort of Widows he would have him refuſe and reject, and by no Means admit into the Number of Deaconneſſes, or the Church's Servants, namely, the younger Widows, who were not paſt Child-bearing, and therefore waxing Wanton againſt Chriſt would marry, that is, growing weary of the Church's Service, and deſpairing of Marriage in the Church, would revolt from the Faith, and marry ſome Infidel out of the Church; *having Damnation*, that is, committing a Sin worthy of Damnation and bringing themſelves into a damnable Condition, *becauſe they renounce their firſt Faith*, which they made Profeſſion of when they were baptized, turning Apoſtates to pleaſe their Infidel Huſbands, which the Apoſtle calls a Turning after Satan, *ver.* 15. to the great Scandal of Chriſtianity. *Obſerve* next, our Apoſtle ſhews that ſuch young Widows are uſually Idle, wandring about from Houſe to Houſe, prying into, and tatling about other Folks Matters; to avoid all which he adviſes the young Women, and particularly the younger Widows, to marry, and ſerve God in a conjugal Relation, bearing and bringing up their Children, guiding their Families, and giving no Occaſion to the Enemies of Religion to reproach either it or themſelves; from all which we may note, that Celibacy, or ſingle Life, is, no ſuch State of Holineſs and Perfection as the Church of *Rome* would perſwade us; we ſee here it has its Temptations and Snares, and thoſe not a few nor ſmall; and that our Apoſtle, in ſome Caſes, and to ſome Perſons, recommends a married Life before it. *Obſerve* laſtly, for a Cloſe of his Diſcourſe concerning Widows, he adviſes that if any Chriſtian has any helpleſs Widow of his own Family, or amongſt his Relations, that he relieve and maintain her, if he be able, and not caſt her upon the Charity of the Church, leſt there be not a Sufficiency to ſupply the Wants of ſuch as are Widows indeed, Aged and Helpleſs; for any to eat the Poors Bread, who are not Poor, and to whom it does not belong, is Robbery.

17 Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Onr Apoſtle proceeds next to give *Timothy* Directions concerning *Elders*; not Old Men in Years, but Elders in Office, ſuch as were imployed in the governing of the Church, and over and above that Service, laboured even unto Wearineſs in preaching of the Word, and expounding the Chriſtian Doctrine, requiring that double Honour be given unto ſuch. *Note* here, (1.) The Elders Work and Duty declared, *to rule well*, wiſely to preſide over, and diſcreetly to govern the Church of Chriſt; alſo to *labour in the Word and Doctrine*, to take Pains in preaching the Goſpel upon all Occaſions; thoſe that are advanc'd to the higheſt Eminency in the Church will not think themſelves above this Part of their Duty. *Note* (2.) The Honour and Reſpect challenged on their Behalf; *double Honour* is their Due, namely, an *Honour* of Reverence, and an Honour of Maintenance, and a double Meaſure of either; ſome thinks it an Alluſion to the Firſt-born, who was the Prieſt of the Family, and had a double Portion amongſt his Brethren; the Levites ſucceeded them, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel theſe, who when Laborious in governing and teaching the Church of Chriſt, deſerve more Honour and better Maintenance than the unkind World is willing to confer upon them, who inſtead of double Honour ſometimes deny them civil Reſpect. *Note* (3.) In that the Apoſtle ſtiles the Miniſters Maintenance, *Honour*, it follows that their Maintenance is not to be eſteemed of the Nature of Alms, but of a Tribute paid by an Inferior to a Superior; neither is our Maintenance mercenary Wages, but ſuch as ought to be given as a Teſtimony of Honour, as well as in the Nature of a Reward; as then they are worthy of, let them never fail to receive double Honour, who *rule well*, and alſo Labour in the Word and Doctrine.

18 For the ſcripture ſaith, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, the labourer is worthy of his reward.

Theſe Words evidently ſhew that by *Honour* in the former Verſe is to be underſtood *Maintenance*; a Place is here cited out of *Deut.* 25. where the Law of *Moſes* forbad the muzzling of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn, but allowed him feeding all the Time of Working; in like manner the Labour of the Church's Guides gives them a Right to the Church's Maintenance and Honour; but ſuch as do not labour have a Right to neither.

19 Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation,
but before two or three witneſſes. 20 Them that
ſin, rebuke before all, that others alſo may fear.
21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus
Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe
things without preferring one before another, doing
nothing by partiality.

Here our Apoſtle directs *Timothy* how to proceed in Church cenſures againſt open Offenders; which plainly ſhews that there was a Right of judging and cenſuring Offenders in *Timothy* by Vertue of his Office. First then he begins to acquaint him with his Duty in cenſuring an Elder, and adviſes him never to admit an Accuſation againſt ſuch without the Atteſtation of two or three Witneſſes: Becauſe, (1.) It is the

Intereſt of the Church of Chriſt that the Reputation of its Miniſters be ſupported. (2.) Becauſe prejudiced Perſons will be ready to accuſe without Reaſon. Conſcientious Miniſters ſhall never want Accuſers, if falſe Accuſers can but find Judges that are willing to believe them: Therefore *againſt an Elder receive not an Accuſation but before two or three Witneſſes.* Next he adviſes him, when there is a juſt and ſufficient Cauſe for cenſuring an Elder, to do it publickly. *Them that ſin*, that is, ſuch Elders as ſin, and are convicted of it, and ſo are become Scandalous by it, *rebuke* before all the Church, before all the Clergy, as in a Synod, putting them to publick Shame, that others may fear to ſin, ſeeing thee to puniſh ſo publickly and impartially. Laſtly, he concludes his Advice with a very ſolemn Charge to *Timothy*, before God and Chriſt, and the glorious Angels, to obſerve theſe Rules of Juſtice in Eccleſiaſtical Judicature, without preferring one Man before another, doing nothing by a partial Reſpect of Perſons. Learn hence, That ſo Heinous is the Sin of unjuſt and unrighteous Judging, eſpecially in Eccleſiaſtical Perſons, and of ſuch fatal Miſchief to the Church, that all imaginable Care and Caution ought to be taken to prevent both the Sin and the Danger of it. *I charge thee before God, and the Loed Jeſus Chriſt*, that thou obſerve theſe things.

22 Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens ſins: keep thyſelf pure.

A twofold Senſe and Interpretation is given of theſe Words, (1.) With Reference to Ordination, and ſo they are a Caution to the Governours of the Church to admit none into the ſacred Function haſtily, raſhly, without due Examination and ſufficient Trial; to which are added Words of great Terror, *neither be Partaker of other Mens Sins*; which ought to make a mighty Impreſſion on the Minds of thoſe in whom the Power of Ordination is lodg'd, ſince the Words do plainly import, that ſuch as do ordain any raſhly, entitle themſelves to all the Scandal they give, and are Partakers of their Guilt. *Note* here, (1.) The Nature of the Office the Miniſters of Chriſt are ordain'd to, to rule, and labour in the Word and Doctrine. *Note* (2.) An Authority in *Timothy* to admit Perſons into this Office, by laying on of Hands. *Note* (3.) The great Care and Caution, the Heedfulneſs and Circumſpection, neceſſary in admitting Perſons to this Holy Function: *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man*: The Welfare of the Church, the Honour of Religion, the Salvation of Mens Souls, depends much, very much, upon thoſe who are admitted into Holy Orders. The ſecond Interpretation given of theſe Words is, that *Timothy* is here directed how to carry himſelf in cenſuring and abſolving of Penitents: As if St. *Paul* had ſaid, when thou haſt juſtly cenſured an Offender be not too haſty in abſolving of him, (for this alſo was done by Impoſition of Hands) till ſome Trial be made of his Reformation, leſt by ſo doing thou becomeſt Guilty of his future Faults: But keep thy ſelf Pure from all Sin, whoſe Office it is to cenſure and reprove Sin in others. In both theſe Senſes have theſe Words been underſtood, *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man, keep thyſelf Pure.*

23 Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities.

Note here, (1.) There is a lawful Uſe of Wine to ſupport Nature, not to clog it, to cure Infirmities, not to cauſe them: Drink it *Timothy* might, medicinally, and no doubt for Chearfulneſs and Alacrity, that the Body might be more fit and expedite for Duty; *uſe a little Wine for the Stomach's Sake*. *Note* (2.) That our Meat and Drink ſhould be fitted for the Preſervation of Health, rather than for the Gratification of our Appetite; the former is Chriſtian Duty, the latter is Brutiſh Senſuality. *Note* (3.) That the Apoſtles, who had the Gift of Healing, could not make uſe of it when and upon whom they pleaſed; no, not upon themſelves, but muſt help their own Infirmities in and by the Uſe of ordinary Means. Thus *Timothy* here, drink no longer Water *alone*, but uſe a little Wine *with it* for thy Stomach's Sake, and thine often Infirmities thence procceeding.

24 Some mens ſins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and ſome *men* they follow after. 25 Likewiſe alſo the good works *of ſome* are manifeſt beforehand; and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.

St. *Paul* had juſt before exhorted *Timothy* to keep himſelf Pure from other Mens Sins, whether Candidates or Penitents, here comes in ſubſequent Advice in order thereunto: As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, *Timothy*, if thou beeſt Diligent to obſerve, and not over haſty either in ordaining Candidates or abſolving Penitents, thou may'ſt in ſome Meaſure perceive who are worthy, and who are unworthy. If thou layeſt thine Hands upon thoſe that are actually faulty, thou partakeſt with them by being an Occaſion of their ſinning; but thou canſt not diſcover their Faultineſs beforehand, though they afterwards prove Wicked, it is not thy Fault; God will at length detect them, yea, they will diſcover themſelves, and when their Faults are manifeſt, deal with them according to the Diſcipline of the Church. Learn hence, (1.) That how much ſoever Sinners attempt the hiding, yet cannot they actually hide themſelves or their Sinnings from God's Sight and Knowledge. *They cannot be hid*, ſays St. *Paul*, tho' Men labour much to hide them; O! Sinner, there is no Way to hide thyſelf from God: thou may'ſt by Repentance hide thyſelf in God, in the Love, in the Favour, in the Mercy of God, but from God thou canſt not be hid. As the Saints good Works are open and manifeſt in the Sight, and to the View of God, ſo they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid: Where can a Sinner be hid from him who is every-where? Or what thing can be our covering from him, in whoſe Sight all things are open? Lord! What will it avail to hide our ſelves from Men when we lie open and manifeſt to the Eye of God? *They that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.*

CHAP. VI.

LET as many ſervants as are under the yoke, count their own maſters worthy of all honour; that the name of God, and his doctrine be not blaſphemed. 2 And they that have believing maſters, let them not deſpiſe *them*, becauſe they are brethren: but rather do *them* ſervice, becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. Theſe things teach and exhort.

Our Apoſtle having in the preceding Chapters inſtructed *Timothy* to give the neceſſary Directions for the Performance of ſeveral relative Duties, in this Chapter he particularly directs him to inſtruct Chriſtian Servants to the acceptable Performance of that great Duty of Obedience, which they owe to their reſpective Maſters, whether Infidels or Chriſtians. Chriſtianity frees Perſons from ſinful Slavery and Bondage, but not from civil Servitude and Subjection. Religion does not level Perſons, but allows of an inequality amongſt Men, Superiors and Inferiors; and as it gives the former a Power to command, ſo it lays the latter under an Obligation to obey. *Obſerve* (2.) The general Duty required of all Servants towards their Maſters, and that is to give them all the Honour and Obedience which is due in that Relation; let them account their *Maſters* worthy of all Honour. What Maſters? (1.) Their Infidel and unbelieving Maſters, they are required to carry it dutifully and reſpectfully towards them. (2.) Their *Believing* or Chriſtian Maſters, they ſhould not deſpiſe them becauſe they are Brethren; for Chriſtian Brotherhood conſiſts with inequality of Place and Relation, and with ſubjection of one Perſon to another: But they ought to ſerve ſuch Maſters the more readily and chearfully, becauſe Brethren, Beloved of God, and Partakers of the *Benefit*, namely, of Redemption by Chriſt, and of the ſanctifying Grace of God. *Obſerve* laſtly, the grand Argumeut which St. *Paul* uſes to enforce the Duty of Obedience upon all Servants, *that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed*; that is, the Men of the World will reproach Religion, revile Chriſtianity, and ſay that it teaches, or allows at leaſt, that Men be Stubborn and Diſobedient: Where *Note*, that the pooreſt and meaneſt Profeſſor of Chriſtianity may do much Good or much Hurt to Religion; ſome might be ready to ſay, alas! What Credit or Diſcredit can a poor Servant do to Religion? Much every Way: He may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, *Tit.* 2. 9. by his Chriſtian Behaviour, and the Name of God and his Doctrine may be blaſphemed by him if he be Negligent in his Duty: None are ſo inconſiderable but they are capable of ſerving the great Ends of Religion, and may honour God in ſome Meaſure; and are capable of being honoured by him upon Earth, and with him in the higheſt Heavens.

2 ——Theſe things teach and exhort. 3 If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine, which is according to godlineſs; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, 5 Perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs; from ſuch withdraw thy ſelf.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſolemn Charge which the Holy Ghoſt by St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, to teach and preſs theſe relative Duties of Servants towards their Maſters with great Zeal and affectionate Earneſtneſs, *Theſe things teach and exhort*; as if our Apoſtle had ſaid, they are Duties of great Moment, therefore teach and preſs them earneſtly; Doubtleſs there is much of the Pleaſure and Will of God in theſe Commands, and the Honour and Glory of God is much concerned in them, otherwiſe the Spirit of God had never been ſo Earneſt in the preſſing of them; the Power of Holineſs in nothing diſcovers itſelf more conſpicuouſly than in the Performance of Relative Duties; we are no more really than what we are relatively; Relational Holineſs is the brighteſt Ornament of Religion. *Obſerve* (2.) The high Character which St. *Paul* gives of this Doctrine which urges the Practice of theſe relative Duties; he calls what he ſays and writes about it, *wholeſome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Learn thence, that the Words written by St. *Paul* in this, and his other Epiſtles, are the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that is, Words agreeable to his Mind and Will, written with an Eye at his Glory, promoting his Honour, correſpondent with and ſuitable to his Practice when here on Earth. *Obſerve* (3.) The odious Character wherewith he brands thoſe falſe and flattering Teachers which preached contrary Doctrine to what Jeſus Chriſt by his Apoſtles had delivered; he charges them with Pride, Ignorance, *Envy*, *Strife*, *Railing*, *evil Surmiſing*, and with *ſuppoſing that Gain* was *Godlineſs*; that is, their End in profeſſing Godlineſs was this, that they might make a Gain of it, and get Preferment by it, making uſe of Religion only as a Block to take Horſe at: But to make uſe of Religion in Policy for worldly Advantage ſake, is the Way to be damn'd with a Vengeance for Religion ſake. *Obſerve* laſtly, St. *Paul*'s Advice to *Timothy* to withdraw from theſe Men, *from ſuch withdraw thyſelf*; hold no Communion with them, maintain no Diſpute with them, for they dote about Queſtions, and ſtrive about Words. *Note* here from St. *Paul*'s bidding *Timothy* withdraw himſelf from them, that it is very Evident that he ſpeaks of Perſons who were then in Being; the Gnoſtick Hereticks, according to ſome, the judaizing Teachers, in the Opinion of others, that is, they of the Circumciſion, who taught things which they ought not, for filthy Lucre ſake. Whoever they were, St. *Paul*'s Admonition to *Timothy*, to withdraw himſelf from ſuch, teaches us, that Heretical Seducers are to be ſhunned and avoided, rather than diſputed with, as unfit for our Chriſtian Communion, and common Converſation.

6 But godlineſs with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, altho' theſe Seducers are for making a Gain of Godlineſs, yet *we* know that Godlineſs is great Gain, eſpecially Godlineſs with Contentment; with Contentment I ſay, which it becomes us to have, for we brought nothing into the World with us, and ſhall carry nothing away with us, having therefore Food and Raiment, let us therewith be content and ſatisfied. Learn hence, (1.) That Godlineſs is the ſincere Practice of the Chriſtian Religion, ſo called, becauſe it directeth and preſcribeth to us the true and only Way of worſhipping and ſerving God. (2.) That ſome Men ſuit their Godlineſs with their worldly Ends, they make a Trade and ſaving Bargain of it. Learn (3.) That Godlineſs, or the ſincere Practice of the Chriſtian Religion, is true Gain, great Gain, yea, the beſt Gain, both for this World, and that which is to come. Learn (4.) That one great Point of Godlineſs is to be content with what we have, yea, tho' it be but Food and Raiment. Contentment is a ſedate and quiet Temper of Mind about outward things: It is the Wiſdom and Will of God not to give to all alike, but to ſome more, to others leſs, of theſe outward Comforts; but nothing beſides Food and Raiment is abſolutely neceſſary, a little will ſuffice a contented Mind; he is not Rich that has much, but he that has enough; that Man is Poor who covets more; having Food and Raiment, *&c. Obſerve* laſtly, the Apoſtle's Argument to excite and move the Chriſtian to this Duty of Contentment, without enlarging his Deſires inordinately after the World, and periſhing Satisfaction of it: *For we brought nothing into the World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*; where remark, that the Note of Aſſurance is fixed rather to our carrying out than to our bringing in; the Apoſtle doth not ſay, it is certain that we brought nothing into the World, and we ſhall carry nothing out: But he ſays, we brought nothing in, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Note of Aſſurance is applied to the latter; for this Reaſon I conceive, becauſe tho' all Perſons come Naked, and bring nothing with them into the World, yet abundance is put upon them, and they are born Heirs to vaſt Poſſeſſions: But it is Obvious to every Eye, and moſt indubitably Certain, that they carry nothing away with them. Death is called an uncloathing; it uncloaths the Body, diſrobing it of all its gaudy and glorious Attire; yea, it uncloaths the Bones; our Fleſh wears off quickly in the Grave; we proverbially ſay of a Rich Man, he has left a vaſt Eſtate, left it behind him, carrying neither a Foot of Land nor Farthing of Money with him; therefore doth St. *Paul* add, *it is certain we can carry nothing out*.

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Parties deſcribed, they that will be Rich; that is, whether God will or no; their Hearts are ſet upon the World, they feel it coming, and have it they will, if by any Means, Right or Wrong, they can come at it, ask no Body's Leave, no, not God Almighty's Leave, but Rich they are reſolv'd to be. *Obſerve* (2.) Their Danger repreſented, they fall into Temptation and a Snare, and many fooliſh Luſts, *&c.* Learn hence, That a Will and Reſolution to be Rich is the Occaſion of much Miſchief to thoſe that cheriſh and allow it in themſelves; a Will to be Rich is to make Riches our principal Buſineſs, our main Scope, our great Work, to purſue the World with the full Bent of our Wills: Now the Bent of our Wills is diſcovered, firſt, by Intention, ſecondly, by induſtrious Proſecution; when the Mind is wholly intent upon getting Wealth, and unwearied Induſtry and Endeavour is found in the purſuit of it. Now this is to make a God of the World; for that which is a Man's Aim, Deſign, and End, is his chief Good, and that which is our chiefeſt Good is God, *They that will be Rich*. Learn (2.) That an hot and over eager Purſuit of the World lays a Man open to endleſs Temptations, ſo that it is not only Difficult, but Impoſſible, to keep his Innocency; and that being irrecoverably loſt, drowns a Man in Perdition and Deſtruction.

10 For the love of Money is the root of all evil: which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.

Here we have the Nature of Covetouſneſs, the Evil and Sin of Covetouſneſs, and the Miſchief and Hurt of it declared. *Obſerve* (1.) The Nature of it; It is an inordinate Love of Money, an inſatiable Deſire after Wealth. *Obſerve* (2.) The Evil and Sinfulneſs of it: 'Tis a Root Sin, *The root of all evil*; the Fruit of all Sin grows from this Root, diſtruſtful Care, tormenting Fear, Anger, Malice, Envy, Deceit, Oppreſſion, Bribery, Perjury, vexatious Lawſuits, and the like; nay further, Covetouſneſs is the Root of Hereſie in Judgment, as well as of Iniquity in Practice; *they have erred from the faith*, that is, in Point of Doctrine as well as in Practice; it makes a Man Believe as well as Act againſt the Rule of Faith for filthy Lucre. *Obſerve* (3.) The Miſchief and Hurt of Covetouſneſs declar'd, it pierces, it pierces through with Sorrows, yea, with many Sorrows. But whom doth it pierce? Firſt, others, it pierces the Poor, the Needy, the Widow, the Fatherleſs, all that fall within the Reach of its griping Hand: Nay, it doth not ſpare its own Maſter, or Slave rather, but pierces him; they pierce themſelves thorough, ſays the Apoſtle, with many Sorrows, with many more and much worſe Sorrows than they pierce others with. Riches ill-gotten by Covetouſneſs or Oppreſſion, inſtead of making their Owners heartily Merry, make their Conſciences ake, and give them many a Stitch in their Sides. None can tell what Gall and Wormwood ſprings from this bitter Root, both to our ſelves and others: The *love of money is the root of all evil, which while ſome covet after, they err from the faith, piercing themſelves thorough with many ſorrows.* 'Tis the Root of all Evil, of Sin, and alſo of Trouble and Diſquiet.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things: and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called, and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes.

Obſerve here (1.) The Apoſtle's Compellation, or the Title given to *Timothy*, *Thou*, *O man of God:* 'Tis a Title borrowed from the Old Teſtament, where it is frequently given to the Prophets, who revealed the Mind and Will of God to the People. Now by giving it to *Timothy*, the Apoſtle intimates his Duty to him, to contemn the World, and flee the eager Purſuit of Riches; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *O Timothy!* thou art a Miniſter and Man of God, ſolemnly dedicated to his Service, and devoted intirely to his Glory, ſee then that thou abhor and avoid that deteſtable Sin of Covetouſneſs. Heavenly Truths are the Subject of thy daily Study; Oh! let not Earthly Things be the Object of thy chiefeſt Delight and Love: But follow after Spiritual Riches, namely, Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs, Faith and Love, Patience and Meekneſs. That Godlineſs which gives Contentment with Food and Raiment, that Faith which aſſures us of a better and more enduring Subſtance, that Righteouſneſs or Juſtice which requires us to let every Man enjoy his own, that Love which makes us willing to diſtribute, that Patience which makes us willing to ſubmit to a Low Condition, that Meekneſs which ſuppreſſes Wrath againſt thoſe that are Injurious to us. All theſe Vertues and Graces are neceſſary for *Thee* as a Miniſter of God, they are certain Indications of a Mind free from Covetouſneſs, and infallible Preſervations from it.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called, and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes.

This whole Verſe is an Alluſion to the Olympick Games, particularly to that of Racing, where the Garland or Crown being hung up at the End of the Goal, he that came firſt did lay hold of it, and take it to himſelf; and becauſe theſe Games were performed in the Sight of many Spectators, the Apoſtle continues the Alluſion, and ſays, *Timothy* had before many Witneſſes profeſſed his Readineſs to ſuffer for the Faith. The Senſe of the Apoſtle in this Advice ſeems to be this, *Fight the good fight of faith*, that is, go on by Faith to overcome all Temptations and Difficulties; preſs toward the Mark till thou lay hold on the Prize, which is Eternal Life: To which Spiritual Warfare and Chriſtian Race thou gaveſt in thy Name, when being baptiz'd and ordain'd thou mad'ſt a publick Profeſſion of the Faith before many Witneſſes.

13 I give thee charge in the ſight of God, who quickneth all things, and *before* Chriſt Jeſus, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion; 14 That thou keep this commandment without ſpot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 15 Which in his times he ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: to whom *be* honour and power everlaſting. Amen.

Obſerve here what a ſolemn Adjuration and vehement Charge is given to *Timothy*, by our Apoſtle, to watch and guard againſt the Sin of Covetouſneſs, and to avoid the eager Purſuit of worldly Wealth, *I charge thee before God and Chriſt, that thou keep this commandment ſpotleſs and unrebukable*, until the Coming of Chriſt, and may'ſt be found ſuch at his Appearing. *Obſerve* (2.) What a glorious Diſplay our Apoſtle here makes of the adorable Attributes of God: He ſtiles him the God that *quickneth* all things, that is, all things that have or ſhall have Life; *the bleſſed and only potentate*, becauſe all Power is eſſentially in him, and derived from him; who *only* hath *Immortality*, that is, an Original, Primitive, Simple, Independent, Eſſential Immortality; this is only Proper and Peculiar to God, he only is eſſentially and neceſſarily of himſelf Immortal; *dwelling in that light* which is Inacceſſible, and none can approach unto, and *whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee:* God is Inviſible in his Eſſence, he is not to be ſeen by any mortal Eye on Earth, the Eye of Faith ſees him only here; nay, he is not to be ſeen by any glorified Eye in Heaven, in his Divine Eſſence; the Nature and Eſſence of God never was ſeen, nor ſhall be ſeen. But we are by the Sight of God in Heaven to underſtand a more clear and full Manifeſtation of God unto us, even ſo far as our Glorified Natures can bear it; it will be abundantly beyond Expreſſion, yea, beyond our Comprehenſion. *Obſerve* (3.) The Teſtimony which the Holy Apoſtle bears to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when here on Earth, that *before* Pontius Pilate, *he witneſſed a good confeſſion*, that is, he did not deny the Truth to ſave his Life, but gave all his Miniſters and People an Example of Courage and Conſtancy, in owning the Truth and ſealing it with their Blood.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, not truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Our Apoſtle having, in a very ſolemn manner, exhorted *Timothy* to avoid that dangerous Sin of Covetouſneſs himſelf in the foregoing Verſes, he doth in theſe Verſes require him to lay the ſame Charge upon others, particularly upon worldly rich Men, *charge them that are rich.* *Obſerve* here (1.) *Timothy*'s Duty, not barely to Exhort and Teach, but to Charge and Command. True, the Miniſters of Chriſt are Servants to their People; but Servants to their Souls, not to their Wills, much leſs to their Luſt; there is an Authority in our Office which impowers us to command for God as well as to entreat. *Obſerve* (2.) The Subject of this Charge, *them that are rich in this world:* Mark, no Man is forbidden to be Rich, nor yet to uſe ſuch lawful Means by which, through God's Bleſſing thereupon, Men may be Rich; but Rich Men need a Charge, they want plain-dealing from Miniſters, becauſe they meet with ſo little of it from other Men; for ſome flatter them, others fear them, God's Miniſters ought ſure to deal faithfully with them. *Obſerve* (3.) The Charge itſelf; and this is ſet down negatively and affirmatively, both Twofold. (1.) The negative Matter of the Charge, *that they be not high-minded*; Pride of Heart and Haughtineſs of Mind and Spirit, is one ſpecial Sin which Great Men are ſubject to: When God lifts them up by his Providence, they lift up themſelves by Pride; there is a ſecret Malignity in Riches when they meet with Mens Corruptions, to lift them up above their due Region; tho' neither the Wiſer, the Holier, the nearer Heaven for all their Wealth, nay, perhaps a great deal nearer Hell for the Abuſe of it; yet ſtill the Rich think High, look Big, breathe Scorn, talk with Diſdain, forgetting that God gives them Riches to Exalt Him, and not themſelves. ------- Next Part of the negative Charge is, that *they truſt not in uncertain riches*; intimating, That Creature-confidence, or making an Idol of Wealth, is the dreadful Bane and Ruine of ſome Rich Men: Their Actions ſay to the Gold, *Thou art my hope, and to the fine Gold, thou art my confidence*; but the Vanity and Sinfulneſs of this appears by the Apoſtle's calling them *uncertain Riches*; uncertain in their Abode and Continuance with us, uncertain in their Promiſes and Pretences to us; we expect more from them than ever we find in them. *Obſerve* (4.) The Poſitive Part of the Charge, (1.) To truſt in God, the Living God, a Bountiful God, He giveth Riches; they buy, they do not give, He giveth *all things*; all the Wealth in the World cannot buy a Mouthful of Air, or a Drop of Light, if God withholds it. God is the Giver of all, he giveth *richly* all things; the moſt miſerable Man cannot number the rich Mercies which he doth receive; and he gives all things richly *to enjoy*; that is, he gives an Heart to take and taſte the Comfort of what he gives, he gives not only Poſſeſſion, but Fruition: Riches can do none of theſe things; why then ſhould we truſt in uncertain Riches, and not in the Living God? *Obſerve* (5.) Another Duty exhorted to, and that is to imitate God in his Works of Bounty, *to do good*; Rich Men are to make their Wealth the Materials of Good Works: Nay, they muſt not only do Good Works, but be rich in Good Works; as their Eſtate is plentiful, ſo muſt their Charity be proportionable; they muſt do it copiouſly, *be rich in good works*, they muſt do it chearfully, *ready to diſtribute*, without Grudging, and without Delay; they muſt do it diffuſively, *willing to communicate*, that is, to do as much Good to the Community as poſſible we can, upon Principles of Humanity, and upon Principles of Chriſtianity alſo. *Obſerve* (6.) The Encouragements given to this Duty: (1.) Thus to lay out, is *to lay up*, and that as in a Treaſure; 'tis like ſcattering of Seed in order to an Increaſe and Harveſt. (2.) Thus to lay out upon others, is to lay up *for themſelves*; they have the Comfort here, and the Reward hereafter. (3.) It is to lay up for themſelves a *Foundation*; not by way of Merit towards God, but by way of Evidence in regard of our ſelves; a Teſtimony of our Reconciliation to, and Acceptance with God. (4.) It is a good Foundation *for time to come*; all our Glory, Wealth and Subſtance is no durable Foundation, here to Day, and gone to Morrow, but Good Works are a Bank in Heaven: All is depoſited in a ſafe Hand that we lay out for God. (5.) It ſhall be rewarded with Eternal Life, *Laying up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold upon eternal life.* Now from the whole learn, (1.) That the Wiſdom of God has ſeen fit to make a great Diſtinction between Men in this World, ſome are Poor, others Rich, as God ſees beſt for both. Learn (2.) That ſome are Rich who are not Rich in this World, Rich in Faith, Heirs of a Kingdom, yet wandring in Deſarts, Dens and Caves. (3.) That there are many who are only Rich in this World; look beyond the Grave and they are Poor Men, Miſerable Men, having great Poſſeſſions in this World, but no Proviſions for the next. Learn (4.) That the great Deſign which all Men, eſpecially Rich Men, ſhould purſue and proſecute in this Life, it is how they may in this Life ſecure and lay hold of Eternal Life: Bleſſed be God it may be laid hold upon, 'tis worth laying hold upon, 'tis Life, 'tis Eternal Life. *Queſt.* But how ſhould we lay hold upon Eternal Life? *Anſw.* (1.) In our Judgments, by having them convinced of the tranſcendent Excellency of it, and by having them approve of the ſtricteſt Condition upon which it is tendred. (2.) In our Affections, by ſtrong and vehement Deſires after Eternal Life. (3.) In our Endeavours, by a diligent Uſe of all Means, in order to the obtaining of it, and particularly by doing Good, by being rich in Good Works, by being *ready to diſtribute*, and *willing to communicate*; for hereby ſhall we lay up for our ſelves *a good foundation againſt the time to come*, and at length *lay hold of eternal life.*

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy truſt, avoiding prophane *and* vain bablings, and oppoſitions of ſcience, falſly ſo called: 21 Which ſome profeſſing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

Our Apoſtle concludes this his Epiſtle to *Timothy* with a very paſſionate and pathetick Exhortation to him, that he would maintain the Purity of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and preach that to his Hearers, avoiding all Idle Speculations and Philoſophical Niceties, which the Heathen Philoſophers admired, deſpiſing, in the mean time, the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel: And he tells him farther, that ſome Chriſtians being taken with this ſort of Learning, have corrupted Chriſtianity, turn'd Hereticks, erring concerning the Faith; to prevent which, he begs for *Timothy* the Grace of God to preſerve, ſanctifie, and ſave him. Learn hence, That in the firſt Beginnings of Chriſtianity, the Philoſophers, by Pretences of great Learning, were the greateſt Deſpiſers, and the bittereſt Enemies of Chriſtianity. *Secondly*, That the Generality of them were taken up with meer uſeleſs Quibbling, ſtriving about Words and barren Notions, inſtead of neceſſary and uſeful Knowledge. (3.) That *Timothy*, and every Miniſter of Chriſt with him, ought to preach the Goſpel, without any ſuch humane Mixtures, in the Purity and Plainneſs of it, and the People receive it with a Simplicity of Mind, to be guided and directed by it. *Laſtly*, That the ſanctifying and eſtabliſhing Grace of God is neceſſary and indiſpenſably needful to preſerve both Miniſters and People ſtedfaſt in the Faith of the Goſpel, and to perſevere therein, their Obedience to it.

THE Second Epiſtle of S. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

It is generally concluded, That it was not long before St. Paul's *Death that he wrote this Epiſtle to* Timothy, *and ſome think it was the laſt Epiſtle that ever he wrote, in which he foretels the near approach of his own Death and Martyrdom,* ch. 4. v. 6. *ſaying,* I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my Departure is at hand. *The Deſign of our Apoſtle in this Epiſtle is two-fold, firſt to forewarn, and thereby forearm his dear Son* Timothy *againſt thoſe Hereticks, Seducers, and falſe Teachers, which were then ariſing and creeping into the Church: And next, to excite him to the utmoſt Care and Diligence in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, exhorting him to prepare for Sufferings and Perſecutions, from his own Example ſet before him.*

CHAP. I.

PAul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God, according to the promiſe of life, which is in Chriſt Jeſus; 2 To Timothy *my* dearly beloved Son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

In theſe Verſes we have the Penman of this Epiſtle deſcrib'd, by his Name, *Paul*; by his Office, *an Apoſtle*; by the Perſon that ſent him, *Jeſus Chriſt*; by the End of his Miſſion to preach, *the promiſe of Life*; that is, the Goſpel in which the promiſe of Life Eternal is contain'd. Here *Note*, (1.) That it is God's Call, and not barely God's Permiſſion; his commanding Will, and not barely his permitting Will, which muſt warrant a Perſon's undertaking the ſacred Office, and prove him a true Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, *Paul an apoſtle by the will of God. Note*, (2.) That as *Adam* brought the Sentence of Death upon us all, and the Promiſe of Life is made to us in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt: So that Promiſe of Life muſt have Miniſters to proclaim it, and to preach this Promiſe is their proper Work. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon deſcribed to whom this Epiſtle is directed, and that by his Name, *Timothy*; by his Relation, *a Son*; by his Affection, *a beloved Son*, a *dearly* beloved Son. Some think St. *Paul* calls him his *Son* becauſe converted by him to Chriſtianity; others, becauſe more throughly Inſtructed, Edified, and Encouraged by our Apoſtle; poſſibly becauſe he was an Aſſiſtant to him, a Co-worker and Fellow-labourer with him in the Work of the Goſpel, and for that reaſon moſt affectionately beloved by him: From whence learn, With what fervour of ſincere Affection the Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould love one another, ſpeak reſpectfully of each other, ſecure the Reputation one of another, ſtrengthen each other's Hands, and encouraging one another's Hearts in the Work of God. We have little Love from the World, Lord! how ſad is it that we ſhould have leſs one for another? Behold here how St. *Paul*'s, and his Aſſiſtant *Timothy*'s Heart were knit one to another, like Father and Son, to the great Reputation, as well as ſucceſsful Furtherance of the Goſpel. *Obſerve* (3.) The Apoſtle's Salutation in Form of a Prayer, *Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Learn thence, That all Spiritual Bleſſings flow from God as the Father in Chriſt unto us; and that no Grace, Mercy or Peace can be had from God the Father, but in, by, and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3 I thank God, whom I ſerve from *my* forefathers with pure conſcience ——

But how could *Paul*, before Converſion, be ſaid to ſerve the God of his Fathers with a pure Conſcience, when he was a Perſecutor, and the Chief of Sinners? *Anſw.* The meaning is, that he worſhipped the ſame God, and the only true God which his Forefathers worſhipped, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; and that he worſhipped him in Sincerity, according to his Conſcience, and the meaſures of Light then received. Learn hence, That the Church before Chriſt had the ſame Faith, the ſame Object of Faith, and worſhipped God, the ſame God under the Law, with us under the Goſpel, *I thank God, whom I ſerve from my forefathers.*

3 —— That without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day:

Behold here the Miniſters Duty in a more eſpecial manner, to be much in Prayer one for another; they ſtand greatly in need of this mutual Help to ſtrengthen each other's Hand, and encourage one another's Hearts in the ways of God: They ſhould therefore, without ceaſing, remember one another at the Throne of Grace.

4 Greatly deſiring to ſee thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy:

Obſerve here the vehemency of Affection which our Apoſtle expreſſes towards *Timothy*, he deſired, greatly deſired to ſee him, and with the Sight of him to be filled with Joy. *Note*, That tho' we muſt love all Chriſtians with a ſincere Love, yet we may love ſome Chriſtians with a more fervent Love than others; choice and uſeful Chriſtians, endearing and endeared Friends may and muſt be loved above others, *I deſire greatly to ſee thee*, &c. *Obſerve* farther, St. *Paul* declares how *mindful* he was of *Timothy*'s Tears; probably a Flood of Tears were ſhed at their laſt parting one from another. The beſt of Men have a Propenſion to weeping, and upon occaſion have ſhed Tears; ſo had *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *David*, and Chriſt himſelf. True Goodneſs promotes Compaſſion; Good Men ever have been, and are Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions.

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am perſwaded that in thee alſo.

This is another Reaſon why St. *Paul* ſo earneſtly deſir'd a Sight of his dear Son *Timothy*, namely, the Remembrance of his Faith, as well as of his Tears, which Faith is deſcribed by the Quality of it, *unfeigned*; by the effect of it, it dwelt by the Subjects wherein, in *Lois*, *Eunice*, and *Timothy*;

by the Order, in which firſt in the Grandmother *Lois*, in the Mother *Eunice*, and laſtly, in the Child *Timothy*. Learn hence, That it is a moſt deſirable and bleſſed thing when there is a Succeſſion of Believers in a Family, and to ſee Faith tranſmitted down to Poſterity, when Grand-mother, Mother, and Grand-child, all walk in the Truth, thus here: And whereas *Timothy* received the Advantage of a Religious Education from thoſe two Holy Women *Lois* and *Eunice*, we learn, That God often bleſſeth the Labours and Examples of Holy Women, to raiſe up excellent Inſtruments in his Church.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou ſtir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

Obſerve here, (1.) St. *Paul's* Care, in putting *Timothy* in Remembrance of his Duty, tho' he very well knew it before, *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance*. None are ſo well inſtructed in their Duty, but they may and ought ſometimes to be put in Remembrance of what their Duty is. *Note*, (2.) The Duty which St. *Paul* puts him in Remembrance of, namely, to ſtir *up the gift of God which was in him, by putting on of* the Apoſtle's *Hands*. Where obſerve, (1.) What the Gift was which he adviſes ſhould be ſtirred up, namely, the Holy Ghoſt, in its miniſterial Gifts and ſanctifying Graces; particularly a Divine Power which diſpoſed and enabled him to teach and live, to act and do, anſwerably to the Duties incumbent upon him, as a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* (2.) What Care *Timothy* muſt take of this Gift, namely, to ſtir it up; the Word is a Metaphor taken from Fire, which if not ſtirred up grows dead, and gives little Heat: They that have received much Grace, and many Gifts from the Holy Spirit, may yet be wanting to themſelves in ſtirring them up. This ſtirring up the Gift of God in *Timothy*, reſpects either the means that are to be uſed in order to the Duty, ſuch are Prayer, Reading, and Meditation; or in the Duty itſelf, which conſiſts in feeding the Flock of God, in reforming Abuſes in the Church of God, and in enduring Hardſhip as a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* (3.) How this Gift was beſtowed upon *Timothy*, namely, by putting on of the Apoſtle's Hands, together with the Hands of the Presbytery, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. the Authority and Power was given by the Apoſtle, the Preſbytery concurring as his Aſſiſtants. St. *Paul* did not lay on Hands without the Preſbytery, much leſs did the Preſbytery lay on Hands without the Apoſtle, but he and they in Conjunction. From the whole learn, That no Perſons, eſpecially Miniſters, ought to ſuffer the Gifts and Graces of God's Holy Spirit to remain in them unexcited and not ſtirred up; *Stir up the gift of God that is in thee.*

7 For God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel, according to the power of God.

Here our Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy* to an holy Courage and undaunted Reſolution in the Execution of his Office. As if he had ſaid, Be not diſcouraged by Perſecutions, for God hath not given us his Meſſengers, the Spirit of Fear, but of Courage and Fortitude; fearleſs we are of the Frowns of Men; alſo *the ſpirit of love*, Love to God and the Souls of Men, which will make the Miniſters of God indefatigable in their Endeavours for the Good of Souls: Likewiſe the Spirit of a ſound Mind, which enables God's Miniſters to curb their Paſſions, inordinate Luſts, Deſires, Perturbations of Mind; an admirable Spirit! to know when to be angry and ſevere, and when to be mild and gentle. Learn hence, That Love is the genuine Principle of Obedience, and ought to be that Frame of Spirit, that inward Affection of Mind, from whence all our Services to God and our Neighbour do proceed. Thus having fortified *Timothy* againſt Fear in the ſeventh Verſe, he next fortifies him againſt Shame in the eighth Verſe, *Be not thou aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord*; that is, of giving Teſtimony to the Goſpel of our Lord, whether by preaching of it, or ſuffering for it: Nor be aſhamed of me his Priſoner, for I do not ſuffer as a Malefactor; nay, be thou a chearful Partaker of the ſame Sufferings as myſelf, and for the ſame Cauſe with myſelf, according to the Power of God; that is, being ſtrengthned with the Almighty Power of God. Learn hence, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are to take great care that they be always ready to ſuffer Reproach for the Goſpel, but that they never be a Reproach unto the Goſpel. Suffering for Chriſt will be ſweet, if it be not imbitter'd by ſinning againſt Chriſt.

9 Who hath ſaved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began. 10 But is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel. 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, to fortify thee againſt the Fear of thoſe Perſecutions, and to arm thee againſt the Shame of thoſe Reproaches which may probably attend thee in the Work of the Goſpel, conſider that the God whom thou ſerveſt in this Employment, is he that *hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling*; called us firſt to Chriſtianity, and then to this Holy Function of the Miniſtry; but to neither of them according to the Merit of our Works. As if we had done any thing to deſerve either of theſe Favours at his Hand, but *according to his own purpoſe and grace, given us in Chriſt before the world began*; that is, which from all Eternity he decreed and determined to accompliſh by Jeſus Chriſt; which gracious Purpoſe of his is now clearly diſcovered by our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's coming into the World, *who hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light*; that is, made a fuller and clearer Diſcovery of it by the Goſpel, to preach which Goſpel I am a commiſſion'd Apoſtle, and for this I ſuffer, and God help you when thereunto called to ſuffer with me. Learn hence, (1.) That God himſelf is the Author of Man's Salvation, *he hath ſaved us*; That effectual Vocation doth accompany Salvation; That the Chriſtians Calling is an holy Calling; That it is alſo an Act of free and gracious Favour in God to call, *who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace*. Learn further, That God's Purpoſe or eternal Decree to ſave, before all time, was manifeſted by Chriſt's appearing in time, *but now is made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. *Obſerve* alſo the Effects of Chriſt's appearing; (1.) To aboliſh Death, not to root it at preſent out of the World, but to take away its Dominion, its Dread and Terror, the whole Power and Diſpoſal of it, *Rev.* 1. 18. *I am alive, and have the Keys of Life and Death.* (2.) To bring *Life and Immortality to light*; that is, Immortal Life more clearly manifeſted and diſcovered. *Note* here, (1.) That the Soul of Man is Immortal, and that there is another State, an immortal State, which remains for Men after this Life: Otherwiſe, the Juſtice of God's Providence could not be ſufficiently vindicacated, but upon the ſuppoſal of a future State of Immortality it may. An Account of the unequal Providences of God in this World, is eaſy to him that believes the Certainty of another; as Good and Evil are at preſent different in their Nature, ſo ſhall they be in their Rewards. *Note*, (2.) That the greateſt Diſcovery that ever was made of Life and Immortality to loſt Sinners, is made by Jeſus Chriſt to loſt Sinners in the Goſpel. It was diſcover'd, tho' darkly, to the Old Teſtament Saints; but the Diſcovery made of it by the Goſpel, as it was an unexpected Diſcovery, a free and gracious Diſcovery, ſo was it a more clear, more full, and final Diſcovery of it, *Chriſt hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light by*, &c.

12 For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things; nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.

For which cauſe, that is, for the ſake of the Goſpel, and not as an Evil Doer, I ſuffer patiently all afflictive Evils, without either Fear or Shame, well knowing in whom I repoſe my Faith and Hope, my Truſt and Confidence; and

ſirmly

firmly believing that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, my Temporal Life, yea, my Eternal Life, the Life of my Soul, my Reward in Heaven; I have committed all unto, and depoſited all in God's Hand, and I am ſure he is both able and willing, he both can and will keep in ſafety that which I have thus committed to him. *Note* here, (1.) That the Knowledge of God muſt precede, or go before Faith in God. *I know in whom I have believed:* Faith ſees not him in whom it believeth, but it knows him in whom it believeth. *Note* (2.) There is no ſuch way to ſecure the Soul, as to commit it into God's Hand; the way to make the Soul ſafe, is to commit it to him to keep, and that in the way of well-doing.

13 Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us.

By *ſound Words* we are to underſtand the Doctrine of the Goſpel; by *a form of ſound Words*, the Truths and Doctrines of the Goſpel methodically diſpoſed and digeſted; to *hold* it *faſt*, is not to ſwerve from it in the Courſe of our Miniſtry, but pertinaciouſly to adhere to it, not parting with our ſelves, nor ſuffering it to be adulterated and corrupted by others. This *Form of ſound words* ſome take to be the Articles of our Creed, in the Words wherein we now have them, probably the ſame in Senſe if not in Words. This is called, *v.* 14. *That good thing which was committed to* Timothy *to keep*; meaning, that Summary of Chriſtian Doctrine which was committed to his Care and Keeping. Learn hence, (1.) That Evangelical Words are ſound Words: All Goſpel Truth is of an healing Nature. Learn (2.) That a Form of ſound Words, or a Methodical Syſtem of Goſpel Truths, is very profitable both for Miniſters and People. Learn (3.) That ſuch a Form of ſound Words is very faithfully to be retained, and very carefully to be kept unto. Learn (4.) That Faith and Love are the Hands whereby we are to hold faſt Goſpel Truth; *hold faſt the form of ſound words in faith and love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Learn (5.) That as Chriſtians are to hold theſe Evangelical Truths faſt in their Judgments, ſo are they to hold them forth in their Lives and Practices, *Keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us*, that is, the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt will not be wanting to our Endeavours, to help our Memory, Love, and Practice, if we be not wanting to our ſelves.

15 This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

By *all in Aſia* we are to underſtand very many, almoſt all, not every individual Perſon: Some think they were Teachers in *Aſia*, others that they were private Chriſtians; ſome that they were his Companions and Followers, who when they ſaw him Impriſon'd, deſerted and left him; and particularly *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes.* Yet *Note* here, (1.) That he doth not tax them of Apoſtacy from Chriſt, when he accuſes them of forſaking him; it is too harſh to ſay, that thoſe that forſake a particular Ruler of the Church do forſake Chriſt himſelf. *Note* (2.) in that he ſays, *All that are in Aſia are turned away from me.* That Sin may, and oft-times has the major Vote of its ſide, the generality go one way, and uſually the wrong way; Sinners, like Sheep, run after one another, like Fiſh ſwim down the Stream together.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus; for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my chain. 17 But when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found *me.* 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: And in how many things he miniſtred unto me at Epheſus, thou knoweſt very well.

Our Apoſtle having complain'd of many in *Aſia* forſaking him, in the Day of his Sufferings, in the foregoing Verſe; in this, he makes a grateful Commemoration of the Kindneſs of *Oneſiphorus* towards him, who refreſhed him with his Preſence and Relief, and was not *aſhamed of his chain*, of his Impriſonment, as others were. Learn (1.) It is no new thing for the moſt Holy and Innocent Servants of Chriſt to ſuffer Hardſhip, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, yea even Death itſelf for the ſake of Chriſt; and when they do ſo, to have Friends forſake and turn their Backs upon them. Proſperity affords many Friends, more Flatterers, but who regards the Priſoner in Bonds? Who cares for looking on the Dial when the Sun is off? Learn (2.) That not to be aſhamed of the Saints in the Day of their Sufferings, but to own them and adminiſter to them in ſuch a Condition, is a certain Sign of a ſound and ſincere Chriſtian. Good *Oneſiphorus* had this, amongſt other Evidences of his gracious State, that he was not aſhamed to own a Perſecuted *Paul* in Chains: Nay, he ſearched for the Apoſtle very diligently, and found him; ſo far was he from hiding his Eyes from him, and forſaking him, as the Men of *Aſia* did. *Obſerve* next, Our Apoſtle's fervent and affectionate Prayer to God, abundantly to recompence this Labour of Love in *Oneſiphorus* towards him: Firſt, He begs Mercy for his whole Houſhold, *The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus. Note*, (1.) How thankful the Saints of God are for Mercies received from God by the Hands of Men. *Note* (2.) That Acts of Chriſtian Charity to the Suffering Servants of Chtiſt, do receive a conſiderable part of their Reward even here, in the hearty and affectionate Prayers of the People of God on their Behalf. How well did it fare with *Oneſiphorus* and his Houſhold, upon the ſcore of St. *Paul*'s Prayers, *The Lord ſhew mercy to the houſe of Oneſiphorus*; next he prays for *Oneſiphorus* himſelf, *The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*; that is, in the great Day of Judgment. Learn hence, (1.) That the Holieſt of Men and beſt of Saints will ſtand in need of Mercy, much Mercy, when they ſtand before God at the Great Day. Learn (2.) That the merciful Chriſtian, which has here ſhewn Mercy to the Miniſters and Members of Jeſus Chtiſt, may expect, and ſhall find Mercy in that Day when they ſtand in need of Mercy. They that ſhew Mercy in the Evil Day, ſhall certainly find Merey in the Great Day, *The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.*

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter firſt exhorts Timothy *to the Practice of ſeveral Duties belonging to his Sacred Function; and that by ſundry Arguments drawn from Wreſtlers, Soldiers, and Huſbandmen, whoſe laborious Induſtry and indefatigable Services he exhorts him to imitate and follow; next he exhorts him from ſeveral Sins which render the Office of a Biſhop obnoxious to Cenſure, and his Perſon to Contempt. Thus he beſpeaks him.*

THou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

St. *Paul* having acquainted *Timothy* with the hard things which he had ſuffer'd for the Goſpel of Chriſt, and withal inform'd him how many had flinch'd for fear of ſuffering, forſaking him, and the Cauſe of God defended by him, in this Verſe he exhorts *Timothy* to Courage and Holy Reſolution for Chriſt, *Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, when others ſhew Puſilanimity and Cowardice, do thou ſhew thyſelf a ſtrong and valiant Man, not being affrighted at the Dangers that threaten thee in publiſhing and defending of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, *be ſtrong in the grace of Chriſt*, that is, in the Goſpel of Chriſt, which contains a Diſcovery of the Riches of his Grace, or be ſtrong through the Influences of the Grace of Chriſt. *Note* firſt, That as all Chriſtians in general, ſo the Miniſters of Chriſt in particular, do need Courage, *Thou my ſon be ſtrong*; nothing he does but is an Act of Valour, all Duties are attended with Difficulties, which put the Chriſtian upon diſputing every Inch of his way; they are only a few gallant Spirits that dare take Heaven by Storm: And the Miniſters of Chriſt do meet with more Difficulties than other Men. Learn (2.) That our Strength, both as Chriſtians and as Miniſters, lies in Chriſt, and not in our ſelves, *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*; the Strength of every Saint, yea of the whole Hoſt of Saints, lies in the Lord of Hoſts.

2 And the things that thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo.

A ſecond Charge given to *Timothy* is, to take ſpecial Care that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the Precepts of Holy Living, which he had heard St. *Paul* deliver in the Preſence of many Witneſſes, ſhould be handed down and tranſmitted to Men of great Fidelity and Ability, whom he was to ordain and impower to teach it unto others. Where *Note* (1.) A Direction given to the Guides and Governours of the Church how they ought to manage themſelves in the Ordination of the Miniſterial Office, this Office is to be committed unto *faithful able men*; many may be uſeful in the Church that cannot be excellent, but he that is unfaithful, is only fit to make Atheiſts. *Note* (2.) That ſuch as have the Goſpel depoſited with them, may and ought to depoſite it with others, and they with others, to the end of the World, thereby to prevent all Innovations and Diverſity of Opinions in matters of Religion, *What thou haſt heard commit to faithful men.*

3 Thou therefore endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. 4 No man that warreth, entangleth himſelf with the affairs of *this* life; that he may pleaſe him, who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier. 5 And if a man alſo ſtrive for maſteries, *yet* is he not crowned except he ſtrive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits. 7 Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things.

Still we find our Apoſtle proſecuting the great and general Deſign of this Epiſtle, which is to direct *Timothy* in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, as a Miniſter of the Goſpel, and particularly to prepare for Sufferings, and to inure himſelf to Hardſhip, and to encounter with Difficulties and Dangers: Hence he compares him to a Soldier, to a Wreſtler, and an Huſbandman; (1.) To a Soldier, *endure hardneſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* Learn hence, That every faithful Miniſter is a ſpiritual Soldier warring under Jeſus Chriſt, his Captain and chief Commander; Muſt the Soldier be called and do all by Commiſſion? ſo muſt the Miniſter. Muſt the Soldier be armed, trained up, diſciplin'd, and made fit for Service? ſo muſt the Miniſter. Muſt the Soldier ſhun no Dangers, ſtick at no Difficulties, paſs thro' thick and thin? Muſt he uſe allowed Weapons, approved Armour of his Generals directing, not of his own inventing? All this muſt the Miniſter be and do: In a word, Muſt the Soldier pleaſe him that hath choſen him to be a Soldier, and in order thereto, not *entangle himſelf with the affairs of this life*? ſuch a Life of freedom from Incumbrance by ſecular Affairs, ſhould the Miniſter of God deſire and endeavour after. Soldiers muſt be as free as may be from Diſtractions; a Soldier that fights in Fetters, fights thereafter; he muſt put off his Fetters before he puts on his Armour; the Miniſters Work lies in the Affairs of the other Life: Now he that is entangled in the Affairs of this Life, will do little about the Affairs of the next. He muſt alſo pleaſe his Captain, not pleaſe himſelf, his Appetite, his Pride, his Covetouſneſs, much leſs muſt he pleaſe the Enemy he is to fight againſt, the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh. Again, (2.) The Miniſter here is compar'd to a Wreſtler, *if a man ſtrive for the maſtery*; that is, for the Prize, the Garland, the Crown at the end of the Race; he ſhall be crowned, if he ſtrives lawfully, if he runs fairly according to the Rules of the Game, and perſeveres finally till he comes to the end of the Goal. Thus muſt the Miniſter of the Goſpel ſtrive for the Crown of Life, by putting forth all their Strength, exerting their utmoſt Endeavours, ſuch as are now Wreſtlers, ſhall e're long be Conquerors. Laſtly, *Timothy*, and all with him in the Work of the Goſpel, are here compar'd to Huſbandmen: As the Huſbandman muſt firſt toil and labour before he can partake of the Fruits of the Earth; he muſt Plow and Sow before he can Reap and Gather: ſo muſt the Miniſter of God, by a laborious Diligence cultivate and improve his People, before he can hope to reap that great Fruit and Benefit, the gaining and converting of Souls to Chriſt. God will reward no Miniſters but the laborious, he will never Dignify Drones in the Church Triumphant. Farther, by comparing *Timothy* to an Huſbandman, he intimates to him his Duty, not to be diſcouraged if he doth not reap Fruit preſently; the Seed lies under the Clods long, before it ſometimes appear; we muſt not deſpair of Men too ſoon. And laſtly, by comparing *Timothy* to an Huſbandman, he ſeems to intimate, that he was to be ſuſtain'd and maintain'd by theſe for whom he laboured. Thus having laid *Timothy*'s Duty before him, under the Metaphor of a Soldier, a Wreſtler, and an Huſbandman; he counſels him to conſider what he had ſaid unto him, and deſires of God to give him a right Underſtanding and ſound Judgment in all things; intimating, that they that will have God's Word and good Counſel bleſt by God to their Underſtanding and Practice, muſt ponder upon it, conſider of it, and duly apply it to themſelves, *Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give thee Underſtanding in all things.*

8 Remember that Jeſus Chriſt of the ſeed of David was raiſed from the dead, according to my goſpel: 9 Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Our Apoſtle having, in the foregoing Verſes, exhorted *Timothy* to Patience and Conſtancy under Suffering, comes now to direct him as to the Matter and Subject of his Preaching, particularly that he inſiſts upon the Incarnation and Reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Remember that Jeſus Chriſt* was the promiſed Meſſias, *of the ſeed of David*, not of *Joſeph.* *Timothy* is here called upon to aſſert the Incarnation of Chriſt, there being ſome Hereticks which did very early deny the Truth of his Humane Nature, as the *Marcionites* and *Manichees*, as there were others that denied the Reality of his Divine Nature, particularly *Ebion* and *Cerinthus.* Secondly, He calls upon *Timothy* to preach and preſs the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection alſo, both becauſe upon that depended the great Evidence of his Divinity, that he was really God; his Reſurrection by his own Power declar'd him to be God, *Rom.* 1. 4. and alſo becauſe upon that depends the Conſolation and Salvation of all Believers. Remember, and frequently inculcate, that Chriſt was raiſed from the Dead, *according to my goſpel*; that is, according to the Goſpel of Chriſt preached by me. Chriſt's Incarnation and Reſurrection are Truths much to be preached and inculcated by Miniſters, and frequently remembred and throughly conſidered by their People. It follows, *Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound*; that is, for which Goſpel, and for preaching which Reſurrection, I ſuffer as a Criminal and reputed Malefactor, yea, I ſuffer to that degree, that I am bound with Chains for preaching Jeſus and the Reſurrection, *but the word of God is not bound*; that tho' they have reſtrained me, they cannot reſtrain that that is looſe and at liberty; when the Diſpenſers of it are in Bonds, that has its free Courſe. Learn, That the Preachers of the Goſpel have, from the beginning, met with great Perſecutions, they have *ſuffered trouble as evil-doers, even unto bonds.* Learn (2.) That the Perſecution of Preachers doth not hinder the Progreſs and Liberty of the Word, when Miniſters are in Priſon, the Word may have free Paſſage, and Holy Men rejoice at its Liberty under their own Confinement: Yea, the Providence of God ſo order'd it, (ſee *Acts* the laſt) that St. *Paul*, even during his Impriſonment, preached the Word with all Boldneſs, his Confinement had cauſed the Goſpel to ſpread in *Rome.* Thus God out-ſhoots Satan in his own Bow; he thinks when he has the Miniſters of God in Priſon he has done his Work, but God over-rules and cauſes their Impriſonment itſelf to fall out rather to the Furtherance of the Goſpel, *I ſuffer bonds*, ſays the Apoſtle, *but the word of God is not bound.*

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elects ſake, that they may alſo obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory. 11 *It is* a faithful ſaying. For if we be dead with *him*, we ſhall alſo live with *him*. 12 If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with *him*; if we deny *him*, he alſo will deny us: 13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf.

St. *Paul* having acquainted *Timothy* in the foregoing Verſes with his Sufferings, even unto Bonds, here he lets him underſtand and know, why and for whoſe Sake he did ſo chearfully endure all theſe things, namely; *for the elects ſake.* Tho' the reſt of the World rejected the Goſpel, yet the Elect would be confirmed by his Example, and obtain that Salvation which in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt was offer'd and tender'd to them. Here *Note*, That there is a certain Election of God, which hath infallibly choſen to Salvation all thoſe who make their Calling and Election ſure, by Perſeverance in Holineſs and Good Works. *Note* (2.) That the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt do think no Sufferings too much, or too dear for the Sake of God's Elect, (for the Sake of Believing Chriſtians, who are a choſen Generation) ſo that their Sufferings may but further their Eternal Glory, Happineſs, and Salvation. To encourage yet again to a patient enduring of all ſorts of Afflictions, he aſſures *Timothy*, that if we be render'd conformable to Chriſt in his Sufferings, we ſhall be alſo in his Glory; *If we ſuffer for him, we ſhall reign with him*; *if we be dead with him*, dead to Sin, and dead to the World, *we ſhall alſo live with him*, in Conformity to his Reſurrection: But if for fear of Suffering we diſown him, he will alſo deny us; *if we believe not*, if we be unfaithful and forſake him, yet He will be true to his Word, He will not forſake his own Cauſe, but make good his Threatnings, his own Veracity ſtands firm, and is as much engaged to execute the Threatning, as to fulfil the Promiſe.

14 Of theſe things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord, that they ſtrive not about words to no profit; *but* to the ſubverting of the hearers. 15 Study to ſhew thy ſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Obſerve here (1.) the excellent Advice which St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, to all the Miniſters of the Church, and to all the Chriſtian Churches far and near, that they ſpend not their Time in Diſputes, that they contend not about Words, which have no tendency to make Men either wiſer or better, but ſerve only to violate the Laws of Charity, and cauſe Men to wrangle eternally, and perſecute one another with hard Names and Characters of Reproach. Here *Note* (1.) What thoſe things are which ought not to be Matters of Contention among Chriſtians; namely, (1.) Such things in which we differ from each other rather in Words than in Senſe; ofttimes Opponents mean the ſame things, but differ only in the way or manner of Expreſſion. (2.) Such things as tend to little or no Profit, either as to Edification in Faith, in Love, or in practical Godlineſs. *Obſerve* alſo the Apoſtle's Argument, why we ſhould not contend about theſe things, becauſe they tend to beget Strife and Contention amongſt Chriſtians, by dividing them into Factions and Parties, and alſo tend to the Subverſion of the Hearers, cauſing them to doubt of the Truth of the Faith about which the contending Parties cannot agreee, *charge them therefore that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers. Obſerve* next, The ſolemn Charge given to *Timothy*, as to the Matter, Manner, and Method of his Preaching, that the Matter of it be *the word of truth*, the pure Word of God; that it be *divided rightly*, to every one his Portion, to every Hearer his Due, methodizing and diſtributing Truth, as God would have it, Terror to whom Terror is due, Comfort to whom Comfort belongs. The Original Word render'd *rightly to divide*, ſome think a ſacrifical Word, alluding to the right dividing of the Sacrifice which was laid upon the Altar, ſeparating the Precious from the Vile, and ſevering the Parts which were not to be offered from them that were, and cutting out the Sacrifices in ſuch manner as all had their Share in them. As if St. *Paul* had ſaid, Study not for the Applauſe of Men, but for the Approbation of God, as becometh a good Workman, who needeth not to be aſhamed of his Work, whoever looks upon it; but let thy Preaching and Living be ſtrait and comformable to the Goſpel, and thus ſtudy to ſhew thyſelf approved of God. Hence learn, That altho' curious unprofitable trifling with Words in a Pulpit be vain and ſinful, yet it is the Part of a ſkilful Teacher, to order, methodize, and diſtribute Truth in its proper place, and giving every Hearer his Part and Portion.

16 But ſhun prophane and vain bablings; for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, ſaying, that the reſurrection is paſt already; and overthrow the faith of ſome.

St. *Paul* having now finiſhed the Exhortatory Part of this Chapter, and acquainted *Timothy* what he would have him practiſe and do, now comes to a Dehortation, adviſing him what he would have him avoid and ſhun; and here firſt he bids him *ſhun prophane and vain bablings*; the vain Bablings of the Heathen Philoſophers, and the profane Notions of heretical and ſeducing Teachers, particularly the *Gnoſticks*, the Followers of *Simon Magus* and *Menander*, who were guilty of an Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, by turning the Reſurrection into an Allegory; affirming, that the Reſurrection of the Soul to Piety and Virtue, was the only Reſurrection to be expected, diſowning the Reſurrection of the Body, and aſſerting that the Fleſh was unfit to riſe. *Obſerve* ſecondly, The Nature of erroneous Doctrine declar'd; it is of a devouring, ſpreading, and deſtroying Nature, *their word will eat as doth a Gangreen. Queſt.* How doth a Gangreen eat? *Anſw.* It eats ſpeedily, it eats incurably, it eats mortally, as it is well known the Gangreen doth. *Qu.* But what is it that Hereſies eat? *Anſ.* Faith, Peace, and Godlineſs; ſo here, *they overthrow the faith of ſome, and increaſe unto more Ungodlineſs. Queſt.* How comes it to paſs that they ſo eat? *Anſw.* The ſpreading and prevailing of Hereſies may be aſcribed partly to the Subtilty and Activity of Seducers, partly to the Curioſity and Simplicity of the Seduced, and partly to the Juſtice of God, for the Manifeſtation of thoſe that are ſincere, and the Puniſhment of thoſe that received not the Truth in the Love of it.

19 Neverthele ſs, the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Notwithſtanding that *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, with others, are fallen away, nevertheleſs we know that the Foundation of God, his only Covenant, ſtandeth firm and ſure, having a Seal annex'd to it, (as uſually Contracts have, whereby two Parties do oblige themſelves mutually to each other) which Seal on God's Part has this Impreſs or Inſcription, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; and on our Part is written, *Let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST depart from iniquity.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Covenant of God made with us in Chriſt Jeſus, is a firm and ſure Foundation to build our Hopes of Perſeverance and Eternal Life upon; *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure.* Learn (2.) That the Covenant (according to the Nature of all Covenants) is conditional; on God's Part promiſing Aſſiſtance, Acceptance, and Rewards; on our Part, a departing from all Iniquity, and an Obligation to the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs. All that make a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity ought to take eſpecial Care that their Lives may anſwer their Light, their Practices correſpond with their Profeſſion, Chriſtianity being not a ſpeculative Science, but a practical Art of Holy Living.

20 But in a great houſe, there are not only veſſels of gold, and of ſilver, but alſo of wood, and of earth, and ſome to honour and ſome to diſhonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſters uſe, *and* prepared unto every good work.

Our Apoſtle had told us at Verſe 17 and 18, of certain Hereticks, ſuch as *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, whoſe Doctrines did eat like a Canker or a Gangreen, he tells us here, that it is not to be wonder'd at that there ſhould be ſuch Perſons in the Church, becauſe the viſible Church is God's great Houſe: Now it is no uncommon thing in great Mens Houſes, to have Veſſels of all ſorts, ſome of Wood and Earth, others of Gold and Silver, ſome to honourable Uſes, and others to diſhonourable. In like manner it is in the Church of Chriſt, there will be a number of Orthodox and alſo of Heterodox Chriſtians, Hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians. He adviſes *Timothy* therefore, not to be ſcandalized at them, but to purge himſelf from them, to keep himſelf pure from Hereſy and Impiety, hereby he would manifeſt himſelf to be a Veſſel unto Honour, *ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe*; that is, for the Service and Glory of God, and diſpoſed for every good Work. Learn hence, That all Chriſtians, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt, ought to be like the Conſecrated Veſſels of the Temple, dedicated and ſet apart for our Lord's eſpecial Uſe and Service; we are not only with other Chriſtians dedicated by Baptiſm, but conſecrated at our ſolemn Ordination, ſo that there is a Sacredneſs upon our Perſons, and to proſtitute our ſelves to any Luſt, is a greater Prophanation than *Belſhazzar* was guilty of, when he deſecrated the Holy Veſſels of the Temple.

22 Flee alſo youthful luſts: but follow righteouſneſs, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in his holy cautionary Directions to *Timothy* what to avoid, and what to follow; he adviſes him (1.) To avoid and *flee youthful luſts*; by which may be underſtood not only the Luſts of the Fleſh, but alſo the Luſts and Vices of the Mind, as Ambition and Pride, Vainglory and Oſtentation. Where *Note*, That the Fleſh, with its Affections and Luſts, are ſuch dangerous Enemies to our Holineſs and Salvation, that the Holieſt of Miniſters and beſt of Men have need, very great need to be warned of them, and cautioned againſt them: *Flee* thou, O Timothy, *alſo youthful luſts.* (2.) He adviſes alſo *Timothy* to avoid *fooliſh and unlearned queſtions*, that is, Controverſies and Diſputes, knowing that ſuch Contentious Wranglings do but engender Strife; it is not unworthy our Obſervation, that no leſs than four times in theſe two Epiſtles do we meet with this Precept from the Apoſtle, to avoid theſe Queſtions and Diſputes, and to apply to that which is practical, ſhewing of what great Importance it is ſo to do; and we ſhall meet with it again in the Epiſtle to *Titus*, chap. 3. 9. From whence learn, That Diſputes about Matters which only ſerve to beget Strife and Contention, but tend little to Edification in Faith and Holineſs, are vain talking, unprofitable Diſputes, and as ſuch to be avoided. *Obſerve* next, He directs *Timothy* what to follow, having ſhewn him what to avoid; namely, to follow after Righteouſneſs and Faith, Peace and Charity with all Perſons, but eſpecially with all our Brethren and Fellow Chriſtians, calling on the ſame Lord, and profeſſing the ſame Faith with us. Where *Note*, That we ought to have Charity for to maintain Peace with, and by no means to ſeparate from our Communion any Perſon who ſerves Chriſt with a pure Heart; *Follow*, ſays our Apoſtle, *charity and peace, with* all thoſe *that call on the Lord Jeſus out of a pure heart.*

24 And the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

By the Servant of the Lord here we are to underſtand all theſe Biſhops and Governours, the Paſtors and Teachers of the Church; by not ſtriving, that they are not to irritate and provoke ſuch as diſſent and differ from them; not to ſtrive indecently with the Tongue, but by ſoft and gentle Words, by cloſe and hard Arguments endeavour to convince their Judgment, for no Man that is in an Error thinks that he is ſo; therefore if we go about by Violence to rend Mens Opinions from them, they will but hold them ſo much the faſter; but if we have but ſo much Patience and Charity as to unrip their Errors by degrees, they will at laſt fall in pieces of themſelves, *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all, and patient*; it follows farther, *in meekneſs inſtructing,* ------ *if God peradventure,* ---- where *Note*, (1.) The Duty directed to, and that is without Bitterneſs and Paſſion; but with great Lenity and Meekneſs, to inſtruct the erroneous, even when they oppoſe the Truth, ſuch eſpecially as do it out of Ignorance, and for want of better Information, are particularly to be pitied, and patiently born with, together with thoſe who labour under the Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions of a contrary Education; *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe* ---- *Note* (2.) The Benefit hoped for, and the Advantage to be expected by ſuch meek and gentle Methods of Inſtruction, as are here directed to; (1.) That Almighty God may peradventure give them Repentance, bleſſing ſuch prudential and pious Means for their Converſion from Error and Seduction; and (2.) That they may be recovered out of Satan's Snares and Temptations, they being at preſent captivated by him according to his Will. Learn (1.) That if erroneous and miſled Perſons will not hear gentle teaching, much leſs will they yield to ſharp Invectives, or provoking Diſputes. Yet (2.) Diſputations wiſely managed, like defenſive Wars, are both uſeful and neceſſary in defence of the Truth, tho' they do not bring over Gain-ſayers. Learn (3.) That till erroneous and miſled Perſons can be brought by Conſideration to be Agents in recovering themſelves, no teaching or diſputing will be ſufficient and effectual to recover them; *That they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him.* Laſtly, Error is the Devil's Snare as well as Sin: Error is as dangerous as Vice, the one is an open Road, the other a By-path to Hell and Deſtruction; conſequently ſuch a Chriſtian as has a due regard to, and value for his own Salvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous Principles as of debauch'd Practices; *That they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle having, in the two foregoing Chapters, forewarned Timothy *of thoſe dangerous Hereticks, and falſe Teachers, which were then ariſing and creeping into the Church, he comes now, by a Prophetical Inſtinct, to foretel of greater Evils and Miſchiefs which ſhould certainly ariſe towards the end of the World, which he calls the laſt Days, and perilous Times. The Prophetical Prediction runs thus.*

THIS alſo know, that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, O my Son *Timothy*, be not thou diſcourag'd, neither let any of thy Succeſſors be diſmay'd at the Sects and Schiſms, at the Hereſies and Blaſphemies, at the Vice and Impiety which will be found in and among Perſons in the laſt Days, when certainly know, that perilous Times ſhall come; where, by the the *laſt days*, underſtand all the Times from Chriſt's firſt coming in the Fleſh to his ſecond coming to Judgment; in the beginning of which Times ſeveral ſorts of Perſons, yea ſeveral Sects and Parties of Men aroſe, to whom the following Characters did belong; namely, Proud, Covetous, Boaſters, and the like. As the Judaizing Teachers, who urged the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law; alſo the *Gnoſticks* and Followers of *Simon Magus* have theſe Characters applied to them in thoſe early Days, and it were well if the Church of *Rome*, in theſe latter Days, could clear herſelf of theſe Characters which are found upon her, as the Marks and Badges of an Apoſtate Church. Learn hence, (1.) That the Days we now live in are the laſt Days, and our Times the laſt Times. (2.) That the laſt Times are, and will be the worſt Times, *perilous Times*, full of Sin, and full of Trouble: Old Age is the Dregs of Life, the World draws upon its Lees, the Dregs are apparent, *in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come.*

2 For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe-accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God;

Here our Apoſtle reckons up the ſeveral Sins which would abound in theſe laſt Days, and make the Times perilous; Perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity ſhall appear inordinate Self-lovers, inſatiably covetous, vain-glorious Boaſters, proud Deſpiſers of others, Blaſphemers of God and Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit, by denying the Preſcience and Fore-knowledge of the former, the Divinity and Godhead of the latter. Learn hence, That Sins, eſpecially great Sins, ſeldom go ſingle and alone, but commonly generate and beget one another. Thus here, Self-love begets Covetouſneſs, Covetouſneſs Pride, and Pride Blaſphemy; thus Men fall from one Sin to another, and proceed from one Degree of Wickedneſs to another.

5 Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof: from ſuch turn away.

This is the laſt, but not the leaſt Sin of the perilous Times: The Apoſtle, (1.) tells us what theſe Men have, a Form of Godlineſs, that is, a vain empty Shew of Piety and Religion, which diſcovers itſelf in external Devotion, in a Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, in an external Shew of Mortification, in a great Zeal for ſome particular Party, or private Opinion. (2.) What they want, the Power of Godlineſs, that is, the Truth and Sincerity of it, conſiſting in true Love to God and our Neighbour. (3.) The Apoſtle directs us as to our Behaviour towards ſuch Men, *from theſe turn away.* Learn hence, (1.) That a Perſon may go far, and advance high in an External Profeſſion of Piety and Religion, and yet have no more than a Form of Godlineſs. (2.) That notwithſtanding this, there is ſuch a thing as the internal and inward Power of Godlineſs and Religion, which few maintain, but moſt deny. Learn, (3.) That Chriſtians muſt ſhun Familiarity with ſuch as have the Brand of the foregoing infamous Sins upon them, and not hold Correſpondency with ſuch as are the avowed Enemies of Chriſt and his Kingdom.

6 For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts. 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle renders a Reaſon why we ſhould turn away from the forementioned Sins and Sinners; namely, becauſe theſe Heretical and falſe Teachers before characterized, are of an inſinuating Temper, they vent not their Errors openly, but in Corners; they creep into Houſes, and there they ſet upon Women with their Temptations, who have leſs Ability to detect them; and firſt upon Women that they may better win their Huſbands over to compliance with them, and upon ſilly Women, and ſuch as were laden with Sin, and led away with divers Luſts; they make a Prey of ſuch Women as are weak in their Intellectuals, and corrupt and wicked in their Morals (which) Women always pretend to be learning, but never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and conſequently are an eaſy Prey to Seducers, and very capable receptive Objects for ſuch Deceivers to draw away. Learn hence, That Seducers obſerve a Method in ſeducing: they begin with Women, weak Women, and uſually wicked and looſe Women; carefully ought that Sex to reſolve and ſhun converſing and diſputing with them.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Jannes and *Jambres* were two famous Magicians in *Egypt*, who withſtood *Moſes* when he was working Miracles before *Pharaoh*, to hinder him from believing; their Names are not mentioned in Scripture, but taken by St. *Paul* either from publick Tradition, or from ſome Ancient *Jewiſh* Records. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, as theſe Magicians reſiſted *Moſes*, ſo theſe Heretical Seducers reſiſt the Truth, making a violent and rancorous Oppoſition againſt it. Thence learn, That there have been falſe Teachers in all Ages, who have with Vehemency oppoſed the Truth and the Profeſſors of it: Neither the Members nor Miniſters of Chriſt ſhall ever want Enemies to war with, whilſt the Seed of the Serpent remains in the World, *Obſerve*, (2.) The Character of theſe Men who reſiſt the Truth, they are *Men of corrupt Minds, and reprobate concerning the Faith*; they have loſt all ſound Judgment, and made Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience. A corrupt Head, a corrupt Heart, and a vicious Life uſually attend and accompany one another; looſe Principles diſpoſe Men to looſe and licentious Practices, ſuch as are *Latitudinarians* in Opinion, are oftentimes alſo in Practice too. An Heretical Head and an upright Heart are incompatible; a good Conſcience and true Faith, like *Hypocrates* Twins, live and die together.

9 But they ſhall proceed no further: for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all *men*, as theirs alſo was.

Here our Apoſtle encourages *Timothy*, and in him all the ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel, to the End of the World, againſt all the Diſcouragements, which either he or they might meet with from the Impoſtors and Seducers of the Times, by aſſuring them of the Iſſue and Event of theſe Trials, firſt that God will put a Bar in their way, *they ſhall proceed no further* in their Hypocritical and Jugling Practices. Learn thence, That Hereticks and Seducers are limited and bounded by God: They cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. Secondly, That God would make their Folly and Madneſs manifeſt to their own Confuſion: their Folly ſhall be diſcovered and then abhorred, as was the Folly and Madneſs of *Jannes* and *Jambres*. Learn, That God will, in his own time, by the Preaching of the Word, diſcover falſe Teachers and their Deluſions to the World.

10 But thou haſt fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience, 11 Perſecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra; what Perſecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution.

A ſpecial Means is here propounded how *Timothy* and his Succeſſors may be preſerved from the Seduction of falſe Teachers, namely, by ſetting before themſelves the Example of the great Apoſtle St. *Paul*; we are more eaſily led by Preſidents than by Precepts, therefore the Apoſtle propounds his own Example as a Pattern? *Thou haſt fully known my Doctrine*, my *manner of Life*, and Converſation, my *Purpoſe* to adhere to, my *Faith* in Chriſt, my *Long-ſuffering* and *Patience* in undergoing Perſecutions for him at *Antioch* at *Iconium*, at *Lyſtra*, and how God was graciouſly pleaſed to deliver me out of all. Learn hence, (1.) That younger Miniſters ought eſpecially to obſerve the Doctrine and Converſation of the Elder, the pious way and walking of the graver Miniſters, and muſt follow them. Aged *Paul* propounds his Virtues to young *Timothy* for Imitation; *Thou haſt fully known my Doctrine and manner of Life*, my Doctrine to be ſound and ſincere, my Life to be holy and unblameable. Learn, (2.) That it is both lawful and laudable at ſome times, and upon ſome occaſions to mention both the Graces which God hath wrought in us, and alſo the Sufferings and Perſecutions which we endure and undergo for him, *Thou knoweſt what Perſecutions I endured at Antioch, Iconium, and Lyſtra.* Learn, (3.) That always Oppoſition and often Perſecution attends the Preaching of the Goſpel where-ever it goes. St. *Paul* went to *Antioch*, from *Antioch* to *Iconium*, from *Iconium* to *Lyſtra*, preaching the Goſpel; but Perſecution followed him hard at the Heels where-ever he went; but obſerve how the Goodneſs of God accompanied him too, *out of them all the Lord delivered me*; not only our Dangers but our Deliverances alſo muſt be recorded and obſerved. *Obſerve* farther, How the Apoſtle argues from his own Perſecutions in particular to all the Godlies Perſecution in general, *yea, all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*; mark, not this or that godly Man, but *All*, every one without Exception; the better the Man the ſooner perſecuted; the Devil ſhoots his Arrows at the whiteſt and faireſt Mark: Again, all that *will*, he doth not ſay all that *wiſh* well to Godlineſs; but all that *will*, all that are abſolutely reſolved ſo to do: And farther, if he will *live*, if he can or will keep his Godlineſs in his Heart, and not diſcover it in his Life, he may eſcape Hatred and Perſecution; but if he will live religiouſly, let him look for Perſecution. *Obſerve* farther, It's ſaid, *He that will live godly*, not living civilly but living godly, expoſes to the World's Scorn and Hatred: In a Word, his Godlineſs *in Chriſt Jeſus*, that is, ſuch Godlineſs as is exerted in the Vertue, Strength, and Power of Chriſt Jeſus particularly. Godlineſs in Chriſt Jeſus is real and true Godlineſs; 'tis exact Godlineſs, 'tis an active Godlineſs, 'tis a prevailing Godlineſs, 'tis a World-condemning Godlineſs, ſuch Godlineſs cannot eſcape the World's Hatred. Learn, That all thoſe that ſhew forth the Power of Religion in an Holy Converſation, muſt certainly look for Perſecution.

13 But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.

Our Apoſtle having acquainted us in the former Verſe with the Condition of the Godly, that they muſt expect and prepare for Perſecution; he lets us in this Verſe underſtand the miſerable condition of the Wicked, that they *wax worſe and worſe*; their Proficiency is meer Apoſtacy, they actively deceive others, and are paſſively deceived themſelves, by the Devil that lying Spirit, that grand Impoſtor. Learn hence, That the proſperous Eſtate of wicked Men is much more dangerous and miſerable than the afflicted and perſecuted Condition of the godly; the good by Perſecution grow better, but the wicked by living at eaſe *wax worſe and worſe*.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned, and haſt been aſſured of, knowing of whom thou haſt learned *them*. 15 And that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

Several Arguments are here made uſe of by St. *Paul*, to preſs *Timothy* to the Duty of Perſeverance in the Doctrine of Chriſt, contained in the Holy Scriptures; the firſt is drawn from the Authority of the Perſon from whom he had received that Doctrine, to wit, St. *Paul* himſelf, an inſpired Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt; Continue in the things which thou haſt learned; that is, from me, and by me, as an authorized Apoſtle. All the Servants of God, but eſpecially the Miniſters of God, muſt continue conſtant in the Faith and ſtedfaſt in the Truth received. The ſecond Argument for *Timothy*'s adhering to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, is drawn from his long Acquaintauce with the Scriptures, even from his Childhood, yea from his Infancy, *from a Child thou haſt known the holy Scriptures*, &c. And the Argument lies thus, Thou, *O Timothy*, haſt learnt the Scriptures from thy Infancy; now what a Shame would it be for thee, who haſt been taught ſo early the true Religion, to turn from it and forſake it; from a Child thou haſt known the Holy Scriptures from a Suckling, as the Word ſignifies: From whence learn, That it is the Duty of Parents to inſtruct their Children betimes in the holy and good Word of God; we read before of the Care that *Timothy*'s Mother and Grandmother took in that matter. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Title given to the Word of God, the *Holy Scriptures*; they are holy in their Author, holy in their Matter, holy in their Penmen, holy in their End, and Deſign, which is to make us holy, *John* 17. 17. The Word of God is not only pure but purifying, not only clean but cleanſing. *Obſerve*, (3.) The high Commendation given of the Word, *it is able to make thee wiſe unto Salvation*; no Knowledge can bring us to Salvation without the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; the Philoſophers will teach you moral Wiſdom, but not a Word of Salvation by a Redeemer, without whom our Salvation is impoſſible; therefore it is here added, ---- *wiſe unto Salvation through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*. Learn thence, That the holy Scriptures, though they inſtruct us in the way of Salvation, yet cannot ſave us without Faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

16 All ſcripture *is* given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.

Our Apoſtle cloſes the Chapter with an Exhortation to *Timothy* to perſevere in his Study of the Holy Scriptures, by an Argument drawn (1.) from the Dignity and Authority of the Scriptures; (2.) from the Utility; (3.) from their Perfection. (1.) From their Dignity and Authority, *they are given by Inſpiration of God*; that is, they are not the Contrivance of any Man's Wit and Fancy, but a Revelation of the Mind and Will of God; and thoſe that wrote them were excited to it, and aſſiſted in it by the Spirit of God: No part of Scripture had either Angels or Men for its Author, but every part of Scripture is divinely inſpired or breathed by God both for Matter and Order, Style and Words. A ſecond Argument is drawn from the Utility and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; they are *profitable for Doctrine and Inſtruction*, teaching us what to know and believe in order to Salvation, concerning God and Chriſt and our ſelves, *&c. for Reproof* of Error and Confutation of falſe Doctrine, *for Correction* of Sin and evil Manners, *for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs*, directing us how to lead a righteous and holy Life according to the Will of God. A third Argument is taken from the Perfection of them, they are able to make *the Man of God perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works*; that is, to make the Miniſters of Chriſt compleat in Knowledge, Faith, and Holineſs, every way fitted for their Work and Duty, as Chriſtians, and as Miniſters. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, and not of the New, muſt be the Scriptures here intended, they being the only Scriptures which *Timothy* had known from a Child; that was before the Scriptures of the New Teſtament were written. *Obſerve*, (2.) That the Apoſtle doth not ſay that theſe Scriptures were of themſelves ſufficient to make *Timothy* wiſe unto Salvation, but only that with Faith in Chriſt Jeſus they were ſufficient for that End; much more then muſt the Scriptures both of Old and New Teſtament together, when accompanied with Faith in Chriſt Jeſus be ſufficient for that End. *Obſerve*, (3.) That the Scriptures are a perfect, plain, and ſufficient Rule in all things neceſſary to Salvation: (1.) They are a perfect Rule, becauſe the Writers of them were divinely inſpired, and conſequently their Writings are infallible: (2.) They are a plain Rule, otherwiſe they would be no Rule at all, of no more uſe to direct our Faith and Practice than a Sun-Dial in a dark Room is to tell us the Hour of the Day: A Rule that is not plain, whatever it may be in itſelf, is of no uſe to us till it be made plain: (3.) They are a ſufficient Rule, they are able to make the Man of God *perfect* and wiſe to Salvation. Here the Church of *Rome* diſtinguiſhes and ſays, the Scriptures are ſufficient to Salvation, but not to Inſtruction; to whom one of the Martyrs reply'd, *If ſo, God ſend me the Salvation, and you the Inſtruction.* It is conceived by ſome that this was the laſt Epiſtle that ever St. *Paul* wrote; if ſo, this is the laſt Charge that ever he gave, and concerns us the more to attend the Solemnity of it. The Chapter before us is St. *Paul*'s *Cygnea Cantio*, his laſt and ſweeteſt Song; by a Spiritual Sagacity he ſaw his End approaching, and the time of his Martyrdom to be at hand, he therefore like a dying Man adjures *Timothy* in a moſt awful and tremendous manner, to preach the Word with all Diligence and Care, which he had ſo highly extoll'd in the foregoing Chapter, as being able to make all Perſons wiſe unto Salvation.

CHAP. IV.

I Charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: 2 Preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine.

Obſerve here, (1.) a moſt ſolemn Adjuration and Charge given, *I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the Judge of quick and dead. Lord! What Opiate can ſtupify the Conſcience of a Miniſter, that he ſhall not feel the awful Authority of ſuch a Charge, or not to be awakened by ſuch ardent Expreſſions? How can they appear before the moſt high and everlaſting Judge? What will be a ſufficient Defence before his enlightned Tribunal? If ſuch in the laſt Judgment, who neglected to feed the Poor with material Bread, ſhall be placed at Chriſt's left Hand; how can thoſe whoſe Office it is to diſpenſe ſpiritual Bread, if they neglect to do it, eſcape Condemnation? *Obſerve*, (2.) The ſubject Matter of

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Charge, to *preach* according to Chriſt's Commiſſion, *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go preach and baptize*; to preach *the Word*, not the Fancies and Inventions of Men, but the wholeſome Word of God, and the whole Word of God, both Law and Goſpel; the one to keep Men from Preſumption, the other from Deſpair, to be *inſtant* and active, urgent and zealous in the Diſcharge of this Duty, in all the parts of it, in Inſtruction, Reprehenſion, and Exhortation; and this *with all Long-ſuffering*, Patience, and Lenity, undergoing meekly the Contradiction of Sinners, and the Reproaches of Men: And for the Time, to do it *in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*, that is, to take all Occaſions, and be thankful to God for all Opportunities of Preaching his Word: The Lazy may find a thouſand Excuſes, but willing Minds know no Difficulties, they conſider the Price paid for Souls, and the Account that muſt be given of them. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Perſon to whom this Charge is given, to *Timothy*, an ordained Perſon, one ſet apart for the Work: This is not a Work common to all, but peculiar to ſome; God's *Timothy*'s only, who are called and ſet apart by Impoſition of Hands for the Work of the Miniſtry, muſt preach the Word; and ſuch ought to take all Occaſions, and very inſtant in ſo doing, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. *neceſſity is laid upon us, yea, wo be unto us if we preach not the Goſpel.*

3 For the time will come when they will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts, ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears. 4 And they ſhall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and ſhall be turned unto fables.

Here we have the Reaſon of our Apoſtle's ſolemn Adjuration in the foregoing Verſes, by which he ſtirs up *Timothy* to a careful Diſcharge of his Duty, namely, in regard of the Apoſtacy of the Times, in which many would grow weary of ſound Doctrine, and follow Fables. Here *Note*, (1.) The Ground of this Apoſtacy, Mens Hatred of the Truth, *they will not endure ſound Doctrine*; that is, they will reject and abhor it, they love their Luſts above God's Law, and will not endure to hear it. A ſecond Ground of their Apoſtacy is a Delight in falſe Teachers, *they heap up to themſelves* ſuch as will claw their itching Ears, and gratify their wanton Deſires, and in no wiſe diſturb their Luſts. Thirdly, Here is the doleful Iſſue and dreadful Conſequent of this their malicious Contempt of the Truth, *They ſhall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and be turned unto Fables*, that is, ſay ſome, to the fabulous Divinity of the *Gnoſticks*, made up of *Gentiliſm* and *Judaiſm:* The fabulous Traditions of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, ſay others. Learn hence, (1.) That Chriſtian Doctrine is ſound Doctrine, wholeſome Words. (2.) Unſound Perſons cannot endure ſound Doctrine, ſore Eyes cannot abide the Light. (3.) That in the Laſt Days there will be many Falſe Teachers to claw and gratify itching Ears. (4.) That the more Falſe Teachers do abound, the more careful and induſtrious ſhould the Miniſters of Chriſt be, to oppoſe them by preaching ſound Doctrine.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangeliſt, make full proof of thy miniſtry.

Behold here a Fourfold Duty preſt upon *Timothy.* (1.) Watchfulneſs, *watch thou in all things*: as if he had ſaid, falſe Teachers will beſet you round on every ſide, therefore guard and watch every where. (2.) Courage, *endure Afflictions*; he that fears the Frowns of Men can never diſcharge his Duty faithfully to God. (3.) Fidelity, *do the Work of an Evangeliſt*, which was an extraordinary, and therefore but a temporary Office to aſſiſt the Apoſtles in preaching and publiſhing the Goſpel from Place to Place; they water'd what the Apoſtles planted. (4.) Sincerity, *make full Proof of thy Miniſtry*; ſo fulfil all the Parts of it, that none may charge thee with the neglect of any part of thy Duty: Let the World ſee that thou makeſt it thine own and only Work to win Souls. Learn hence, (1.) That the Apoſtacy and Looſneſs of the Times we live in, muſt oblige all Perſons, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt to watch; who ſhould watch if not the Watchmen? Learn, (2.) That Miniſters of all Men need Courage, they muſt inure themſelves to endure Hardſhip, and expect hard Words, hard Dealings, nick Names, and all kind of Reproaches, and theſe muſt be endured with Patience, with Courage, and with Conſtancy. Learn, (3.) That Miniſters muſt make full Proof of their Miniſtry; that is, muſt fully and faithfully diſcharge all the Duties of their Calling, not do their Duties by halves; but accompliſh all the Parts of their Miniſtry, ſtrengthening the weak, comforting the afflicted, reducing the wandring, and adorning their Doctrine by a pure and unblameable Converſation. This is to fulfil our Miniſtry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finiſht my courſe, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing.

Our Apoſtle being now come almoſt to the end of his Chriſtian and Miniſterial Race, he firſt looks downward into his Grave with Comfort, *v. 6.* and ſees his Death a pleaſing Sacrifice to God, and a ſweet Departure to him, *I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*; next he looks backward, and reflects upon his well-ſpent Life with Joy, *I have fought the good Fight, I have finiſhed my courſe*, v. 7. Laſt of all he looks upward, and there ſees Heaven prepared for him, v. 8. *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.* *Obſerve*, (1.) St. *Paul*'s Intimation of his Death, *I am ready to be offered* up, a Sacrifical Word; I am ready to be poured out as a Drink-Offering; my Death will be a ſweet Sacrifice to God, my Blood being ſhed for Chriſt, as the Wine was poured out on the Meat-Offering. Learn hence, That the Death of God's Miniſters, eſpecially of ſuch as die Martyrs, is a moſt pleaſing Sacrifice unto God; precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of all, but eſpecially of ſuch Saints. *Obſerve*, (2.) St. *Paul*'s Narration of his Life, *I have fought, I have finiſht*, &c. The Words run in Figures taken from the *Olympick* Games, where was Combating, Wreſtling, Running, according to the Laws of the Games, and Judges appointed to declare the Victories, and to give them the Prize a Crown of Garlands, The firſt Metaphor is taken from a Soldier, a Combatant, a Champion, *I have fought a good Fight.* Learn, Every ſincere Chriſtian, but eſpecially every faithful Miniſter, is a Spiritual Soldier; their Enemies are Spiritual, their Weapons Spiritual, their Warfare Spiritual, their Victory Spiritual; they muſt be Men of Courage, Men of Conduct, Men that can endure Hardſhip, Men of Unity and Activity among themſelves. The ſecond Metaphor is taken from a ſtrenuous Runner, *I have finiſht my courſe*, I am come to the Period of my Days, and to the End of my Race; alluding perhaps to his courſe of Life after his Converſion, which was wholly ſpent in running from Place to Place to preach the Goſpel: And now he was come to the laſt Stage or Goal at *Rome*, where he was to receive his Garland, his Crown of Martyrdom. Learn hence, A Chriſtian's Life is a Race, which he muſt not only chearfully begin, but perſeveringly finiſh, ſo ſays the Apoſtle here, I *Paul* the Aged have fought the good Fight. *&c.* have not only begun, but finiſht my Courſe. Oh what a Comfort is it to be an old Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt! St. *Paul* is now reckoned to be 61 Years of Age when he ſuffered Martyrdom; he run his Race patiently, chearfully, reſervedly, and perſeveringly. The third Metaphor is taken from Depoſitaries, who faithfully keep things committed to their Truſt without Embezzlement: This *Depoſitum*, the Chriſtian Faith, St. *Paul* had kept, *I have kept the Faith*; he kept firſt the Grace of Faith, ſecondly, the Doctrine of Faith inviolable, endeavouring to tranſmit it down to Poſterity in deſpight of the Legal *Jew* or the Prophane *Gentile.* *Obſerve*, (3.) St. *Paul*'s Expectation of his Reward, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, &c. Here *Note*, The Reward is a *Crown of Righteouſneſs*, becauſe given only to righteous Men; the Perſon rewarding, *Chriſt*, the righteous Judge; the Perſon rewarded, *me*, St. *Paul* himſelf, and all the faithful that love Chriſt's appearing. The Certainty of the Reward, *'tis laid up*, reſerved and kept ſafe, as an Inheritance for a Child; the Time of the Reward, *in that Day*, the great Day of the Lord, when he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead. Learn hence, (1.) That the Reward which God has in hand for his faithful Servants, is no leſs than a Crown of Glory. (2.) That the time when this Reward ſhall be fully and finally diſpenis the great Day. (3.) It is the Property of the Godly to look, love, and long for that Day.

9 Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me. 10 For Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world, and is departed unto Theſſalonica: Creſcens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry. 12 And Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus.

Our Apoſtle comes now in this ſecond part of the Chapter to treat of ſome private and perſonal Affairs: And firſt he deſires *Timothy* to come ſpeedily to him, having a great Deſire to ſee him, and be comforted by him before he died: The ſtrongeſt of Chriſtians may ſometimes be helped by the weaker; a *Paul* may ſtand in need of a *Timothy*, there is not a Member in the Body, but is ſome way ſerviceable to the Head. Secondly, he aſſigns a Reaſon why he did thus deſire *Timothy*'s Preſence, becauſe of *Demas* and others Abſence; *Demas had forſaken him, having loved this preſent World.* The beſt may ſometimes be forſaken by their Boſom Friends; *Demas* was ſuch to St. *Paul*, yet left him; for what Cauſe? For the Love of the World: This when it grows inordinate, will cauſe a Man firſt to forſake his Friend, and then his God. Thirdly, *Creſcens* was gone to *Galatia*, *Titus* to *Dalmatia*, *Tychicus* to *Epheſus*; All of them no doubt to ſpread the Goſpel, to plant or water the Churches. Good Men will be doing good where-ever they are, where-ever they come or go. *Only Luke* was with him, nothing could ſeparate that good Man from him; a faithful Friend loveth at all times, yet Friendſhip (*ollæ amicitia*) will vaniſh in Adverſity, but true Chriſtian Friendſhip is perpetual, the Foundation of it is Eternal: Laſtly, he deſires *Timothy* to bring *Mark* with him, not for Reſt or Recreation, becauſe he wanted a Companion for his Diverſion; no, but to aſſiſt him in his Work, bring *Mark*, for he is profitable to me for the Miniſtry. 'Tis happy when the Miniſters of God affect the Company, and deſire the Preſence of each other, for Spiritual ends and Religious Purpoſes.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comeſt, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* eſpecially the parchments.

St. *Paul* having deſired *Timothy*'s Company at *Rome*, requeſts him to bring with him ſuch things as he wanted, and ſtood in preſent need of; (1.) His Cloke; probably a Garment which in the Winter Seaſon he might want the Warmth and Benefit of, eſpecially being in a cold Priſon. So long as we are upon Earth, a prudential Care muſt be taken to preſerve our Health; when Winter approached St. *Paul* ſent for his Winter Garment to keep him warm; the Body is the Soul's Organ or Inſtrument by which it acts, therefore we muſt do what in us lieth to keep it in tune for the Service of the Soul. (2.) His *Books*, probably the Books of the Old-Teſtament, certainly no profane Books; he had no leiſure for, nor liking to any ſuch. (3.) *But eſpecially the Parchments*, theſe are thought to be Note-Books of his own collecting, in which he had written ſeveral things for the Help of his Memory, and the Benefit of the Church. Behold here, (1.) an eminent Pattern of pious Studiouſneſs in St. *Paul*; here was an Aged Man, an Aged Miniſter that had already read much; a Priſoner, no very proper place for Study, were Priſons then fill'd with ſuch Brutes as generally now; nay a dying Priſoner, one that look'd for Death and Beheading every Day; yet old *Paul*, dying *Paul*, cannot live without his Books, he muſt ſtill be reading, learning, ſtudying the Scriptures eſpecially, which are ſuch a vaſt Deep as the Line of an Apoſtle could not fathom; behold, I ſay, a Pattern for ſuch Miniſters as think they know enough, have ſtudied enough, and are too old to learn; ſo was not our Apoſtle, when within a few Months of his Death. (2.) Behold here an eminent Pattern of pious Humility in *Timothy*, if *Biſhop* of *Epheſus* now, as ſome affirm, if only a Miniſter of a particular Church, as others affirm, yet was he undoubtedly a very humble Perſon, otherwiſe St. *Paul* had not deſired, and *Timothy* had certainly diſdained to carry this Luggage with him to *Rome*. Pride would have ſtoopt to nothing of this, but thrown all to the Dunghil, whereas true Humility diſpoſes a Man, eſpecially a Miniſter of Chriſt, to become all things to all Men.

14 Alexander the copper-ſmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works. 15 Of whom be thou ware alſo; for he hath greatly withſtood our words.

Here our Apoſtle (1.) complains of the Injuries and Oppoſitions, which he had met with from *Alexander the Copper-ſmith*, who was before a great Profeſſor, but now become a grievous Perſecutor; he made Shipwrack of the Faith, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. of which he did before profeſs; nay, it's thought this Man, *Acts* 19. 33. was near Martyrdom, yet afterwards an Oppoſer of the Truth: The beſt things corrupted become worſt, the ſweeteſt Wine makes the ſharpeſt Vinegar. Be not offended then, if at any time you ſee Profeſſors turn Blaſphemers, nay Preachers themſelves turn Perſecutors. *Obſerve*, (2.) An Apoſtolical Prediction rather than a dreadful Imprecation paſt upon *Alexander*, *The Lord reward him according to his Works.* The Lord ſhall reward him according to his Works; the Apoſtle by a Prophetick Spirit ſaw what was coming upon him, and foretels his Doom. Imprecations againſt the Enemies of the Church, if lawful, yet muſt be very cautiouſly and very rarely uſed; what we find in Scripture looking like ſuch, are rather to be accounted Predictions than Imprecations. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Caution given to *Timothy* to ſhun him, *Of whom be thou aware alſo*, for he is an Oppoſer of the Truth: Wicked Men do not ſo much oppoſe the Miniſters as the Miniſtry, not ſo much oppoſe Preachers as Preaching; 'tis the Light of Truth which evil Doers hate, becauſe it has a ſearching, diſcovering, and condemning Power. St. *Paul* doth not complain of *Alexander*'s Unkindneſs towards him, but of his malicious reſiſting the Truth, and hindring the Prayers of the Goſpel, *He hath greatly withſtood our Words.*

16 At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but all men forſook me, *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

Our Apoſtle here complains of the Timerouſneſs of weak Chriſtians in their Carriage towards him; at his firſt appearing before *Nero* the Emperor of *Rome*, or ſome of his Officers, they deſerted him, they all deſerted him, very few durſt own him: But this was out of Weakneſs and Timerouſneſs, not out of Maliciouſneſs, as *Alexander* in the former Verſe; therefore St. *Paul* prays for them, that God would not lay it to their Charge, but pity and pardon their Infirmity. Learn hence, How hard will it go with the holieſt of Saints; if God ſhould lay but one Sin, tho' a Sin of Infirmity, to their Charge, it would ſink them to the loweſt Hell. Lord! how ſad muſt it then be to have the Sins of a wicked Man's whole Life charg'd upon him? Learn, (2.) That the holieſt Servants of God in a ſuffering Hour may and muſt expect to be left alone, forſaken of all their Friends, none daring to open their Mouth, and ſpeak a Word for them: The Apoſtle met with it here, and a greater than he before him; when Chriſt was apprehended, all the Diſciples forſook him and fled.

17 Notwithſtanding, the Lord ſtood with me, and ſtrengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

That is, Though Man forſook me, God ſtood by me; the Lord Jeſus ſtrengthened me, that by me thus ſtanding up in the Defence of the Goſpel, the preaching of it might be fully known, and that all the *Gentiles* might hear the Defence of it; and thus for that time I was delivered out of *Nero's* Hands, that bloody Lion's Mouth. Learn, (1.) That whilſt God has any further Work for his Servants to do, he will aſſiſt and ſuſtain them in deſpite of all Oppoſition and Diſcouragements whatſoever; though *Nero* roar, and Perſecutors rage, and Friends deſert, yet God will ſtand by, God will deliver till his faithful Servants have finiſh'd their Work, *the Lord ſtood by me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion*, ſays the Holy Apoſtle. See here the certain Character of the Church's Enemies, they are Lions, Lions for Power, Lions for Policy, Lions for Terror, Lions for Cruelty; God ſometimes delivers his People, and ſaves them from, ſometimes ſuffers his deareſt Children to fall into the Paws, yea, the Mouths of theſe devouring Lions.

18 And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work, and will preſerve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Mark, He doth not ſay, the Lord will deliver me from every Evil Worker, but *from every evil work*; tho' he doth not ſave me from my Temporal Enemies, bleſſed be God my Spiritual Enemies ſhall never hurt me, neither Sin nor Satan. Lord! it is a far greater Favour to be preſerved from Sin, than from any Temporal Affliction that can befal us, yea, than from Death itſelf; *the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*; yea farther, *he will preſerve me to his heavenly kingdom*. God has a Kingdom, an heavenly Kingdom for all his Saints, his Suffering Saints eſpecially; it is prepared for them, they are preparing for it, and they ſhall be put into the Poſſeſſion of it in due time. ----- He cloſes with a Doxology there, *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* As God has prepared an Eternal Kingdom for his Saints, ſo they deſire that God may have Glory from them to eternal Ages: Grace enlargeth the Heart towards God, in fervent Deſires, that his Glory may be eternized.

19 Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſhold of Oneſiphorus.

Obſerve here how mindful the Apoſtle is of his abſent Friends; tho' he was now in Priſon, and they a great way from him, yet he ſends pious Salutations to them. This *Priſca* or *Priſcilla* and *Aquila*, are often remembred by St. *Paul*, he lodged in their Houſe at *Corinth*: The Saints and Servants of God forget not one another when at the ends of the Earth. ----- He ſalutes alſo *Oneſiphorus* and his Houſhold, Wife, and Children, and Servants. Thus do pious Governours procure a Bleſſing upon their Families as well as upon their Perſons. *Oneſiphorus* is not only pray'd for himſelf, and ſaluted ſingly, but likewiſe his Houſhold alſo, *Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſhold of Oneſiphorus.*

20 Eraſtus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick.

Eraſtus is mentioned, *Rom.* 16. 23. as Chamberlain of the City of *Corinth*, one that ſhewed Kindneſs to *Paul*; he was a Great Man, the Treaſurer of the City of *Corinth*, yet neither his Riches, nor his great Place, could keep him from loving the Apoſtle and the afflicted Church of God. Rarely are Great Men Good, and as rarely are Good Men Great, yet ſome Great Men are Good, and ſome Good Men are Great. *Lot* and *Abraham*, *Job* and *David* were full of Riches, yet full of Piety, under the Old Teſtament: So was *Nicodemus*, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, and *Zacheus*, under the New. Thus God magnifies the Power of converting Grace.----- *Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick.* This Man was a Citizen of *Epheſus*, a Diſciple and Companion of St. *Paul*, *Acts* 20. whom he was forced to leave ſick at *Miletum*. *Note*, Strength of Grace cannot prevail againſt Bodily Weakneſſes and Diſeaſes; Sickneſs may ſeize even the beſt of Men. *Note* alſo, That the Apoſtles had not the Gift of Healing when they pleaſed, but only when God gave it them.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter, Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

Our Apoſtle being greatly deſirous to ſee *Timothy* before his Death, reneweth his Requeſt and Suit to him, to make haſte and come before Winter; the Perſonal Preſence of Good Men is much, very much deſired by them, in order to excite and quicken each other. To encourage *Timothy* to haſten to him, he names ſeveral Perſons of Note that were then at *Rome*, who ſent Salutations to him, and would rejoice to ſee him: But where were all theſe when our Apoſtle was upon his Trial? *Anſw.* They all forſook him, and not one of them ſtood with him. Behold, what Frailty there may be, and what Fear will do, in Perſons of choice Note for Eminency and Grace in the Church of God.

22 The Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with thy ſpirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

The Apoſtle concludes this like his other Epiſtles, with an Apoſtolical Benediction, *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy ſpirit*; as if he had ſaid, Be not ſad at my Departure: For tho' I muſt leave thee, yet the Lord will uphold thee by his Grace, and be preſent with thee by the Influences of his Holy Spirit. The inward Preſence of Chriſt with the Spirits of his People, directing their Spirit in thinking, judging, chuſing, and refuſing, is a ſweet Privilege, and greatly to be deſired. Happy they who have the Spirit of Chriſt perpetually preſent with them, who ſo live that Chriſt may delight to dwell by his Spirit in them. ----- *Grace be with you*, that is, with all of you; he doth not ſay, Riches be with you, or Honours be with you, or the Favour of Man be with you, but Grace, and the Favour of God be with you. God's ſpecial Favour and diſtinguiſhing Grace is to be ſought by all Perſons, above and before all things. ----- Laſtly, Our Apoſtle ratifies and ſeals up all with that concluding Particle, *Amen*, teaching us, That whatever we ſhould pray for ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired, and heartily conſented to: They ſin in Prayer, who underſtand not what they pray for, and who do not earneſtly deſire what they pray for: For in Teſtimony of our Deſires to be heard we ſay, *Amen*.

THE Epiſtle of St. PAUL TO TITUS.

St. Paul's *Epiſtles to* Timothy *and* Titus, *are the Church's Canons, which the Holy Ghoſt indited, very ſufficient to their Uſe and End. O how happy had the Church been in all Ages, if ſtrict Canonical Obedience had been paid, as well as ſworn unto them!*

Titus *was a* Gentile, *converted early to Chriſtianity by* St. Paul, *who having great Experience of his Piety and Prudence, left him in* Crete *to govern the Church of God in that Iſland.*

This Epiſtle to Titus *is of the ſame Nature, and wrote with the ſame Deſign as that to* Timothy, *only ſhorter; becauſe* Titus *ſeems to have been the Ancienter and more Experienced Perſon:* St. Paul *briefly inſtructs him in all the Parts of his Duty, in electing Church-Governours, in cenſuring Falſe-Teachers, in inſtructing the Ancient and Younger Perſons, in preſſing upon all Perſons Obedience to Magiſtrates, and a Care to maintain Good Works.*

CHAP. I.

Titus *being placed by* St. Paul *in* Crete, St. Paul *writes to him how he ought to demean himſelf there; by appointing in every City Biſhops or Elders, to teach and govern thoſe that were already, or ſhould afterwards be converted to the Faith of Chriſt; exhorting him to be very careful to make choice of worthy and fit Perſons into this high and honourable Office, men of ſound Doctrine and unblameable Lives.*

PAUL a ſervant of God, and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the faith of Gods elect, and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godlineſs:
2 In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began;
3 But hath in due times manifeſted his word through Preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour:
4 To Titus mine own ſon after the common faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

Theſe Verſes contain the Apoſtle's Salutation, and the firſt part of this Chapter; in which *Obſerve*, (1.) the Perſon ſaluting, deſcribed by his Name, *Paul*; by his general Office, *a ſervant of God*; by his ſpecial Office, *an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*; by the end of his Office, to *preach the faith*, and thereby to promote the *Faith of God's elect*, and to bring Perſons to the Acknowledgment of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is Truth according to Godlineſs. Learn hence, That the great Deſign and End of preaching the Goſpel, is to produce Faith in the Heart, and Holineſs or Godlineſs in the Life of thoſe that ſit under it, not that common, notional, and intellectual Faith, which is oft-times found in unholy Perſons; but that lively Faith, which is elſewhere called *the faith of the operation of God*, and here, *the faith of God's elect*; even ſuch a Faith as is the Parent and Principle of Obedience. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtle declares a farther End of his Office, namely, to raiſe Chriſtians up to a lively *Hope* and Expectation of that *eternal life, which* that *God who cannot lie, promiſed before the world began:* But how could God then Promiſe, when there was none to promiſe to? *Anſwer*, The Promiſe was made to Chriſt, and in him to all his Members: For there was a Federal Tranſaction betwixt the Father and the Son from all Eternity; the Son promiſed to put his Soul an Offering for Sin, and the Father engaged that he ſhould ſee his Seed, and the Travail of his Soul. *Obſerve* (3.) How God, who promiſed us in Chriſt *eternal Life* before all Time, did accompliſh and make good that Word in the fulneſs of Time, *ver.* 3. *he hath in due time manifeſted his Word through preaching*; that is, what God ſo long ago purpoſed in Himſelf, and promiſed to his Son, He hath, in the fitteſt appointed Seaſon, made manifeſt by the Preaching of the Goſpel, which is committed to me by the Appointment of God and Chriſt. Learn hence, That the Doctrine of Salvation is much more clearly revealed to us that live under the Goſpel, than it was to the Fathers of the Old Teſtament: Life and Immortality, that is, the clearer Knowledge and more full Aſſurance of Eternal Life, is now brought about by the Preaching of the Goſpel. *Obſerve* (4.) The Perſon ſaluted, *Titus*; deſcribed by his Relation, St. *Paul's Son in the faith*; he begat him by his Miniſtry unto God, was the Inſtrument of his Converſion to Chriſtianity. *His ſon after the common faith*; where *Note*, That the Church has but one Faith common to all Chriſtians, it has one common Object of Faith, Chriſt crucified; it has one common End of Faith, Eternal Salvation: This is the End of every Believer's Faith and Hope. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Salutation itſelf; *Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour*; that is, all Spiritual, Temporal, and Eternal Bleſſings, I moſt heartily wiſh unto you, from God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our worthy Mediator. Learn hence, That whatever Spiritual Grace, or Temporal Bleſſings we now receive from God, is from him not barely as a Creator, but as a Father, a gracious Father in Chriſt, in whom he pours forth the Immenſity of his Love upon us, and through whom he conveys all kind of Bleſſings unto us.

5 For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Erection of a Power in the Perſon of *Titus*, *I left thee in Crete to ordain elders*; I, who am an Apoſtle of Chriſt, and have received a Commiſſion from him thus to do. *I left thee*, thee who wert ſo dear to me, ſo uſeful to me, yet for the Church's Service did I deny my
ſelf

ſelf and part with thee. Behold here a bleſſed Pattern for our Miniſterial Imitation. St. *Paul* did and could moſt cheartully ſacrifice all his private Advantages, the tendereſt and utmoſt of his Affections to the Benefit of the Church, and the Intereſt of Religion; let us go and do likewiſe. *Obſerve* (2.) The End of this Inſtitution, or the Uſe and Exerciſe of this Power, to order, and to ordain, to correct and conſtitute; (1.) To let *in order things that were wanting*; the Ship of the Church is never ſo well rigg'd, but ſomething is wanting that might be added: Whilſt the Tabernacle of God ſojourns here below, ſome Pin or other will be lacking in it. (2.) To *ordain elders in every city*, ſuch as might govern and teach, and adminiſter to God in Holy Things: Wherever a Church is planted, there is an abſolute Neceſſity of a ſettled Miniſtry, and a Succeſſion of Miniſters, without which it is impoſſible that Religion ſhould either proſper or long continue: And Care muſt be taken that ſuch Miniſters be duly Qualified, and regularly Ordained, *I left thee in Crete to ordain elders.* *Obſerve*, (3.) The Limitation of theſe Acts, according to the Apoſtle's Preſcription, *as I had appointed thee.* *Titus* muſt do nothing but according to Commiſſion, and by ſpecial Direction. Where *Note*, That the ordering and governing of the Church was not left arbitrary, no not to *Titus* himſelf; but whatever he did was done by Apoſtolical Direction: *For this cauſe I left thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldſt ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee.*

6 If any be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly. 7 For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God, not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate: 9 Holding faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainſayers.

Here St. *Paul* gave *Titus*, as he had before done *Timothy*, the Character of ſuch Perſons as were to be admitted into the ſacred Function. The Character is twofold, Poſitive and Negative; he ſhews them both what they ſhould be, and what they ſhould not be. The Poſitive Characters of a Biſhop, yea, of every one that adminiſters to God in Holy Things, are theſe, He muſt be *blameleſs*, free from Scandal, not blame-worthy; a Miniſter's Life ſhould be ſo bright and ſhining, that all Perſons who behold it may admire it, and guide their Lives by the Direction and Example of it. *The huſband of one wife*, that is, at once, the Apoſtle's Command doth not forbid ſucceſſive Marriages; for this he elſewhere allows; ſee the Note on *Tim.* 3. 2. Nor does the Command oblige him to marry at all, but it eſtabliſhes the Lawfulneſs of a Biſhop's Marriage, if he ſees Reaſon for it; yet, no doubt, by theſe Words, *the huſband of one wife*, St. *Paul* propoſes a greater Degree of Chaſtity to Church-Governors than to other Perſons. *Having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly.* *Titus* muſt not only look at the Perſon he is to ordain, but to the Family and Houſhold of the Perſon ordained, that they be well governed, becauſe the Honour of Religion, and the Reputation of the Church ſuffers exceedingly, when any of the Biſhop's Family, his Children eſpecially, are riotous and unruly: Beſides, the World will pronounce them unfit to govern the Church of God, that cannot Command their own Families. *As the ſteward of God*; the Steward is an appointed and deputed Officer, he acts by Commiſſion, and diſtributes his Lord's Allowance according to his Lord's Command, and is accountable for all he does; and as he is over the inferior Servants, ſo muſt he be a Pattern and Precedent for them; a Steward muſt be both wiſe and faithful. *A lover of hoſpitality, ſober, temperate*; mark, of Hoſpitality, not of Luxury and Senſuality: As he commends Hoſpitality, ſo he regulates it too, *a lover of hoſpitality*, yet *ſober* and *temperate*, riotous Houſekeeping is not Hoſpitality in St. *Paul*'s Account, but the liberal and free relieving of ſuch as are in Neceſſities and Streights. *Holding faſt the faithful word he hath been taught*,----- He muſt be a Perſon well inſtructed, well ſettled and confirmed in the Faith, of Ability to defend the Faith, and to ſtop the Mouth of Gainſayers: ----- Juſt, Holy, and a Lover of good Men, a Perſon of ſtrict Holineſs and Piety towards God, of exact Righteouſneſs and Juſtice towards Man, and a ſincere Lover of all Good Men. Theſe are the Poſitive Characters required in a Biſhop. The Negative follow, and they are five: *not ſelf-willed*, not ſo adhering to his own Reſolutions, that nothing can divorce him from them; he that is of an inflexible Will, had need be of an infallible Judgment; *not ſoon angry*, and ſubject to Paſſion, for he ſtands in God's Place, and ought to reſemble God in Long-ſuffering and Patience; *not given to wine*, that is, to much Wine, no inordinate Lover of it, no Sitter at Wine, either in his own Houſe or elſewhere; *no Striker*, either with the Hand, or with the Tongue; *not given to filthy lucre*, ſeeking to get Wealth by ſordid Ways and Means: The Sin of Covetouſneſs is not ſo baſe in any Man as in a Miniſter; many are unjuſtly charged with it, but where it is really found it is a ſordid Sin. How unfit is he to adminiſter in Holy Things to God, who prefers the World before God? By making a God of the World, we make an Idol of God.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, eſpecially they of the circumciſion: 11 Whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucres ſake.

A Reaſon is here ſubjoined by our Apoſtle, why *Titus* ſhould take ſuch ſpecial Care to fill the Church with able Guides, namely, becauſe there were a multitude of Falſe Teachers diſperſt abroad, and ſcatter'd up and down every where, particularly the Judaizing Doctors, thoſe of the Circumciſion, mention'd *Acts* 15. who would make Chriſtianity nothing more than a Supplement to the Law of *Moſes.* Theſe, he tells *Titus*, muſt have their Mouths ſtopped, not by Force, for *Titus* had no Power of the Sword, but by Confutation; he muſt take Care to ordain ſuch as might Silence them, tho' not ſatisfy them. For mark the Efficacy of Error, and the Power of Seduction, *they ſubvert whole houſes*, they make Proſelites without number. Learn hence, That ſuch is the Strength of Error, and the Weakneſs and Unſtedfaſtneſs of many Chriſtians, that whole Houſholds may be ſubverted by the moſt groſs Deceivers. If the Apoſtles Converts were thus eaſily and univerſally miſled, no wonder if ours be ſo.

12 One of themſelves, *even* a prophet of their own, ſaid, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies. 13 This witneſs is true: wherefore rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewiſh fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

The next Argument St. *Paul* makes uſe of to excite *Titus* to take great Care how he behaved himſelf at *Crete*, and what Biſhops he left there, is drawn from the Quality and Nature of the People in that Iſland of *Crete*, where God's Providence and the Apoſtle's Care had plac'd him: He tells him, that one of their own Prophets or Poets, *Epimenides*, had given this Character of them, That the *Cretians* were a lazy and a lying People, ready enough to be miſled by the Falſe Teachers, particularly the Judaizing Doctors, who impoſed Circumciſion and other Ceremonial Rites upon them, which were now old Fables, but tended to pervert Men from the Truth, therefore he charges *Titus* to reprove ſharply and cuttingly, *that they may be ſound in the faith.* The Word is a Metaphor taken from Chirurgeons, who cut out dead Fleſh to the quick, but it is in order to Healing; Cutting Words have done great Cures: Many a diſeas'd, feſter'd Soul has been made ſound, both in Faith and Manners, by ſevere Reprehenſion. Learn hence, That although, generally ſpeaking, we ought to temper our Reproofs with much Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, yet there is a time when we muſt reprove *ſharply*, that Men *may be ſound in the faith.* We may, we muſt ſpeak cutting Words, when kind Words will not do.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, *is* nothing

pure: but even their mind and conſcience is defiled.

Here our Apoſtle intimates what thoſe *Jewiſh* Traditions and Fables were, which thoſe Judaizing Doctors and Falſe Teachers would obtrude and impoſe upon Perſons at that time, namely, Pretences that Men were defiled by eating things unclean, by not obſerving their Days, and keeping other Ceremonial Rites: But, ſays the Apoſtle, *to the pure all things are pure*; that is, to Believers who are ſanctified by the Chriſtian Faith, and purified from Sin and Guilt, all Meats, and Days, and Things of this Nature, are clean and lawful, and may without Sin be uſed, every Creature being ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer. Here *Note*, The Honourable Title which a gracious and merciful God puts upon Good Men, notwithſtanding they have much Impurity and Sin inhering in them, and many ſinful Weakneſſes and Infirmities cleaving to them, yet God calls them *pure*, *unto the pure*, &c. they are now initially ſo, and ſhall e're long be perfectly ſo. *Note* (2.) A Privilege purchaſed for them by the Blood of Chriſt, and that is, the lawful Liberty and Uſe of all Meats, *&c.* under the Goſpel, which were prohibited by, and forbidden under the Ceremonial Law; *unto the pure all things are now pure.*

15 —— But unto them that are defiled and nnbelieving, is nothing pure.

Mark, he doth not ſay, to the defiled all things are unclean, but *nothing is pure*; they pollute all they touch: To an unſanctified Man nothing is ſanctified; whatever he does is unclean, either in the Matter, in the Manner, or in the End of his doing it; and the Reaſon follows, becauſe *their mind and conſcience are defiled.* No wonder the Streams are polluted, when the Fountains are poiſoned. *The mind and conſcience are defiled*, partly by Blindneſs, partly by Stupidity and Senſeleſneſs.

16 They profeſs that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate.

Behold here the diſmal Character of many Hypocritical Perſons in the *Jewiſh* Church, they profeſt the Knowledge of God, the true God; but in their Works, in their Lives and Actions they denied him, and ſo became abominable both to God and Man, diſobedient to the Law, and averſe to every good Work. Here learn, (1.) That Hypocrites are generally great Profeſſors, they profeſs great Knowledge of God and great Zeal for him. (2.) That to deny God is a very heinous Sin, and an abominable Wickedneſs; there is a twofold Denial of God, firſt, in Words expreſly and openly; ſecondly, in Practice cloſely and conſequentially, *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.* There may be at once a profeſſing of God, and a Denial of him: Many a Man's Practice ſpeaks loud, that there is no God, when he makes a fair Confeſſion and Profeſſion of him with his Mouth and Tongue. Learn, (3.) That no ſorts of Perſons are ſo odious to God, and abominable in his Sight, as thoſe who make a Profeſſion of his Holy Name and Truth, but walk contrary in their Lives to that Profeſſion.

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter directs Titus *how to diſcharge his Duty faithfully, as a Miniſter of Chriſt, in preaching the Goſpel, adviſing him to inſtruct all, both young and old, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, in the Practice of their relative and reſpective Duties one towards another, that God might be glorified, and Religion adorned: And here firſt he inſtructs him in general to preach to the People wholſome and ſound Doctrine; and then directs him particularly to apply that Doctrine to the ſeveral ſorts and conditions of Men.*

BUT ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine:

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, whatever the forementioned Judaizing Doctors preach, tho' they doat upon Dreams, and feed their Hearers with Fables and Fancies to poiſon and corrupt their Souls, and turn them from the Truth; be ſure that thou carrieſt thyſelf as becomes a ſound Preacher of the Goſpel, and *ſpeak* only *the things which become ſound doctrine*; the Body may as ſoon be nouriſh'd with Carrion, as the Soul with rotten and unſound Doctrine. Chriſtian Doctrine is ſound Doctrine. And the Miniſters of Chriſt, who feed his People, muſt take Care that they bring ſuch wholſome Doctrine to their People as may contribute greatly to their Spiritual Health and Soundneſs, *ſpeak thou the things that become ſound doctrine.*

2 That the aged men be ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in faith, in charity, in patience:

By *aged men* we may underſtand all ancient Men in general, and Church-Officers in particular, in whom our Apoſtle requires and calls for Gravity and Sobriety in Behaviour, Temperance in all things, that they be *ſound in the Faith*, ſincere in *Charity*, and conſtant in *Patience*; where *Note*, That our Apoſtle exempteth none from the Inſtructions, Admonitions, and Exhortations of the Miniſters of God. God's School is as well for the Aged as the Young, not only for initiating Youth, but alſo for edifying the Aged, and building them up in their moſt Holy Faith; the Aged have but a little time to be in the World, their Nature declines, their Days are almoſt ended, they muſt therefore labour to recompence a Decay of Nature with Increaſe of Grace, the Weakneſs of Body with Strength of Faith, *let the aged men be ſound in the faith.* *Note* farther, That Sobriety, Gravity, Temperance, Soundneſs in the Faith, Eminent Charity, and Exemplary Patience, are the great Ornaments of Perſons in their Old Age.

3 The aged women likewiſe, that *they be* in behaviour, as becometh holineſs, not falſe accuſers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
4 That they may teach the young women to be ſober, to love their huſbands, to love their children,
5 *To be* diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own huſband, that the word of God be not blaſphemed.

Inſtructions are here given for the Aged Women, as before for the Aged Men, that is, for all in general, and ſuch Aged Women in particular as were Deaconneſſes, or Servants to the Church, that they being placed in the Rank of Church-Officers, ſhould act and walk as becometh Holy Perſons, employed about Holy Things; particularly, that their Deportment and Behaviour be ſuch, both in Habit and Geſture, as *becometh holineſs*, that they be not *falſe accuſers*, Devils the Original ſignifies, becauſe Falſe-Accuſing is the Devil's Work; they that do his Work ſhall bear his Name; *not given to much wine*; Exceſs in Drinking is bad in Men, worſe in Women, worſt of all in Old Women, who ought to be Patterns of Piety and Prudence, of Sobriety and Temperance, to the younger Women; for St. *Paul* here directs them to *teach the younger*; that is, by their private Admonitions and prudent Examples, inſtruct them to be wiſe and ſober, not light and airy, and over frolick; to love their Huſbands and Children in a fit and becoming manner, and to ſhew it in all their Behaviour; diſcreet and chaſte in all their Actions, keeping at Home, and minding the Affairs of the Family, to be kind and obedient to their Huſbands, leſt the Miſcarriages of young Women ſhould bring Reproach upon Religion, and the Goſpel be thought by the Men of the World to infuſe any thing into them contrary to Moral Vertue. Learn hence, That the wholſome Doctrine of the Goſpel muſt be preached and practically applied to Women as well as to Men, and they cannot, without the Danger of Damnation, deſpiſe or neglect the Miniſtry of the Word.

6 Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded.

Note here, (1.) That the Miniſters of God muſt apply themſelves and their Doctrine to the ſeveral Sexes, Ages, and Conditions of their People; that every Perſon, Man and Woman, Young and Old, Superior and Inferior, may know not only what is lawful, but what is expedient, moſt beſeeming their Quality, and beſt becoming their Age. Here our Apoſtle directs *Titus* to exhort firſt the Aged Men, next the Aged Women, now the younger Men, that they be *ſober-minded*, ſettled in the Truth, guided by ſound Judgment, not governed by Paſſion, not led by Senſe and

Appetite, nor puff'd up with proud Conceit: Where it is obſervable, that St. *Paul*'s Warnings here given in this Chapter to the aged Men, the aged Women, and the younger Men, do intimate to us what Vices they are that all ſorts of Perſons are ſubject to, and moſt endangered by; and this is the wiſe Improvement that all ſhould make of it, to watch againſt the Sins of their Age and Condition, their Complexion and Conſtitution, their Calling and Vocation, every Sin that doth ſo eaſily beſet them, and obſtructs and hinders them in their Chriſtian Courſe.

7 In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works: in doctrine *ſhewing* uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity, 8 Sound ſpeech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part, may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.

St. *Paul* having directed *Titus* what Doctrine to preach, comes now to inſtruct him what Example to lead, *in all things ſhew thyſelf a pattern of good works*; as if he had ſaid, In all the Good which thou exhorteſt thy Hearers to, be an eminent Pattern of it thyſelf; that they may ſee that viſibly in thy Life, which thou preſſeſt upon them by thy Preaching. By Piety and good Works ſecond thy Doctrine; there muſt be a ſweet Harmony between a Miniſter's Doctrine and his Converſation; otherwiſe he pulls down faſter than he builds up: An Heterodox Converſation will carry an Orthodox Preacher to Hell -------- He cloſes this Admonition to *Titus* concerning Preaching, with this ſolemn Charge, namely, that his Doctrine be ſound and profitable, ſincere without Mixture, grave without Levity, ſound Words, that can never be confuted by Gain-ſayers, which muſt be expected; but happy will you be if they can have nothing juſtly to charge your Doctrine or your Converſation with. Learn hence, That the Miniſters of God have ever had, and muſt always expect ſome that will withſtand, oppoſe and gainſay them, as long as there is a Devil in the World, and ſo long as the Miniſters of God endeavour to batter down the Walls of his Kingdom, he will raiſe Storms about their Ears. Learn (2.) That it is the Duty, and muſt be the Care and Endeavour of all the Miniſters of God to oblige themſelves to ſuch an Exemplary Piety of Converſation, as may ſtop the Mouth of Slander, *that the contrary party may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay againſt them.*

9 *Exhort* ſervants to be obedient unto their own maſters, *and* to pleaſe *them* well in all things; not anſwering again, 10 Not purloyning but ſhewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Although *Titus*, according to ſome, was a Biſhop, yea an Archbiſhop, yet St. *Paul* exhorts him to look upon the Inſtruction of Servants as one part of his Charge. *Exhort ſervants*; the Souls of the pooreſt Slaves and Servants, for whom the Son of God died, muſt be of precious Account with, and be particularly concerned for, by the higheſt Ambaſſador of Chriſt; As all Souls had an equal Price, ſo muſt they have an equal Care. *Obſerve*, (2.) The general Duty which Servants are exhorted to, and that is *Obedience* to their own Maſters, in all honeſt and lawful things, whether their Maſters were Pagans or Chriſtians; if Pagans, not thinking that their Chriſtianity freed them from their juſt Commands; if Chriſtian Maſters, not thinking that they had therefore a greater Liberty to be ſaucy with them, or leſs obedient to them. *Obſerve*, (3.) The particular Duties here preſt upon Servants, (1.) *Not anſwering again*, not croſſing or contradicting what they are commanded, nor ſaucily replying when they are reproved. (2.) *Not purloining*, that is, not ſtealing the leaſt thing, nor taking any thing that is their Maſters, which is not allowed by their Conſent, but ſhewing all conſcionable Truſtineſs, and that great Fidelity and Honeſty may be found with them. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Argument or Motive to ſtir up Servants to this conſcionable Care, and conſcientious Diſcharge of their Duty, *That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*; that is, that they may put Honour upon Chriſt and his holy Religion, by beautifying their Chriſtian Profeſſion by a ſuitable and becoming Converſation. Learn hence, That it is in the Power of the pooreſt and meaneſt Servant to do much Good or much Hurt to the Chriſtian Religion: Some might be ready to ſay, Alas! What Good or Hurt, what Credit or Diſcredit, can a poor Servant do to Religion? Much every way: He may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour by his Chriſtian Behaviour as a Servant, and the Name of God and his Doctrine may be blaſphemed by him, if he be negli- in his Duty. None are ſo little and inconſiderable, but they are capable of ſerving the great Ends of Religion, capable of doing Service for God on Earth, and of being eternally rewarded by God in Heaven.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men; 12 Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world;

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Let all ſorts of Men, Servants and Maſters, Children and Parents, old and young, diſcharge their Duties faithfully to God and one another; for the Grace of God diſcovered in the Goſpel, has appeared to all Men, teaching them to deny all Doctrines and Practices which are ungodly, and all worldly Luſt of Senſuality, and that we ſhould live ſoberly with reſpect to our ſelves; righteouſly and charitably towards our Neighbour, and holily towards God in this preſent World. *Note* here, (1.) A choice and excellent Deſcription of the Goſpel, it is *the Grace of God*, that is, the Doctrine of God's Free Grace and gratuitous Favour declared in Chriſt to poor Sinners. *Note* (2.) The joyful Meſſage which the Goſpel brings, and that is Salvation: The Goſpel makes a gracious Tender of Salvation, and that univerſally to loſt and undone Sinners. *Note*, (3.) The clear Light and Evidence that it does hold forth this Meſſage in and by; it has appeared or ſhined forth like the Day Star, or the Riſing Sun. *Note*, (4.) The Extent of its glorious Beams, how far they reach to all indefinitely. *The Grace of God bringing Salvation, has appeared unto all Men*; that is, it is tendered to all without Reſtriction or Limitation, (1.) As to Nations, *Jew* or *Gentile*; (2.) As to Perſons, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free; (3.) Without Reſtriction, as to the Number and Greatneſs of their Sins; (4.) Without Reſtriction, in reference to the degree of their Graces. *Note*, (5.) The great Leſſon which the Goſpel teaches, Negative and Poſitive; (1.) Negative, *to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*, where by Ungodlineſs underſtand all Sins commited againſt the firſt Table, by worldly Luſts, all Sins committed againſt the ſecond Table: called worldly Luſts, becauſe the Object of them is worldly things, and becauſe they are the Luſts of wordly Men. (2.) Poſitive, to *live* (1.) *Soberly*; He begins with our Duty to our ſelves, then to our Neighbour, and laſt of all to God, and ſo proceeds from the eaſier to the harder Duties: And obſerve the Connexion, *ſoberly, and righteouſly*, and *godly*, not disjunctively; as if to live ſoberly or righteouſly, or in pretence godly, were ſufficient. A Sobriety in Speech, in Behaviour, in Apparel, in Eating and Drinking, in Recreations, and in the Enjoyment of lawful Satiſfactions. (2.) *Righteouſly*, exerciſing Juſtice and Charity towards our Neighbour; he that is uncharitable is unjuſt and unrighteous, and the unrighteous ſhall no more enter into the Kingdom of God, than the unholy: And all a Perſon's Pretences to Godlineſs are but Hypocriſy, without Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbour. (3.) *Godly*; Godlineſs has an internal and external part, the internal and inward part of Godlineſs conſiſts in a right Knowledge of him, in a fervent Love unto him, in an entire Truſt and Confidence in him, in an holy Fear to offend him, in ſubjecting our Wills intirely to him, in holy Longings for the Fruition and Enjoyment of him. The external and outward part of Godlineſs conſiſts in Adoration and Bodily Worſhip, this is due to God from us; he was the Creator of the Body as well as of the Soul, the Redeemer of the Body as well as of the Soul, and will glorify the Body as well as the Soul, therefore are we to *glorify God with our Bodies, and with our Spirits which are the Lord's.* *Note*, (6.) The Time when, and the Place where this Leſſon is to be learnt, *in this preſent World.* Here is the Place, and now is the Time when this Duty of living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World, is to be performed by us. Learn, That a ſober, righteous, and godly Life in this preſent World, is abſolutely neceſſary in order to our obtaining the Happineſs and Glory of the World to come. *Inference*, If ſo, what a Cheat doth that Man put upon his

Soul who truſts to a Death-bed Repentance? Be it never ſo ſincere, how can it be ſaid to be a living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this World, when juſt ſteping into Eternity?

13 Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Character given of that Reward which the Goſpel promiſes to them that live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World; this is deſcribed (1.) By its Futurity, 'tis *Hope*, ſomething expected, and to come; (2.) By its Tranſcendency, it is a *bleſſed Hope.* Learn, That the Chriſtian's Hope, (or the good things hoped for) is laid up, not in this, but in the other World; becauſe this World, and this preſent State, is not capable of that Happineſs which the Chriſtian hopes for. 'Tis too great, 'tis too good for Earth, 'tis laid up in Heaven. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Time and Seaſon when this glorious Reward and bleſſed Hope ſhall be diſpenſed and given forth unto the godly, and that is, at *the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; where *Note.* A threefold Deſcription of Chriſt, (1.) By the Immenſity of his Deity, he is the *great God.* (2.) By the Graciouſneſs of his Office, *our Saviour.* (3.) By the Glory of his Advent, or Appearance, *looking for the glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve*, (3.) The Chriſtian's Duty, with Reference and Relation to this Reward, and to the Appearance of Chriſt, when it ſhall be diſpenſed and given forth, namely, to look and long for that Joyful Hour. Learn, That the great Duty incumbent on all the People of God, is to be continually looking and longing for, hoping and expecting of the Coming and Appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; *looking for the bleſſed Hope, &c.*

14 Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Obſerve here, (1.) The way and manner how Chriſt came to be our Saviour, he *gave himſelf for us. Note*, (1.) The Giver, *Chriſt*, he gave. (2.) The Gift, *himſelf.* (3.) The Perſons for whom he gave himſelf, *for us.* Learn, (1.) That all that Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered he did ſuſtain and undergo freely and voluntarily. (2.) That that which Chriſt gave for our Redemption was himſelf. (3.) That it was eſpecially for his Church, that he gave himſelf, *who gave himſelf for us. Obſerve*, (2.) The great Ends for which Chriſt gave himſelf for his Church, and they are two. (1.) To *redeem* them *from Iniquity.* (2.) To *purify* them *a peculiar People to himſelf.* (1.) To *redeem from Iniquity*; Redemption ſuppoſes a Thraldom and Bondage; Redemption from Iniquity ſuppoſes a Thraldom and Bondage to Sin and Iniquity: Our Redeemer there from is *Jeſus Chriſt*, and by dying for us he did, and only could redeem us; *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from Iniquity.* (2.) Another End of Chriſt's redeeming us, is to *purify us to himſelf a peculiar People.* Here *Note*, That as Redemption did preſuppoſe a Bondage, ſo Purification ſuppoſes an Uncleanneſs, that is, Sin. (2.) *Note*, That Chriſt's redeemed People are a purified People, and a peculiar People, poſſeſſed by the Spirit of Chriſt, with a Zeal for good Works. *Note*, (3.) That it was not only for us that Chriſt redeemed and purified us a peculier People to himſelf, but ultimately for himſelf, and for his own and his Father's Glory and Complacency; That he might purify to *himſelf* a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.

15 Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man deſpiſe thee.

As if he had ſaid, Let theſe neceſſary practical Truths be the Subject matter of thy Preaching, and according to the Authority of thy Office rebuke Gain-ſayers; and let thy Doctrine and Behaviour in Wiſdom and Gravity be ſuch, as may keep and preſerve thee from all Contempt. The Miniſters of Chriſt are to take eſpecially Care that they neither expoſe their Perſons nor their Office, by any Indecencies, to Contempt; *Let no Man deſpiſe thee.*

CHAP. III.

In the former Chapters our Apoſtle inſtructed Titus, *that he ſhould in the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry, propound the ſeveral Offices and Duties of Chriſtianity unto ſeveral Eſtates and Conditions of Perſons, to Men and Women, to Young and Old; that ſo they might be good in all Relations, and live Religious in every Capacity.*

Now in this concluding Chapter of his Epiſtle, he directs Titus *to preach and preſs more general Duties which concern all Mankind, as to be ready to every good Work, to ſpeak evil of no Man, to ſhew Meekneſs to all Men, to be careful to maintain good Works; becauſe the falſe Apoſtles, inſtead of preſſing the Neceſſity of a good Life, did amuſe the People with idle Notions, fooliſh Queſtions, and endleſs Diſputes. Accordingly St.* Paul *doth thus beſpeak him.*

PUT them in mind to be ſubject to principalities, and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good work,

Obſerve here, That in thoſe early Days of Chriſtianity, great Scandal was brought upon Religion by the undutiful Carriage of Servants and Subjects towards their Maſters and Magiſtrates; and this upon a falſe Notion of Chriſtian liberty, advanced and propagated by the falſe Apoſtles, judaizing Teachers, and *Gnoſtick* Libertines; whereupon he requires *Titus* to put Chriſtians in mind of their Duty in that particular, and to inculcate it earneſtly upon them, that the Chriſtian Religion might not be ſlandered upon this Account, *Put them in mind that they be ſubject to Principalities and Powers.* Learn hence, That the Duty of Subjection to Governours and Government, and of Obedience to Magiſtrates and Rulers, is of very great Importance, and ought to be enforced and frequently inculcated upon the People by the Miniſters of God; becauſe by Nature all Men deſire Liberty, and caſt off the Yoke of God: Every one would rule and govern, altho' the Duty of Subjection be much the eaſier Duty. (2.) From St. *Paul*'s preſſing *Titus* to preach up the Doctrine of Obedience and Subjection to Governours and Government, learn, That there is no ſuch Way and Method to bring the World to live regularly under Government, like planting the Goſpel amongſt them, and making them ſubject to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

2 To ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, ſhewing all meekdeſs unto all men.

Calumny and Evil-ſpeaking has been a reigning Vice in all Ages, and a greater Guilt is contracted by it than Men apprehend; every Man ought to be as juſt to his Neighbour's Reputation as his own: If what we report of another we know to be falſe, it is downright Lying; if what we report of others we believe to be falſe, it is a Slander; if what Evil we report of others be really true, and we know it to be ſo, yet it is a Defamation, and contrary to that Charity and Goodneſs which Chriſtianity requires; for to divulge the Faults of others, tho' they be really guilty of them, without neceſſity, is certainly a Sin, and included in this Apoſtolical Prohibition: To think and ſpeak evil of others, is not only a bad Thing, but a ſign of a bad Man; and in many caſes it is as great a Charity to conceal an Evil we hear of our Neighbour, as it is to relieve him in his Diſtreſs. The next Exhortation is, *to be no Brawlers*; in the Original, no *Fighters*, that is, neither with Tongue or Hand, but meek and gentle, putting up a double Wrong, rather than revenging a ſingle Injury, uſing all Meekneſs towards all Men. Meekneſs pacifies Wrath, and conquers Animoſity to a Wonder, making him tame and gentle, who by Oppoſition is furious and implacable; the hardeſt Flint is ſooner broken upon a Pillow or Cuſhion, that gently yieldeth, than upon a Bar of Iron that furiouſly reſiſteth.

3 For we our ſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

Here we have a very weighty Reaſon laid down by our Apoſtle, why Chriſtians ſhould be found in the Practice of the forementioned Vertues of Equity and Lenity, of Patience and Charity, of Meekneſs and Long-ſuffering one towards another; namely, becauſe before their Converſion they themſelves lived in the Practice of the forementioned Vices as well as others, *we our ſelves alſo were fooliſh, diſobedient, &c.* that is, the Servants of Sin, and Slaves to our Luſts, ſuffering Wrath to reſt in our Boſoms, till it boiled up to Revenge; having formerly therefore been ſuch our ſelves, we ought to pity rather than ſpurn at thoſe that are ſo ſtill. No Argument will more effectually incline and diſpoſe us to pity the Miſcarriages of others, than the Conſideration, that we our ſelves are prone unto, and have heretofore been guilty of the ſame, or the like Provocations our ſelves.

4 But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghoſt; 6 Which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour:

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Though in our Heatheniſh and unconverted State we were as bad and vile as any, yet no ſooner did the Loving Kindneſs of God to fallen Man appear by the Illumination of the Goſpel, and the Communication of his Grace, not for any good Works or Deſerts of ours, but of his meer Mercy, and free Goodneſs he ſaved us from that State of Sin and Miſery by Regeneration, ſignified and ſealed in Baptiſm, and by renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which Holy Spirit was poured forth in an extraordinary Meaſure upon us, (according to Promiſe) after Chriſt's Reſurrection. Here *Obſerve*, How every Perſon in the Trinity acts diſtinctly in the Work of our Salvation: Firſt, The fontal Cauſe, the Spring and Source of our Happineſs, lies in the Kindneſs and Love of God the Father. (2.) The meritorious and procuring Cauſe of the Application of this Love, is Jeſus Chriſt, in the Work of Redemption and Mediation. (3.) The immediate and efficient Cauſe of the Communication of that Love of God the Father, procured thro' the Mediation of Chriſt the Son, is the Holy Spirit, in the Work of Regeneration.

6 Which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour: 7 That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

That is, which Holy Spirit was in its Gifts and Graces plentifully poured forth upon us, and dwelleth in us, not eſſentially but energetically, illuminating, guiding, ſtrengthning and confirming of us: And the End of God herein is, *That being juſtified by his Grace*, that is, by Faith in his Son, *we ſhould be made Heirs of eternal Life, according to the Hope* which the Promiſes of God have given us thereof. Learn hence, (1.) That all the Grace which is ſo plentifully poured forth upon Believers, is by the Means and Mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Learn, (2.) That Juſtification being a Sinner's Abſolution from Guilt and Puniſhment by the Satisfaction of Chriſt the Redeemer, is yet an Act of ſpecial Grace, and free Favour in God, *That being juſtified by his Grace.* Learn, (3.) That it is the bleſſed Privilege of all juſtified Perſons, that they are now Heirs to, and ſhall e're long be Poſſeſſors of Eternal Life; they ſhall e're long have in hand, what now they poſſeſs in Hope; *being juſtified by Grace, we are Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.*

8 *This is* a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: theſe things are good and profitable unto men.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes ſpoken of Juſtification by Grace without Works of Righteouſneſs, doth here immediately give a ſtrict and ſolemn Charge to *Titus*, to preſs the Neceſſity of good Works upon thoſe who did believe and embrace the Goſpel, on purpoſe to prevent all Miſtake and Abuſe of the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, and free Grace and Mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt; intimating, That they who are juſtified by the Faith of the Goſpel, ſhould be far from thinking themſelves hereby excuſed from good Works, that they ought upon that account to be the more careful to maintain and practiſe them, becauſe by the very Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith and Religion, they have ſolemnly engaged themſelves ſo to do. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That the great Deſign of Chriſtianity, and the End of God in the Revelation of the Goſpel, was to reform the Lives and Manners of Men, and to oblige all Perſons both to be good, and to do good. Learn, (2.) from the Apoſtle's vehement Aſſeveration, *This is a faithful Saying*, and his ſolemn Charge, *Theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly*, That there have been Perſons in all Ages, who have exalted the Vertue of Faith, if not intentionally, yet indiſcreetly to the Prejudice and Neglect of a good Life. As if by a meer ſpeculative Belief and Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, Men were diſcharged from the Practice of Moral Duties. God grant that the decried Morality of ſome Perſons may be an integral Part of *my* Religion. Learn, (3.) That tho' good Works are not neceſſary before Juſtification to bring us into a juſtified State, yet they are neceſſary after Juſtification in order to our continuance in that State; ------ *Not by Works of Righteouſneſs which we have done*, that is, before Faith; but he doth not exclude the Works of Righteouſneſs in the leaſt, that they ſhould hereafter do, by vertue of the new Nature given to them, from being Conditions of their future Happineſs. As Morality doth not make Faith uſeleſs, ſo neither doth Faith bring any Excuſe for Immorality. Learn, (4.) That it is not ſufficient that Believers do good Works, but they muſt maintain good Works; the Word ſignifies they muſt be Patterns and Preſidents, they muſt be eminent and excelling in good Works: And let their Faith be never ſo excellent, if they do not add to their Faith Vertue, it is but Fancy, a ſtrong Faith built upon a weak Foundation.

9 But avoid fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions, and ſtrivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

We have the ſame Charge given to *Timothy*, 1 Epiſt. 1. 4. See the Note upon it; and learn hence, That Diſputes about Matters which only ſerve to beget Strife and Contention, and tend little to our Edification in Faith and Holineſs, are vain Talk and unprofitable Diſputes, to be declined and avoided by all wiſe and ſerious Chriſtians, *Avoid fooliſh Queſtions, for they are unprofitale and vain.*

10 A man that is an heretick, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject: 11 Knowing that he that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Avoid and ſhun, and refuſe Communion with him that doth obſtinately perſiſt in dangerous Errors and Hereſies, and accordingly let him be excommunicated. Learn hence, (1.) Who is an Heretick in the Apoſtle's Senſe, even he who is perverted from the true Faith, and holds Opinions which ſubvert the Foundations of it: and one who is condemned in his own Conſcience, and ſins againſt his own Convictions; for the Apoſtle here bids *Titus* not inform him of his Errors, but admoniſh him of his Fault, which ſhews, that the Crime lay not in his Head, in his Underſtanding, but in his Will and Affections; For no Man, who acts according to his Judgment and Conſcience, how erroneous ſoever, is ſelf-condemned in that Action. Learn, (2.) That even Hereticks themſelves ought to be tenderly and loving dealt with, ſo long as there is any Hope that they may be gained or won. Learn, (3.) That the Charity of the Church, in her Cenſure of Excommunication, aims rather at the cutting off of Errors than of Perſons.

12 When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

Our Apoſtle having finiſhed all ſuch common Precepts as reſpected the whole Church in *Crete*, he now paſſeth to ſuch private Affairs as did more particularly reſpect the Perſon of *Titus* and himſelf. Firſt, He deſires *Titus* to come to him to *Nicopolis* from *Crete*, but not before he had ſent thither *Artemas* or *Tychicus* to officiate in his Place: Wonderful Care of the holy Apoſtle! and a mighty Concern for the Welfare of the Churches! St. *Paul* very well knew how fatal and dangerous it might be for the Churches to be deſtitute of their ſpiritual Guides, though for a very ſmall time. St. *Paul* knew the Malice of the Devil, the Subtilty of Seducers, and the Weakneſs of Christians Faith too well, to give all or any of them Advantages of doing Miſchief in the Abſence of *Titus* from them.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Here we have a ſecond private Affair which is given in charge to *Titus*, namely, That he helps forward on their Journey *Zenas* and *Apollos*, both Apoſtolick Men, the former an Expounder of the Law of *Moſes*, the other an Eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures; both theſe cleaved to St. *Paul*, and therefore were worthily to be reſpected by *Titus*, whom the Apoſtle therefore bids him be kind and courteous to, and help them forward in their Journey. Learn thence, That Chriſtianity is no Enemy to, but a great Promoter of all Offices of Humanity and civil Courteſy towards all Perſons. towards Strangers particularly, towards good Men eſpecially. *Obſerve* next, St. *Paul* deſires *Titus* to take Care, that thoſe Servants of God be ſo ſupplied, that they lack nothing: Such as are engaged in the Lord's Work, muſt be carefully provided for, and Care taken that they lack nothing.

14 And let ours alſo learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful.

Let ours, that is, either, (1.) Thoſe of our Order, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, or thoſe that are our Converts, ſuch as are Chriſtians let them ſtudy to excel in good Works, be diligent in the Labours of their Calling, that they may have wherewith to ſupply the Neceſſities of others, to the intent that they may not appear unfruitful. Learn hence, That as Chriſtianity is no barren and fruitleſs Profeſſion, but all Perſons profeſſing Religion ought to take Care that good Works may accompany their Faith; ſo the Miniſters of Chriſt in ſpecial ought to be careful herein, and by no means to bind that Duty upon others which they do not practiſe themſelves; they muſt by Charity and good Works ſecond their Doctrine, and win Perſons to a Love of Religion.

15 All that are with me ſalute thee.

By theſe Words St. *Paul* gives *Titus* to underſtand, that all the Chriſtians that were then with him did embrace him with an endearing and loving Affection, and would have their Mindfulneſs of him witneſſed by a kind and familiar Salutation. Theſe Salutations had more in them than Humanity, Civility, and common Courteſy; they were Atteſtations of a truly Chriſtian Love and Brotherly Affection, one Member of Chriſt towards another for Grace's Sake.

15 ——— Greet them that love us in the faith. ——

That is, as Chriſtians, as Brethren, and Fellow-Members in Chriſt, *Verus Amicus qui vere & in Deo diligit.* Grace binds Man to Man in the ſtrongeſt and moſt indiſſoluble Bonds and Ties.

15 —— Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

This is the Salutation of St. *Paul*, always written with his own Hand, in all his Epiſtles; although the Epiſtles themſelves were writ by others, he did it to prevent Counterfeits, that no Baſtard Writings might be obtruded upon the Church: And whereas he ſays, *Grace be with you all*, it plainly intimates, that altho' this Epiſtle be written by Name to *Titus*, that yet it was intended for the Benefit and Advantage of the whole Church.

THE
Epiſtle of St. PAUL
TO
PHILEMON.

This Epiſtle was writ to a particular Perſon, and upon a particular Occaſion. The Perſon was Philemon, *an Eminent Officer in the Church at* Coloſs, *and, as ſome ſay, Succeſſor to* Timothy, *as Biſhop of* Epheſus. *The Occaſion thus,* Oneſimus *a naughty Servant, running away from his Maſter* Philemon, *and carrying away probably ſomething of his Maſter's Subſtance with him, by the Providence of God comes to* Rome, *where* St. Paul *was now a Priſoner and Preacher in Bonds: God bleſt the Apoſtle's Miniſtry for the Converſion of this Fugitive, who was brought to a true Khowlegde of Jeſus Chriſt, and after his Converſion, for a Time, adminiſtred to* Paul *in Priſon; but the Apoſtle underſtanding that he was another Man's Servant, and particularly his dear Friend* Philemon's, *ſends him back to his Maſter, earneſtly deſiring him to pardon him, and to receive him into Favour.*

CHAP. I.

PAUL a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer, 2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus, our fellow-ſoldier, and to the church in thy houſe: 3 Grace to you, and peace from God our father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Writer of this Epiſtle deſcribed, by his Name, *Paul*; by his Condition, *a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; by his Office, a *Labourer*, a *Soldier*, a *Fellow-labourer*, and a *Fellow-ſoldier* with *Philemon* and *Archippus*. Where *Note*, That to be a Labourer, a Soldier, and a Priſoner for Jeſus Chriſt, are the Titles that St. *Paul* glories in, and not in worldly Dignities. *Paul a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; yet was *Paul* a Priſoner in *Libera Cuſtodia*, not ſo cloſely confin'd, but he had Pen, Ink, and Paper; God gave *Paul* then, as *Joſeph* before, Favour in the ſight of the Keeper of the Priſon: Let Perſecutors ſend the Saints to Priſon, God can provide a Keeper for their turn. Happy was it for thee *Oneſimus*, that *Paul* was ſent to Goal; his Impriſonment was the happy Occaſion of thy Spiritual Liberty. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Perſons to whom the Epiſtle is directed; firſt, and eminently to *Philemon* the Maſter, and to *Apphia* the Miſtreſs of the Family, in which, and with whom *Oneſimus* had dwelt, but was now run from. St. *Paul* writes to both, judging the Miſtreſs's Conſent neceſſary for taking this Fugitive back into her Family, as well as the Maſter's; intimating thereby, That altho' the Huſband, by the Ordinance and Appointment of God, has the higheſt Place, the firſt and chief Power in the Government of the Family, yet the Wife being given him of God as an Aſſiſtant and Fellow-Helper in Government, her ſubordinate Authority given her by God is to be owned and acknowledged. Next, This Epiſtle is directed to *Archippus*, who dwelt with or near *Philemon*, him he calls his Fellow-Soldier, and *Philemon* his Fellow-Labourer. Where *Note*, That the Miniſters of the Goſpel are compar'd to Soldiers; they have Enemies to encounter and conflict with, Satan's Temptations, the World's Perſecutions, Sinners corrupt Luſts and Affections. Let the Miniſters of God then reckon beforehand upon a toilſome and troubleſome Life; if they reſolve to be faithful, the Devil will plant all his Artillery againſt them. Laſt of all, This Epiſtle is directed *to the Church* in *Philemon's Houſe*; by which ſome underſtand the Company of Chriſtians that met together at his Houſe to worſhip God; for Chriſtians then had not Liberty publickly to perform that Duty; others underſtand it of *Philemon*'s own Family, which ſpeaks at once *Philemon*'s Privilege and Duty, that he had ſuch a well-ordered Family, that it was a little Church; that is, it was a lively Image and Repreſentation of the Church, both in their Doctrine and Worſhip.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.

Obſerve here, Our Apoſtle's Holy Inſinuation and Pious Wiſdom, that he might make a more eaſy way for his Petition, he labours to poſſeſs *Philemon* with an Opinion of his endeared Affection towards him, and of his continual Prayers even by Name for him; *I thank my God, making mention of thee in my prayers.* Where *Note*, That St. *Paul* did, and we may make particular mention of Perſons and Churches in our daily Prayers to Almighty God. I make *mention of thee always in my prayers.*

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou haſt toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints. 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Chriſt Jeſus. 7 For we have great joy and conſolation in thy love, becauſe the bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by thee, brother.

Our Apoſtle having diſcovered to *Philemon* his fervent Prayers for him, now makes mention of the excellent Graces which were ſo Orient and Shining in him, namely, his Faith and his Love; his Faith in Chriſt produced Love to him and to all Saints; not to a Party of Chriſtians only; hearing of thy Love and Faith towards the Lord Jeſus, and in him towards all the Saints. The Saints are to be loved next to Chriſt, and in and for Chriſt. *Obſerve* next, St. *Paul* prays that *Philemon*'s Faith and Love might be made manifeſt to be effectual by producing all ſorts of good Fruits in him and by him; *That the communicatiou of thy faith may become effectual.* *Obſerve* laſtly, The great Joy and Conſolation which the Apoſtle had in the Operativeneſs of *Philemon*'s Faith and Love, whereby the Bowels of the

Saints were greatly refreſhed. Learn hence, That adminiſtring to the Neceſſities of the Saints, and relieving the Bowels of the diſtreſſed Members of Jeſus Chriſt, is a bleſſed Evidence of the Sincerity of our Love to Chriſt and Chriſtians: There is a frozen Charity and a Lip-Love found amongſt many Profeſſors, whom Chriſt will diſown at the Great Day, but ſuch as by Offices of Kindneſs, performed with a tender and pitiful Heart, do refreſh the Bowels of the Saints, Chriſt reckons it as done unto himſelf, whatever is done to thoſe his ſuffering Members, *Mat.* 25. and God himſelf is thereby refreſhed, *Phil.* 4. 18. *an odour of a ſweet ſmell, and a ſacrifice acceptable and pleaſing to God. Note* laſtly, What the Condition of the holieſt and beſt of God's Servants in this World has been, is, and may be; namely, ſuch, that their Bowels may ſtand in need of refreſhing, whilſt the Wicked are fat, freſh, and flouriſhing; but, bleſſed be God, if his Children miſs of Refreſhment from Men, their *time of refreſhing will come from the preſence of the Lord.*

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Chriſt, to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9 Yet for loves ſake I rather beſeech *thee*, being ſuch a one as Paul the aged, and now alſo a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt. 10 I beſeech thee for my ſon Oneſimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: 11 Which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

Obſerve here the marvellous condeſcending Humility of our Apoſtle in theſe Expreſſions: As an Apoſtle, he was the higheſt Ruler and Officer in the Church of God, and had the fulleſt Authority and Power that a Perſon could have upon Earth to command, require, and enjoin *Philemon* to the Practice of his Duty; but he tells him, tho' he might be bold to enjoin, yet he choſe rather to beſeech; *for love ſake I rather beſeech thee.* Learn thence, That Church Rulers and Governours, although they have a commanding Power and Authority, which, upon occaſion, they may, and muſt make uſe of; yet they chuſe much rather, in Love to entreat, hoping *that* will work more kindly and effectually upon the Minds of Perſons. *Obſerve* (2.) the Argument St. *Paul* uſes as a Ground of Entreaty, *I Paul* deſire and beſeech thee, *I Paul the aged, I Paul a priſoner. Note*, He urges his Years as an Argument for granting his Requeſt; that he was Aged, and an Aged Miniſter of Chriſt; if Honour be due to an Aged Perſon walking in the way of Righteouſneſs, much more is it ſo to an Aged Miniſter, grey-headed in the Service of Chriſt, and having faithfully diſcharged his Duty there. He alſo urges his Sufferings as well as his Years; *I Paul the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt.* The Sufferings of Chriſt's Miniſters in the Cauſe of God ſhould by no means leſſen and diminiſh, but rather augment and encreaſe that Reverence, Regard, and Reſpect which is deſervedly due and payable unto them. *Obſerve* (3.) The Perſon whom he thus intercedes with Affection for, *Oneſimus*, whom he calls his *Son begotten in his Bonds*; that is, his Spiritual Son converted to Chriſtianity by his Miniſtry, when he was in Priſon. Where *Note*, That endearing Love, and that fervent Affection which the Miniſters of Chriſt bear to their Converts, to ſuch as they have gained unto Chriſt; it equals, nay, perhaps, exceeds the natural Affections of Parents towards their own Children. *Note* alſo, Who they are that beſt deſerve the Name of *Fathers* in the Church, verily thoſe that have begot moſt Spiritual Children unto God; ſuch as can ſay, Lord, here am I, and the Children which thou haſt given me. Nevertheleſs, for our Comfort, God will, at the Reckoning-Day, account and treat ſuch as Spiritual Fathers who have been Faithful, tho' Unſucceſsful, in the Work of Chriſt, becauſe they have caſt forth *the prolifick Seed* of the Goſpel, therefore the Cauſe of Sterility and Spiritual Barrenneſs cannot be imputed to them, they having exerted and put forth their beſt Endeavours. *Note* alſo, The high Honour which God confers upon his faithful Miniſters; the Scripture allows them, tho' but Inſtruments, what is properly attributed to God himſelf, namely, to beget Spiritual Children; this is God's Work, *Of his own will begat he us*, Jam. 1. 18. God allows that to be in an inferior Senſe attributed to the Miniſtry, which is ſtrictly applicable only to himſelf. *Obſerve*, (4.) How the Apoſtle wiſely anſwers the Objections which *Philemon* might make againſt his Requeſt of receiving *Oneſimus*, that he had been Vile, a Fugitive, a Thief, what not? St. *Paul* implicitly owns all that, yet with a ſoftning Diſtinction, *He was unprofitable in times paſt, but now profiteth both thee and me.* Now St. *Paul* preocupating and anſwering this Objection before *Philemon* made it, *ſhews* how hard it is for the beſt Men to forgive and to forget Injuries done unto them, eſpecially by their Relations, thoſe in their own Families, whether Children or Servants. *Note* alſo, The Character given of *Oneſimus* before Converſion, he *was unprofitable.* Lord! What an uſeleſs, unprofitable Creature is an unſanctified and unconverted Sinner? unprofitable to God, unprofitable to others, unprofitable to his own Soul; but by Converſion he becomes univerſally uſeful and profitable to all about him, but eſpecially to himſelf; others may have the Benefit of our Eſtate, our Parts and Gifts, but we ourſelves ſhall have the chief Benefit, Comfort, and Advantage of our own Grace.

12 Whom I have ſent again: thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels. 13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtred unto me in the bonds of the goſpel. 14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit ſhould not be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly.

Here are ſeveral Arguments uſed by our Apoſtle, why *Philemon* ſhould receive *Oneſimus* into his Service again. (1.) Becauſe St. *Paul* had ſent him for that End, a long and tedious Journey from *Rome* to *Coloſs*, and becauſe he came with the Apoſtle's Commendatory Letters, and in his Name. We are not eaſily to reject thoſe that come to us countenanced and encouraged with the Commendations of the reverend and faithful Miniſters of God in the cloſe of the firſt Argument, at the foot of the twelfth Verſe. *Obſerve* the endearing Title he gives *Oneſimus*, he calls him *his own bowels*; *receive him that is my own bowels.* O Lord! Certainly there is no ſtronger Love, nor more endearing and endeared Affection between any Relations upon Earth, than between the Miniſters of the Goſpel and ſuch of their beloved People, whom they have been happily inſtrumental to beget unto thyſelf. How inexpreſſively dear is the Soul of a poor Servant to a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, and how lovely when once Converted? *Receive him*, for he is as dear to me as if he had proceeded out of *my own bowels.* Again, Another Argument is this; St. *Paul* ſends him, becauſe he was another's Servant, even *Philemon*'s Friend, and being very ſerviceable to the Apoſtle, he would have gladly detained him; but could not ſatisfy himſelf to do it without *Philemon*'s Conſent. Maſters have ſuch a Right in their Servants, and ſuch a Right unto their Service, that they are not to be diſpoſed of without their own Conſent. St. *Paul*, tho' he wanted, yet would not detain *Oneſimus*, tho' a Fugitive Servant, without *Philemon*'s Knowledge: Chriſtian Religion is no Deſtroyer, but an Eſtabliſher of Civil Rights. *Oneſimus*'s Converſion to Chriſtianity gave him no Manumiſſion and Liberty from *Philemon*'s Service, and accordingly our Apoſtle remits and ſends him back to his old Maſter *Philemon.*

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever; 16 Not now as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, a brother beloved, ſpecially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the fleſh, and in the Lord?

Here our Apoſtle anſwers an Objection which poſſibly *Philemon* might make: Thus, *Oneſimus* ran away from me, what Reaſon have I to receive him again? The Apoſtle ſeems thus to reply upon it: If his departing from thee was ſo managed by the wiſe and merciful Providence of God, that it might be an occaſion of thy receiving him again for ever, then for all his Departure thou oughteſt to receive him. But verily thus it is, the Wiſdom of God has thus over-ruled the Matter; he went from thee a Fugitive, Theeviſh, and Purloining; but he returns a Convert, a Chriſtian, a Brother in the Faith, and as ſuch to be entertained by thee, being doubly related to thee, both as a

Servant and as a Fellow-Member of Chriſt. *Obſerve* here, (1) The large Extent, and next the over-ruling Power of the Divine Providence: Its *Extent*, it reaches not only to Kingdoms and Nations, but to Families and Perſons, even to poor Bond-ſlaves; a Fugitive runs not from his Service, but the Providence of God eyes and obſerves it, nay, wiſely and mercifully over-rules. O! the Depth of Divine Knowledge and Wiſdom, the Providence of God concerns itſelf, and has an hand in thoſe Actions of Men which are ſinful, without any blemiſh to his Holineſs; he concurs to the Act, but not to the Ataxy and Diſorder of the Action; he that rides a Lame Horſe is the cauſe of his Going, but not of his Halting. *Obſerve* (2.) The Privilege of our Spiritual Conjunction in Chriſt, above any other Civil Conjunction. The former laſts *for ever*, the latter but for a ſhort time; the Relation between Huſband and Wife, Parent and Child, Maſter and Servant; alas, 'tis but for a Moment, Death will ſoon diſſolve all Civil Relations: But the Spiritual Relation and Conjunction being effected, by the Bond of the Spirit is indiſſoluble, 'tis *for ever*. Death itſelf cannot diſſolve it, yea, it knits the Knot faſter; *he departed for a ſeaſon that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever.* *Obſerve* (3.) That although Chriſtianity doth not take away the Degrees of Perſons, and the Civil Differences between Man and Man, yet it maketh us all Equal and Fellow-brethren in Chriſt. *Receive him* now, not barely *as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, as a brother* in Chriſt; you and he are now Brethren by Grace. Learn hence, That Religious Servants are more than ordinary Servants, they are Brethren in Chriſt; and when Humility, Fidelity, and Prudence, are found with them, as they are more than ordinary Servants, ſo God expects that we ſhould give them more than ordinary Reſpect, and we ſin in denying it. O Servants, would you have higheſt Reſpect ſhewn you, become then firſt humble Servants to Jeſus Chriſt, and then faithful and prudent Servants where God has placed you, and you ſhall never want Reſpect either from God or Men; for *them that honour God he will honour.*

17 If thou count me therefore, a partner, receive him as my ſelf. 18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account. 19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit, I do not ſay to thee, how thou oweſt unto me even thine own ſelf beſides.

Obſerve here, (1.) Another Argument wherewith St. *Paul* doth preſs *Philemon* to receive *Oneſimus*, and it is drawn from a Partnerſhip and Communion with him in the Faith; if we are Partners and have Communion and Fellowſhip one with another as Chriſtians, comply with my Deſires herein. Learn hence, That there is a Communion, a Fellowſhip, a Partnerſhip between Chriſtians; and this Communion which is between Saints, ſhould make Saints reſpect one another. *If thou count me a partner receive him,* yea, *receive him as my ſelf*; a very high Expreſſion, ſtill diſcovering that affectionate Tenderneſs which St. *Paul* bare to this new Convert. *Obſerve* (2.) Another Objection anſwered; *Philemon* might ſay, How can I receive him that has wrong'd me, robb'd me, and run away from me? Sure it is enough to pardon him; muſt I receive him too? Our Apoſtle implicitly grants, that there was a Debt due from *Oneſimus* to *Philemon*; *If he was wronged*, that is, granting that he has done it. Where note, Religion deſtroys no Man's Property, nor does Communion of Saints make a Community of Goods; otherwiſe from this Community, *Oneſimus*, or St. *Paul* for him, might have pleaded an Immunity both from Reſtitution or Puniſhment; St. *Paul* acknowledges, not denies the Debt: But obſerve farther, He takes it upon himſelf, *put it on my account, I will repay it.* 'Tis not then unlawful in itſelf for one Perſon to become Bound and Surety for another; yea, it is a Work of Mercy, which not only may be done, but ſometimes muſt be done, but always with due Caution and Conſideration. *Obſerve* (3.) The wonderful Modeſty of the Apoſtle in mentioning his own Praiſes and Commendations, *I ſay, not that thou oweſt to me even thine own ſelf,* implying what great things he had done for *Philemon* in his Converſion, ſo great as made *Philemon* a Debtor, not only of his own Goods, but of himſelf too: However, the Apoſtle only glances at it modeſtly, and that upon a juſt and great Occaſion too; *I do not ſay,* (though I might have ſaid it) *that thou oweſt to me even thine own ſelf beſides.*

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refreſh my bowels in the Lord. 21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay. 22 But withal, prepare me alſo a lodging: for I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you.

Obſerve here, (1.) A Pathetick Repetition of our Apoſtle's former Petition, with the force and Strength of a freſh and additional Argument. Thus, O my Brother, that which revives me in a Priſon, and refreſhes my Bowels, now I am in Bonds, that aſſuredly thou oughteſt to do; but thy remitting and receiving *Oneſimus* will thus refreſh me, therefore do it. Learn thence, That whatever Chriſtians know will rejoice the Hearts, and revive the Spirits of one another, ought in mutual Condeſcenſion and Kindneſs to be performed each towards other upon their mutual Requeſts. How unnatural is it for one Member to vex and grieve another, as unbecoming is it in the Body Spiritual, as it is in the Body Natural; *Brother, let me have joy in the Lord, refreſh my bowels in the Lord.* *Obſerve* (2.) Our Apoſtle's Holy Confidence in *Philemon*'s Obedience and Compliance; *having confidence in thy obedience I know thou wilt do more than I ſay.* See here what Credit and Honour, Conſcience and Obedience puts upon a Man; *Philemon*'s good Conſcience occaſioned St. *Paul*'s Confidence: It is a ſpecial Honour when the general Courſe of a Man's Life is ſo ſteady, ſo uniform, and even, that either our Miniſters or pious Friends dare be confident in us, vouch for us, and engage for our Obedience and Compliance with whatever becomes us. *Obſerve,* (3.) St. *Paul* having finiſhed his Requeſt for *Oneſimus*, ſpeaks one Word for himſelf, namely, That a Lodging might be provided for him, hoping it ſeems for a Deliverance out of Priſon by the Help of the Church's Prayers, *prepare me a Lodging.* Religion is no Enemy to Hoſpitality; nay, it requires it, and encourages to it, *Rom.* 12. 13. *Heb.* 13. 2. It is a Duty incumbent upon all, but eſpecially Miniſters; but an unkind World takes Care that ſome have ſcarce Bread ſufficient for their Families, much leſs have any Ability for Hoſpitality, or indeed for thoſe neceſſary Acts of Charity which are required by God, and expected by Man, to render their Labours amongſt their People both acceptable and ſucceſsful. The Miniſters of God when they aſk Bread of ſome, they give them a Stone, and when they demand their Dues of others, they ſting like a Scorpion; but bleſſed be God it is not thus univerſally. *Note* laſtly, What it was St. *Paul* grounded his Expectation of Deliverance upon, namely, the Help and Benefit of the Church's Prayers, *I truſt through your Prayers I ſhall be given unto you.* Learn, That our Deliverance from Trouble is to be expected and ſought by the means of the Prayers of ſuch as fear God; yet mark, Though Prayer obtains much, yet it merits nothing at God's Hand. *I truſt thro' your Prayers I ſhall be given,* that is, freely given in *unto you*; though we obtain Bleſſings by Prayer, yet not for the Merit of our Prayers. If Mercy were due to us, Thankfulneſs were not due to God.

23 There ſalute thee Epaphras, my fellow-priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus; 24 Marcus, Ariſtarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers. 25 The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Concluſion of his Epiſtle, he ſhuts it up with Salutations and Prayer; firſt, he ſalutes *Philemon* from *Epaphras*, *Marcus*, *Ariſtarchus*, *Demas*, and *Luke*, ſome his Fellow-Priſoners, all his Fellow-Labourers. Here *Note*, How graciouſly God provides for the Comfort of his Children in a Priſon; he ſweetned St. *Paul*'s Affliction with the Saints Communion; it was no Joy to St. *Paul* that *Epaphras* was in Priſon, he had rather he had been preaching at *Coloſs*; but ſeeing he was a Priſoner, the Apoſtle, no doubt, was very thankful that he was in the ſame Priſon with him, where they had opportunity, (it's hoped) to pray together, to diſcourſe, encourage and comfort one another: And note the Cauſe of *Epaphras* his Impriſonment, ***in Chriſt Jeſus***, that is, for the Sake of Chriſt Jeſus. No doubt there were others in Priſon beſides *Epaphras*, but none were St. *Paul's* Fellow-Priſoners but he, becauſe tho' Sufferers in the ſame Priſon, yet not for the ſame Cauſe, *Epaphras my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth thee. Obſerve*, (2.) Our Apoſtle's concluding Prayer, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your Spirit.* Here *Note*, (1.) The Perſon prayed to, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, our anointed King; from *Chriſt* we are called *Chriſtians*, becauſe every one of us, in our meaſure, are Partakers of a Divine Unction with and from Him, 1 *John* 20. *We have an Unction from the Holy One.* This Oyl ran down from the Head of our great High Prieſt, to the very Skirts of his Garment. *Note* (2.) The Bleſſing prayed for, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy Spirit*, that is, may the ſpecial Favour of God, both in its Effects and Influences, in its Graces and Comforts, reſide in thy Soul and Spirit; may the bleſſed Spirit of our Lord Jeſus evermore dwell in thee by his ſanctifying Impreſſions, by his powerful Aſſiſtances, and by his quickning Influences. *Note* (3.) He doth not pray for *Philemon* ſolely, tho' for him eminently, but for all the Saints at *Coloſs*, who had obtained like precious Faith with him; the Grace of our Lord Jeſus be with, not *thy* but *your* Spirit: All the Saints of God in general, yea, the whole Race of Mankind univerſally, muſt be remembred by us in our Prayers. *Amen* is a Word that denotes our Earneſtneſs of Deſire to be heard, and our comfortable Expectation of being anſwered: It teaches us, That whatever we pray for, ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly expected, and earneſtly deſired. They ſin in Prayer, who either do not underſtand what they pray for, or do not earneſtly deſire what they pray for, or do not believe God's readineſs to grant what they pray for: Therefore in Teſtimony of our Deſire and Aſſurance to be heard in Prayer, we ſay, *Amen.*

LAUS DEO.

The EPISTLE to the HEBREWS.

As touching the Author and Penman of this Epiſtle to the Hebrews, *there have been many and various Opinions, ſome have ſuppoſed it written by St.* Luke, *others by* Barnabas, *or* Clemens, *but moſt by St.* Paul, *which they attempt to prove from Chapter* 13. 23. Know ye not that our brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; *becauſe it is cuſtomary with St.* Paul, *when he writes Epiſtles to call* Timothy *his Brother,* 2 Cor. 1. 1. Coloſ. 1. 1. *And alſo from the Words of St.* Peter, 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. As our dear brother Paul hath written unto you in all his Epiſtles. *Whence it is evident, that the Apoſtle* Paul *had writ to them, to whom St.* Peter *was then writing; that is, to the Believing* Jews *in general, and to thoſe of the Diſperſion in particular. But ſince we are aſſured that the Spirit of God did indite the Book, we need not be over-ſollicitous to find out whoſe Hand it was that held the Pen.*

The Perſons to whom this Epiſtle is directed, are ſtiled Hebrews; *that is, the Believing* Jews *Converted to Chriſtianity, chiefly thoſe that inhabited* Judea, *and in and about* Jeruſalem: *Who though they had embraced the Goſpel, yet they adhered to the* Moſaick *Rites, and* Jewiſh *Ceremonies, joining them with Chriſtianity, as neceſſary to Salvation. Now for this bare Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they were expoſed to a bitter Perſecution by the unbelieving* Jews. *Our Apoſtle therefore juſtly fearing leſt their Sufferings for Chriſtianity ſhould occaſion their Apoſtacy from it, writes this Epiſtle to eſtabliſh and confirm them in their Holy Profeſſion, by acquainting them with the ſad and fatal Conſequences of a ruinous Apoſtacy, and the fruitleſneſs of former Sufferings, without a reſolute Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Faith, and Patience under all Tribulations.*

That St. Paul *didnot prefix his Name to this Epiſtle, as he did to others, the Reaſon ſuppoſed is this, Becauſe he was the Apoſtle of the* Gentiles, *and not of the Circumciſion, or of the* Jews; *and his Name being not over-acceptable to them, he ſets it not at the Front of his Epiſtle, leſt the ſight of it ſhould have prejudiced the* Jews, *and taken them off from duly weighing and conſidering the weighty Matters which he wrote about.*

The general Scope and Deſign of this Epiſtle, is to inform the Hebrews, *that the Goſpel-Miniſtry, or Diſpenſation under the New-Teſtament by Jeſus Chriſt, far ſurpaſſeth and tranſcendently excelleth the Miniſtry of the Old-Teſtament, under* Moſes *and the Prophets: And to prove, That Chriſt was greater than the Angels, a greater Perſon and Law-giver than* Moſes, *a greater Prieſt than* Aaron, *a greater Prince than* Melchiſedec; *and that the* Levitical *Prieſthood, and Old-Covenant, were to give Place to Chriſt our great High-Prieſt, and to the New-Covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.*

CHAP. I.

In the firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle, the Proofs of the Eternal Deity of Jeſus Chriſt are produced with ſuch clear Evidence of Scripture Light, that only a veiled Heart, obſtinate Infidelity, can reſiſt. And the Medium which the Inſpired Penman makes uſe of, is, The comparing Chriſt with the Angels, (the Glory and Beauty of the Creation) and ſhewing that he is infinitely dignified above them; and that Religious Adoration is due unto him from them, even from the Angels of the higheſt Order, ver. 6. Let all the Angels of God worſhip him. *But this will moſt evidently appear by a particular Explication of the ſeveral Parts and Verſes of the Chapter, in which our Apoſtle thus ſpeaks.*

GOD who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by *his* Son.——

Our Apoſtle intending here a Compariſon between the Law and the Goſpel, ſhews firſt wherein they both agree, and next wherein they differ. They agree (firſt) in this, That God was the Author of them both; both Law and Goſpel received their Original from God himſelf; and God the Father, by way of Eminency, was the peculiar Author both of Law and Goſpel. *God*, that God, *who ſpake in timespaſt by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son. Obſerve*, (2.) The Difference between the Law and the Goſpel, with reſpect to the manner of their Revelation. The Revelation of the Will of God under the Law, was, (1.) At *ſundry times*, before the Flood, by *Enoch* and *Noah*; after the Flood by *Abraham*, by *Jacob*, by *Moſes*, and all the Prophets. (2.) *In divers manners*, ſometimes by a lively Voice, ſometimes by Dreams and Viſions, ſometimes by Inſpiration and immediate Revelation, ſometimes by Urim and Thummim, ſometimes by Signs from Heaven. (3.) The Revelation of the Law was made of old, formerly, in *times paſt*; this of the Goſpel was made in theſe *laſt days*. (4.) That was made to the *Fathers*, this to *Us*. (5.) That Revelation was made by the *Prophets*, this by the *Son* Jeſus Chriſt. From the whole Learn, (1.) That Almighty God did not leave the World only to the Light of Nature, and to know him barely by his Works of Creation; but beſtowed upon them the invaluable Bleſſing of ſupernatural Revelation, thereby to bring Mankind to the clearer Knowledge of their Duty. Learn, (2.) That the Revelation which God was pleaſed to make of Himſelf, his Mind, and Will, was gradual, and by Parts, not all at one Time, and in one Manner, but at *ſundry Times*, and in *divers Manners*. Learn, (3.) That the Goſpel Diſpenſation is the moſt perfect Revelation of the Will of God, which God ever did, or ever will make to the Sons of Men. Learn, (4.) That as it is a perfect, ſo likewiſe a final Revelation of God's Mind and Will to a loſt World: A farther Diſcovery of the Mind of God for Man's Salvation is not to be expected; the Goſpel is the laſt Effort which the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs will make upon Mankind, in order to Eternal Happineſs; herein God has ſpoken to us by his Son, and if we will not hear him, he will ſpeak no more, we muſt expect no other; he can ſend no greater Prophet, no dearer Perſon to us than his own Son; and as he can ſend no greater, ſo will he ſend no other; for if we deſpiſe him, whom will we reverence? Now the Dignity of this Perſon, our Apoſtle proceeds in this and the next Verſes to deſcribe.

2 —— Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds.

The Title of ***Heir***, which is here given to Chriſt, ſetteth out his Dignity and Dominion, together with the Right he has to both; namely, That of his Sonſhip; for what is an Heir but his Father's Succeſſor? Chriſt as a Son being Heir of all things, imports that he is Lord of all, and has a Sovereign Empire and Dominion over all Perſons and Things, over all Angels and Men, whether living or dead. Learn hence, That God the Father has given and granted unto Chriſt his Son, as Mediator and Head of his Church, a Sovereign Power and Authority over all Perſons and Things, both in Heaven and in Earth, to be diſpoſed of by him at his Pleaſure, and according to the Sovereign Purpoſe of his Will; ***Whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.***

—— By whom alſo he made the worlds.

By whom, not ***for whom***, as the ***Socinians*** would ſuggeſt: The Word ſignifies the efficient and the final Cauſe, according to *Coloſ.* 1. 16, 17. ***By him were all things created, and by him all things conſiſt.*** And ***by him***, not as an Inſtrument or created Cauſe, for then muſt he be created by himſelf, ſeeing ***all things were made by him, and nothing made without him***, *John* 1. 3. But as the principal efficient Cauſe, according to St. *John*, 5. 19. ***Whatſoever the Father doth, that doth alſo the Son likewiſe.*** The Father doth all by the Son, and the Son doth all from the Father. And by ***making the Worlds***, we are to underſtand his forming of the Old World, not his Reforming of the New, for if ſo, the Apoſtles might be ſaid to make the Worlds as well as Chriſt, becauſe they had a principal Hand in Converting and reforming the World. But by the Worlds here underſtand the Viſible and Material Worlds, all things in Heaven and Earth, which were made by Chriſt, not as a ſubordinate Inſtrument, but as a primary and principal Agent, which ſets forth the Omnipotent Power of Chriſt and conſequently proves him to be truly and really God. Learn hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by making the Worlds, and all things therein, by his own immediate Power, has given a full and ample Demonſtration of his Divinity, or being Eſſentially and Really God.

3 Who being the brightneſs of *his* glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high:

Our Apoſtle here proceeds in deſcribing the Divinity of Chriſt's Perſon, by whom the Father has made known his Will to us under the Goſpel. He declares, (1.) What he is. (2.) What he does, or did. (3.) The Conſequent of both, or what he now enjoyeth. ***Obſerve***, (1.) Our Apoſtle declares who, and what Chriſt was, and is, namely, ***The Brightneſs of the Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.*** As the Brightneſs of the Sun is of the ſame Nature with the Sun, and of as long Continuance as the Sun, and cannot be ſeparated from the Sun; and yet the Sun, and the Brightneſs of the Sun, are really diſtinct each from other. In like manner, the Father and the Son are of one and the ſame Eſſence, Co-eternal and Inſeparable, yet the Perſon of the one is diſtinct from the other. And as the Sun comunicates its Light and Influence to us by its Beams, ſo doth God communicate his Goodneſs, and manifeſt himſelf to us by Jeſus Chriſt. Learn hence, That the Son is of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, yet a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father, and all the incomprehenſible Glory of the Father brightly ſhines forth in Chriſt his Son.

—— And the expreſs image of his perſon.

That is, the expreſs Character of God the Father's Perſon, his natural Image, and eſſential Likeneſs; all the Perfections ſhining forth in God the Father, are ſubſtantially in Chriſt the Son: Is the Father Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniſcient, Omnipreſent? ſo is the Son, whoſe Character is, whoſe Reſemblance and Image he bears; *John* 10. 38. ***The Father is in me, and I in him***; the ſame eſſential Properties and Nature being in each Perſon, by vertue thereof their Perſons are ſaid to be in each other. All the glorious Perfections of the Nature of God do belong unto, and dwell in the Perſon of the Son of God. ***Obſerve***, (2.) Our Apoſtle having declared what Chriſt is, next declares what he does; namely, that he ***upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power***; that is, he exerts and puts forth the ſame Omnipotent Power in the Work of Preſervation, which he did in the Work of Creation, keeping it from ſinking in its original Chaos of Confuſion. This Work of Conſervation, ſay ſome, is a greater Act of Omnipotency than that of Creation; by the ***former***, all things were brought out of nothing, by the ***latter*** they are preſerved from returning into nothing, which their own Nature, and their perpetual Conflict by contrariety of Qualities, would neceſſarily precipitate them into. Learn hence, (1.) That ſuch is the Nature and Condition of the Univerſe, that it cannot ſubſiſt one Moment without continual Support; ſuch is the dependent Condition of the whole Creation. Learn, (2.) That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has the Weight of the whole Creation upon his Hand, he upholdeth what himſelf created; and as well his upholding as creating, his Conſervation as well as Creation of all things by the Word of his Power, do prove him truly and really God. ***Obſerve***, (3.) A farther Evidence and Proof of the Divinity of Chriſt produced here by our Apoſtle, as he made the World by his Omnipotent Power, and upholds it by his wonderful Providence, ſo he redeemed it by his Blood, ***He by himſelf purged our Sins.*** He that made the Heaven, bow'd the Heavens, and came down from Heavens, and became a Sacrifice for Sin on Earth, and ***by himſelf*** alone, by himſelf without a Partner, by himſelf without a Comforter, expiated the Guilt of Sin, and ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin, ſuffering as he was Man, and ſatisfying as he was God; ***who by himſelf purged our Sins.*** Learn hence, That ſo great was the Work of Expiation of Sin, that it could no otherwiſe be really effected and accompliſhed than by the Sacrifice and Satisfaction of Chriſt, who was truly and really God. ***Obſerve***, (4.) The Conſequent of all that Chriſt did, or his glorious Condition after his Humiliation, having ***purged our Sins, he ſat down on the right Hand of the Majeſty on high:*** That is, God the Father clothed him with the higheſt Honour, and endowed him with the greateſt Power that Heaven itſelf could afford; the Right Hand is the Place both of Dignity and Honour, and alſo of Superiority and Power. Chriſt's ſitting at God's Right Hand, imports his Exaltation to the higheſt Authority and moſt ſupreme Dominion. Learn hence, That when our Lord Jeſus Chriſt had finiſhed his Suffering upon Earth, he was placed in the Seat of the higheſt Honour and Authority, at the Right Hand of God his Father in Heaven, even to be the Object of Adoration both to Angels and Men, as the following Verſes declare, in which our Apoſtle thus ſpeaks.

4 Being made ſo much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him.

In the foregoing Verſes, a Compariſon was made between Chriſt and the Prophets, here between Chriſt and the Angels, and the Preference and Pre-eminence given to him above them all. Angels were very glorious Creatures, employed by God in giving of the Law, but Chriſt, whom God the Father employed in the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, is far ſuperior to them, and has an Excellency above them. (1.) ***A more excellent Name***, they being called Miniſters or Servants, he ſtiled ***a Son***. (2.) A more excellent Nature, his being a Divine, theirs an Angelical Nature; yea, this Humane Nature, by vertue of its Union with the Godhead, has a Dignity ſurpaſſing the Nature of Angels. (3.) A more excellent Office and Function, as Mediator between God and

Man, which belongs not to any Angel: And, (4.) Conſequently a more excellent Power and Authority, with a right to Adoration and Worſhip, which the Angels have not, but are commanded to worſhip him, *when he brought his firſt begotten into the World*, that is, in the Morning of the Reſurrection, when he was in a glorious manner begotten from the Dead; the Father ſays, *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*; and therefore he that is to be worſhipped, is greater than they that are to worſhip. Learn hence, (1.) That the evidencing and declaration of Chriſt to be the Son of God, was the particular Care and ſpecial Work of God the Father; he ſaid it, he recorded it, he revealed it: *Thou art my Son*. Learn, (2.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Mediator of the New-Covenant, is in his own Perſon God Bleſſed for ever, to whom Divine Honour and Religious Worſhip is due and payable from glorified Angels; *let all the Angels of God worſhip him*. Learn, (3.) That the Command of God is the Ground and Reaſon of all Religious Worſhip; the Angels are to worſhip Chriſt, but the Ground of their doing it is God's Command; *He ſaith, Let all the Angels worſhip him*. Learn, (4.) That it can be no part of our Duty to worſhip the Angels, who are our Fellow-Servants in the Worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt; they that are to worſhip Chriſt with us, ſurely they are not to be worſhipped by us.

7 And of the angels he ſaith, Who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son, *he ſaith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs *is* the ſcepter of thy kingdom: 9 Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows.

Still our Apoſtle goes on, comparing Chriſt and the Angels together, and giving a tranſcendent Preference to the one before the other. The Angels are miniſtring Servants, but Chriſt a Natural Son; the Angels are the prime Inſtruments of the Father's Providence, moſt zealous and active to accompliſh his Pleaſure, but the Son is *God*; *thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever. God*, not by Analogy and Deputation, as Princes are, nor with a Limitation and Diminution, as *Moſes* was made a God to *Pharaoh*, but abſolutely and really, as ſubſiſting in the Divine Nature; to the Son he ſaith, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Learn hence*, That it is the Divine Nature of Jeſus Chriſt that gives ſtability and fixedneſs, yea, immutability and unchangeableneſs to his Throne and Kingdom; *thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. And whereas the Scepters of Earthly Kings are often unrighteouſly managed, and their Throne do ruinouſly fall, the Scepter of Righteouſneſs is the Scepter of Chriſt's Kingdom; that is, all the Laws, and the whole Adminiſtration of his Kingdom by his Word and Spirit are all juſt and equal, righteous and holy; *a Scepter of Righteouſneſs is the Scepter of thy Kingdom*. And farther, the Apoſtle declares, that the Righteous Adminiſtration of Chriſt in his Kingdom, proceeds from his own habitual Righteouſneſs and Love thereunto: *Thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity*, and for that Reaſon was dignified and exalted by God over and above all his Fellows. *Learn hence*, That Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator, becauſe of his Love to Righteouſneſs, and Hatred to Sin, is dignified and advanced by God, not only above all Men, but likewiſe above all Angels; *Therefore God, even thy God, hath Anointed thee above thy Fellows.*

10 And, Thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. 11 They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt: and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.

What proof can be more deſired of Chriſt's Divinity than what is here given by our Apoſtle? the Name and Attributes of God are given to him, as alſo an everlaſting Throne and Kingdom; Divine Honour is required to be paid to him: And here ſuch Divine Works are aſcribed to him, wherein no Creature can have any ſhare of Efficiency with him: Such is the making of the World, *Thou Lord laidſt the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thine Hands*; Here we have Chriſt's Omnipotency declared, *He laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are thy Handy-works*: And his Eternity and Immutability aſſerted, *When the Heavens periſh, thou remaineſt; when they wax old and are changed, thou art the ſame. Learn hence*, That the whole World, the Heavens and the Earth being made by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is an evident Proof that he is exalted above all Creatures, and that he is an Almighty and Unchangeable God; *Thou Lord haſt laid*, &c. *Learn*, (2.) That ſuch is the Frailty of Man's Nature, and ſuch the periſhing Condition of all created things, that nothing will or can yield ſtable Conſolation to us, but a firm Belief of the Omnipotency and Immutability of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

13 But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool?

This Verſe contains a farther Proof of Chriſt's Pre-eminence above the Angels, and that he is in reality the Son of God; namely, becauſe he ſits in the Quality of a Son, at the Right Hand of God the Father; equal to him in Dignity, Power and Glory, commanding all the viſible and inviſible World, moſt eaſily, yet irreſiſtibly, though gradually ſubduing his Enemies to a conſummated and compleat Victory. *To which of the Angels ſaid he at any time?* The words are an Interrogation, which have the force of a vehement Negation, and imply, that God the Father did never ſay this to any of the Angels, nor put ſuch Honour upon any one of them, as to ſay, Sit on my Right Hand until I make thy Foes thy footſtool; but to Chriſt he ſaid it, *Pſal.* 10. 1. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool. Learn hence*, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt is a ſpiritual King, and as ſuch has many Enemies to his Kingdom and Government. Sin is an Enemy to Chriſt and his Kingdom; it makes an univerſal Oppoſition to Chriſt and his Government, Satan is a ſworn Enemy to Chriſt and his Throne, and he exerts his Enmity by Temptations and Perſecutions. The World is an Enemy alſo in the Things of it, in the Men of it, in the Rule of it. The Law is an Enemy to Chriſt and his Kingdom, not abſolutely but accidentially, by reaſon of the conſequents that attend it: It ſlays them, *Rom*, 7. 9, 10, 11, which is the work of an Enemy: In a word, Death, the Grave and Hell, are Chriſt's Enemies. *Learn* (2.) That all Chriſt's Enemies ſhall in Chriſt's Time be made his footſtool; they are conquering now initially, and gradually, they ſhall be conquered e're long finally and perfectly; and all his People ſhall be made compleat ſharers in his Victory and Conqueſt. *Learn*, (3.) That Chriſt ſitting at God's Right Hand, in a certain and aſſured Expectation, of having his Foes become his footſtool, is an undoubted Proof of the Divinity of his Perſon, and that he is eſſentially and really God. To none of the Angels, or any of the Creatures, ſaid he, at any time, ſit on my Right Hand, but to the Son he ſaid.

14 Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?

This is the laſt Teſtimony produced by the Apoſtle to prove Chriſt's Pre-eminency above the Angels: he is a Son, they are but Servants; not only Servants to Chriſt, but Servants to Believers, to the Church of Chriſt, to the Heirs of Salvation. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Nature of Angels declared, they are *Spirits*, without any thing Material or Corporeal belonging to them, yet having a Power to aſſume a Body, and appear in Humane Shape, when they pleaſe. The Scripture deſcribes them as excelling in Strength, Purity and Holineſs, to be of great Activity and Swiftneſs, and gives Intimation of ſeveral Ranks and Orders among them, diſtinguiſhing them by the Names of Principalities and Powers, Thrones and Dominions; but what the Difference of theſe Names do import, none can poſitively declare. *Obſerve*, (2.) Their general Office declared, They are *miniſtring Spirits*, they are God's Domeſtick Servants, they attend upon his Throne, they expect his Commands, they execute his Pleaſure, and are in a conſtant Readineſs to do his Will. The Angels are the great Inſtruments of Providence in the World; not that God needs them, or cannot manage without them; for he can do whatever he pleaſeth in Heaven and Earth; God can ſteer all Humane Affairs with the leaſt Nod and Beck of his Will, without any Inſtruments at all; but his Wiſdom and Goodneſs thinks fit to Honour his Creatures with his Commands, that ſo they may be capable of his Favour and Rewards. *Obſerve*, (3.) The ſpecial Office and Imployment of good Angels, with reference to good Men: they are ſent forth, there is their Deſignation and Appointment *to miniſter*, that's their general End and Imployment *for the Heirs of Salvation*, that's their more ſpecial and peculiar Buſineſs; they have a Charge of the Bodies and Souls of the Saints whilſt alive; a ſpecial Charge of their Souls at Death to conduct them to Bleſſedneſs, and probably a care and Charge of their Bodies after Death, as may be gathered from St. *Jude*, *ver.* 9. Learn hence, (1.) That the higheſt Honour of the moſt glorious Angels in Heaven, is to miniſter to the Saints by God's Appointment here on Earth. Learn, (2.) That ſuch is the Love and Care of God towards his Saints, that he ſends the moſt glorious Attendants upon his own Throne, to miniſter unto them and take care of them. Behold then, the aſtoniſhing Regard which the great God has for good Men, in that he appoints all his Angels to miniſter to them, for the Safeguard of their Perſons, for the Succeſs of their Affairs, and for the Security of their eternal Salvation. Lord! What is Man that thou art thus mindful of him, that when thou madeſt him lower than the Angels, thou ſhouldſt yet make the Angels miniſter unto him. Behold alſo the Impiety of the Church of *Rome*, in worſhipping of Angels: Surely, if they are our Fellow-Servants, and miniſter unto us, we are by no means to worſhip them. See *Rev.* 19. 10.

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle having by an irreſiſtible Strength, and force of Argument, proved his Propoſition laid down in the foregoing Chapter, namely, That Chriſt, the Diſpenſer of the Goſpel, was not only above Moſes, *the Deliverer of the Law, but far ſuperior to the Angels themſelves. He comes in the beginning of this Chapter to draw an Inference from his foregoing Diſcourſe, as appears by the illative Particle,* Therefore, *at the head of the firſt Verſe, which runs thus:*

THerefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let *them* ſlip.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing Chriſt is ſo excellent in his Perſon, and ſeeing the Goſpel has ſuch a glorious Author as the Bleſſed Jeſus, let us take great heed that we eſteem his Perſon, revere his Authority, reverence his Miniſtry and his Meſſage, and that our Memories be not like leaking Veſſels, ſuffering the Word at any time to ſlip and run from us. Learn hence, (1.) That the Conſideration of the Revelation of the Goſpel by the Son of God, is a powerful Motive to an high Eſtimation of it, and a diligent Attendance on it: *Therefore we ought to give more earneſt heed*; that is, knowing the Excellency of his Perſon, and Sublimity of his Doctrine. Learn, (2.) That the true and only way of honouring our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Son of God, is by diligent Attendance and Obedience to his Word: Where there is no Obedience to the Goſpel, there is no Faith in, nor Love unto Jeſus Chriſt, the Author and Diſpenſer of the Goſpel. Learn, (3.) That there are ſundry Times and Seaſons wherein, and ſeveral Ways and Means whereby Men are in great danger of loſing the Word, if they attend not diligently to its Preſervation: *Leſt at any time* ſome loſe the Word in a time of Proſperity, others in a time of Perſecution, ſome in a time of Temptation. Learn, (4.) That the Word heard is not loſt without great Sin, as well as with the inevitable Ruin of the Souls of Men: if we ſuffer the Word to ſlip out of our Memories, that we forget it; out of our Hearts, that we deſpiſe it; out of our Lives, that we are diſobedient to it; it is loſt as to us, and will end in our Loſs, yea in our Ruin at the laſt. Learn, (5.) That the only way to prevent this Sin and Danger under the Word, is by a very diligent Attendance upon it, and giving more earneſt Heed to the things contained in it; we are to attend to the Word before we hear, to bring us to it; attend upon it in hearing, that it may be remembred by us; and after we have heard it, that it may be be practiſed by us. This Conſideration, that it is the Word of Chriſt, the Great and Mighty God, the Wiſdom of the Father, that we are going forth to hear, will engage us to give the more earneſt heed to the things we hear, *leſt at any time we ſhou'd let them ſlip*.

2 For if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; 3 How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation,

The Apoſtle having ſet forth the tranſcendent Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon and Office, and ſhewn that he was a more excellent Prophet than *Moſes*, a more excellent Prieſt than *Aaron*, a more excellent King than *Melchiſedec*, hereupon he infers, that ſuch as deſpiſe the Goſpel, the Doctrine of this Bleſſed Jeſus, are far more inexcuſable than thoſe that were the Tranſgreſſors of the Law of *Moſes*. *If the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt*; that is, If the Law given by the Miniſtry of Angels was firm and inviolable, and all the Tranſgreſſors of it were juſtly and ſeverely puniſhed, how can we eſcape periſhing if we neglect the Goſpel which makes a diſcovery of that great Salvation which was purchaſed by Chriſt for loſt Sinners? The Apoſtle's Argument is drawn (*a minori ad majus*) from the Leſs to the Greater: Thus, if Almighty God was ſo ſevere againſt the Violation of a far meaner Inſtitution, to wit, the Law given by the Miniſtry and Diſpenſation of Angels, how can we eſcape that neglect to hear and obey the Goſpel, which makes a tender, yea, the only tender of Salvation to a loſt World? *Note here*, (1.) The great Care which Almighty God takes to make loſt Sinners happy; namely, by offering them a great Salvation. *Note*, (2.) The great Care which every one of us ought to take in order to our own Happineſs and Salvation, and that is, not to *neglect* it. *Note*, (3.) The great Guilt which they contract, and the inevitable Puniſhment God will inflict on ſuch as do neglect this great Salvation, *how ſhall they eſcape*? Learn hence, (1.) That there is Salvation held forth, and tendred by Chriſt to loſt Sinners in the Goſpel. That this Salvation thus held forth and tendred unto Sinners, it is a great Salvation; *great* in its Author *Chriſt Jeſus*, *great* in the Price paid for it, *the Blood of Jeſus*; *great* in the ſubject Recipient of it, the whole Man, *Soul and Body*; *great* in regard of the Evils it ſaves us from, Sin, Satan, the Curſe of the Law, Death, and Hell; *great* in reſpect of the gracious Privileges it intereſts Believers in. Learn, (3.) That notwithſtanding this Salvation is ſo great yet there are ſome that neglect it. (4.) That it is impoſſible for ſuch Neglecters to eſcape. *Queſt.* (1.) What, ſhall they not eſcape? *Anſw.* The Curſe of the Law, the Wrath of God, the Sentence of Chriſt denounced, and the Sentence of Chriſt inflicted. *Queſt.* (2.) Why they ſhall not eſcape? *Anſw.* Becauſe ſuch Perſons Sin againſt the Remedy, the only Remedy which the Wiſdom of God had found out for Man's Recovery; and accordingly the Mouth of God has ſpoken it, the Hand of God has written it, and the Oath of God has confirmed it, that ſuch Sinners ſhall not eſcape; ſuch as Sin againſt the Remedy muſt periſh without the Remedy.

3 ——Which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; 4 God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

Here we have a ſpecial Reaſon aſſigned, why ſuch as reject the Goſpel cannot eſcape Divine Wrath, becauſe the Goſpel was firſt publiſhed and delivered by Jeſus Chriſt; it was clearly, plainly, ſweetly, and perſuaſively preached by himſelf firſt. The Law was promulgated by Angels, the Goſpel proclaimed by the Son of God, and afterwards by his Apoſtles; and God confirmed their Teſtimony by *Signs and Wonders*, by *miraculous* Powers, and *Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, all which did ſignify God's Approbation of their Doctrine, and gave the World a confirmation of the Truth and Excellency of it. and conſequently gave Credibility to it. *Here Note*, That as the Law of *Moſes* was confirmed by Miracles, ſo was the Goſpel of Jeſus alſo; nay, herein this was ſuperiour to that. *Moſes* wrought Signs and Wonders, but the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were peculiar to the Times of the Meſſiah, and were the proper Confirmation of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation. Yet note farther, That though the Apoſtles had a Power to work Miracles, yet it was *according to God's Will*, and not at their own Pleaſure; they could not work Miracles when they pleaſed, nor what they pleaſed; whence it was evident, that not they but God was the Worker of them. And the more God's over-ruling Will was ſeen in the Miracles *then*, the greater Confirmation have we of that Doctrine *now*, *which* [Goſpel] *was at firſt ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.*

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak. 6 But one in a certain place teſtified, ſaying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him? 7 Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedſt him with glory and honour, and didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands:

Still our Apoſtle proſecutes his former Deſign, which was to perſwade the *Hebrews*, that more heed is to be given to the Word of *Chriſt*, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, than to the Word or Law delivered by *Angels*, becauſe God had given a greater Authority to *Chriſt* than ever he did to *Angels*, as appears by putting the World to come in ſubjection to Chriſt, and not to Angels; yea, in as much as Angels themſelves are to be in ſubjection unto Chriſt, as a part of his Kingdom, *Unto the Angels hath he not put in ſubjection the World to come*; that is, the World of Believers gathered out of all Nations by the preaching of the Goſpel, is put under Chriſt's immediate Power, and ſubject not to Angels, but to Chriſt himſelf. Learn hence, That it is the great Privilege of the Goſpel-Church, that it depends upon Chriſt as its immediate and only Head, and is not put in ſubjection to any other, either Angels or Men. The Goſpel-Church was not put in ſubjection to Angels in its firſt Erection or Inſtitution, nor was it put in ſubjection unto Angels as to the Rule and Government of it when erected; but Angels and Saints are equally ſubjected unto Chriſt, who is both an Head of vital Influence, as alſo an Head of Authority, Rule and Government to the whole Church, and every Member thereof. *Obſerve* next, The Proof which the Apoſtle brings for this out of the *Pſalms*, Pſal. 8. in which *David* breaks forth into Admiration and Wonder, at that Glory and Honour which God the Father put upon Man at firſt in the Work of Creation and next in the Work of Redemption; when the Son of God took the Nature of Man upon him, well might it then be ſaid, Lord! What is Man that thou wert thus mindful of him, and the Sons of Men, that thy dear and only Son did thus viſit them? Learn hence, (1.) That ſuch was the inconceivable Love of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, towards the Sons of Men, that he was free and willing to condeſcend unto any Condition for their Benefit and Salvation: He that was the Creator of Angels was willing for our Sakes to be made lower than the Angels, *a little lower*, that is, for a little time lower than the Angels; namely, during the time of his Humiliation. Learn, (2.) That this wonderful Condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards the Nature of Man, his Reſpect and Care, his Love and Grace towards Mankind, is juſt matter of Great and Eternal Admiration. O! What is Man that thou art mindful of him, and crownedſt him with Dignity and Glory?

8 Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we ſee not yet all things put under him. 9 But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.

We had an Account of the Depth of our Lord's Humiliation before, of the Heighth of his Exaltation now, all things are and ſhall be put under him; for tho' God has given Chriſt Dominion over all things, and all things are ſubject to his Power, yet he hath not as yet exerciſed his compleat Power, in ruining all his Enemies, and reducing all his People to ſubjection: And this will not be ſeen till the laſt *Saint* be converted, and till Death, the laſt Enemy, be deſtroyed; but yet, in the mean time, Chriſt is exalted with great Triumph to his Kingdom in Heaven, and there crowned with Dignity, and Honour and Glory in Heaven. 'Tis eaſy to believe that every thing ſhall be put under him that riſeth up againſt him, in his own appointed time.

9 But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.

Obſerve here, (1.) The wonderful Humiliation and Abaſement, the Exinanition and deep Depreſſion of the Glorious Jeſus; he was made for a little time *lower than the Angels*; that is, he was made Man, and mortal, and did ſuffer Death. *Obſerve*, (2.) The manner of our Lord's Death, *he taſted it*, he did really taſte of it, and but taſte of it; he taſted Death, that is, he died really, and not in appearance only, he taſted it. (2.) Implying, that he underwent the Bitterneſs of it; he found out experimentally what Death was by dying, as a Man finds out the Bitterneſs of a Thing by taſting. Again, He did but taſte of it, he was not finally overcome and vanquiſh'd by it; he continued but a ſhort time under it, it was not poſſible that he ſhould be long holden of it; the Dignity of his Perſon render'd a ſhort Continuance of his under the Power of Death ſufficient for our Redemption. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Perſons for whom he taſted Death, or died; for others, not for himſelf; that is, in their room and ſtead; he underwent that Death in our ſtead, which we ſhould have undergone in our own Perſons. *Obſerve* (4.) The Extent [illegible] Chriſt's Death, he taſted Death *for every Man*; that is, Chriſt by his Death has made God propitious to every Man, [illegible]de Sin remiſſiable, and every Man ſaveable: The Death of Chriſt renders God willing to be reconciled unto all Sinners; Faith renders him actually reconciled. The Reaſon why every Man doth not obtain Salvation, is not for want of a ſufficient Propitiation. *Obſerve*, (5.) The moving Cauſe which inclined God to deliver up Chriſt to Death, and to transfer our Puniſhment upon him, and that was his own Grace and free Good Will; *That he by the Grace of God ſhould taſte Death for every Man. Obſerve*, (6.) The glorious Reward of our Lord's Sufferings with reference to himſelf, *We ſee Jeſus for ſuffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour.* As Chriſt's Meritorious Sufferings for us, ſo ſhall our Patient Suffering for him be rewarded with the higheſt Glory in Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. *The God of all Grace who hath called us into his eternal Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after ye have ſuffered a while, make ye perfect*, &c.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings.

Obſerve here, (1.) The gracious Title given to Chriſt, *the Captain of our Salvation*; becauſe the whole Work of Salvation from firſt to laſt, our Guidance and Conduct through Sin and Suffering, unto Glory and Happineſs, is committed to him. As a Captain he conducts with Care, he leads on with Power, he diſcharges his Truſt with Tenderneſs and Love: He goes before us in Obedience, in Suffering, thro' Death, and into Glory. *Obſerve*, (2.) That God made Jeſus Chriſt the Captain of our Salvation perfect thro' Suffering? that is, He was conſecrated and ſet apart for the Office of a compleat Prieſt by his own Blood, when he offered himſelf without Spot to God. Every *Levitical* Prieſt was conſecrated by the Blood of a Beaſt ſacrificed; Chriſt was conſecrated by his own Blood, for no other Blood would be accepted. It is called the Father's Act to conſecrate and make him perfect; but it was indeed the Son's own immediate Act; the Father's by Deſignation and Appointment, but his own by actual Performance, offering himſelf thro' the eternal Spirit without Spot. *Obſerve*, (3.) That Chriſt being conſecrated and perfected thro' Sufferings, he hath conſecrated the way of Suffering, for all that follow him to paſs thro' it into Glory. Upon this Conſecration of the way of Suffering by Chriſt Jeſus, a Believer's Suffering becomes (1.) Neceſſary and unavoidable, the Head and the Members muſt be made conformable to each other, *Rom.* 8. 29. They are thereby made, (2.) Uſeful and profitable, Chriſt has taken the Curſe out of the Croſs, and ſanctified the Croſs to a ſpecial End and Purpoſe; hereby likewiſe all Sufferings for the Goſpel are, (3.) Made honourable; no greater Honour than to ſuffer for Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 41. *The Apoſtles rejoiced that they had the Honour to ſuffer Shame for his Name:* And laſtly, Sufferings hereby are made ſafe to the Sons of God, yea, more ſafe than Proſperity by far. Gold is not conſumed, but improved and preſerved in the Furnace. *Obſerve*, (4.) That ſuch is the Merit and Deſert of Sin, and ſuch the Immutability and Severity of the Juſtice of God, that there was no way poſſible to bring Sinners unto Glory, but by the Death and Sufferings of the Son of God; or if poſſible, yet no other way ſo becoming God, *it became him for whom are all things*, and ſo expreſſive of his Love and Goodneſs to a loſt World; it would have been unbecoming God, the ſupreme Governour of the World, to have paſſed by the Deſert of Sin without a Satisfaction; therefore his Wiſdom contrived that Grace ſhould be exerciſed and Juſtice ſatisfied, that Sin ſhould be puniſhed, Mercy magnified; that Sinners ſhould be ſaved, and the Glory of all God's Attributes ſecured.

11 For both he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, *are* all of one: for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my truſt in him. And again, Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.

In theſe Words, the Union of Chriſt and Us, by his Participation of the ſame Nature with us is declared: He and We *are all of one*; that is, of one and the ſame Nature, of one Stock and Original; it was the Product of the wiſe, merciful, and righteous Counſel of God, that the Saviour of Men ſhould have Communion with them in their Nature, that he might have Right to redeem them by his Propinquity and Alliance with them; *Both he that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified are all of one.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was, and ought to be of the ſame Nature and Stock with thoſe whom he did redeem, and ſanctify unto God. Divine Juſtice required, that the ſame Nature which had ſinned, ſhould ſuffer for Sin. The Wiſdom of God was pleaſed to redeem Man; Man muſt be redeemed by Man; God as God could not die, therefore God becomes Man, that he might be in a Capacity to die; he that as Man will redeem Man, muſt be of the ſame Nature with Man. This Chriſt was, both by Divine Inſtitution, and by a voluntary Suſception; *He that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified are all of one.* Learn, (2.) That Chriſt having taken our Nature upon him, accounts it no Diſgrace to acknowledge and own us for his Brethren; Chriſt will be aſhamed of none of his Brethren, but ſuch as are a Shame unto him. Learn, (3.) That notwithſtanding the Union of Nature which is betwixt Chriſt and Us, yet in reſpect of our Perſons, there is an inconceivable diſtance between him and us: So that it is a marvellous Condeſcenſion in him to call us Brethren. Here *Note*, That tho' Chriſt calls us Brethren, yet it becomes us to call him Lord; and as ſuch to adore and worſhip him, to glorify and ſerve him, to honour and obey him.

14 Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and bloud, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame: that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Reality of Chriſt's aſſuming the Humane Nature aſſerted; *As the Children were partakers of fleſh and bloud, he alſo himſelf took part of the ſame.* Which is in effect the ſame he had aſſerted in the foregoing Verſe, that *he that ſanctifieth, and they that are ſanctified are all of one*; that is, of one Nature and Original. *Obſerve*, (2.) A two-fold Reaſon aſſigned, why Chriſt thus condeſcendingly aſſumed the Human Nature, namely, that he might deſtroy the Devil, who had the Power of Death, and deliver his People that were under the ſlaviſh Fear of Death. (1.) That he might deſtroy him that had the Power of Death. Here *Note*, (1.) The Devil deſcribed in a very formidable manner, as one that had *the power of Death*; not the ſupreme but a ſubordinate Power of *Death*; a Power of *Death*, as God's Executioner to inflict it; the *Devil* has the Power of *Death*, juſt as the Hangman has the Power of the Gallows, to put thoſe to Death whom the Judge condemns only. *Note*, (2.) Him that has thus the Power of Death, has Chriſt deſtroyed, that is, diſarm'd and diſabled, not deſtroyed his Being, but diſarm'd him of his Power and Authority over the Children of God. *Note*, (3.) That Chriſt did this by his own Death; thro' Death, that is, by his own dying, he deſtroyed him that had the Power of *Death*: it was upon the Croſs that he ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, and made a ſhew of them openly. Chriſt by dying, conquered Death. The ſecond Reaſon of Chriſt's appearing in our Fleſh and Nature, was to deliver his People from the Slavery and Bondage of the ſinful and ſervile fears of *Death*. Here *Note*, (1.) That there is a natural Fear of *Death* which is not ſinful: Art thou afraid of *Death*? Thou wert not a Man, if thou didſt not fear it: there cannot but be in Nature an Averſion to its own Diſſolution; and Nature will always act like itſelf. *Note*, (2.) That there is a ſervile ſlaviſh fear of *Death* which has both Sin and Torment in it: a fear of *Death* as penal, and drawing after it everlaſting Puniſhment. *Note*, (3.) That unregenerate Men, if a ſenſeleſs Stupidity has not benumm'd them, and a Spirit of Slumber fallen upon them, are in Bondage under the ſervile and ſlaviſh Fear of *Death*: It will daunt the ſtouteſt Man that ever lived, to look upon *Death* when he can ſee nothing but *Hell* beyond it. *Note*, (4.) That Jeſus Chriſt, by dying, has freed all his Children from this ſervile and tormenting Fear of *Death*. (1.) Chriſt has taken away the true Reaſon of the Fear of *Death*, namely, the Curſe and Condemnation of the Law of God. *The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law*; *Death* has its wounding Power from *Sin*, and *Sin* has its condemning Power from the Law. (2.) Chriſt has aſſured Believers, that they ſhall not be Loſers, but Gainers, yea, great Gainers by Death, conſidering the private Evils freed from, and the poſitive Good they ſhall reſt in.

16 For verily he took not on him *the nature of* angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.

It may be render'd from the Original thus, *He catch'd not hold on Angels, but on Man he catch'd hold.* A Metaphor taken from a Perſon that catches hold of another who is falling down ſome deep and dangerous Precipice, to his inevitable Deſtruction: Such a good and kind Office did the Son of God for us, when he ſuffered the Angels to fall headlong from that State of Happineſs in which they were created into that Abyſs and Gulph of Miſery into which they had plunged themſelves by their own voluntary Tranſgreſſion, The like unto which had Man alſo done, had he not been ſeaſonably catch'd by the Son of God in the Arms of preventing Grace and Mercy. Learn, That it was not the Angelical, but the Human Nature: it was the Nature of fallen Man, and not of lapſed Angels, which the Son of God did vouchſafe to aſſume, and take into a Perſonal Union with his God-head, *Queſtion*, Why would not Chriſt take upon him the Nature of Angels? Probably, Becauſe they were the firſt Tranſgreſſors, and God might judge it decent that the firſt Breach of the Divine Law ſhould be puniſhed with Death, to ſecure Obedience for the future; or, (2.) Becauſe the Angels ſinned without a Tempter, they had no ſuperiour Rank of Creatures already fallen, as Man had, to ſeduce and draw them from their Obedience to their Creator's Will: Or, (3.) Becauſe the Angels ſinned againſt more clear and convictive Light and Knowledge; there was nothing of Weakneſs, Deceit, or Ignorance to leſſen the Malignity of their Sin; they would not ſin by Miſperſuaſion, but of purpoſed Malice. But after all, the Reaſon why Chriſt took not hold on Angels, but on Man, the Seed of *Abraham*, muſt be ultimately reſolved into the Sovereignty of God's Will, who will be merciful to whom he will be merciful. Lord! Why Mercy, thy milder Attribute, ſhould be exerciſed towards Man, and Juſtice thy ſeverer Attribute be executed upon Angels! Why Veſſels of Clay are choſen, and Veſſels of Gold rejected, muſt be reſolved into that Love which paſſes Knowledge! And we ſhall never fully underſtand the Riches of this diſcriminating Grace, till thy dear Son ſhall appear at the Great Day, as their Judge and our Juſtifier; Then ſhall we feel the Comfort of theſe Words, that *Chriſt took not upon him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.*

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high prieſt, in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people: 18 For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.

In theſe two Verſes our Apoſtle illuſtrates what he had taught before, and confirms his foregoing Propoſition concerning Chriſt's participating of Fleſh and Blood, and acquaints us here with one ſpecial end of it, namely, to be ſuch an High Prieſt as our Exigencies and Neceſſities did require: For we being Perſons obnoxious to Temptations and Sufferings of all ſorts, the Wiſdom of God, and the Nature of the thing required it, that Chriſt our Great High Prieſt, ſhould in a ſpecial manner be able to relieve and help us; In order to this, *Obſerve*, (1.) How our Apoſtle reports and reaſſerts, that Chriſt was *in all things*, or every manner of way *made like unto his Brethren*; that is, he aſſumed the Human Nature, with all its eſſential Properties, ſubjected to Temptations and Sufferings, but not to Sin, for that would have been ſo far from couducing to the end aimed at, that it would have been utterly deſtructive of it. Had he been himſelf a Sinner, he could never have ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for our Sins. *Obſerve*, (2.) The general End of Chriſt's Conformity to his Brethren; namely, That he might be a merciful and faithful High Prieſt. That he might be our Prieſt, it was neceſſary that he ſhould partake of our Nature, for every High Prieſt for Men, muſt be taken from among Men; this is not work for an Angel, nor for God himſelf as ſuch: And that he might be our *merciful and faithful* High Prieſt, he was ſubject to *Sufferings* and *Temptations*. With great Condolency and tender Sympathy doth he exerciſe Acts of Mercy and Compaſſion towards the Humane Nature; and thus was he merciful, and with great condeſcenſion and care doth he take notice of all the Concernments of his Brethren under Wants and Sorrows, under all their Temptations and Sufferings; and thus is he our faithful as well as merciful High Prieſt. Learn hence, That ſuch was the unſpeakable Love of Chriſt toward his Brethren, that he would refuſe no Condition of Life, neither Sufferings nor Temptations to fit him for the diſcharge of his Office, which he had undertaken for them. Chriſt ſuffered, and was tempted, that he might ſuccour them that are tempted: he ſuffered under all his Temptations, but ſinned in none; he ſuffered being tempted, but ſinned not, being tempted. *Obſerve*, (3.) The ſpecial Deſign and End of Chriſt's being our great High Prieſt; namely, *To make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People*. From whence Learn, That the principal Work of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as our great High Prieſt, and from which all other Actings of his in that Office do flow, was to make Reconciliation or Atonement for Sin; his Interceſſion in Heaven is founded on Earth. The *Socinians* therefore, who deny the Satisfaction of Chriſt, and his dying as a Propitiation or Propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin; they take from *Us* our Hopes and Happineſs, from *Chriſt* his Office and Honour from *God* his Grace and Glory; they do indeed allow of a Reconciliation in words, but it is of Men to God, and not of God to Men; they plead the Expediency of our being reconciled to God by Faith and Obedience, but deny the neceſſity of God's being reconciled to us by Sacrifice, Satisfaction and Atonement; ſo reſolved are theſe Men to be as little as may be beholden to Jeſus Chriſt, that rather than grant that he has made any Reconciliation for us by his Blood, they deny that there was any need of ſuch a Reconciliation at all, never conſidering the Inflexibility of God's Juſtice, nor the Impartiality of his Indignation againſt Sin. O! the Depths of Satan; and, O! the Stupidity and Blindneſs of thoſe Men that are taken Captive by him at his Pleaſure.

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapters aſſerted the Doctrine of our Saviour's Prieſthood, according to his conſtant Method, he comes in this Chapter to make Application to that Doctrine which he had declared and confirmed, that ſeeing Chriſt was ſo highly Dignified aud exalted, being the Apoſtle and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion, we ſhould diligently conſider *him both what he is in Himſelf, and what he is to Us: This* teaches *us, that all the Doctrines of the Goſpel, eſpecially thoſe concerning the Perſon and Offices of Jeſus Chriſt, ought to be improved by us unto Practice and Obedience.*

WHerefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, conſider the Apoſtle and high prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus;

Theſe words are an Exhortation to the Believing *Hebrews* to *conſider* and ponder in their Hearts the high Dignity and Excellency of Chriſt, as the great Prophet and Apoſtle of his Church; and in them, *Obſerve*, (1.) The Title given to the *Hebrews*, unto whom the Exhortation is directed; he ſtiles them, (1.) *Holy Brethren*, ſo they were all by external Profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by internal Sanctification. Learn hence, That all the Profeſſors of the Goſpel are obliged to be Holy, and ſuch as are real Profeſſors of it, are ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, and made truly and really Holy. (2.) *Partakers of the heavenly Calling*; that is, of that Calling from Heaven which makes you Heirs of Heaven, implying, that the only way to attain the ſaving Knowledge of Chriſt in the Goſpel, is by means of an effectual heavenly Calling. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Duty exhorted to, and that is diligent Conſideration, *Conſider Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, Rationally attend unto, and with great Intention of Mind ponder upon the Undertaking of the Son of God: for if you conſider him in his Perſon and Offices, and you will firmly adhere to him and his moſt Holy and Excellent Religion, without Intanglements unto Judaiſm. Learn thence, That the ſpiritual and deep Myſteries of the Goſpel, eſpecially thoſe which concern the Perſon and Offices of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, do require our deep and diligent, our moſt attentive and ſerious Conſideration. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Title given to Jeſus Chriſt, the Object of this Conſideration; he is ſtiled *the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*; that is, the firſt and chief Apoſtle ſent of God to be the prime Preacher of the Goſpel, the firſt Legate ſent from Heaven, and the great High Prieſt that mediates between God and Man. Here *Note*, That the Function of an Apoſtle and High Prieſt were the greateſt Functions that ever God inſtituted in his Church; none greater than an High Prieſt under the Law, none greater than an Apoſtle under the Goſpel, both of them never conjoined in one Man, but here. Learn hence, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is all in all unto his Church, the King, Prieſt, Prophet, and Apoſtle of it, all in one, *Conſider the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, &c.

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo Moſes *was faithful* in all his houſe.

Becauſe the *Jews* had generally too high an Opinion of *Moſes* our Apoſtle here enters upon a Compariſon between Chriſt and *Moſes*, thus; As *Moſes* was faithful, ſo was Chriſt, in declaring the Will, the whole Will of God unto his Church; Was *Moſes* univerſally Faithful, faithful in all his Houſe? ſo did the faithfulneſs of Chriſt extend itſelf to all the Church. Did *Moſes* do every thing according to the Inſtitution and Appointment of God? So was Chriſt faithful to him that appointed him, doing all that in and for the Church, which God hath commanded him, and nothing elſe. Learn hence, That the Worſhip of God in his Houſhold and Family, the Church, is for the Subſtance of it no leſs perfectly and compleatly ordered and ordained by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt now under the Goſpel, than it was by *Moſes* of old under the Law, I ſay, as to the Subſtance of it, not as to every particular Circumſtance. *As for Example*, The manner of celebrating the Paſſover in every Minute and Circumſtance of it is ſet down by *Moſes*, how it muſt be killed, and how eaten, but Chriſt has not ſet down ſo for the Sacrament: A general Command we have to do this in Remembrance of him; but neither the Time when, nor Place where, nor Geſture in which is particularly and expreſly mentioned. The Goſpel which teaches us a more ſpiritual way of ſerving God, is not ſo particular in the Circumſtantials of Worſhip as the Law was, and yet *Chriſt was faithful to him that appointed him, as Moſes was faithful in all his Houſe.*

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, in as much as he who hath builded the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe. 4 For every houſe is builded by ſome man; but he that built all things *is* God. 5 And Moſes verily *was* faithful in all his houſe, as a ſervant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after; 6 But Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe: whoſe

houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end.

Our Apoſtle having in the preceding Verſes, entred upon a Compariſon between Chriſt and *Moſes*, and ſhewed in general wherein they were alike, and did agree: He proceeds now to evince the Preference of Chriſt, and to ſhew in ſundry ſignal Inſtances his Exaltation above *Moſes*: *This Man*, meaning the Meſſiah, ***was counted worthy of more Glory than*** Moſes, *&c.* As if he had ſaid, Chriſt is as much more honourable than *Moſes*, as the Maker and Maſter of the Houſe is more honourable than the Houſe: He that buildeth the Houſe hath more honour than the Houſe; but Chriſt built the Houſe and *Moſes* was only of the Houſe or a part of it; therefore Chriſt ought to have more honour than *Moſes*, for all Families or Houſes are founded by ſome Man; but he that built the Church is the ſame that made all things, namely, God. Another Propoſition proving the ſame Concluſion, we have in the next Verſes: Thus, He that is a Son over his own Houſe, is of more honour than a Servant in the Houſe of another. But Chriſt is a Son over his own Houſe; *Moſes* was only a Servant in the Houſe of another, therefore more honour is due to Chriſt than is payable to *Moſes*. Learn hence, (1.) That the Church is God's Houſe, a Building of God, a ſacred Building, his ſpecial Temple, the Place of his conſtant and fixed Reſidence. Learn, (2.) That the Building of the Church is ſo great and glorious a Work, as that it could not be effected by any but him who was truly and really God: Such is the Wiſdom of its Contrivance, that none but a God could build it, and ſuch omnipotent Power was required in the building of it, that we may admire its Excellency but cannot comprehend it. Learn, (3.) That Chriſt the Builder of his Church, the Houſe of God, is worthy of all Glory and Honour, upon the account of that his Building; he had indeed an eſſential Glory from all Eternity, the ſame with that of God the Father, which was clouded for a ſeaſon by his taking upon himſelf the Form of a Servant: But there is a farther Honour and Glory which he received in his Exaltation as Head of the Church, and as Lord and Heir of the whole Creation, which renders him the Object of Religious Adoration. Learn, (4.) That although every one that is imployed as an Inſtrument in Building the Houſe of God, and is faithful in his Work and Truſt, is with *Moſes* worthy of great honour, yet the honour of all ſuch Inſtruments put together, is inferiour and ſubordinate to the Glory and Honour of Jeſus Chriſt, the chief Builder of the Church.

6 ——Whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end.

The Apoſtle having thus confirmed his Argument, returns (according to his uſual manner) to make Applicatian of it unto the *Hebrews*, and improves it for the enforcement of his Exhortation unto Conſtancy and Perſeverance. *Whoſe Houſe are we*; that is, Believers who worſhip him according to the Goſpel are ſo, upon this Condition, that *we hold faſt our Confidence*; that is, the confident Profeſſion of our Chriſtian Faith, and the Joy and Glorying in our hopes of the promiſed Bleſſedneſs unto the end. Learn hence, That as it is an eminent Privilege to be of the Houſe of Chriſt, or a part of that Houſe, ſo the greatneſs of the Privilege requires an anſwerable Duty; becauſe we are the Houſe of God, it becomes us to hold faſt our Confidence unto the end. Learn, (2.) That as at all times, ſo eſpecially in a time of Trial and Perſecution, Conſtancy in our Chriſtian Profeſſion is and will be a good Evidence, both to our ſelves and others, that we are Living Stones in the Houſe of God; *His Houſe we are, if we hold faſt our Confidence to the End.*

7 Wherefore as the holy Ghoſt ſaith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my works, fourty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I ſware in my wrath, They ſhall not enter into my reſt.

The Apoſtle having proved our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church, doth in theſe words draw an Inference from the foregoing Concluſion, namely, that ſeeing Chriſt is the chief Apoſtle and Prophet of his Church, ſeeing he was a Teacher ſent of God to inſtruct the World in the Practice of their reaſonable Duty, that therefore it is our obliged Duty to hearken to Chriſt's Voice, and that now to comply with his Call, and that preſently; *Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Heaats.* *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Perſon ſpoken of, and that is Chriſt. *His Voice*; that is, the Voice of Chriſt our great Apoſtle, ſpeaking in his Goſpel. *Obſerve*, (2.) A Duty required of us in reference to this Perſon, and that is, to hear and obey Chriſt's Voice. *Obſerve* (3.) The circumſtance of Time, and the ſpecial Seaſon when this Duty of hearing Chriſt's Voice is to be performed, and that is preſently, *To day if you will hear his Voice.* *Obſerve*, (4.) A cautionary Direction given to all thoſe that ſet under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel and hear Chriſt's Voice ſpeaking to them therein, namely, To take heed that they *harden not their Hearts.* Learn hence, (1.) That the Voice which ſpeaks unto us in and by the Goſpel, it is Chriſt's Voice. (2.) That it is the great Duty of all thoſe that ſit under the Preaching of the Goſpel to hear and obey Chriſt's Voice. Learn, (3.) That it is not only their Duty to hear Chriſt's Voice, and anſwer his Call in the Goſpel, but to do it *now*, to do it preſently, and without delay; *To day if you will hear his Voice.* Learn, (4.) That it is the Duty, and ought to be the ſpecial Care of all thoſe that ſit under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and that hear Chriſt's Voice ſpeaking to them therein, to take heed that they harden not their Hearts. *Obſerve* laſtly, From our Apoſtle's drawing an Inſtance out of the Old-Teſtament, namely, That of the *Jews* in the Wilderneſs, to inſtruct the *Hebrews* to make uſe of the preſent Seaſon for hearing the Voice of Chriſt under the New-Teſtament. We learn, That Old-Teſtament Exemples are New-Teſtament Inſtructions. The Examples of our Forefathers ate of Uſe and Concernment to us, and ought to be the Objects of our deepeſt Conſideration? *Your Fathers tempted me, and I was grieved with that Generation.*

12 Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

The Apoſtle having propounded the Example of the *Iſralites* in the foregoing Verſes, to the conſideration of the *Hebrews*, here he adviſes them to take Care that they do not imitate the old *Iſraelites* in their Unbelief, which will endanger our Revolt from God *now*, as it did theirs *then*: *Take heed leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.* Where *Note*, The Nature of Sin in general, and of Unbelief in particular, declared: its a Departure from God, from the Living God; the Root of all Apoſtacy is curſed Infidelity; Unbelief ſets all the corrupt Luſts and Affections of the Heart at Liberty, to act according to their own perverſe Nature and Inclination: for it makes the Soul negligent, careleſs, and ſlothful in oppoſing Sin. *Note* farther, That there is need of great Care and Heedfulneſs, of Circumſpection and Watchfulneſs, leſt at any time, or by any means, there ſhould be found in us an evil Heart of Unbelief, to occaſion our Backſliding from Chriſt, and the Profeſſion of our Faith in him; *Take heed, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*, &c.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called, To day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

Theſe Words afford us a ſpecial Remedy againſt the forementioned Evil of Apoſtacy, and that is mutual Exhortation to conſtancy in Religion; *Exhort one another*, Miniſters the People, and the People their Miniſters, and themſelves mutually. Learn hence, That ſedulous and mutual Exhortation is a ſpecial means to preſerve Chriſtians from the Sin and Danger of Apoſtacy, from Chriſt, and his Holy Religion *Exhort one another daily*: *Obſerve* next, How this Duty is amplified by the Properties of it, it muſt be frequent, *Exhort one another daily*, and ſeaſonably, *whilſt it is called to Day.* We have but an uncertain Seaſon for the due Performance of moſt certain Duties; how long it will be called to Day we know not; the Day of Life is uncertain, and ſo is the Day of the Goſpel; a Summer's Day for Clearneſs, a Winter's Day of Shortneſs; our Working Day it is a waſting Day. *Obſerve* laſtly, The great Peril and Danger which attends the Neglecters and Neglecting of this Duty; *Leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of Sin.* Learn hence, That Sin is very full of Deceit, or exceedingly Deceitful. (2.) That the Deceit which is in Sin, and inſeparable from it, tends exceedingly to the hardening of the Sinner: There are three eminent Evils in Sin; Pollution, by which it defiles; Baſeneſs, by which it diſhonours; Deceitfulneſs, by which it deludes us with a falſe Expectation of what it is never able to perform.

14 For we are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end;

That is, Hereby we ſhall declare our ſelves to be made Partakers of Chriſt and his ſaving Benefits, if we perſevere in the Faith of the Goſpel, of which we have begun to make a Profeſſion; intimating, That ſuch Chriſtians as do renounce the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, either through Fear or Flattery, were never made Partakers of Chriſt, nor ſavingly united to him: No better Evidence of our Intereſt in Chriſt, than what Perſeverance gives.

15 While it is ſaid, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For ſome when they had heard did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes.

The Intention of our Apoſtle in theſe and the following Verſes is to confirm his preceding Exhortation, to hearken unto the Voice of Chriſt, ſpeaking in and by the Goſpel; and this he does by propounding the Example of the *Iſraelites*, who came forth out of *Egypt* under the Conduct of *Moſes*, and heard the Voice of God in the Wilderneſs; they all came out of *Egypt*, they all heard the Voice of God, howbeit all did not provoke but only ſome. *Note* here, (1.) How the Apoſtle again repeateth over the Words of the *Pſalmiſt* which he had mentioned before, *v.* 7, 8. *To Day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* From whence we may learn, That the Repetition, yea frequent Repetition of Matters of Moment, is very uſeful and neceſſary; we can never hear that too often, which we can never learn too well. *Note* farther, The Privilege which the *Iſraelites* of old enjoyed in the Wilderneſs, and which we now enjoy under the Goſpel; both theirs and ours is this, *To hear the Voice of God.* This is a very great Privilege, but Privileges are as Men uſe them; in themſelves they are very valuable, but unto us they are no more than as they are prized and improved by us: Many, yea moſt of them to whom Chriſt himſelf preached, finally periſhed, they got nothing by hearing his Doctrine, thro' their Unbelief, but an Aggravation of their Sins, and haſtening of their Ruin. Chriſt himſelf in his whole Miniſtry was a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence to both the Houſes of *Iſrael.* Let not his Miniſters then be diſcouraged at the Smalneſs of their own Succeſs; knowing that they ſhall be a ſweet Savour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved. *Note* laſtly, That altho' many, very many in the Wilderneſs that heard the Voice of God, provoked him, yet not all, --- *v.* 16. *Some when they heard, did provoke, howbeit not all that came out of Egypt.* Learn thence, That in the moſt general and viſible Apoſtacy of the Church, God evermore reſerves a Remnant to himſelf, to bear Witneſs for himſelf by their Faith and Obedience; *They provoked, howbeit not all.* God always has, and ever will reſerve a Remnant of faithful and undefiled Souls unto himſelf, to maintain and keep up his own Kingdom in the World, and to have a Revenue of ſpecial Glory from them, and by them, ſo long as the World continues.

17 But with whom was he grieved fourty years? *was it* not with them that had ſinned, whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs? 18 And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not? 19 So we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.

Obſerve here, The Party grieved, *God*; the Parties grieving, *The People of Iſrael*; the Time of both, *forty Years*; the Occaſion of this Grief, *Sin* in general, *Unbelief* in particular, Hardneſs of Heart, and final Apoſtacy; the Puniſhment of their Sin, *their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs*, Learn, (1.) That Sin is the proper Object of God's Diſpleaſure, the only thing he is diſpleaſed with for itſelf, and with the Sinner for Sin's ſake. Learn, (2.) That publick Sins, or the Sins of Societies are great, very great Provocations unto God: It was not for their perſonal and private Sins that God was thus provoked, but for their Confederacy in Sinning. Learn, (3.) From their exemplary Puniſhment, *their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs*; That God ſometimes makes Men who have been wickedly exemplary in Sin, to be righteouſly exemplary in Puniſhment.

18 And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not?

The *Reſt* here ſpoken of is the Land of *Canaan*, ſo called, becauſe God promiſed it to *Abraham*, to plant and ſettle his Poſterity in it; and becauſe it typified Heaven, that Eternal Reſt which God has prepared for his Saints; into this Reſt the Rebellious and Unbelieving *Iſraelites* muſt not enter; God ſware the contrary, he ſware by himſelf, he ſware in his Wrath, he ſware to make his Sentence irrevocable and immutable. Lord! Thine Oath ſtands as a Bar againſt all unbelieving Sinners at this Day, as it did againſt the *Iſraelites* of old, and cuts off all Hope of Entrance into thy Eternal Reſt, which they have eternally forfeited; *to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his Reſt, but to them that believed not*? Learn hence, (1.) That Unbelief is the immediate Root and Cauſe of all provoking Sins. Did Men believe the Happineſs of Heaven, they could not neglect it: Did they believe the Torments of Hell, they would avoid them. Learn, (2.) That the Oath of God is engaged againſt all Unbelief, and no Unbeliever ſhall enter into the Reſt of God, ver. 19. *We ſee they could not enter in becauſe of Unbelief.*

CHAP. IV.

This Chapter is of the ſame Nature, and carrieth on the ſame Deſign with the foregoing; both of them contain an Exhortation to Faith, Obedience, and Perſeverance: And in as much as the Earthly Canaan *was a Type and Figure of the heavenly Reſt, the Apoſtle exhorteth all Chriſtians to take heed, leſt by Unbelief they miſs of the latter, as the* Iſraelites *did of the former.*

LEt us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left *us* of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing you have ſo dreadful an Example of God's Wrath executed upon your Fathers in the Wilderneſs for their Unbelief, take heed of their Sin, leſt ye ſuffer the like Puniſhment. Here *Note*, (1.) The manner of the Exhortation, and how the Apoſtle includes himſelf in the Admonition, *Let us fear*; it is wiſe and ſafe for the Miniſters of God to include themſelves in the Exhortations and Admonitions which they give to others; for they need Excitement, and the Means of Eſtabliſhment as well as others. *Note*, (2.) The Affection of Fear which our Apoſtle recommends for their Preſervation from falling; by which, he means a fear of Care, Diligence, and Circumſpection. Let us fear leſt we come ſhort and fail. Fear is a good Monitor, and the beſt Preſervative from Sin. *Note*, (3.) The Duty exhorted to, leſt a Promiſe of Reſt being made, we ſhould fall ſhort of attaining it, as the *Iſraelites* did that fell in the Wilderneſs. Learn hence, (1.) That it is matter of great and tremendous Conſequence, to have the Promiſes of God propounded to us; they are either a Savour of Life unto Life or of Death unto Death; one of theſe two will certainly be the Conſequent of their Propoſal. God will demand a ſtrict Account of the Sons of Men, of the Entertainment given to his Promiſes and Threatnings. Learn, (2.) That they which mix not the Promiſes of God with Faith, ſhall utterly come ſhort of entring into God's Reſt. Learn, (3.) That the failing of Men through Unbelief doth no way cauſe the Promiſe of God to fail or ceaſe; the Veracity of God is engag'd for the Stability of the Promiſe; ſo that though Men by their Unbelief may diſappoint themſelves of their Expectation, yet they cannot bereave God of his Faithfulneſs.

2 For unto us was the goſpel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

Obſerve here, (1.) That the Goſpel is no new Doctrine, no new Law, but one and the ſame to all Perſons, and at all times, ever ſince the firſt Publication of it in the *Original Promiſe*, Gen. 3. 15. It is the ſame for Subſtance, tho' not for Clearneſs of Revelation; the ſame Goſpel was preached to *Adam*, to *Abraham*, to the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, which was preached by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but with clearer Light, Evidence, and Power in the Adminiſtration of it; *Unto us was the Goſpel*, the ſame Goſpel, *preached as well as unto them.* *Obſerve*, (2.) That the Generality of Perſons, which have ſat under the Preaching of the Goſpel in all Ages, have not ſavingly profited by it, *The Word preached did not profit*: From the beginning it has been ſo, partly thro' Careleſneſs, and want of due Attention in the Hearers, and partly for want of Meditation upon, and particular Application of the Word unto themſelves after they have heard it; partly thro' the Neglect of Prayer for a Bleſſing upon the Word they hear, For theſe and the like Cauſes the Word preached did not, and does not profit. *Obſerve*, (3.) That Unbelief in Man's Heart is the great Cauſe of that Unprofitableneſs which is found in the Word preached. Unbelief hinders the Efficacy of the Word preached, by with-holding Men from yielding their Aſſent to the Truths they hear, by hindring them from applying, from a particular and cloſe applying of the Word they hear, to their own Conſciences; and Unbelief hinders Men from calling upon God by Prayer, for a Bleſſing upon the Word they hear. *Obſerve* (4.) That the Word preached then profits, and only then, when it is a *mixed* Word: The Original Word is a Metaphor taken either from Seed, from Meat, or from Phyſick. As Seed muſt be mix'd with the Soil, and with the Dew and Rain of Heaven, or it will never ſpring and grow; or as Meat muſt be mixed with the Stomach, or it will not nouriſh; and as Phyſick muſt meet and mix with the Humour, gripe and put the Patient to ſome Pain, or it will never cure: So muſt the Word be rooted in the Heart, or it will never fructify in the Life; it muſt be *mixed* with Faith, with Love, with Humility, with Patience, or it will never bring forth Fruit with Joy.

3 For we which have believed, do enter into reſt, as he ſaid, As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt: although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, There is a Reſt promiſed to us Believers, as well as the Typical Reſt *Canaan* was promiſed to the *Iſraelites*. Learn thence, That the State of Believers under the Goſpel, is a State of Bleſſed Reſt. There is a ſpiritual Reſt which Believers obtain Entrance into by Jeſus Chriſt, in the Faith and Worſhip of the Goſpel, beſides their Eternal Reſt in Heaven. This Spiritual Reſt conſiſts in Peace with God, in Satisfaction and Acquieſcency in God, and in means of Communion with God. Learn, (2.) That it is Faith alone which is the only way and means of entring into this Bleſſed State of Reſt; *We who have believed do enter into Reſt*: As Unbelief cuts off from, ſo Faith gives an Entrance into the Reſt of God. It follows,

3 —— As I have ſworn in my wrath, if they ſhall enter into my reſt:

Obſerve, Here is a Threatning confirmed by the Oath of God, that they who believe not ſhould never enter into Reſt, and Promiſe that ſuch as do believe ſhall certainly enter. Learn thence, That there is a mutual In-being of Promiſes and Threatnings in the Covenant, which muſt be conſidered together, and cannot be ſeparated each from other. Where there is a Promiſe expreſs'd, there a Threatning is tacitly underſtood; and where there is a Threatning expreſs'd be it never ſo ſevere, yet there is a gracious Promiſe included: Nay, ſometimes God gives out a Threatning for no other end, but that Men may lay hold upon the Promiſe. Thus the Threatning that *Nineveh* ſhould periſh, was given out mercifully, that *Nineveh* might not periſh. It follows,

3 —— Although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world.

That is, Almighty God when he had perfected and finiſhed the Works of Creation in ſix Days, reſted on the ſeventh Day from his Labour; ſhewing us by his own Example, that Work and Labour muſt precede our Reſt; after God had finiſhed the glorious Work of Creation, he returns as it were into his own eternal Reſt, and directs us to ſeek Reſt in himſelf; and by his own Example teaches us, that our Days of Labour muſt go before our Day of Reſt.

4 For he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh *day* on this wiſe, And God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works. 5 And in this *place* again, If they ſhall enter into my reſt. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that ſome muſt enter therein, and they to whom it was firſt preached, entred not in becauſe of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, ſaying in David, To day, after ſo long a time; as it is ſaid, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jeſus had given them reſt, then would he not afterward have ſpoken of another day.

For the clearer underſtanding of theſe Words, we muſt know, that there is a threefold Reſt ſpoken of in Scripture, all which are called *His*, that is, God's Reſt, being all of his appointing and providing: Namely, (1.) The Reſt of the Sabbath-Day, in remembrance of God's reſting from the Work of Creation. (2.) The Typical Reſt in the Land of *Canaan*. (3.) An Eternal Reſt with God in Heaven, of which the Sabbath and the *Iſraelites* Reſt in *Canaan* were a Type and Figure. Now the Apoſtle's Deſign is to prove, that the Reſt which God principally intends for his People is this laſt Reſt, namely, an everlaſting Reſt with himſelf in Heaven; and this he evidently proves, becauſe if *that* Reſt which they had obtained in the Land of *Canaan*, under the Conduct of *Joſhua*, (called in *Syriack Jeſus*) had been all the Reſt which Almighty God ever intended for them, then it had been needleſs for *David*, in the 95th *Pſalm*, which was penn'd a long time after, even ſome thouſands of Years, to make mention of any other Reſt. But this he does, and therefore infers, that there is a third Reſt yet to come, which by the preaching of the Goſpel was now propoſed to them, and that under the ſame Promiſes and Threatnings with the former. If *Jeſus* or *Joſhua* had given them the true ſpiritual and eternal Reſt here ſpoken of, in *Canaan*, then would not *David* afterward have ſpoken of another Reſt after their Reſt in *Canaan*; which ſeeing he has done, the Apoſtle concludes, there muſt yet remain a farther Reſt to be enjoyed by the People of God. From the whole *Note*, That God has by Promiſe given his People a full Aſſurance of enjoying a Reſt upon Condition of Faith, and this another manner of Reſt than that of *Canaan*, which the *Iſraelites* of old did enjoy.

9 There remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God.

From the foregoing Premiſes the Apoſtle draws this Concluſion, That there remaineth yet a more glorious, perfect, and compleat Reſt, for the People of God. *Obſerve* here, (1.) ſomething implied, namely, That the People of God, whilſt here on Earth, have Work to do, and Labour incumbent upon them. Reſt and Labour are correlates, the one ſuppoſes the other; the Apoſtle affirming, that there is Reſt remaining for them, ſtrongly ſuppoſes that there is Labour at preſent belonging to them; God's People are an induſtrious working People: Chriſt's preſent Call is to Service and Duty. *Obſerve*, (2.) That God has already given his People a Fore-taſte of, and ſome Entrance into Reſt during their preſent State of Work and Labour, the better to enable them for *that*, and the more to ſweeten *that* to them: The State of Sin is a State of all Labour and no Reſt; the State of Glory is all Reſt and no Labour; but the State of Grace is a mix'd State, partly of Labour and partly of Reſt; of Labour in reſpect of our ſelves, in reſpect of the World, againſt Sin, under Affliction and Perſecution: But of Reſt in Chriſt, in his Love, in his Favour and Grace; and thus our Labour makes our Reſt ſweet, and our Reſt makes our Labour eaſy. *Obſerve*, (3.) That there is reſerved and laid up in Heaven for all the People of God, that ſerve him laboriouſly and faithfully here on Earth, a ſure and certain, a compleat and perfect, a glorious and everlaſting Reſt; for its Quantity it is full of Reſt, for its Quality it is unmixed Reſt; Reſt and nothing but Reſt: for its Duration 'tis an eternal Reſt; the leaſt fear of loſing or leaving it, would imbitter all the Joy which the Saints taſte in the Fruition and Enjoyment of it: *There remaineth*, or there is laid up and reſerved, *a Reſt for the People of God.*

10 For he that is entred into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Into the ſpiritual, heavenly Reſt, mentioned in the foregoing Verſe, the Believer is ſaid to have entred in this Verſe; and this is done two ways, initially, inchoatively, and imperfectly in this Life; fully, finally, perfectly, and compleatly in the next. They have now a preſent Title and Right to enter into this Reſt, the actual Enjoyment and full Poſſeſſion of it is to come. *Obſerve*, (1.) Believers have already entred initially into this Reſt whilſt here on Earth, and accordingly *have ceaſed from their own Works*; that is, The Works of the fleſh, the Service of Sin; theſe they have diſcarded by Repentance and Mortification. *Here note*, That before Converſion a Perſon is doing his own Works, fulfiling his own Will, and not God's; but after he ceaſes from all ſinful Works inchoatively, though not perfectly; *He that hath entred into his Reſt, hath ceaſed from his own Works. Obſerve*, (2.) That when Believers have finiſhed all their Works of Evangelical Obedience, they ſhall then, and not till then, fully and finally enter into God's Reſt, and be for ever happy in the Enjoyment of it. All Men deſire Reſt, but it is not to be found on Earth, but in Heaven; not in the Creature, but in God. O happy they, which believing the Excellency and Glory of this Reſt, do work, wait, and wiſh for it, and with diligence and conſtancy uſe all holy Endeavours for the attaining and ſecuring of it.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing there is ſuch an Eternal glorious Reſt prepared for, and promiſed to Believers, then is it the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavour of every one of us, to ſecure our Title to it, and our Intereſt in it, by a ſtedfaſt Faith, and perſevering Obedience, leſt following the Example of our Forefathers in the Wilderneſs, we fall and periſh as they did. Learn hence, (1.) That there is a Reſt promiſed to us under the Goſpel, as there was to the *Jews* of old under the Diſpenſation of the Law. Learn, (2.) That the *Jews* heretofore, by Sin in general, by Unbelief and Diſobedience in particular, did fall ſhort of the Reſt propoſed to them, and never entred into it, but were deſtroyed by the juſt Indignation of God. Learn, (3.) That in the *Iſraelites* Sin and God's Diſpleaſure, in the Event of the one, and in the Effects of the others, there was an *Example* ſet forth, of what would be our own Lot and Portion, if through Unbelief we fall ſhort of the Reſt which the Goſpel propoſes to us; *Let us labour to enter into that Reſt, leſt any Man fall after the ſame Example of Unbelief.* It is our Duty to improve Examples, leſt we be made Examples of Divine Diſpleaſure. Learn, (4.) That we cannot rationally have the leaſt expectation of eſcaping Vengeance under the Guilt of thoſe Sins, which others in like manner being guilty of, have not eſcaped; for with God there is no reſpect of Perſons. Did the *Iſraelites* miſs of the Earthly *Canaan*? So ſhall we of the Heavenly, through Unbelief.

12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and *is* a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Take heed eſpecially of Unbelief, for the Word of God, or Doctrine of the Goſpel will quickly find you out if you be guilty of it. There is a piercing Power in the Word of God, through the Energy and Efficacious Operation of the Holy Spirit; it is here compared to a Sword, becauſe it does divide things moſt nearly united, and diſcovers things moſt inward and ſecret, or rather God by the Word doth this; he by the Word pierces *even to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and the Spirit*; that is, the Actings of the Underſtanding, and the Motions of the Will and Affections; it cuts aſunder the moſt reſolute and compacted Purpoſes of the Will, yea, it pierces to the *Marrow*; that is, the moſt ſecret and cloſe contrivances of the Soul, the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, O mighty Power of the Word! And of God in and by the Word, to convey Strength to the Weak, Wiſdom to the Simple, Comfort to the Sorrowful, Light to the Blind, and Life to the Dead; it brings Souls out of the Captivity of Sin into the Bleſſed Liberty of Faith in Chriſt.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight: but all things *are* naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

There is not any one place of Scripture (I think) which more fully informs us of the perfect and exact knowledge of Almighty God, as to all Perſons and Things, than this before us. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Object; All and every thing, our Perſons, our Actions, the manner of our Actions, the Deſign and End of our Actions; he knows what we have been and done, and what we will be and do. *Obſerve*, (2.) The full manifeſtation and clear repreſentation of all Perſons and Things unto God. (1.) All things are here ſaid to be *naked*, uncloathed, their Dreſs and Paint taken off; theſe Words are an Alluſion to Bodies, which being ſtript and uncloathed, all ſee what they are; there may be many Deformities, Blemiſhes, yea Ulcers, upon a Body undiſcerned, while it is cloathed and covered, but when *naked* every Scar appears, and nothing is hid; *all things are naked in his ſight*: That is, He as plainly diſcerns what they are, as we diſcern what a Body is that ſtands naked before us. The Knowledge which God has of Perſons and Things is a clear and diſtinct Knowledge. (2.) All things are here ſaid to be *open* as well as *naked* unto God; a Metaphor taken, ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*, from the ſacrificed Beaſts, which being excoriated, their Skins pluckt off, they were cut down from the Neck to the Rump, ſo that all the Inwards of the Beaſt, lay bare, and every part might be clearly ſeen; it is one thing to ſee a Sheep alive, with the Skin and Fleece on, and another thing to ſee it naked and flayed, but a farther thing to ſee it opened and unbowelled, with all its Inteſtines and Inwards expoſed to the Eye. Others think, there is in the *Original* Word an Alluſion to Anatomiſts, who *Open* and diſſect Humane Bodies, the Heart, the Liver, the Lungs, the Bowels, all exactly appear, whether ſound or decayed: Such a kind of Anatomy doth God make upon Man's Heart; his piercing Eye ſees and diſcerns what is Fleſh and what is Spirit in us, what is Faith and what is Fancy, what is Grace in reality, and what in appearance only. Doubtleſs the Phraſe doth ſignifie a moſt intimate, full and through Knowledge of all Perſons, and all Things which is found in that God with whom we have to do, and to whom we muſt give an account for all that we have done.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt *our* profeſſion.

Our Apoſtle comes now to aſſert the Prieſthood of Chriſt, and to ſet forth the Dignity and Excellency of his Office, from whence he encourages the believing *Hebrews* to Perſeverance and Stedfaſtneſs in the Profeſſion of their Faith in him. Here *Note*, (1.) The Eminency of the Perſon, *Jeſus the Son of God*; not by ſupernatural Conception only, but by eternal Generation alſo; this is the Eminency of that Perſon who is ſuperiour to Men and Angels. *Note*, (2.) The Excellency of his Office, a Prieſt, an high Prieſt, a great High Prieſt; not barely equal with *Aaron*, but ſuperiour to him, and infinitely above him, the univerſal Supream Pontiff of Heaven and Earth, in compariſon of whom all other Prieſts, even the higheſt of them, were but Shadows. *Note*, (3.) His Relation to us, *we have him*; that is, ſpecial Intereſt in him, making Profeſſion of Obedience to him; and he is *paſſed* into the *Heavens*, to open Heaven to us, and to make interceſſion with the Father for us. This Entrance of Chriſt's into Heaven, was ſhadowed forth by the High Prieſt's entrance into the Holy of Holies here on Earth. *Note*, (4.) Our Obligation to him, *Let us hold faſt our Profeſſion*: that is, the Profeſſion of our Faith in him, without Wavering, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance. Learn hence, (1.) That great Oppoſition ever has been, and always will be made unto the Stedfaſtneſs of Believers in their Holy Profeſſion: The Apoſtle's Exhortation plainly ſuppoſes Oppoſition. Learn, (2.) That it is our Duty in the midſt of all Oppoſition, to hold faſt our Holy Profeſſion, without either Apoſtatizing in the whole, or declining in part from it. The Glory of God is in the higheſt manner concerned in it, and aſſured Deſtruction attends the omiſſion of it, and that in a peculiar, terrible, and dreadful manner, *Ch.* 10. 29. Learn, (3.) That Believers have great encouragement unto, and aſſiſtance in the ſtedfaſtneſs and conſtancy of their Holy Profeſſion, by and from the Prieſthood of Jeſus Chriſt: For as he is our High Prieſt, he knows our Temptations, pities us under them, affords us actual Help and Relief againſt them? he interceeding with the Father that our Faith may not fail, and that we may be kept by the Almighty Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation. Learn, (4.) That Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, was the Son of God; and the neceſſity of his being ſo did thus appear; (1.) Before the entrance of Sin, there was no need of the Office of Prieſthood between God and Man; for every one was then in his own Name to go to God with his Worſhip, which would have been accepted according to the Law of Creation. (2.) Sin being entred into the World, there was no more Worſhip to be performed immediately unto God; Two cannot walk or converſe together except they be agreed. (3.) That the Worſhip of God might be again reſtored in and to the World, it was indiſpenſably neceſſary that ſome one ſhould interpoſe between Sinners and the Holy God; for ſhould Sinners approach him immediately in their own Names, he would be unto them a conſuming Fire. (4.) No Creature could undertake the Office of being a Prieſt for the Church of God, which now conſiſted all of Sinners: Neither the Nature of the Office, which was to interpoſe between God and Sinners, nor the Quality of the Work, which is to make Atonement for Sin, would admit of it. (5.) Jeſus Chriſt therefore undertaking to be a Prieſt for Sinners, it was neceſſary he ſhould be what he was, the very Son of God; which denotes his Divine Perſon and Nature, and that our great High Prieſt was eſſentially and truly God: *Seeing we have a great High Prieſt, even Jeſus the Son of God, let us hold faſt our Profeſſion.*

15 For we have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without ſin.

Theſe words contain a farther Deſcription of Chriſt our great High Prieſt, by his merciful Diſpoſition towards his People, he is ſaid to be *toucht*; that is, ſenſibly affected with the *Infirmities*, that is, the Miſeries, Sufferings, and Calamities, which the Humane Nature is exerciſed with, and expoſed to. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt now in Heaven, doth exerciſe a tender and compaſſionate Spirit towards his ſuffering Children and Servants here on Earth; he has an experimental Knowledge of what his People ſuffer, either from God, or from Man, for God's ſake, as one that is intereſted in them, as one concerned for them, as one related to them, yea as being one with them. This Sympathy of Chriſt with and towards his ſuffering People, it is a tender Sympathy, an extenſive Sympathy, it reaches all our Infirmities, a proportionable Sympathy, anſwerable to every occaſion, a perpetual Sympathy as long as he continues High Prieſt, and we remain ſubject to Infirmities, ſo long will he be toucht with the feeling of them. *Obſerve* farther, The aſſigned Reaſon why our great High Prieſt is ſo ſenſibly affected with our ſuffering Condition; namely, becauſe he was in all points tempted like as we are, Sin excepted. Chriſt by aſſuming our Nature became humbly affectionate, and by ſuffering our Infirmities, became experimentally compaſſionate. Here *Note*, That Temptation may be without Sin; it is not our Sin to be tempted, but to comply with the Temptation. (2.) That Chriſt was tempted, yea in all Points tempted like unto us: his Temptations were in all Points like ours, he was tempted to Sin, yet without Sin. There is a twofold Temptation to Sin, inward and outward; inwardly Chriſt was not tempted to Sin, outwardly he was, and with greateſt vehemency aſſaulted both by Men and Devils to the worſt of Sins than ever Man was, but he always reſiſted and always overcame. O what a Conſolation is this unto us under all our Temptations, that Chriſt was in all things tempted like unto us, but without Sin!

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Theſe words are an Inference drawn from the Apoſtle's foregoing Diſcourſe, ſeeing we have ſuch an High Prieſt as is before deſcribed, let us come with boldneſs, with freedom and liberty to the Throne of Grace, *&c.* *Note* here, (1.) There is a Throne of Grace, which Believers may come unto; God has a Throne of Juſtice and a Throne of Grace: If he look upon Man according to the Law of Works, he muſt needs ſit upon the Throne of Juſtice as a ſevere Lord, and ſtrict Judge to condemn us; but being propitiated and atoned by the Blood of Chriſt, his Throne is a Throne of Grace and Mercy, from which he repreſents himſelf to us as a God in Chriſt, as a God of Forgiveneſs, as a God in Covenant, and as a God that will have Communion with us. *Note*, (2.) That Believers may come boldly and with Confidence to this Throne of Grace; they have Liberty to do it, they have Authority to do it, and may have Confidence and Aſſurance of Audience in the doing of it. *Note*, (3.) That all Help, Succour, and Spiritual Aſſiſtance in every time of Need, is found with God, and proceeds from meer Mercy and Grace in God, *that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need.* *Note*, (4.) That the way to obtain Mercy and find Grace to help in every time of Need, is by a due Application of our Souls for it to the Throne of Grace; *let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may find help in time of Need.*

CHAP. V.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapters ſet forth the Excellency of Chriſt's Prophetical Office, and proved him to have been a more excellent Prophet than Moſes, *yea a Perſon ſuperiour to Angels, and thereupon exhorted to Perſeverance in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, he comes now in this and the following Chapters, to diſcourſe of the Prieſthood of Chriſt, as far more excellent than that of* Aaron's, *and conſequently, that there was all imaginable Reaſon to perſevere in Chriſtianity, in reſpect of this Office likewiſe. In the Chapter before us, the Apoſtle informs us in the general, what an High Prieſt is, ſhews that none can be ſo who is not called of God; and then proves Chriſt to be ſo called. For thus he ſpeaks:*

FOr every high prieſt taken from among men, is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins:

Obſerve here, The Apoſtle deſcribes an High Prieſt ſeveral ways. (1.) By his *Original*, he is one *taken from amongſt Men*; that is, of the ſame Nature with themſelves, otherwiſe he had not been capable of thoſe compaſſionate Impreſſions which are required to the due diſcharge of his Office. Thus Chriſt's participation of our Nature was neceſſary to the diſcharge of his Office as High Prieſt, and a manifeſt Evidence that he will be tender and compaſſionate towards them whoſe Nature he ſuſtains and bears. (2.) He is deſcribed by the general Nature of his Office, he is *ordained for Men in things pertaining to God*; that is, he was to act and negotiate for the good of ſinful Men, in things wherein they have to do more immediately with Almighty God; particularly to offer Gifts, Oblations, and Sacrifices for their Sins. Where *Note*, That it was the Entrance of Sin that made the Office of the Prieſthood neceſſary; Had it not been for Sin, every one might have gone to God in his own Perſon, but now God will not be immediately treated with by any, but thro' the interpoſition of a Mediator; and he having firſt made an Atonement for Sin. (3.) The High Prieſt is here deſcribed by the Exerciſe of his Office, and the ſpecial Diſcharge of his Duty, which is, *to offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sin*; that is, to give Satisfaction and make Atonement for Sin. Here *Note*, That the Light of Nature dictates to us, that ſomething ought to be offered unto God, in Acknowledgment of his ſupreme Dominion; and becauſe Men are guilty of Sin, and God eſſentially juſt, Sacrifices muſt be offered, and a Prieſt ordained, to offer thoſe Sacrifices for the averting of his Wrath, and procuring of his Favour: But by what Sacrifices God will be atoned, and by whom, and in what manner they muſt be offered, not the Law of Nature but the Light of Scripture, Divine Revelation muſt teach us. *Every High Prieſt taken from among Men, is* ordained *for Men*; that is, inſtituted and appointed of God for the Service of Men in things pertaining to God.

2 Who can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity:

Our Apoſtle proceeds in giving the Character of the High Prieſt, which God required under the Law; he muſt have Compaſſion for Men, for ſinful Men, being compaſſed with ſinful Infirmities himſelf. *Obſerve* here; (1.) A great and neceſſary Qualification or Endowment of an High Prieſt, He was and is one able to have Compaſſion; that is, able with all Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, with all Patience and Forbearance, to bear the Infirmities, Sins, and Provocations of

Men, even as a Nurſe bears with the Weakneſs and Frowardneſs of a poor Infant. *Obſerve*, (2.) The peculiar Object of his compaſſionate Care and Regard; namely, Thoſe that are *ignorant*, and do wander *out of the way*; in theſe two Words does the Apoſtle comprize all ſorts of Sinners whatſoever, with all ſorts and kinds of Sin. *Obſerve*, (3.) A ſpecial Reaſon render'd, why the High Prieſt was thus compaſſionate, becauſe *he himſelf is compaſſed with Infirmities*; his own Condition will mind him of his Duty in this matter, being beſet on every hand with Infirmities of his own. Learn hence, (1.) That it is a mighty Privilege to us, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, was encompaſſed with the ſinleſs Infirmities of our Nature. (2.) That no ſort of Sinners are excluded from an Intereſt in the Care and Love of our compaſſionate High Prieſt; ſuch as are *ignorant*, and ſuch as are *out of the way*, he has Compaſſion upon both; none are excluded, but thoſe who by Unbelief do exclude themſelves, and cauſe the Blood of the Reconciling Sacrifice to cry againſt them.

3 And by reaſon hereof he ought, as for the people, ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer for ſins:

That is, By reaſon of which Infirmities he ought both by God's Command, and alſo from the Reaſon and Nature of the thing, as for the People ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer Sacrifices for Sins. *Note* here, That this is a Deſcription of the High Prieſt under the Law, not of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt under the Goſpel, becauſe Chriſt had actually no Sin of his own to offer for, being holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners. This Expreſſion therefore of offering for his own Sins, belongs to the Weakneſs and Imperfection of the Legal High Prieſt. Learn hence, That it was a part of the Darkneſs and Bondage of the Church under the Old Teſtament, that their High Prieſts had need to offer Sacrifices for themſelves and their own Sins; this they did in the View of the People; they firſt took Care to offer for their own Sins, and then for the Sins of others; whoſoever dealeth with God about the Sins of others, ought to look well in the firſt place unto his own; it is a great Evidence of Hypocriſy for Men to be ſevere towards the Sins of others, and careleſs about their own Sins. Learn, (2.) That ſuch was the abſolute Holineſs and Spotleſs Innocency of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, that what he offered was not for himſelf, but for his People. Atonement for Sinners was made by him who had no Sin of his own to atone for.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron: 5 So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf, to be made an high prieſt: but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he ſaith alſo in another *place*, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

The foregoing Verſes declared the Perſonal Qualifications of the High Prieſt, here we have his Call and Commiſſion to this Office and Function; The former made him meet for it, the latter gave him right unto it. *No man taketh this Honour*; that is, the Honour of Prieſthood to himſelf, but only he that is called of God, as was *Aaron*, and his Poſterity. *Note* here, (1.) That it is an Act of Sovereignty in God, to call whom he pleaſes to his Work and Service. (2.) That as it is an Act of Sovereignty in God, ſo it is a ſpecial Dignity and Honour to us to be duly called to, as well as qualified for his Work and Service. Learn, (3.) That the higheſt Excellency and utmoſt Neceſſity of any Work or Service to be here done for God, will by no means warrant our Undertaking of it, and engaging in it without a lawful Call unto it. Learn, (4.) That the more excellent any Work of God is, the more expreſs ought to be our Calling to it. *No Man taketh this Honour upon him, but he that is called of God:* It were well if our Lay-Preachers conſidered this. *Obſerve* next, How the Apoſtle applies all this to Chriſt? *So alſo Chriſt*, *our great High Prieſt*, *glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt* uncalled, but he dignified him, who ſaid unto him, *Thou art my Son*, and *Thou art a Prieſt for ever*, without Succeſſion, *after the Order*, Similitude, and Manner of *Melchiſedec*. Learn hence, That the Office of the High Prieſthood over the Church of God, was an Honour and Glory to Jeſus Chriſt; it was ſo to his Humane Nature, even as it was united to his Divine Nature. *Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an High Prieſt*, implying, That it was a Glory and Honour, though not aſſumed, but conferred: And that as *Aaron* was called of God ſo was Chriſt, but in a more excellent and glorious manner. By this we underſtand the intollerable Pride and bold Preſumption of many in theſe Times, who take upon them to officiate in matters of Religion, though never qualified for, nor called to this Work: If ever any Man or Angel, then ſurely Chriſt might have taken this Honour to himſelf, yet he did not uncalled: Verily, this will be the eternal Condemnation of all ſuch Uſurpers, who without any Commiſſion from God or Man, undertake what they do not underſtand.

7 Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears, unto him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Obſerve here, (1.) A ſpecial Act of Chriſt's Prieſthood or Prieſtly Office, *He offered up*. (2.) The Subject Matter of his Offering, *Supplications and Prayers*. (3.) The intenſe manner of his Offering, *with ſtrong Cries and Tears*. (4.) The Perſon to whom he offered, unto God, *who was able to ſave him from Death*. (5.) The Time of his Offering, *in the Days of his Fleſh*; that is, in the time of this mortal Life; when cloathed with our frail Nature. (6.) The Iſſue and Succeſs of all this, *he was heard in that he feared*. Learn hence, (1.) That the Holy Jeſus did not only take upon him our Human Nature, but the Infirmities of our Nature alſo. Chriſt had in this World a time of Infirmities as well as our ſelves. True, his Infirmities were ſinleſs, but ſorrowful and grievous, which expoſed him to all ſorts of Temptations and Sufferings. Learn, (2.) That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, offered up moſt ardent Prayers and Supplications to Almighty God, in the Days of his Fleſh, upon his own and our behalf. The Text mentions *Prayers*, *Supplications*, *with ſtrong Cries*. Learn, (3.) That Chriſt ſhed Tears as well as Blood for a loſt World: he offered up ſtrong Cries and Tears: By this he ſhewed the Truth of his Humanity, and that he did not accept only the Humane Nature, but did alſo aſſume Humane Affections. Learn, (4.) That Chriſt's Prayers were always heard, either in Kind or in Equivalency: He was not ſpecifically heard as to the paſſing of the Cup from him, when he prayed in the Garden; but he was equivalently heard as to the Support of his Spirit, and as to ſupplies of Strength to enable him to drink the bitter Cup with Silence and Submiſſion, *He was heard in that he feared*, by being delivered not from Death, but out of Death, as his Followers muſt expect to be delivered.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he ſuffered:

Obſerve here, (1.) Chriſt's eminent Dignity, he was a *Son*, that is, the Son of God, and God himſelf; *the Word was God*, John 1. 1. And as the Word was made Fleſh, ſo he was nearer to God than any other Perſon; he was a *Son*, a ſinleſs Son, yet a ſuffering Son; and *he learned Obedience by the things which he had ſuffered*. *Obſerve*, (2.) As Chriſt's eminent Dignity, ſo his exemplary Obedience; *he learned Obedience*, not by Perſonal Speculation, but by Real Experience; he experimentally underſtood what Obedience was. *Note* here, That there are two ways of learning Obedience. (1.) By the Comprehenſion of the Mind. (2.) By the Experience of Senſe. Chriſt, as God, was perfect in Knowledge, nothing could be added to him; but when he became Man, then he came to underſtand and learn by Sufferings, which was a new Method and Way of knowing. And the Obedience which Chriſt learnt, was free and voluntary, univerſal and compleat, ſincere and pure, perſevering and conſtant. Chriſt learned this Leſſon of Obedience, not barely to know it, but to do it; to learn to obey, is to obey by the things which he ſuffered; he did perfectly learn, and experimentally underſtand what Obedience was. O Bleſſed Jeſus! As didſt thou, ſo may we learn practical Obedience by the things which we ſuffer.

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him.

Obſerve here, (1.) A choice and ſingular Bleſſing and Benefit ſpoken of, and that is eternal Salvation, which implies not only Deliverance from Hell, and Redemption from e-eternal Miſery, but the obtaining of eternal Life and Happineſs. *Obſerve*, (2.) The Author of this great Bleſſing and Benefit to Mankind, namely, Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, who by making Atonement for us, and reconciling us to God, is ſaid to be the *Author of eternal Salvation* to Mankind. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Way and Means whereby he became the Author of our Salvation, and that was by *being made perfect:* The Original Word is an Alluſion to one that runs in a Race, where he that wins receives the Crown. Thus Chriſt having finiſhed his Courſe of Sufferings, and received the Reward of them, by being raiſed from the Dead, and exalted to the Right Hand of God, he is ſaid to be *made perfect*. *Obſerve*, (4.) The Qualification of the Perſons who are made Partakers of this great Benefit, or the Condition upon which it is offer'd and tender'd, and that is Obedience, *He became the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him*. *Queſt.* (1.) How does Chriſt *become the Author of eternal Salvation*? *Anſw.* As a Rule and Pattern, as a Price and Propitiation, and as an Advocate and Patron; by the Purity of his Doctrine, as a Rule; by the Piety of his Example, as a Pattern; by the Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings, as a Propitiation; and by his prevailing Interceſſion, as our Advocate now in Heaven. Where *Note*, That the Virtue of his Interceſſion in Heaven, is founded on his Satisfaction here on Earth, in ſhedding of his Blood for us. *Queſt.* (2.) What Obedience does the Goſpel require as a Condition, and is pleaſed to accept as a Qualification in thoſe who hope for eternal Salvation? *Anſw.* Negatively; Not a bare external Profeſſion of Obedience, tho' accompanied with Prophecying and working Miracles, but an hearty and univerſal Conformity to the Precepts of the Goſpel, in Sincerity and Uprightneſs; allowing our ſelves in the neglect of no known Duty, nor in the Practice of any known Sin. *Queſt.* (3.) But is fallen Man under a poſſibility *now* of performing this Obedience? *Anſw.* We are no more ſufficient of our ſelves, and by any Power of our own, to perform the Condition of the Goſpel, than we are able to anſwer the Demands of the Law. But the Grace of God is offered to us, and ſtands ready to aſſiſt us to perform the Condition which the Goſpel requires. Conſequently, what the Grace of God ſtands ready to enable us to do, if we be not wanting to our ſelves, that may properly be ſaid to be poſſible to us, and in ſome ſenſe in our Power to perform. *Queſt.* (4.) But is it not our making Obedience the Condition of our Salvation, prejudicial to the Freeneſs of God's Grace, and the Law of Faith? *Anſw.* In no wiſe; ſeeing it is acknowledged, that Faith is the Root of all true Holineſs and Evangelical Obedience, that we ſtand continually in need of Aſſiſtance of God's Grace to enable us to perform that Obedience which the Goſpel requires, and is pleaſed to accept, and that God confers eternal Life upon us, not for the Merit of our Obedience, but only for the Sake of Chriſt. The ſumm of all is this, That it is indiſpenſably neceſſary for a Man to be a good Man, that he may get to Heaven; and that it is the greateſt Preſumption in the World for any Man to hope to attain Salvation without Obedience and a Holy Life: For tho' our Obedience cannot merit Heaven, yet it does qualify and fit us for Heaven; tho' it doth not make us worthy, yet doth it make us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. And whoever finds fault with this Doctrine, finds fault with the Goſpel itſelf.

10 Called of God an high prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec.

Theſe Words may be look'd upon as an Evidence and Teſtimony, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was, and is the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, becauſe he is a *Prieſt after the Order of Melchiſedec*; that is, becauſe his Prieſthood is eternal. *Note* here, (1.) That God was pleaſed to put a ſignal Honour upon the Perſon and Office of *Melchiſedec*, that in him there ſhould be an early and excellent Repreſentation made of the Perſon and Prieſthood of Jeſus Chriſt. *Melchiſedec* was an illuſtrious Type of Chriſt; he was the firſt Perſonal Type of Chriſt that ever was in the World; after him there were many others, and he was the only Type of the Perſon of Chriſt that ever was in the World; others were Types of Chriſt in the Execution of his Office, but none but *Melchiſedec* were ever Types of his Perſon; for being introduced without Father, without Mother, without beginning of Days, or end of Life, he was made like to the Son of God, of whom it is ſaid, *Who can declare his Generation:* And farther, *Melchiſedec* was a Type of Chriſt in thoſe two great Offices of a King and a Prieſt, which none but he ever was. *Note*, (2.) That the Prieſthood of Chriſt was not after the Order of *Aaron*, which was to expire, and not to laſt long, but after the Order of *Melchiſedec*, which was to continue and laſt for ever: *Thou art a Prieſt for ever after the Order of Melchiſedec*. The Prieſthood of Chriſt is an eternal Prieſthood, *He ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us*.

11 Of whom we have many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered; ſeeing ye are dull of hearing.

That is, of which Prieſthood of Chriſt, as compared with *Melchiſedec*, we have much to ſay, which it is not eaſy to make intelligible by Words, to thoſe that are ignorant and dull of Underſtanding. Learn hence, (1.) That all Scripture Truths are not equally eaſy to be underſtood, but require a peculiar Diligence in our Attendance upon them, that they may be underſtood. Learn, (2.) That it is the Incapacity of Hearers, thro' Dulneſs and Slothfulneſs, and want of preparatory Knowledge, which makes Scripture-Teaching no more and no better underſtood: All our Miſcarriages under the Word, are to be reſolved into our own Sloth, Negligence, and depraved Affections; we have many things to ſay, but ye are dull of Hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which *be* the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, when for the time that you have profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, you ought to have been able to be Teachers of it to others, you had need your ſelves to be inſtructed in the firſt Rudiments of the Chriſtian Religion, *and are become ſuch as have need of Milk*, the Food of Babes, *and not of ſtrong Meat*, the Food of Men. Learn hence, (1.) That the time when, and how long we enjoy the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, is a Circumſtance which muſt in particular be accounted for; whereas *for the time*, all have Time, but all have not Time alike: The Day of the Goſpel is not of the ſame Length to all Nations, Churches, and Perſons. Learn, (2.) That it is reaſonably expected by God, that Perſons ſhould thrive and grow in Knowledge and Holineſs proportionably to their Time and Means; and not doing ſo, is charged upon them as a great Aggravation of their Guilt; *For the Time ye ought to have been Teachers*; that is, of Ability ſufficient for the teaching of others. They had not learned of their Teachers, when the Apoſtle had reaſon to hope they had been able to teach their Learners. Many after long teaching are ignorant, and ought to be taught again the ſame things which they long ago heard. Learn, (3.) That the Holy Scriptures are to be look'd upon, conſulted with, and ſubmitted to, *as the Oracles of God*; they are ſometimes called the Living, ſometimes the Lively Oracles of God, becauſe they are the Oracles of the Living God, and alſo Life-giving Oracles to them that obey them. Learn, (4.) That there are in the Scripture, Truths ſuitable to the ſpiritual Inſtruction and Edification of all ſorts of Perſons; there is in it both Milk and ſtrong Meat, plain Doctrines and firſt Principles neceſſary for all, and Truths of a deeper Search that are profitable to ſome. In the Scripture, ſaid one, there are Shallows, and there are Depths; Fords where the Lambs may wade, and Depths where the Elephants may ſwim.

13 For every one that uſeth milk, *is* unskilful in the word of righteouſneſs: for he is a babe. 14 But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.

Our Apoſtle here ſpeaks of the difference of Doctrines under the Metaphor of Meats: From whence we may gather (1.) That the Word of God, in the Diſpenſation of it, is Food provided for the Souls of Men. (2.) That the Word, as Food, will not profit the Soul until it be eaten and digeſted: 'Tis not Food prepared, but Food received that nouriſhes. When *Manna* was gathered and eaten, it nouriſhed the *Iſraelites*; but when gathered and laid by, it putrified and bred Worms. Lord! What Pains do ſome take to gather *Manna*, to hear the Word, but alas, it lies by them, and is of no uſe. Learn, (3.) That as the Goſpel is the Word of Righteouſneſs, ſo God requires and expects that all thoſe who live under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, ſhould be ſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs. The Goſpel is the Word of Righteouſneſs; it is ſo *declaratively*, it is ſo *efficiently: Declaratively*, As the Severity of God againſt Sin is hereby more fully revealed, and as the Righteouſneſs which God requireth, approveth, and accepteth for our Juſtification, is therein declared; and the Righteouſneſs which God requireth in us, and expecteth from us, is hereby diſcovered alſo: And as it is the great Inſtrument of working Holineſs in us, and making us inherently Righteous, ſo it is the Word of Righteouſneſs *efficiently*, as well as *declaratively*: Our Juſtification is wrought in us thereby, *John* 17. 17. Learn 4. That the ſpiritual Senſes of Believers, well exerciſed in the Word of Righteouſneſs, are the beſt and moſt undeceiving Helps in judging of what is Good or Evil, what is True or Falſe, that is propoſed to them: *Such by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.*

CHAP. VI.

The Holy Apoſtle having, in the foregoing Chapters, largely treated of the Divinity of our Saviour's Perſon, and the Dignity of his Prieſthood; ſhewing, that he was a more excellent Prieſt than Aaron, *even an eternal High Prieſt, after the Order of* Melchiſedec, *in whom both Crown and Miter, Kingdom and Prieſthood did concenter.*

In the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter he gave the Hebrews *a very ſmart Reproof for their Dulneſs and Ignorance, comparing them to Children, yea, to Babes that muſt be fed with* Milk, *that is, plain and eaſy Doctrines, the firſt Principles and Rudiments of Chriſtianity; as being uncapable of* ſtrong Meats, *that is, the harder and higher Myſteries of Religion.*

He begins this Chapter with an Exhortation to them, to increaſe both in Knowledge and Obedience; exciting them to advance to an higher and more perfect degree of Knowledge in the Chriſtian Religion, than the firſt Principles and Groundwork of it. And accordingly he thus beſpeaks them, ver. 1.

THerefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection; ——

In theſe Words of the Apoſtle he ſeems to allude to the Building of an Houſe: As in that, we firſt lay a good and ſure Foundation, but do not reſt there, but proceed in raiſing up the Fabrick; in like manner, it is neither ſatisfactory nor ſufficient, to advance no farther in the Chriſtian Religion, than the Knowledge of the firſt Principles of it, but Endeavours muſt be uſed to attain a more perfect Degree and Meaſure of Knowledge in the Myſteries of the Goſpel. *Leaving the Principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*, he means not leaving them, ſo as to forget them, and lay them aſide, but to leave them by going beyond them, and advancing farther and higher in the Knowledge of Chriſtianity. Learn hence, 1. That in Chriſtianity, and in other Sciences, there are certain Rudiments and Fundamental Principles, which muſt and ought to be carefully taught. 2. That it is a neceſſary and uſeful Practice in the Church of God, to teach the Doctrine of Chriſtianity in the firſt Principles of it plainly and ſummarily to young Beginners. Learn, 3. That when the Miniſters of the Goſpel have laid a good Foundation of Scripture-Knowledge in the Underſtanding of their Hearers, they muſt excite them by all preſſing Conſiderations to make a farther Progreſs in their Knowledge; and leaving the Doctrine of the beginning of Chriſt, *go on unto perfection.*

1 ——Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works; and of faith towards God. 2 Of the doctrine of baptiſms, and of laying on of hands, and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

Still our Apoſtle purſues his Metaphor, in comparing Chriſtianity to a Building, and the firſt Rudiments or Principles of the Chriſtian Religion to a Foundation which ſupports the Superſtructure. Next, he ſummarily declares what theſe Fundamental Doctrines, and firſt Principles of the Chriſtian Religion are, namely, theſe Six. 1. *Repentance*, or a turning from all ſinful Works, called *dead Works*, becauſe they end in Death; dead, becauſe deadly; they proceed from Death ſpiritual, and end in Death eternally. 2. *Faith towards God*, or Faith in God; that is, in the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Particularly, Faith in the firſt Original Promiſe of God, to ſend Chriſt into the World to ſave us from our Sins, and granting Remiſſion of Sins by him. Here *Note*, How cloſely Repentance and Faith are united and knit together; where the one is, there is the other; and where either is not, there is neither. He repenteth not, who hath not Faith towards God, and he hath no Faith towards God who repenteth not. 3. *The doctrine of Baptiſm*; that is, of both the Chriſtian Sacraments, as alſo of the Covenant of Grace, of which the Sacraments are Seals. Perſons admitted into the Church by Baptiſm, ought to be well inſtructed (as ſoon as capable of it) in the Nature, Uſe, and End of the Sacraments; acquainting them not only with the Nature of the outward Sign, but with the Neceſſity of the inward Grace. (4.) *The doctrine of laying on of Hands*, to confirm the Baptized Perſons in the Faith, and to oblige and enable them to keep the Covenant they entred into with God, when they were Baptized; which was done before their Admiſſion to the Lord's Table. Impoſition, or laying on of Hands, was an ancient and venerable Right uſed in the Primitive Church upon ſeveral Occaſions; particularly, in Ordination, in Abſolution of Penitents, in healing the Sick, in conferring the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 8. 17. And, *laſtly*, in Confirmation, when Baptized Perſons were brought before the Church, to acknowledge, confirm, and renew their Baptiſmal Covenant with God; and to receive the Benefit of Publick Prayer, and Epiſcopal Benediction, in order to the further Endowments of Grace to perform their Vows, adorn their Profeſſion, and be admitted to the Lord's Table, as compleat Members of the viſible Church of Chriſt. (5.) *The Reſurrection of the dead*, a Doctrine denied by the *Sadduces*, derided by the *Athenian Philoſophers*, and perverted by *Hereticks*: but is a Fundamental Principle of the Goſpel; the Faith whereof is indiſpenſably neceſſary unto our Conſolation, and has a peculiar Influence upon our Obedience. This is the animating Principle of Goſpel-Obedience, becauſe we are aſſured, that our Services ſhall not only be remembred, but rewarded alſo. (6.) *The eternal Judgment*, which will doom Men to everlaſting Rewards and Puniſhments in a future State. The Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to dwell much upon this Fundamental Principle of Religion, to repreſent the Dread and Terror of that eternal Day to all Men, to the Intent they may be excited and ſtirred up to take effectual Care that they fall not under the Vengeance of that fatal Day. Theſe Six Principles being laid down by the Apoſtle, he tells them his Reſolution, to endeavour the carrying of them on to a more perfect Degree and Meaſure of Knowledge in the Myſteries of the Goſpel; in order to their becoming ſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs; *Leaving the Principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection; which we will do, if God permit.*

4 For *it is* impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghoſt, 5 And have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; 6 If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put *him* to an open ſhame.

By the *Enlightned* here, underſtand thoſe that were Baptized, and embraced Chriſtianity: The Ancients called Baptiſm *Illumination*, and Baptized Perſons *the Enlightned*; becauſe of that Divine Illumination which was conveyed to the Minds of Men by the Knowledge of Chriſtianity. By *taſting the heavenly gift*, and being *made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt*, underſtand ſuch as had not only heard of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, but had ſome Experience of them themſelves; as alſo of the Spiritual Benefits conferred upon them in Baptiſm, by the Holy Spirit. By *taſting the good Word of God*, underſtand ſome Reliſh of the Truth and Goodneſs of the Goſpel, ſome Pleaſure in entertaining it, by Reaſon of the gracious Promiſes of Eternal Life and Happineſs contained in it. The Goſpel that proclaimed Remiſſion of Sins was a *good Word*; this good Word they ſaw confirmed by Miracles, Tongues, and Prophecy, and ſo could not but be convinced of the Truth of it, which is here called a taſting it; who have *taſted the good Word of God*,

God, it follows, *and the powers of the world to come*; that is, the Powers of the Goſpel-Age; for *the world to come*, in the Language of the Prophets, doth ſignify the Times of the *Meſſiah*; and thus *the powers of the world to come*, are the miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghoſt beſtowed upon Men, in order to the Propagation of the Goſpel; ſuch were the Gifts of Healing, caſting out Devils, working Miracles. Others, by *taſting the powers of the world to come*, underſtand ſome Apprehenſions of the Reſurrection and future Judgment, with Affections ſuitable thereunto. Now concerning theſe, ſays our Apoſtle, *if they fall away*; that is, if they ſhall, after all this, apoſtatize from this Profeſſion, out of Love to this preſent World; or for fear of Perſecution and Sufferings, if they ſhall relapſe either to *Heatheniſm* or *Judaiſm*, *it is impoſſible to renew them again to repentance*; that is, it is a thing very difficult, hardly to be hoped for, that ſuch wilful Apoſtates ſhould be reſtor'd again by Repentance; *Seeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame*; that is, they vertually, and in effect, crucify him over again, and in as much as in them lies; for by denying and renouncing of him, they declare him to be an Impoſtor, and conſequently worthy of Death. So that the plain Senſe of the Words ſeem to be this; If thoſe that are Baptized, and have receiv'd the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and are endow'd with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall yet, after all this, Apoſtatize from Chriſtianity, it is very difficult, and next to an Impoſſibility, to recover ſuch again by Repentance; ſeeing they are guilty of as great a Crime, as if in their own Perſons they had put to Death, and ignominiouſly uſed the Son of God. Here *Note*, That it is not a partial Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Religion, by any particular vicious Practice, but a total Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, and more eſpecially to the *Heathen Idolatry*, which is here intended. From the whole learn (1.) That they which have been enlighten'd, awaken'd, and made Partakers of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, in ſome meaſure, and taſted the Sweetneſs of the Word and Ways of God, in ſome degree, may yet fall away. (2.) That if ſuch do fall away, it is very difficult, tho' not altogether impoſſible, to renew them again to Repentance: And that for theſe Reaſons, (1.) Becauſe of the Greatneſs and heinous Nature of the Sin, it being a downright Apoſtacy from God, againſt the cleareſt Light and Knowledge, and fulleſt Conviction of a Man's Mind; and the higheſt Affront to the Son of God, who reveal'd the Chriſtian Religion to the World, and ſeal'd it with his Blood. (2.) Becauſe thoſe who are guilty of this Sin, do renounce and caſt off the Means of their Recovery, and therefore it becomes extremely difficult to renew them again to Repentance: They reject Chriſt and his Holy Goſpel, and refuſe the only Remedy appointed for their Recovery. (3.) Becauſe it is ſo high a Provocation to God, to withdraw his Grace and Holy Spirit from ſuch Perſons, by the Power and Efficacy whereof they ſhould be brought to Repentance; God juſtly leaving thoſe who ſo unworthily leave him. Lord! How fearful and fatal a Condition is it, to begin in the Spirit and end in the Fleſh; to decay in Religion, and Apoſtatize from Grace; to have had ſome Work of the Spirit, and Word upon our Hearts, ſo as to have Light and Love, ſome taſte and ſavour of Religion, ſome Deſires after, and Hopes of Heaven, and, after all, to cool and give over, to revolt and backſlide, and have our Latter End worſe than our Beginning.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briars *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto curſing; whoſe end is to be burned.

The Deſign and Scope of our Apoſtle in theſe Words is Threefold. (1.) To ſet forth the Excellency and Neceſſity of the Goſpel, diſpenſed to us in the Miniſtry of the Word; he compares it to Rain, which doth ſoften, refreſh, and fructify the Earth. (2.) He diſcovers the different Effect which the Word of God, or the Doctrine of the Goſpel has upon different Perſons, that ſit under the Preaching and Diſpenſation of it; the ſincere Chriſtian becomes fruitful under the Dews and Showers of Divine Grace, and receives a Bleſſing. But the barren and fruitleſs Profeſſor is like an howling Wilderneſs or dry Deſart, which after innumerable refreſhing Showers brings forth nothing but Briars and Thorns. (3.) He declares the different State and Condition of ſuch Perſons. A People that anſwers God's Care and Coſt, is like a Field that drinks in the Rain, bringeth forth Herbs, and receives a Bleſſing. But ſuch a People, as after all the refreſhing Showers from Heaven, and after all the Culture and Labour of God's Huſbandmen on Earth, ſhall remain Buſhes and Briars, barren and unfruitful under all; or worſe than ſuch, they are *nigh unto Curſing*, and their *End is to be burned.* Bleſſing attends the one, Burning waits the other. *Note* (1.) That what the Rain is to the Earth, that is the Word of God, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel to the Soul of Man: Is the Rain of Heavenly Extraction? ſo is the Word of God: Does the Rain fall by Divine Direction? ſo does the Word preached: Does the Rain diſtil down gradually and ſucceſſively, not all at once? ſo does the Word fall, here a little and there a little: Does the Rain mollify and ſoften, revive and refreſh, fructify and make fruitful where it falls? ſo does the Word preached, *Col.* 1. 6. The Word of the Goſpel is come unto you, *and bringeth forth Fruit, ſince the Day you heard of it.* In a Word, As after Plenty of Rain there follows a great Drought, and want of Rain, ſo after a long and plentiful Enjoyment of the Goſpel, if People do not prize and improve their Mercies, God will cut them ſhort, and deprive them of them. *Note* (2.) That it is poſſible for a People to ſet long under the Miniſtry of the Word: That Spiritual Rain, that celeſtial Dew may be daily dropping and diſtilling down upon them, and yet that People may be Buſh and Briar after all; barren and unfruitful in the Account of God. *Note* (3.) That a People ſo remaining, and under ſuch Advantages are *nigh unto curſing, and their end is to be burned.* Barrenneſs under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, is always accompanied with an Increaſe of Sin, and of Condemnation alſo: Thoſe that are not, becauſe they will not be healed and reformed by the Preaching of the Goſpel, are righteouſly given up by God to extream Obſtinacy and final Obduration.

9 But beloved, we are perſwaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak. 10 For God *is* not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do miniſter.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Holy Wiſdom of our Apoſtle, in mollifying the Severity of the foregoing Commination and Prediction; and the good Hope and firm Perſuaſion he had of the *Hebrews* Perſeverance in Grace unto Salvation, notwithſtanding all the Cautions and Warnings he gave them of Apoſtacy and Apoſtates; *I am perſwaded better things of you, though I thus ſpeak.* We may repreſent the ugly and filthy Face of Sin to our beſt Friends, to the end that they may hate it, and eſcape it: We may be confident of another's Sincerity, and, as occaſion requires, publickly teſtify that Confidence to themſelves; *We are perſwaded better things of you.* *Obſerve* (2.) The ground of this Confidence declared, and that is twofold. (1.) The Graces of God's Spirit found operative in them; their Faith in Chriſt, and Love to all his Members; it was a working Faith and laborious Love that was found with them, they have adminiſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter. Behold the Nature of Chriſtian Love, it is an immortal Fire, ever burning, never dying. (2.) Another ground of this Perſuaſion, was the Knowledge of God's Faithfulneſs in remembring and rewarding this their Labour of Love; *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*; that is, God is Righteous, and will certainly remember and reward your Faith, your Charity, and good Works; for he has promiſed to do ſo, and he is faithful that has promiſed. Learn hence, (1.) That Faith, if it be a Living Faith, will be a Working Faith. Obedience is the Fruit of Faith, and we ought to look on Obedience as our Work. Learn (2.) That it is the Will and Pleaſure of God, that many of his Saints and Servants in this World be in ſuch a Condition, wherein they ſtand in need of being miniſtred unto. Learn (3.) That the beſt Evidence we can have of the Sincerity of our Love, is its Readineſs to miniſter to the Saints in all Diſtreſſes. Learn (4.) That both the Labour of our Sufferings, and the Labour of our Services ſhall be remembred and rewarded by a Righteous God; *God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love,—— in that ye have adminiſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter.*

11 And we deſire, that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end:

Note here, (1.) That although the Apoſtle had a firm Perſuaſion, that they were ſincere and upright, and would hold on their way, yet he exhorts them to ſhew the ſame Diligence which they had done, and to perſevere to the end, as they had begun. Learn thence, That Miniſterial Exhortation unto Duty is needful, even unto them who are ſincere in the Practice of it, that they may abide and continue therein: *We deſire that you ſhew the ſame Diligence unto the end. Note*, (2.) The ſpecial Duty he exhorts them to, and that is, to attain a *full Aſſurance of Hope. Hope* is a certain and aſſured Expectation of good things promiſed, accompanied with Love, and a longing Deſire to enjoy them. *A full Aſſurance of Hope*, is ſuch a fixed, conſtant, and prevailing Perſuaſion concerning the good things promiſed, and our certain Enjoyment of them, as will ſupport us under, and carry us through all the Difficulties and Troubles that we conflict with. Learn hence, That a good Man may in this Life arrive at an Aſſurance of Faith and Hope, as touching the Goodneſs of his Condition in the Life to come. The Original Word ſignifies a full Gale of Hope, a Metaphor taken from Sailors, who enter the Harbour with a full Gale of Wind, both with Facility and Safety. The Chriſtian's Soul is a Ship ſailing in a tempeſtuous Sea: Faith repreſents the Pilot, Love the Sail, Hope the Wind that muſt fill the Sail: be the Pilot never ſo confident, the Sail ſpread to the utmoſt, yet without a Gale of Wind the Ship lies becalmed, moves not towards the Harbour. A Chriſtian on Earth without Hope, is as a Ship at Sea without Wind. *Note*, (3.) The ſpecial Means directed to, in order to the attaining of this full Aſſurance of Hope, and that is, *to ſhew Diligence, the ſame Diligence*, and that *to the end.* Learn thence, That Chriſtians ought by no means to wax ſecure but to uſe all Diligence to the end of their Lives, for the heightning of their Hope to a full Aſſurance; *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame Diligence, to the full Aſſurance of Hope to the end.*

12 That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.

Our Apoſtle having exhorted the *Hebrews* to great Diligence in good Works in the former Verſe, in this Verſe endeavours to excite and provoke them to it by the Examples of deceaſed Saints, who are now reaping the Reward of their former Pains, and inheriting the Promiſes. Here *note*, (1.) A cautionary Direction given, *that ye be not ſlothful*, either timorous and faint-hearted, or remiſs and negligent. God having engaged ſo firmly on his part to let nothing be wanting which is requiſite to enable us to perſevere; if we miſs of the Promiſe, that is, of Heaven, the Good promiſed, we muſt thank our own Sloth for it. *Note*, (2.) The great Duty exhorted to, and that is to be Followers of the Saints; *be Followers of them*; that is, vigorouſly and conſtantly imitate them in their Graces and gracious Converſations. The Graces of the Saints, (whether living or dead) are Patterns preſented to our Imitation. *Note*, (3.) The particular and ſpecial Graces in the Saints which we are to imitate and follow, namely, their Faith and Patience: Their Faith: that is, their firm Truſt in God, and Belief of his Promiſes, relying on his Word under all Trials: And their Patience; that is, their Perſeverance in well-doing, and patient Expectation under all Delays, and conſtant Adherence to him under all Difficulties. Learn hence, (1.) That Heaven is not ours by Purchaſe, but by Promiſe, (2.) That Heaven is a promiſed Inheritance, which Saints by Faith and Patience have poſſeſſed. (3.) That by being Followers of them in their Faith and Patience, we may alſo come with them to inherit the Promiſes.

13 For when God made promiſe to Abraham, be-
cauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by
himſelf, 14 Saying, Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs
thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. 15 And
ſo after he had patiently endured, he obtained the
promiſe.

The Apoſtle having told us in general that the Saints by Faith and Patience do inherit the Promiſes, inſtances here particularly in *Abraham*, unto whom God made a Promiſe of multiplying his Seed greatly to him, and confirmed that Promiſe by an Oath, but *Abraham* waited long by Faith and Patience for the compleat fulfilling of the Promiſe; and ſo muſt we: God delights to be truſted by his People upon his Word and Oath, and when they do not live to ſee the Promiſe of God fulfilled, they glorifie him exceedingly, by dying in the Faith and firm Belief, that it ſhall be fulfill'd in God's own appointed time. *Note* here, The wonderful Condeſcenſion in God towards the Infirmity of Man, he ſwears, he ſwears by himſelf, he pawns and pledges his Godhead, and if he performs not what he promiſes and ſwears, is willing to forfeit it. *O fœlices nos! Quorum cauſa Deus jurat: O miſerrimi! Si nec juranti credamus.* O happy Man! For whoſe Sake God condeſcends to ſwear. O miſerable Men! If we doubt of God's Promiſe confirmed by his Oath, in which he has laid down his Godhead at Stake and Pawn, never to take it up again, if he fails the leaſt Jot in the punctual Performance of it.

16 For men verily ſwear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all ſtrife.

Theſe Words contain a Reaſon, why God in gracious Condeſcenſion to Man's Infirmity, is pleaſed to confirm his Promiſe with an Oath; it is to determine a Controverſy, and put an End to a Strife depending between God and the Fallen Creature: And this is the general Reaſon for an Oath amongſt Men, it is to put Bounds and Limits to the Contentions and Contradictions of Men, to make an end of all Strife between them, which otherwiſe would be perpetuated, and to bring them to a mutual Acquieſcency; *An Oath for Confirmation is an end of all Strife.* Learn hence, (1.) That there is, as we are in a State of Nature, a Strife and Difference between God and us. (2.) That the Promiſes of the Goſpel are gracious Propoſals of the only Way and Means for the ending of that Strife. (3.) That the Oath of God interpoſed for the Confirmation of theſe Promiſes, is every way ſufficient on God's part, to put a Period to this Strife, and to eſtabliſh a firm Peace with us, through the Blood of Chriſt. *Men verily ſwear by the greater, and an Oath for Confirmation is the end of all Strife.*

17 Wherein God willing more abundantly to
ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability
of his counſel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18 That
by two immutable things, in which *it was* impoſ-
ſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong con-
ſolation,——

Here the Apoſtle acquaints us with the Deſign of God, in confirming his Promiſe, namely, to manifeſt the Immutability of his Counſel to us; that is, his Decree and Purpoſe for our Salvation; to the Intent that by his Word and Oath we might have ſtrong Conſolation. So unſpeakable is the Weakneſs of our Faith, that we ſtand in need of the utmoſt Condeſcenſion of God for its Confirmation. *Note* here, That God has made many Promiſes for the Confirmation of his People's Faith. God's Oath is a Surety for his Promiſes, and that God's End both in his Promiſe and his Oath, is to give his People the higheſt Aſſurance and ſtrongeſt Conſolation. *Queſt.* Why are we ſo hard to believe God upon his ſingle Word: yea, can ſcarce truſt him upon his Oath? *Anſw.* Becauſe of our Guilt; now Guilt is always full of Fear, and fearful of Suſpicion and Diſtruſt; and becauſe the way of Reconciliation is ſo rare and wonderful, that we can ſcarce conceive of it, much leſs believe it; alſo the Privileges of the Goſpel are ſo glorious that they exceed our Belief: And becauſe we our ſelves are ſo falſe and fickle, both with God, and one another, that Promiſes, Vows, and Oaths, are all little enough to hold us; now we are apt to meaſure God by our ſelves, therefore he gives us his Oath. *Inference*, (1.) How ought we to bind our ſelves to God by Oath, ſeeing he condeſcends *thus* to tye himſelf to us? (2.) How unreaſonable is it for the Believer to diſtruſt God upon his Oath? This is not only to accuſe God of a Lie, but to impeach him of Perjury. (3.) How abſurd is it for the impenitent Sinner not to tremble at the Threatnings of God, which are confirmed by an Oath, as well as his Promiſes; *I have ſworn in my Wrath they ſhall never enter into my Reſt.*

18 —— Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us :

In theſe Words there is an Alluſion to the Cities, a Refuge ſpoken of under the Law ; God appointed ſix of them for thoſe to fly unto, who were guilty of caſual Homicide, or killing a Man by chance, that ſo they might avoid the Fury of the Avenger of Blood. Now theſe Cities of Refuge were an illuſtrious Type of Chriſt. *Note* here, (1.) Chriſt is the Believer's City of Refuge, the only Sanctuary for diſtreſſed Souls. (2.) That Believers do by Faith fly unto him for Refuge, when the Guilt of Sin, and the Wrath of God for Sin, do purſue and follow them. This flying for Refuge doth imply Diligence and Earneſtneſs, as in the Caſe of Life and Death, yea, unwearied Diligence ; and it implies Continuance in this Refuge, when once got into it, not to ſtir out of it for all the World. Lord ! open the Eyes, and awaken the Conſciences of all impenitent Sinners, make them ſenſible that the Avenger of Blood is at their Heels, and that their Damnation ſlumbers not, if they do not preſently fly from the Wrath to come, and take Sanctuary in thy Son.

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entreth into that within the vail.

In theſe Words we have the Nature of a Chriſtian's Hope deſcribed. (1.) By a Metaphorical, (2.) By a Typical Similitude. (1.) Obſerve the Metaphor made uſe of to ſet forth the Nature and Office of Hope, it is compared to an Anchor ; *which Hope we have, as an Anchor of the Soul,* Doth the Anchor hold faſt the Ship, and keep it ſteady, both in Storms and Tempeſts, and in the midſt of the moſt tumultuous Waves ? In like manner, the Hope of eternal Glory quiets, ſtays, and ſtrengthens the Chriſtian's Spirit, when toſs'd upon the Waves of this troubleſome World. Learn hence, (1.) That Believers are expoſed to many Storms and Tempeſts here in this World ; their Afflictions, Perſecutions, Temptations, Fears, *&c.* are compared fitly to Storms, becauſe of their Fierceneſs and Violence, and becauſe of their Tendency to Ruin and Deſtruction. Learn, (2.) That theſe Storms would prove ruinous to the Souls of Believers, did not Hope, the Anchor of the Soul, take faſt hold on the Promiſes of the Goſpel, which keeps the Chriſtian firm and invincible againſt all Oppoſitions ; *which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt. Obſerve,* (2.) Hope is deſcribed by a Typical Similitude, it *entreth into that within the Vail.* The Vail here alluded to, is that which parted the Holy of Holies from the Body of the Temple, a Type of Heaven. The Heavens are as a Vail to the Senſe and Reaſon of Man, there their Sight and their Thoughts are bounded, they can neither diſcern nor judge of any thing that is above or within that Vail : But Faith and Hope pierceth through it ; no created thing can keep them at a diſtance from God himſelf. As the Anchor ſtays not in the Waves of the Sea, but pierces through them till it comes to the ſolid Bottom ; ſo the Chriſtian's Hope fixes on nothing under Heaven, but pierces through all till it *entreth into that within the Vail* ; that is, till it fixes on God as the Author, on Chriſt as the Purchaſer, on the Spirit as the Inſurer, on the Covenant as the Conveyer of all Grace, Mercy, and Peace. Here Hope fixes itſelf to hold the Soul firm and ſtedfaſt in all the Storms that may befal it. Learn hence, (1.) That the Hope and Faith of Believers are inviſible unto the World ; they *enter within the Vail,* where the World's Eye can never follow them. Learn, (2.) That Hope firmly fixed on God in Chriſt by the Promiſe, will hold the Soul ſteady, and keep the Chriſtian tite in all the Storms that may befal it ; *It is an anchor both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entreth into that within the Vail.*

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entred, *even* Jeſus, made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

Obſerve here, The Perſon ſpoken of, Chriſt ; the Subject Matter ſpoken of him, his entring into Heaven ; and the Quality in which he entred Heaven ; namely, as our Forerunner. This denotes, (1.) His publick Capacity, that he entred Heaven in our Name, and to negotiate our Affairs. (2.) His abſolute Precedency, he is our Forerunner, but he himſelf had no Forerunner, none that entred before him in their own Names, but in his, and upon his account, thro' the Vertue of his Merits, and by the prevalency of his Mediation. Learn hence, (1.) That there is a Place and State of Happineſs above, prepared for Pious Souls, which Chriſt is already entred into, and has taken Poſſeſſion of : This Place may be conſidered in its Amplitude and Largeneſs, in its Stability and Firmneſs, in its Sanctity and Holineſs, in its Pleaſure and Delightfulneſs, in its Glory and Bleſſedneſs, in its Eternity and Everlaſtingneſs : And this Place is by Chriſt prepared for Believers ; namely, By his Death and Satisfaction, by his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, by his Mediation and Interceſſion. Learn, (2.) That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is not only entred into Heaven, but entred as our Forerunner, to take and keep Poſſeſſion of it in the Name and Stead of all Believers. To enter Heaven as our Forerunner, implies, that he entred in our *Natures,* that he keeps Poſſeſſion of it in our *Names* : As ſure as the Head is gone before the Members, ſo certainly ſhall the Members follow their Head, as a Forerunner ſuppoſes others to follow after ; and it implies, that Chriſt will put us into the actual Poſſeſſion of Heaven in his own time. *Inference,* (1.) Is Chriſt gone before to Heaven, then let us be willing to follow him in the way of Obedience, and in the way of Suffering, as well as to meet him in the end. (2.) To make haſte after him. Did he fly as an Eagle towards Heaven, and ſhall we creep like a Snail ? Is not the Boſom of Chriſt more deſirable than the Arms of our deareſt Friends ? Shall we not enjoy all Comforts in the Enjoyment of our Comforter ? (3.) Let our Hearts at preſent be with them. Oh ! Where ſhould our Hearts be, but where our Head is ?

C H A P. VII.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter returns to his Diſcourſe concerning the Prieſthood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, from which he had digreſſed in the former Chapter ; and ſhews in this, wherein Melchiſedec *was a Type of Chriſt, to wit, in his Name, King of Righteouſneſs ; in his Title, King of* Salem, *or Peace ; in his Original, without Pedigree or Deſcent ; in the Excellency of his Perſon, to be preferr'd before* Abraham, *and all the* Levites, *that deſcended from him ; in the Eminency of his Prieſthood, which could and did make a perfect Expiation for Sin, which the* Levitical *Prieſthood never did, never could do ; and accordingly thus he ſpeaks,* ver. 1.

FOR this Melchiſedec king of Salem, prieſt of the moſt high God, who met Abraham, returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, and bleſſed him : 2 To whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all : firſt, being by interpretation king of righteouſneſs, and after that alſo, king of Salem, which is king of peace ; 3 Without father, without mother, without deſcent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a prieſt continually.

Here *Obſerve,* (1.) The Perſon ſpoken of, deſcribed by his Name, *Melchiſedec.* Some take this *Melchiſedec* to be *Sem,* the Son of *Noah* ; but this cannot be, becauſe his Genealogy is exactly ſet down by *Moſes* : Others take him to be one of the Poſterity of *Japhet,* the Father of the *Gentiles* : In the midſt of theſe Sinners, above others, was *Melchiſedec* raiſed up as an illuſtrious Type of Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah. See here, how God can raiſe up Inſtruments for his Service, and unto his Glory, when, where, and how he pleaſeth. And learn hence, That this ſignal Prefiguration of Chriſt, in the Nations of the World, at the ſame time when *Abraham* received the Promiſes for himſelf and his Poſterity, gave a Pledge and Aſſurance of the certain future Call of the *Gentiles* unto an Intereſt in him, and Participation of him. *Obſerve,* (2.) *Melchiſedec* is here deſcribed by his Office ; he was a King of *Salem,* and a Prieſt of the moſt High God ; yea, the firſt that was ſo by ſpecial Inſtitution, and ſeparated to the Office by God's Approbation : None went before him, and none ſucceeded him in his Office. Here *Note,* That the firſt perſonal inſtituted Type of Chriſt was *Melchiſedec* as Prieſt : for in his Kingly Office he was not ſo directly Typical of Chriſt ; there were Moral Types of Chriſt's Perſon before *Melchiſedec,* as *Adam, Abel,* and *Noah,* which repreſented him in ſundry things : But the firſt Perſon who was ſolemnly deſigned to repreſent Chriſt by what he was and did, was *Melchiſedec* the Prieſt, *teaching us*, that the Foundation of all that the Lord Chriſt had to do in and for the Church was laid in his Prieſtly Office, whereby he made Atonement and Reconciliation for Sin: *Melchiſedec King of* Salem, *and Prieſt of the moſt High God. Obſerve* 3. He is deſcribed by ſeveral Actions and Circumſtances: 1. *He met* Abraham *returning from the Slaughter of the Kings*: This Meeting of *Melchiſedec* and Abraham, after *Abraham* had gotten the Victory over all his Adverſaries, was a Type and Repreſentation of the Glorious Meeting of Chriſt and his Church at the laſt Day; then he will bring out of his Stores in Heaven for their Eternal Refreſhment, as *Melchiſedec* brought forth Bread and Wine to refreſh *Abraham* returning from the Slaughter of the Kings. 2. He *Bleſt him*, Gen. 14. 19. and *Melchiſedec* ſaid, *Bleſſed be* Abraham *of the moſt High God, Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* Sacerdotal Bleſſings were Authoritative, and that by ſpecial Inſtitution. In this Bleſſing of *Abraham* by *Melchiſedec* all Believers are Virtually Bleſſed by Jeſus Chriſt: *Melchiſedec* repreſented Chriſt in what he then did, and *Abraham* repreſented all his believing Poſterity in what he then received. 3. Another Sacerdotal Act or Exerciſe of Prieſtly Power aſcribed to *Melchiſedec* is, that he received of *Abraham* Tithes of all; the one paid them in a way of Duty, the other received them in a way of Office. *Note* here, The Antiquity of Tithes, and how very Ancient they were; they were paid in *Abraham*'s Time, long before the Ceremonial Law, and therefore cannot be ſaid to be *Jewiſh* and *Levitical*. The Patriarchs before the Law, the *Jews* under the Law, and the Chriſtians in Times of the Goſpel, have all paid this Proportion: From whence ſome have concluded, that as the Seventh Part of our Time, ſo the Tenth Part of our Goods and Eſtates, were given to God from the beginning, as Lord of all our Time, and Proprietor of all our Eſtate. Whatſoever we receive ſignally from God in a way of Mercy, we ought to return a Portion of it to him in a way of Duty. It is a certain Sign that a Man has not engaged God in getting an Eſtate, when he will not entitle him to any Portion of it when it is gotten. *Obſerve* 4. The Apoſtle proceeds unto other Inſtances in the Deſcription of *Melchiſedec*, wherein he was made like unto the Son of God, ver. 3. *Without Father, without Mother, without Deſcent, having neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*: Which Expreſſions muſt not be underſtood Abſolutely, but Tropically; not of *Melchiſedec* as a Man, but as a Prieſt; for as a Man he had certainly both Father and Mother, though not recorded in Scripture; he was aſſuredly Born, and did not leſs certainly Die than other Men; but neither his Beginning of Days nor End of Life are Regiſtred and Rehearſed, that he might be the fitter Type of Chriſt, concerning whom it is ſaid, *Who can declare his Generation?* But though *Melchiſedec*, as a Man, had Father and Mother, yet as a Prieſt he had no Predeceſſor nor Succeſſor; no Predeceſſor from whom he might by Birth receive his Sacerdotal Power; no Succeſſor who deriv'd his Prieſthood from him: Now herein alſo was *Melchiſedec* an Illuſtrious Type of Chriſt, who derived his Prieſthood from no Mortal Predeceſſor, but immediately from his Heavenly Father; neither will he tranſmit it to any Succeſſor, but when all Enemies are ſubdued, he ſhall reſign his Prieſthood, together with his Kingdom, to God the Father, who gave him both. *Obſerve* 5. What is here aſſerted concerning *Melchiſedec*; namely, that he *abideth a Prieſt for ever*; that is, Things are ſo related concerning him in Scripture, as that there is no mention of the ending of the Prieſthood of his Order. We read of no Reſignation of his Office, or of the Succeſſion of any Perſon to him therein, and thus he remaineth a Prieſt for ever. This was that which our Apoſtle did principally deſign to confirm from hence, namely, that there was in the Scripture, before the Inſtitution of the *Aaronical* Prieſthood a Repreſentation of an Eternal, Unchangeable Prieſthood, to be introduced in the Church, which he demonſtrates to be that of Jeſus Chriſt, of which *Melchiſedec*'s Prieſthood was a Type.

4 Now conſider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the ſpoils.

Theſe Words are the Apoſtle's Application of what was before diſcourſed; by comparing *Melchiſedec*'s Excellency with *Abraham*'s, he ſhews Chriſt's Excellency above *Melchiſedec*'s; and he calls upon them to conſider this; *Conſider how great this Man was.* It will be fruitleſs, and to no advantage, to propoſe and declare the moſt Important Truths of the Goſpel, if thoſe unto whom they are propoſed do not diligently enquire into them, and duly ponder and conſider of them. The *Hebrews* are here called upon to *conſider*; but what? And whom? Why, who *Melchiſedec* was, and how great a Man he was. *Note* here, That the greatneſs of *Melchiſedec* did not reſpect either the Endowments of his Perſon, or the Largeneſs of his Dominion, or his Riches and Wealth, (in which Senſe ſome are ſaid to be *great* in Scripture:) But he is pronounced *great* with reſpect to his Office, and in regard of his Nearneſs to God on that Account, as alſo in his repreſenting our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* farther, The Proof here given of the greatneſs of *Melchiſedec*, in that no meaner Perſon than *Abraham*, than *Abraham* the Patriarch, did give the Tenth Part of the Spoils unto him. Here remark, That notwithſtanding the higheſt Advantages and Priviledges which *Abraham* was poſſeſſed of, which render'd him almoſt adored by his Poſterity, yet when the meaneſt Duty was preſented to him, he readily complied with it. The higheſt Priviledges neither can nor ought to exempt any Perſon from the Performance of the meaneſt Duty. Duty is our higheſt Honour, and chiefeſt Advantage; but Privileges, Promotions, Dignities, and Exaltations, may becomes Snares, and end in the Ruin of Mens Souls. When a Perſon is dignified and advanced in the Church, if thereby he thinks himſelf exempted from the ordinary Service of the Miniſtry, he is guilty of horrid Pride and Ingratitude; but if he farther indulges himſelf in a Courſe of Idleneſs, Sloth, Senſuality, and Worldlineſs, theſe are Crimes unpardonable, and want a Name to expreſs them.

5 And verily, they that are of the ſons of Levi, who receive the office of the prieſthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whoſe deſcent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and bleſſed him that had the promiſes. 7 And without all contradiction, the leſs is bleſſed of the better.

Still the Apoſtle goes on to give *Melchiſedec* the preference above *Abraham*, and from thence to infer that Chriſt whom *Melchiſedec* Typified, was much more Excellent than *Abraham*, and all the *Levitical* Prieſts which ſprang from him: The Argument lyes thus. The Law allowed *Aaron* and the other Prieſts to take Tithes of their Brethren that ſprung from *Abraham*; but *Melchiſedec* received Tithes of *Abraham*, who was none of his People, yea, and Bleſſed *Abraham* alſo, which is a Demonſtration that he was greater than *Abraham*; and conſequently it is evident that Chriſt is greater than the *Jewiſh* Prieſts. To Bleſs Authoritatively is an Act of Superiority: Now *Melchiſedec* Bleſſed *Abraham*, he is therefore greater than *Abraham*; becauſe he that Bleſſeth is greater than he whom he Bleſſeth. Behold here the Excellency of the Office of God's Miniſters, namely, to Bleſs the People in God's Name: They Bleſs Authoritatively, they Bleſs Declaratively, they Bleſs Optatively. God help them to take heed leſt by their Miſcarriages they prove a Snare and a Curſe unto them whom they ought to Bleſs.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witneſſed that he liveth.

Our Apoſtle ſtill carried on the ſame Argument, proving *Melchiſedec*'s Prieſthood to ſurpaſs and excel the *Aaronical* and *Levitical* Prieſthood in the Immortality of it: As the leſs is Bleſſed of the greater, ſo is that which is Immortal greater and better than what is Mortal, but ſuch is *Melchiſedec* and his Order of Prieſthood. Indeed, in the *Levitical* Order of Prieſthood, though the Prieſts be ſuperiour to the People, and take Tithes of them, yet do they Die as well as the People: But we read not a Word of *Melchiſedec*'s Death, he is a Prieſt for ever; that is, he did Typically prefigure Chriſt, who doth properly and indeed live for ever. *Melchiſedec* ever lives *ſecundum Hiſtoriam*; Chriſt *ſecundum veritatem.* Learn hence, That the Life of the Church depends upon the Everlaſting Life of Jeſus Chriſt; he liveth for ever when Miniſters die, or have their Mouths ſtopt. This great High Prieſt lives, upon whom the Life and Preſervation, the Continuance and Salvation, of the Church does depend; *Here Men die that receive Tithes. Note, From their Mor-*

tality, That in the outward Adminiſtration of God's Worſhip he is pleaſed to make uſe of the Miniſtry of Frail, Mortal, and Dying, Men, *Zach.* 1. 5. *The Prophets, do they live for ever?* Hereby it does evidently appear that it is the Power of God, and nothing elſe, which gives Efficacy and Succeſs to all Goſpel Adminiſtrations, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. *We have this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us.*

9 And as I may ſo ſay, Levi alſo who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchiſedec met him.

By *Levi* here we are to underſtand the *Levites*, or the *Levetical* Prieſthood; they being in *Abraham*'s Loins are ſaid to pay Tithes in *Abraham* to *Melchiſedec*, which the Apoſtle produces as an Evidence that *Melchiſedec* is ſuperiour to the *Levites*, and greater than they; and conſequently that Chriſt, who *Melchiſedec* did Typifie, muſt needs be more excellent than they alſo. The Argument runs thus; they who receive Tithes of others are certainly ſuperiour to them of whom they do receive them; but *Melchiſedec* received Tithes of *Abraham*, and of *Levi* in *Abraham*'s Loins, therefore he is ſuperiour to them, and of a more excellent Order than they, which is the great Truth he hath been ſo induſtriouſly proving.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical prieſthood, (for under it the people received the law, what further need *was there* that another prieſt ſhould riſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law.

If Perfection, that is, a perfect Expiation and Remiſſion of Sin could have been made by the Sacrifices which the Legal Prieſts offered, there ſhould then have been no need that God ſhould inſtitute a Prieſt of another and more Excellent Order, namely, his own Son, to be a Prieſt after *Melchiſedec*'s Order, and not after the Order of *Aaron*. Where *Note*, That Perfection is denied to the *Levitical* Prieſthood, and aſcribed to the Prieſthood of Chriſt. To perfect ſinful Man, is to free him from the Guilt of Sin, and from the direful and diſmal Conſequences of Sin, and to make him Righteous and Holy, capable of Communion with God both here and hereafter. Now this the *Levitical* Prieſthood could not do, *but Jeſus Chriſt has by one Offering perfected for ever them that are Sanctified*, Ch. 10. 14. Thus the Apoſtle infers the Neceſſity of changing the Prieſthood; and next he tell us, *ver.* 12. That the change of the *Levitical* Prieſthood neceſſarily draweth along with it a change of the *Levitical* Law, and the Legal Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace; for the *Levitical* Prieſthood and the *Levitical* Law do both ſtand and fall together; *The Prieſthood being changed, there is made of Neceſſity a change alſo of the Law.* By the changing of the Prieſthood underſtand the Abolition of it; by the change of the Law underſtand the Abrogation of it; by the Word *Neceſſity* underſtand that the change was not Caſual and Contingent, but abſolutely needful, in regard of the Imperfection and Inability of *Levitical* Prieſthood, to effect any ſuch Thing. Learn hence, That the Promulgation of the Goſpel, and the Inſtitution of Chriſtianity, did abrogate the *Levitical* Law, and made it of no force. This might be the Reaſon why God did not only by the Death and Sacrifice of Chriſt, the great High Prieſt, aboliſh the *Levitical* Prieſthood, but alſo deſtroy'd the Temple itſelf, where he had put his Name, and never ſuffer'd it to be rebuilt; denoting thereby the utter Abolition of the *Levitical* Prieſthood, and the total Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law.

13 For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For *it is* evident that our Lord ſprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning prieſthood.

In the foregoing Verſes our Apoſtle had aſſerted the Change of the Prieſthood, and therewith the changing of the Law. In theſe Verſes he proves it by the Tranſlation of the Prieſthood to another Tribe; namely, from *Levi* to *Judah*. The *Levitical* Prieſthood was confined to one certain Tribe, that of *Levi*, and to one certain Family, that of *Aaron*: Whence it follows, that the Tribe being changed, and God having inſtituted a Prieſt of another Tribe, the Prieſthood muſt be changed alſo. Now it being evident that Chriſt ſprang not of the Tribe of *Levi*, but out of *Judah*, the Apoſtle from the changing of the Tribe ſtrongly infers the Change of the Prieſthood. *Note here*, 1. How it was a Fruit of the manifold Wiſdom of God, and a very great Mercy and Favour to give the Law, but a far greater to take it away. 2. If under the Law the whole Worſhip of God did ſo depend on the Prieſthood, that *that* failing the whole Worſhip was to ceaſe, as being no more acceptable to God, how much more will all Worſhip under the New Teſtament be rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the great and only High Prieſt of his Church?

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another prieſt, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life. 17 For he teſtifieth, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

That the *Aaronical* Prieſthood was to be changed, and conſequently the whole Law of Ordinances that depended thereupon, and that the Time was now come wherein this Change was to be made, is the grand Truth which our Apoſtle here deſigns the Confirmation of; it being indeed that Truth whereinto our Faith of the Acceptance of Evangelical Worſhip is reſolved: And accordingly he gives a farther Proof of the Change of the Prieſthood from the different manner of the Prieſt's Conſecration. Thus the *Levitical* Prieſt was ſet apart to his Office by a number of carnal Rites and outward Ceremonies, which the Law preſcribed to be uſed at the Conſecration of *Aaron* and his Sons, who were purified with Water, anointed with Oyl, ſprinkled with Blood, cloathed with Prieſtly Veſtments, initiated with Sacrifices, adminiſtred in an Earthly Tabernacle and Temple. But, ſays our Apoſtle, the Evangelical or Goſpel High Prieſt, Chriſt Jeſus, was not conſtituted thus, or made a Prieſt with ſuch carnal Rites and outward Ceremonies, but *with the Power of an endleſs Life*; that is, he was conſecrated a Prieſt by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, having an Immortal Life ſuitable to his Prieſthood, and Authority to give Eternal Life to as many as depend upon the Benefit of his Sacrifice and Satisfaction; *He was made, not after the Law of a carnal Commandment*, (with corporal Ceremony, and carnal Duration,) *but after the Spiritual Power of an endleſs Life.* Learn hence, That all the outward Ceremony which ſeemed to be wanting unto Chriſt in his Entrance into his Prieſtly Office was on the account of a greater Glory. *Aaron* was made a Prieſt with great outward Solemnity, Chriſt with none at all; yet all *Aaron*'s Ceremonial Glory was nothing, in compariſon of that excelling Glory which accompanied thoſe inviſible Acts of Divine Authority, Wiſdom and Grace, which communicated Chriſt's Office unto him.

18 For there is verily a diſanulling of the commandment going before, for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Now the Apoſtle comes to declare that the *Levitical* Prieſthood being aboliſhed, and the Ceremonial Law abrogated, the whole State of the Church, and of the ſolemn Worſhip of God therein, muſt neceſſarily be changed alſo. This he foreſaw would be a mighty Surprizal to the generality of the *Hebrews*, to hear that they muſt quit all their Concern and ſpecial Intereſt in the Law of *Moſes*; and therefore he aſſigns a double Reaſon for the abrogation and diſanulling of that Law; namely, the Weakneſs and Unprofitableneſs thereof; *ver.* 18. *There is a diſanulling of the Commandment, for the Weakneſs and Unprofitableneſs thereof.* Not that the Law was weak in itſelf, or unprofitable to the End for which God made it; namely, to lead them to Chriſt; but weak and unprofitable for Juſtification and Salvation. They expected Expiation of Sin, Sanctification; and Holineſs by it, without any regard to Chriſt and his Sacrifice, by whom alone it could be obtained. Thoſe Things the Law could not effect in its beſt Eſtate; how vain was it then for the *Jews* to expect them when it was aboliſh'd? *Obſerve next*, How the Apoſtle proves the Law to be weak and unprofitable; namely, becauſe *it made nothing perfect*. *The Law*, that is, the whole Syſtem of *Moſaical* Ordinances, the Legal Covenant, *it made nothing perfect*; that is, no Perſon, how ſtrictly ſoever he obſerved it, could be juſtified and ſaved by it; it could not of itſelf cleanſe from Sin, reconcile us to God, juſtifie our Perſons, ſanctifie our Natures, and procure Salvation for us. *Obſerve* Laſtly, Though the Ceremonial Law made nothing perfect, yet the Goſpel Law, called here *a better Hope*, becauſe the Promiſes of it are a good Ground of Hope, has Efficacy, Power, and Vertue, to do all thoſe Things for us, and by it we have Freedom of Acceſs to God. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope, whereby we draw nigh to God.* Learn hence, 1. That the Law could not juſtifie or ſanctifie any Perſon, nor make him perfect, by reconciling him to God, and procuring Salvation for him. Learn 2. That Believers of Old, who lived under the Law, did not live upon the Law, but upon the Hope of Chriſt, or Chriſt hoped for; could Juſtification and Salvation have been had any other Way, or by any other Means, Chriſt's coming had been needleſs, and his Death in vain. Learn 3. That the Introduction of a better Hope by the Goſpel, after a ſufficient Diſcovery made of the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of the Law, did make all Things perfect, or bring the Church to that State of Conſummation which was deſigned unto it. Learn 4. That when all Mankind were at an unconceivable diſtance from God, it was Infinite Condeſcenſion and Grace to appoint his own Son, who was the Bleſſed Hope of the Saints under the Old Teſtament, to be the only Way and Means of our approaching unto him. When *the Law made nothing perfect, the bringing in of a better Hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God.*

20 And in as much as not without an oath *he was made prieſt*, 21 (For thoſe prieſts were made without an oath: but this with an oath, by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.) 22 By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament.

Our Apoſtle has not yet done with his ſeveral Arguments to prove the tranſcendent Excellency of Chriſt's Prieſthood above that of *Aaron's*: His Argument in the Verſes now before us lyes thus; he that is made an unchangeable Prieſt by the Oath of God, is a better, greater, and more excellent Prieſt, than any made ſo without it. But whereas the *Levitical* Prieſts were made without an Oath, by a Law changeable at the Will of the Lawgiver, Jeſus Chriſt was made a Prieſt by the unchangeable Oath of God; *The Lord ſware, and will not repent, thou art a Prieſt for ever.* Learn hence, That nothing was wanting on the Part of God that might either give Eminency and Glory, or Stability and Efficacy, to the Prieſthood of Chriſt: This was both due to the Glory of his Perſon, and alſo needful to encourage and ſecure the Faith of the Church. Learn 2. That Jeſus Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, being initiated into his Office by the Oath of God, his Prieſthood is liable to no Alteration, Succeſſion, or Subſtitution; but the Church may continually draw nigh to God in full Aſſurance of his meritorious Satiſfaction, and prevailing Interceſſion, and receive from thence a ſolid Foundation of Peace and Conſolation; *By ſo much was Jeſus made a Surety of a better Teſtament. Obſerve* here, 1. The Title given to the Goſpel Covenant, it is here called a *better Teſtament*: Better, not for Subſtance, but for Clearneſs; for Subſtance, the Old Covenant Diſpenſation and the New are the ſame; but the latter is made more clear, more free, more full, more ſurely ratified by the Death of Chriſt, and accompanied with a more mighty Operation of the Spirit of Chriſt. *Obſerve* 2. The Title here given to Chriſt, he is the *Surety of a better Teſtament*. Our Surety, becauſe our Sacrifice. The *Socinians* own Chriſt to be the Surety of the Covenant, in reſpect of his Holy Life, and Exemplary Death, Sealing it as a Teſtimony by his Blood, but Deny him to be a Surety in reſpect of his Satiſfaction, Merit and Interceſſion. But alas! As our ſinful Condition requires a Mediator of Redemption, ſo our changeable Condition requires a Mediator of Interceſſion; and bleſſed be God he has appointed one for both, even his own and only Son, who is the Surety of a better Teſtament. Learn thence, That the Lord Jeſus was not only made a Surety on God's Part to us, to aſſure us that the Promiſe of the Covenant on his Part ſhould be performed, but was alſo an Undertaker on our Part, to furniſh us with that Grace and Aſſiſtance which ſhall enable us to do, anſwer and perform, all that is required on our Part, that we may enjoy the Benefit of the Covenant, Grace here, and Glory hereafter. Chriſt has undertaken as Surety of the Covenant, firſt, to ſatiſfie for Sin, by offering himſelf a Propitiatory Sacrifice; and next to furniſh forth a ſufficiency of Grace to enable for the fulfilling the Conditions of the Goſpel Covenant. Thus was Jeſus *the Surety of this better Covenant.*

23 And they truly were many prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death: 24 But this *man*, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood.

Now our Apoſtle is come to his laſt Argument, by which he proves the Excellency of Chriſt's Prieſthood above that of *Aaron*. The *Levitical* Prieſts, he ſays, were many and mortal; their Mortality was the Cauſe of their Multitude; they were cut off by Death, and ſucceeded one another; but Chriſt is one and the ſame to his Church, Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever; he had no Partner, has no Succeſſor, but executes an Everlaſting Unchangeable Prieſthood in his own Perſon. *Note* here, 1. That the Multiplication of Prieſts, particularly of High Prieſts under the legal Diſpenſation, was a manifeſt Evidence of the imperfection of it; from *Aaron* the firſt High Prieſt, unto *Phineas* the laſt, who was deſtroyed with the Temple, are reckoned Fourſcore and Three High Prieſts ſucceeding one another: Of theſe Thirteen are ſaid to live under the Tabernacle, Eighteen under the Firſt Temple Built by *Solomon*, and all the reſt under the Second Temple: The Ground of which Multiplication of Prieſts was this, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of Death. Learn 2. That the Prieſthood of Chriſt, as unchangeably exerciſed in his own Perſon, is perpetual, and its Perpetuity is a principal Part of the Glory of that Office; *he continueth for ever*, having an *unchangeable Prieſthood*. *Queſt.* But did not Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, die as well as *Aaron*, and other High Prieſts? *Anſw.* Yes, he died as a Prieſt, they died from being Prieſts; he died as a Prieſt, becauſe he was alſo to be a Sacrifice. The Apoſtle doth not ſay that he did not die, but that he always abideth; he abode a Prieſt even in the State of Death, and after his Reſurrection he became Immortal, never to die more; he ever liveth, he dieth no more; Death has no more Dominion over him. See how he deſcribes himſelf, *Rev.* 1. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the Keys of Hell and Death.*

25 Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.

Theſe Words are a comfortable Inference and Concluſion which our Apoſtle draws from his preceding Diſcourſe concerning the Eternity and Unchangeableneſs of Chriſt's Prieſthood; ſeeing he lives for ever, he is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and that for ever. *Obſerve* here, 1. The compleat Power and Ability of Jeſus Chriſt to ſave Sinners aſſerted: *He is able to ſave*, and that *to the uttermoſt*; that is, compleatly and everlaſtingly. Learn hence, That whatever Difficulties lye in the Way of Salvation, and whatever Oppoſitions do riſe againſt it, either with reſpect to the Guilt of Sin, or to the Power and Dominion of it, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is able, by vertue of his Sacerdotal Office, and in the exerciſe of it, to carry on the Work through them all unto Eternal Perfection: Such is the Dignity of his Perſon, ſuch is the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction, that he expiates the Guilt of his Sin univerſally and perpetually. *Obſerve* 2. The Character and Deſcription given of the Perſons whom Jeſus Chriſt thus perfectly and eternally ſaves, *Such as come unto God by him*; thoſe, all thoſe, and only thoſe, whom God will ſave, are ſuch as come unto him for Salvation by and through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator. Oh how injurious then are they to their own Souls, who ſet down deſponding, either under the Guilt, or under the Power, of their Sins, and conclude them either ſo great that they cannot be pardoned, or ſo ſtrong that they can never be vanquiſhed or overcome! *Obſerve* 3. The Reaſon of this Power and Ability in Chriſt to ſave Sinners to the uttermoſt aſſigned, and that is, the Eternity of his Prieſthood, the Perpetuity and Prevalency of his Interceſſion; *Seeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.* Here *Note*, 1. The State and Condition of Chriſt as an High Prieſt, *he ever liveth.* He is always living in Heaven a Threefold Life: 1. The Eternal Life of God in his Divine Nature; thus he liveth in himſelf. 2. A Life of unconceivable Glory in his Humane Nature; this is a Life which he liveth for himſelf. 3. A Mediatory Life in Heaven; and this he lives for us. *Note* 2. What he doth as an High Prieſt in that State and Condition; *he maketh Interceſſion for us.* Learn, That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ever liveth to make *Interceſſion* with his Father in Heaven on the Behalf of all penitent Believers here on Earth. We are not to conceive of Chriſt as an Interceſſor with his Father in Heaven, in ſuch an humble ſupplicating Manner as when here upon Earth, with Knees bended down, and Eyes lifted up to Heaven; this is inconſiſtent with his glorified State. But it is ſuch a pleading and petitioning with his Father as in the nature of a Claim and Demand; and it is ſuch a Claim and Demand made to his Father as is accompanied with the preſenting the Memorials of his Death unto him. Chriſt need not uſe his Mouth to plead with his Father in Heaven; the bare ſhewing of his wounded Body pleads prevalently and perpetually; and this Interceſſion of Chriſt is a ſtanding Evidence of the continuance of his Love and Care, his Pity and Compaſſion, to us. Bleſſed be God that our great High Prieſt, who ſuffered for us, ever liveth in Heaven to make Interceſſion for us.

26 For ſuch an high prieſt became us, *who is* holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Obſerve here, 1. Something ſuppoſed, and neceſſarily implied, namely, That if we intend to come unto God, we had need of an High Prieſt to encourage and enable us thereunto; *Such an High Prieſt became us*; implying, that without an High Prieſt in general we can do nothing in this Matter. *Obſerve* 2. The Care and Kindneſs of God in providing for us, not only an High Prieſt, but *ſuch an High Prieſt* as our Condition required; one that has made an Atonement for us, procured Acceptance, given us Aſſiſtance, preſerved us in Grace, and will preſerve us unto Glory. Behold the Infinite Wiſdom, Love, Grace, and Goodneſs of God, in giving ſuch an High Prieſt as in the Qualifications of his Perſon, the Glory of his Condition, and the Diſcharge of his Office, was every way ſuited to deliver us from a State of Apoſtacy, Sin, and Miſery, and to bring us to himſelf thro' a perfect Salvation. *Obſerve* 3. The double Character given of this High Prieſt in his Purity. 1. He is *Holy*, *Harmleſs*, *Undefiled*, *ſeparated from Sinners*. Thus he was in his Conception, Birth, Life and Death, never tainted or ſtained with the leaſt Sin, but both habitually and actually more Pure and Holy than any Prieſt on Earth, or Angel in Heaven. 2. In his Dignity, *He is made higher than the Heavens*; advanced above all the Inhabitants of that Glorious Place, where he ever liveth, and keeps his Reſidence, remaining a Prieſt for ever, not to Sacrifice, but to apply effectually his former Sacrifice to all Believers.

27 Who needeth not daily, as thoſe high prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice firſt for his own ſins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once when he offered up himſelf.

That is, as Jeſus Chriſt our Great High Prieſt had no Sin of his own to expiate like other High Prieſts, but his Buſineſs was to offer for our Sins, ſo the Oblation and Offering he made upon that Account was not Bullocks or Rams, but *himſelf*, in Sacrifice, and that *once*, and but once, upon the Croſs, which *once* offered Sacrifice was abundantly ſufficient to take away Sin; whereas other High Prieſts offered for their own Sins, for the Peoples Sins, and that often, which was a Token of their Inſufficiency and Imperfection. Learn hence, That no Sacrifice could bring us to God, and ſave us to Perfection, but that wherein the Son of God himſelf was both Prieſt and Offering; ſuch an High Prieſt became us, who offered himſelf once for all. Learn 2. That the Perfection of Chriſt's Sacrifice makes the Repetition of it needleſs; and the often repeating of it would argue the Imperfection both of Prieſt and Sacrifice: He *needeth not daily to offer up Sacrifices, for this he did once, when he offered up himſelf.*

28 For the law maketh men high prieſts, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was ſince the law, *maketh* the Son, who is conſecrated for evermore.

That is, the *Levitical* Law appointed Men to be High Prieſts that laboured under Infirmities, were Sinners, and ſubject to Mortality; but the Promiſe made to Chriſt, and confirmed by God's Oath, long ſince the Law was given, maketh the Son, and none but the Son, (who is perfectly Holy and Conſecrated to this Everlaſting Office,) a Prieſt for evermore. Learn hence, 1. That there never was any more than Two Sorts of Prieſts in the Church; the one made by the Law, the other by the Oath of God. Learn 2. That the Great Foundation of our Faith, and the main Hinge whereon all our Conſolation depends, is this, that our High Prieſt is the Son of God, and his everlaſting continuance in his Office is ſecured by the Oath of God.

CHAP. VIII.

Our Apoſtle having proved the Excellency of Chriſt's Prieſthood in the former Chapter; he proceeds in this *to ſhew his Faithful Execution of that his Prieſtly Office, for the good Benefit of his Church; proving by ſundry Arguments that his Miniſtry as our great High Prieſt is to be preferr'd before the* Levitical *Adminiſtration; partly, with reſpect to the Place where he miniſters, which is Heaven; partly, in reſpect of the Sacrifice which he preſents in Heaven, his* Body, *his* Humanity, *in which he ſuffered; and partly, with reſpect to that* New *and* Better Covenant, *whereof he is* Mediator. *Concerning which he thus ſpeaks particularly in the Chapter before us.*

1 NOw of the things which we have ſpoken, *this is* the ſum: we have ſuch an high prieſt, who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the majeſty in the heavens; 2 A miniſter of the ſanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Obſerve here, 1. The Apoſtle's Preface, in which he doth briefly recapitulate the Sum and Subſtance of his preceding Arguments; *now of the Things which we have ſpoken this is the Sum.* Learn hence, That when Doctrines are important, and the Matters treated of very weighty and momentous, we ſhould endeavour by all Means to take an Impreſſion of them upon the Minds of our Hearers, by a brief Recapitulation of the Things we here inſiſted on; thus doth our Apoſtle here. *Obſerve* 2. A Declaration of the firſt general Pre-eminence of our High Prieſt, and that is taken from his preſent State and eternal Condition, He *is ſet on the Right Hand of the Throne of the Majeſty in the Heavens.* A Throne, a Sceptre, a Crown, are Enſigns of Majeſty, and Ornaments of Sovereign Power: To ſet in the Throne, is to poſſeſs Sovereign Power and Dominion; this Chriſt now enjoys in Heaven, as the Reward of his deep Humiliation, and as the higheſt Degree of his Exaltation. Learn thence, That the Principal Glory of the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt depends on the Glorious Exaltation of his Perſon. *Obſerve* 3. Another Pre-eminence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as our great High Prieſt; he is ſtiled a Miniſter of the Sanctuary. *A Miniſter*; this initmates to us, that our great High Prieſt in the heighth of his Glory condeſcends to diſcharge the Office of a publick Miniſter in the behalf of his Church. Our Thoughts ſometimes dwell upon what Chriſt did for us on Earth, but too ſeldom are they taken up with the Contemplation of what he is ſtill doing for us in Heaven: And a *Miniſter of the Sanctuary, or true Tabernacle*; that is, not of the literal Sanctuary and Tabernacle here below, for Chriſt never entred into that, but of the Sanctuary of Heaven, in which dwelleth all that was repreſented in the Sanctuary here below: Chriſt our great High Prieſt abides in the Sanctuary of Heaven for us continually; always repreſenting the Efficacy of that Blood whereby Atonement was made for all our Sins. O Bleſſed Jeſus! Thy being continually in Heaven will draw our Hearts and Minds continually thither, if ſo be we are really intereſted in thy Holy Miniſtration.

3 For every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices: wherefore *it is* of neceſſity

that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he ſhould not be a prieſt, ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things, as Moſes was admoniſhed of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For ſee (ſaith he) *that* thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.

That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is our great High Prieſt under the Goſpel the Apoſtle had ſufficiently demonſtrated and confirmed before. *Obſerve* here, How he next declares what is the Nature, Duty, and Office, of Chriſt as our High Prieſt; namely, *to offer Gifts and Sacrifices.* A Prieſt that has nothing to offer is no Prieſt at all; Chriſt therefore offered as well as other High Prieſts; but what? Bullocks and Rams? In no wiſe he offered himſelf, his whole Humane Nature, Soul and Body. As to the Typical Sacrifices he did not, could not, offer them, were he upon Earth, becauſe he was not of the Tribe of *Levi*, whoſe proper Office it was to meddle with thoſe Offerings; therefore leaving the Shadow to them, he offered the Subſtance himſelf; that is, his own Body ſignified by thoſe Shadows. Learn hence, That there was no Salvation to be had for us, no, not by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, without his Sacrifice and Oblation; *It was of Neceſſity that he ſhould have ſomewhat to offer* as well as thoſe Prieſts had of Old, according to the Law. No Salvation without Atonement for Sin; no Atonement for Sin but by Sacrifice; no Sacrifice ſufficient for Atonement but the Death of Chriſt: And whoever looks for Salvation otherwiſe than in the Faith and Vertue of that Sacrifice, will be diſappointed and deceived. But although the Oblation was made by Chriſt on Earth, yet the continual Application of its Efficacy to the Souls of Believers is made by Chriſt now in Heaven; without which, neither their Acceſs to God, nor their Peace with God, could be maintained, *ver.* 3, 4. In the Fifth Verſe the Apoſtle aſſerts, that the *Levitical* Prieſts here below did perform thoſe Adminiſtrations which were but Shadows of Heavenly Things above; *Who ſerve unto the Example and Shadow of Heavenly Things.* Where *to ſerve*, is to officiate as Prieſts, in offering Gifts and Sacrifices: But this their Service was not Spiritual and Heavenly, but Carnal and Earthly, yet *a Shadow* and Imitation of Heavenly Things. Learn hence, That God alone limits the Signification and Uſe of all his own Inſtitutions. The Miniſtry of the *Prieſts* of Old was only in and about Earthly Things, not Heavenly Things, yet having a Reſemblance and Shadow of Heavenly Things. We muſt not take any thing out of God's Inſtitutions which he has put into them, nor muſt we put more into them than God has furniſhed them withal. To expect that from any Ordinance or Inſtitution of God which he never intended or deſigned, is to make an Idol of the Ordinance, and the Way to render it uſeleſs, yea, pernicious and perillous to us; to put that into an Ordinance which God never put into it, and to expect more from an Ordinance than God ever promiſed, is to overthrow it.

5 —— As Moſes was admoniſhed of God, when he was about to make the tabernable For ſee (ſaith he) *that* thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.

The Words imply, that Divine Inſtitution is the only pure Rule of Religious Worſhip: *Moſes* did nothing of his own Head when he Built the Tabernacle, but had his Directions in every Thing from God. If Perſons will carve out the Worſhip of God according to their own Fancies, they may pleaſe themſelves perhaps, but they can never pleaſe their Maker; for nothing is pleaſing to God, as to the Subſtance of Religious Worſhip, but what is of his own preſcribing: Conſequently all that theatrical Pomp which is found in the Church of *Rome*, and makes the Worſhip of God a dead Thing, is a meer Fornication in Religion, and an Abomination in the Sight of God. All their Humane Inventions are intolerable Preſumptions. And as *Moſes* was bound to give Direction according to the Pattern given him, ſo the Prieſts in their Adminiſtrations were bound to follow *Moſes*'s Directions. Yet after all the Things which *Moſes* was concern'd about were Carnal Things; the Tabernacle was Earthly, the Offerings Carnal, yet Shadows of better Things, even of Heavenly: For the Sanctuary was a Shadow of an Heavenly Sanctuary, the *Prieſt* of a better *Prieſt*, the Service of a far better Service; this ſeems to be the Intention of our Apoſtle.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words proves the Excellency of Chriſt's Miniſtry or Prieſthood above that of *Aaron* and his Sons, from the Excellency of the New Covenant (or the New Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace) above the Old, of which he was the Mediator. Now the more excellent the Covenant, the more excellent the Miniſtry. Learn hence, 1. That the Goſpel Covenant, or the New Covenant, was the beſt Covenant that ever God made with Man; not but that the Old and New Covenant were the ſame for Subſtance, though not for Clearneſs; indeed Temporal Things were Types and Shadows of better Things, even of Heavenly Things: And accordingly Believers under the Old Teſtament were ſaved by a Covenant of Grace as well as we. Learn 2. That the Goſpel Covenant is therefore a better Covenant, becauſe eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes; their Promiſes of Old were chiefly Temporal, though not only Temporal Promiſes. Ours are chiefly Spiritual, yet are Temporal Things promiſed us alſo; but more rarely, and with the Exception of the Croſs, or rather they are thrown in as Additions to Spiritual Promiſes, *Matth.* 6. 33. But the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace are therefore better, becauſe Strength and Aſſiſtance is engaged for, and graciouſly offered, in order to enable us to perform the Conditions of them: The Law required ſinleſs Obedience; the Goſpel accepts ſincere Obedience, and offers Grace to perform it. Learn 3. That Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator of this better Covenant. As there was a Covenant made between God and Man, ſo there was need of a Mediator, that the Covenant might be effectual; for a Mediator is neceſſary, both where there is a Controverſie and Difference, and alſo where there is an Imparity and Diſtance between Perſons; in both Reſpects Chriſt is Mediator; and his Mediation was needful, that he might bring us to God. God ſtood upon Terms before he would pardon Sin. Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and that by Blood, and that Blood of infinite Value; therefore Chriſt is firſt a Sponſor before a Mediator; he firſt ſatisfies for the Breach before he goes about to make up the Breach between God and the Sinner: Thus was he *the Mediator of a better Covenant.*

7 For if that firſt *covenant* had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond. 8 For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold, the days come, (ſaith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. What is diſcharged on the firſt Covenant; and that is *Faultineſs*: By which we are not to underſtand any ſinful Faultineſs, but Defectiveneſs and Imperfection only: For it was not faulty in the Matter and Subſtance of it, as it was inſtituted and ordained by God, but therefore called faulty becauſe it was obſcure, was not ſo ſurely ratified, and not attended with that Vertue, Power, and Efficacy, which the New Covenant is accompanied with. *Obſerve* 2. Wherein conſiſted that Defectiveneſs and Imperfection of the firſt Covenant which is here complained of, namely, 1. In its Inability to juſtifie and ſave us, becauſe of our Inability, through the weakneſs of the Fleſh, to anſwer the Demands of it. *Rom.* 8. 3. *What the Law could not do in that it was weak, through the Fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the Fleſh, &c.* The Law was not properly weak to us, but we were weak to that. 2. The Legal Covenant required exact Obedience, but afforded no Spiritual Aſſiſtance for the Performance of what it required: But the Covenant of Grace, the New Covenant, is called a *Miniſtration of the Spirit*; and under the Goſpel we are ſaid not to *ſerve in the oldneſs of the Letter*, but *in the newneſs of the Spirit.* Now, ſays the Apoſtle,

poſtle, *ver.* 8. Almighty God finding fault with the *Jews* for the Breach of the former Covenant, declared by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. 31. 31. That the Covenant he would make with all true *Iſraelites* for time to come ſhould not be like that which he made with their Fathers in *Egypt*, which they continued not in the Obſervation of, (wanting thoſe Aſſiſtances from the Holy Spirit to enable them thereunto which are procured for us by Chriſt.) and accordingly *I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord*, but gave them up for their Sins into the Hands of their Enemies. *Obſerve* laſtly, How Almighty God makes the imperfection of the Old Covenant, and the *Iſraelites* inſtability therein, the reaſon of his making a New Covenant with us, in which Grace and Aſſiſtance is offered to enable us to obey and perſevere in Obedience: *Finding fault with them*; that is, for the Breach of the former, he ſaith, *Behold the Days come that I will make a New Covenant with them.* *From the whole Note*, 1. That the Grace and Glory of the New Covenant are much ſet off and manifeſted by comparing it with the Old. *Note* 2. That nothing but effectual Grace from Chriſt will ſecure our Covenant Obedience one Moment: What greater Motives, or ſtronger outward Obligations to Obedience, could any People under Heaven have than the *Iſraelites* had? But they quickly turned out of the Way: Therefore in the New Covenant is this Grace promiſed in a peculiar Manner, as we ſhall ſee in the next Verſe.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſons with whom this Covenant is made, the Houſe of *Iſrael*, and the Houſe of *Judah*; not made with them as a Political Body, becauſe their Policy was to be diſſolved, but as a Part of the Univerſal Church. *Obſerve* 2. The Author of this Covenant, and that is God himſelf, *I will make it, ſaith the Lord. Note*, That the aboliſhing of the Old Covenant, and eſtabliſhing the New, is an Act of Sovereign Wiſdom, Grace, and Authority in God; *I will make a New Covenant*. *Obſerve* 3. What is the great and comprehenſive Promiſe of the New Covenant; *I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts*; that is, 1. I will make a clear and perſpicuous Revelation of my Mind and Will unto them, and give them a thorough Knowledge and Underſtanding of my Laws, ſo that their own Conſciences ſhall condemn them when they do tranſgreſs them. And, 2. By my Holy Spirit I will make a deep and efficacious Impreſſion of them upon their Hearts and Spirits. Where *Note*, That the Precepts of the Old Covenant are all of them turned into Promiſes under the New; their preceptive and commanding Power remaineth, but Grace is promiſed for the Performance of them. *Note* further, That the Work of Grace in the New Covenant paſſeth on the whole Soul, in all its Powers and Faculties, to their Change and Renovation: *I will put my Laws in their Minds, and write them on their Hearts.* And conſequently to deny the Neceſſity and Efficacy of the ſanctifying and renewing Grace of God in the Habits and Acts of it, is plainly to overthrow the Evangelical Covenant. *Obſerve* 4. What is the Revelation which is here ſaid to enſue between God and his People; *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a People.* Here *Note*, 1. God's Revelation to us; *I will be to them a God.* I who am All-ſufficient in my ſelf, will be your All-ſufficient Preſerver, and your All-ſufficient Rewarder. As nothing leſs than God's becoming our God can relieve and help us, ſo nothing more can be required thereunto. *Note* 2. Our Relation to God, *They ſhall be to me a People*; that is, a ſpecial and peculiar People, owning Dependancy upon him, and profeſſing all Subjection and Obedience to him. And *Obſerve*, God undertakes for this, they ſhall be to me a People. Learn thence, That God doth as well undertake for our being his People, as he doth for his being our God: He that aſſumes them into that Relation freely, will preſerve them in it powerfully; *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a People.*

11 And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord: for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.

Theſe Words are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; They are a Promiſe, that under the New Covenant Diſpenſation the Holy Spirit ſhall be ſo plentifully poured forth, and the Light of the Goſpel ſo clearly ſhine forth, that there ſhall not be ſuch need as under the Law to teach Men the Knowledge of God, and their Duty to him; they ſhall not need in ſuch a manner as formerly to inſtruct one another in the Meaning of the Types and Shadows of the Law: *They ſhall not know me*; that is, all Ranks and Degrees of Men, all Sorts and Conditions of Perſons, ſhall own me to be the Lord. *Note* here, What Abuſe is put upon this Text by ſome, who bring it to ſet aſide the Neceſſity of Humane Teaching; for it is by ſuch Teaching that God gives Men the Knowledge of himſelf. Learn hence, That there is a Duty incumbent on every Man to inſtruct others according to his Ability and Opportunity in the Knowledge of God. But, Lord, Pity us, we have more that mutually teach one another Sin, Folly, Vanity, yea, Villany of all Sorts, than the Knowledge of God, and the Duty we owe unto him! This is not what God here promiſeth Believers in a Way of Grace, but what he hath given up careleſs, unbelieving Profeſſors to in a Way of Vengeance.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

This is the great Fundamental Promiſe of the Covenant of Grace, Pardon of Sin. Thence learn, That free and undeſerved Grace in the Pardon of Sin is the Original Spring and Foundation of all Covenant Mercies and Bleſſings. *Obſerve* further, How copiouſly the Spirit of God ſets forth the Benefits of pardoning Grace, I will forgive and forget; *I will be merciful, and remember no more*; Pardoning Mercy is full as well as free. *Obſerve* laſtly, The aggravating Names here given to Sin, 'tis called *Unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe nothing can be more unequal and unjuſt than for Man to Sin againſt God his Creator, his Ruler and Benefactor: And *Iniquity*, or a Tranſgreſſion of the Law, an erring and ſwerving from the Rule of Holineſs, which we are to walk by. Learn hence, 1. That the Aggravations of Sin are great and many, which the Conſciences of convinced Sinners ought to have regard unto. Learn 2. That we can never underſtand aright the Glory and Excellency of Pardoning Mercy, unleſs we are convinced of the Greatneſs and Vileneſs of our Sins in the ſeveral Aggravations of them. Learn 3. That the Covenant of Grace fully aſſures us that there are Riches of Grace, and abundance of Pardoning Mercy in God, which diſpoſes him for Chriſt's ſake to be merciful to Penitent Sinners Unrighteouſneſs, and to remember their Tranſgreſſions no more, how many and heinous ſoever they have been.

13 In that he ſaith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the firſt old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, *is* ready to vaniſh away.

The Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes proved the Inſufficiency of the Old Covenant, and the Neceſſity of the New, and given the Preference to the latter above the former; in this laſt Verſe he acquaints us with the Abrogation of the Old Covenant, *it is made Old*; and with the Abrogation of it, *it is ready to vaniſh away*: As Old Things loſe their Power, Strength, and Vigour; ſo the Old Covenant loſt its binding Power and obliging Force: And as that which waxeth old moulders away by little and little, till at laſt it does totally vaniſh, and utterly periſh: Thus the Legal Diſpenſation by little and little decayed, till it wholly ceaſed at laſt; yea, it is obſervable that the whole Policy and *Jewiſh* Government did vaniſh away and totally expire in a few Years after the writing of this Epiſtle. Learn hence, 1. That the outward Appearance of the Legal Adminiſtration was glorious, and very taking, to the *Jews*: The Fabrick of the Temple, the Ornaments of the Prieſts, the Order of their Worſhip, had a Glory in them which dazled the Eyes, and captivated the Minds and Affections, of the People. Learn 2. That all this Glory did gradually vaniſh, and at laſt totally diſappear; all the Glorious Inſtitutions of the Law were at beſt but as Stars in the Firmaments of the Church, and conſequently were all to diſappear at the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs: *In that he ſaith, A new Covenant, he hath made the firſt old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vaniſh away.*

CHAP. IX.

Our Apoſtle having in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter aſſerted that the Old Covenant made with the Church at Sinai, *with all the Ordinances of Worſhip and Priviledges thereunto belonging, was taken away and ceaſed, and well knowing how hard and very difficult it would be to perſwade the* Hebrews *to forego thoſe Things which they were ſo exceedingly fond of, they looking upon them to be (as indeed they were) of God's own Appointment, and expected all their Happineſs to depend upon a ſtrict Obſervation of them, and a firm Adherence to them; he comes in this Chapter to make a Compariſon between the Old and New Covenant, between the Legal and the Evangelical Diſpenſation, ſhewing that the former was to ceaſe, and that it was greatly to the Church's Advantage that it ſhould do ſo, yea, abſolutely neceſſary that it might be brought unto that State of Perfection it was deſign'd unto; and accordingly thus he ſpeaks,* Verſe 1.

1 THen verily the firſt *covenant* had alſo ordinances of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary.

In this and the following Verſes the Apoſtle gives us a particular and diſtinct View of the Typical Ordinances in the Old Covenant under the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation, and alſo of their Accompliſhment in Jeſus Chriſt: And here in general he acquaints us that the Firſt Covenant had an outward Legal Service, with ſundry Rites and Ordinances of Divine Worſhip, and a Worldly Sanctuary raiſ'd by Men of Earthly Materials; a Temporary Tabernacle; *Verily the Firſt Covenant had Ordinances of Divine Service,* &c. *Obſerve* here, That there never was any Covenant between God and Man but it had ſome Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Divine Worſhip annex'd unto it: The Original Covenant of Works had the Ordinances of the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Covenant of *Sinai* (whereof the Apoſtle here ſpeaks) had a Multitude of them, and the Goſpel Covenant is not deſtitute of them; witneſs our Sacraments and Publick Worſhip. *Obſerve* 2. That all Ordinances for Worſhip muſt be reſolved into Divine Ordination or Inſtitution, as that which renders them acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God: A Worſhip not ordained by God, is not accepted by God; it had *Ordinances* of Worſhip. *Obſerve* laſtly, How God can animate outward Carnal Things with an hidden Inviſible Spring of Glory and Efficacy. So he did their Sanctuary with its relation unto Chriſt, which was an Object of Faith, which no Eye of Fleſh could behold.

2 For there was a tabernacle made, the firſt wherein *was* the candleſtick, and the table, and the ſhew-bread, which is called the ſanctuary. 3 And after the ſecond vail, the tabernacle which is called the holieſt of all: 4 Which the golden cenſor, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory ſhadowing the Mercy-ſeat, of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly.

In theſe Verſes the Holy Ghoſt by the Apoſtle ſets before our Eyes the Beautiful Face of God's Publick Worſhip under the Ceremonial Law. And, Firſt, He deſcribes the Place appointed by God for his Solemn Worſhip: This was Firſt the Tabernacle, then the Temple: The Tabernacle was an Ambulatory Temple; the Temple a Standing Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a Type and Figure of Chriſt's Incarnation, whereby the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him Bodily, as it dwelt Typically in the Tabernacle; this Tabernacle had Two Parts, the Sanctuary, or Holy Place, and the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or the Holy of Holies. Our Apoſtle tells us what Sacred Utenſils were by God's Appointment in both theſe Places. 1. In the Sanctuary there was the *Candleſtick*, repreſenting that Fulneſs of Light which is in Chriſt, and which is by him communicated to the whole Church. The *Table* whereon ſtood the Shewbread, typifying the Saints Communion with Chriſt, and one with another; alſo the *Shewbread* itſelf, which typified Chriſt, as being the only Bread of Life to his Church, the only Spiritual Food of the Soul that nouriſhes it unto Life Eternal. 2. In the Holy of Holies there was *the Golden Cenſor*, which was to hold the Incenſe: This repreſented the Interceſſion of Chriſt, which gives Efficacy to the Prayers of all Believers: The Prevalency of all our Prayers depends on the Incenſe which is in the Hand of our Merciful High Prieſt *The Ark of the Covenant overlaid with Gold*; this, with the Mercy-ſeat which covered the Ark, was the moſt Glorious and Myſterious Utenſil of the Tabernacle, the moſt Eminent Pledge of the Divine Preſence; called the Ark of the Covenant, becauſe the Two Tables, in which the Ten Commandments were writ by the Finger of God, were kept in it; next, *the Golden Pot*, in which the *Manna* was laid up, and miraculouſly kept from Putrefaction, (which of itſelf would have ſtunk in Two Days,) a Type of Chriſt the Bread of Life. Then *Aaron's Rod that budded:* This originally was the Rod of *Moſes* wherewith he fed his Sheep in the Wilderneſs, and afterwards wrought his Miracles, and particularly ſmote the Rock with it till it guſh'd out Water. When *Aaron* was called to the Office of the Prieſthood it was deliver'd unto his keeping. This Rod of *Moſes*, wherewith he ſmote the Rock, is commanded to be laid up in the Tabernacle, becauſe the Spiritual Rock that followed them was to be ſmitten with the Rod of the Law, that it might give forth the Waters of Life unto the Church. Laſt of all, *The Tables of the Covenant*; that is, the Two Tables of Stone cut out by *Moſes*, and written on with the Finger of God, containing the Ten Commandments, which were the Subſtance of God's Covenant with the People. Theſe Two Tables of Stone were by the Expreſs Command of God put into the Ark; and there was nothing elſe in the Ark but them. The Pot of *Manna* and *Aaron*'s Rod were laid up in the Holy of Holies, near the Ark, but not in it, which were of no Actual Uſe in the Service of God, but only kept as Sacred Memorials. Having thus deſcribed what was in the Ark, next the Apoſtle tells us what was over the Ark, namely, the Cherubims and the Mercy-ſeat. The *Cherubims* were *Alata Animalia*, winged Creatures of Human Shape, but with Wings to denote their Angelical Nature; they were Two of them, one at each End of the Ark, ſhadowing the Mercy-ſeat; from between theſe Cherubims over the Mercy-ſeat it was that God manifeſted his Majeſtical Preſence, ſpake unto *Moſes*, and gave out his Oracles as a Prince ſpeaks from a Throne. The *Mercy-ſeat* was of pure Beaten Gold, the Meaſure of it exactly anſwering the Ark: This cover'd the Ark, wherein the Law was; and was a Type of Chriſt, who fully covers our Sins, the Tranſgreſſions of the Law, out of God's Sight; and is therefore called by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 3.25. our Propitiatory, or Propitiation, our Mercy-ſeat. *For if thou, Lord, ſhould mark Iniquities according to the Law, who ſhould ſtand?* Theſe are the Particular Things which the Apoſtle thought fit to take Notice of in the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle; all which we ſee pointed at Chriſt; and there was in them all, more or leſs, a Repreſentation of the Perſon and Mediation of Chriſt. Hereunto were they deſign'd by Divine Wiſdom, to denote, that in him alone is God well-pleaſed, in him alone will he be glorified.

6 Now when theſe things were thus ordained, the prieſts went always into the firſt tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice *of God*. 7. But into the ſecond *went* the high prieſt alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf, and *for* the errors of the people. 8. The Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt of all was not made manifeſt while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding: 9 Which *was* a figure for the time then preſent, in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices, that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience, 10 *Which ſtood* only in meats, and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances impoſed *on them* until the time of Reformation.

Our Apoſtle having given an Account in the preceding Verſes of the Structure or Fabrick of the Tabernacle in the Two Parts of it, which belonged to the *Prieſts*, namely, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, (for of the firſt Court the Court of the People, he ſays nothing ;) he comes now to diſcourſe of the Service, which by the Appointment of God the *Prieſts* were to perform in this Magnificent Structure.

6 Now when theſe things were thus ordained, the prieſt went always into the firſt tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice *of God*.

Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Perſons Adminiſtring, the *Prieſts* only, and they of the Poſterity of *Aaron:* All others were forbidden upon Pain of Exciſion. *Obſerve* 2. The General Foundation of the Service of theſe *Prieſts* in the Sanctuary, *they entred* into it, but were to go no farther ; they muſt not ſo much as look into the Holy of Holies ; no, nor yet abide in the Sanctuary when the High Prieſt entred into the moſt Holy Place. *Obſerve* 3. The Time of this their Entrance into the Sanctuary to diſcharge their Service, *always* ; that is, every Day, and at all Times, as Occaſion did require. *Obſerve* 4. The Service itſelf, *accompliſhing the Service of God* ; theſe Services were either daily or weekly: Daily, were dreſſing the Lamps, ſupplying them with Holy Oil Morning and Evening; alſo the Service of the Golden Altar, on which the *Prieſts* burnt Incenſe every Day. The Weekly Service of the Sanctuary was the Changing of the Shew-bread every Sabbath-day in the Morning. All the Service was typical, repreſenting the continual Application of the Benefits of Chriſt's Sacrifice unto his Church to the End of the World. The Tabernacle itſelf, and the Inhabitation of God in it, was a Type of the Incarnation of the Son of God ; all the Utenſils of it were Repreſentations of his Grace. He is the Light and Life of the Church, the Lamp and the Bread thereof. The Incenſe of his Interceſſion renders all our Obedience acceptable unto God ; and accordingly there was continual Application made unto theſe Things without Intermiſſion every Day: Signifying unto us, that a continual Application unto God by Chriſt, and a continual Application of the Mediation of Chriſt by Faith, are the Springs of the Light, Life, and Comfort, of the Church.

Having thus deſcribed the *Prieſt*'s Service in the Firſt Part of the Temple, *ver. 6.* he comes now to declare the Service and Adminiſtration of the High Prieſt in the Second Part of the Temple, or Holy of Holies, *ver.* 7.

7 But into the ſecond *went* the high prieſt alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf, and for the errors of the people.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon adminiſtring deſcribed, *the High Prieſt alone* ; none of the Prieſts were permitted to be ſo near him as the Sanctuary when he adminiſtred in the moſt Holy Place. Thus ſacredly was the Preſence of God in the Holy of Holies made inacceſſible, not only to the People, but even to all the Prieſts themſelves. The great Truth which this repreſented and ſhadow'd forth was, that there is no Entrance into the gracious Preſence of God but by our great High Prieſt, the Holy Jeſus. The *High Prieſt alone*, and no other Perſon, entred into the Holy of Holies. *Obſerve* 2. The High Prieſt engaging in his Service, *He entred through the Vail into the Holy Place.* This was a Type both of the Entrance of Chriſt into Heaven, and of our Entrance by him unto the Throne of Grace. We read, *Matth.* 27. 15. Of the rending of this Vail at the Death of our Saviour from Top to Bottom: Signifying thereby, That the Way was laid open unto the Holy Place, and the gracious Preſence of God diſcovered, and made acceſſible to all that come unto him by Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* 3. The Time of this Service expreſs'd, it was *once* only *every Year* ; and the Day, the preciſe Day of the Year, determined, *Lev.* 16. 29. to wit, the Tenth Day of the Month *Tizry*, anſwering our *September*, called the great Day of Atonement, on which Day ſuch a compleat Atonement was made for Sin, that the *Jews* had a Saying, That on the Day of Expiation all *Iſrael* was made as Innocent as in the Day of Creation. *Obſerve* 4. The Nature of this Service, the Apoſtle tells us it was *not without Blood* ; that is, he did it by Blood, ſprinkling it Seven Times with his Finger towards the Mercy-Seat, *Lev.* 16. 11, 12. There is an Emphaſis in the Expreſſion, *not without Blood*, to manifeſt the Neceſſity of the Death and Blood-ſhedding of Jeſus Chriſt our great High Prieſt, and the Impoſſibility of our entring into the gracious Preſence of God without the Blood of the Reconciling Sacrifice, Chriſt Jeſus. *Obſerve* 5. For whom this Blood was offered ; firſt, for *himſelf*, then for the People ; that is, for his own Sins, and the Sins of the People : This argued the great Imperfection of that State ; whereas Chriſt our great High Prieſt was not to offer up the Blood of Bulls, but his own Blood ; not for himſelf at all, but for others only ; not once a Year, but once for all ; *by one Offering he hath for ever perfected them that are Sanctified.*

8 The holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding:

The Apoſtle in this Verſe declares the Spiritual Uſe and Signification of the *Levitical* Service, and what the Holy Ghoſt did intend thereby ; namely, That the true and proper Means to enter into Heaven, the Holy of Holies, was not ſo fully and clearly manifeſted ; and that Heaven repreſented by the Holy of Holies was as yet inacceſſible ; for Chriſt firſt entred into Heaven as our Forerunner, with his Blood to appear before God, and thereby to prepare the Way for our Entrance after him. Hence learn, 1. That the Holy Ghoſt's Deſign in all the *Levitical* Service was to direct the Faith of Believers to Chriſt the promiſed Meſſiah, who was ſignified thereby ; *the Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying.* Learn 2. That although Typical Inſtitutions attended diligently unto were ſufficient to direct the Faith of the *Jews* unto the Expectation of a real Expiation of Sin, and a gracious Acceptance with God thereupon ; yet the clear Manifeſtation of the way of Expiation of Sin by the Blood of Chriſt is the great Priviledge and Diſcovery of the Goſpel. Learn 3. Altho' the ſtanding of the Firſt Tabernacle was a great Mercy and Priviledge, yet the removal of it was a greater, becauſe it made way for the bringing in of that which was much better, the Goſpel State.

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then preſent, in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices, that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the Conſcience, 10 *Which ſtood* only in meats, and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances impoſed *on them* until the time of reformation.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The Firſt Tabernacle was but a Figure, or Typical Repreſentation of Good Things to come, ſerving only for the preſent Non-age of the Church, for the *Gifts and Sacrifices* then offered could not of themſelves perfectly juſtifie, ſanctifie, or ſave any Man, nor could they pacifie the Conſcience of the Sinner. Where *Note*, That Conſciences cannot be ſatisfied till God's Wrath be pacified. Now the Ceremonial Rites could not pacifie God's Wrath, becauſe they could not ſatisfie God's Juſtice : Nothing but the Blood of Chriſt could do that which thoſe Sacrifices were only typical Repreſentations and Prefigurations of. *Obſerve* farther, The Apoſtle's Reaſon why thoſe Legal Rites could not make *them* perfect ; namely, becauſe the Nature of them was ſuch, that they reached only to the Outward Man, conſiſting only for the moſt part in *Meats, Drinks, and divers Waſhings*, that concern'd the Fleſh and Body of Man, which did not of themſelves commend any Man to God, and were impoſed upon them as a Yoke, until the Times of Reformation, that is, the Time of the Meſſiah, the Time of the New Teſtament Diſpenſation. *Note* here, The great Imperfection of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, it was weak and imperfect, and conſequently not to be continued. *Note* farther, That nothing can give Peace to Conſcience but what gives Satisfaction to God's Juſtice. Whoever ſeeks it any other Way than by Vertue of Chriſt's Atonement, will never attain it in this World, or in that which is to come ; *No Offerings could make him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conſcience.*

11 But Chriſt being come an high prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building ; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

Our Apoſtle having ſhewed in the preceding Verſes how and after what manner the Levitical Prieſts executed their Office, he comes now to declare how, and after what manner, Chriſt, our great High Prieſt, did alſo execute his. And, 1. As the Levitical Prieſts had a Tabernacle, an Earthly Sanctuary, to officiate in, ſo Chriſt had a greater and more perfect Tabernacle to execute his Office in, namely, that of his own Body; not like *theirs* made with Hands, but miraculouſly formed in the Virgin's Womb, by the overſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt, in which Tabernacle the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt ſubſtantially. The Humane Nature of Chriſt was that Tabernacle in which the Son of God Adminiſtred his Sacerdotal Office in this World, and wherein he continueth yet ſo to do in Heaven by his Interceſſion. And well may this Tabernacle be called *greater*, being ſo not in Quality and Meaſure, but in Dignity and Worth; and *more perfect*, that is, more perfectly fitted and ſuited to the End of a Tabernacle, both for the Inhabitation of the Divine Nature, and the Means of exerciſing the Sacerdotal Office, in the making Atonement for Sin, than the other was. Learn hence, That the Humane Nature of Chriſt, in which he exerciſed and diſcharged the Duties of his Sacerdotal Office, in making Atonement for Sin, is the greateſt, moſt perfect and excellent, Ordinance of God, far excelling thoſe that were moſt excellent under the Old Teſtament. The Glory of this Tabernacle of our Saviour's Body in Heaven will be the Object of Holy Adminiſtration unto all Eternity, as it was admirably fitted and perfected for Service and Uſefulneſs here on Earth. *Obſerve* 2. The Apoſtle declares, that as Chriſt had a more excellent Tabernacle, ſo he was incomparably a more excellent High Prieſt than ever the Legal Diſpenſation had: *They* entred the Holy of Holies, he entred Heaven; *They* entred often, *He* but once; *They* entred with the Blood of Goats and Calves, *He* in his own Blood: And the Effect, Fruit and Benefit, of it was unſpeakable; thereby he *obtained Eternal Redemption for us*. *Note* here, That whereas it is ſaid, that Chriſt entred into Heaven with his own Blood, it is not ſo to be underſtood as if he carried the material Blood which he ſhed with him into Heaven in a Veſſel, or otherwiſe, as the High Prieſt carried the Blood of the Sacrifice in his Hand into the moſt Holy Place; but that Chriſt preſented his Body in Heaven, out of which the Blood was ſhed; and by the Merit of his Death made Expiation for Sin, and purchaſed Eternal Redemption for Sinners. Learn hence, That the Entrance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as our great High Prieſt into Heaven, to appear in the Preſence of God for us, and to ſave us thereby to the uttermoſt, was a Matter ſo great and glorious, that it could not be accompliſhed but by his own Blood. No other Sacrifice was ſufficient to this End, *not by the Blood of Bulls and Goats*.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh; 14 How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your Conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God?

The Apoſtle had aſſerted in the former Verſe that Eternal Redemption was the Fruit of Chriſt's Sacrifice, he proves it in theſe; and that by an Argument drawn from the leſs to the greater, Thus if, ſays he, the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Water that was mixt with the Aſhes of the Burnt Heifer, (or Red Cow mentioned *Numb. 19.*) purified from ceremonial Uncleanneſs, and procured the external Sanctification of the Fleſh, or outward Man, how much more ſhall the Blood of Chriſt, who by the Eternal Spirit, (that is, his Godhead, his Divine Nature,) offered up himſelf, (his whole Man, Soul and Body, a Sacrifice,) without Spot to God the Father, be able to purge our Conſciences from all Spiritual Impurity, and Uncleanneſs of Sin, that Dead, becauſe deadly Work, and render us fit to ſerve the Living God in an Holy Courſe of Chriſtian Obedience? *Note* here, 1. That Chriſt's Offering himſelf to God was a ſpecial Act, as High Prieſt of the Church, wherein he gave up himſelf in a Way of moſt profound Obedience, to do and ſuffer whatever the Juſtice of God required unto the Expiation of Sin, even to the ſhedding of his Blood. *Note* 2. That Chriſt's Godhead it was which rendred the ſuffering of his Manhood infinitely meritorious; or that Chriſt's Blood was effectual, not ſimply, as it was material Blood but as offered by the Eternal Spirit. His Blood, tho' not the Blood of God, yet was the Blood of him that was God. *Note* 3. That the purging of our Conſciences from dead Works is an immediate Effect of the Death of Chriſt, and a Benefit which upon our Faith and Obedience we are made Partakers of. *Note* (4.) That the beſt Works of Men, antecedently unto the Purging of their Conſciences by the Blood of Chriſt, are but dead Works, unſuitable to the Nature of the Living God. Lord, help up us to remember, that when we come to Hear, to Pray, or perform any Act of Worſhip, that we are doing it to the Living God. O how improper for, and unſuitable to, a Living God, are dead Services, without Life, without Heat, without Spirit.

15 And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the new Teſtament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a teſtament *is*, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator. 17 For a teſtament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all, whilſt the teſtator liveth.

Theſe Words repreſent unto us one ſpecial Benefit accruing by the Death of Chriſt, namely, the Ratification of the Goſpel Covenant; for by this Means he took upon him the Glorious Office to be the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by the Intervention of his Death he might make Satisfaction for the Sins of Believers under the Old Teſtament, as well as for thoſe that live under the New; and that as well thoſe that lived before Chriſt's coming in the Fleſh as ſince, might by virtue of his Death obtain the promiſed Eternal Inheritance. *Note* here, That God deſigned an Eternal Inheritance unto ſome Perſons; that the Perſons deſigned are them that are called; that the Way and Manner of conveying a Right and Title to this Inheritance was by Promiſe; that there was an Obſtacle to the Enjoyment of this Inheritance, which was Tranſgreſſion againſt the Firſt Covenant; that this Obſtacle might be removed, and the Inheritance enjoyed, God made a New Covenant, which had a Mediator, who expiated Sin by the Sacrifice of his Death. *Note farther*, That the Efficacy and Merit of Chriſt's Death and Mediation extends itſelf to all that are effectually called, as well thoſe that lived before his coming in the Fleſh, as to thoſe that lived ſince. *Note* laſtly, How the Covenant of Grace is here called a Teſtament, becauſe it received its Ratification and Confirmation by the Blood of Chriſt. All Things required in a Teſtament are here found, namely, a Teſtator deceaſed, Chriſt Jeſus; Legacies bequeathed, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, Bleſſings; Legatees named, the Heirs of Promiſe; Conditions required upon which only the Legacies may be obtained, Faith, Repentance, and ſincere Obedience; Seals annexed, Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper; Witneſſes ſubſcribing, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt. The Sum is this, That the Death of Chriſt is the Foundation, Life and Soul, of the New Covenant; and that the New Covenant is of the Nature of a Teſtament; and the Benefits promiſed therein, to Wit, Remiſſion of Sin, Reconciliation with God, Sanctification on Earth, and Glorification in Heaven, are Legacies freely left us by our deceaſed Teſtator, who *was Dead, but is Alive again, and Lives for evermore* to execute his own Will and Teſtament, of which the Scripture is the Inſtrument, and the Sacraments the Seals. Learn from the whole, 1. That there is an irrevocable Grant of the whole Inheritance of Grace and Glory made unto Believers in the New Covenant. 2. That as the Grant of theſe Things is free and gracious, ſo the Enjoyment of them is ſecured againſt Contingencies by the Death of Jeſus Chriſt the Great Teſtator. *A Teſtament is of force after Men are Dead, but of no Strength at all whilſt the Teſtator liveth.*

18 Whereupon neither the firſt *teſtament* was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wooll, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover, he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of the miniſtry. 22 And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood; and without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.

Our Apoſtle having entred upon a Compariſon between the Firſt and Second Covenant in the former Verſes, he goes on to proſecute it in theſe, ſhewing that both of them were *dedicated*, that is, confirmed by Blood. The Firſt Covenant which God made with *Iſrael* in *Horeb* had not its Sanction without Typical Blood. The uſing of Blood for the Sanction of Leagues and Covenants was a very Ancient Rite, and probably ſignified that the Parties confederating did thereby engage Blood and Life for the Obſervation of them. Now that the Covenant between God and *Iſrael* was thus Solemnized, and received its Confirmation by Blood, the Apoſtle makes appear from the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, *Exod.* 24. unto which he appeals; where we find the *Sprinkler* to be *Moſes*, the *Sprinkling* to be Blood, the Things *Sprinkled* were the Book wherein the Covenant was written, and the People who engaged themſelves in the Covenant. Now the Uſe and End of this Sprinkling upon the People was the Confirmation of the Covenant on their Part, as the Sprinkling of it upon the Altar was the Confirmation on God's Part. And the Words added to the Action were, *This is the Blood of the Covenant*; that is, this is the Blood by which the Covenant is confirmed and made inviolable betwixt God and you: He calls it the *Blood of the Covenant*, becauſe it was a Sign of it, and a Seal confirming it. In like Manner the New Covenant was confirmed by Blood, even by the Blood of Chriſt, as is evident from his own Words, *Luke* 22. 20. *This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood for Remiſſion of Sin.* Remiſſion of Sin is one Principal Bleſſing promiſed in the New Covenant; but this Promiſe had been in vain if Chriſt's Blood had not been ſhed to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and thereby make Sin remiſſible: For though Man had Repented, and could have made even Hell itſelf to ſwim with his Tears, yet his Sin could not have been remitted had not this Blood made it remiſſible; ſo that the Blood of Chriſt is the firm and immoveable Baſis and Foundation upon which the New Covenant was fix'd. This is the Firſt Part of our Apoſtle's Deſign in theſe Words, namely, to prove the Neceſſity of Chriſt's Blood for Confirmation of the New Covenant. Next he proves the Efficacy of that Blood for taking away of Sin; telling us, that the Tabernacle, the Veſſels, and all the Utenſils thereunto belonging, yea, all the Things which were purified, were ceremonially purified by Blood; and that as without ſhedding of Blood *then* there could be no Remiſſion, ſo no Acceptance with God *now* without the ſhedding of the Blood of Chriſt. Learn hence, That in all Things wherein we have to do with God, and whereby we approach unto him, it is the Blood of Chriſt, and the Application of it to our Conſciences, that gives us a gracious Acceptance with God; without this all is Unclean and Undefiled *now*, as without ſhedding of Blood there was no Purification *then*.

23 *It was* therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If the Tabernacle and Utenſils thereunto belonging, which were Patterns and Types of Heavenly Things, muſt be conſecrated by the Blood of Bulls and Goats, much more muſt the Heavenly Things themſelves, which were ſhadow'd by them, be purified and conſecrated by better Blood than the Blood of Beaſts, even with the Precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. Learn hence, 1. That there is ſuch Uncleanneſs in our Natures, in our Perſons, in our Duties, in all our Services, that unleſs they and we are purified by the Blood of Chriſt, neither we nor they can have any Acceptance with God. Learn 2. That the Sacrifice of Chriſt is the one, only, everlaſting, Fountain and Spring of all Sanctification and Sacred Dedication, whereby the whole New Creation is purified and dedicated unto God. Learn 3. That neither Heaven itſelf, nor Heavenly Things, could have been made meet for us, or we for them, had not they been dedicated and we purged by the Sacrifice of Chriſt. By *Heavenly Things* here we may underſtand *Heaven* itſelf, of which the *Tabernacle* was a Type. Now as the Purification of the *Tabernacle* was only to prepare it to be a Place in which their Perſons might be preſented before God, in like manner was Heaven itſelf prepared and purified for us by our Lord's Entrance into it, with his own Atonement, or Propitiatory Sacrifice; Chriſt's entring into Heaven, and his appearing with his Blood of Sprinkling in the Preſence of God for us, procures the Acceptance of our Prayers and Praiſes whilſt we live, and our Admiſſion into thoſe Heavenly Manſions of Bliſs and Glory prepared for us when we die.

24 For Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us:

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon ſpoken of, and that is *Chriſt* our great High Prieſt, the Mediator of the New Covenant. *Obſerve* 2. What is ſpoken of him. 1. Negatively, That he is not entred into the Holy Place of the Sanctuary, or Tabernacle made with Hands; that is, Built by the Hands of Men, which was a Figure of the true Holy of Holies, to wit, Heaven. All God's Appointments in his Service have their proper Seaſon, their proper Glory, Beauty, and Uſe; even the Tabernacle, and the external Utenſils thereof made with Mens Hands, had ſo, whilſt they had the Force of a Divine Inſtitution. 2. Poſitively, He is entred into Heaven itſelf, the Place of the peculiar Reſidence of the Preſence, Majeſty and Glory, of God, where all his Bleſſed Saints enjoy him, and his Holy Angels miniſter unto him. *Obſerve* 3. The End of our great High Prieſt's Entrance into Heaven declared, *Now to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* The Prieſts of Old, when they entred the Holy Place, were forced ſoon to go out again to prepare for a new Sacrifice: But this Word *now* is expreſſive of the whole Seaſon and Duration of Time, from the Entrance of Chriſt into Heaven, unto the Conſummation of all Things: There is no Moment of Time in which it may not be ſaid he now appeareth in the Preſence of God for us. Learn hence, That the continual Appearance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for us in Heaven as our great High Prieſt, in the Preſence of his Father, is the Foundation both of our Safety and our Comfort, from whence Relief may be derived upon all Occaſions, whatever Difficulties, Temptations, and Trials, may be before us.

25 Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the high Prieſt entreth in the holy place, every year with blood of others: 26 (For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world,) but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words ſets forth the Excellency of Chriſt's Sacrifice from its Singularity; it needeth no Repetition, as their Sacrifices of Old did; their Sacrifices were repeated often, and their Repetition was an Evidence of their Imperfection; but Chriſt's once offering himſelf a Sacrifice was ſufficient, in regard of the infinite Worth and Dignity of his Perſon: *Once in the End of the World*; in the Goſpel Age, the laſt Age of the World, *hath he appeared to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.* Here *Note*, That the Vertue of Chriſt's Sacrifice once offered did extend itſelf to all Times, and purchaſed Pardon for Sins committed in all Ages, even long before it was offered: For the Death of Chriſt muſt be conſidered, not as a Natural, but as a Moral, Cauſe; not as a Medicine that heals, but as a Ranſom that frees a Captive. A Captain may be releas'd upon Aſſurance given that a Ranſom ſhall be paid, tho' it be not actually paid. Thus the Death of Chriſt was available to purchaſe Pardon for Believers before his coming, becauſe he interpoſed as their Surety, and is therefore called the *Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, not only in reſpect of God's Decree, but Chriſt's Efficacy: The Salvation we derive from him, was ever in him; Chriſt's once offering was ſufficient; his Sacrifice may be often Commemorated, but only once Offered: Such indeed is the abſolute Perfection of the one Offering of Chriſt, that it ſtands in need of, and will admit of, no Repetition in any Kind. *Note* farther, that this one Offering of Chriſt is always effectual unto all the Ends of it now and hereafter, even no leſs than it was in the Day and Hour when it was actually offered. This Sacrifice needs no Repetition, like thoſe of Old, but is always freſh in the Vertue of it, and needs nothing but renewed Application by Faith for the Communication of its Effects and Fruits unto us; *for by one Offering he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* Though the Sufferings of Chriſt were neceſſary to the Expiation of Sin, yet he ſuffered neither more nor oftner than was neceſſary; to have ſuffered often was altogether needleſs, and would have been uſeleſs. *Note* laſtly, The great End for which Chriſt once became a Sacrifice, namely, *to put away Sin*; plainly implying, that Sin had erected a Dominion, a Tyranny, over all Men as by a Law; that no Power of any meer Creature was able to diſannul or aboliſh this Law of Sin; that the Deſtruction and Diſſolution of this Law of Sin was the great End of Chriſt's coming to diſcharge his Prieſtly Office in the Sacrifice of himſelf; *Now in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away, to aboliſh and deſtroy, Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.*

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment. 28 So Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation.

Theſe Words may be conſidered Relatively and Abſolutely. Relatively thus, as God has appointed that all Men ſhould once die penally for Sin, and then be judged; ſo did he determine that Chriſt ſhould once ſuffer penally, to expiate Sin, and take away the Guilt of it fully. And as after Death Men muſt appear the ſecond time to Judgment, ſo after his once Offering to take away Sin and Death Chriſt ſhall appear the ſecond time to beſtow upon us Eternal Salvation. *Note* here, That Chriſt's being offered to take away the Sins of many, cannot be meant of his taking them away in the *Socinian* Senſe, to wit, by his Holy Doctrine, which was confirmed by his Death; but of his bearing our Sins by way of *Imputation*: For this is evident from the Oppoſition here between his firſt Appearance and his ſecond. *Chriſt was once offered to bear our Sins*, but he *ſhall appear a ſecond time without Sin.* Why? Did he not appear the firſt time without Sin? Yes, certainly he did as to any inherent Guilt; for the Scripture aſſures us *he had no Sin.* What then is the Meaning of the Oppoſition; at his firſt coming *he bore our Sins*, at his ſecond coming he ſhall appear *without Sin.* The Words can have no other imaginable Senſe but this, that at his firſt coming he ſuſtained the Perſon of a Sinner, and died as a Sacrifice; but at his ſecond coming he ſhall appear as a Judge, to confer Eternal Life on thoſe who are made Partakers of the Sacrifice of his Death. Thus the Words are to be conſidered *Relatively. Abſolutely* thus, *It is appointed for all Men once to die*; here is the firſt Word of Certainty, *all Men muſt die*; then the Word of Singularity, they *muſt once die*, not often; once, and but once; they die by Statute and Appointment; the Supreme Lord of Life and Death appoints Man his Time, both for coming into the World, and going out of it: We come in at his Command, and leave it at his Diſpoſe. *And after Death the Judgment*; the Word *after* ſignifies the Order of Time, for Death goes before, and Judgment follows it. This Judgment is both particular of every individual Perſon, and general, and univerſal, of all; after which follows the final, eternal, and unalterable, Condition of Man, either in a State of Miſery or Felicity. The Parties judged will be Angels and Men, the Perſon judging Jeſus Chriſt: He by redeeming Mankind obtained Right and Power to judge Mankind; ſuch a Judge as the Power of the Mightieſt cannot daunt; ſuch a Judge as the Subtilty of the Wiſeſt cannot delude; ſuch a Judge as the Riches of the Wealthieſt cannot bribe: In a Word, ſuch a Judge as there is no appealing from, no repealing of his Sentence. O Great Day! When the ſtiffeſt Knee ſhall bow at the Tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſtrongeſt Back ſhall break under the inſupportable Burthen of a Redeemer's Wrath; when the *Alexanders* and *Cæſars*, which once ſhook the Earth, and made the World to tremble, ſhall revere and lye proſtrate at the Foot of Chriſt! And, Lord, ſeeing that Judgment is before us, let us ſeriouſly believe it, daily expect it, duly prepare for it; let no Profit tempt us, no Pleaſure intice us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to do that Thing which we cannot account for at thy Tribunal. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

The Deſign of our Apoſtle in the Chapter before us is Twofold; Firſt, to ſhew the Weakneſs and Imperfection of the Levitical *Sacrifices, conſidered in themſelves, and the Neceſſity and Efficacy of the Sacrifice of Chriſt. Secondly, To improve this Doctrine unto Faith, Obedience, and Perſeverance, in our Chriſtian Profeſſion unto the Death by ſeveral weighty Arguments, ſhewing particularly the Fatal Danger of Apoſtacy from Chriſt and his Holy Religion.*

1 FOr the law having a ſhadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

In the former Part of this Chapter the Apoſtle proves the Impotency and Imperfection of the *Levitical* Sacrifices by ſundry Arguments; namely, Firſt, from the Nature of them, they were but *Shadows*; from the Plurality of them, they were *many*; from the Repetition of them, they were *often*; and from the Inefficaciouſneſs of them, they could not *take away Sin.*

The former of theſe is taken notice of in this firſt Verſe, *The Law having a Shadow of Good Things to come.* An Alluſion probably to the Art of Painting, wherein a Shadow is firſt drawn, and afterwards the very Image itſelf; or a Metaphor taken from the Shadow of a Body in the Light of the Sun. As a Shadow is a Repreſentation of a Body, a juſt and true Repreſentation of it, and of nothing elſe, yet but an obſcure Repreſentation of a Body; the Life, Vigour, and Spirit, of a Body cannot be repreſented by it. Thus was it between the Sacrifices of the Law, and the Sacrifice of Chriſt: The Blood of thoſe Sacrifices were Repreſentations of Chriſt, they were a juſt Repreſentation of Chriſt; he was the Idea in the Mind of God, when *Moſes* was charged to make all Things according to the Pattern ſhewed him in the Mount: And they were but an obſcure and dark Repreſentation of them; the Glory and Efficacy of theſe Good Things appeared not viſible in them. Learn hence, That whatever there may be in any Religious Inſtitutions, and the diligent Obſervation of them, if they only *ſhadow* forth Jeſus Chriſt, and do not actually *exhibit* him to the Faith of Believers with the Benefits of his Mediation, they cannot make us *Perfect*, nor give us Acceptance with God.

1 ———————— The ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceaſed to be offered; becauſe that the worſhippers once purged, ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins. 3 But in thoſe *ſacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of ſins every year.

Here we have a Second Argument to prove the Impotency and Weakneſs of the Legal Sacrifices, and it is drawn from the Repetition and Non-ceſſation of them. Thus thoſe Sacrifices which were often repeated Year by Year, could not of themſelves make Satisfaction for Sin, or purge the Conſcience of the Sinner from Guilt. Had Juſtice been ſatisfied, and Conſcience quieted, there had been no Reaſon why thoſe Sacrifices ſhould have been ſo often repeated: But the Caſe was otherwiſe, for in their moſt ſolemn Sacrifices there was a Commemoration and Confeſſion made of their former Sins by the High Prieſt every Year, which was an Intimation to them that they needed a New and Better Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin; namely, that of the *Meſſiah*, in and by which alone Remiſſion of Sin was to be expected and obtained. Learn hence, 1. That the Repetition and Reiteration of the ſame Sacrifices is an evident Demonſtration of their Weakneſs and Inſufficiency: Accordingly the Church of *Rome* by affirming the Sacrifice in the *Maſs* to be the very ſame with that which Chriſt offered on the Croſs, do prove an Inſufficiency in the Sacrifice of Chriſt for the Expiation of Sin, if the Apoſtle's Argument here be good; for he affirms that all Sacrifices that muſt be repeated are Weak and Inſufficient. Learn 2. That although repeated Sins, have need of repeated Confeſſion, and renewed Pardon, yet they have no need of a Sacrifice; *For he who is once purged has no more Conſcience of Sin*; that is, tho' he knows he has many Sins, yet he has not a Trembling, Tormenting, Accuſing, Conſcience, becauſe he is purged, and his Sins pardoned, through that one Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt. Learn 3. That the Diſcharge of Conſcience from the Guilt of Sin, by Vertue of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, is a full Demonſtration of the Sufficiency of the Vertue of that Sacrifice: And that there needs no Reiteration of it, but only freſh Applications made unto it by repeated Acts and Exerciſes of Faith.

4 For *it is* not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins.

The Intendment of our Apoſtle in theſe Words is to prove, That the Sacrifices of the Law could not expiate Sin, nor make Reconciliation with God, which the Sacrifice of Chriſt alone was ordained and appointed to. Here *Obſerve*, 1. The Subject Matter ſpoken of, the Blood of Bulls and Goats; they were accompanied with great Solemnity and Pomp of Ceremony in their Celebration; and the People had a great Eſteem and Veneration of them in their Minds; but when all was done, that which was offered was no more than the Blood of Bulls and Goats. *Obſerve* 2. That which is denied of theſe Sacrifices, namely, the taking *away of Sins*; to take away Sin is to make Atonement for Sin, to expiate the Guilt of it before God by a Satisfaction given, or Price paid, that it ſhall never bind over the penitent Sinner unto Puniſhment. *Obſerve* 3. The manner of the Negation, it was *impoſſible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away Sins*. Impoſſible from Divine Inſtitution, they were never deſigned for that End, therefore could never effect it, for the Vertue of every Inſtitution depends upon its Deſignation to its End: Now the Blood of Bulls was only deſigned to repreſent the taking away of Sin, but never by itſelf to effect it: And it was alſo impoſſible from the Nature of the Thing; for how could the Blood of a Beaſt expiate the Sin of a Man? Satisfaction muſt be made for Sin in and by the ſame Nature that had ſinned. Learn hence, That it was utterly impoſſible that Sin ſhould be taken away before God, and from the Conſcience of the Sinner, by any other Blood than by the Blood of Chriſt; it is this alone that cleanſeth us from all Sin, for he alone was the Propitiation for them.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world he ſaith, ſacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me: 6 In burnt-offerings and *ſacrifices* for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure: 7 Then ſaid I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above, when he ſaid, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for ſin thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure *therein* (which are offered by the Law;) 9 Then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. 10 By the which will we are ſanctified through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once *for all*.

Our Apoſtle having ſhewed the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of the *Levitical* Sacrifices in the former Verſes, he comes now to declare the Efficacy and Sufficiency of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and of his Bleſſed Undertaking, to do, fulfil, perform, and ſuffer all Things required by the Will and Wiſdom, by the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, of God unto the compleat Salvation of the Church. And this he does by a Quotation out of the Old Teſtament, *Pſal*. 40. 6, 7, 8. Where Chriſt is brought in as newly made Man, ſpeaking to his Father in and after this manner, For as much as thy Wiſdom did inſtitute, and formerly appoint, Sacrifices, as Types to prefigure the Sacrifice of thy Son, but thou didſt not intend their longer Continuance when he ſhould once be offered up, purſuant to this Holy Will and Pleaſure of thine I am now come into the World; thou haſt prepared me a Body, an Holy and Innocent Humane Nature, fit to be united to my Glorious Godhead, in which Nature I will ſuffer, and by my Sufferings ſatisfie thy Juſtice for Sin, and by the ſufficiency of my Sacrifice put a Period to all the *Levitical* Sacrifices that did precede me, and prefigure me. Learn hence, 1. That in the Fulneſs of God's appointed Time Chriſt came into the World to accompliſh that which the *Levitical* Sacrifices did only prefigure, but could not effectuate. 2. That in order thereunto Chriſt did aſſume the Humane Nature, and offered himſelf in that Nature willingly to his Father as a Sacrifice to atone Divine Diſpleaſure. 3. That by this one Sacrifice and Obligation of Chriſt, which he performed in Obedience to the Will of God, all that believe in him are juſtified and ſaved, do obtain Remiſſion of Sin, Grace here, and Glory hereafter; *By which Will we are ſanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all*.

11 And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring, and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, which can never take away ſins: 12 But this man after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; 13 Form henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footſtool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.

Our Apoſtle ſtill proceeds upon his former Argument, namely, to aſſign a farther Difference between Chriſt and the *Levitical* Prieſts. 1. The *Levitical* Prieſthood conſiſted of a Plurality of Perſons; the Prieſts were many; by reaſon of Death they had many Succeſſors; but the Evangelical Prieſthood conſiſted but of one ſingle Perſon, the Lord Jeſus, called here *this Man*. 2. The *Levitical* Prieſthood conſiſted of a Plurality of Sacrifices; they were alſo ſo many, many in Number, and many in Kind, Bulls, Lambs, Goats, *&c.* But the Sacrifice which Chriſt offered was but one as to the Kind; namely, *That Body which was prepared*, *v.* 5. 3. The *Levitical* Sacrifices were oft-times offered, *v.* 11. but the Sacrifice of Chriſt was but once offered. 4. The *Levitical* Sacrifices could never take away Sin, but Chriſt by the Sacrifice of his Death took away Sin for ever, fully and everlaſtingly. 5. The *Levitical* Prieſts *ſtood* and *miniſtred*, *ver.* 11. *Every Prieſt ſtandeth daily*. This is the Poſture of Servants, but Chriſt ſets, which is the Poſture of a Lord; *This Man after he had offered ſat down*. 6. They ſtood *daily* Miniſtring and Offering, becauſe their Sacrifices could not take away Sin; but Chriſt did his Work fully by one Offering, and after that ſits or reſts for ever in Heaven. Learn hence, 1. That Chriſt Crucified is the only Divine and Proper Sacrifice under the Goſpel. *Divine*, Becauſe its Inſtitution and Appointment was of God: *Proper*, becauſe all the Eſſential Properties of an Expiatory Sacrifice were found in this: 'Twas a living Creature offered by a Prieſt, 'twas offered to God, and 'twas a Sweet Savour unto him; and it is the only *proper* Sacrifice of the Goſpel: Doing Good is called a Sacrifice, *Heb*. 13. 16. Righteouſneſs is called a Sacrifice, *Pſal*. 4. but not properly, but alluſively and metaphorically only. Learn 2. That the Sacrifice of Chriſt is but of one Kind, and was but once offered, yet is of ſuch unſpeakable Value and everlaſting Efficacy, as to take away Sin fully and finally, and to perfect all them that are or ſhall be ſanctified to the end of the World. The Vertue of this Sacrifice reacheth backward as far as *Adam*, and reacheth forward to the laſt Believer ſpringing from *Adam*: And as it reacheth backward and forward to all Believers, in former, preſent, and future, Ages; ſo to all the Sins of all Believers which are fully purged and expiated by it, the Deſign and End of this Oblation being to atone, pacifie, and reconcile, God, by giving a full and adequate Compenſation and Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God for the Wrong done to the Holineſs of his Law. Thus our Jeſus *by one Offering has perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*.

15 *Whereof* the holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us: for after that he had ſaid before, 16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: 17 And their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remiſſion of theſe *is*, *there is* no more offering for ſin.

Our Apoſtle had aſſerted the Perfection of Chriſt's Sacrifice in the former Verſes, he proves it in theſe by the Teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt recorded, *Jer*. 31. 31. Where after he had promiſed a New Covenant inſtead of the Old;

and had ſaid, *This is the Covenant I will make with them after thoſe Days*; namely, when the Days of the Old Teſtament are expired, then he ſays, *I will put my Law into their Hearts; and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more.* Now ſeeing God promiſeth under the New Covenant Sanctification and Remiſſion of Sins to all Believers, of which Covenant Chriſt is Mediator, and by whoſe Death the Covenant is Ratified and Confirmed, therefore this one Sacrifice once offered up is abundantly ſufficient. And if Remiſſion of Sins be obtained by Chriſt's One Sacrifice, there needs no Repetition of it, nor any other Offering for Sin. Learn hence, that the Sacrifice of Chriſt was of that excellent Vertue and tranſcendent Merit, that by once offering it took away Sin, all Sin, and made it eternally remiſſible. And upon Faith actually and eternally remitted; to what Purpoſe then ſhould there be any more Offerings for Sin: Yea, they who look for, and truſt to, any other, they fall into that Sin for which there is no Remiſſion provided in the Covenant; nor ſhall any other Offering be accepted for them for ever: For they deſpiſe both the Wiſdom and Grace of God, the Blood of Chriſt, and the Teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, whereof there is no Remiſſion.

Here now we are come to a full End of the Doctrinal Part of this Epiſtle, concerning the Nature of Chriſt's Prieſthood, the Neceſſity and Efficacy of his Sacrifice, the Power and Prevalency of his Interceſſion. O Glorious Myſteries! The Light of the Church of the *Gentiles*, the Glory of the People *Iſrael*, the Foundation and Bulwark of Evangelical Faith.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh; 21 And *having* an high prieſt over the houſe of God: 22 Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.

The Apoſtle having thus finiſh'd the Doctrinal Part of his Diſcourſe, and inform'd their Judgment of the Excellency of the Evangelical Service above the *Levitical* Sacrifices, he comes now to the Applicatory Part of his Diſcourſe, to direct their Practice in ſeveral weighty and important Duties which appear'd to be incumbent upon them; as namely, To *draw near to God*, *ver.* 22. To perſevere in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, *ver.* 23. To ſtir up one another to Love and Good Works, *ver.* 24. To continue in Chriſtian Communion, *ver.* 25. The Firſt Duty exhorted to is to draw near to God; ſeeing we have Boldneſs, *&c. let us draw near with a true Heart*. *Note* here, 1. The Duty exhorted to, and that is, *draw near to God*, in General to Worſhip him, in Particular to Pray unto him, and ſeek Remiſſion of Sin, and Eternal Life from him, to come unto God as Cloathed with Glorious Majeſty, ſitting upon a Throne of Grace, and Propitiated by the Blood of Chriſt. *Note* 2. The Manner of performing this Duty, *with a pure Heart, and in full Aſſurance of Faith*. With the *Heart*, or we give him a Skin inſtead of a Sacrifice; with *Sincerity* of Heart, which is the Life and Soul of all acceptable Worſhip; and with *a full Aſſurance of Faith*, grounded upon the Fidelity of God, and the Immutability of the Promiſe. *Note* 3. The Qualification of the Perſon; he that draws near to God muſt, 1. Have his *Heart ſprinkled from an Evil Conſcience*; that is, his Soul cleans'd by the Blood of Chriſt, and freed from the Accuſations of an Evil-condemning Conſcience. 2. His *Body waſhed with pure Water*, to wit, the Laver of Regeneration, which was ſignified by the legal Waſhings. *Note* 4. The Encouragement we have thus to draw near to God, and that is Threefold. 1. We have *a new* and *living Way* unto the Holieſt, by the Blood of Jeſus; an Alluſion to the legal Diſpenſation, wherein the High Prieſt had a Way to paſs through the Vail with Blood into the Holieſt, to expiate the Peoples Sins, and obtain Mercy for them: Ours is called a *new* Way, becauſe newly *made manifeſt*; and a *living* Way, becauſe it leads to and ends in Life Eternal; or a *living* Way, in Oppoſition to the typical Way of going into the Holieſt, which was a *dead* Way to all but the High Prieſt, and to him too if he entred above once a Year, and then alſo if he entred without Blood. Farther, this *new* and *living* Way is here ſaid to be *Conſecrated through the Vail of Chriſt's Fleſh*: That is, made paſſable for Penitent Sinners, the Throne of Grace made acceſſible through the Blood of a Mediator: When Chriſt died the Vail of the Temple was rent, to ſignifie that our Great High Prieſt was ready to enter the Holy Place of Heaven to procure Eternal Redemption for us. 2. Encouragement is *Boldneſs*, or Freedom and Liberty to enter into the Holieſt: A Freedom for our Prayers to enter Heaven whilſt we live, and a Right and Liberty for our Perſons to enter it when we die. 3. The Means whereby we obtain this Liberty, *by the Blood of Jeſus*. We that before could not come near him for our Sins, may now come near him by Faith in the Blood of his Son; for that Blood ſatisfied Juſtice, merited Divine Favour, and made God acceſſible. Learn hence, 1. That as Sin had made God inacceſſible to Sinners as Sinners; ſo the Blood of Chriſt, that new and living Way, has made him acceſſible to Believers. 2. That altho' from the firſt Promiſe of Chriſt there was always a Way for Believers to come to God, yet it was not ſo manifeſt as it was after Chriſt's Death and Aſcenſion, and the Goſpel's Revelation.

23 Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering (for he *is* faithful that promiſed,)

The Second Duty which the Apoſtle exhorts the *Hebrews* hereunto is Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Faith and Hope, in order to the actual Enjoyment of the great Reward. Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Duty itſelf, to *hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith*; not blindly, without due Examination, but having examined the Grounds and Foundations of our Faith, to maintain the Profeſſion of it againſt all Temptations and Terrors of the World, occaſioned by Sufferings and Perſecutions; and againſt all the cunning Arts and Inſinuations of buſie and diſputing Men, whoſe Deſign it is to unhinge us from our Religion, and make us Proſelites to their Party and Faction: Thus let us *hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith without wavering*. *Obſerve* 2. The Reaſon enforcing this Duty, becauſe *he is faithful that has promiſed*. Mark the Gradation, we have a Promiſe, even a Promiſe of Eternal Glory, as the Reward of our Perſeverance: This Promiſe is God's Promiſe, not Man's; and the Promiſe of a Faithful God, who neither can nor will change his Mind: He can as ſoon change his Being as change his Word and Promiſe; *He is faithful*, &c.

24 And let us conſider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works:

Obſerve here, The Duty exhorted to, to *conſider one another*; that is, to watch over one another: This Conſideration reſpects the Gifts, the Graces, the Temptations, the Dangers, of one another, and is the Foundation of all thoſe mutual Duties of Warning, Exhorting, and Admoniſhing, one another: Duties, God knows, generally loſt amongſt us; and with them is the Glory of the Chriſtian departed from us. Learn hence, That the mutual Watch of Chriſtians over each other, and their mutual Exhortations of each other unto Goſpel Duties, is neceſſarily required, as a ſpecial Means for their Preſervation in their Chriſtian Profeſſion. *Obſerve* 2. The Duty we are to *provoke*, and be *provoked* unto, and that is to *Love* and *Good Works*; that is no true Faith which can be ſeparated from Love, and that is no true Love that is ſeparated from Good Works. The great End of Chriſtian Communion amongſt Believers ſhould be to excite one another to Love, which is the Spring and Fountain of all Good Works, and to provoke one another to Good Works, as the Genuine Effect and Fruit of a ſincere Love to God and our Neighbour.

25 Not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting *one another*: and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching.

Obſerve here, 1. That in the Apoſtles Time there were Chriſtian Aſſemblies, in which Chriſtians did meet together to Worſhip and Serve God, and Edifie and Comfort one another; and in Times of Peace and Liberty they have convenient Places erected and ſeparated for that End and Uſe: The Light of Nature, as well as of Scripture Dictates, that God is to be Worſhipped ſolemnly and publickly; that Publick Worſhip pleaſes him moſt, and that he accepts it beſt. *Obſerve* 2. It was the Manner or Cuſtom of ſome then to forſake the Publick Aſſemblies; ſome out of Sloth and Negligence,

ligence, others out of Fear and Perſecution; this was a dangerous Sin, and ſo continues. God and Chriſt eſteem themſelves forſaken when their Worſhip and Worſhippers are cauſleſly forſaken. *Obſerve* 3. The Duty intimated and directed to, not to forſake the aſſembling together, as ſome do; for Chriſtian Aſſemblies are the Life, the Food and Nouriſhment, of our Souls; conſequently forſaking of Church Aſſemblies is uſually the Forerunner of Apoſtacy. *Obſerve* 4. The great Inducement and Encouragement to this Duty, *becauſe the Day approacheth*: What Day? *Anſw.* The Day of *Jeruſalem*'s approaching Deſtruction to them; the Day of Death and Judgment coming upon and haſtning towards us. Learn hence, 1. That the Intimations given of approaching Judgments, ought to influence unto ſpecial Diligence in all Evangelical Duties. 2. That to ſee evidently the Approaches of Death and Judgment, and yet not to be ſedulous and diligent in the Duties of Divine Worſhip, is a Sign and Token of a backſliding Frame, tending unto final Apoſtacy from Chriſt and his Holy Religion.

26 For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for Sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries.

In theſe Verſes the Apoſtle gives a vehement Enforcement of his preceding Exhortation to an unfainting Perſeverance in the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and this is drawn from the dreadful Conſequences of Apoſtacy: We have here the Nature of the Sin expreſs'd, the Impoſſibility of Deliverance from the Guilt of it declared, and the Puniſhment that will unavoidably follow upon it aſſerted. *Obſerve* 1. Wherein the Nature of this Sin conſiſts; *If we ſin willingly*, that is, by renouncing Chriſtianity. Where *Note* how our Apoſtle puts himſelf in amongſt the Number, to ſhew that there is no Reſpect of Perſons in this Matter, but thoſe who have equally ſinned, ſhall be equally puniſhed. *Note* farther, That the Apoſtle by ſinning *wilfully* does not mean every wilful Sin, and that there is no Recovery after any voluntary Sin committed; but by *wilfully* he means obſtinately, maliciouſly, and with deſpight. *Obſerve* 2. The Seaſon and Circumſtance of this Sin, after *we have received the Knowledge of the Truth*; that is, after the Goſpel has been preached unto us, and we upon Conviction of its Truths and Senſe of its Power have taken upon us the Publick Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; after we have dedicated our ſelves to Chriſt in Baptiſm, and joined our ſelves unto the Body of his Church; after all this, to relinquiſh and renounce the Chriſtian Profeſſion, either for fear of ſuffering, or love of this preſent World, expoſes to an unutterable and inevitable Condemnation. *Obſerve* 3. What the Apoſtle charges is an Aggravation of this Sin, namely, that it cannot be expiated; *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin.* for God has no other Son to offer as a Sacrifice for Sin, if this be rejected, and no other Spirit to make that Sacrifice effectual, if the Holy Spirit be deſpiſed, and finally reſiſted, and therefore no Ground of Hope can remain for ſuch Apoſtates. The Puniſhment of Sins unpardonable is unavoidable; it is an Eternal Decree of Divine Juſtice that the Sacrifice of Chriſt ſhall never benefit that Man who finally falls away after he has received the Knowledge of the Truth. *Obſerve* 4. The dreadful and tremendous Judgment here threatned to Apoſtates, and what they muſt eternally expect, namely, the *fiery Indignation*, and fearful Wrath of the Juſt and Holy Ghoſt. From the whole learn, 1. That there is an inſeparable Connexion between Apoſtacy and Eternal Ruin. 2. That the Minds of wretched *Apoſtates* are ofttimes filled with dreadful Expectations of approaching Wrath. 3. That the Dread and Terror of God's final Judgment againſt *Apoſtates* is in itſelf inconceiveable, and accordingly ſhadowed out by Things of the greateſt Dread and Terror in the World. 4. That God's fiery Indignation, though it ſhall devour his Adverſaries, yet ſhall it never eat them up; it ſhall eternally prey upon them, but never conſume them, or annihilate their Being. O Myſterious Fire! Whoſe ſtrange Property it is always to torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume. God grant that we may never experimentally know, or feelingly find, either where Hell is, or what it is.

28 He that deſpiſes Moſes law, died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes: 29 Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace?

The Apoſtle here confirms what he had before ſpoken of the ſad and certain Deſtruction of Apoſtates, and compares it with the Puniſhment inflicted on the Breakers of *Moſes*'s Law. If thoſe under the Teſtimony of Two or Three Witneſſes of that Apoſtacy died without Mercy, how much ſorer Puniſhment is due to the Condemners of Chriſt, who tread under foot, that is, vilifie and undervalue our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, eſteeming him as one that died a publick Malefactor, counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing, that is, a common Thing; making nothing of the ſolemneſt Rite that ever was uſed in the World for the Confirmation of any Covenant, to wit, the ſhedding of the Blood of the Son of God, *and doing deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace*, as if he were guilty of Lying and Falſhood in bearing Witneſs to the Divine Power of Chriſt. Learn hence, 1. That although to tranſgreſs *Moſes*'s Law was an heinous Offence, yet to ſin wilfully againſt the Goſpel after we have received the Knowledge of it is far more heinous. Learn 2. That to revolt from, and rebel againſt God, loving ſinful Man, againſt Jeſus Chriſt ranſoming and redeeming captive Slaves, and againſt the Holy Spirit ſanctifying and cleanſing polluted Souls, comes neareſt the Sin of Devils; and as the Sin is the more heinous, ſo the Puniſhment muſt be far more grievous: For God has allotted different Degrees of Puniſhments unto different Degrees and Aggravations of Sins. Learn 3. That the Puniſhment of final Apoſtacy is Eternal, without any Hope of Mercy, and without the leaſt Relaxation of Puniſhment, for they ſhall have Judgment without any Mercy.

30 For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord. And again, the Lord ſhall judge his people.

The Apoſtle had declared in the Verſes before the certain Judgment of Apoſtates, here he declares the Judge, *the Lord*, and the Judgment, *Vengeance*; *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord*: Where by Vengeance is meant *Vindictive* Juſtice in puniſhing Sinners. The Apoſtle's Argument ſeems to lye thus; If God profeſſes himſelf an Avenger of all Sin and Injury done to his People, as he certainly doth, *Deut.* 32. 36. much more will he ſhew himſelf an Avenger of ſo horrible an Indignity offered to his Son and Holy Spirit. Learn hence, That the Conſideration of the Righteous Nature of God, and that Encloſure he has made of Vengeance to himſelf under an irrevocable Purpoſe for its Execution, gives indubitable Aſſurance of the unavoidable Deſtruction of all wilful Apoſtates.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words winds up his whole Argument againſt the wilful Deſpiſers of the Goſpel, taken from the Aggravation of that Sin, with the Severity of the Puniſhment that would certainly befal them that are guilty of it. *Note* here, 1. The Deſcription given of God, He is the *Living God*; ſo called, both by Way of Oppoſition unto all dead and dumb Idols, and alſo with reſpect to his lively Power and Strength, whereby he is able to avenge the Sins of Men: And likewiſe to ſignifie the Eternal Duration of his Exiſtence. He ever liveth to execute his Wrath, and inflict Vengeance on the Apoſtate Sinner. Learn, That the Name of the Living God is full either of Terror or Comfort to the Souls of Men. O Lord! Thine Attributes, which are the Principal Delight of all ſincere Chriſtians, and the ſpecial Object of their Hope and Faith, are an Eternal Spring of Dread and Terror to all impenitent Sinners. *Note* 2. What is the Effect and Fruit of all Sin in General, and of Apoſtacy in Particular; namely, a *falling into God's Hands.* There is a Threefold Hand of God mentioned in Scripture, his *protecting* Hand, his *correcting* Hand, and his *wrathful* and *revenging* Hand. It is ſafe and comfortable to fall into God's protecting Hand: It is profitable and beneficial, though not pleaſing and delightful, to fall into God's chaſtening and correcting Hand; but to fall into his angry Hand, his wrathful and revengeful Hand, this is ſad and fearful;

either to fall under this Sentence of his Wrath in this Life, or under the full and final Execution of that Wrath in the Life to come. *Note* 3. The tremendous Dreadfulneſs of that Wrath, it is a *Fearful*, Dreadful, *Thing*, that which no Tongue can utter, no Heart can conceive. *Who knoweth the Power of thy Wrath?* Pſalm 90. Learn thence, That the Wrath and Vengeance which the Everliving God will certainly inflict upon all Wicked Sinners in general, and upon all Wretched Apoſtates in particular, it is very Dreadful and Tremendous, and ſo muſt needs be, becauſe it is a Wrath inconceivably great, and unavoidably ſure, and becauſe it is the Wrath of a Juſt God, of an Almighty God, of an Everliving God.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:

Our Apoſtle here proceeds to a New Argument to perſwade Chriſtians to Perſeverance, drawn from the Conſideration of their former Sufferings for Chriſtianity; ſince you were Illuminated, that is, Baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, ye endured couragiouſly Afflictions, a fight of Afflictions, yea, a great fight of Afflictions. Learn hence, That the Wiſdom of God oft-times permits and ſuffers Perſons, at their firſt Converſion, to fall into manifold Trials and Temptations: Carnal Relations now firſt ſcoff, then frown, and at laſt caſt off. The World hates them, marks them out for Perſecution, loads them with Calumny and Slander. But *Obſerve* farther, The Apoſtle directs them to *call to remembrance* their former Sufferings; he does not mean the remembrance of what was bitter and afflictive in their Sufferings, but the Cauſe for which they ſuffered, and the Preſence of God enjoyed by them in and under their Sufferings; this would encourage, embolden, and ſtrengthen, unto Duty. Learn hence, That a wiſe Management of former Experience is a great Direction and Encouragement unto future Obedience.

33 Partly whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed.

Here our Apoſtle particularly mentions the Sufferings which the Primitive Saints underwent for the ſake of Chriſtianity, and reduces them to Three Heads, Shame, Pain, Loſs: They ſuffered in their Names, by being diſgraced; in their Perſons, by being ſcourged; in their Eſtates, by the ſpoiling of their Goods: Let all that make Profeſſion of the Name of *Chriſt* expect and provide for ſuch Sufferings, eſpecially for Reproaches. We may put a due Value upon our Names and Repreſentations, but muſt not be over-ſollicitous about the Preſervation of them. Let us keep in the Way of our Duty, and leave our good Name to God's Care and Keeping. The World firſt thunders in Reproaches, then falls in a Storm of Perſecution. Learn hence, That all Temporary Sufferings, in all their aggravating Circumſtances, in all their formidable Dreſs and Appearance, may be, and oft-times is, the Lot and Portion of thoſe who have undertaken the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity: *Ye endured a great fight of Afflictions, whilſt ye were made a Gazing-ſtock to the World.* The Chriſtians here were expoſed to the World as it were upon a Stage, or in a Theatre, where Multitudes might *Gaze* upon them, Revile, and make a Sport of them.

34 For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in your ſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.

The firſt Words of this Verſe, *Ye had Compaſſion on me in my Bonds*, prove St. *Paul* to be the Author of this Epiſtle, for who elſe could there be whoſe Bonds for the Goſpel were ſo known, and ſo famous, among the Believing *Jews?* His Bonds were firſt at *Jeruſalem*, afterwards at *Rome*, the Two Capital Cities of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And St. *Paul* declares here what a tender Sympathy and Fellow-feeling with him in his Sufferings they did expreſs: *Ye had Compaſſion on me in my Bonds*; that is, ye owned me in my Sufferings, ye ſympathized with me under my Sufferings, ye adminiſtred to my Succour and Relief when burthened with my Sufferings. *Obſerve* next, He reminds them of their Deportment under their own Sufferings; *Ye took joyfully the ſpoiling of your Goods.* Probably the Bread which they eat, the Cloaths which they wore, the Beds whereon they lay, were taken from them by their Perſecutors; yet all this *Spoil* was taken *joyfully*; not more joyfully by the Spoilers, than it was by the Spoiled. Learn, It is the peculiar Glory and Excellency of the Goſpel that it gives inſuparable Joy unto the Chriſtian's Mind under the greateſt outward Sufferings; *they endured joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods.* *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Reaſon of this their Chriſtian Patience under Sufferings, they had a *Subſtance*; they had a Subſtance in Heaven, and they had a better Subſtance in Heaven than they loſt upon Earth, and they knew that they had it; *knowing your ſelves that ye have in Heaven a better and more enduring Subſtance.* Learn thence, That Faith, by giving an incomparable preference to the Things of Heaven, above all periſhing Things on Earth, affords abundant Joy and full Satisfaction in the Loſs of them all upon the Account of an aſſured Intereſt in better Things.

35 Caſt not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompence of reward.

As if he had ſaid, Seeing you have endured ſo much, never ſhrink back from a Bold and Couragious Profeſſion of *Chriſt* and his Holy Religion, which will be crowned with a great Recompence of Reward. *Obſerve* 1. The Exhortation, *Caſt not away your Confidence* and Courage in the free Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, like cowardly Soldiers, that in the heat of the Battle do caſt down their Shields and Armour, and run away. The Chriſtian is a Spiritual Soldier; he muſt not ſhrink or give back, but die a Conqueror rather than be taken Priſoner. *Obſerve* 2. The Reaſon which enforces the Exhortation, (*which hath great Recompence of Reward.*) Mark, The Reward is certain, and that it is due to ſuch as perſevere. Perſeverance and the Reward are inſeparably joined together, ſo that the one ſhall infallibly follow the other. Hence learn, That in Times of Suffering, and in the Approaches of them, it is the Duty of Believers to look upon the Glory of Heaven under the Notion of a Refreſhing and All-ſufficient Reward: *Caſt not away your Confidence, which hath great Recompence of Reward.*

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe.
37 For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.

Ye have need of Patience: But had they it not already when they endured ſuch a great Fight of Afflictions? Yes aſſuredly; the meaning thereof is this, ye have need of the continued Exerciſe of Patience; implying, That without the conſtant Exerciſe of Patience none can paſs through Tribulations to the Glory of God, and their own Advantage. We have need of Patience to perform difficult Duties, to reſiſt ſtrong Temptations, to wait for an Anſwer of our Prayers, and alſo to wait for the Reward of our Patience. After we have done the Will of God, we have need of Patience to enable us to wait for the receiving of the Promiſe, that is, the Good promiſed. Here Note, That the Glory of Heaven firmly believed will powerfully ſuſtain the Chriſtian Spirit under Sufferings. 2. That Patience is as neceſſary to enable us to expect and wait for the Reward of our Sufferings, as it is needful and neceſſary to ſupport and uphold us under Sufferings. *Obſerve* farther, The comfortable Aſſurance which the Apoſtle gives, both of the certain coming and ſpeedy coming of *Chriſt*, to Reward their Faith and Patience; *He that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.* *Note* here, The Chriſtian's ſuffering Seaſon will be ſhort, *Chriſt* will come to call him off; he will come, and will not tarry; and when he comes no Difficulties ſhall be able to ſtand before him, but ſuch as have ſuffered patiently ſhall be rewarded gloriouſly.

38 Now the juſt ſhall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.

Theſe Words, *The Juſt ſhall Live by Faith* are taken out of the Prophet *Habakkuk*, and are Three times made uſe of by St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles, *Rom.* 1. 17. *Gal.* 3. 11. and in this place. By the juſt Man underſtand a juſtified Man; by the Life which he lives underſtand a Life of Sanctification and of Glorification, a Life of Grace and Holineſs, and a Life of Glory and Happineſs. Learn, That whatever Life the Believer lives after a more excellent Manner, and for more excellent Purpoſes and Ends than other Men, he lives that Life by the Help and Aſſiſtance of his Faith.----In the following Words, *But if any Man draw back, my Soul have ſhall no Pleaſure in him.* *Obſerve* 1. The Crime ſuppoſed, *If any*

Man that has embraced Chriſtianity, ſhall either for Sufferings feared or felt *draw back* from his Holy Profeſſion. The Word ſignifies to ſneak and ſlink away out of Fear; and the Apoſtle means by it a quitting our Profeſſion of Chriſtianity for fear of Suffering. Learn hence, That in and under great, ſharp, and long, Trials, Perſons are in danger of drawing back from that Profeſſion of the Goſpel wherein they are engaged. *Obſerve* 2. The Sentence pronounced upon this Crime, *My Soul ſhall have no Pleaſure in him*; that is, God will be exceedingly diſpleaſed with him, and puniſh him very ſeverely; intimating, that Apoſtacy from the Profeſſion of God's True Religion is a Sin highly provoking to him, and will be moſt ſeverely puniſh'd by him. Here *Note*, That theſe Threatnings imply, that there is a poſſibility of the Saints falling away, conſidered in themſelves, but not that they are ever totally deſerted by the Holy Spirit, and left under the reigning Power of Sin. Theſe Threatnings are intended to awaken their Care, and have a ſingular Influence on their Preſervation. From the whole learn, That Backſliders from the Goſpel are in a peculiar Manner the Abhorrency of the Soul of God; *If any Man draw back my Soul ſhall have no Pleaſure in him.*

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

Obſerve here, 1. A Twofold oppoſite State, namely, them that *draw back*, and them *that believe*, that is, perſevere in believing. *We are not of them that draw back.* ---- Intimating, 1. That in the viſible Church there have been, are, and will be, a number of Hypocrites, who for fear of ſuffering in a Time of Perſecution will *draw back*. 2. That it is every Chriſtian's Duty to Evidence to his own Conſcience, and alſo to give Evidence unto others, that he is not of this Sort or Number; *we are not of them that draw back.* ---- *Obſerve* 2. A Twofold oppoſite Event, *Perdition* on the one Hand, and *Salvation* on the other. The firſt of theſe is denied, the latter is affirmed, concerning theſe *Hebrews*; *we are not of them that draw back to Perdition, but of them that believe to the ſaving of the Soul.* Where *Note*, 1. The actual Influence of Apoſtacy on the one Hand to Deſtruction, nothing can free Apoſtates from Eternal Ruin. *Note* 2. The actual Influence of Faith on the other Hand to the ſaving of the Soul. Thence learn, That ſincere Faith will carry Men through all Difficulties, Hazards and Troubles, unto the certain Enjoyment of Eternal Bleſſedneſs; *We are of them that do believe unto the ſaving of the Soul.*

CHAP. XI.

Our Apoſtle having in the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter ſpoken of the juſt Man's living by Faith, he comes in this Chapter to give an Excellent Deſcription of it, and paſſes many high Encomiums upon it, ſhewing both what it is, and what great Things it has done in all Ages of the Church. From whence we may obſerve in general, that it is Faith alone which in all Ages of the World, under all Diſpenſations of Divine Grace in and towards the Church, hath been the great vital Principle, enabling the Saints to live unto God to obtain the Promiſes, and inherit Eternal Life, and will continue ſo to be to the Conſummation of all Things.

1 NOW faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.

Obſerve here, 1. The Thing deſcribed, or the Subject ſpoken of, and that is *Faith*; that Faith whereby the Juſt Man lives, the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of; tho' not as a juſtifying, but as it is effectually uſeful in our whole Life, eſpecially unto Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, which was the great Duty urged and enforced in the foregoing Chapter. *Obſerve* 2. The Deſcription itſelf, it is the *Subſtance of Things hoped for*. 1. That is, it is a confident and firm Expectation of the Good Things which God has promiſed; giving the Good-Things hoped for a real Subſiſtence in our Minds and Souls. 2. It is the *Evidence of Things not ſeen*; that is, it evidences the Reality and Certainty of future Things, it realizes the inviſible Realities of another World unto our Minds, and cauſes us to believe them as ſtrongly as what we ſee with our Bodily Eyes. Learn hence, That a lively Faith gives ſuch a Reality, Certainty, and preſent Being to Things hoped for, and yet to come, as if they were viſibly ſeen, and actually enjoyed.

2 For by it the elders obtain'd a good report.

Having in the former Verſes deſcribed Faith, in this and the following Verſes, he enters upon the *juſt* Praiſe and deſerved Commendation of this Divine and Excellent Grace, which has ſuch an univerſal Influence into all the Parts of the Chriſtian Life. In this Verſe, to commend that Faith which he had in the former Verſe deſcribed, he brings in the Experience of the Elders, or Old Teſtament Saints, all True Believers from the Foundation of the World, who by Faith obtained from God a Good Teſtimony, recorded in the Holy Scriptures. *By it*, or through it, as a Condition appointed and ordained of God; not for it, or by the Worth and Influence of it, as a meritorious Cauſe; the Elders or Saints of God from the Beginning of the World obtained a good Report. Learn thence, 1. That the Old Teſtament Saints had the ſame kind of Faith that we have, and were ſaved in the ſame manner that we are; they had the ſame Promiſes, the ſame Terms of Grace, the ſame Meritorious Purchaſe by the Blood of *Chriſt*; he is therefore called the *Lamb ſlain from the Beginning of the World*; ſlain in God's Purpoſe and Decree, ſlain in the Types and Figures of his Death; tho' his Blood was not actually ſhed, yet was it decreed to be ſhed, and ſo was as effectual to them as to us. Learn 2. That the Renown of the Old Teſtament Saints was their Faith that made them Famous, not their Priority in living before us, not their Longævity in living many Years beyond us, nay, not upon the Account of their other Graces, which yet rendred them truly Excellent, are they ſaid to obtain a good Report, but upon the Score and Account of their Faith. *Abel* was Famous for Righteouſneſs, *Enoch* for Walking with God, *Abraham* for Obedience, *Moſes* for Meekneſs; but the Crown is ſet upon the Head of their Faith only; *by it the Elders obtained*, &c.

3 Thro' Faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen, were not made of things which do appear.

The Deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe Words is to prove that Faith ſatisfies itſelf in the Word of God concerning the Way and Manner of the World's Creation; for tho' the World be now viſible, and the Things contained in it are ſaid to be ſeen, yet the Original framing and making of the World has a Principal Place among Things not ſeen. Learn hence, That by Faith aſſenting to Divine Revelation, and not by Reaſon, we underſtand the Truth and Wonders, the Seaſons and Cauſes, the Manner and End, of the World's Creation. Reaſon indeed tells us that there was a Creation, conſequently a Creator; but Reaſon without Divine Revelation could never have diſcovered the Circumſtances and Manner of the Creation, which wholly depended upon the Will of God. Reaſon and Nature could never have known them, had not God in his Word firſt revealed them; the Old Heathens could never determine who made the World, nor when, nor how it was made, nor whence, and out of what it was made; Reaſon may propound the Queſtion, How was the World made, and all Things therein? But Revelation muſt reſolve it. A poor Child learns more by its Catechiſm than all the Philoſophers ever learnt by their profound Reſearches, and painful Studies. *Through Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed*, it follows, *by the Word of God*. That is, both by his External and Imperial Word, his Word of Command, ſaying, *Let it be*, he ſpake, and it was done, *Pſal.* 33. 9. And alſo by his Eſſential and Subſtantial Word, *Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom God made the Worlds, *Heb.* 1. 2. in that Order which *Moſes* has Hiſtorically related. *Obſerve* laſtly, How, and after what Manner, the World was made; not out of any prejacent or pre-exiſtent Matter, but out of Nothing; that which was not at all could not be ſeen; *the Things that are ſeen were not made of Things that do appear.* Here *Note*, That the Power of God framed many Things out of Nothing, as the Heaven of Heavens, the Dwelling-place of God and Angels, immediately, other Things mediately out of the Chaos; that is, ſuch rude, indiſpoſed and unfit, Matter, as had no Diſpoſition to receive ſuch a Form as it did actually receive from the Power of God, and may therefore deſervedly be called a Creation out of Nothing. Learn hence, That in the Work of Creation, tho' other Attributes of Wiſdom and Goodneſs viſibly appeared, yet none was ſo eminently conſpicuous as the Power of God. Well might St. *Paul* ſay, *Rom.* 1. 20. That herein was manifeſted *his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

By

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet ſpeaketh.

From a general Declaration of the Nature of Faith in the foregoing Verſes, our Apoſtle proceeds to give Inſtances of the Efficacy and Power of Faith in particular Perſons, in this and the following Verſes. And he begins here with *Abel*, but why not with *Adam?* Becauſe *Adam* was the firſt Sinner, and the greateſt of Sinners; and altho' received to Grace and Mercy, yet after his Fall *Moſes* ſpeaks little of him, nothing very notable; neither did Almighty God put that Honour upon *Adam* which he did upon his Son *Abel*; he had the Honour to ſhed his Blood for *Chriſt*, and for teſtifying his Faith in him; and accordingly *Abel* is here repreſented as the firſt Evangelical Believer, *by Faith* Abel. *Obſerve* farther, 1. The Action which *Abel* performed, he offered Sacrifice to God; he offered a Sacrifice moſt Excellent, and he offered it by Faith. But did not *Cain* bring his Offering in Faith too? Yes, no doubt, he believed the Being of God, and conſidered him as a Creator, and Preſerver, and accordingly offered the Fruits of the Earth as an Acknowledgment that all theſe Things were made, preſerved, and beſtowed on Man by God. But *Abel's* Faith was fixed on God, not only as a Creator, but as a Redeemer alſo, accompanied with a Senſe of Sin and Guilt, truſting in the Way of Redemption and Recovery which God had provided. Here *Note*, that the Performance of the outward Duties of Divine Worſhip is not the Rule of the Acceptance of Mens Perſons with God, but a difference and diſtinction is made from the *inward Principle*, whence thoſe Duties do proceed. *Cain* and *Abel* both offered Sacrifice, but not from a like Principle, nor yet for a like End. *Obſerve* 2. The Effect and Fruit of *Abel's* Faith, it procured a Teſtimony and Witneſs from God himſelf that he was Righteous; he teſtified that he had reſpect to his Perſon by the Approbation of his Offering. Our Perſons muſt be juſtified before our Performances can be accepted. God has firſt reſpect to the Offerer, than to the Offering; for the Perſon muſt recommend the Gift, not the Gift recommend the Perſon. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Priviledge of *Abel's* Faith, *by it, being Dead, he yet Speaketh.* Some underſtand the Words in a paſſive Senſe, he is ſpoken of; he being Dead, there is an Honourable Mention of him. Religion is the trueſt Honour, and the Righteous ſhall be had in Everlaſting Remembrance; others in an active Senſe, and ſo the Words import, that the Dead Saints do yet ſpeak, and that ſomewhat worthy to be heard and obſerved; they ſpeak by the Precious Graces with which they were enriched; they ſpeak by the Holy Life they maintained, by the good Works they wrought, by the Eminent Services they did for God and Man, by their ſharp Trials, by their bitter Sufferings; by theſe they ſpeak, to the Honour of Religion, and to the Furtherance of the Goſpel. God's *Abels*, his Dead Saints, do thus ſpeak when laid in the Duſt.

5 By faith Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.

The Second Inſtance is *Enoch*, concerning whom our Apoſtle affirms, that he was Tranſlated, and that he was Tranſlated by Faith; Tranſlated from one Condition to another; from Grace to Glory, from Earth to Heaven. He was gathered by God, both in Body and Soul, to himſelf; and in a way of Eminent Grace and Favour freed from Death. Hereby God gave the World a convincing Teſtimony that the Body is capable of Eternal Life and Happineſs. But how was he Tranſlated by Faith? *Anſw.* Not Efficiently; Faith was not the Efficient Cauſe of his Tranſlation, for that was an immediate Act of Divine Power; not meritoriouſly, for it is recorded as an Act of Sovereign Grace and Favour; but inſtrumentally only; he was by Faith brought into that State and Condition of Favour and Acceptance with God, as to have this peculiar Priviledge conferr'd upon him. Some we find are carried to Heaven by ſpecial Prerogative, by Priviledged Diſpenſation; *By Faith* Enoch *was Tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee Death.* But *Obſerve* farther, What went before his Tranſlation, and that was his pleaſing God; before his Tranſlation he had this Teſtimony, that he pleaſed God. Such as would live with God hereafter, muſt ſtudy and ſeek to pleaſe God, by walking with him here; would we come where *Enoch* is, we muſt walk as *Enoch* did. There is no hope of living with God in Heaven if we do not pleaſe him here on Earth.

6 But without faith *it is* impoſſible to pleaſe *him*: for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarded of them that diligently ſeek him.

Without Faith, that is, without juſtifying Faith, without Faith in the *Meſſiah*, (for that is the Faith here ſpoken of,) there is no poſſibility of pleaſing God, and if ſo, then no poſſibility of being ſaved without Faith. This appears partly from Divine Conſtitution, God has ſo appointed it, partly from the Nature of the Thing itſelf; Faith being the firſt regular Motion of the Soul towards God, no Works, no Duties, no Performances whatſoever, can pleaſe God without Faith. ---*He that cometh to God*, that is, has any Acceſs or Approach to him in a Way of Worſhip, or any Acceſs with Acceptance into his Grace and Favour, he muſt believe, 1. God's Being. 2. God's Bounty; that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of ſuch as diligently ſeek him. Learn hence, 1. That the firſt Point of Faith, if we would have any thing to do with God, is firmly to believe that there is a God; *He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is.* Learn 2. That the Fountain of all Obedience and Service to God is a firm belief of his being a Rewarder of all them that diligently ſeek him. Learn 3. That the whole Iſſue of our finding God when we ſeek him depends upon our diligent ſeeking of him; he is a Rewarder of them, of all, and only, them that diligently ſeek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the ſaving of his houſe, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon ſpoken of, *Noah*, an Eminent Perſon in the Line of the Church, and one that walked with God, and found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord. *Obſerve* 2. What was ſpoken of him; he was *warned of God*, touching his Deſign and Purpoſe to deſtroy and drown the Old World. *Obſerve* 3. What was the Effect of this Warning, it produced in *Noah* Fear and Obedience; Fear of the Threatning, and Obedience to the Command; he was moved with Fear, and prepared the Ark. *Obſerve* 4. The Exerciſe, yea, Eminent Exerciſe, of *Noah's* Faith; neither the difficulty of the Work, nor the length of Time, an Hundred and Twenty Years, nor his want of Succeſs all that time in Preaching, nor the Contempt and Scorn caſt upon him by the whole World, could weaken his Hands, or diſcourage his Heart, in the leaſt from going on with his Work. *Obſerve* 5. The Conſequent of *Noah's* Faith and Obedience with reſpect unto the World, he *condemned the World*; not as a Judge, Properly and Authoritatively; but as a Witneſs, by Plea and Teſtimony; he condemned it by his Doctrine, by his Example, and left it altogether without Excuſe. *Obſerve* 6. The Fruit and Effect of *Noah's* Faith and Obedience with reference to himſelf; *he became Heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith.* That is, of the Happineſs promiſed to them who are juſtified by Faith; he was evidenced and declared to be a Righteous Perſon.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obey'd; and he went out, not knowing whether he went.

The next Illuſtrious Inſtance of the Efficacy of Faith we have here in the Perſon of *Abraham*, who obeyed the Call and Command of God in leaving his own Native Country, to go he knew not whether, and to receive an Inheritance he knew not when. Where *Note*, 1. The Foundation of *Abraham's* Faith and Obedience, and that was the *Call of God*; he had an immediate Command to go out of his own Country into a certain Place, with a Promiſe to receive it for an Inheritance; *Get thee from thy Country*, Relations, Friends, and all outward Enjoyments, is a Command becoming the Greatneſs of God to give, and Self-denial in Fact or Reſolution to comply with; ſuch a Command from the Great God is the Foundation of all ſincere Profeſſion. *Note* 2. What was the Principle of *Abraham's* Obedience in complying with this Call of God, and that was his Faith. *By Faith Abraham*, when he was called, obeyed. True Faith, where-ever it is it bringeth forth ſincere Obedience; theſe Two can no more be ſeparated than the Light and the Sun, than the Fire and Heat; Obedience is the Daughter of Faith, and Faith the Parent and Principle of Obedience, *Note* 3. The Difficulty, and therein the Excellency, of his Obedience; he *obeyed*, *went out*, *not knowing whither he went.* If Faith be once ſatisfied in the Call and Command of God it will follow him when it cannot ſee a Step of its Way; over Hills and Mountains, through Dales and Valleys, fearing nothing. He that has God's Call need not fear God's Conduct.

9 By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as *in* a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe. 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker *is* God.

The Apoſtle ſpake of the Place which *Abraham* was called from in the foregoing Verſe, namely, out of *Ur* of the *Caldees*; here he ſpeaks of the Place he was called to, *Canaan*, ſtiled *the Land of Promiſe*, that is, the Land which God had newly promiſed to give unto him. Where *Note*, 1. *Abraham*'s Act of Obedience, *he ſojourned in the Land of Promiſe as in a ſtrange Country*; he was there as a Sojourner, not an Inheritor, moving up and down from Place to Place till God thought fit to ſettle him and his Poſterity. *Abraham* was a Sojourner both in his Condition of Life, and in his Diſpoſition of Heart. *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, and accordingly *Abraham* expected a better Country, with a City which had *Foundations*, *whoſe Builder and Maker is God.* Learn, That the Children of God here on Earth, where they have beſt Right, and moſt Poſſeſſions, are but Strangers and Pilgrims. *Note* 2. The manner of his Sojourning in this Land, *dwelling in Tabernacles.* This was both an Act of Policy, and an Act of Piety; of Policy, that they might live peaceably, without giving Umbrage to the Natives, or occaſioning any Envy or Grudge from them; and of Piety, to expreſs their Hopes and Deſires of a better Country. *Note* 3. *Abraham*'s Companions, his Fellows and Followers, in this Act of Obedience; he ſojourned with *Iſaac and Jacob* as Heirs of the ſame Promiſe. Where mark, how all the Saints of God are of the ſame Spiritual Diſpoſition; they are animated by the ſame Spirit, governed by the ſame Laws; they act from the ſame Principle, and for the ſame End, and deſire nothing more than to live together, and to enjoy God, and one another. *Note* 4. The Reaſon rendred why *Abraham* eſteemed himſelf but as a Stranger in *Canaan*, becauſe his Thoughts ran much upon Heaven, of which *Canaan* was but a Type; *He looked for a City which had Foundations*, *whoſe Builder and Maker is God.* Where *Obſerve*, 1. *Abraham*'s Act of Expectation, he looked for it, he rationally expected it; it was not a blind Hope, but well built on the Power and Promiſe of God. 2. What he looked for, *a City*, not *Jeruſalem*; an earthly City, as ſome would have it, for that was not poſſeſt till Eight Hundred Years after, and then only by his Poſterity for a limitted Time; but an heavenly City, a ſettled, quiet, Habitation, a ſuitable Dwelling for them that have had a Life of Trouble in this World. 3. The City itſelf deſcribed, 1. By the Nature of it, *it has Foundations*, in Oppoſition to Tents and Tabernacles which had no Foundation, but were moving, ambulatory, Dwellings, ſupported only by Stakes and Corps; this City is founded upon the Eternal Power, the Infinite Wiſdom, and Immutable Counſel, of God. 2. By the Maker and Builder of it, *God*; he is the Contriver, Framer, and Erecter, of this City; and as he is the Maker, ſo is he the Diſpoſer, of it alſo; pleaſe God and he give will it thee; none *can* give it thee without him, he *will* never give it thee without pleaſing of him.

11 Through faith alſo Sarah herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed.

Our Apoſtle having ſpoken of *Abraham*'s Faith before, makes an honourable mention of his Wife *Sarah*'s Faith here. 'Tis a bleſſed Thing when Husband and Wife are one in the Faith, as well as one Fleſh. When the conſtant Companion of our Lives draws with us in the ſame Yoke of Religion. *Note* 1. The Perſon whoſe Faith is here commended, *Sarah herſelf*, a Woman, a barren Woman, and a barren Woman well ſtricken in Age; a Woman weak in Sex may be ſtrong in Faith. Tho' *Sarah* at firſt laughed, yet ſhe afterwards firmly believed. And the Apoſtle takes no notice of the former, but applauds the latter. O with what great Indulgence doth God cover the Failings of his Children, but proclaims aloud their Graces to the World; Men do not thus; they will overlook all that is good in others, and report only what is amiſs. *Sarah*'s Laughing, *Rahab*'s Lie, *Job*'s Impatience, are not mentioned, but their Graces are remembred: Who would not ſerve ſuch a gracious Maſter, that winks at our Failings, but accepts and rewards our weak Services, and ſincere Graces. *Note* 2. The Commendation and Fruit of *Sarah*'s Faith, ſhe received by it Strength and Ability for Conception; probably ſhe recovered her youthful Vigour, and received a general Reſtoration of Nature, to an Ability for all its Primitive Operations, which was before decayed by Age: She received Strength to conceive Seed when paſt Age. Learn, That it is the Property of Faith to expect a Bleſſing abſolutely above the uſe of Means, when we have a particular and ſpecial Warrant from God ſo to do, as *Sarah* had in this Caſe. *Note* 3. The Ground of *Sarah*'s Faith, *Becauſe ſhe judged him faithful that had promiſed.* That is, ſhe reſolved her Faith into, and reſted upon, the Veracity of God in the Accompliſhment of the Promiſe, which is the proper and immediate Object of Faith. Learn, That where-ever we exerciſe and put forth Faith, we muſt take care and be ſure that we have a Promiſe to exerciſe it upon, otherwiſe 'tis not Faith, but Fancy: God's Promiſe, and not God's Power, is the Ground of Faith; 'tis not what God can do, but what he will do, and what he has engaged and promiſed to do, that is the Ground of Faith: He can quench all the Fire in Hell, but where has he ſaid he will do it? *She judged him faithful who had promiſed.*

12 Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *ſo many* as the ſtars of the sky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea ſhore innumerable.

Theſe Words acquaint us with that gratuitous Remuneration and gracious Reward which God gave *Abraham* and *Sarah* as the Fruit of their Faith, namely, the Bleſſing of a numerous Poſterity; there ſprang of them, and of both them, as good as dead, (with reference to the Procreation of Children,) a numerous Iſſue, like the Stars of Heaven, and the Sand of the Sea. Hence learn, That the God of Nature at his own Pleaſure works Things above the Power of Nature in its ordinary Efficacy and Operation; by weak and dead Means he often produces mighty Effects. Learn 2. That whatever Difficulties and Oppoſitions lye in the way of the accompliſhing of God's Promiſes they ſhall have an aſſured Accompliſhment on God's part, if Faith be kept up in lively exerciſe on our part.

13 Theſe all died in faith——

That is, all the forementioned Saints, *Abel*, *Noah*, *Abraham* and *Sarah*, they all died in the Faith of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, believing he ſhould come, and expecting Salvation by his coming. It is not enough for a Chriſtian to live in the Faith, but he muſt alſo die in the Faith; and to die in the Faith is an honourable and happy Manner of dying; it is a greater Happineſs to die in the Lord, than to die for the Lord; if a Man die for the Lord, and be not in the Lord, he is not bleſſed in his Death: A Man may die for the Lord's Cauſe, yet not for the Lord's Sake, but out of Vain-glory.

13 —— Not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, ——

Obſerve here, The great Trial which the Faith of the Old Teſtament Saints was put unto, they died, *not having received the Promiſes*; that is, they went to their Graves; before the great Bleſſings God had promiſed were accompliſhed. Faith is contented with the Promiſe, tho' it wants actual Poſſeſſion of the good Things promiſed. God would have Believers in all Ages of the Church to live by Faith and Promiſes not actually performed: And it is a great Honour to God when we are ready to die to go to the Grave with Aſſurance, and to profeſs our Confidence that God will make them good: *Theſe all died*, *not having received the Promiſes.* Yet obſerve the Actings and Exerciſe of their Faith towards theſe Promiſes, which they had not yet received in their Accompliſhment, 1. They *ſaw them afar off*, at a great diſtance; it is the Property of Faith to eye the Bleſſings promiſed at a Diſtance, ſo that no Diſtance of Time or Place can weaken Faith as to the Accompliſhment of Divine Promiſes. 2. They *were perſwaded of them:* This imports the Mind's ſatisfactory acquieſcing in the Truth of God for the Accompliſhment of his Promiſes; a firm Perſwaſion of the Truth of God's Promiſes, and a quiet waiting for the Accompliſhment of them at a great Diſtance, is an Eminent Fruit of Faith. 3. They *embraced them*; the Word ſignifies, they ſaluted and hugg'd them. Whence *Note*, That Faith is an Act of the Will, as well as of the Underſtanding; there is in Faith Adherence as well as Aſſent; an embracing as well as a Perſwaſion; the Heart cleaves to the Promiſe with Love, Delight, and Complacency.---*And confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*; ſo they were in outward Condition, wandring from Place to Place; ſo they were in Affection and Diſpoſition, looking upon this World as their Pilgrimage, and Heaven as their Home and proper Country, becauſe thence they are Born; there lyes their Inheritance, there are all their Kindred, there is their longeſt Abode. Chriſtians ſhould not only account but confeſs themſelves Pilgrims, and diſcover it by their Journeying, and mending their Pace Heavenward.

14 For they that ſay ſuch things, declare plainly that they ſeek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country*, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: 16 But now they deſire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, they that ſay ſuch Things, namely, that they, even in the Land of Promiſe, are Pilgrims and Strangers, do declare plainly that they ſeek a Country where they may reſt and dwell when this their Pilgrimage on Earth is ended. Now this Country was not *Caldea*, but Heaven, a Glorious City, which God prepared for them, as an abundant Recompence for their Earthly Country, which they left at God's Command. Here *Note*, 1. That Heaven is the Chriſtian's proper Country; they are Born from Heaven, their Converſation is in Heaven, their Eternal Habitation is there, their Head and Husband, their Friends and Kindred, are there: And it is theirs by a Right of Donation, by a Right of Purchaſe, by a Right of Poſſeſſion, and by a Right of Conqueſt. *Note* 2. That this Heavenly Country is by far the better, yea, the beſt of Countries; beſt in regard of the Largeneſs and Extent of it; beſt in regard of the Safety and Security of it; beſt in regard of the Order and Government of it; beſt in regard of the Company and Society dwelling in it; all Saints, none but Saints, none but perfect Saints; beſt in regard of the Immunities and Priviledges belonging to it, and in regard of the Duration and Continuance of it; a Country that can never be Invaded, never be Conquered. *Note* 3. That ſincere Chriſtians have ſtrong Deſires after, and vehement Longings for, this better, this beſt of Countries; *Now they deſire a better Country.* And *God is not aſhamed to be called their God.* ---They that by their Faith give Glory to God, in acknowledging his Faithfulneſs in this Life, he will never be aſhamed of them, either in this Life, or at Death, or after Death. Learn 1. That it is the greateſt Priviledge, Honour, and Advantage, that any can be made Partakers of, that God will bear the Name and Title of their God. 2. That God's owning of Believers as his, and of himſelf to be their God, is an abundant Recompence of all the Hardſhips which they undergo in this their Pilgrimage. The Top and Sum of all Happineſs is to have the Lord for our God.

17 By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten *ſon:* 18 Of whom it was ſaid, That in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead: from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

The next Perſon inſtanced in for the Fame of his Faith is *Abraham*, who was deſervedly ſtiled the *Father of the Faithful:* Him God tries in a very extraordinary Manner, by putting him upon offering up his Son *Iſaac*. Where *Note*, That where God gives much Grace, he tries Grace much; the greater the Faith, the greater the Trial; ſtrong Faith muſt prepare for ſtrong Trials. Here *Abraham*'s Faith was tried whether he would depend upon God's Promiſe above Reaſon; his Obedience was tried, whether he would yield to God's Command againſt Nature; his Love was tried, whether his Affection was not more warm towards his Son than to his God; and his Fear was tried, whether he did reverentially acknowledge and ſtand in awe of God, by adoring his Sovereignty and Dominion over him. Trials are the beſt Touchſtone of Faith, without which Men will want the beſt Evidence of its Sincerity: And great Trials in Believers are an Evidence of great Faith. *Obſerve* farther, The Excellency of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience upon this Trial; *He offered up his Son Iſaac*; that is, he did in part, and was ready to have done it thoroughly, had not God countermanded him. Learn hence, That where there is a Divine Command obliging us to Obedience it is the Wiſdom and Duty of Faith to cloſe its Eye againſt all inſuperable Difficulties and Dangers. *Abraham* objected not againſt the horrid Nature of the Command to kill a Son, his own Son, his only Son, the Son of the Promiſe, but Deliberately, and upon due Conſideration, was ready to execute what God required. Lord! What a ſtrong Faith was here, fortified with an impregnable Reſolution, that could make *Abraham* hold out Three Days againſt the violent Aſſaults of his own Nature, and the charming Preſence of his Son, enough to melt his Heart; yet nothing made him ſtagger in his Duty, but he performs a moſt miraculous Act of Obedience in Defiance of all Difficulties. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Fruit and Succeſs of *Abraham*'s Faith, he believed God could and would raiſe *Iſaac* from the Grave, and he receives him again in a Figure, as one ſnatch'd out of the very Jaws of Death. There is no ſuch Way to enjoy the continuance of an earthly Comfort as by reſigning it up to God; accounting that God was able to raiſe him up even from the Dead, from whence alſo he received him in a Figure.

20 By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau concerning things to come.

Note, That there is a Bleſſing by Way of Prayer, and a Bleſſing by Way of Prophecy, foretelling what ſhall befal Perſons in time to come: Of this kind is *Iſaac*'s Bleſſing. The Patriarchs were in a peculiar manner directed and guided by God, and their Bleſſing was a conferring of a Right to the Parties Bleſſed. Thus *Iſaac* Bleſſed *Jacob* and *Eſau concerning Things to come*; that is, concerning the great and future Things which ſhould happen to their Poſterity after them. *Note* here, *Eſau*'s wicked Men have their Portion in outward Bleſſings as well as *Jacob*'s, as well as the beſt and holieſt of Men: Partly as they are God's Creatures, partly as they deſcend from Parents in Covenant with God, and partly becauſe they make ſome Profeſſion of the Name of God: And God will be behindhand with none, but ſo far as they do Good they ſhall ſee Good.

21 By faith Jacob when he was a dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph: and worſhipped *leaning* upon the top of his ſtaff.

Obſerve here in dying *Jacob* the Frame and Carriage of Holy Men in their dying Seaſons to Bleſs their Children, and Worſhip their God. *Jacob* Bleſſed *Joſeph*, and his Two Sons, laying hold on the Covenant made with *Abraham*. It is no ſmall Priviledge to be Born of Parents taken into viſible Covenant with God, and no ſmall Comfort when God comes to take away ſuch Parents from us to have the Benefit of their Bleſſings and Prayers. *Jacob*, when dying, Bleſſed both the Sons of *Joſeph*; and as he Bleſſed them, ſo he Worſhipped God with Religious Worſhip, and in a Devout Manner, leaning upon the top of his Staff. Learn thence, That our Addreſſes to God ought to be exceeding reverent, both as to the Frame of our Souls, and alſo as to the Geſture of our Bodies; we cannot be always affectionate in Prayer, for Devotion depends upon the vigorous Motions of the Bodily Spirits; but we ſhould be always reverent and ſerious in Prayer, otherwiſe it is no Worſhip. Learn farther, That where Faith gives a willing Mind bodily Infirmities ſhall be no Let and Hindrance from Duty.

22 By faith Joſeph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Here we have a Twofold Inſtance of *Joſeph*'s Faith when dying. 1. He *made mention of the departing of the Children of Iſrael*; he ſaid unto his Brethren, *Behold I die, but God ſhall bring you unto the Land which he hath ſworn unto your Fathers.* See how the good Man dies in the Faith of the Promiſe. Thence learn, That it is of ſingular Uſe and great Advantage to the Church, that ſuch Believers as have been eminent in Profeſſion, ſhould in their dying Moments teſtifie their Faith in the Promiſes of God; ſo did *Jacob* before, ſo did *Joſeph* now. The Second Inſtance or Evidence of *Joſeph*'s Faith was, that he *gave Commandment concerning his Bones*; that is, he took an Oath of his Brethren that they ſhould carry his Bones out of *Egypt*, and bury them in *Canaan*, thereby owning and Profeſſing himſelf to be of the Poſterity of *Abraham*; and thereby alſo encouraging the Faith and Expectation of his Brethren and their Poſterity to hope for their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and put into the Poſſeſſion of the Promiſed Land; ſo that it is evident that there was Faith, much Faith, ſhewed by *Joſeph* in diſpoſing of his Bones. The Papiſts Plea from hence for paying Veneration to their Relicks is weak and contemptible: This was a ſpecial Charge given in Faith to do what was done; and to ſhut them up in a Coffin, and decently bury them, was all that was done. Now to take Example from hence, to dig Mens Bones out of their Graves, to enſhrine them, and place them upon Altars, to carry them in Proceſſion, to adore them, to to aſcribe miraculous Operations to them. caſting out of Devils, and the like, is fond and ridiculous.

23 By faith Moſes when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, becauſe they ſaw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

In theſe Words the Faith of *Moſes*'s Parents is Celebrated; the Birth of *Moſes* fell out in the very Height and Fury of *Pharaoh*'s Perſecution, when the King had given Commandment to deſtroy all the Male Children; *Moſes* was then Born, and hid by his Parents, and preſerved as a Deliverer of the Church of God. Oh! How blind are all the Perſecutors and Oppoſers of the Church of God? When they think all Things ſecure, and their Counſels ſo deeply laid, that God himſelf cannot deliver out of their Hands, then doth the Almighty lay in Providence for his Church's Deliverance, and their Deſtruction. Now was *Moſes* a Deliverer Born and hid. But obſerve a double Cauſe of *Moſes*'s hiding: The firſt External, *They ſaw he was a proper Child*; they had a Perſuaſion that God would provide a Perſon to be their Deliverer; and they ſaw ſomething Divine in *Moſes* to ſtir up their Faith, and raiſe their Expectation, that he might be the Perſon. The Second Internal and Moving Cauſe, *They were not afraid of the King's Commandment*, or Bloody Decree. Learn thence, 1. That the Commands of Kings and Princes have oft-times been a very great Trial to the Children of God; ſo was *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Command to Worſhip the Golden Image, and ſuch was *Pharaoh*'s Command here. Learn 2. Kings and Princes muſt not be obeyed in Things contrary to the Word of God: Obedience without Reſerve is to be paid to none but God; *They were not afraid of the King's Commandment.*

24 By faith Moſes, when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter;
25 Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon;
26 Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.

The next Perſon whom our Apoſtle inſtances in is *Moſes* himſelf, whoſe Faith and Self-denial were moſt eminently conſpicuous in all the Inſtances of them. *Obſerve* 1. His great Self-denial, with all the inhancing Circumſtances of it; *When he came to Years he refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh*'s Daughter.* *Note* here, 1. The Circumſtance of Time, *When he came to Years:* It was no childiſh Act, when he knew not what he did, but when he came to Age, and underſtood; nay farther, this was when *Moſes* was newly come to Age, in the Prime and Vigour of his Time, when he had juſt begun to taſte the Sweetneſs of Youthful Pleaſures: The World appears a Dead and a Dry Thing in the Winter of Old Age, but looks Green and Beautiful in the Spring of Youth: But *Moſes* when come, juſt come, to Years, refuſed it. *Note* 2. The Circumſtances of his Education, he had been Bred from a Child in a Princely Way and Manner, he never knew what belonged to a low Eſtate: Thoſe that never had much, forſake but little when they forſake all: Want will never much pinch thoſe who never underſtood Plenty; but thoſe that have enjoyed Fulneſs all their Days, for them to ſtoop voluntarily from the Height of Eaſe and Honour, to the Depth of Affliction and Hardſhip, is admirable. Thus did *Moſes*, he refuſed Honour, and choſe Affliction. *Note* 3. The Circumſtance of his Obligations, *Pharaoh*'s Daughter had ſav'd his Life, adopted him for her Son, given him Princely Breeding. *He was learned in all the Wiſdom of the Egyptians*, and ſet her Heart upon him as her own. However, *Moſes* breaks thro' all, and away he goes. But whither went he? Why, to yͤ Company of Poor Bondmen, labouring at the Brickkilns, to take his Lot of Suffering with them. *Note* 4. The Circumſtance of his Expectations; how very fair and certain a Proſpect he had of enjoying the Crown of *Egypt*; he did not refuſe it becauſe he deſpair'd of attaining it, for he was an adopted Heir unto it. *Note* laſtly, That all this was not a raſh and ſudden Determination, but a deliberate and adviſed Choice, *Acts* 7. 23. St. *Stephen* ſays, he made this Choice *when he was full Forty Years old*; that is, when he was of ripeſt Judgment, and in the Height of Proſperity and Reputation: He did not only, as *Joſephus* ſays, at Three Years old caſt a Crown, given him for a Play-toy, to the Ground, and trample it under his Feet; but as the Apoſtle ſays here, when he came to be a Man he treated it with no more Reſpect, *but refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh*'s Daughter.* Behold here *Moſes*'s Faith, and eminent Self-denial, in chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the Worſhippers of the true God, than to gain a Kingdom by renouncing God and his Holy Religion. From whence learn, that Faith is a Grace which will teach and enable a Perſon openly to renounce all Worldly Advantages at God's Call, when we cannot enjoy them with an upright Mind, and a good Conſcience. *Queſt.* But how did *Moſes* come to know his Stock and Race, that he was an *Hebrew* Born, and not an *Egyptian*, no Son of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter? *Anſ.* He found himſelf Circumciſed, and ſo belonged to the Circumciſed People. The Token of God's Covenant received in Infancy, duly conſidered, is a moſt effectual Means to preſerve Perſons in the Profeſſion of the true Religion. Add to this, That his own Mother was his Nurſe, and continually with him, and probably his Father frequently; who being Perſons fearing God, took Care very early to impreſs him with the Principles of the true Religion, and with a Deteſtation of the *Egyptian* Idolatry.

25 Chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

Obſerve here, 1. The common Lot and uſual Condition of God's People in this World; it is an afflicted State and Condition. 2. That wicked Men oft-times enjoy Pleaſures in the Ways of Sin, whilſt good Men meet with much Affliction in the Work of Holineſs. 3. That notwithſtanding this, all Wiſe and Good Men do rather chuſe afflicted Godlineſs, than pleaſant and proſperous Wickedneſs. 4. That a Spiritual Eye can ſee an Excellency in the People of God, when in the loweſt ſuffering Condition will join itſelf unto them, and appear with them, and for them, though it be with great Loſs, and much Hazard. *Moſes* here choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the ſhort and ſinful Pleaſures of *Pharaoh*'s Court.

26 Eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward.

The former Verſe acquainted us with the general Choice which *Moſes* made of Affliction with the People of God; this acquaints us with one ſort and particular kind of Affliction which he choſe, namely, Reproach for Chriſt; this he counted his Glory, his Riches, his Treaſures, beyond all the Riches and Treaſures of *Egypt*. *Note* here, That the People of God have been, and uſually are, a People under Reproach; not only a perſecuted, but a reproached, People; the Foundation of all Sufferings is laid in Reproach; this is the Cover for all. The *Jews* by Reproaches firſt ſtirred up the Rage of the People againſt Chriſt before they attempted to take away his Life. *Note* 2. That the Reproach of Good Men is the Reproach of Chriſt, becauſe he and they are but one Myſtical Body, and becauſe of the near Union that is between them. The Reproach of the Wife is the Reproach of the Husband, eſpecially if ſhe be reproached for his Sake, and upon his Account. Again, obſerve what an high Eſteem a Gracious Perſon has of Reproaches in the Cauſe of Chriſt, and for the Sake of Chriſt; he eſteems them his Glory, his Treaſure, his greateſt Treaſure; he rejoices and takes pleaſure in them, and very much values himſelf by them. Verily no Man deſerves the Name of a Chriſtian till he has ſuch an Eſteem of Chriſt, and Value for him, that the Worſt Things in the World, even Perſecution and Reproach, ſhall be preferr'd by him before the great Things of the World, when they ſtand in Competition with him, or in Oppoſition to him. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Ground of *Moſes*'s Faith, Self-denial, Contempt of the World, and all his Excellent Actions, and that was the Recompence of Reward which he had reſpect unto; *For he had reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward.* Where *Note*, That there is a Reward laid up for Good Men; that it is lawful, yea, laudable, very expedient, yea, very neceſſary and needful, for a Chriſtian to eye this Reward, and to have reſpect unto it in the whole Courſe of his Obedience; and this doing will be a mighty Encouraging Motive to undergo all Hardſhips and Difficulties in the Way of Religion; *He had reſpect unto the Recompence of Reward.*

27 By faith he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible. 28 Through faith he kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born, ſhould touch them. 29 By faith they paſſed through the red ſea as by dry *land:* which the Egyptians eſſaying to do were drowned.

Our Apoſtle having deſcribed the Faith of *Moſes*, with reſpect to his Sufferings with the People of God, in the former Verſes, comes now to inſtance in the Power and Activity of it, with reſpect to their Deliverance in theſe Verſes. Where *Note*, 1. The Spiritual Fortitude which attended his Faith, *He forſook* Egypt, *not fearing the Wrath of the King*; even the Wrath of the greateſt King upon the Earth is to be diſregarded if it lyes againſt our Duty to God. *Note* 2. The Reaſon or Ground of this his Fortitude and Courage, *He endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; that is, he ſaw him by Faith whom he could not ſee by Senſe; he ſaw him in his Omnipreſence, Power, and Faithfulneſs, and had a Fixed Truſt in him at all Times, and on all Occaſions. Learn hence, That there is nothing inſuperable to Faith whilſt it can keep a clear View of the Power of God, and the Promiſe of God. *Note* 3. The Commendation of *Moſes*'s Faith from a due Obſervation of a Double Ordinance of Worſhip, namely, the *Paſſover, and the Sprinkling of Blood.* As to the former, *Moſes*'s Faith in keeping the Paſſover had reſpect to its Divine Inſtitution to the Command for its Perpetual Obſervance, to the Sacramental Nature of it, to the Myſtical or Typical Signification of it. Hence Learn, That a Vigorous and Lively Exerciſe of Faith is always required unto the Right and Due Celebration of a Sacramental Ordinance; *By Faith he kept the Paſſover*, it follows,--- *and the Sprinkling of Blood.* This was a Temporary Ordinance, an Obſervation annex'd to the Firſt Celebration of the Paſſover, not repeated afterwards: The Sprinkling of the Blood on the Side-poſts of their Houſes was a Token that the Deſtroying Angel ſhould paſs over thoſe Houſes, and none ſhould be deſtroy'd in them: But this Rite, tho' it ceas'd with the Firſt Paſſover, yet it abides for ever in its Myſtical Signification; God hereby teaching us, that unleſs we are ſprinkled with the Blood of Chriſt, our Paſchal Lamb, no other Priviledge can ſecure us from the Diſpleaſure of God, and Everlaſting Deſtruction; *By Faith he kept the Paſſover, and Sprinkling of Blood*, Ver. 28. *Note* 4. A farther Inſtance of the Power and Efficacy of *Moſes*'s Faith in paſſing through the Red Sea, *V.* 29. probably he entred firſt into the Sea at the Head of the People himſelf, both to conduct them, and to encourage them; the Waters doubtleſs were rais'd to a very great Heighth on both Sides of them; and though they were a Wall unto them, yet it was a Mighty Act of Faith to put themſelves between ſuch Walls as were ready every Moment to fall upon them, had they not been under an Almighty Reſtraint. Learn hence, That Faith will overcome all Fears and Dangers, and find a Way through a Sea of Difficulties, under the Call, and at the Command, of God. But how came it to paſs that the *Egyptians* going in the ſame Path thro' the Red Sea were drowned, in which the *Iſraelites* were preſerved? *Anſ.* The *Egyptians* entring in was an Act of Preſumption, the *Iſraelites* was an Act of Faith. God commanded the *Iſraelites* to go through; now as Faith gives Courage to obey God in Difficult, ſo it gives Encouragement to hope that Safety ſhall evermore accompany Duty.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compaſſed about ſeven days.

After the Faith of *Moſes* and the *Iſraelites* at the Red Sea, we have here the Faith of *Joſhua* and the *Iſraelites* before *Jericho* recorded and related: *Jericho* was a Walled and Well-fenced City, and a Frontier Town, that kept them from entring into *Canaan.* God commanded them not to fight, but to walk; to go round the City Seven Days, and he would give them an unexpected Entrance into it: They believe and obey, and the Succeſs was according to their Deſire; *By Faith the Walls of* Jericho *fell down*, &c. Here *Note*, 1. The Grace exerciſed, *Faith*; they believed God upon his Word, they enter *Canaan* at this Frontier Town; God remembers his Promiſe, and diſappoints not the Faith and Expectation of his People. *Note* 2. The Readineſs and Exactneſs of the Peoples Obedience, they compaſſed the Town ſo many Days, they do what God commands, and no more; here is no Mount rais'd, no Engine planted, no Sword drawn; they only walk, not fight. Doubtleſs the Men of *Jericho* made themſelves merry at this Sight, and ſaid to one another, What, will theſe Men beat down our City with their Eyes? Will they conquer us only by gazing upon us? And farther, as the Army only muſt encompaſs the City, ſo muſt the Prieſt blow with Rams-horns, a Contemptible Means. Had they made uſe of the Silver Trumpets of the Sanctuary that had been a Good Ground to hope for Succeſs, they being the Symbols and Sacred Signs of God's Preſence with them; but verily Trumpets of Rams-horns ſeem'd more fit to move Laughter than to do Execution: Yet aſſuredly no Ram of Iron could have been ſo forcible for Battery as theſe Rams-horns when God had appointed them. 'Tis the Praiſe of Omnipotency oft-times to work by Improbabilities. *Note* 3. The Event and Succeſs which follow'd their Faith, and accompanied their Obedience, *the Walls of* Jericho *fell down.* Nothing can ſtand before the Power of God, and the Faith of his People. If we will believe God's Promiſes, and execute his Commands, we need no Shifts or Artifices, no Power or Policy, of our own to work Deliverance for us. Learn hence, That when Faith makes uſe of the Means preſcrib'd by God, tho' it cannot diſcern what Influence the Means can have unto the End aimed at, yet the Iſſue and Event ſhall certainly be according to God's Appointment, and Faith's Expectation; *By Faith the Walls of* Jericho *fell down, after*, &c.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the ſpies with peace.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon ſpoken of, *Rahab*, a *Gentile*, an *Amorite*, an *Harlot*, who kept a Victualling-houſe in *Jericho*, and ſo was both *Harlot* and *Hoſteſs*, defiled both in Body and Mind. with Idolatry and Adultery. 2. What is ſpoken of her? She believed; *By Faith Rahab*, &c. She was converted to God before the Spies came to her, by what ſhe had heard of him, and his Mighty Works. Behold here a Bleſſed Inſtance! 1. Of the Sovereignty and Freedom of God's Grace. 2. Of the Power and Efficacy of Divine Grace in calling and converting a Perſon given up by her own Choice to the Vileſt of Sins, even to the Ravings of Luſt; but no Sinner nor Sin is to be deſpaired of in whoſe Cure Sovereign Grace is engaged. *Obſerve* 3. The Effect and Fruit of her Faith, *ſhe received the Spies with Peace*; that is, entertain'd them ſafely, concealed them, gave them Intelligence, expoſed herſelf to Danger in the Conveyance of them; an Eminent Fruit, a Special Evidence, and a high Demonſtration, of her Faith. Indeed ſhe told an Officious Lie; but God pardoned it, and the Apoſtle here make no mention of it; the Holy Ghoſt lays, as it were, the Finger upon the Scar, and covers it out of Sight, contrary to the Practice of the Malignant World, who overlook all the

Good, and reflect only upon the Evil of an Action; whereas God take Notice of the Good, but paſſes by the Evil. *Obſerv.* 4. The Benefit and Advantage ſhe receiv'd by her Faith, ſhe *periſhed not*; that is, when the Incredulous and Idolatrous People of *Jericho* were deſtroy'd, ſhe and her Family were preſerved. From the whole learn, 1. That God is ready to ſhew Wonderful Mercy to Penitent Sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him, how great ſoever their Sins have formerly been. Learn 2. That True Faith, wherever it is, will ſhew itſelf by ſome Eminent Effect, and Notable Fruits of it. Learn 3. That the Rewards of Faith are Excellent, and truly Glorious: As ſhe was preſerved from the Common Ruin at *Jericho*, ſo ſhall all Believers be ſaved from that Wrath and Deſtruction which ſhall come e'er long upon the Impenitent and Unbelieving Word.

32 And what ſhall I more ſay? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Sampſon, and *of* Jephthae, *of* David alſo and Samuel, and *of* the prophets: 33 Who through faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raiſed to life again: ——

In theſe and the following Verſes our Apoſtle ſums up the remaining Teſtimonies which he might have produced, to ſhew the great Things which Faith had aſſiſted Perſons to do, and alſo enabled them to ſuffer the Hardeſt and moſt Terrible Things that could be encounter'd with. In the Verſes now before us an Account is given us of the great Things of all Sorts which Faith has enabled to do; particularly, it was Faith that made them fearleſs, whom God raiſed up in the Days of the Judges to conflict with the Enemies of the Church. It was Faith that aſſiſted them in the Combat, and render'd victorious in the Conflict. 'Twas Faith render'd *Gideon* ſucceſsful over the *Midianites*, *Barak* over the *Canaanites*, *Sampſon* over the *Philiſtines*, *Jephthae* over the *Amorites*, *David* over the *Jebuſites* and *Moabites*. 'Twas Faith in the Promiſe of God that made made them Couragious, and render'd them Victorious. There is nothing ſo great, ſo difficult, or ſeemingly inſuperable, that ſhould hinder us from acting Faith in all Things, even Things more great and excellent than the Conqueſt of Earthly Kingdoms. *Obſerve* next, Our Apoſtle having enumerated the Perſons believing, he now reckons up the Noble Acts and Honourable Atchievements of their Faith. *Through Faith they ſubdued Kingdoms*; ſo did *Joſhua* ſubdue all the Kingdoms in *Canaan*, and *David* all the Kingdoms about it, *viz. Moab*, *Ammon*, *Edom*, *Syria*, and the *Philiſtines*: Theſe were ſubdued by Faith, becauſe what they did was in Obedience to God's Command; and in the Accompliſhment of his Promiſes, for he had given all thoſe Kingdoms by Promiſe to the *Iſraelites* before they were ſubdued by them. Thus are they ſaid to ſubdue Kingdoms by Faith. Yet *Note*, That they made uſe of all other Heroick Vertues beſides Faith, Courage, Valour, Military Skill, and Military Stratagems. Faith excites all Graces and Vertues, and and puts them in Motion. *Wrought Righteouſneſs.* They executed the Judgments of God on the Enemies of the Church, and adminiſtred Juſtice impartially to all that were under their Rule and Government; and this Working Righteouſneſs is a Fruit of Faith, for Unbelief is the Cauſe of all the Injuſtice and Oppreſſion that is in the World. *Obtained Promiſes*; that is, the Good Things promiſed; ſo did *Abraham* by Faith obtain a Promiſed Son, *Joſhua* a Promiſed *Canaan*, *David* a Promiſed Kingdom; but there was a great Space of Time between the Promiſe and the Performance, which put their Faith ſometimes hard to it. *Stopped the Mouths of Lions*; thus *Daniel*, ch. 6. *becauſe he believed in his God*, ver. 23. And the Faith which heretofore ſtopped the Mouth of Lions, can ſtop the Rage of the moſt Savage Oppreſſors and Perſecutors whenever God pleaſed. *Quenched the Violence of Fire*; ſo did the Three Childrens Faith, *Dan.* 3. *Not a Hair of their Head was ſinged*; they knew not which Way God would deliver them, but they committed themſelves to the Omnipotency and Sovereignty of God in the Diſcharge of their Duty, with a full Perſwaſion that one Way or other he would deliver them. *Eſcaped the Edge of the Sword*; as did *David* the Sword of *Goliah* and *Saul*, though ſometimes his Fear prevail'd that he ſhould one Day periſh by the Sword of *Saul*. Fear may be in Caſes of Danger, and yet Faith at the ſame Time have the Principal Conduct of the Soul; by Faith *David* eſcaped the Edge of the Sword; ſo did the *Jews* the Sword of *Haman*, and *Elijah* the Sword of *Jezabel*. *Out of Weakneſs were made Strong*; ſome apply this to *Gideon* and his Three Hundred Men, *Judg.* 7. 15. others to *Hezekiah*, who by the Power of Faith was in a Wonderful Manner recover'd and reſtor'd from a Deſperate Sickneſs to Perfect Health, *Iſa.* 38. *Waxed Valiant in Fight*; ſo did *Joſhua*, *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Jephthae*, and *David*, who through Faith in the Promiſe, and of the Preſence of God with them, feared neither the Number nor Strength of their Enemies. *David* often declares that *God girded him with Strength to the Battle, and taught his Hands to war, and his Fingers to fight; ſo that though an Hoſt encamped againſt him yet his Heart was not afraid. Turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens*; thoſe *Aliens* were the Heathens and Idolaters, *Philiſtines and Midianites*, who were Enemies to *Iſrael*, and to the God of *Iſrael*, and they made them fly, and turn their Backs; for as they fought for God out of a Principle of Faith, ſo God fought for them according to the Faithfulneſs of his Promiſe, which was the Ground of their Confidence and Courage. *Women received their Dead raiſed to Life again*; this is applied to the Widow of *Zarephah*, and the *Shunamite*, 2 *Kings* 4. 36. 1 *Kings* 17. 23. They were raiſed by the Prophet's Faith, and receiv'd by their Mothers when rais'd with Joy and Thankfulneſs. Theſe Ten Inſtances did the Apoſtle ſelect and chuſe out of many to give of the great Things that had been done thro' Faith, thereby to aſſure the *Hebrews*, and us with them, that there is nothing too hard or difficult for Faith to effect when it is ſet on Work, and manag'd according to the Power of God.

35 —— And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better reſurrection. 36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover of bonds and impriſonments. 37 They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword: they wandred about in ſheep-skins and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy,) they wandred in deſerts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes acquainted the *Hebrews* with the great Things which Faith enabled the Old Teſtament Saints to do, he now lays before them an Account of the hard and difficult Things which Faith enabled them to ſuffer: And here he reckons up the Sharpeſt and Bittereſt Sufferings that Humane Nature perhaps can be expos'd to; but to do the greateſt Things, and to ſuffer the hardeſt, is all one to Faith; Faith ſtands ready for both as God ſhall call. *Obſerve* here in general, That the Evils enumerated are of ſuch Various Sorts and Kinds as to comprize every Thing that may befal Believers on the Account of their Chriſtian Profeſſion: Do we meet with Temptations, Scorns, Mockings, Scourgings, Bonds, Impriſonment, yea, Death itſelf, by all Sorts of Tortures and Extremities? This is our Encouragement, that others in the Cauſe of God have undergone them, and been carried victoriouſly through them; but the Particulars in this little Book of Martyrs follow.

Others were tortured, not for accepting Deliverance: In this Paſſage, and ſeveral others here following, the Apoſtle is concluded to refer to the Story in the *Maccabees*, which tho' written after the Cloſing of the Canon of the Scripture, when there was no Extraordinary Prophet in the Church, yet the Matters of Fact were then freſh in Memory, and are here alluded to, particularly *Eleazer*, 2 *Mac.* 6. 28. who was beaten to death when he had been perſwaded and allured to accept Deliverance by tranſgreſſing the Law; and alſo the Mother and her Seven Sons, they expected *a better Reſurrection*, better than what their Perſecutors offer'd them, even a Glorious Reſurrection of their Bodies at the laſt Day. *Others had Trials of Cruel Mockings*, as *Micajah*, 1 Kin. 22. 24. and others, *and Scourgings*, as *Jeremiah*, chap. 20. 2. and 37. 15. *alſo Bonds and Impriſonments*, as *Joſeph* in *Egypt*, and *Jeremy* in the Dungeon; ſome were *ſtoned*, as *Zacharias* the

Son of *Jehojada*, 2 *Chron.* 24. 21. others *ſawn aſunder*, as *Iſaiah*, under the Tyranny of *Manaſſeh*; others were *tempted* with fair Promiſes and great Rewards, but refuſing, were *ſlain with the Sword*. Learn hence, That Torments in the Caſe of Religion have been a very old Invention of the Devil and the World; and they have placed great Hopes of prevailing by them, but no Inſtruments of Cruelty, no Endeavours of Hell, ſhall ever prevail againſt the Faith of God's Elect. *They wandred about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, Deſtitute, Afflicted, Tormented*. This ſome refer to *Elijah*, who was Deſtitute, and Fed by Ravens, 1 *Kings* 17. 4. But it has been the Portion of many of God's faithful Servants to be driven from their Habitations, ſometimes by the Cruelty of the Laws, ſometimes by Force and Violence. *Of whom the World was not worthy*; that is, the Men of the World, they think the Saints of God not worthy to live amongſt them; whereas the World is not *worthy of ſuch* Excellent Company, and therefore as ſoon as their Work is done God removes them. Learn hence, 1. That God's Eſteem of his People is never the leſs becauſe of their outward Sufferings and Calamities, whatever the World judgeth of them; they eſteem them the Filth of the World, and the Off-ſcouring of all Things, but God is of another Mind. Learn 2. Let the World think as highly and as proudly of itſelf as it pleaſes, God thinks it at all Times, but eſpecially when it perſecutes his People, baſe, and unworthy of their Society. *They wandred in Deſarts and Mountains*. Behold here the State and Condition of ſome of the Servants of the Living God, who when driven from all inhabited Places, took up their Lodgings in *Deſarts* and *Mountains*, in *Dens* and *Caves of the Earth*. Learn hence, That oft-times it is much better, and more ſafe, for the Saints of God to be in a Wilderneſs among the Beaſts of the Field, than in a Savage World, inflamed by the Devil into Rage and Perſecution.

39 And theſe all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promiſe:

That is, all the forementioned Scripture Saints, with others that lived from the beginning of the World, and the firſt giving out of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, *Gen.* 3. 15. all and every one of theſe obtained *a good Report through Faith*, that is, a good Teſtimony that they pleaſed God; nevertheleſs they received not the Promiſe, that is, the actual Exhibition of the Promiſe; *Chriſt*, the promiſed *Meſſiah*. The Promiſe they had, but not the Thing promiſed; this was not in their Days exhibited; *Chriſt* was not then come in the Fleſh. This Promiſe was made by God to the Elders from the beginning, but not actually accompliſhed until the Fulneſs of Time. Learn hence, That the Old Teſtament Saints had from the beginning the Promiſe from God concerning the Exhibition of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh for the Redemption of the World, which Promiſe they were perſwaded of the Truth of, embraced it with deſire, longing for the actual Accompliſhment of it, and thus enjoyed the Benefit of it as well as we.

40 God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect

The better Thing here ſpoken of is the coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh. Lord, what were we? And how were we better than they, that this better Thing ſhould be reſerved for us? They ſaw the Promiſe afar off, we enjoy it at Hand, *Jucundius eſt ſpectare quam expectare bonum: That they without us ſhould not be made Perfect*; without us, is as much as without the Things which are actually exhibited unto us. God never intended or deſigned that the Infant-Condition of the Church ſhould be made perfect before the Exhibition of *Chriſt*; that is, that they ſhould be juſtified and ſaved by any Sacrifices or Services done in their Time, but by looking to the Sacrifice and Satisfaction of *Chriſt*, whereby both they and we are perfected. Learn hence, That it is *Chriſt* alone who was to give Perfection and Conſummation to his Church. All the outward Glorious Worſhip of the Old Teſtament, tho' it pleaſed God, yet had no Perfection in it; this God reſerved for our Times, *that they without us ſhould not be made Perfect*.

CHAP. XII.

This Chapter contains an Application of the Doctrine delivered and confirmed in the foregoing Chapter, in which our Apoſtle having preſt the Chriſtian Hebrews *to* Perſeverance *in the* Faith, *and* Patience *under the heavieſt Sufferings for the Sake of their Holy* Profeſſion, *by laying before them ſeveral Inſtances of the Old Teſtament Saints, who by the help of their Faith did ſuch great Services for God, and endured ſuch great Sufferings from the World; he comes now to reinforce his Exhortation to Patience and Conſtancy in the Cauſe of* Chriſt, *from the Teſtimony before inſiſted on, with new additional Motives, Encouragements and Directions, in the Chapter before us, in which he thus beſpeaks them.*

1 WHerefore, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of Witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing we who are now called forth to ſuffer have before us ſo many Inſtances of the Faithful, who like a Cloud of Witneſſes have gone before us, and by the help of their Faith conquered all Impediments that lay in the Way of their Salvation, let us take Encouragement from them to quit our ſelves like Men; and as Runners in a Race, let us caſt off all worldly Incumbrances which will intangle us, and avoid all Sin, eſpecially a Boſom Corruption, which eaſily beſets us, and as eaſily overcomes us, and let us run with Patience and Perſeverance the Race of Chriſtianity ſet before us. *Note* 1. That the Old Teſtament Saints are here called *Witneſſes*, *a Cloud of Witneſſes*, and a Cloud *encompaſſing us*. They are Witneſſes of this grand Truth, namely, That Faith will carry Believers ſafely through all that they may be called to do, and ſuffer, in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel; they are called *a Cloud of Witneſſes*, partly for their Number, there being a great Multitude of them; partly for their Direction, there being a leading Vertue in them. As there was a Cloud that went before the Children of *Iſrael* to lead them in the Wilderneſs, ſo this Cloud of Witneſſes leads us up and down the Wilderneſs of this World in the darkeſt Night of our Sorrows and Sufferings; and they are ſaid to *encompaſs us*, becauſe the Scripture every where encompaſſes us with them, ſo that we can be in no ſuffering State or Condition, be it never ſo ſad, but we may turn our Eye, and behold the Face of ſome or other of theſe Worthies looking upon us, and encouraging of us to Patience and Perſeverance; and therefore to faint in our Profeſſion, whilſt we are encompaſſed with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, is a great Aggravation of our Sin. Learn hence, That it is a ſpecial Honour which God puts upon his Saints departed, eſpecially ſuch as ſuffered and died for the Truth, that even after their Death they are Witneſſes to Faith and Obedience in all Generations. *We are compaſſed about with ſo great a Cloud of Witneſſes.*

1 ——— Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us, 2 Looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of *our* faith: ———

Note here, 1. Chriſtianity is a Race, a Race ſet before us by God, and it is our Duty faithfully and perſeveringly to run it. *Note* 2. That in order to the running of this Race all Impediments muſt be laid aſide; *Let us lay aſide every Weight, and the Sin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us*. By *every Weight* is generally underſtood the World, its Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, Preferments, which oft-times are a peculiar Obſtruction to Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity; this dead Weight muſt be *laid aſide*, by mortifying our Hearts and Affections towards the World; for it is Inordinate Love to theſe Things which give them their Weight and Incumbrance: Where this Grace is in its due Exerciſe, the World cannot influence the Mind into any Diſorder, nor make it unready for its Race. By the *Sin which doth eaſily beſet us*, ſome underſtand all Sin in general, others a Boſom-beloved Sin in ſpecial, others Timerouſneſs and Fear in particular: All Softneſs and Tenderneſs, with reſpect to Suffering, is the Original Word rendred *eaſily beſet us*. Some think there is an Alluſion to the long Garments worn in the Eaſtern Countries, which dangling about a Man's Heels, unfit him for running a Race. As a Man that has a Burthen on his Back, or a long Garment hanging down to his Heels, is altogether unfit to run a Race, ſo unready are they for the Spiritual Race who are entangled with the Love of the World, or with any ſinful Compliances. *Note* 3. That Patience is a Grace very neceſſary to enable a Perſon to run the Race of Chriſtianity which God has ſet before him. *Let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us.* Such is the inevitableneſs and unavoidableneſs of the Chriſtian's Trials, ſuch the multiplicity and variety of them, ſuch the long Duration and Continuance of them, that there can be no Perſeverance without Patience. *Note* 4. The Way diſcovered, and the Means declared, how, and by which, we may attain this Grace of Patience, namely, by *looking unto Jeſus.* Learn thence, That looking unto, and beholding of, *Chriſt* in his Patience, is a notable Means to excite and ſtir us up to the practice and performance of our Duty. *Note* 5. The ſpecial Title given here to *Chriſt*, he is ſtiled *the Author and Finiſher of Faith* in his People; he is deſervedly ſtiled the *Author* of our Faith, becauſe his Holy Doctrine is the Foundation of our Faith, becauſe his Holy Ordinances are the ſpecial Means of Faith, and his Holy Spirit the Producer of Faith in the Souls of his People, and his Precious Blood the Purchaſer of Faith, and all Grace for his People. And he is the *Finiſher* of our Faith too, as well as the Author of it, inaſmuch as he has by his Promiſe engaged to perfect what he has begun, *Phil.* 1. 6. *Being Confident of this very Thing, that he that hath begun a good Work in you will perform it*, &c. And inaſmuch as he doth by his Interceſſion plead with the Father for the Believer's Preſervation in Faith, and Perſeverance in Holineſs, unto the End. *I have prayed that thy Faith fail not*, Luke 22. 32.

2 ——Who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Apoſtle having propounded the Example of ſuffering Saints before, to provoke them to Patience and Conſtancy under their Tribulations, he propounds now the Example of a Suffering Saviour, and bids them *conſider him.* *Qualis ſit*, compare his Sufferings with your own; conſider who he was, and who you are; was not he the Son of God? Had not he all Glory and Power in his Hand? Yet he *endured*, &c. conſider him therefore. Learn thence, That the frequent Conſideration of *Chriſt* in his Sufferings is the beſt Means to keep up Faith, and encourage Patience, under our own Sufferings. *Obſerve* 2. How our Apoſtle particularly enumerates the Sufferings which our Lord *Jeſus* underwent; he *endured* the *Contradiction of Sinners*, that is, the great Oppoſition made to his Doctrine, the Slander caſt upon his Miracles, the Indignities offered to his Perſon, the Malicious and Unwearied Attempts againſt his Life. Next he *endured* the Pain of the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame of the Croſs. Pain and Shame are the Two conſtituent Parts of all outward Sufferings, and they were both Eminent in the Death of the Croſs; no Death more cruel and painful, no Death more opprobrious and diſgraceful; and never did theſe appear in any Perſon's Death to that Degree of Extremity as in the Death of *Chriſt*, yet he patiently endured them with an Holy Compoſure of Soul, without reviling the Villainous *Jews*, or threatning them with that Vengeance and Deſtruction, which it was in his Power to have brought upon them every Moment. Lord! Never any Example of patient Suffering like to thine, nor can any equal to it be given in Humane Nature. Learn thence, That the manner of *Chriſt's* enduring Sufferings, particularly Pain and Shame, ought to be continually before us, that God may in ſome meaſure be glorified by us, according thereunto when we are called into a ſuffering Condition. *Obſerve* 3. What it was that carried *Chriſt* through his Sufferings, it was *the Joy that was ſet before him*; that is, ſay ſome, his Glorious Exaltation. Rather the Proſpect of that Glory which would redound to God and his Church by his patient Suffering; the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind, were now ſet before him, and he valued them above Life, Honour, Reputation and Eaſe, and every thing that was dear unto him. Accordingly it is called his Pleaſure, *Iſa.* 53. 10. Learn hence, That herein is *Chriſt* our great Example, in that he was influenced and acted in all that he did and ſuffered by a conſtant reſpect to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of his People. *For the Joy that was ſet before him he endured the Croſs*, &c. *Note* 4. The Reward of our Lord's patient Sufferings declared, he is therefore *ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.* God's Throne implies his Majeſty and Power; the Right Hand of his Throne implies the higheſt Honour, Dignity, and Power, next to God. *Chriſt*'s Advancement above Angels, and all Creatures, is hereby intimated; this Glorious Eſtate was the great Reward of his Sufferings; *he became Obedient unto Death*, therefore God thus highly exalted him. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Advantage we ſhall reap and receive by eying *Chriſt* in, and imitating his Patience under, all our Sufferings, it will prevent our being *wearied, and faint in our Minds.* Learn hence, That ſuch Sufferings may befal us in the Way of our Profeſſion as may cauſe us to faint, and grow weary. 2. That when we do begin to faint, and grow weary under Sufferings, it is our Duty to look unto *Jeſus*, and conſider him as an Example of the greateſt Patience and Conſtancy of Mind. *Look unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of your Faith, and conſider him who endured—— that ye be not weary, nor faint.*

4 Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.

Here the Apoſtle ſubjoins another Reaſon why the *Hebrews* ſhould be reconciled to a ſuffering Condition, becauſe what they had already ſuffered was but a Flea-bite, compared with what *Chriſt*, and the forementioned *Cloud of Witneſſes*, ſuffered. He, and they, reſiſted unto Blood, which you never yet did. *Ye have not yet reſiſted unto Blood*, &c. By *Blood* is meant Death, and loſs of Life. Though they had reſiſted Bravely, and ſuffered Manfully, yet their Lives were ſafe. Learn hence, 1. That ſuch as are engaged in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, have no Security, but that they may be called forth to the utmoſt Sufferings, even to the Sealing of it with their Blood. Learn 2. That whatever befals us on this ſide Blood is to be lookt upon as a Fruit of Divine Tenderneſs and Mercy towards us. Learn 3. It is highly diſhonourable to faint in the Cauſe of *Chriſt*, and the Goſpel, under leſſer Sufferings, when we know there are greater to be undergone by our ſelves and others on the ſame Account. Learn 4. That it is a Noble Struggle to reſiſt even unto Blood, in oppoſing Sin, and ſtriving againſt it; both in ſtriving againſt the Sin which others commit, and in ſtriving againſt the Sin which others by Promiſes or Threatnings would tempt us to commit. O how Honourable a Warfare is it to be engaged againſt ſuch an Enemy as Sin is!——*Striving againſt Sin.*

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto Children,——

As if he had ſaid, by growing weary and faint in your Minds, you will plainly ſhew and evidently declare that you have forgotten that Exhortation which God gives, *Prov.* 3. The want of a diligent Conſideration, and due Remembrance of God's Promiſes recorded in Scripture, for our Encouragement unto Duty, and Support under Difficulties, is very Sinful, and of dangerous Conſequence, unto our Souls. *Ye have forgotten the Exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you.*——

5 ——My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

Note here, 1. A ſweet and endearing Compellation, *My Son.* Learn thence, that good Men, when under the greateſt Trials, and heavieſt Afflictions, are God's Sons; he calls them Sons, and he deals with them as with Sons. *Note* 2. The Nature of the Saints Afflictions declared; not Judgments, but Chaſtiſements, and Fatherly Rebukes; the Original Word ſignifies ſuch a Correction as a Father gives his Child for his Inſtruction, and bringing him to a Senſe of his Duty. Learn thence, that all the Afflictions which God lays upon his Children, they are not the Effects of his Vindictive Anger, but the Fruits and Effects of his Paternal Love. *Note* 3. A cautionary Direction given againſt Two very dangerous Extreams in the Time of Affliction, namely, deſpiſing Correction, and fainting under it: It is the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavour, of all the Children of God, when under his Fatherly Hand, to take Care that they neither deſpiſe his Chaſtiſements, nor faint under them. When God has taken away one of our Comforts, to ſay, let him take all if he will; if my Children muſt die, let them die; if my Eſtate muſt go, let it go: This is to deſpiſe. God cannot bear it to ſee us bear his Hand thus lightly. The other Extream is Fainting; if when Goods are taken away the Heart is taken away; and when Relations die the Spirit of a Perſon dies with them. *Deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint*, &c.

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth.

A Reaſon is given in theſe Words why we ſhould not faint under Divine Chaſtiſements, becauſe God chaſtneth every one whom he loves. Here *Note*, That Love is Antecedent unto Chaſtning, and that Chaſtning is Conſequential unto Love. *Note* 2. That Divine Love and Fatherly Chaſtnings are inſeparable; *whom he loveth*, that is, whomſoever he loveth, *he chaſtneth*, none goes free. *Note* 3. That no Perſon then has any reaſon to complain of his Portion of Fatherly Chaſtiſements, ſeeing it is the conſtant Way and Manner of God's dealing with his Children. *Note* 4. That in and under all our Chaſtiſements the Reſignation of our ſelves to the Sovereign Pleaſure, and Infinite Wiſdom of God, is the only Means to preſerve us from Fainting and Wearineſs.

7 If ye endure chaſtning, God dealeth with you as with ſons: for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons.

Obſerve 1. He doth not ſay, If ye be chaſtiſed, but *if ye endure Chaſtiſement, God dealeth with you as with Sons*; if ye endure them with Faith and Patience, with Submiſſion and Perſeverance, ſo as not to Faint under them. Learn hence, That a patient Endurance of Chaſtiſements is of great Price in the Sight of God, as well as of ſingular Uſe and Advantage unto us. Afflictions and Chaſtiſements are no Pledges or Aſſurance of our Adoption, but when and where they are endured with Patience. *Obſerve* farther from thoſe Words, *What Son is he whom the Father chaſtneth not?* 1. That every one of God's Sons, more or leſs, ſtands in need of his Fatherly Chaſtiſements. 2. That God is very careful, as a wiſe and tender Father, to Correct and Chaſten all his Children. 3. That God in correcting of his Children dealeth with them as with Sons; he is the World's Sovereign, but the Believer's Father: As he is the Governour of the World he treats Men righteouſly in his Judgments; as he is the Father of Believers he treats them graciouſly in Afflictions. *Obſerve* again from thoſe Words, *If ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers*, (that is, all Sons are Partakers,) that all true Children are under God's Fatherly Diſcipline, and all that are not under his Diſcipline are not his Children; *then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons*. Learn hence, 1. That God's Family, or Viſible Church in this World, has ſome Baſtards in it; Sons that may have Gifts and outward Enjoyments, but are not Heirs, and have no Right to the Heavenly Inheritance. Learn 2. That this is a great Evidence of it that they are not the genuine Sons of God, becauſe they go unchaſtiſed, not that they are altogether without Affliction; for they are in Trouble like other Men, but they are not ſenſible of Divine Chaſtiſement in their Afflictions; they do not receive them, bear them, and improve them, as ſuch, but are impaired by their Afflictions, rather than improved by them; they come Canker'd out of the Furnace, and Leprous out of *Jordan*. Affliction that ſhould refine them from their Droſs, and purifie them from their Filth, boils their Scum and Impurity more into them. Learn laſtly, That a joyous State of Freedom from Affliction is ſuch as we ought to watch over with great Jealouſie and Fear, leſt it ſhould be a leaving us out of the Diſcipline of the Family of God. Not that we may deſire Afflictions as ſuch, much leſs excruciate and torment our ſelves; but we may pray that we may not want any Pledge of our Adoption, leaving the ordering and diſpoſal of all Things to the Will of God.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave *them* reverence: ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection unto the father of ſpirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chaſtned *us* after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.

Theſe Words are a freſh Argument to perſwade Chriſtians to a patient enduring of Divine Chaſtiſements: The Argument is drawn from the leſs to the greater; thus, if our earthly Parents chaſtned us only a few Days, and after their own Pleaſure, and yet we are ſubject to them, how much more ought we to be ſubject to God our Heavenly Father, who chaſtens us for our Profit, that we may be Partakers of his Holineſs. *Note* here, 1. Earthly Parents do and may chaſtiſe the Children of their Fleſh, and they ought to reverence them for ſo doing, and pay a reverential Submiſſion to their Paternal Chaſtiſements. *Note* 2. That the Motive of, and Rule which Parents too often follow in correcting of their Children, is their own Will and Pleaſure; they have frequently a greater regard to their own Paſſions than to their Childrens Advantage, and correct oftner in Humour than with Reaſon; erring ſometimes in the Matter, ſometimes in the Manner, ſometimes in the Meaſure, of their Corrections. *Note* 3. That great is the Difference between Divine and Paternal Chaſtiſements. 1. In their Author, one is the Father of our Fleſh, the other of our Souls and Spirits; they are the immediate Product of his Power, which is a Fundamental Reaſon for our patient Submiſſion to God in and under all Afflictions. 2. In their End, the one for their own Pleaſure, the other for his Childrens Profit, to make them Partakers of his Holineſs, by Renovation, Sanctification, and Mortification; the carrying on of theſe Things in us is that which God deſigns in all his Chaſtiſements. Learn hence, That we can have no greater Pledge and Aſſurance of Divine Love in Afflictions than this, that God by them brings us nearer to himſelf, and makes us more like himſelf; if under Divine Chaſtiſements we find no increaſe of Holineſs, they are utterly loſt, and we have nothing but the Trouble and Sorrow of them. *Note* laſtly, The Duty we owe to God the Father of Spirits, and that is *Subjection*, together with the Benefit and Advantage of it; by being in *Subjection to the Father of Spirits* we ſhall *live*. Now this *Subjection* unto God conſiſts in an Acquieſcency in his Right and Sovereignty to do what he will with his own, in an Acknowledgment of his Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs in all his Dealings with us, in a mighty Senſe of his Care and Love, and in an entire Reſignation of our ſelves to his Holy Will in all Things. And behold the Advantage and Benefit of this Subjection to God in our Chaſtiſements, we ſhall *live* a Spritual Life on Earth, and an Eternal Life in Heaven. The rebellious Son under the Law, that refuſed Subjection to his Earthly Parent was ſtoned to Death; ſee *Deut*. 21. 18. and died without Mercy; but they who yield Subjection to God in their Chaſtiſements ſhall *live*, and not die.

11 Now no chaſtning for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words ſeems to obviate an Objection againſt a Compliance with his Exhortation, to bear Divine Chaſtnings with Silence and Submiſſion, and this is taken from the Trouble and Sorrow wherewith Chaſtiſement is accompanied. This he takes for granted is ſo, but takes off all the Weight of the Objection, by oppoſing the Benefits of Affliction thereunto. Learn hence, 1. That all Afflictions for the preſent are grievous to the Fleſh, and painful to Human Nature. Learn 2. That though Afflictions are grievous, yet their Fruits are gracious to a Believer. God in his Sovereign Wiſdom doth ſo diſpoſe and manage his Peoples Afflictions, that he makes them end in an happy Fruit, even in the Fruits of Holineſs and Sanctification; and after Affliction has done its Work, and wrought kindly, God comes in with Comfort and Joy, and chearing Cordials follow bitter Phyſick. *Obſerve* farther, How the Benefit of Chaſtiſement is expreſs'd in a Threefold Gradation. Affliction yielded *Fruit*. 'Tis no dead and dry Thing, but this Rod bloſſoms, and brings forth Almonds. The Fruit it yeilds is *the Fruit of Righteouſneſs*, namely, Patience, Submiſſion to the Will of God, Weanedneſs from the World, Mortification of Sin, Purity of Heart, Holineſs of Life, farther Readineſs and greater Fitneſs for Sufferings. Theſe are the ſweet Fruits which God enables his to gather from the ſoure Tree of Affliction. And this Fruit of Righteouſneſs which Affliction yields is *peaceable* Fruit, becauſe it is a Pledge and Evidence of our Peace with God, and becauſe they bring Peace into our own Minds. By theſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs our Hearts are quieted, our Minds compoſed, all Tumults allayed, and we enabled to poſſeſs our Souls in Patience. Oh Happy Fruit of Affliction! Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chaſtiſeſt. *Obſerve* laſtly, Who they are that are Bleſſed with theſe ſpecial Benefits of Afflictions, only thoſe that are *exerciſed* thereby: The Original Word is an Alluſion to thoſe in the publick Games, who ſtrip themſelves naked, and put forth all their Strength for Maſtery. To be exerciſed by Chaſtiſements is to have all our Spiritual Strength put forth, all our Faith and Patience tried to the utmoſt. Learn hence, That a Chriſtian can never find any Benefit in Chaſtiſements, unleſs he be exerciſed by them; that is, unleſs his Graces be ſtirred up by them to an Holy and Conſtant Exerciſe; for hereby alone do they yeild the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. 13 And make ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, ſeeing ſo Glorious Fruits ſpring from ſanctified Afflictions, be not dejected in Mind, nor ſuffer Fear to ſeize upon you, which weakens the Hands, and enfeebles the Knees, and cauſes them to ſmite one againſt another; but be reſolute for God, make ſtrait Paths in the Way of Chriſtianity, not ſtepping once out of it to avoid Perſecution; leſt they who are already *lame* and feeble, the weak and wavering Chriſtians, be diſheartned, and moved by your Example to turn out of the Way; but let them rather by your Conſtancy be confirmed in their Chriſtian Courſe. Learn hence, 1. That in the running of our Spiritual Race we muſt put forth our utmoſt Strength and Activity; but where the Courſe is long, and Difficulties great, and we are apt to grow weary, and deſpond, our *Hands hang down*, and our *Knees* grow *feeble*. Learn 2. That Faintneſs and Wearineſs in Duty, Dejection and Deſpondency as to Succeſs, are great Evils, and of fatal Conſequence unto others, as well as our ſelves; which therefore we muſt with all Intention of Mind watch againſt; *Lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees*. Learn 3. That negligent and careleſs Walking in Time of Proſperity, and Puſilanimity and Weakneſs in Time of Trial, is a great Means of turning aſide thoſe that are Lame and Weak out of the Paths of viſible Holineſs, *leſt that which is Lame be turned out of the Way*. Learn 4. That the Sight and due Conſideration of a Chriſtian's Courage and Conſtancy will tend very much to the healing of the lame and weak Chriſtians whilſt they are in the Way; whoſe Recovery, when quite turned out, will be very difficult, if not impoſſible.---*Let it rather be healed.*

14 Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

Our Apoſtle having now finiſh'd his Exhortation unto patient Perſeverance in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel under all Sufferings and Afflictions, he now proceeds to a Preſcription of Practical Duties incumbent upon Chriſtians at all Times in the daily Courſe of their Converſation: Two of which are contained in this Verſe, namely, *to follow Peace and Holineſs*; the former contains our Duty to Man, the latter our Duty to God. Here *Obſerve*, That both Duties are enjoined in one and the ſame Precept, and alſo with one and the ſame Penalty. *Without which*, that is, without following of both which, without purſuing and endeavouring after both, *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*. Indeed, if a Perſon follows Holineſs, though he cannot obtain Peace, he may ſee God; provided he purſues Peace, and the Fault none of his that he doth not find it: But if he does not purſue Peace, tho' he pretends never ſo much to Holineſs, he cannot be happy; for a Chriſtian muſt be of a peaceable as well as of a pious Converſation. Peace and Holineſs, Peaceableneſs and Purity, are here joined together, and he can neither be happy in this or the next World that puts them aſunder. *Obſerve* further, The manner how Peace and Holineſs muſt be followed, namely, with intenſe Endeavours: The Original Word imports a vehement Purſuit, a Metaphor taken from Huntſmen, who follow the Chaſe, and purſue their Game, tho' it flies before them: If Peace may be had, though it be upon hard Terms, we muſt endeavour to ſecure it; for it can never be bought too dear if it be not purchaſed by Sin and Baſeneſs. A Frame and Diſpoſition of ſeeking Peace with all is eminently ſuited unto the Doctrine and Grace of the Goſpel. A forward Spirit, ready for Strife and Contention, eaſily provoked, and containing long a Senſe of Injuries, is directly contrary to the Spirit and Temper of the Goſpel. *Obſerve* likewiſe, how that Holineſs towards God muſt be accompanied with Peaceableneſs towards Man. It is Evangelical Holineſs which is here required, which muſt be an inward Holineſs, and univerſal Holineſs, a ſincere and real Holineſs, an humble and ſelf-denying Holineſs, a growing and progreſſive Holineſs, a conſtant and perſevering Holineſs, and ſuch a Holineſs towards God as is always accompanied with Righteouſneſs towards Men. *Obſerve* laſtly, The abſolute Neceſſity of Holineſs in order to Eternal Bleſſedneſs; *Without it no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*. The future Sight of God in Glory depends Peremptorily on our preſent Holineſs; not as the Meritorious Cauſe of it, but as a neceſſary Qualification and Preparation for it; and as it is the indiſpenſable Condition of our obtaining of it. The Soul is by Holineſs made meet and fit for the Enjoyment of God in Happineſs, *Col.* 1. 12. Lord! How miſerably miſtaken will they be who expect to ſee God to their Comfort hereafter, who have lived and died in an unholy State here?

15 Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of the grace of God: leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled:

Our Apoſtle having declared what our Duty is with reſpect to our ſelves in the foregoing Verſes; here he acquaints us how much it is our Duty to take Care of, and Watch over, others, to do what in us lyes that none may fall ſhort of the Grace of God; that is, fall from the Grace of God, and the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity: So that it is very plain that Apoſtacy is the Sin here pointed at, their falling back from Chriſtianity to Judaiſm for fear of Perſecution. This is deſervedly called a *Root of Bitterneſs ſpringing up*, according to *Deut.* 29. 18. *A Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood*. Learn hence, 2. That looking diligently unto the good of others, and to prevent their falling into Sin, eſpecially into the Sin of Apoſtacy, is a Duty we are obliged to, by the Light of Nature, and the Royal Law of Love. Learn 1. That the Root of Apoſtacy from God, and the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, may abide inviſibly in and among Eminent Profeſſors of Religion. It is here called a *Root*, becauſe at the beginning it is hidden in the Hearts of Men, and cannot be diſcovered until it ſprings up; and it is called a *Root of Bitterneſs*, becauſe of its obnoxious and poyſonous Qualities, its bitter Effects and Fruits. Learn 3. That there is no Man profeſſing the Goſpel who comes ſhort of the Grace of God but it is by reaſon of himſelf and his own Sin: Unbelief, Negligence and Sloth, are the true Cauſes why ſuch Perſons do fail of the Grace of God; *Looking diligently, leſt any Man fail of the Grace of God.*

16 Leſt there *be* any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.

Our Apoſtle proceeds in theſe Verſes to warn them againſt ſuch Sins as would occaſion their Apoſtacy, and falling from the Grace of God, and they are Fornication and Prophaneneſs; *Leſt there be any Fornicator, or profane Perſon.* Where *Note*, How the Apoſtle puts Fornication and Prophaneneſs together, becauſe they uſually go together; Fornicators, ſuch eſpecially as are habitually ſo, do always grow prophane, and prophane Perſons do ſet light by Fornication; and they are Sins very ſeldom forſaken. Few Fornicators and prophane Perſons do ever come to Repentance. By Fornication underſtand all Conjunction with Women out of Wedlock, be it with Single or Married Perſons. By prophane Perſons underſtand ſuch a mock of Religion, who lightly regard its Promiſes and Threatnings, who deſpiſe or neglect its Worſhip, who ſpeak irreverently of its Concerns. *Note* 2. The Inſtance which the Apoſtle gives of a prophane Perſon in the Perſon of *Eſau*; *Leſt there be any Fornicator or profane Perſon, as Eſau.* The Scripture makes no mention of his Fornication, but the Way whereby he manifeſted his Prophaneneſs is declared, namely, that *for one Morſel of Meat he ſold his Birthright.* Which Birthright had many Priviledges belonging to it, as namely, a double Portion of the paternal Inheritance, a Right of Rule and Government over the Family, Power and Dominion, Dignity and Superiority, belonging to him, but eſpecially the Honour of Prieſthood, all which did belong to the Firſt-born. Add to theſe the Bleſſing which run from *Abraham* in the Patriarchal Line, and was communicated from Father to Son, containing an Incloſure of all Church-Priviledges, and the Preſervation of the promiſed Seed. Now *Eſau* by ſelling his Birthright did vertuouſly renounce his Right unto this Bleſſing, wherein the promiſed Seed and the Church-State were contained, and doing all this upon a ſlight Conſideration, for a Meſs of Pottage, or Morſel of Meat; and in regardleſs Manner, utterly unconcern'd at what he had done, this was his Prophaneneſs; and accordingly the Scripture ſays, *Thus* Eſau *deſpiſ'd his Birthright.* Learn from hence how much it concerns all Perſons not to glory in their outward Priviledges: *Eſau* here was the Firſt-born of *Iſaac*, Circumciſed according to the Law of God, and Partaker in all the Worſhip of God, yet he proved an Outcaſt from the Covenant and Promiſes thereof. *Prophane Eſau.* The 17th Verſe acquaints us with the fruitleſneſs of *Eſau*'s Sorrow for parting with his Birthright, and the unprofitableneſs of his Endeavours in order to the recovery of it, when he would have inherited the Bleſſing *afterwards.* This *afterwards*, ſay ſome, was not leſs than Forty Years, for he ſold his Birthright when he was Young, and when he deſigned the recovery of the Bleſſing *Iſaac* was old; thus long did he live in Sin without any Senſe of it, or Repentance for it; but falling into Diſtreſs, it fills him with Perplexity, and he ſeeks the recovery of the Bleſſing: And herein he was a Type of all Unbelievers, and obſtinate Refuſers of the Grace of *Chriſt.* Learn from his Example, That there is a Time a coming when the prophaneſt Sinners upon Earth will be found upon their Knees, at God's Door, ſeeking, and that earneſtly, with ſtrong Cries and Tears, for the obtaining of that Bleſſing which they now ſinfully undervalue, and ſcornfully deſpiſe. *Afterwards* Eſau *would have inherited the Bleſſing, and ſought it carefully with Tears.* It follows he was *rejected*, that is, by his Father *Iſaac*, and found no Place with him for *Repentance*. *Iſaac* would not change his Mind, nor recall the Bleſſing, which as a Prophet of God he had conferred on *Jacob.* Learn hence then, That ſuch Sinners as now neglect the ſeeking of the Bleſſing in God's Time, have great Reaſon to fear that they ſhall not find it in their own Time, tho' they ſeek it with Tears ſalter than thoſe of *Eſau*'s. Prophane Contemners of the Grace of God ought to fear being excluded from the Mercy of God; and as *Iſaac* did not, God will not, repent or alter his Righteous Sentence upon them. This ſad Event had the Prophaneneſs of *Eſau*, and the like will they meet with who deſpiſe the Grace of God.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, 19 And the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which *voice* they that heard, intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a dart. 21 And ſo terrible was the ſight, *that* Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.)

Our Apoſtle's Deſign being to bring over the *Hebrews* fully from *Judaiſm* to *Chriſtianity*, he enters here upon a Deſcription of both States, ſhewing the Excellency of the one above the other. He deſcribes firſt the Legal State of the Church under the Old Teſtament, and the manner of their Forefathers entring into Covenant with God at Mount *Sinai.* And then he ſets forth the Evangelical-State whereunto they were called, and into which they were entred. In the Verſes now before us he ſets forth the Dread and Terror of the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation; and the Way and Manner how their Forefathers under the Old Teſtament entred into their Church-State; telling them, that they *came to a Mount that might be touched*; that is, to Mount *Sinai*, in the Deſart of *Arabia*, a barren and fruitleſs Place, full of Buſhes and Brambles, but without Water or Food; intimating, That ſuch as are under the Law, in a State of Sin, bring forth no acceptable Fruit unto God; and as there was no Water in the Deſart, but that which the People lived upon was brought out of the Rock, and that Rock was *Chriſt*, it intimates, that from *Chriſt* alone were all their and our Refreſhments. The Law affords none but Thunders from its fiery Mouth, Wrath and a Curſe. Farther, This Mount is ſaid to be *what might be touched*; that is, a ſenſible, carnal, Thing, expoſed to feeling; intimating how low and inferior the giving of the Law was in Compariſon of the Promulgation of the Goſpel, which was from *Heaven.* The Law was given from a *Mount* that might be touched by the Man or Beaſt, tho' if either touch'd it they muſt die, to imitate the Bondage and Fear the People were then in, who might not ſo much as touch the Mountain where were the Signs of God's Preſence: But the Goſpel was promulg'd from *Heaven*, and the Son of God ſent down on purpoſe from thence to plant and propagate it here in the World. The ſecond Thing which the Apoſtle tells them they were come unto was to *Fire that burned.* This Fire that burned on the Mount was a Token of God's Preſence, and a diſtinct Means of filling the People with Dread and Fear. This Fire repreſented the Purity and Holineſs of God's Nature, his Jealouſie and Severity againſt Sin. Thus the Law repreſents to us the Holineſs and Severity of God, with his Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt Sin and Sinners, but there leaves us conſumed without Relief by *Jeſus Chriſt*; unto Fire the Apoſtle adds *Blackneſs, and Darkneſs, and Tempeſt*, which Blackneſs and Darkneſs might be cauſed by thick Clouds and Smoak that covered the Mount. This Darkneſs was a Type of that utter Darkneſs of Hell which the Tranſgreſſors of that Law deſerved, and the Tempeſts and terrible Storms were Emblems and Signs of God's fiery Indignation and fearful Vengeance on the wicked Violaters of his Holy Law, and might alſo point out and ſignifie the Effects of the Law then delivered; namely, to bring the Soul into Darkneſs, that it can ſee no Light, either for its Direction or Conſolation; and it raiſes a Tempeſt in the Mind of diſquieting, perplexing, Thoughts, without revealing or encouraging a Sinner to look out after any Relief, till Chriſt in his Goſpel ſays, *Behold me, Behold me.* It follows, ye are come *to the ſound of the Trumpet.* This was not a real Trumpet, but the ſound of a Trumpet formed in the Air by the Miniſtry of Angels waxing louder and louder, to ſignifie the nearer approach of God; alſo as this Trumpet did ſummon the People to appear before the Lord as a Legiſlative Trumpet, in like Manner there ſhall be a Judicial Trumpet to ſummon the World to appear before *Chriſt* at the great Day. After the ſound of the Trumpet followed *the voice of Words*; that is, the Voice of God in a terrible Manner promulging the Law out of the midſt of the Fire in a Language underſtood by that People. As the Sound of the Trumpet, ſo the Voice of God, was loud, majeſtick, terrible, and like Thunder. *Queſt.* But why was there ſuch vaſt Solemnity uſed at the giving of the Law? *Anſw.* To ſignifie the Majeſty and Authority of him who was the Supream Lawgiver, even the Lord of Heaven and Earth; and that the greater the outward Solemnity was, the greater the inward Impreſſion might be upon the Minds of the People; and to ſignifie, that if the Promulgation of the Law was ſo awful, the Tranſgreſſion of it would be fatal, and the Tranſgreſſors Puniſhment very dreadful. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Event of this Sight and Hearing on the Part of the People, Fear made them deſire that they might hear this Voice no more; and God's Deſign in all was to cauſe them to long for, and look after, that great Prophet *Chriſt Jeſus*, by whom God would ſpeak unto them more comfortably, and by whom they might have Acceſs to the Throne of Grace more freely. *They entreated that the Word ſhould not be ſpoken unto them any more*, becauſe it heightned their Fear and Dread to the utmoſt. Learn from hence, That the Sight and Voice of God will be very dreadful to us; and there will be no Appearance for us before him with Confidence and Peace, unleſs we have an Anſwer in readineſs with us to all the Words of the Law, even all that the Law requires of us; and ſuch as truſt to their own Works and Merits, to anſwer for them, or to any Thing whatſoever, beſides the Blood and Sacrifice, the Mediation and Satisfaction, of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Surety of the New Covenant will find themſelves eternally deceived. The next Evidence the Apoſtle gives of the dreadful Promulgation of the Law, and conſequently of the miſerable State of them that are under its Power, appears in this, that the People *could not endure that which was commanded*; that is, the Severity of that Command, that if a Beaſt touched the Mountain, *it ſhould be ſtoned, or thruſt through with a Dart.* All this was to ſhew the abſolute Inacceſſibleneſs of God in and by the Law, and at what diſtance we ought to keep our ſelves from every Thing that falls under the Curſe of the Law. It is added laſt of all, *That* Moſes *himſelf did exceedingly Fear and Quake.* From whence obſerve, how all Perſons concern'd were brought to an utter Loſs and Diſtreſs at the promulgation and giving of the Law, from whence no Relief is to be obtained, but by him alone who is *the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs unto all them that believe.*

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general aſſembly, and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. 24 And to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

Our Apoſtle having given an Account in the foregoing Verſes of the State of the *Jewiſh* Church under the Law, comes now to declare that more Excellent State whereinto Believers are called in and by the Goſpel. The Priviledges here ſumm'd up partly reſpect the Church-Militant, and partly the Church-Triumphant. *Obſerve* then, The glorious Priviledges of the Goſpel-State, and what Believers are ſaid to come to whilſt Militant here on Earth. 1. They are ſaid to come unto *Mount Sion, the City of the Living God, the New Jeruſalem*; not to Mount *Sinai*, which was full of Terror and Diſcomfort, but to Mount *Sion*, full of all Spiritual Bleſſings; where *Note*, The Goſpel-Church is call'd the City of the Living God. A City is a Place of Safety, and a Place of Honour, a Place of Peace and Reſt. The Souls of Sinners can find no Place of Reſt or Safety under the Law, but we have all theſe Things by the Goſpel; Reſt in *Chriſt*, Peace with God, Safety in Divine Protection, *&c.* And as a King dwells in his City, ſo God dwells in the Church of Believers; this is my Reſt for ever, here will I dwell, ſays God, for I have a Delight therein. O what manner of Perſons ought they to be who are the Denizens of this City of God. Alas! The great number who pretend highly to the Church and its Priviledges are Citizens of this World only, and altogether unfit for this Holy Society. 2. Believers are next ſaid to come to an *innumerable Company of Angels*; to come to theſe is ſaid to be of their Society; they and we are one in *Chriſt*; the Angels above, and Believers below, make up but one Corporation or Family; they are our Fellow-Citizens, and our Fellow-Subjects. True, they are above us, and at a mighty diſtance from us, yet upon occaſion very near us; and tho' we do not ſee them, nor ſpeak unto them, nor familiarly converſe with them, yet they love us, have a ſpecial care of us, and are miniſtring to us as Heirs of the ſame Salvation with themſelves. 3. They are come to the *general Aſſembly, and Church of the Firſt-born*; that is, they are of the number of God's regenerate and adopted Ones, of thoſe that are Born again, whoſe Names are regiſter'd in Heaven; as the Firſt-born under the Law had a Right to the Inheritance, to a double Part of the Inheritance; ſo they who are intereſted really in the Goſpel-Church have a Right to all that God has provided, and *Chriſt* has purchaſed, even to the whole Inheritance of Grace and Glory. O Glorious Priviledge, to be brought unto this Bleſſed Society, this General Aſſembly of the Firſt-born; eſpecially if we conſider what Company, what Society, what Aſſembly, we belong unto without it, which is no other than that of Devils, and the Seed of the Wicked Serpent. 4. They are come *to God the Judge of all*; that is, they have acceſs to God by *Jeſus Chriſt*, acceſs to his Favour by Juſtification, and acceſs into his Preſence by Prayer and Supplication, yea, acceſs to him as a Judge, without Terror or Conſternation. Bleſſed Priviledge! Believers have a comfortable acceſs to God as the Judge of all; with all their Cauſes and Complaints, he will hear them, plead their Cauſe, and judge for them, and make their Oppreſſions unſafe to the greateſt of the Sons of Men. 5. Believers are ſaid to come *to the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect.* Come to them, tho' not in the ſame Place with them, till Death; yet we and they have the ſame God and Sovereign, the ſame Head and Saviour, the ſame Expectation of a Glorious Reſurrection. *Note* here, 1. There are Spirits of Men in a ſeparate State and Condition capable of Communion with God and the Church. 2. That all the Spirits of Juſt Men departed are made perfect; their Race is conſummated, perfect Deliverance from all Sin and Sorrow is compleated, and a full Reward enjoyed; their Faith is heightned into Sight, and all their Graces elevated into Glory. 3. That yet are they Spirits ſtill, and no more but Spirits; and though perfected Spirits, yet there is wanting the laſt finiſhing Stroke from the Hand of God to render the Bodies as well as the Spirits of Juſt Men for ever perfect in the Morning of the Reſurrection. 6. Believers are here ſaid to come to *Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant*; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, your Fathers came to a Mount of Fire and Smoak, of Darkneſs, Terror and Death, where there was no Mediator to make their Peace with God, no Blood to cry for Mercy, and to cleanſe them from Sin. But you, by forſaking *Judaiſm*, and coming over to *Chriſtianity*, fully are come into that Society where *Chriſt* is Mediator and Prieſt; where the Blood of *Chriſt* ſprinkled upon your Souls cries aloud for Mercy, and cleanſes from all Sin. *And to the Blood of Sprinkling, which ſpeaks better Things than the Blood of* Abel. Intimating, That *Chriſt*'s Blood ſollicites God with ſtronger Cries for Mercy than did ever *Abel*'s for Revenge. *Queſt.* But what are thoſe *better Things* which the Blood of *Chriſt* ſpeaks above and beyond the Blood of *Abel?* *Anſw.* 1. It ſpeaks better Things from God unto us, namely, that his Juſtice is ſatisfied, his Wrath appeaſed, the condemning Guilt of Sin expiated, and the Majeſty of God fully reconciled to all Believers. 2. It ſpeaks better Things to God for us, namely, to be at Peace with us, to reſt in his Love towards us, to furniſh us with all Grace here, and to fit us for Glory hereafter. O Bleſſed *Jeſus!* Thy Blood never cried as *Abel*'s did for Vengeance on them by whom it was ſhed, but pleaded for Pardon, and obtained Pardon, on the behalf of ſmany of them. Happy they who by Faith are made Partakers of this Typical Blood of Sprinkling, which ſpeaks better Things than the Blood of *Abel.*

25 See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more *ſhall not* we *eſcape*, if we turn away from him that *ſpeaketh* from heaven.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Verſes given a Summary Account of the Two States of the Law and the Goſpel, with the incomparable Excellency of the latter above the former, he gives them an Exhortation and Cautionary Direction to take heed that they did not turn a deaf Ear to ſo Excellent a Perſon as *Chriſt* was, preaching to them by his Doctrine: *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh.* Here note in general, that to refuſe any who ſpeak unto us in the Name and Authority of *Chriſt*, is to refuſe *Chriſt* himſelf. This may be applied to all the faithful Preachers of the Goſpel, however they may be deſpiſed in and by the World. But it is here the Perſon of *Chriſt* that is particularly intended. To refuſe him here, is either to reject his Doctrine, and not receive it, or having received it, to renounce it; ſo that this Refuſal includes both Unbelief and Apoſtacy, either of which are fatal and dangerous to the Sons of Men. *Obſerve* next, The Reaſon drawn from the heinouſneſs of the Sin, and the grievouſneſs of the Puniſhment; *If they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on Earth*, that is *Moſes*, who delivered his Meſſage here below, *much more ſhall not we eſcape if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven*; that is, *Jeſus Chriſt* his Son, ſent down from Heaven perſonally to deliver his Holy Doctrine, and now ſpeaking to us from Heaven by his Holy Spirit, in his Miniſters and Apoſtles. *Note* here, 1. That *Chriſt* did in former Times ſpeak unto his Church by *Moſes* and the Prophets. 2. That in theſe latter Times he vouchſafed to ſpeak unto his Church perſonally himſelf. 3. That after he perſonally diſappear'd, and left the World, he vouchſafed ſtill to ſpeak unto his Church by his Spirit in the Miniſtry of the Word. 4. That tho' to refuſe *Chriſt*, when ſpeaking here on Earth, was a grievous Sin, and deſerved a fearful Puniſhment; yet to refuſe him now ſpeaking from Heaven is a more grievous Sin, and deſerves a greater Puniſhment. Conſidering who ſpeaks, what he ſpeaks, and from whence he ſpeaks: The Goſpel was a Myſtery brought to us from the Boſom of the Father, the cleareſt Revelation of God's Will, and the fulleſt Manifeſtation of his Love, and yet few regard it, moſt reject it to their unutterable and inevitable Condemnation.

26 Whoſe voice then ſhook the earth: but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven. 27 And this *word*, Yet once more, ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The Voice of God at the promulging of the Law on Mount *Sinai* ſhook the Earth, but he promiſed after this to ſhake all Nations, and that *Chriſt*, the expected *Meſſias*, the Deſire of all Nations, ſhould come, which is now fulfilled. *Queſt.* But what means our Apoſtle by God's ſhaking not the Earth only, but alſo Heaven? *Anſw.* He means thereby all the *Moſaical* Worſhip, all the *Judaical* State, theſe were ſhaken at the coming of *Chriſt*, in order to the Introduction of the immoveable Goſpel State, which was perpetually to remain. Learn thence, That the coming of the *Meſſias* was to be the laſt Diſpenſation of God for the Salvation of Mankind, and conſequently was to be perpetual and unchangeable. The Apoſtle argues from the Words *once more*, that the former Diſpenſation ſhould be removed to make Way for that which ſhould perpetually remain. Several Things are here aſſerted by our Apoſtle, 1. That there were ſome Things which were intended by God to be ſhaken, namely, the Levitical Prieſthood, and all the Jewiſh Sacrifices and Services; theſe Things were to be ſhaken, moved, yea, altogether removed, out of the Way. 2. That there were Things that could not be ſhaken or removed, but remain, theſe were the Goſpel-State, the Chriſtian Religion, which ſhall continue till Time ſhall be no more. 3. That the former Things were removed, that the latter might be introduced and eſtabliſhed; the Law and the Goſpel were inconſiſtent, the Legal and Evangelical Adminiſtration could not ſtand in Force together, therefore there was a neceſſity for the nulling of the one in order to the eſtabliſhing of the other. 4. That the removal of the Law, to bring the more perfect Adminiſtration of the Goſpel, doth prove the Stability and Immutability of the Goſpel; that it ſtands faſt for ever; there ſhall be no more ſhaking, no farther alteration in Matters of Religion, to the End of the World. *For thus it follows.*

28 Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God *is* a conſuming fire.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Apoſtle calls the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken, in oppoſition to the Law, which was an imperfect and alterable Diſpenſation. The Goſpel Revelation is full and final; there is no need of any farther Revelation after this, nor of any Change of that Religion which was brought from Heaven by the Son of God: In regard of the Perfection of it, and its admirable fitneſs to reform the World, and to recover Mankind out of their loſt Eſtate, and laps'd Condition, and to bring them to Eternal Happineſs: And this by the Purity of its Doctrine, and the Power of its Arguments, to work upon the Minds of Men by the clear Diſcovery of the mighty Rewards and Puniſhments of another World. We have received now *a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken. Obſerve* 2. The Inference which the Apoſtle draws from the Perfection and Perpetuity of this Revelation which God has laſt of all made to the World by his Son, *let us have Grace to ſerve him acceptably*; that is, let us live as becometh thoſe to whom God hath made ſo clear and perfect a Revelation of his Mind and Will: We have all the Advantages of Divine Revelation which the World ever had, and the laſt and moſt perfect that the World ever ſhall have. We have not only *Moſes*, but *Jeſus*; not only the Moral Law, but the Glorious Goſpel, which the Son of God came down on purpoſe from Heaven to declare to the World. *Obſerve* 3. The manner how God muſt be ſerved, *with Reverence and Godly Fear*. Reverence in Divine Service looks at God's Glorious Excellency and Majeſty, and at our own Unworthineſs, together with that infinite Diſtance between him and us; and *Godly Fear* is a Religious Awe upon the Soul in Holy Duties, from the Conſideration of the great Danger of ſinful Miſcarriages in his Worſhip. *Obſerve* 4. The Reaſon making the foregoing Duty neceſſary, *for our God is a conſuming Fire. Our God* intimates a Covenant Relation. *Note* thence, That the Believers God *is a conſuming Fire*, but not to Believers; or if ſo, not to conſume their Graces, but their Corruptions only, or at moſt their corruptible Comforts. *Note* 2. That tho' God takes us near to himſelf, and in Covenant with himſelf, yet he expects that we conſider who he is, and what he is, even a *conſuming Fire*, and a *jealous God*.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Apoſtle being now come to the Concluſion of this moſt Excellent Epiſtle, cloſes it with an Exhortation to ſeveral Evangelical and Moral Duties, thereby pointing out to the Miniſters of the Goſpel the Right Order *and Beſt* Method *of* Preaching, *namely, Firſt, to unfold the Myſteries of the Goſpel, with the Grace of God therein, and then to improve it to practical Holineſs in the Duties of Obedience. ---- In the preſſing of theſe Duties here, becauſe there was not Room for all, he mentions only ſome which were moſt neceſſary for the* Hebrews *to attend unto with Diligence in their preſent Circumſtances; and herein alſo ought our Apoſtle to be our Pattern in the Work of the Miniſtry. Circumſtances may make it neceſſary oftentimes that ſome Duties be more diligently preſſed on our People than others, which in themſelves are of no leſs Importance than they.--- And finally, the Divine Wiſdom and Pious Care of the Apoſtle is to be obſerved and followed by us, in that Solemn and Fervent Prayer which he puts up to God for a Bleſſing upon his Exhortations. Thus did our Lord before him, having preached a moſt Excellent Sermon to his Diſciples, St.* John 14. 15, 16. *he concludes it with a* ſuitable *Prayer.* Chap. 17. *Doubtleſs herein, according to our Ability, we ought to follow our Bleſſed Lord's and his Holy Apoſtle's Inſtructive Examples.*

1 LET brotherly love continue.

Love being the Fountain and Foundation of all Moral Duties, our Apoſtle begins with it, and places it at the Head of all the reſt, as comprehending our whole Duty towards our Neighbour. *Note* here, the Duty commanded is *Love*; the ſpecial Duty recommended is *Brotherly Love*, or that Brotherly Affection which every True Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow-Members in *Chriſt* for Grace's Sake; and the manner of the Injunction or Command is, that this Brotherly Affection do *continue*, and conſtantly abide; not in the Pretence and Appearance of it only, but in the Truth and Reality of it; for there are innumerable Occaſions which will be ready to impair and weaken it, if it be not well grounded. Alas, Unſuitableneſs of Natural Tempers, Differences in Judgment, and Matters of Opinion, inconſiſtent Worldly Intereſt, readineſs to provocation, or to be provoked, Pride on the one Hand, or Envy on the other, will ſadly occaſion the temporary Decay, yea, at laſt the total Loſs, of this Noble Grace, if it be not well grounded, and deeply rooted. Learn hence, That *Brotherly Love* is very apt to impair and decay if we endeavour not continually its Preſervation and Revival. Lord, how marvellous is it, that ſo many amongſt us can perſwade themſelves that they are Chriſtians, and yet be not only Strangers, but Enemies, to this Grace and Duty of Love? How is the Power and Glory of Chriſtianity weakned through want of it? And verily until this holy Love be again revived amongſt us, the Intereſt of Chriſtianity will run very low, yea, the Concerns of Religion will more and more run to Ruin.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers: for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares.

The Second Duty here exhorted to is Hoſpitality, eſpecially towards Strangers, which conſiſted in receiving them into their Houſes, and furniſhing them with all needful Accommodations. In thoſe Eaſtern Countries Inns were not ſo ready as with us; and Chriſtians were generally Poor, not able to bear their own Charges in their travelling from Place to Place; Strangers even amongſt Heathens were accounted Sacred, and under the peculiar Protection of God, and a Puniſhment was appointed for thoſe that were Inhoſpitable towards them. Hoſpitality is a preſcribed Duty; but this Part of it, to wit, the entertaining of Strangers, which was ſo great a Virtue in Ancient Times, is now driven out of the World by the Wickedneſs of ſome, and the Covetouſneſs of others; few Strangers are worthy to receive Entertainment, and as few have Hearts to give it. *Obſerve* farther, The manner of preſcribing this Duty, *be not forgetful to entertain Strangers*; no doubt a poſitive Command is included in the Prohibition, *forget not*; that is, remember to do it; be always in a readineſs for the Diſcharge of this Duty. Our Hearts ought to be always in a gracious Diſpoſition towards ſuch Duties as are attended with Difficulty or Charge; the liberal Mind deviſeth ſeveral Things. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Reaſon enforcing the Duty, hereby *ſome have entertained Angels unawares*; ſo did *Abraham* and *Lot* entertain Three Angels in the Appearance of Men, not knowing who or what they were. By receiving Strangers out of Faith in Chriſt, and Love to God, we may receive Precious Saints, and which is more, ſome Bleſſed Angel ſent to keep them, and which is moſt of all, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who at preſent reſents, and will hereafter acknowledge and reward, ſuch Kindneſſes ſhewn to his Members as done to himſelf, St. *Matth.* 25.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which ſuffer adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the body.

Hoſpitality towards Strangers was preſt in the foregoing Verſe, here Compaſſion towards Sufferers, ſuch as are Captives, Priſoners in Bonds, either upon a Religious or Civil Account. Here *Note*, 1. That Bodily Bondage is a bitter Bondage. Captivity is a moſt grievous Calamity. 2. That we are very prone to forget others Captivity when we our ſelves are in Proſperity. 3. That ſuch as are in Bonds for Chriſt's Sake eſpecially, and his Holy Goſpel, ought particularly to be remembred by us; they are and ought to be the peculiar Objects of our Compaſſion. Altho' conſidering the Cauſe in which they ſuffer, 'tis better, and more honourable, to be in Bonds for Chriſt, than to be at Liberty with a raging, perſecuting, World; for Bonds and Impriſonment for the Truth were Conſecrated to God, and made Honourable by the Bonds and Impriſonment of Chriſt himſelf, and commended to the Church in all Ages by the Bonds and Impriſonments of the Apoſtle and the Primitive Witneſſes to Chriſtianity. *Note* farther, How we are to be mindful of them, and in what manner, by viſiting of them, adminiſtring to them, ſympathizing with them, praying for them, and all this *as bound with them*, which implies an Act of Union, as Members of the ſame Myſtical Body, and ſuffering in and for the ſame Common Cauſe; *Remember them that are in Bonds, as bound with them*, it follows, *and thoſe that ſuffer Adverſity, as being in the Body*. This implies, that there are many kinds of Afflictions beſides Bonds; that we are prone to forget thoſe who ſuffer lighter and leſſer Afflictions; if they be not in Bonds we are ready to forget them, though they ſuffer much Adverſity; but the Command is more general, to remember all that are in any kind of Adverſity, whether they ſuffer in Body, Name, or Eſtate, by Sickneſs, Pain, Loſſes, Reproaches, or any kind of Calamity. The Profeſſors of Religion are exempted from no Sorts of Adverſity; and under every kind of it we muſt remember them, and ſympathize with them, becauſe we our ſelves are *in the Body with them*; that is, ſay ſome, we are Members of the ſame Myſtical Body with them, and therefore when one Member ſuffers, all the Members are to ſuffer with it. *Your ſelves are in the Body*; that is, ſay others, in the ſame State of Natural Life, ſubject and obnoxious to the ſame Sufferings, and within the reach of the ſame Adverſities. Learn hence, that a Senſe of our own being continually obnoxious unto Sufferings during this Life, ought to incline our Minds to a diligent Conſideration of others in their Sufferings, ſo as to diſcharge all Duties of Love and Helpfulneſs towards them, as an Evidence of our Intereſt in the ſame Myſtical Body with them, and as a Ground of juſt Expectation of the like Relief and Compaſſion from them; *Remember them which ſuffer Adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the Body.*

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Verſes directed Chriſtians to their Duty one towards another, in this and the following Verſes he directs them to perform their Duty towards themſelves; and becauſe the Two radical comprehenſive Luſts of corrupted Nature are Uncleanneſs and Covetouſneſs, he therefore commends unto their Care and Practice thoſe Two great Duties of Chaſtity and Contentation. The former in this, the latter in the next Verſe. Now here *Obſerve*, That to prevent the former Sin, the Ravings of unbridled Luſt, our Apoſtle preſcribes the Remedy which God appoints, *Marriage*; that is, the Conjunction of Two individual Perſons that have Freedom in Choice or Conſent, and have Power over themſelves, not being within the Degrees of Affinity or Conſanguinity prohibited, betwixt whom there reſults ſuch an indiſſoluble Union, that thereby they become one Fleſh: Such Marriage he affirms to be *Honourable*, and to be ſo eſteemed in regard of its Author, *God himſelf*, *Gen.* 2. 18. in regard of the Place, *Paradiſe*; in regard of the Time, in Man's *Innocency*; in regard of the End and Uſefulneſs of it, the Continuation of the Race of Mankind; thus it is Honourable, and ought to be had in Honour. The Apoſtle adds, that it is thus *Honourble in all*; that is, amongſt all Orders, Ranks and Degrees of Men that are called thereunto: The Remedy is equally provided by God for all; and therefore for the Church of *Rome* to deny it to their Clergy, is to uſurp Authority over the Conſciences of Men, and to judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker, which our Firſt Parents in Innocency did not think themſelves too Pure for. Learn hence, 1. That Divine Inſtitution is ſufficient to render any State or Condition of Life Honourable, and conſequently the State of Marriage. 2. That which is Honourable by Divine Inſtitution may be render'd Abominable by the Miſcarriages of Men. 3. That it is an horrid Contempt of the Authority of God, and a bold Uſurpation over the Conſciences of Men, to forbid the State of Marriage unto any which God has made Honourable among all. Next to the State of Marriage the Apoſtle adds the Duty of that State, *the Bed undefiled*, in oppoſition to the defiled Bed of Whoremongers and Adulterers, and the Preſervation of Marriage Duties within their due Bounds.

4 —— But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Having exhorted to Conjugal Purity and Chaſtity in the former Part of the Verſe, he adds a very cogent Reaſon and forcible Motive to it in the latter Words, becauſe *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*; that is, all Perſons who in a ſingle State of Life do know one another Carnally, without a Marriage Vow or Covenant between them; if both Parties be ſingle, their Filthineſs is called Fornication; if either of them be Married, Adultery; neither of them ſhall eſcape the Judgment of God; that is, Temporal Puniſhment in this Life, and Eternal Damnation in the next. Learn hence, That whatever light Thoughts Men may have of the Sin of Uncleanneſs, yet we are aſſured it doth in its own Nature deſerve Eternal Condemnation; and ſuch as live and die impenitently in it, ſhall certainly periſh for it: And if ſo, then all Occaſions of, and all Temptations leading to, thoſe Sins are to be avoided as we love our Souls. For of all Sinners thoſe who have habitually given up themſelves to the Luſts of the Fleſh are moſt rarely and difficultly brought to Repentance.

5 *Let your* converſation *be* without covetouſneſs; *and be* content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.
6 So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.

Obſerve here, 1. A Dehortation, or Negative Precept, *let your Converſation be without Covetouſneſs*: By *Converſation* we are firſt to underſtand the Diſpoſition of the Mind, then the Actions of the Life; both ought to be free from all inordinate Love to, and Endeavour after, more of this World than God is pleaſed to give unto us. By *Covetouſneſs* we are not to underſtand as if a provident and prudential Care for the Things of this Life were forbidden, or as if all Endeavours to maintain our Right to what God has given us were unlawful; but by Covetouſneſs is meant an eager and inſatiable Deſire after, accompanied with reſtleſs and unwearied Endeavours for, the Things of this Life, proceeding from an undue Valuation of them, and an inordinate Love unto them. Learn hence, That as all Sin in general, ſo Covetouſneſs in particular, is inconſiſtent with a Chriſtian Converſation according to the Goſpel. No Sin at this Day doth more ſtain the Glory of Chriſtianity than this doth. Alas! The profligate Lives of debaucht Perſons, their Blaſphemies, Adulteries, Drunkenneſs, and ſuch like, do not half the Miſchief to Religion which this Sin doth, becauſe the Perſons guilty of it pretend to Religion, which the other concern not themſelves with. *Obſerve* 2. A poſitive Injunction, *be content with ſuch Things as you have.* Contentment is a gracious Diſpoſition of Mind, whereby the Chriſtian reſts ſatisfied with that Portion of the good Things of this Life which the Wiſdom of God aſſigns him, without complaining of the *Little* which God gives to him, or envying the *Much* which God beſtows on others. Yet know that Contentment with what we have is not inconſiſtent with, nor excluſive of, an induſtrious Diligence, and an honeſt moderate Care to encreaſe what we have for our ſelves and Families. Honeſt Induſtry is the Command of God, and he has given us Six Days in Seven for the exerciſe of it; but it is utterly excluſive of all covetous Deſires, of all anxious Cares, of all priding our ſelves in, and boaſting of, what we have received, contemning and deſpiſing others, a Vanity which Men of weak Minds are only guilty of. *Obſerve* 3. The Argument to enforce the Duty; *For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* The Words are a Promiſe, a Promiſe of God, a Promiſe of his Preſence and Providence to aſſure us of both, and that he will never leave us. He uſeth Five Negatives, *I will not leave thee*, I will not, I will not, I will not forſake thee. Where *Note*, That the Vehemency of the Expreſſion, by the Multiplication of the Negative Particles, is both an Effect of Divine Condeſcenſion, and gives the utmoſt Security to the Faith of Believers, that God will be preſent with them, and comfortably provide for them; ſo that the Words are a ſtrong Reaſon to dehort from Covetouſneſs, and to exhort to Contentedneſs; for having God preſent with us to take care of, and provide for us, we have all Things in him, and a Promiſe from him, that we ſhall not want any Thing that is good and needful for us; only we muſt allow God this liberty, and give him leave to judge what is needful, and when 'tis needful. *Obſerve* 4. That though the foregoing Promiſe was made to *Joſhua*, yet the Apoſtle applies it to all Believers, and draws Comfort from it, *We may boldly ſay, The Lord is my Helper.* Here *Note*, That whatever Promiſe is made in particular to any one Believer, if there be not ſome ſpecial Reaſon which confines and ties it to his Perſon, every Believer may apply it to himſelf. This Promiſe which God made particularly to *Joſhua* for his Support under that great Difficulty in conquering the Land of *Canaan*, the Apoſtle here applies to the Caſe and State of particular Believers; *We may therefore boldly ſay*, &c. Believers having the ſame Grounds that he had, may uſe the ſame Confidence that he did, tho' our Circumſtances and his are not the ſame. All the Promiſes of God's Gracious Preſence made to the Prophets and Apoſtles of Old, all Believers may apply to themſelves in their ſuffering State. *We may boldly ſay*, &c.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.

The next Duty recommended to them, is reſpect to the Spiritual Guides, and Eccleſiaſtical Governours, whom God by Death or Perſecution at any time removes from them, and that is to preſerve their Memory freſh amongſt them as a precious Treaſure; *Remember them that have the Rule over you.* Secondly, to propound their Holy Converſation to their daily View, in a Chriſtian Imitation of thoſe Evangelical Graces and Moral Vertues which were ſo Orient and Exemplary in their Rulers Lives. Learn hence, 1. That it ought to be the Care of the Churches Guides to ſet before their People, and leave behind them, ſuch an Example of Faith and Holineſs, as that it may be the Duty of the Church to remember them, and follow their Example. Learn 2. That it is the ſtanding Duty of that People whom God hath honoured with the Enjoyment of a Spiritual Guide and Ruler, perſeveringly to follow their Faith in the Soundneſs of it, and in the Steadfaſtneſs of Faith, and to imitate their Converſation, by exemplifying thoſe Evangelical Graces and Chriſtian Vertues which did ſo oriently ſhine forth in the Lives of their Miniſters.

8 Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever:

Theſe Words may be underſtood Three Ways, with reſpect to the Perſon of Chriſt, to the Office of Chriſt, and to the Doctrine of Chriſt. 1. With reſpect to the Perſon of Chriſt, he is Eternal and Immutable in every State of the Church, and in every Condition of Believers he is the ſame, and always will be the ſame in his Divine Perſon; he is, ever was, and ever will be, all in all unto his Church. 2. He is *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever*; not only in reſpect of his Perſon, but in regard of his Office. The Vertue of the Legal Sacrifice expired with the Offering, but the Precious Oblation of Chriſt hath an Everlaſting Efficacy to obtain full Pardon for Believers: His Blood is as powerful to propitiate God, as if it were this Day ſhed upon the Croſs. 3. He is *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever*; in regard of his Doctrine that remains unchangeable and irrevocable. The Goſpel is the laſt Revelation of the Mind of God made known by Jeſus Chriſt that ever will be laid before the World: Such therefore as reject him, and his Doctrine, reject the laſt Remedy, the only Remedy, and muſt needs periſh without any poſſibility of Recovery. Learn from the whole, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was from the beginning of the World the immutable Object of his Churches Faith; and the Conſideration of Jeſus Chriſt in his Eternity, Immutability, and Indeficiency in his Power, as he is always the ſame, is the great Encouragement of Believers in the Profeſſion of their Faith, and a mighty Support under all the Difficulties they meet with upon the Account thereof; *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever.*

9 Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines:——

There is an Inference in theſe Words from what was aſſerted in the former concerning the Immutability of Chriſt and his Doctrine; namely thus: Seeing that the Doctrine of Chriſt taught by the Apoſtles is as Chriſt himſelf, *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever*, therefore the Apoſtle dehorts them from being *carried about with divers and ſtrange Doctrines*; that is, in ſhort, the Doctrines of thoſe that mingled Judaiſm and Chriſtianity together, by cleaving to the legal Obſervation. *Note* here, The Nature of the falſe Doctrines, and what Efficacy they have upon the Minds of Men; in themſelves they are light and vain like the Wind, toſſing Men up and down as the Wind and the Waves do the Ship that wants Ballaſt; turning them out of their Courſe, and endangering their Deſtruction; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, take heed that ye be not *carried about with divers and ſtrange Doctrines.*

9 —— For *it is* a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

By Meats here underſtand Diſputes and Controverſies about the Difference of Meats: By Grace underſtand the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the Sanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit, which fixes and eſtabliſhes the Heart, and keeps the Chriſtian ſteady and ſteadfaſt. Learn hence, That it is far better to have the Heart filled with Divine Grace, than the Head with Diſputes and Controverſies in Religion; *it is good that the Heart is eſtabliſhed with Grace, and not with Meats.* The Reaſon is added, *They have not profited them that are occupied therein*; that is, to obſerve the Doctrine concerning a Religious Diſtinction of Meats, ſince the Goſpel has been entertained, is altogether unprofitable and unavailable: Yea, Meats of themſelves profited not thoſe who obſerved them, even whilſt the Inſtitutions concerning them were in force. Learn hence, That thoſe who decline from the Grace of God as the only Means to eſtabliſh their Hearts in Peace with him, do labour in that whereby they ſhall receive no Advantage.

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which ſerve the tabernacle.

Theſe Words are brought in as a farther Reaſon why the Chriſtian *Hebrews* ſhould not return to *Judaiſm*, or any other Doctrine different from the Goſpel of Chriſt. *We Chriſtians*, ſays the Apoſtle, *have an Altar*; that is, a Sacrifice, a Prieſt offered upon, and ſanctified by, the Altar of the Croſs. *Note* here, That the Church of Chriſt under the New Teſtament has its Altar, as well as the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation had theirs. The Altar which we have is Chriſt alone and his Sacrifice; for he was both Prieſt, Altar, and Sacrifice, all himſelf, and ſtill continueth ſo to be. *Note* 2. That this Altar is every way ſufficient in itſelf for the Ends of an Altar; and therefore the Introduction of any other Sacrifice requiring a material Altar is Derogatory to the Sacrifice of Chriſt, and excluſive of him from being an Altar,

tar. *Obſerve* next, The Perſons excluded from having any Right unto, or Expectation of Benefit by this *Altar*, namely, ſuch as *ſerve the Tabernacle*; that is, ſuch as cleave ſtill to the Worſhip appointed for the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle, and adhere to the *Moſaical* Obſervations. They have no Right to this Altar by any Divine Inſtitution, no Right by Vertue of their Office and Relation to the Tabernacle. Learn hence, That all Priviledges, of what Nature ſoever, without a Participation of Chriſt as the Altar and Sacrifice of his Church, are of no Advantage to them that enjoy them. *We have an Altar whereof they have no right to eat who ſerve the Tabernacle.*

11 For the bodies of thoſe beaſts whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary by the high prieſt for ſin, are burnt without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctifie the People with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, As the Beaſts ſlain for Atonement, whoſe Blood was brought into the Sanctuary, was not to be eaten by the Prieſt, but burnt without the Bounds of the Camp of *Iſrael*; in like manner Chriſt when he was to be offered up, to ſanctifie the People with his own Blood, went without the Gates of *Jeruſalem* to ſuffer: Signifying, that as they rejected him as unworthy to live with them, ſo he departed from them and their Political and Legal State. Accordingly, *Let us go forth unto him without the Camp*; that is, let us go unto him from the *Jewiſh* State and Ceremonial Law, bearing his Reproach of the Croſs, which muſt be expected by us. *Obſerve* here, That Jeſus Chriſt in his Sufferings did offer himſelf unto God. That the End of his Offering was to ſanctifie the People: This he deſigned, and this he accompliſhed by his *own* Blood, ſo called Emphatically, partly in Oppoſition to the Sacrifice of the High Prieſt, which was the Blood of Bulls, and not their *own*; and partly to teſtifie what our Sanctification coſt Chriſt, even his *own* Blood. *Obſerve* farther, The Circumſtance of Place where our Lord ſuffered, it was *without the Gate* of the City of *Jeruſalem*; intimating, That he had now finally left the City and Church of the *Jews*, and accordingly he denounced their Deſtruction as he went out of the Gate, *Luke* 23. 28, 29, 30. and by thus turning his Back upon the Temple he plainly ſhewed, that he had now put an End to all Sacrificing in the Temple, as unto Divine Acceptation; and by going out of the Gate, he declared that his Sacrifice and the Benefits of it were not included in the Church of the *Jews*, but equally extended unto the whole World; and by going out of the *City* as a *Malefactor*, and dying an accurſed Death, he plainly declared that he died a Sin-Offering; that his Death was a Puniſhment for Sin. *Obſerve* Laſtly, Our Duty to go forth to him without the Camp; this implies a relinquiſhing of all the Priviledges of the Temple and City. 1. A turning our Backs eternally upon all *Jewiſh* Obſervations. 2. An Acceptance of the Merit of this Sacrifice. 3. The owning of Chriſt under all that Reproach and Contempt that was caſt upon him in his Suffering without the Gate, and not being aſhamed of his Croſs. 4. In our Conformity to him in Self-denial and Suffering; all which are comprized in this Apoſtolical Exhortation, *Let us go forth to him without the Camp, bearing his Reproach.* The Sum is this, That we muſt leave all to go forth to a crucified Saviour; and if we reſolve ſo to do we muſt expect and prepare to meet with all Sorts of Reproaches.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come.

Theſe Words may be conſidered either Relatively or Abſolutely. Conſider them with relation to the Context and their Senſe is this; how chearfully ought Believers (according to the Advice in the foregoing Verſe) to go forth to Chriſt without the Camp, bearing his Reproach, when they conſider their preſent State and Condition, that they have no City here below, that was now the Seat of Divine Worſhip, whereunto it was confined, as the *Jews* did at *Jeruſalem* before the Aboliſhment of their Ceremonial Worſhip; *but they ſeek one to come*, even the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall Worſhip God in his Temple Day and Night. Conſider the Words Abſolutely in themſelves and Two Things ſeem to be intended and deſigned by them. 1. That our Condition in this World is very uncertain and unſettled, *We have no continuing City here.* 2. It implies a Tendency to to a future Settling, and the Hopes and Expectations we have of an happier Condition into which we ſhall enter when we go out of this World. Learn hence, 1. That the World never did, nor never will, give a State of ſatisfactory Reſt unto Believers; it will not afford them a City of Reſt, hardly a Place of Refuge; they muſt therefore ariſe and depart, for this is not their Reſt. Learn 2. That as God has prepared a City of Reſt for Believers, ſo it is their Duty to ſeek and ſecure it, and continually endeavour the Attainment of it, in the Way of his own Appointments. *We have not, but we ſeek.*

15 By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: For with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.

Our Apoſtle having at the Tenth Verſe declared that we Chriſtians have an Altar, to wit, Jeſus Chriſt; here we are directed to offer a Sacrifice, without which an Altar is of no uſe. *By him let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually.* Where *Note*, 1. Chriſtians are to offer a Sacrifice to God, and to none but God. No Creature, Angel, or Saint, has any Part in it; Praiſe them we may, but offer a Sacrifice of Prayer or Praiſe to them we may not. *Note* 2. That the Chriſtian's Sacrifice which he preſents to God, and none but him, is not propitiatory, but gratulatory; a Sacrifice of Praiſe. We pretend to no Expiation of Sin, we owe that to a better Sacrifice. What we offer is the Fruit of our Lips; not the Fruit of our Fields, or of our Flocks, but of ſuch Lips as confeſs to his Name. *Note* 3. The Time when, and the Perſon by whom, this Sacrifice of Praiſe is to be offered to God, and that is *continually*, conſtantly, Morning and Evening; not putting Almighty God off with leſs under the Goſpel than the *Jews* offered to him under the Law, which was the Morning and Evening Sacrifice, and all this by Chriſt; *by him let us offer*, by him who is our Peace may we find Acceſs. It is his Merit and Mediation that crowns our Sacrifice, and obtains Acceptance for it. *Note* 4. Another Sacrifice eſpecially recommended to our Care, as exceeding acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God, and that is the Sacrifice of Almſgiving, Beneficence, and Bounty, doing all the Good we can, and communicating to the Relief of ſuch as want; *but to do good*, &c. as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, take heed you do not put God off with the Fruit of your Lips, the Prayers and Praiſes which coſt you little, but know he calls for the Labour of your Hands, and for a Part to be given to him in his poor Members of what he has given to you; therefore be ſure you forget not to do Good and Communicate, *for with ſuch a Sacrifice God is well-pleaſed*, with none better pleaſed than this, pleaſed with none without this; *intimating*, 1. That it is dangerous to the Souls of Men when attendance unto one Duty is abuſed to Countenance the neglect of others; when Men give God daily a Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe, but withhold from him in his Members the Sacrifice of Almſgiving; they give him the Fruit of their Lips which coſt them nothing, but to do Good and Communicate, which will coſt them ſomething, this they forget. 2. That ſuch Works and Duties as are peculiarly uſeful to Men, are peculiarly acceptable unto God, with ſuch *Sacrifice* God is well-pleaſed.

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

Two Things are here obſervable, 1. The Miniſter's Duty towards his People. 2. The Peoples Duty towards their Miniſters. In the former, *Note* 1. The Duty required, *to Rule, to Watch*: God makes the Biſhops and Paſtors of his Church here guiding Rulers in Church Affairs; they Rule, not with Rigor, but with Lenity and Benignity; they Watch over them, that they may guide and lead them with Rational Guidance and Conduct. *Note* 2. The Subject of this ruling Power and Authority, it is not over their Eſtates, but their Perſons, Particularly and Principally their Souls, *They Watch for your Souls*; as *Jacob* watcht over *Laban*'s, ſo do the Miniſters watch over Chriſt's, Flock, by Day and Night. *Note* 3. The great Engagement and Obligation that lyes upon them thus *to Rule*, and thus *to Watch: They muſt give an Account*; that is, of their Work and Office, of their Duty and Diſcharge. There is a Great Shepherd, a Chief Shepherd; as Chriſt is called the Prince of Shepherds, to whom all Inferiour Shepherds muſt give an Account of their Office, of their Work, and of the Flock committed to their Charge. *Note* 4. The different Accounts that will be given by the Miniſters of God at the Great Day, ſome with Joy, others with Grief: It is Matter of the greateſt Joy to us, when we find any Soul thriving under our Miniſtry, and Bleſſing God for the Benefit they find by it; but on the other hand, the Sadneſs of our Hearts under the Barrenneſs and Unprofitableneſs of many under our Miniſterial Labours is not eaſily to be expreſt. O God! With what Sighing, with what Groaning, with what inward Heavineſs and Mourning, our Accounts unto Chriſt are now given and accompanied, thou only knoweſt, and will make manifeſt at the Great Day. *Obſerve* 2. The Peoples Duty declared with Reference to their Spiritual Guides and Rulers, and that is, to *Obey them*, and ſubmit themſelves; *Obey them that Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* Obey their Doctrine, and ſubmit to their Diſcipline, but neither, with a blind and implicit Obedience obey their Doctrine; *Teaching you all Things whatſoever Chriſt hath commnnded them*, and ſubmit to their Rule whilſt it is exerciſed in the Name of Chriſt, and according to his Inſtitution. Learn hence, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as Supreme Head of his Church, has ordered and ordained that there ſhall be Officers of his Church to Guide and Teach, to Rule and Watch, over it, to the End of the World. Learn 2. That the due Obedience of the Church in all its Members unto the Rulers of it, in the Diſcharge of their Office and Duty, is the beſt Means of its Edification, and a happy Cauſe of Order and Peace in the whole Body; *Obey them*, &c.

18 Pray for us: for we truſt we have a good conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly. 19 But I beſeech you the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner.

In theſe Words *Obſerve* 1. A Requeſt made by the Apoſtles to theſe *Hebrews* for Prayer, *Pray for us:* The Prayers of the meaneſt Saints may be uſeful to the greateſt Apoſtle, both with Reſpect to their Perſon, and the Diſcharge of their Office. *Obſerve* 2. The Ground which gave him Confidence to ask their Prayers, and Aſſurance that he ſhould receive them, *We truſt we have a good Conſcience in all Things.* Behold here with what Modeſty and Humility the Apoſtle ſpeaks of himſelf, even in Things of which he had the higheſt and fulleſt Aſſurance; *We truſt we have a good Conſcience in all Things.* Queſtion, *What is a good Conſcience?* Anſwer, A good Conſcience is a Conſcience enlightned by the Word of God, a Conſcience awakened by the Spirit, a Conſcience purified and pacified by the Blood of Chriſt, a Conſcience univerſally tender of all God's Commands. *Obſerve* 3. The Teſtimony given of his having a good Conſcience, willing in all Things to live honeſtly: A Reſolution and Will, accompanied with conſtant Endeavours to live honeſtly, is a Fruit and Evidence of a good Conſcience. The Word *Willing* denotes Readineſs, Reſolution and Endeavour. *Obſerve* 4. How he preſſes for an Intereſt in their Prayers, with Reſpect to his preſent Circumſtances, and his Deſign of coming to them; *I beſeech you the rather*, &c.

20 Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Verſe deſired their Prayers for him, in this Verſe he adds thereunto his own Prayer for them; a moſt Glorious and Excellent Prayer, encloſing the whole Myſtery of Divine Grace in its Original, and the Way of its Communication by Jeſus Chriſt; a Prayer evidently proceeding from a Spirit full of Faith and Love. *Obſerve* here, 1. The Title aſſigned and given to God; *The God of Peace.* But why the God of Peace rather than the God of Power, or the God of Grace, or the God of Glory? Becauſe the Divine Power was not put forth in raiſing *Chriſt* from the Dead till God was pacified. Juſtice incenſed expoſed him to Death, but Juſtice appeaſed freed him from the Dead. *Obſerve* 2. The Titles aſſigned and given to *Chriſt*, and they ſeem to expreſs his Threefold Office, of a *Prophet*, in that he ſtiles him the *Great Shepherd of the Sheep*; of a *Prieſt*, in that he is ſaid to be *brought again from the Dead by the Blood of the Everlaſting Covenant*; and of a *King*, in that he is ſtiled *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* *Note*, *Chriſt* is a Shepherd, that great Shepherd of the Sheep; a Shepherd, becauſe as a Shepherd he rules and governs his People, as a Shepherd he leads them by his Heavenly Doctrine and Inſtructive Example, as a Shepherd feeds them with his Word, yea, with his Precious Body and Blood: He is ſtiled not *the* but *that* Shepherd, namely, that was promiſed of Old, the Object and the Hope of the Church from the Beginning. And *that great Shepherd*, becauſe great in his Perſon, great in his Power, great in his Undertaking, great in his Glory and Exaltation, above the whole Creation; and the *great Shepherd of the Sheep*, becauſe they are his own; a little Flock in the midſt of Wolves, which could never be preſerved, were it not by the Power and Care of this *great Shepherd.* *Obſerve* 3. The Work aſſigned to God as a God of Peace; he *brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* *Chriſt* is ſaid to raiſe himſelf in regard of immediate Efficiency; but God the Father is ſaid to raiſe him in regard of Sovereign Authority. God the Father, to whoſe Juſtice the Debt was due, by letting *Chriſt* out of the Priſon of the Grave, acknowledged himſelf ſatisfied; the God of Peace, to evidence that Peace was now perfectly made, brought *Chriſt* again from the Dead: But how did he do this? It is anſwered, *By the Blood of the Everlaſting Covenant*, that is, by the Blood of *Chriſt* himſelf, which ratified and confirmed the Covenant. *Obſerve* 4. The Things prayed for, 1. Perfection in every good Work, to do the Will of God; it is not an abſolute Perfection that is here intended, but a Readineſs to every good Work, or Duty of Obedience. 2. To work in them that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight; by this underſtand the actual gracious Performance of every known Duty. *Note*, That the Efficacy and actual Efficiency of Divine Grace, in and unto every Act of Obedience and Duty, is here prayed for, and relied upon. *Obſerve* laſtly, A Doxology, or Aſcription of all Glory to *Chriſt*, *To whom be Glory*, &c. All Grace is from him, and therefore all Glory to be aſcribed to him: The whole Diſpenſation of Grace will iſſue in the Eternal Glory of *Jeſus Chriſt.*

22 And I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23 Know ye, that *our* brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; with whom, if he come ſhortly, I will ſee you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the ſaints; they of Italy ſalute you. 25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

Our Apoſtle hath ſhut up and cloſed his Epiſtle before, he adds theſe Verſes by Way of Poſtſcript: Now he begs of them kindly to accept, and wiſely to improve, the Exhortations given them in this Epiſtle, wherein he had handled many weighty Matters in few Words: He lets them know that *Timothy* was ſet at liberty, and probably gone forth to preach the Goſpel, with whom if he returned ſhortly he hoped to come unto them, being deſirous to ſee them: And thus with Salutations to them all in general, and to Church Governours in particular, both from himſelf and the Chriſtians in *Italy*, he wiſhes them an increaſe of all Grace, and an abundant Senſe of the Love and Favour of God in *Chriſt*; ſaying, *Grace be with you all.* Amen.

THE General Epiſtle OF St. JAMES.

The Epiſtle of St. James, *together with the Six following Epiſtles, have gone under the Name of Catholick Epiſtles for many Ages, becauſe, ſay ſome, they were not written to a particular City or Country, as moſt of St.* Paul's *Epiſtles were, but to all the* Chriſtian Jews *abroad, diſperſed into ſeveral Countries throughout the World, whoſe Suffering Condition rendred the Conſolation which this Epiſtle affords very needful and neceſſary, as being greatly ſupporting.*

The Author and Penman of it was St. James, *commonly called* James the Leſs, *and our Lord's Brother, the Son of* Alpheus, *ſtiled alſo* James the Juſt, *and Biſhop of* Jeruſalem; *conſequently its Authority cannot reaſonably be queſtion'd.*

The Deſign of the Epiſtle is, Firſt, To eſtabliſh the Chriſtian Jews *in a Well-ordered, Religious, Courſe of Life, and to fortifie them againſt Sufferings from the Unbelieving* Jews. *Secondly, To correct a pernicious Error about the Sufficiency of a naked Faith and empty Profeſſion, without Practice,* &c. *which ſprung from a Miſunderſtanding and Abuſe of the Day of Juſtification by Faith. The Deſign of St.* Paul *in Ep.* Rom. *(of which we have the ſame in* Acts 4. 12.) *was to manifeſt that* Chriſt *was the only* One, *and* Chriſtianity *the only* Way *to ſet us* Criminals clear *with God, ſo as to bring us to himſelf in Glory. And St.* James *ſhews us, That 'tis not the* bare Belief *and* Profeſſion *of the* Chriſtian Faith, *but the* Power *and* Practical Improvement *of it, that muſt make or render it* Saving *to us.*

CHAP. I.

1 JAmes, a ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad greeting.

Obſerve here, 1. The Author and Penman of this Epiſtle deſcribed by his Name, *James*; by his Office, *a Servant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, by ſpecial Office, as a Diſpenſer of his Goſpel. 'Tis the higheſt Honour that can be conferred upon the greateſt Perſon to be the Servant of Chriſt, eſpecially in the Quality of an Ambaſſador. *Note* alſo how St. *James* ſtiles himſelf the Servant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some read the Words conjoined, others disjoined; conjoined thus, *James, a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt, who is God and Lord*; and thus the Fathers urged this Text againſt the *Arians*, to prove the Divinity and Godhead of Chriſt; others read the Words disjoined thus, *James, a Servant of God, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* This latter Reading ſeems moſt natural, and leſs ſtrained, and affords an Argument for proving the Divinity of Chriſt no leſs weighty than the former; for as the Father is Lord as well as Jeſus Chriſt, ſo Jeſus Chriſt is God as well as the Father, and God will have all to Honour the Son as they Honour the Father. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſons to whom this Epiſtle is directed, *to the Twelve Tribes ſcattered abroad*; that is, to ſuch, and ſo many, of the *Jews* as were converted to Chriſtianity, and were now diſperſed and ſcattered into ſeveral Countries and Nations, to them is St. *James* excited and moved by God to write and direct this Excellent Epiſtle. Here *Note* by the Way theſe Three Things. 1. That God's own People in general may be diſperſed and driven abroad from their own Countries and Habitations; it is no new Thing to ſuffer in this Kind, *Heb.* 11. 38. thoſe of whom the World was not worthy wandred in Deſarts and Mountains, Woods and Caves. *Note* 2. The Severity of God's Juſtice towards this People of the *Jews* in particular; they were a ſinning People, a ſinful People, weary of God, ſick of his Worſhip, ſevere to his Son, and God grows ſick and weary of them, and according to his Threatning, *Deut.* 28. 64. ſcattered them from one End of the Earth unto the other, among all the People. Lord! How dangerous and unſafe is it to reſt upon and glory in our outward Priviledges? None had more, none had greater, Priviledges than the *Jews*, yet for their Sins the Land ſpewed them out, and God diſpers'd them, yea, made them an Hiſſing and a By-word among the Nations. *Note* 3. The Tenderneſs of God's Love and Care towards the Faithful amongſt them, in and under this Diſperſion, he ſtirreth up St. *James* to write to the ſcattered Tribes, and to apply ſeaſonable Comforts to them, and to all Chriſtians with them, in a Suffering State, which accordingly he does throughout this whole Epiſtle.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Our Apoſtle's Deſign in this Epiſtle being to ſupport the believing *Jews* under their great Sufferings for the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, he firſt acquaints them with the nature of thoſe Sufferings which they might expect to fall under for the ſame. He calls them *Temptations*, that is, Trials; they are correcting Trials for Sin, and they are experimental Trials of the Truth of Grace, and of the Strength of Grace; the Affliction of God's Children are Trials caſtigatory, probatory Trials. *Note* 2. The Advice given theſe Trials, to count it Joy, all Joy, when they fall into Temptations, yea, into divers Temptations; not that Afflictions are in themſelves joyous; the Temptation or Trial is not Matter of Joy, but of Sorrow and Heavineſs, conſider'd in itſelf; but becauſe of their Good Effects, and Sweet Fruits, in proving our Faith, and encreaſing our Patience; but Mark, he ſays, *when ye fall into Temptations*, not when ye run your ſelves into them, or draw them upon your ſelves; we loſe the Comfort of our Sufferings, when either by Guilt or by Imprudence we bring them upon our ſelves. Learn here, That Trials, how Evil and Afflictive ſoever in themſelves, and in their own Nature, yet adminiſter occaſion of great Joy to ſincere Chriſtians, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in Tribulations*; it denotes the higheſt Joy, even to Exaltation and Raviſhment; there is Joy reſulting from the *Conſideration* of the Glory that redounds to God, of the Honour done to us, of the Benefit done to the Church, and to our ſelves, by confirming the Faith of others; evidencing the Sincerity of Grace to our ſelves, preparing us for, and giving us a ſwifter Paſſage to, Heaven. *Note* 3. Our Apoſtle's Argument to preſs them to joy in, and rejoice under, their Afflictions; and this is taken, (1.) From the Nature of them, they are Trials of Faith. (2.) From the Effect and Fruit of them, they beget or work Patience. Learn hence, 1. That the Afflictions which the People of God met with are Trials of all their Graces, but eſpecially of their Faith. This is a Radical Grace, we live by Faith, we work by Love; now of all Graces Satan has a particular Spight againſt the Chriſtian's Faith, and God has a particular Care for the Preſervation and Perfection of it. *Knowing the Trial of your Faith worketh Patience*; that is, they adminiſter Matter and Occaſion for Patience, and by the Bleſſing of God upon them they produce and encreaſe Patience; often Trial put us upon frequent Exerciſes, and the frequent Exerciſe of Grace ſtrengthens the Habits of Grace; conſequently the more our Trials are, the ſtronger will our Patience be. *Knowing that the Trial of your Faith worketh Patience*; it follows, *v.* 4.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

That is, let your Patience and Perſeverance under Sufferings reſolutely continue and hold out to the End; this the Apoſtle urges, becauſe ſome Perſons bore out the firſt Brunt and Onſet of Perſecution; but being exerciſed with diverſity and length of Trials they fainted. Now, as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If we will be compleat Chriſtians, our Patience muſt run parallel with our Sufferings; thus ſhall we be perfect, not with an abſolute Perfection, but with a Perfection of Duration and Perſeverance. Learn, That Afflictions ſanctified by God do tend exceedingly, not only to the encreaſing but perfecting of a Chriſtian's Patience. *Queſt.* But when has Patience its perfect Work, making the Chriſtian perfect and entire? *Anſw.* When there is a ſtrong Faith, as the Foundation of that Patience; when there is a Chriſtian Fortitude and Courage, enabling us to ſuſtain Trials; when there is an exact Knowledge of our Duty to bear Afflictions with a meek and quiet Spirit, with a forbearing and forgiving Spirit, yea, with a praying Spirit, which includes the heighth of Charity under the higheſt Provocations; in a word, when there is found with us an entire Truſt and Dependency upon God's Power and Promiſe, and a chearful Submiſſion, and quiet Reſignation, of our Wills to his moſt Holy, Wiſe, and Righteous Will, in and under the ſharpeſt Trials, and heavieſt Afflictions, that can befal us. Now *has Patience had its perfect Work*, and the ſuffering Chriſtian, in a Goſpel-qualified Senſe, may be ſaid *to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

5 If any of you lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind, and toſſed. 7 For let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.

Obſerve here, 1. A Truth neceſſarily ſuppoſed, that every Man, more or leſs, lacketh Wiſdom to enable him patiently to bear, and prudently to manage, the Afflictions of this Life; and that there is need of great Wiſdom to enable us to glorifie God in a ſuffering Hour. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſon directed to in order to the obtaining of Divine Wiſdom for the patient bearing of Afflictions; *Let him ask it of God.* He that wants Wiſdom let him go to the Fountain of Wiſdom. God gives not his Bleſſings ordinarily without asking, and the beſt of Bleſſings may be had for asking; of the Two it is much better to ask, and not receive, than to receive, and not ask. *Obſerve* 3. A great Encouragement for all that lack Wiſdom to go unto God for it, drawn firſt from the bountiful Manner of his giving, *He giveth liberally*, without upbraiding. Secondly, From the Certainty of the Gift, *It ſhall be given him.* God's Liberality in giving what we ask, and many times more than we ask, yea, more than we can either ask or think, is a mighty Encouragement to Faith, and Fervency in Prayer, to Perſeverance and Importunity in Praying, eſpecially if we conſidar what is added, that as God giveth liberally, ſo he upbraideth not; that is, he neither upbraids them with their Frequency and Importunity in asking, nor yet with their great Unworthineſs of receiving; but inſtead thereof ſubjoins an Aſſurance of granting, *It ſhall be given him.* It is a mighty Encouragement to Pray, when we conſider there is not only Bounty in God, but Bounty engaged by Promiſe. *Obſerve* 4. The Condition required on our Part muſt be obſerved and fulfilled, as well as the Promiſe made on God's Part; *But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* *Queſt.* What is it to ask in Faith? *Anſw.* The Perſon praying muſt be in a State of believing; the Petitioner muſt be a Believer, the Thing asked for muſt be an Object of Faith, by being the Subject Matter of ſome Promiſe; a fervent Prayer for that which God never promiſed is a foul Sin. Again, The manner of asking muſt be faithful, with a pure Intention of God's Glory, with chearful Submiſſion to God's Will, with fiducial Recumbency upon God's Promiſe, with great Fervency and Warmth of Spirit; he that will prevail with *Jacob*, muſt wreſtle with *Jacob* for a Bleſſing. *Obſerve* 5. The Evil and Danger of wavering and doubting in the Matter of Prayer; the Evil of it is this, that it is perplexing and tormenting to the Mind; *he that wavereth is driven and toſſed like a Wave of the Sea*, an elegant Similitude to ſet out the Nature of Doubting when upon our Knees in Duty: And the Danger of it is expreſſed, *v.* 7. *Let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any Thing of the Lord. Note*, That doubtful and unbelieving Perſons, when they pray, though they receive ſomething, yet they can expect nothing. Let him not think to receive any thing; if he does 'tis more than could be expected, becauſe more than God has promiſed. Doubting in Prayer is a Provocation to God; and when a Man's Prayer is a Provocation, how can he expect his Prayer ſhould be either heard or anſwered? *Let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.*

8 A double-minded man *is* unſtable in all his ways.

By a double-minded Man we are to underſtand one that is divided in his own Thoughts between Two different Ways and Opinions, as if he had Two Minds, or Two Souls; many ſuch there were in the Apoſtle's Days; *Judaizing* Brethren, that ſometimes would ſort with the *Jews*, ſometimes with the *Chriſtians*; many ſuch there are in our Days divided betwixt God and the World, between Holineſs and Sin; like a Needle between Two Loadſtones, always wavering to and again, pointing frequently to both, but never fixed to either; ſuch a Man, ſays our Apoſtle, *is unſtable in all his Ways*; that is, in all his Actions. Learn hence, That whilſt Mens Minds are divided between God and their Luſts, they muſt neceſſarily lead very anxious, uncertain, and unſtable, Lives, always fluctuating in great Anxiety and Uncertainty; for he is always at odds with himſelf, and in perpetual variance with his own Reaſon; where Mens Minds are double, their Ways muſt neceſſarily be unſtable.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10 But the rich in that he is made low: becauſe as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away. 11 For the ſun is *no ſooner* riſen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Our Apoſtle having finiſh'd his neceſſary Digreſſion concerning Prayer in the foregoing Verſes, returns now to his former Argument concerning bearing Afflictions with Joy; and urges a ſtrong Reaſon here to inforce the Duty, *let the Brother of low Degree*; that is, ſuch a Chriſtian as is brought low by Perſecution and Sufferings for Chriſt, let him rejoice that God has Exalted him, and made him Rich in Faith, and an Heir of the Kingdom; nothing is more certain than that the greateſt Abuſes and Sufferings for Chriſt are an Honour and Exaltation to us; he adds, *But let the Rich rejoice in that he is made Low*; that is, when he loſes any thing for Chriſt: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Let the Poor Chriſtian rejoice in that he is ſpiritually Exalted, and the Rich Man rejoice in that he is ſpiritually Humbled; a Rich Man's Humility is his Glory. *Obſerve* next, The Apoſtle rendreth a Reaſon why the Rich ſhould have a lowly Mind in the midſt of their flouriſhing Condition, becauſe all the Pomp and Grandeur of Riches fades like a Flower, and he himſelf alſo beautiful, but fading, fair, but vaniſhing: And he purſues this Similitude of a Flower in the Eleventh Verſe, ſhewing that as the Flower fadeth preſently before the Heat of the ſcorching Sun, ſo the Rich Man fades, and all his Riches they are both tranſitory and paſſing. Learn hence. That it may and ought to comfort a Chriſtian that ſuffers Loſs for Chriſt by Perſecutors and Perſecution, to conſider that the Things which he loſeth for the Sake of Chriſt are Things of a fading Nature, which could not have been kept long by him, had they not been rent from him; but that which he ſecures by his Perſeverance, is an everlaſting Treaſure, reſerved in the Heavens for him; by parting with that which he could not keep, he makes ſure of that which he can never loſe; well therefore may the Rich Man rejoice in his Humiliation; *Let the Brother of low degree rejoice that he is exalted, and the rich that he is made low.*

12 Bleſſed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

In theſe Words the Apoſtle lays down a forcible Argument to perſwade Chriſtians to bear Sufferings and Perſecutions with invincible Patience, drawn from the Bleſſedneſs which attend ſuch a Condition; *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptations, &c. Note* here, 1. The Character of the Perſon whom God pronounceth bleſſed; namely, not the Man that eſcapeth Temptations and Trials in this Life, but he that *bears* them with Courage and Conſtancy, with Patience and Submiſſion. *Note* 2. A Deſcription of that ample Reward which ſhall be conferred upon ſuch Sufferers, *They ſhall receive a Crown of Life.* Where obſerve the Felicity of a future State is ſet forth by a Crown, to denote the Tranſcendency and Perfection of it, and by a Crown of Life to denote the Perpetuity and Duration of it. *Note* 3. Here is an Intimation of the Time when this tranſcendent Reward ſhall be diſpers'd, namely, when the ſuffering Chriſtian has finiſhed his Courſe with Patience and Perſeverance; *when he is tried he ſhall receive the Crown of Life.* Learn from the Whole, That a patient and conſtant enduring of Trials and Afflictions in this Life ſhall certainly be rewarded with a Crown of Bleſſedneſs and Immortality in the Life to come: *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*, &c.

13 Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. 14 But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed. 15 Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.

There are Three Sorts of Temptations ſpoken of in Scripture, Temptations of Seduction, Temptations of Suggeſtion, and Temptations of Affliction; the laſt were ſpoken of in the former Verſes, *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*; the Second Sort are ſpoken of in this Verſe, *Let no Man ſay when he is tempted* to Sin, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted by it, neither tempts he any Man to it. *Note* here, 1. That God is not the Author of Sin, nor tempts any Man to the Commiſſion of it; if he did our Evil Actions could not be properly Sins, nor juſtly puniſhable by God; for no Man can be juſtly puniſhable for that which he cannot help, and no Man can help that which he is compelled unto; and it is very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that the ſame Perſon ſhould both tempt and puniſh. To tempt unto Sin is contrary to the Holineſs of God; and after that to chaſtize for complying with the Temptation is contrary to the Juſtice of God; God then is not the Author of the Sins of Men. *Note* 2. That Men are very apt to charge their Sin upon God, and to lay their Faults at his Door. *Let no Man ſay* ſo; intimating that Men are very ready and apt to ſay ſo; and that it is not only a Fault, but an impious Aſſertion, to ſay that God tempts any Man to Sin; *Let no Man ſay:* He ſpeaks of it as a Thing to be rejected with utmoſt Deteſtation, a Thing ſo impious and diſhonourable to God. *Note* 3. The Reaſon and Argument which the Apoſtle brings againſt this impious Suggeſtion, *God cannot be tempted of Evil, neither tempteth he any Man*; that is, he cannot be drawn to any Thing that is Evil himſelf, and therefore it cannot be imagined he ſhould have any Inclination or Deſign to ſeduce others: He can have no Temptation to Sin from his own Inclination, for he has a perfect Antipathy againſt it; and there is no Allurement in Sin to ſtir up any Inclination in God towards it, for it is nothing but Crookedneſs and Deformity: And how can he be ſuppoſed to entice Men to that which his own Nature does abominate and abhor? For none tempt others to be bad but thoſe who are firſt ſo themſelves. Inference 1. No Doctrine then ought to be aſſerted, or can be maintained, which is contrary to the natural Notions which Men have of God, as touching his Holineſs, Juſtice and Goodneſs. Inference 2. If God tempts not us, let us never tempt him: This we do when we tempt his Providence, expecting its Protection in an unwarrantable Way; as when we are negligent in our Callings, and yet depend upon God's Providence to provide for our Families, which is to approve our Folly, and to countenance our Sloth. *Note* 4. The true Account which our Apoſtle gives of the Prevalency and Efficacy of Temptation upon Men, it is their own innate Corruption, and vicious Inclination which doth ſeduce them to it. *Every Man is tempted when he is drawn aſide of his own Luſt, and enticed.* Mark, he does not aſcribe it to the Devil; *he* may and does preſent the Object, and by his *Inſtruments* may and does ſolicite for our Compliance: His Temptations have a moving and exciting Power, but can have no prevailing Efficacy but from our own voluntary conſent; it is our own Luſt cloſing with his Temptations which produce the Sin: For God's commanding us to reſiſt the Devil, ſuppoſes that his Temptations are not irreſiſtable. Learn hence, That Man's worſt Enemy, and moſt dangerous Tempter, is the Corruption of his own Heart and Nature, becauſe it is the inmoſt Enemy, and becauſe it is an Enemy that is leaſt ſuſpected: A Man's Luſt is himſelf, and Nature teaches not to miſtruſt our ſelves: What Reaſon have we then perpetually to pray that God would not lead us into Temptation, to keep us by his good Providence out of the Way of Temptation, becauſe we carry about us ſuch Luſts and Inclinations as will betray us to Sin when powerful Temptations are preſented to us? There is no ſuch Way then to diſarm Temptations, and take away the Power of them, as by mortifying our Luſts, and ſubduing our vicious Inclinations. *Note* 5. The Account which our Apoſtle gives of the Pedigree, Birth and Growth, of Sin: When *Luſt*, that is, our corrupt Inclinations, and vicious Deſires, *have conceived*, that is, gained the Conſent and Approbation of the Will, it bringeth forth, and engageth the Soul in Sin, and Sin, when it is finiſhed in the deliberate outward Action, and eſpecially when by cuſtomary Practice it becomes habitual, bringeth forth Death, the Wages of Sin; the firſt Approaches of Sin are uſually modeſt, but afterwards it makes bolder Attempts; our Wiſdom is to reſiſt the firſt Beginnings of Sin, for then we have moſt ſtrength, and Sin leaſt; to ſuppreſs Sin in the Thoughts, to mortifie Luſt in the Heart, before it breaks forth in the Life, and at laſt iſſue and terminate in Death; For *when Luſt has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth Death.*

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning.

As if he had ſaid, Be not deceived about the Cauſes of Good and Evil; Sin and Death are certainly from our ſelves; let us therefore never aſcribe either our Sins, or our Temptations, unto God; but every good and perfecting Gift is of God's free Donation and Grace, even from above, from the Father of Lights, (both of the Light of Nature, and the Light of Grace,) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning*, from Good to Evil; he is unchangeable in his Nature and Being, and in his Attributes and Properties. Learn hence, 1. That we are very prone to err in our Notions and Apprehenſions, as touching the Authors of Good and Evil; too ready to conclude either God or Satan to be the Authors of the Sin we commit, and our ſelves the Authors of the Good we do: *Do not err, my Beloved Brethren*, in this Matter. Learn 2. That as Sin, which is nothing but Evil and Imperfection, is not from God, but wholly from our Selves, and our own corrupt Hearts; ſo whatever is Good, Perfect, or Praiſe-worthy, is wholly from God, and not from our Selves: We are neither by Nature inclined to that which is Good, nor are we able of our Selves to perform it; both Inclination and Ability are from God, who is the Fountain of Goodneſs and Perfection, and can never ceaſe to be ſo, for with him is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning. Learn (3.) That God being the Infinite Father of Lights, who hath no Eclipſes or Decreaſes, no Shadows or Mixtures of Darkneſs, but always ſhines with a ſettled and conſtant Brightneſs, always is, and was, and to all Eternity will be, immutably the ſame, and never undergo the leaſt change, either of his Eſſence and Being, or of his Properties and Perfections: *With whom is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* As nothing argues greater Imperfection than Inconſtancy and Change, ſo the greater and more glorious the Divine Perfections are, the greater Blemiſh and Imperfection would Mutability be: Were God changeable it would darken all his other Perfections, and raze the Foundation of all Religion; for who could either Fear or Love, Truſt or Serve, that Being who is fickle and inconſiſtant? What Security could there be in his Promiſes? And who would regard the Terror of his Threatnings, were he not invariable, and without ſhadow of changing.

18 **Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we ſhould be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures.**

Theſe Words are very expreſſive of Four Things, namely, of the Efficient Cauſe, the Impulſive Cauſe, the Inſtrumental and the Final Cauſe, of our Regeneration. *Obſerve* (1.) The Author and Efficient Cauſe of Regeneration; *He* that is the Father of Lights, mentioned in the foregoing Verſe, he begat us. *Note*, That God, and God alone, is the Prime Efficient Cauſe of Regeneration; 'tis ſubjectively in the Creature, 'tis efficiently from God: *Chriſt* appropriates this Work to God, *Mat.* 11. 23. the Scriptures appropriate it to God, *Pſal.* 34. 9. called *his Saints*, and God himſelf appropriates it to himſelf, *Ezek.* 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within them*, &c. *Obſerve* (2.) The Impelling, Impulſive, and Moving Cauſe, of Regeneration, *His own Will*, *of his own Will begat he us*; by his meer Motion, induced by no Cauſe, but the Goodneſs of his own Breaſt, of his own Will; and not naturally, as he begat his Son from Eternity; *of his own Will*, and not neceſſarily, by a Neceſſity of Nature, as the Sun enlightens and enlivens; but by an Arbitrarineſs of Grace, *of his own Will*, and not by any Obligation from the Creature; by the Will of God, and not for the Merit and Deſert of Man. *Obſerve* (3.) The Inſtrumental Cauſe of our Regeneration, the Word of Truth, that is, the Goſpel, which is the great Inſtrument in God's Hand for producing the New Birth in the Souls of his People. Here *Note*, The Goſpel is called Truth by Way of Excellency, *the Word of Truth*, that is, the true Word; and alſo by Way of Eminency, as containing an higher and more excellent Truth than any other Divine Truth; the Goſpel declares the Truth of all the Old Teſtament Types. *Obſerve* (4.) The final Cauſe of our New Birth, that we ſhould be a kind of Firſt-fruits of his Creatures, that is, of his New Creatures, the chief among his Creatures: The Firſt-fruits were the beſt of every Kind to be offered to God, and were given as God's peculiar Right and Portion: Thus the New Creature is God's peculiar Portion taken out of Mankind, which being conſecrated to God by a new Begetting, they ought to ſerve him with a New Spirit, New Thankfulneſs, as lying under the higheſt Obligations unto New Obedience.

19 **Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath.** 20 **For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.**

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Seeing God has put ſuch an Honour upon his Word, the Word of Truth, as by it to beget us to himſelf, therefore be ſwift to hear it, prize it highly, and wait upon the Means of Grace readily and diligently; but *be ſlow to Speak*, that is, to utter your Judgments of it, much more *ſlow* in undertaking to be a Teacher and Diſpenſer of it; alſo *ſlow to Wrath*, or to Contentions about the Word, and Points of Divinity: Wrath and Paſſion hinders all Profit by the Word, either preach'd, read, or diſcourſed about; and a forcible Reaſon is rendred why all Wrath ſhould be ſuppreſſed, becauſe the *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*; that is, Man's ſinful Anger will never put him upon doing thoſe Things that are Juſt and Righteous in God's Account; or there is a Figure in the Words; more is intended than expreſſed; the meaning is, that the Wrath of Man is ſo far from working the Righteouſneſs of God, that it worketh all manner of Evil. Learn hence, That Man's Anger is uſually Evil, and very Unrighteous: Anger juſtly moderated is a Duty, but ſuch a Duty as is very difficultly managed without Sin; raſh, cauſleſs and immoderate, Anger gratifies the Anger, diſhonours God, diſcredits Religion, wounds our own Peace.

21 **Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.** 22 **But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves.**

Theſe Words are a Direction given for the right hearing of, and due profiting by, the Word of God; in order to the former our Apoſtle ſhews, (1.) What we muſt lay aſide, namely, *all Filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of Naughtineſs*; that is, all ſenſual Luſts, and angry Paſſions. *And*, (2.) *receive with Meekneſs*, Calmneſs and Submiſſion, *the engrafted Word*, that is, the Word planted and ſown in our Hearts by the Hands of *Chriſt*'s Miniſters, *which is able to ſave our Souls*, that is, from Hell and Damnation; yet does not the Word ſave of itsſelf, but God by the Word; the Power of the Word is not Intrinſical, but Extrinſical, derived from God, whoſe the Word is. Learn hence, (1.) That as all Sin in general, ſo Anger, Wrath and Malice, in particular, ought to be laid aſide by us at all Times, but then eſpecially when we go forth to hear the Word of God. Learn (2.) That the Word muſt be received with all Meekneſs of Spirit if we would hear it with Profit and Advantage; there muſt not to be found with us either a wrathful Fierceneſs, or a proud Stubbornneſs, or a contentious Wrangling, but Humility and Brokenneſs of Spirit, Docibility and Tractableneſs of Spirit under the Word, otherwiſe all our Hearing will be an Addition to our Sin, and an Aggravation to our Condemnation. Learn (3.) That the Word muſt not only be apprehended and received by us, but implanted and grafted in us, or it will never be able to ſave our Souls: *Receive the engrafted Word, which is able to ſave your Souls.* *Queſt.* But how may we know when the Word is an engrafted Word? *Anſw.* When it is a fruitful Word, *Col.* 1. 6. *The Word of the Truth of the Goſpel is come unto you, and bringeth forth Fruit.* Learn (4.) Though hearing of the Word be a Duty, yet it muſt not be reſted in; be Hearers, but not only Hearers: Alas, bare hearing of the Word is the leaſt Part of Chriſtianity, and the lighteſt Part of Chriſtianity; though we be intelligent Hearers, although we be very diligent and attentive Hearers, though we be affectionate Hearers, yea, though we make great proficiency in Knowledge by our Hearing, yet all this will deceive us at laſt if nothing farther be added to it. Therefore learn, (5.) That the Doers of the Word are the beſt Hearers, yea, the only Hearers in God's Account: Not to hear at all is Atheiſtical, and produces no Religion; to hear, and not to know, and be affected with what we hear, is Stoical, and breeds a Blind Religion; to know, and not to do, is Phariſaical, and breeds a lame Religion: The Practical Hearer is the only approved Hearer in the Account of God: *A good Underſtanding have they that do thy Commandments*, *Pſal.* 111. Laſtly, Without this all our Hearing is but Self-deceiving; and this is the moſt ſhameful Deceit, the moſt dangerous Deceit, and if timely Care and Endeavour prevents not, an irreparable and eternal Deceit: *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves.*

23 **For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs:** 24 **For he beholdeth himſelf, and goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.**

In theſe Words our Apoſtle declares the Vanity and Unprofitableneſs of a bare hearing of the Word, by a Similitude taken from a Man looking in a Glaſs; tho' he ſees his own natural Face which he was Born with in a Glaſs, whilſt he is looking in it, yet no ſooner is he gone from it, but he forgets the Figure and Faſhion of his own Countenance, having had only a ſlight and tranſient View of it; ſo in like manner the preaching of the Word has not an awakening Influence, and leaves not an abiding Impreſſion upon moſt Hearers, who are willing to be deceived, and to deceive themſelves, by a bare and naked hearing of Divine Truths. Learn hence, That the Word of God is a Glaſs, or as a Glaſs in which the Soul's Complexion may be ſeen; in this Glaſs we may ſee both God and our Selves, *Chriſt*'s Beauty and our own Deformity, both our Diſeaſe and our Remedy. Learn 2. That the Glaſs of the Word muſt not be careleſly and curſorily look'd into, with a ſlight and ſuperficial Glance; but if we deſire to have all the Spots and Blemiſhes of our Souls thorowly diſcovered, we muſt keep it before our Eyes continually, and daily dreſs our Souls by it.

25 But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continues *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this Man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.

Obſerve here, 1. The Title given to the Word of God, particularly the Goſpel, it is called *Liberty*, a *Law of Liberty*, and a *perfect Law of Liberty*, partly, becauſe it calleth us to a State of Liberty and Freedom, and teacheth us the Way to true Liberty, and offers us the Aſſiſtance of a Spirit of Liberty; partly, becauſe it ſpareth none, but dealeth with all Perſons freely, without reſpect of Perſons: The Goſpel, or Word of God, then is a Law of Liberty. *Obſerve* 2. The Duty here required with reference to this Law of Liberty, namely, to look into it, and continue therein; to look into it with an accurate and narrow Inſpection, as the Diſciples did into *Chriſt*'s Sepulchre, and as the Angels look into the Myſteries of Salvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. To look into the Law of Liberty implies deepneſs of Meditation, and liveliness of Impreſſion; and continuing therein imports Perſeverance in the Knowledge, Faith and Obedience, of the Goſpel, in order to our Fruitfulneſs in good Works; *if you abide in me, and my Word abide in you*, ſays *Chriſt*, *ye ſhall bring forth much Fruit*, John 15. 5, 7. *Obſerve* 3. The Reward promiſed and inſured to ſuch as look into the Goſpel, that Law of Liberty, that continue in it, and are Doers of the Work, are required by it, *they are bleſſed in their Deed*: There is a Bleſſedneſs annexed to the doing of that Work which the Word of God requires; yet mark the Diſtinctneſs of Scripture Phraſe; the Apoſtle doth not ſay, that the Doers of the Word ſhall be bleſſed for their Deed, but in their Deed; 'tis an Evidence of our Bleſſedneſs, not the Ground of it; the Way, though not the Cauſe, of Bleſſedneſs.

26 If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

Obſerve here, 1. That there have been, are, and ever will be, many Profeſſors of Religion, who ſeem, and only ſeem, to be Religious. *Obſerve* 2. That an unbridled and ungoverned Tongue is a certain Sign and Evidence of a Man's being only ſeemingly Religious; it ſeems there were many unbridled Tongues in the Apoſtle's Days amongſt the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, which put the Apoſtle upon ſpending the whole Third Chapter about the Government of the Tongue; the Grace and Word of God are Bridles which we are to put on to reſtrain us from ſinful or exceſſive ſpeaking. *Obſerve* 3. That ſuch a Man as pretends to Religion, and ſeems to be Religious, without bridling and governing of his Tongue, all his Religion is but vain and ſelf-deceiving; *Vain*, that is, empty in ſhew and in appearance only, nothing in truth and in reality; or vain, that is, ineffectual; it doth not perform its Office, it does not anſwer its End; their Religion will do them no good, ſtand them in no ſtead; that Faith, that Hope, thoſe Prayers, which will conſiſt with the reigning Evils of the Tongue, are vain and *ſelf-deceiving*; that Religion which cannot drive the Devil out of the Tongue will never prove *Chriſt* to be in the Heart; that Religion which cannot tame the Tongue will never ſave the Soul: Though ſome Evils of the Tongue may conſiſt with Grace, yet an unbridled Tongue cannot conſiſt with it: Deceit in our Lips is as bad as Falſhood in our Dealings, and Virulence in our Tongues as bad as Violence in our Hands: And if thy Religion be vain, all is vain to thee; thy Hopes are vain, thy Comforts are vain. The Sum is, That an unbridled Tongue in a Religious Profeſſor is enough to prove his Religion vain.

27 Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Apoſtle doth not ſet down the Whole of Religion, but an eminent Part and Inſtance of it only: *Pure Religion is this*; that is, this is the true Practice of Religion, without which all Religion is vain: This is an eminent Fruit which ſprings from the Root of pure Religion; if pure Religion live in the Heart, the Fruits of Pious Charity will appear in the Life. *Obſerve* 2. That Acts of Charity, when they flow from a Religious Principle, do commence Acts of Worſhip; Θρησκεία, Worſhip; to viſit the Widow and Fatherleſs, conſidered in itſelf, may be only an Act of Indifferency, and Civil Courteſie; but when it is performed as an Act of Duty, in Obedience to the Command of God, or as an Act of Mercy and Pity, for the Supply of their Wants by our Purſe, or for the Comforting their Hearts by our Counſel, being thus done out of Conſcience it is as acceptable to God as an Act of Worſhip, *To viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction*. *Obſerve* 3. How the Apoſtle joins Charity and Purity together; a Pretence to the one without the other diſcovers the Inſincerity of both; the relieving of the Afflicted, and a Life unſpotted, muſt go together, or God accepts of neither: *Pure Religion is this, to viſit the Widow, and keep himſelf unſpotted from the World*; that is, from the Defilement and Pollutions of the World by the Luſts thereof. *Plainly intimating*, 1. That the World is a filthy Place, a dirty, defiling, Thing. What Company almoſt can you come into, generally ſpeaking, that is not Sooty and Leprous? How hard is it to converſe with them, and not be polluted and infected by them? Even as hard as it is to touch Pitch and not be defiled. 2. That it is our Duty, and ought to be our daily Endeavour, to keep our ſelves as untainted by, and unſpotted from, the World as we can: And that we may eſcape the Pollutions which are in the World through Luſt, let us be inſtant in Prayer, diligent in our Watch, that if we cannot make the World better, that ſhall never make us worſe. 3. That we ſhould more and more grow weary of the World, and long for Heaven, where there is nothing that defileth, where we ſhall have pure Hearts, pure Company, every thing agreeable, and this not for a few Years, but for everlaſting Ages. Lord! When ſhall we aſcend on high to live with thee in Purity?

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle's Deſign in this Chapter is Twofold; namely, Firſt, To admoniſh againſt that common Sin of reſpecting Perſons in Religious Matters; becauſe of Worldly Advantages. Secondly, To caution and warn againſt that Fatal Opinion of the Sufficiency of a bare and naked Faith in order to Salvation, without the Preſence and Teſtimony of Works to recommend it to God's Acceptation. As touching the former of theſe our Apoſtle thus ſpeaks.

1 MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *the Lord* of glory, with reſpect of perſons. 2 For if there come unto your aſſembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have a reſpect to him that weareth the gay cloathing, and ſay unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and ſay to the poor, Stand thou there, or ſit here under my footſtool: 4 Are ye not then partial in your ſelves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

For the better underſtanding of theſe Words let us conſider, 1. What the Apoſtle doth not, 2. What he doth, condemn. 1. What is not here condemned; namely, 1. The paying of Civil Reſpects to all Perſons according to their Character, and a different Reſpect to Perſons according to their different Qualities; Honour is to be given to whom Honour is due, and the Rich are entitled to Reſpect, and that they receive it from us, is no ways diſpleaſing unto God. 2. Much leſs does our Apoſtle here ſpeak againſt honouring Magiſtrates, or paying Reſpect to our Eccleſiaſtical or Civil Rulers and Governours in their Courts of Judicature: Civility, yea, Chriſtianity, calls for outward Reſpect and Reverence to them that are above us, eſpecially if in Authority over us. But poſitively that which is here condemned, (1.) In general, is Partiality in our Reſpect to Perſons in Religious Matters, for in the Things of God all are equal; the Rich and the Poor ſtand upon the ſame Terms of Advantage; external Relations, and Differences bear no weight at the Goſpel Beam; therefore to diſeſteem any of the poor Members of Chriſt as ſuch, is to diſeſteem and undervalue Chriſt himſelf. Holineſs is not leſs lovely to him becauſe cloathed with Rags, nor Unholineſs leſs loathſom becauſe it goes in a gay Coat with a Gold Ring. Wickedneſs is abominable to Chriſt, and ought to be ſo to us, tho' it ſits upon a Throne, and Holineſs ſhines in his Eye, (and may it be in ours alſo,) tho' it lyes upon a Dunghil. (2.) That which ſeems here to be condemn'd in particular is the accepting of Perſons in Judgment upon the Account of outward Advantages, proceeding not according to the Merits of the Cauſe in their Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Judicatories, but according to external Reſpects. Our Apoſtle would by no means have them pay a Deference to a Rich Man in Judgment becauſe of his Riches, or gay Attire; nor to paſs over the poor Saint in their Aſſemblies for want of the Gold Ring, and Goodly Apparel, ſeeing their Faith hath cloathed them with a greater and more valuable a Glory, which renders them more honourable than any Riches or gay Cloathing could do. And mark the Apoſtle's vehement Expoſtulation, which carries with it the Force of a ſevere Reprehenſion; *Are ye not partial, and become Judges of Evil Thoughts.* As if he had ſaid, Are ye not condemn'd in your ſelves, and convinc'd in your own Conſciences, that you do Evil? Are ye not become Judges of Evil Thoughts? That is, do you not paſs Judgment from your Evil Thoughts, in thinking the Rich worthy of Reſpect in Judgment for his gorgeous Attire, and outward Greatneſs, and the Poor fit to be deſpiſed for his outward Meanneſs? Is not this an Evil, a very Evil, Thought in you, to think him the beſt Man that weareth the beſt Cloaths, and him a vile Perſon that is in vile Apparel? From the Whole learn, 1. That Men are very prone to honour worldly Greatneſs in general, yea, to give too great a Preference to it, even in Matters of Judgment. Man is very often ſway'd in Judgment by the Power, Pomp, and Splendor, of Men; we are apt to think that they that are worth moſt, are moſt worthy. Thus Men, good Men, may misjudge of Men; but thus to accept the Perſons of Men, either in Spiritual or Civil Judgment, is a provoking Sin.

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God choſen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love him?

To prevent the growing Evil condemned in the foregoing Verſe, of undervaluing thoſe that are Rich in Grace, becauſe Poor in Eſtate, the Apoſtle in this Verſe declares how God himſelf gives Countenance to the contrary Practice; he confers a Threefold Dignity upon them; they are Choſen by him; they are Rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven now: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Are they fit to be deſpiſed by you that are thus highly dignified and enriched by God? And to ſtir up their Attention to what he ſpeaks, he uſhers in his Interrogation with this, *Hearken, my Beloved Brethren, Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World*, &c. Learn hence, That ſuch as are Poor in this World, and diſeſteemed of Men, may yet be Choſen of God, Rich in Grace, and Heirs of Glory. This he does to demonſtrate the Sovereignty and Freeneſs of his Grace, and the Glory of his Wiſdom. The firſt Choice that *Chriſt* made of Perſons to be his Followers were Poor Men, and ever ſince, generally ſpeaking, they are the Poor that receive the Goſpel: God has more Rent, and better paid him, from a ſmoaky Cottage, than from many ſtately Palaces, where Men wallow in Wealth, and forget God.

6 But ye have deſpiſed the poor; Do not rich men oppreſs you, and draw you before the judgment-ſeats? 7 Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

Our Apoſtle here charges them downright with that Sin which he had been before condemning, namely, an undue Reſpect of Perſons, deſpiſing the Poor whom God himſelf had choſen and honoured; *But ye have deſpiſed the Poor.* Deſpiſing the Poor is a Sin, not only againſt the Word, but againſt the Works, of God; 'tis againſt his Word and Expreſs Command, back'd with a ſevere Threatning, *Rev.* 23. 10. *Enter not into the Vineyard of the Poor; that is, oppreſs them not, for his Avenger is mighty, and God will plead his Cauſe for him.* 'Tis alſo againſt his Works, and his End in the Creation; for God never made any Creature for Contempt; he then that deſpiſeth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker, that is, contemneth the Wiſdom of God; which is as much ſeen in making Poor, as in making Rich; in making Valleys, as in making Hills. *Obſerve* farther, The Apoſtle ſhews them what little Reaſon and Cauſe they had, as to vilifie the Poor, ſo to idolize and adore the Rich: *Do not Rich Men oppreſs you* by Tyranny, *and draw you before the Judgment-Seat*, like the vileſt Malefactors? Do not they blaſpheme the Name of *Chriſt?* That worthy Name from which you are called Chriſtians, and ſpit in the very Face of your Holy Religion? Learn 1. That Wicked Rich Men are ofttimes Oppreſſors, ſometimes Perſecutors; they have frequently both Will and Power, both Diſpoſition and Occaſion, to do both. 2. That Oppreſſors and Perſecutors are generally Blaſphemers; they blaſpheme the Name of *Chriſt*, that Worthy Name, which whoſoever nameth ought to depart from all Iniquity, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19.

8 If you fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf, ye do well. 9 But if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors.

Obſerve here, 1. The honourable Title put upon the Law of God, *a Royal Law*; Royal in its Author, *Jeſus Chriſt*, *Heb.* 12. 25. *Chriſt*'s Voice ſhook Mount *Sinai*; Royal in its Precepts; the Duty it requires of us is Noble and Excellent; nothing but what is our Intereſt as Men, our Honour and Happineſs as Chriſtians, and what tends to the perfecting and enobling of our Natures. Royal in its Rewards; true, our Work can deſerve no Wages; however our Royal Maſter will not let us work for nothing. Satan, as a Maſter, is bad, his Work much worſe, but his Wages worſt of all. *Chriſt* is a Royal Maſter, Obedience to his Law is Royal Service; and how Royal is his Reward, in making us Kings and Prieſts unto God on Earth, and Crowned Kings and Princes with God in Heaven. *Obſerve* 2. Our Duty declared with relation to this *Royal Law*, namely, to fulfil it. *If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scriptures*; that is, if ye pay a ſincere Reſpect to the whole Duty of the Law, if you come up in your Obedience to that Univerſal Love of God, and your Neighbour, which the Law requires, ye do well; where by ***Neighbour*** we are to underſtand every one to whom we may be helpful; the Command to love him as our ſelves, ſhews the manner, not the meaſure, of our Love; the kind, not the degree; the parity and likeneſs, not the equality of Proportion; we muſt mind the Good of our Neighbour as really and truly, though not ſo vehemently and earneſtly, as our own. *Obſerve* 3. How the Apoſtle convicts them for walking contrary to this Law, in honouring the Rich, and deſpiſing the Poor, and in judging according to Mens outward Quality and Condition. *If ye have reſpect to Perſons* (in this manner) ye commit Sin, and are *convinced* of the Law as Tranſgreſſors. How does the Law convince? Not only by reproving, but by proving; it ſhews us a Rule, and ſaith there ye have departed from it; here is a Line, and there ye have tranſgreſſed it; either gone over it, or gone beſide it. Learn hence, That the Rule of the Word diſcovers Wickedneſs fully to the Conſcience of the Sinner, who winks hard, and is loth to lye under the Convictions of it.

10 For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Here the Apoſtle doth ſuppoſe a Caſe which ought to make every Perſon very Conſcientious in his Obedience to the whole Law of God, namely, that in Caſe a Man were careful to obſerve all the Laws of God, except one, his living in the Breach of that one ſhall be ſo far from being connived at upon the Account of his Obedience to all the reſt, that he ſhall be liable to the Puniſhment which is due to the Tranſgreſſion of the whole Law; to the ſame Puniſhment for kind, I ſay, not for degree; becauſe the more and greater Sins Men are guilty of, the greater and ſeverer ſhall be their Puniſhment, which conſiſts in being for ever baniſhed from the Preſence of God and in being impriſon'd with Devils and damned Spirits, which is called Eternal Death. Learn hence, That whoever allows himſelf in any one Sin, be it either of Omiſſion or Commiſſion, willingly, conſtantly, and with allowence from Conſcience, and doth not convert and turn from it unto God, he is certainly in a State of Damnation, becauſe he affronts the Sovereignty, and contemns the Authority, of that God that made and enacted the whole Law, and alſo ſtands in a prepared Readineſs and Diſpoſition to break any other, yea, all other, Laws in the groſſeſt manner, whenſoever any forceable Temptation may aſſault him. Add to this, that living in the Breach of any one Law, will make a Perſon unmeet for the Enjoyment of God, as well as living in the Breach of all.

11 For he that ſaid, Do not commit adultery, ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law. 12 So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, he that threatned Adultery with Death, threatned alſo Murther with Death; it is the ſame Lawgiver that forbids both, and his Authority is as truly contemned in tranſgreſſing one as both theſe Laws. Diſobedience to God in any one Law, is a vertual denying of his Authority to preſcribe any Law to us, and lays a Foundation for Univerſal Diſobedience; for if Almighty God's Sovereignty be diſown'd in any one Inſtance, it may as well be ſo in all other; the ſame Reaſon that leads to the Obſervation or Violation of one Law, doth oblige us to keep or break all the reſt, and that is the Authority of the Lawgiver. The whole Law hath an equal Obligation upon the Conſcience. From hence the Apoſtle draws this Inference, That Perſons ſhould ſo ſpeak, and ſo do, ſo order their Speeches and their Actions, as they that ſhall be judged by the Law of Liberty. *Note* here, 1. That all we ſay and do, all our Actions and Expreſſions, do fall under the Judgment and Sentence of the Law of God. 2. That the Law of God in the Hand of *Chriſt* is a Law of Liberty; we are freed from it as a Covenant, freed from its Condemnatory Curſe, freed from its rigorous Exactions, Bondage and Terrors. The Law to a Believer is a Law of Liberty, to others a Law of Bondage and Death. 3. That it will be a great Help to us in our Chriſtian Courſe to think often that all our Words and Actions muſt come into Judgment; 'tis agreeable to the Liberty of the Goſpel to believe and remember that all we ſay and do muſt be judged by the Law of Liberty.

13 For he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment.

That is, he that whilſt he lived *ſhewed no Mercy*, but had Opportunity and Ability to ſhew it, *ſhall have Judgment without Mercy*; that is, ſhall be very ſeverely handled by God in the Great Day, and the Sentence that ſhall paſs upon him will be unſupportable: But *Mercy rejoiceth againſt Judgment*, or triumpheth over Judgment; that is, Mercy in ſome Degree of Exaltation; ſuch a Mercy as has Covetouſneſs, Hard-heartedneſs, and Penuriouſneſs, with all its Enemies, under its Feet, ſuch Mercy qualifies, ſtrengthens, and enables, the Perſon in whom it is found to be confidently ſecure that he ſhall receive no Prejudice or Hurt by that Judgment which God ſhall paſs upon the World at the Great Day. Learn from hence, That merciful Men, whoſe Hearts and Hands are much exerciſed in doing Good, and ſhewing Mercy, by Means of the Conſciouſneſs of theſe God-like Diſpoſitions in themſelves, are, or may be, full of a joyful and bleſſed Security, that they ſhall ſtand in the great Judgment of the World, and find Favour and Acceptance in the Eyes of the Judge, when all unmerciful, covetous and hard-hearted, Perſons ſhall fall under the Sentence, and be ground to Powder by it. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that ſheweth not Mercy, but Mercy rejoices againſt Judgment.*

14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith ſave him? 15 If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, 16 And one of you ſay unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? 17 Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Our Apoſtle here enters upon the ſecond Part of his Diſcourſe contained in this Chapter, namely, to ſhew the Vanity of a fruitleſs Faith; that ſuch a Faith as is not the Parent and Principle of Obedience, and Productive of Good Works, is altogether ineffectual and unprofitable. Faith of no Kind, when it is alone, is juſtifying; as there can be no good Works without Faith, ſo where true Faith is it will be fruitful in good Works, otherwiſe Faith is no more Faith; no believing without Obedience will avail us; therefore St. *Paul* and St. *James* both agree to render to Faith the Things that are Faith's, and not to take away from Works the Things that are Works. *What doth it profit a Man to ſay he has Faith*, &c. As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Let not any Perſon think his Faith ſufficient to juſtifie and ſave him without the Works of Charity and Mercy. Alas! A meer wordy Profeſſion is a poor, unprofitable, Thing! What will profeſſing Chriſtianity, and ſaying we believe, avail to Salvation, if we obey not *Chriſt*, and live not according to the Goſpel? Will good Works feed the Hungry, or cloath the Naked? Is it not like a mocking of them? Even ſo a notional Knowledge, and a bare Profeſſion of Faith, if it brings not forth the Fruits of Holineſs and Obedience towards God, of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, of Love and Mercy, towards our Neighbour, it is an ineffectual, dead, Thing; like a dead Corps, without a quickning and enlivening Soul; it is altogether dead as to our Juſtification and Salvation. Learn hence, 1. That a fruitleſs Faith is certainly a dead Faith. 'Tis dead, becauſe it doth not unite us to *Chriſt*; 'tis lifeleſs, becauſe there is no livelineſs in ſuch a Perſon's Performances; for tho' Faith be not always alike lively, yet if ſincere, it is always living, and enables the Chriſtian to live unto *Chriſt*, and to bear much Fruit, *John* 15. 5. *He that abideth*, that is, *believeth in me, and in him, the ſame bringeth forth much Fruit*. *Obſerve* 2. The Compariſon whith St. *James* here makes between Faith and Charity; from whence he draws this Concluſion, If Charity towards the Poor, profeſſed in Words, but without Works be counterfeit, then Faith in *Chriſt*, profeſſed in like manner, without Obedience, is alſo counterfeit and falſe; but Charity towards the Poor in Words, and not in Deeds, is a counterfeit Charity; accordingly Faith in *Chriſt*, without Obedience to his Commands, is a falſe Faith; a dead Faith, in regard of the Effect, becauſe it will never bring them, in whom it is, to Life and Salvation.

18 Yea, a man may ſay, Thou haſt faith, and I have works: ſhew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works.

St. *James* brings in theſe Words by Way of Dialogue between a ſincere Believer that has true Faith, and a falſe-hearted Hypocrite that only pretends to it, thus, Thou ſay'ſt thou haſt true Faith, though thou haſt no Works to evidence its Truth; I ſay, I have true Faith, becauſe I have good Works, which are the genuine Effects and Fruits of it. Come we now to the Trial, and let it appear who ſaith true, thou or I; if thou that haſt no Works ſay'ſt true, prove thy Faith to be true ſome other Way. Works thou haſt none, ſhew thy Faith then by ſomething elſe; but that is impoſſible, therefore thou vainly boaſteſt of that which thou haſt not; but on the other ſide, ſays the ſincere Believer, I can make good what I ſay, proving the Truth of my Faith by the Fruits of it in my Work; this is a real Demonſtration that my Faith is no vain Oſtentation, as yours is. This Way of arguing is very convincing; it gripes the Conſcience of the Hypocrite, and covers him with Shame, and Confuſion of Face. Learn hence, That good Works are the Evidences by which we muſt judge of our Faith now, and according to which *Chriſt* will judge of us and our Faith at the Great Day. Theſe Two, Faith and Good Works, ought to be as inſeparable as Light and the Sun, as Fire and Heat. Obedience is the Daughter of Faith, and Faith the Parent and Principle of Obedience.

19 Thou believeſt that there is one God; thou doeſt well: the devils alſo believe and tremble.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Be thou either *Jew* or *Chriſtian*, thou believeſt that there is a God, and aſſenteſt to the Articles of Religion, herein thou doſt well, but this is no more than what the Devils do, for they alſo believe and tremble; and if thou haſt no better Faith, and no better Fruits of thy Faith, than they, thou haſt the ſame Reaſon to tremble which they have. *Obſerve* here, 1. That a bare and naked Aſſent to the Truths of the Goſpel, yea, to the Fundamental Truths and Articles of Religion, is not Faith that will juſtifie and ſave; the Devils have it, yet have no Hopes of Salvation with it. They believe that there is a God, and a Chriſt that died for others, tho' not for them; ſo that an Atheiſt that does not believe a God is worſe than a Devil; for he believes that there is a God, whoſe Being the Atheiſt denies. *Obſerve* 2. That Horror is the Fruit and Effect of the Devil's Faith; the more they know of God, the more they dread him; the more they think of him, the more they tremble at him. Oh God! All Knowledge of thee, out of *Chriſt*, is uncomfortable; thine Attributes, which are in themſelves dreadful and terrible, being beheld by us in thy Son, do yield Comfort and Sweetneſs to us. The Devils believe, but tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? 22 Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only.

Our Apoſtle here goes on to prove that a Perſon is juſtified by Works, that is, by a working Faith, from the Example of *Abraham*; and the Argument lyes thus, if *Abraham* of old was juſtified by a working Faith, then we cannot be juſtified without it at this Day; but *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, and the Friend of God, was juſtified by a working Faith, therefore Faith without Works will juſtifie no Man. As *Abraham* was juſtified, ſo muſt we and all others be juſtified, becauſe the Means and Method of Juſtification were ever one and the ſame, and ever will be uniform and alike. But *Abraham* was juſtified by a working Faith; his Faith was full of Life, Efficacy and Power, in bringing forth Obedience unto God; witneſs his ready Compliance with that hard and difficult Command, the offering up his Son *Iſaac*. *Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works*, that is, how his Faith did both direct and aſſiſt him in that Work. *Heb.* 11. *By Faith* Abraham *offered up* Iſaac, and by Works was his Faith *made perfect*, that is, declared to be perfect; for *Abraham* was juſtified Five and Twenty Years before he offered up his Son, but his conquering the Difficulties of that Work ſhewed the Perfection of his Faith; as the Goodneſs of the Fruit declares the Excellency of the Tree, ſo the Fruit of Obedience evidenced the Sincerity of *Abraham*'s Faith. From hence then it may and muſt be *concluded*, that a barren and empty Faith is a dead Faith; dead, becauſe it may be found in and with a Perſon, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins. Dead, becauſe it receives not the quickning Influences of the Spirit of God. Dead, becauſe it wants Operation, which is the Effect of Life. Dead, becauſe unavailable to Eternal Life. *Obſerve* farther, The honourable Character and noble Teſtimony here given of *Abraham*, for and upon the Account of his Faith and Obedience, *He was called the Friend of God*. All true Believers are God's Friends; as Friends they are reconciled to him, as Friends they enjoy Communion with him, and Communications from him; as Friends there is a Conformity of Wills and Affections between them; they like and love, they will and chuſe, the ſame Things; as Friends they deſire and long for the compleat Fruition and Enjoyment of each other. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Inference which St. *James* draws from this Inſtance of *Abraham*, *Yet ſee then how that by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith*. By *Faith only*, he means Faith that is alone, ſolitary, and by itſelf, without Works. *Queſt.* But doth not St. *James*, by affirming that by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith only, contradict St. *Paul*, who ſays, *By the Deeds of the Law ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in God's ſight?* Rom. 3. 20. *Anſw.* Not at all. 1. Becauſe they do not ſpeak *ad idem*, to the ſame Thing; St. *Paul* ſpeaks of Juſtification before God, St. *James* of Juſtification before Man; St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the Juſtification of our Perſon, St. *James* of the Juſtification of our Faith. 2. They do not ſpeak *iiſdem*, to the ſame Perſons; St. *Paul* had to do with falſe Apoſtles, and judaizing Chriſtians, who ſought to ſubſtitute the Works of the Law, and a Righteouſneſs of their own, inſtead of, or at leaſt in, Conjunction with the Grace of God; but St. *James* had to do with Hypocritical Profeſſors, who abuſed St. *Paul*'s Doctrine of Free Grace, and took Encouragement to Sin, affirming, that if they believed 'twas ſufficient, no Matter how they lived; therefore St. *James* urges the neceſſity of Good Works as Evidences of the Sincerity of our Faith. The Sum of the Matter is this, what God has joined none muſt divide, and what God has divided none muſt join. He has ſeparated Faith and Works in the Buſineſs of Juſtification, according to St. *Paul*, and none muſt join them in it; and he has joined them in the Lives of juſtified Perſons, as St. *James* ſpake, and there we muſt not ſeparate them. St. *Paul* aſſures us, that Works have not a Co-efficiency in Juſtification itſelf; but St. *James* aſſures us, that they may and ought to have a Co-exiſtency in them that are juſtified.

25 Likewiſe alſo was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works, when ſhe had received the meſſengers, and had ſent them out another way?

Here the Apoſtle declares that *Rahab* was juſtified by a working Faith, as *Abraham* was before her, which appear'd in her entertaining the Spies, lodging them in her Houſe, and diſmiſſing them with all poſſible Privacy, which was a notable Evidence of her Faith in the God of *Iſrael*; her Faith being accompanied with great Self-denial, and expoſing her to a mighty hazard. Indeed *Rahab*'s Faith was mixed with great Infirmity, ſhe told a Lie; but that is over-look'd by God, and her Faith only Recorded, not her Failing divulged. *Rahab*'s Lie, *Sarah*'s Laughter, *Job*'s Impatience, are not mention'd; we diſcover Corruption in the very Exerciſe of our Graces; but Oh! How good a Maſter do we ſerve, that pardons our Infirmities, and accepts our Sincerity. Learn hence, That the Duties and Services of Believers, tho' blemiſh'd with many Defects, do find Acceptance with God, and ſhall not fail to be rewarded by him. *Rahab*'s Faith was ſeen in receiving the Spies, her Weakneſs and Infirmity appear'd in her Lying; God pitied and pardoned the one, and accepted and rewarded the other.

26 For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.

In this Verſe the Apoſtle ſums up the whole Matter, by comparing a dead Faith to a dead Corps; as that is imperfect, wanting its beſt and nobleſt Parts, ſo Faith without Works wants that which dignifies and compleats it. Faith, without Holineſs to enliven it, is a dead Body, without the Spirit to quicken it. Again, as a dead Corps is uſeleſs as well as imperfect; tho' it has Eyes, it ſees not; Feet, it walks not; Mouth, but ſpeaks not: Thus it is with a dead Faith, being unaccompanied with a good Life; no believing without Obedience will avail us; for tho' there is no Merit in our Obedience that we ſhould be ſaved for it, yet is there ſuch a Neceſſity of Obedience that we ſhall never be ſaved without it. Again, as a dead Corps is noiſome to us, ſo is a Profeſſion of Faith without Obedience loathſome to God. He ſays to all the Workers of Iniquity, *Depart from me, I know you not*, I approve you not. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead*, that is, as the Body is known to be dead if we perceive no vital Actions flowing from the Soul, ſo is Faith dead if we ſee it not demonſtrated by effectual Operation. As it is neceſſary to the Being of a living Body that it be united to the Soul, ſo is it neceſſary to the Being of a living Chriſtian's Faith that it bring forth Works of Obedience in the Chriſtian's Life. *For as the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo.*

CHAP III.

Our Apoſtle had at the latter End of the Firſt Chapter diſcours'd concerning the Evils of the Tongue, ſhewing that Man's Religion to be vain which doth not teach him to Bridle and Govern that unruly Member, and keep it within the Bounds of

Reaſon and Religion; in this Chapter he returns to the ſame Argument, and ſhews the great Neceſſity we lye under to watch over our Words, and to avoid the Sins of the Tongue, and this both as an Argument of our Sincerity, and as an Ornament to our Profeſſion. Accordingly thus he ſpeaks.

1 MY brethren, be not many maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation.

For the clearer Underſtanding of theſe Words let us conſider, 1. What the Apoſtle does not forbid, namely, Private and Brotherly Admonition, which proceeds from Chriſtian Love one towards another; much leſs does he condemn Publick and Authorized Reproof. God has made it the Duty of all to Admoniſh and Reprove each other Charitatively; he has made it the Duty of others to Admoniſh and Cenſure Evil-doers Authoritatively, this therefore is not forbidden. *Obſerve* 2. What it is that is here forbidden, namely, ſuch a reproving of others as is Supercilious and Maſterly, managed with Sharpneſs and Severity, Raſhly and Rigidly. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Be not Magiſterial and Cenſorious towards your Brethren, as if every one of you had many Maſters in him; cenſuring of others is an Arrogation of Maſterſhip over others; and the aſſuming of a Power over them which God never gave us, 'tis a bold Uſurpation of God's Authority; we may Admoniſh, Reprove and Warn, but it muſt not be in a Lordly Manner, in a Maſterly Way, which is Reviling rather than Reproving; we muſt conſider what may ſtand with Charity, as well as what will conſiſt with Truth. Every Evil muſt not be divulged, but ſome muſt be covered with a Cloak of Love; there may be, and oft-times is, a great deal of Malice in reporting Truth. *Obſerve* next, The Remedy preſcribed againſt cenſuring others, namely, the conſidering our ſelves that we ſhall thereby *receive the greater Damnation.* Sharp Reprovers in judging others pronounce a Doom upon themſelves. Such as reprove either out of Office, or out of Charity, ought to look to themſelves, leſt in reproving others they condemn themſelves.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the ſame *is* a perfect man, *and* able alſo to bridle the whole body.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, we had need be very Candid in cenſuring others, for we all of us offend in many Things our ſelves, eſpecially with and by our Tongues, which is an Engine of more Miſchief, both to our ſelves and others, than any other Member of the Body; and accordingly he is called here not a Gracious Man, but a Perfect Man, one that has attained to the fulleſt Meaſures and higheſt Degrees of Grace that can bridle his Tongue. To be able to bridle the Tongue is an Argument of conſiderable growth and happy progreſs in Grace. He that can bridle his Tongue, can bridle his whole Body, that is, govern all the other Actions of his Life, he is a very extraordinary Chriſtian.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body.

As we rule the whole Body of an Horſe by a Bridle in its Mouth, ſo by bridling our Tongues we ſhall rule and govern all the Actions of our Lives. *Note*, That as hot and hard-mouth'd Horſes, ſo the Tongue of Man, is apt to run out, unleſs well bridled; nor is any Bridle ſtrong enough to hold it in but the Bridle of Grace; nay, not that at all Times. The Grace of God is both Spur and Bridle to the Tongue of Man; Grace, like a Spur, provokes to ſpeak for God, and for the good of others, and Grace, like a Bridle, ſtops us from ſpeaking what may grieve the Spirit of God, and juſtly offend others. None rule their Tongues well without Grace; and every one that has Grace doth not rule them well; it is a great Part of Perfection not to offend in Word.

4 Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be ſo great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governour liſteth. 5 Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things: behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. 6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the Tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature, and is ſet on fire of hell.

The Deſign of our Apoſtle by this and the former Similitude is to ſhew, that little Things well govern'd can govern great Bodies; as the Rider by a ſmall Bit can govern the Horſe at pleaſure, and the Pilot by a ſmall Rudder can manage the Ship with eaſe; ſo the Government of that little Member the Tongue is a ſpecial Means for governing the whole Man. Next he compares the Tongue to Fire, in regard of the Danger that attends it; will a Spark of Fire ſet an Houſe, a Town, a City, in a Flame, and lay it in Aſhes? In like manner will a fiery Tongue enflame a Family, a Society, a Church, a Kingdom, yea, the whole World, by Strife and Contention, putting all into Combuſtion; ſuch a Tongue being ſet on Work by the Devil, and kindled by that Fire which came from Hell; but verily a Tongue ſet on Fire from Hell, ſhall, without Repentance, be ſet on Fire in Hell. Learn hence, That a Wicked Tongue is of an Helliſh Original, the Fire of ſuch a Tongue is blown up by the Breath of Hell. Let us abhor Contentions, Revilings and Reproaches, as we would Hell itſelf.

7 For every kind of beaſts, and of birds, and of ſerpents, and things in the ſea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame, *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon.

Our Apoſtle here goes on in ſhewing how difficult it is to govern the Tongue; 'tis wilder than the wildeſt Beaſts; they are more tractable, and may be ſooner tamed, than a Tongue be governed; 'tis *an unruly Evil*, that will not be held in: Nature has ſet a double Guard about the Tongue, namely, the Teeth, and the Lips, and Grace has laid many Reſtraints upon it, and yet it breaks out *full of deadly Poiſon*; intimating, That the Tongue is as deadly as a Venomous Beaſt; in the wild Deſart there are Lions, Bears and Tigers, but theſe aſſault us but now and then, and can only rend the Skin, but a contentious Tongue is always troubleſome to the Soul and Spirit; Man tameth the Beaſt, and God tameth Man; and the Apoſtle's calling the Tongue *an unruly Evil, full of deadly Poiſon*, plainly imports, that a Wicked Tongue is venomous and hurtful; a ſlanderous Tongue is a deadly Poiſon; nothing can ſecure againſt it but Innocency, and a good Conſcience; if we fall by it let this comfort us, that there will be a Reſurrection of our Names as well as of our Perſons; let us always then keep in the Way of our Duty, and commit our good Name to God's Care and Keeping.

9 Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father; and therewith curſe we men, which are made after the ſimilitude of God. 10 Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing. My brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be. 11 Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet *water* and bitter? 12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine figs? ſo *can* no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Apoſtle informs us what is the proper uſe of the Tongue, namely, to Bleſs and Praiſe God; Speech being the moſt Excellent Faculty, is to be conſecrated to Divine Uſes; 'tis both a good Man's Work, and his Recreation, to Bleſs and Praiſe God. *Obſerve* 2. The ſinful Uſe which ſome Men put the Tongue unto, and that is, to curſe with it, to curſe Men that have the natural Image of God upon them, yea, Holy and Good Men, that have the Divine Image of God inſtampt upon them; this is the abuſe of ſome Mens Tongues, their Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs. *Obſerve* 3. The ſame Tongue cannot, ſhould not, Bleſs God, and Curſe Men; to Pray and Brawl with the ſame Tongue is ſhameful Hypocriſie; to go from Worſhipping to Railing and Reviling; to ſpeak to the God of Heaven with a Tongue ſet on fire of Hell, is a monſtrous Impiety. *Obſerve* (4.) How the Apoſtle diſcovers the mighty Abſurdity of Bleſſing and Curſing with one and the ſame Tongue, and of putting the beſt Member to the worſt Uſe; the Good aggravates the Evil, and the Evil diſparageth, yea, diſproveth, the Good; to ſuppoſe that the ſame Tongue ſhould acceptably bleſs God, and at the ſame Time ſinfully curſe Man, is as irrational and abſurd as to imagine that the ſame Fountain ſhould ſend forth ſalt Water and freſh, ſweet Water and bitter; and as if a Figtree ſhould bring forth Olives, or a Vine bear Figs: Our Apoſtle Argues and Reaſons from what is impoſſible in Nature, to what is abſurd in Manners; contrary Effects from the ſame Cauſe is againſt the Order of Nature; in like manner Grace is uniform, and always acts like itſelf; to bleſs and curſe, to pray and revile, is wholly inconſiſtent with Grace; Nature abhors Contradictions, and ſo does the Grace of God; though a Chriſtian has a double Principle in him, the *Fleſh* and the *Spirit*, yet he has not a double *Heart*; his Spirit is ſingle and ſincere in what he does, in all he does, both for God and Man.

13 Who *is* a wiſe man, and endewed with knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, if any among you deſire to approve your ſelves more knowing than others, wiſer and better than others, as you would be thought when you cenſure and deſpiſe others, ſhew it to the World by a better Converſation, by your abounding fruitfulneſs in good Works, and by ſuch Meekneſs of Spirit as will be an Evidence of true Wiſdom. Hence we *Learn*, that the Wiſe Man is a Meek and Patient Man; as Pride and Folly, ſo Wiſdom and Meekneſs, are Companions; the more Wiſdom a Man has, the more he can check himſelf, and curb his Paſſion: *Moſes* is renowned in Scripture for his Wiſdom, and for his Meekneſs; we all affect the Reputation of Wiſdom, let us diſcover it by Humility, in being lowly within our ſelves; and by our Meekneſs, in bearing with, and forbearing one another; yet muſt our Meekneſs be a Wiſe Meekneſs, it muſt be a Meekneſs of *Wiſdom*; our Meekneſs muſt be oppoſite to Fierceneſs, but not to Zeal: *Moſes* was very Meek in his own Cauſe, but as hot as Fire in the Cauſe of God; Meekneſs and Zeal are conſiſtent, let us then ſhew out of a good Converſation our Works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth. 15 This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh, 16 For where envying and ſtrife *is*, there *is* confuſion, and every evil work.

Obſerve here, (1.) How the Apoſtle points at the Root of all Tongue-Evils; we pretend Zeal and Juſtice, Zeal for God, and doing Right to our ſelves, but the true Cauſe is *Envy*; called *bitter Envying*, as being bitter in its Root, bitter in its Fruit, bitter to others, bitter to our ſelves; this is a painful Evil, an unprofitable Evil, a fooliſh, ſinful, Evil; it makes another's Good our Grief; but why ſo? The Good of another is no Hurt to us; we have not the leſs becauſe another has more: *Leah*'s Fruitfulneſs was no Cauſe of *Rachel*'s Barrenneſs; why then ſhould it be the occaſion of *Rachel*'s Envy? Thy Portion is not impaired becauſe thy Brother's is increaſed. *Obſerve* (2.) How Envy and Strife are here joined together; if you have *Envying and Strife* in your Heart; when Envy is found in the Heart, Strife will ſoon be found in the Tongue, for Envy is the Mother of Strife; natural Corruption doth moſt of all bewray itſelf by Envy; it has an early Spring, and a late Antumn; we have it as ſoon as we come into the World, and 'tis an hard Matter to leave it before we go out of it again: Children ſuck it in with their Milk, and the Old Man buries it in his Coffin. *Obſerve* (3.) What are the bitter Effects and Fruits of Envy and Strife, namely, *Confuſion*, and *every evil Work*; an envious Spirit is an unquiet and wicked Spirit; the Devil worketh by no Inſtruments more than by Envious, Diſcontented and Malicious, Perſons: Pride and Envy were the Two Firſt Sins that crept into the World; the Firſt Man was ruin'd by Pride, the Second deſtroy'd by Envy, the whole World could not hold Two Brothers when the one was envied by the other: *Cain*'s Envy taſted Blood, and verily the Sinner's Envy thirſts after it; well therefore may the Apoſtle ſay, that where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion, and every Evil Work: *This Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is Earthly, Senſual, Deviliſh.*

17 But the wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* eaſie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſie.

Our Apoſtle here enters upon a Compariſon between Earthly Wiſdom, and Spiritual, Heavenly, Wiſdom; between Wiſdom that is not, and Wiſdom that is, from above. *Obſerve* (1.) That Wiſdom which is not from above Characterized and Deſcribed. (1.) It is *Earthly*; it is ſuited to Earthly Minds, and it is employed about Earthly Things: Earthly Wiſdom is meer Folly; 'tis ſad to be Wiſe only for this World, and to have ſuch an unſavoury Spirit as will reliſh nothing but what is Earthly. (2.) *Senſual*; ſuch Wiſdom as tendeth only to gratifie the Senſes, and is converſant about outward Pleaſures, which are the Pleaſures of the Beaſt, and not of the Man: Such Senſual Satisfactions do only pleaſe the ſenſitive Appetite, which it is the higheſt rational Pleaſure to mortifie and ſubdue. (3.) Deviliſh; becauſe it is ſuch Wiſdom as is found in the Devil; he is only Wiſe to do Miſchief. As a Man has a fleſhly Part in common with the Beaſt, ſo there are ſome Sins which the Scripture calls fleſhly and beaſtly Luſts, as Uncleanneſs, Riot, Exceſs, and the like; but as Man has ſomewhat in common with the Angels, namely, his Spirit and Soul, ſo there are ſome Sins which are called Satan's Luſts, *John* 8. 44. *His Luſts ye will do.* Thus Envy, Pride, Wrath, Revenge, Malice, Slander, theſe Sins make a Man Deviliſh, like unto Satan; hence is St. *Paul*'s Exhortation, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit.* Lord, pity the deplorable Ruins of Mankind, compaſſionate, fallen, Man, who hath not only ſomewhat of the Beaſt, but alſo ſomewhat of the Devil, in him by Nature. O deplorable Degradation! And ſhould he Sacrifice himſelf he could not ſave himſelf without a Sanctifier; he muſt be reſtored to the Divine Likeneſs here, or never enjoy his Maker hereafter. *Obſerve* (2.) He next deſcribes *Spiritual Wiſdom* to us, and that, Firſt, By its Original, 'tis from above: All Wiſdom is known by its deſcent; Carnal Wiſdom is of the Earth Earthly; Spiritual Wiſdom is from above, and has an Heavenly Author, and its Original and Deſcent is Heavenly: *The Wiſdom that is from above.* Secondly, He deſcribes Spiritual Wiſdom by its Effects and Fruits, by its Properties and Qualities, and reckons up Eight of them. (1.) True Wiſdom is *Pure*, an Holy Wiſdom, and Sinleſs Craftineſs: The Heart of ſuch a Perſon is clean, though not wholly free, from Sin, and his Way is undefiled: This pure Wiſdom will not brook the filthineſs either of Error in Judgment, or Sin in Practice: Error is a Blot as well as Sin, and is as damnable as Sin; the one is an open Road, the other a ſecret Path, to Hell and Deſtruction; he that is Wiſe, and has a due Care of his Soul's Salvation, will be as much afraid of erroneous Principles as he is of debauched Practices. (2.) *Peaceable*: True Wiſdom teaches to avoid all Strife and Contention: There is a ſweet Connection between Wiſdom and Peace; the wiſeſt are the meekeſt Men; they are Peaceable, and Peacemakers; not ready to provoke others, nor eaſily provoked themſelves: Such as ſee moſt need of Pardon from God, are moſt ready to pardon others, to live peaceably with all; yet note, tho' Wiſdom be *Pure* and *Peaceable*, yet it is Firſt *Pure*, then *Peaceable*; as God is the Firſt and Beſt of Beings, ſo Purity is the Firſt and Beſt of Bleſſings, the chief Care then muſt be for Purity and Truth; but next to Purity we moſt regard Peace: Truth muſt be preferred, but Peace muſt not be neglected; we muſt Treat with God by Prayer, and Treat with Man by Condeſcenſion, as far as a good Conſcience will ſuffer, for obtaining and preſerving Peace: *The Wiſdom from above is firſt Pure, then Peaceable.* (3.) True Wiſdom is *Gentle*, in oppoſition to Strife and Contention; the Word alſo ſignifies Moderate and Patient, *Phil.* 4. 5. 1 *Tim.* 3. 3. Such a Chriſtian is Moderate in doubtful Opinions, Moderate in his judging of others, Moderate and Patient in his whole Converſation, receding ſometimes from his own Right for Peace ſake. (4.) Eaſie to be Entreated; not Inflexible, but Perſuadable; he that has an Inflexible Will had need have an Infallible Judgment: Indeed there may be a flexibility and eaſineſs to a Fault; ſome good Natures (as they are called) are eaſily drawn away to Sin by evil Company, and wicked Counſel; in ſuch a Caſe to turn a deaf Ear to all Entreaties is not Obſtinacy, but Religious Reſolution. (5.) Full of Mercy; this has a double Object, ſuch as want, and ſuch as offend; and ſo there is Mercy in giving, and in forgiving: 'Tis the Glory of a Man to paſs by a Tranſgreſſion, and the Honour of a Chriſtian to put on Bowels of Mercy; without this Garment we ſhall appear naked at the Bar of God. (6.) Full of Good Works. Religion is not a dry Rod, but it Bloſſoms, and brings forth Fruit. Fruits of Humanity, and civil Courteſie, as well as Fruits of Piety, and Pious Charity: When we begin to be Religious we muſt not ware off to be Kind and Courteous; be Pitiful, be Courteous, 1 *Pet.* 3. 8. (7.) *Without Partiality:* That is, without making any Difference between Perſon and Perſon, becauſe of outward Reſpects, which is an high Point of Wiſdom: Folly diſcovers itſelf in nothing more than by doating upon outward Splendor: Fools, like Children, count nothing Good but what is Gay, but Wiſdom teaches us to value, and put an eſtimate, upon Perſons and Things according to their intrinſick Worth, and doth nothing by Partiality. (8.) Without Hypocriſie; in true Wiſdom there is no prevailing Guile, but a true Simplicity and godly Sincerity found with it, and this is the higheſt Piece of Wiſdom; the Hypocrite is the greateſt Fool; the ſincere Chriſtian is the truly Wiſe, and the only Wiſe, Man: *The Wiſdom from above is Pure and Peaceable, without Partiality, and without Hypocriſie.*

18 And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.

Our Apoſtle here concludes his Diſcourſe, by ſhewing the Happineſs of thoſe who are poſſeſt of that Wiſdom from above, which is Pure and Peaceable, *&c.* They ſow a Seed which will yield them preſent Fruit, and bring Sheaves of Joy and Comfort into their Boſoms, and alſo entitle them to an Everlaſting Reward in that Kingdom wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs. Learn hence, 1. That all the Actions of this Life are as Seed ſown for the Life to come; and every one's Harveſt hereafter will be according to his Seedtime here; our Rewards ſhall be according to our Works. *Learn* (2.) That the Reward of Righteouſneſs and Peaceableneſs are reaped, and received here Initially, and ſhall be e'er long enjoyed perfectly: *The Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of them that love Peace. Learn* (3.) That true Lovers of Righteouſneſs ought to be Lovers of Peace, and peaceable Perſons Lovers of Righteouſneſs; Mercy and Truth muſt meet together, Righteouſneſs and Peace muſt kiſs each other; Peace without Righteouſneſs is but a ſordid Compliance; Righteouſneſs without Peace is but a rough Auſterity; our Duty is to couple a ſweet Goodneſs with a ſevere Righteouſneſs.

CHAP. IV.

Our Apoſtle having ſhewed in the foregoing Chapter the exceeding Evil of Strife and Contention, he comes in this Chapter to diſcover the Root from whence all this proceeds, namely, from Mens Carnal Luſts, and Corrupt Affections; accordingly thus he ſpeaks.

1 FRom whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come* they not hence, *even* of your luſts that war in your members?

The *Jews*, to whom St. *James* directed this Epiſtle, had at that time great Wars and Fightings, not only with their Neighbours, but even among themſelves; in every City there were *Wars and Fightings among them:* Now the Apoſtle here puts it to their Conſciences to tell and declare whence theſe Animoſities and Contentions, thoſe Wars and Fightings, did proceed, *Come they not hence, even from your Luſts?* Plainly *intimating*, that the Cauſe of all Civil Diſſentions are Mens Corruptions: War ſtirs firſt within before it breaks forth without; were there not a Fight in our ſelves there would be no Fighting with others: Luſt within is the Make-bait in all Societies and Communities without: Pride and Covetouſneſs, Envy and Ambition, make Men injurious to one another; worldly and ſenſual Luſts firſt War in our ſelves before they diſturb the common Peace.

2 Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.

The *Jews* at the writing of this Epiſtle to them did vehemently Luſt after Liberty and Freedom from the *Roman* Yoak, and for Dominion and Government over other Nations, believing that their *Meſſias* was to be a Temporal Prince, who ſhould enable them to Lord it over the *Heathen* World: Now, ſays our Apoſtle, though you Luſt for Liberty and Dominion, yet you have it not; and though in an eager purſuit after theſe Things ye Kill and Slay, yet you do but loſe your Blood and Labour, for ye cannot obtain what you thus inordinately ſeek, and irregularly covet; you ſhould go to God in Prayer for what you deſire: But if at any time you do Pray, it is not in a right Manner, with a right Intention, and for a right End, 'tis to conſume it upon your Luſts, namely, that having the Liberty you deſire, you may poſſeſs the good Things of this World you Luſt after, and may Lord it over the *Heathen* World. *Learn* hence, That we pray amiſs when our Aims and Ends are not right in Prayer. *Learn* (2.) That then our Aims and End are not right in Prayer when we ask Bleſſings for the Uſe and Encouragement of our Luſts. *Learn* (3.) That Prayers ſo framed are uſually Succeſleſs; what we ask amiſs we are ſure to miſs, if the Almighty has any Kindneſs for us; in Prayer we muſt conſider Three Things, the Object, the Manner, and the End: We muſt not only guard our Affections, but ſecure our Intentions; for Prayers that want a good Aim, do alſo want a good Iſſue: *Ye ask, and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs.*

4 Ye adulterers, and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

'Tis Spiritual, not Corporal, Adultery which theſe Words take notice of; the inordinate Love of the World is called Spiritual Adultery, becauſe it draws away the Love of the Soul from God, and diſſolves the Spiritual Marriage between God and the Soul: *Ye Adulterers, and Adultereſſes, know ye not that the Friendſhip of the World*, which ſtands in Competition with, and indiſpoſes you for, the doing of God's Will, *is enmity with God?* And that whoſoever will be thus a *Friend* of the World is the *Enemy* of God? To love the World as God's Competitor is Enmity to God, and he is God's Enemy that loveth it predominately. Learn we to love every Creature with a Creature love: For God reckons we love him not at all, if we love him not above all.

5 Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?

Some by the Spirit here underſtand the Holy Spirit of God, and make the Words run in the Form of an Interrogation thus, the Spirit that dwelleth in us Chriſtians luſteth he to Envy, as yours doth? Nay, rather is he not the Spirit of Love and Goodneſs? Others underſtand our own Spirit, our corrupt Nature, is mightily carried forth this Way, even to envy the Good of others; it's uſual in Scripture to call the Bent and Propenſion of the Souls either to Good or Evil by the Name of Spirit. *Note* hence, That God's own People have much, too much, of a Spirit of Envy remaining in them, unmortified and unſubdued by them: *The Spirit that is in us luſteth to Envy.*

6 But he giveth more grace: wherefore he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

The Sin of Envy being cenſured before, our Apoſtle next condemns the Sin of Pride; he uſes a Military Term when he tells us that *God reſiſteth the Proud*; it *ſignifies*, that he ſets himſelf as in Battle Array againſt the Proud, in a direct Oppoſition to him; there are no ſort of Sinners whom God ſets himſelf ſo much againſt to Puniſh and Plague as proud Sinners: Such are wholly out of his Favour; he beholdeth them afar off, and they are the Subjects of his high Diſpleaſure; like naked Men in an Army, they ſtand expoſed to his Wrath, they have no Shelter, nothing to keep off the Threatning from them: For there can be no Shelter from Divine Wrath but in Divine Love: There are Two Eminent Works of Divine Providence in the World, the one is to lift up and exalt the Humble, the other is to abaſe and pull down the Proud: Some pride themſelves in their Natural Parts, others in their Acquired Parts, ſome in their Moral Virtues, and Evangelical Graces, others in their Holy Duties, and Spiritual Performances; we ſeldom do well but we think too well of our ſelves. Learn hence, That

Pride is a common Sin, and provoking, yea, a very provoking Sin, and ſo muſt needs be, becauſe it is an Uſurpation of the Place and Power of God, and ſets itſelf againſt all the Commands and Threatnings of God: *God reſiſteth the Proud, but he giveth Grace to the Humble. Grace*, that is, (1.) Favour: The Humble ſhall have his Favour, and the Proud his Frowns. (2.) God giveth Grace, that is, more Grace, further Meaſures of Grace, to the Humble; as we lay up our richeſt Wines in the loweſt Cellars, ſo does God lodge his choiceſt Graces in humble and lowly Hearts; he giveth not only Grace, but more Grace, to the Humble; ſuch as are low in their own Eyes, are under the ſpecial Protection and Direction alſo of the moſt High God.

7 Submit your ſelves therefore to God, reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you:

That is, ſubmit to his Government and Authority, to his preceptive and commanding Will, and to his providential and diſpoſing Will, ſubmit your ſelves to the Guidance of his Word, to the Direction of his Spirit, to the Conduct of his Providence: Submit your whole ſelves to the whole Law and Will of God; let all your Thoughts, Affections, Words and Actions, be guided according to the ſtrict Rules of the Word of God: But *Reſiſt the Devil*, by no means do not ſubmit or yield an Inch to him; the only Way to overcome Satan is not by yielding to him, but by reſiſting and oppoſing of him: Satan is both a conquered Enemy, and a cowardly Enemy; though he has a bold Face, yet a faint Heart: *Reſiſt him, and he will flee from you. Obſerve* here, (1.) The Devil's active Enmity and continual Hoſtility againſt Man implied and ſuppoſed: Satan is continually Buſie with us; that is, the Apoſtate Spirit, and the Spirit of Apoſtacy lodged in our Natures; where-ever we ſee Malice, Revenge, Envy, Hatred, Pride, and Self-love, there is that Evil Spirit which is ſo Inimical and Injurious to us, that is, *Venenum Serpentis Diabolici*, the Sting and Poiſon, the very Soul and Spirit, of the Apoſtate Nature. *Obſerve* (2.) The Chriſtian's Duty diſcovered, and that is, not to Yield, but Reſiſt and Oppoſe: We muſt either Reſiſt him, or be taken Captive by him; if we do not Reſiſt him, we ſhall never get Rid of him; if once we Parley and Treat with him, we muſt expect to be Triumph'd over, and Trampled upon, by him. *Obſerve* (3.) The Certainty of Succeſs declared, *He will flee from you:* Every Denial is a Diſcouragement to Satan; the ſtrength of his Temptations lyes in our Treachery and Falſeneſs; we are falſe within our ſelves, otherwiſe all his Power and Malice could not hurt us: However, if we continue our Reſiſtance, the Holy Spirit will come in with his Aſſiſtance; he will be our Second in the Field, and we ſhall find that ſtronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the World; the God of Peace will bruiſe Satan under our Feet ſhortly.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you:

Obſerve here, (1.) Man by Nature ſince his Fall is afar off from God; not barely by a natural Diſtance, as a Creature, but alſo by a moral Diſtance, as a Sinner; God made Man near him, but when Man ſinned he departed from him; now we draw nigh to God by Converſion, and in all the Actings of Repentance there is a Firſt and a Second Converſion: A firſt Converſion from a ſinful State, a Second Converſion from ſinful Acts; by both we draw nigh to God; but the drawing nigh to God here principally intended, is by approaching to him in Prayer, and in the Uſe of every Holy Ordinance; an humbling of the Soul before God is a drawing nigh unto him: Hence it is that Good Men delight ſo much in Prayer, and other Holy Duties; they meet with God in them, and draw near to God by them; and they that meet with God, meet with all Delights. *Obſerve* (2.) As the Duty required, *Draw nigh to God*, ſo the Encouragement annexed, *He will draw near to you:* God will certainly draw nigh to that Chriſtian in a Way of Mercy, who prepareth his Heart to approach and draw near to him in a Way of Duty; the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him, nigh to Comfort, nigh to Quicken, nigh to Guide, nigh to Support.

8 ——Cleanſe *your* hands, ye ſinners, and purifie *your* hearts, ye double-minded.

Mark, to ſignifie to us our deep Pollution, and univerſal Pollution, we are called upon both to Cleanſe and to Purifie, and that both our Hands and our Hearts. *Queſtion*, But why is cleanſing of the Hands ſet before purifying the Heart? Muſt we ſweeten the Streams before the Fountain? *Anſw.* It is not unuſual in Scripture to put that Firſt which is viſibly Firſt; as *Calling* before *Election*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. and becauſe Grace having once entred the Heart, diſcovers itſelf by an immediate cleanſing of the Hands; ſo that if we would have an Holy Life we muſt get a Clean Heart. Learn (1.) That unclean Perſons can have no Communion with God. (2.) That they who draw nigh to God muſt cleanſe their Hands, becauſe the Sins of our Hands do keep us at a Diſtance from God, and God at a Diſtance from us. *Commerce* with God in an Ordinance is one Thing, and *Communion* with him is another: A Man may have a Commerce or Trade with an Enemy for Profit ſake, whilſt he refuſes to hold Communion with him in a Way of Friendſhip, and Intimacy of Acquaintance. Learn (3.) That Double-minded Men have corrupt Hearts. Double-mindedneſs is a dividing of the Heart between God and ſomething elſe; whereas God calls for the whole Heart, the whole Mind, the whole Soul, the whole Strength. Learn (4.) That this Double-mindedneſs hinders both our drawing nigh to God, and God's drawing nigh to us; an Heart divided between God and the World, between Conſcience and Luſt, between Religion and Self-intereſt, will hinder all Intercourſe and Sweet Communion betwixt God and us in the Duty of Prayer: *Cleanſe therefore your Hands, ye Sinners, and Purifie your Hearts, ye Double-minded.*

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heavineſs. 10 Humble your ſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

The next Duty we are exhorted to by the Apoſtle is a deep Humiliation, and voluntary Afflicting, of our Souls before God for Sin, and upon the Account of any Calamity either on our ſelves or others. Learn hence, That as the Afflicting Hand of God does encreaſe upon a Perſon, a Family, or a People, ſo ought the Humiliation and Mourning of that Perſon, Family, or People, to encreaſe; we ought not only to be humbled when God afflicts, but alſo to be humbled in proportion to what God afflicts; great Afflictions calls for great Humiliations; woe to that Perſon, that Family, or that People, who will not be afflicted when God afflicts them, nor humble themſelves when God humbles them; who when God caſts them down will hold up their Heads in Mirth and Jollity: God loves to ſee us bear our Croſs, but he cannot endure to ſee us make ſport with it, or ſlight of it; if God once perceive us driving away our Sorrow with Harp and Viol, or drowning it with Wine, he can quickly turn our Wine into Water, and our Laughter into the Voice of Weeping; now is it not better to turn our Mirth into Mourning, than to have God turn it into Mourning? They who turn their Mirth into Mourning ſhall find Comfort after their Mourning: But they ſhall know nothing but Mourning whoſe Mirth God turns into Mourning; be afflicted therefore, and mourn, and weep. *Queſt.* But how comes the Apoſtle to make uſe of ſo many Words to one Purpoſe, *be Afflicted, Mourn, Weep, Humble your ſelves?* &c. *Anſ.* All this heap of Expreſſions does import and imply, (1.) The Neceſſity of the Duty. (2.) The Difficulty of the Duty. (3.) The Continuance of the Duty; and accordingly much enforcement is Neceſſary; Fleſh and Blood loves Pleaſure, but declines Sorrow and Heavineſs; Nature loves no bitter Draughts, though bitter Things are ſometimes the beſt Things; therefore the Apoſtle's Call to afflict our Souls, and humble our ſelves in the Sight of God, is repeated; and mark the Encouragement given thus to do, *Humble your ſelves in the Sight of God, and he ſhall lift you up*; Submiſſion and Humility is the true Way to Exaltation and Glory; the Way to Riſe is to Fall; he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted, *Luke* 14. 11. He ſhall lift thee up in due time, 1 *Pet.* 5. Wait God's leiſure and the Promiſe ſhall ſurely be fulfilled; the World looketh upon Humility as the Way to Contempt, but God pronounces it the Way to Honour; *before Honour is Humility.*

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that ſpeaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth *his* brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy: who art thou that judgeſt another?

Theſe Words, as generally delivered by our Apoſtle, are a Diſſwaſive from the Sin of Detraction, or ſpeaking Evil of one another, either by ſecret Whiſpering, or open Backbiting; a very common, but moſt unbecoming, Sin amongſt Chriſtians. What Pleaſure do ſome Perſons take in divulging the Faults of others, in aggravating their Faults, in defrauding them of their neceſſary Excuſe and Mitigation. though at the ſame Time they are conſcious of it, by leſſening their good Actions through the Suppoſition of their falſe Aims and Ends? 'Tis an injurious and unworthy Jealouſie, when a Perſon's Actions are fair to ſuſpect his Intentions, by mentioning their Failings, but ſuppreſſing their Worth and Excellencies: It becomes Chriſtians neither to give Way to this growing Evil themſelves, nor give Ear to it in others. But there ſeems to be ſomething Special and Particular in theſe Words, which reſpects the *Jews*, to whom this Epiſtle is directed; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, give over your Reproach and Cenſoriouſneſs againſt the *Gentile* Chriſtians, who do not obſerve your Ceremonial Law, your Feaſts, your Sabbaths, your Circumciſion; for both the Law of *Chriſt*, and the Law of *Moſes*, which you profeſs to own, do bind you to Love your Neighbour as yourſelf, and forbids ſuch uncharitable Cenſures; ſo that by condemning your Brethren you condemn the Law, and ſet yourſelf above it; and all this in Contempt of the Law and the Lawgiver, who is one, and is able both to ſave and to deſtroy. There are ſome that are neither able to ſave nor to deſtroy; there are others able to deſtroy, but cannot ſave. *Satan* is a Deſtroyer, but he cannot ſave any, nor can he deſtroy all, if he could none ſhould be ſaved. But there is a Lawgiver who can ſave and deſtroy, who can give Life and take it away, and both as often as he will; he can ſave thoſe that obey his Laws, and deſtroy all thoſe that tranſgreſs them: Therefore ſeeing *Chriſt*, and none but *Chriſt*, has Authority to give Laws, it is not for you to impoſe Ceremonial Obſervances upon your Brethren, and to cenſure and judge them for not obſerving them, when *Chriſt* has ſet them at liberty from the Obſervation of them.

13 Go to now, ye that ſay, To day or to morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what *ſhall be* on the morrow: For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. 15 For that ye *ought* to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings: all ſuch rejoicing is evil.

For the clear underſtanding of theſe Words conſider, 1. What is not here forbidden or condemned by our Apoſtle, namely, prudential Reſolutions for a right Management of Humane Affairs; it is lawful for Men to take up a Purpoſe to go to ſuch a Place, and follow their Trade there; to Buy, and Sell, and get Gain, in an honeſt Way; but no Man muſt be peremptory in this, becauſe we know not what ſhall be on the Morrow; ſuch Determinations muſt be made with Submiſſion to Divine Providence; *If the Lord will we ſhall do this or that*, referring all to his Pleaſure, who alone doth whatſoever pleaſeth him. Conſider 2. What is hereby intimated to us, and what is the Duty incumbent upon us, namely, 1. That we have no Aſſurance of our Lives, nor of any of the Comforts of our Lives, for one Day, and therefore ought to refer all our Actions, our Enterprizes and Undertakings, to the Will of God. *What is your Life? It is but a Vapour; therefore ye ought to ſay, if the Lord will we ſhall do this and that.* 2. That in regard of the great Frailty of our Lives, and the great Uncertainty of Iſſues and Events, it is the Height of Preſumption to promiſe our ſelves great Things without the Leave of God's Providence. As our Times are in God's Hands, ſo are our Actions alſo in God's Power, both as to the Performance of them, and as to the Succeſs of them. *Say not then, to Day, or to Morrow, we will go into ſuch a City, for that ye ought to ſay, if the Lord will we ſhall do this.*

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin.

Obſerve here, 1. That Sins of Ignorance are Sins, and render Men greatly culpable, though Ignorance will in ſome degree leſſen their Puniſhment. *Obſerve* 2. That to ſin againſt Light and Knowledge is a very heinous Aggravation of Sin, becauſe the Knowledge of our Duty lays us under the greateſt Obligation to do it. 3. That the greater Advantages and Opportunities any Man has of knowing his Duty, and the more Knowledge he ſins againſt in not doing of it, the greater is his Sin, and the more grievous will be his Condemnation.

CHAP. V.

1 GO to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon *you*. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire: ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.

Theſe Words may be conſidered either relatively or abſolutely. Conſider them, 1. With relation to the *Jews*, to whom they were written immediately, and they are a Prediction or Denunciation of that Judgment which was coming upon the Rich Men in the *Jewiſh* Nation, which Prediction *Joſephus* aſſures us was fulfilled by the ſlaughter and ſpoiling of the Rich *Jews* throughout *Galilee* and *Judea*, the Zealots ſparing none but the Poor and Low. Thus did the Vengeance of God, and does to this Day, purſue and follow that wicked People, who killed the Lord of Life, and their own Prophets, who brought Judgement on themſelves to the uttermoſt. Conſider the Words abſolutely in themſelves, and they are a ſevere and cutting Reprehenſion to Covetous Rich Men; for their ſordid ſparing of that Wealth which God had given them for publick Service. And the Apoſtle gives us, 1. A Deſcription of their Sin. 2. A Declaration of their Puniſhment. *Obſerve* 1. A Deſcription of the Sin of the Covetous Rich Worldlings, they choſe rather to have their Goods to be corrupted and ſpoiled than to be employed to good Uſes. Their Victuals might have refreſh'd the Bowels of the Hungry, but they rather ſuffered them to putrifie and ſtink. The Garments which lay uſeleſs in their Wardrobes might have cloathed the Backs of their naked Brethren, but they rather let them be moth-eaten; their Gold and Silver might have been applied to many good Uſes, but they had rather it ſhould be cankered, and ruſt in their Cheſts. *Obſerve* 2. The Puniſhment denounced againſt them for this their Sin, the Ruſt of their Gold and Silver *ſhall Witneſs againſt them*; that is, their Conſciences ſhall at once convince them of their baſe Covetouſneſs, and torment them for it; and this corroding of their Conſciences ſhall have an Impreſſion upon their Bodies; it ſhall eat their Fleſh as it were Fire; and all that Treaſure which with wrong to others, and violation of their own Conſciences, they had heaped together, was but heaped up for the Spoiler, and the Violence of the Laſt Days. Learn from the whole, 1. That it is hard to poſſeſs Riches without Sin; an hard Matter to have them, and not be hindred from Heaven by them. Learn 2. That a covetous Hoarding and ſordid Sparing of Wealth, which our ſuffering Brethren want, brings a Curſe both upon our Perſons and Eſtates. 3. That ſore Miſeries and dreadful Judgments ſhall come upon Wicked Rich Men, which, if believingly apprehended, would cauſe them now to Weep and Howl. We do no Hurt with our Wealth ſay ſome; ay, but what Good do you do with it? Where are the Poor Members of *Chriſt* whom ye have relieved with the Superfluities of your Table? But can many ſay, Truly they have done no Harm with their Eſtates? Lord! What Careleſneſs in Religion, what Contempt of God, what Riot and Exceſs; is found amongſt many that abound in Wealth, who expend more upon a Luſt in one Day than would maintain a Poor Family many Years? Learn 4. That in the Day of Judgment not only our Actions, but all the Circumſtances of our Actions, ſhall be brought forth, and produced as Arguments of Conviction; the ruſty Iron, the cankered Silver, the moth-eaten Cloaths, ſhall be produced; the Stones of the Wall, Built by Oppreſſion, ſhall cry, Lord, we were Built by Oppreſſion and Violence, and the Beam out of the Timber ſhall anſwer it, *True, Lord, even ſo it is*, Habak. 2. 11. The Circumſtances of Mens Sins at the great Day will be as ſo many Memorials to put *them* in mind of Guilt, and *God* in mind of Vengeance. *Your Gold and Silver is cankered, and the Ruſt of it ſhall witneſs againſt you.*

5 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped, are entred into the ears of the Lord of ſabbaoth.

The next Sin which our Apoſtle convicts the Rich of, and condemns them for, is the Sin of Oppreſſion, and that of the worſt Sort, even of Labourers and Servants; their Covetouſneſs was the Cauſe of this Oppreſſion. There is no Sin ſo heinous and baſe but Covetouſneſs may be a Mother or a Nurſe to it: What more ſordid than for the Rich Maſter to detain the Wages of the Poor Labourer? Yet *Behold, the Hire of the Labourers crieth.* Though they did not, durſt not, complain, yet their Hire kept back did complain. Learn hence, That as all Oppreſſions is very ſinful, ſo eſpecially the detaining of the Labourer's Wages, when their Hire is delayed or denied, both are exceeding ſinful; and accordingly we find Oppreſſors in Scripture joined with the vileſt of Sinners, even with Sorcerers, Adulterers, and falſe Swearers, *Mat.* 3. 5. And to teſtifie that God cannot want Witneſſes againſt Oppreſſors, he tells us, their Hire ſhall cry as well as the Poor themſelves; the Beam and the Stone out of the Wall ſhall cry, *Hab.* 2. Remember we then that ſecret Wrongs are known to God; the Poor may not always know who wrongs them, but the Lord fully knows, and their Wrongs and Oppreſſions will cry againſt us, when they know not againſt whom to cry. And *Note*, The Perſon glorouſly deſcribed, who is the Poor's Avenger, he is the *Lord of Sabbaoth*, or the Lord of Hoſts, who has all Power in his Hand, and all Creatures at his Command. How bold and daring then is the Oppreſſor to afflict the Poor, who have the Lord of Hoſts for their Avenger? (*Their Cry is entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth.*

5 Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nouriſhed your hearts, as in a day of ſlaughter.

The next Sin he charges upon them is Senſuality, Luxury, Laſciviouſneſs, their Eating and Drinking to exceſs in their Feaſts, pampering themſelves for the Slaughter, and the Shambles. Theſe are Sins very natural to corrupt Nature, but chiefly incident to the Rich. Pride, Idleneſs, Fulneſs of Bread, and living in Pleaſure, are too frequently Sins that do abound in Rich Mens Houſes; tho' their Abundance is no Excuſe, but rather an Aggravation of their Sin. God allows us to uſe Pleaſure, but not to live in Pleaſure, and by calling it Pleaſure upon Earth. He intimates, 1. That Senſual Delights are only enjoyed here in this World. 2. That their Deſires ran after theſe earthly Pleaſures only; the Pleaſures of the Beaſt only pleaſed them; whereas the Delights of Senſe are ſo far from being the chief Pleaſure for which God deſigned us, that on the contrary he intended we ſhould take our chief Pleaſure, not in qualifying, but in reſtraining, our Senſual Appetite, in reducing that rebellious Power under the Government and Dominion of Reaſon and Religion.

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the juſt; *and* he doth not reſiſt you.

By *the Juſt* may be underſtood *Jeſus Chriſt*, that *Juſt One*; whom the Nation of the *Jews* condemned and killed, and alſo ſuch of his Members, Orthodox Chriſtians, whom the Judaizing Chriſtians perſecuted. By their *Condemning the Juſt*, underſtand how they proceeded againſt them under a Pretence and Colour of Law; before they would actually kill, they pretend legally to condemn. Learn thence, That God takes notice not only of the open Violences offered to his People, but alſo of all the Injuries done unto them, under the Form of a Legal Procedure; it is a mighty Provocation, when publick Authority, which is the Defence of Innocency, is made the Pretence of Oppreſſion; it follows, *Ye have killed the Juſt*, this is added to let us know that Oppreſſion will proceed as far as Death. Wickedneſs knoweth no Bounds; good Men are oft-times arraigned, condemn'd and kill'd, they fall a Sacrifice to the Rage of their Perſecutors and Oppreſſors. It is added, *He doth not reſiſt you*, which, if applied to *Chriſt*, points at his Meekneſs; he was ſlain without Reſiſtance; he came to ſuffer, therefore would not reſiſt. If applied to the ſuffering Chriſtians, it points at their Weakneſs and Inability to make Reſiſtance, as well as at their Meekneſs and Patience under Sufferings. *Ye have condemned and killed the Juſt, and he doth not reſiſt you.*

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye alſo patient; ſtabliſh your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Obſerve here, 1. The Duty exhorted to, *Patience*; *Be patient, Brethren.* Patience is a Senſe of Afflictions without Murmuring, and of Injuries without Revenge. 'Tis the Duty of Chriſtians to be Patient under their Sufferings, tho' they be long and ſharp. *Obſerve* 2. The Argument to enforce this Duty, *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* This may be underſtood of *Chriſt*'s particular coming to judge his Murtherers at *Jeruſalem*, which was then at hand, or of his general coming to judge the World at the laſt Day. As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, have a little Patience, and when your Lord cometh he will put a Period to all your Afflictions with deſire; long for his coming, and yet with Patience wait for it. *Obſerve* 3. A Pattern of Patience propounded in the Huſbandman, he waiteth, and waiteth long for the Time of Harveſt, and in order thereunto for the former and latter Rain, to prepare the Corn for the Day of a joyful Harveſt. Now in Imitation of the Huſbandman the patient Chriſtian thus argues with himſelf, if the Huſbandman waits with Patience for the coming of the Harveſt, ſhall not I wait with Perſeverance for the coming of my Lord? The approach of Harveſt is precious to him, and ſhall not the appearance of *Chriſt* be ſo to me? Shall he endure ſo much for a little Corn, and not I much more for an Heavenly Kingdom? *Obſerve* 4. The Directions given in order to the obtaining of this Patience and Long-ſuffering, *ſtabliſh your Hearts*; that is, in a firm Expectation of *Chriſt*'s coming, believe that he will come certainly, and may come ſuddenly, and ſooner perhaps than you may apprehend. Learn hence, that it is the Duty of Chriſtians in and under their Afflictions, to *ſtabliſh their Hearts* in a firm Belief of the Coming and Appearance of *Chriſt*, to put a final Period to all their Sufferings, and to reward their victorious Faith and Patience. *Be ye alſo Patient, ſtabliſh your Hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

9 Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be condemned: behold, the judge ſtandeth before the door.

Obſerve here, 1. A Prohibition, *Grudge not one againſt another*; that is, do not murmur or repine, groan or grieve, as impatient Men uſe to do under their Preſſures; complain not of God, becauſe the Time of your Deliverance is delayed; thirſt not after Revenge againſt your Perſecutors, and envy not thoſe who are exerciſed with fewer Troubles than your ſelves. *Grudge not.* *Obſerve* 2. The Enforcement of this Prohibition from the Danger of the Fact, *Leſt ye be condemned.* As if he had ſaid, Impatience and Diſcontent, Envy and Diſtruſt, will expoſe you to greater Miſeries than you complain of: Your Sufferings here are but for your Probation, but your Grudging and Repining will be your Condemnation. *Obſerve* 3. The Anticipation or Foreſtalling of an Objection which ſome might make, What! Muſt we ſuffer, and may we not complain? Muſt we, by tamely bearing many Affronts, Invite more, and Revenge none? Yes, ſays the Apoſtle, be patient, and commit your Cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly, for *Behold the Judge ſtandeth before the Door.* Where *Note*, 1. A Judge, the Supream and Univerſal Judge, *Jeſus Chriſt*, who was here judged by his Creatures, but is now coming to judge his Judges. 2. His Poſture, *He ſtandeth*, which is the Judge's Poſture when he executes Judgment. St. *Stephen* ſaw *Chriſt* ſtanding, *Acts* 7. 55. at God's Right Hand; not as an Advocate to plead his Cauſe, (*Chriſt* is ſaid to ſit at God's Right Hand when he does that,) but he ſtood now as a Judge to take ſpeedy Vengeance on St. *Stephen*'s Murtherers for that bloody Act. *Note* 3. The Place where the Judge ſtandeth, *before the Door*; that is, he is coming to Judgment, and he is juſt at Hand; he has put on his Robes, and is aſcending his Tribunal. *Obſerve* laſtly, The *Note* of Attention, *Behold*; this uſhers in the whole, *Behold, the Judge ſtandeth at the Door.* Learn hence, That the Conſideration of *Chriſt*'s near approach to Judgment ſhould awe the Conſciences of Men, and mould their Converſations into a dutiful Compliance with Divine Commands.

10 Take, my brethren the prophets, who have ſpoken in the Name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience.

Here the Apoſtle exhorts ſuffering Chriſtians to Patience, by the Example of the Old Teſtament Saints, who were exceeding Dear to God, employed in ſpecial Services for God, yet exerciſed with long and ſharp Afflictions from him. Now *their* Nature was as Tender and as Frail as *ours*, and we have the ſame Bleſſed Spirit to Comfort and Aſſiſt us with *them*. *Note* thence, 1. That the Examples of Excellent Perſons, who have gone in the Thorny Path of Affliction before us, and beaten it for us, are of excellent uſe to ſuppreſs our Fears, to ſupport our Spirits, under all our Conflicts, and to rouze our Courage in all our Encounters. *Note* 2. That it is our great Duty to eye the encouraging Examples of thoſe that have trod the Path of Sufferings before us, and ſtrive to imitate and follow ſuch worthy Patterns. The Firſt Sufferers had the hardeſt Task; ſtrange and untry'd Torments are moſt terrible; they knew not the Strength of their Enemy which they were to engage; but we fight with an Enemy that has been often beaten, and triumphed over by our Brethren that went before us; certainly, we that live in theſe laſt Times have the beſt Helps that ever any had to ſubdue their Fears. *Take we* then the *Prophets*, and Primitive Saints, *for an Example* both of grievous Sufferings, and of great Patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure.—

That is, all Perſons do judge and pronounce thoſe that have ſuffered Death for Righteouſneſs ſake to be in a very happy Condition; though they live Perſecuted, yet they die Sainted. Living Saints are an Eye-ſore; by the Strictneſs of their Lives, and the Severity of their Reproofs, they Torment a Wicked World; but Dead Saints do not ſtand in the Way of their Luſts; they will have therefore a good Word for the dead Saints whilſt they hate and perſecute the living. *Behold we count them Happy which endure.*

11 ——Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

That is, ye have heard how Eminent *Job* was, both for his Sufferings and his Patience, and you have ſeen (it is ſet before your Eyes in his Story) what an End the Lord made with him, giving him double in this World for what he loſt; therefore though you may be Loſers for God, yet fear not that you ſhould be Loſers by him. Learn hence, 1. That it is good and uſeful in our Afflictions to propound *Job*'s Pattern and Example to our own Imitation. He was Famous for his Sufferings, and as Famous for his Patience: Do you ſuffer various Kinds of Affliction? Do you ſuffer in your Body, in your Spirit, in your neareſt Relations, in your deareſt of Earthly Comforts? And under all theſe do you ſuffer the heavieſt Cenſures for Hypocriſie? It is but *Job*'s Portion, and if you compare Notes not half of his Condition neither; ſo for his Patience, let us propound that for our Pattern too, and take this Encouragement to do it, namely, that though *Job* diſcovered much Impatience, curſing the Day of his Birth, *&c.* yet that is not here mentioned, but mercifully pitied, and pardoned, and graciouſly over-look'd. Where the Heart is upright with God Infirmities are not mentioned by him. Learn 2. That our Afflictions ought not ſo much to be conſidered in their Nature and Beginning as in their Iſſue and End. *You have ſeen the End of the Lord.* God gives always a Gracious End, and a Glorious End, to the Afflictions of his People, and ſometimes a Temporal End alſo. *Job* had all theſe: Let us under the Rod wait upon God with *Job*'s Patience, and he will give us *Job*'s End. Learn 2. What an Affectionate Regard God bears to his Children in and under their heavy Sufferings; he is full of Bowels, as the Word ſignifies, truly compaſſionate, *very pitiful, and of tender Mercy.* As he has Pardon for their Sins, ſo he has Pity for their Afflictions; he is pitiful as well as merciful, yea, very pitiful, and of tender Mercy. *Obſerve* laſtly, That the Book of *Job* is a real Hiſtory, not a Parable. There was ſuch a Man as *Job*, how elſe could his Patience be propounded as a Pattern? And whence is it that we find him numbered with *Noah* and *Daniel*? *Ezek.* 14. 14. As they were real Perſons, and truly prevalent in Prayer, ſo was he, *Job* 42. 10.

12 But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea, and *your* nay, nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation.

Obſerve, That an Oath here is not abſolutely forbidden, but reſtrained. *Above all Things, my Brethren.* *Note*, With what Vehemency and Earneſtneſs the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Swear not*, that is, ſwear not vainly and raſhly, ſwear not lightly and prophanely, ſwear not unduly by any of the Creatures, (but by the Creator only,) which was a Sin that the *Jews* were dreadfully guilty of. *But let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay*; accuſtom your ſelves to a true Simplicity and Plainneſs of Speech, in affirming or denying, letting Oaths alone, *leſt ye fall into Condemnation*; that is, plainly into the Condemnation of Hell. Learn hence, 1. That raſh and vain Swearing, or prophane Oaths, are an high Abuſe of the dreadful Name of God, and a mighty Provocation to him: Verily there is no Sin that doth more weary the Patience of God, becauſe there is no Sin that doth more baniſh the Fear of God out of our Hearts. Learn 2. That the great End of Speech being to communicate the Senſe of our Minds to each other, we ought to uſe ſuch Plainneſs and Simplicity in ſpeaking, that we may believe one another without Oaths, or more Solemn Religious Aſſeverations. But yet, 3. To take an Oath upon a ſolemn Occaſion, when lawfully called thereunto, is a Chriſtian and Neceſſary Duty.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

Here *Obſerve*, 1. That Affliction is a praying Seaſon. Prayer is a Duty never out of Seaſon, but never more in Seaſon than in and under Affliction. *Obſerve* 2. That tho' the Time of Affliction be a ſpecial Time when a Saint prayeth, yet it is not the only Time; he prays at all Times becauſe he loves to pray; he prays then becauſe he eſpecially ſtands then in need of Prayer. A Carnal Heart has no Mind to the Duty; he viſits not God unleſs God viſits him; but a Good Man prays continually, prays without ceaſing, in Health and Sickneſs, in Poverty and Want; when the Candle of the Lord ſhines about his Tabernacle, as well as when he walketh through Darkneſs.

13 ——Is any merry? let him ſing pſalms.

He that Prays makes Muſick in the Ears of God; he that Sings Pſalms performs a Duty ſuitable to his Condition. Several Conditions require ſeveral Duties, and all Duties are to be performed ſuitably to our ſeveral Conditions. Singing is proper to a proſperous State; both to Sing God's Praiſes, and to Sing to his Praiſe. Prayer is proper to an afflicted Condition; 'tis our beſt Remedy, becauſe it leads us to God, our beſt Refuge. Therefore if any be afflicted let him pray to God to alleviate and ſanctifie his Affliction. *Is any Merry? Let him Sing Pſalms* of Praiſe to that God who hath given him this Chearfulneſs of Spirit.

14 Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him,——

Some *Obſerve*, 1. That St. *James* doth not ſay, Is any Man Sick? Let him Pray, but let him ſend for others to Pray with him, and for him; plainly ſuppoſing, that the Sick Man is very unfit to Pray himſelf, or to Pray for himſelf; in other Afflictions let him Pray, but in Sickneſs let others Pray for him, he having enough to do to grapple with his Grief, and to conflict with his Affliction: A diſeaſed Body unfits the Mind for *Holy Duties*. Yet *Obſerve* 2. 'Tis one Thing to want an Heart in Sickneſs to Pray for our ſelves, and another Thing to want Ability to Pray for our ſelves. Many deſire the Prayers of others in Sickneſs, who wanted Hearts to Pray for themſelves in Health. This is a ſad Symptom, that the Soul is as Sick, yea, more dangerouſly Sick, than the Body. Add to this, That the Prayers of others are very rarely beneficial to us, unleſs we Pray, or have a Deſire to Pray, for our ſelves. *Obſerve* 3. The Sick Man's Duty, not only to deſire Prayer, but to ſend to the Elders of the Church to pray for him, and with him. *Queſt.* But if the Sick neglect to ſend, may the Miniſter neglect to go if he knows of the Sickneſs? Doubtleſs we ought to go if we know of it whether they ſend or not; for they want our Prayer and Help moſt when they deſire it leaſt, and by refuſing to go we may loſe the laſt, and perhaps the beſt, Opportunity of doing Good unto them. If our People, through Stupidity and Inſenſibleneſs, omit their Duty in ſending for us, God forbid that either through Pride or Sluggiſhneſs we ſhould neglect our Duty in going to them; too too often we never hear our People are Sick till the Bell tells us they are Dead. If therefore by any Means we gain the Knowledge of their Condition, let us apply our ſelves with all our Might to their Condition, leſt God be more angry with us for not going to them, than with them for not ſending for us; imitating our Lord, who is found of them that ſought him not.

14 —— Anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord.

Some make this Anointing with Oil to be a Medicinal Practice amongſt the *Jews*, and that they adminiſtred it Phyſically; but why then muſt the Elders adminiſter it? The Phyſician might have done it as well as they. True, but the Elders are ſent for, that they applying this Corporal Remedy, might join with it Spiritual Phyſick of Prayer, Good Admonition, and Comfort. As if a Sick Perſon ſhould ſend for the Miniſter at his taking of Phyſick, that he might then Pray with him, Counſel and Comfort him. Others make this Anointing with Oil a Religious Act. *Chriſt* impowered his Apoſtles to work Miracles, and amongſt others, they had the Gift of Healing the Sick, whom they Anointed in the Name of the Lord, or by the Authority of the Lord; but the Goſpel being ſufficiently confirmed, this Gift of Healing is ceaſed, and therewith the Rite of Anointing; therefore the Church of *Rome* keep up an Idle Ceremony in Anointing the Sick, unleſs they had a Miraculous Power to Heal the Sick; to keep up the Rite, unleſs they could produce the Effect; to pretend to the Anointing, without the Power of Healing, is a meer Piece of Pageantry. Beſides, they Anoint thoſe that are given over for Dead; and the Apoſtle's Anointing was for the Benefit of the Living, as apppears by the following Verſe.

15 And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up; and if he have committed ſins they ſhall be forgiven him.

Here our Apoſtle ſhews the Good Effect of this Anointing and Praying; yet *Note*, that he aſcribes the Sick Man's Recovery not to the Oil, but to the Prayer, *The Prayer of Faith ſhall ſave the Sick*. The Moral Means is taken notice of before the Ritual and Ceremonial, *The Prayer of Faith ſhall ſave the Sick*; there was required to the Miracle Faith both in the Elder and in the Sick Perſon to *ſave*, that is, to recover, the Sick; yet mark, it is ſaid, *the Lord ſhall raiſe him up*, to *Note*, that the Efficacy of Faith lyes in the Object of Faith; 'tis not Faith properly, but God called upon in Faith, that ſaveth the Sick. The Efficacy of Faith is not from its own Merit, but from God's Power and Grace.

15 —— And if he have committed ſins, they ſhall be forgiven him.

If he has committed Sins: Why? Is there any Queſtion to be made of that? No, but if he has committed ſuch Sins as brought this Sickneſs upon him they ſhall be forgiven him upon this Prayer of Faith; if any Special or Particular Sin has drawn down this Diſeaſe upon him it ſhall be remitted, and the Diſeaſe removed; where the Sickneſs is by Way of Chaſtiſement, the Healing is a Teſtimony of God's Forgiveneſs. *Learn* hence, How abſurd is the Popiſh Sacrament of *Extream Unction*; how can they gather a Perpetual Ordinance from an Action that was Extraordinary and Miraculous, and long ſince ceaſed? Or, apply a Sacrament to Dying Perſons from a Rite uſed upon Perſons who were not to Die, but to be raiſed from Sickneſs? Or how can they promiſe to him Forgiveneſs of Sins, to whom they cannot promiſe that Recovery which was the Token of it?

16 Confeſs *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed:

Note here, 1. That there is a Time and Seaſon when it is our Duty to confeſs our Sins, not only to God, but to one another, to a Pious and Prudent Miniſter, to an Injur'd and Wronged Neighbour, to thoſe that have been tempted by us, and have conſented with us in Sinning. *Note* 2. How abſurdly the Papiſts ground their Practice of Auricular Confeſſion upon this Text; here is not one Word ſpoken of a Prieſt, nor of our Confeſſing to him; and if ſo, the Text proves it the Prieſt's Duty to confeſs to the People, as much as the Peoples to confeſs to the Prieſt; for the Duty requir'd is Mutual, *confeſs one to another*; accordingly the Words are generally underſtood of confeſſing Private Injuries one to another; that the Sick Perſon muſt reconcile himſelf to his Neighbour as well as to God that he may recover; for ſo it follows, *pray for one another, that ye may be healed*; intimating, that it is the Duty of Chriſtians to confeſs their Miſcarriages and Private Injuries one to another, and by their Prayers to ſuccour, help, and relieve each other; it is the Duty of the Strong to Pray for the Weak, and the Strong may be ſtrengthned by the Prayers of the Weak.

16 —— The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Obſerve here, 1. The Qualification of that Prayer which at that Time was effectual for the Recovery of the Sick Perſon in a Miraclous Manner, it may be rendred an Inſpired Prayer; as they that were acted by the Evil Spirits, ſo ſuch as were moved by the Impulſes of the Holy Spirit, were called, 'Ενεεύμενοι, in a good Senſe; the Phraſe properly ſignifies a Prayer inwardly wrought and excited, and implies the Efficacious Influence of the Holy Spirit, and the Force and Vehemency of a Chriſtian's Spirit and Affection exerted and put forth in the Duty; in wrought Prayer, or Prayer that works in and upon our own Hearts, has a Mighty Prevalency with God. *Obſerve* 2. The Qualification of the Perſon praying, *a Righteous Man*; not legally Righteous, one in a State of Sinleſs Perfection, but a Perſon juſtified by Faith, and whoſe Faith is fruitful in Good Works. *Obſerve* 3. The Prevalency and Efficacy of ſuch a Perſon's Prayer, *it availeth much*; he doth not ſay how much, that is better experienc'd than expreſs'd; it availeth much for our ſelves, ſometimes more for others than for our ſelves. *Note*, That the Fervent Prayers and Interceſſions of the Righteous have a mighty Prevalency with God both for themſelves and others.

17 Elias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words proves the general Propoſition he had laid down, that the Fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much by a Particular Inſtance; the Example of *Elias*, who ſeem'd to carry the Keys of Heaven at his Girdle, to ſhut and open the Heavens at his Pleaſure, 1 *Kings* 17. 1. *As the Lord liveth there ſhall not be Dew or Rain, but according to my Word*; the Apoſtle here tells us what Word this was, namely, a Word of Prayer, and not a Word of Command; Elias *prayed, and the Heaven gave Rain*; he prayed in Prayer, ſo the Original; that is, he prayed with Faith and Fervency, according to the Will of God revealed to him; and though he was a Man ſubject to the Common Infirmities of Humane Nature with our ſelves, yet his Paſſions did not hinder the Prevalency of his Prayers; nothing has wrought ſuch Wonderful Effects in the World as Prayer; it made the Sun ſtand ſtill in Heaven, it brought Fire out of Heaven, 1 *Kings* 1. 10. and here it ſhut up the Windows of Heaven, that it rained not for the Space of Three Years and Six Months; it has a Divine Kind of Omnipotency in it.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

Our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with an Exhortation to the Duty of Fraternal Correption and Chriſtian Admonition; if, ſays he, any one among you, who hath made an Outward Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſhall for fear of Perſecution, or otherwiſe, turn aſide from the Rule of the Goſpel, whether in Matters of Faith or Practice, ſuch a

Perſon, either Miniſter, or private Chriſtian, as ſhall be Inſtrumental by Prayer, Proof, or Counſel, to recover him out of that wandring and backſliding Condition, he ſhall have the Honour to ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins; that is, thou ſhalt be a Means of bringing him to a Sight of his Sins, and to ſeek a Pardon of them, which is the only true and happy Way of hiding and of covering of them. Learn hence, 1. It is not ſufficient that every one takes Care of his Soul, but he muſt alſo Watch over the Souls of others; there is no Brother ſo mean in the Chriſtian Church but the Care of his Salvation belongeth to all in the Chriſtian Communion. Learn 2. What great Honour God puts upon the Creature in calling him a Saviour, to a reſtored and converted Brother, he ſhall ſave a Soul from Death; but when God puts the Glory of his own Work upon the Head of the Creature, what Cauſe have they to lay the Crown of their Excellency at the Foot of God? When the Honour of the Supream Cauſe is put upon the Inſtrument, the Inſtrument ought to aſcribe all the Efficacy and Efficiency to the Firſt Cauſe, ſaying, ***Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Praiſe***, Amen.

THE
Firſt Epiſtle General
OF
ST. PETER.

The Writer of this and the following Epiſtle was St. Peter, *who ſtiles himſelf* an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, *not the Univerſal Biſhop and Head of the Church; no where do we find this Holy and Humble Apoſtle aſſuming, though we often find the Apoſtate Church of* Rome *giving him, an uncontroulable Monarchy, and Sovereign Dominion, over the whole Church of* Chriſt, *and over the Apoſtles themſelves, and their Succeſſors: And accordingly to interpret thoſe Words of our Saviour to St.* Peter, *St.* John 21. *Paſce Oves,* Feed my Sheep, *in ſuch a rampant Senſe as they have done, could never with any Confidence have been offered to the Reaſon of Mankind, had not theſe Men ſubdued their Reaſon to their Intereſt, and ſubjected both to an Implicite Faith, and Blind Obedience. St.* Peter *being the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, writes this Epiſtle to the Believing Jews, and Proſelited Gentiles, who were of the Diſperſion, ſcattered abroad in divers Countries, of whom he had an eſpecial Charge, and of whoſe Converſion he had been a Principal Inſtrument.*

The Deſign of the Epiſtle was to Confirm them in the Chriſtian Religion, to Encourage them to Conſtancy under the ſharpeſt Perſecutions, and fiery Trials, for the ſame; and to excite them to the Practice of particular Duties incumbent upon them in every Capacity and Relation in which they ſtood beautifying and adorning their Holy Profeſſion by an Holy and Becoming Converſation. And accordingly thus he writes unto them.

CHAP. I.

1 PEter an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

Obſerve here, 1. The Penman of this Epiſtle deſcribed, by his Name, *Peter*, by his Office, *an Apoſtle*, by the Author of his Office, *Jeſus Chriſt*; this Name *Peter* was given him by our Saviour, and ſignifieth a Stone, a Rock, probably for his Confeſſion and Acknowledgment of *Chriſt*, the Rock upon whom the Chriſtian Church was Built; his Call to the Office, firſt of a Diſciple, and then of an Apoſtle, was from *Chriſt* himſelf; it is a ſingular Support to the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, under all their Diſcouragements, to conſider whoſe Officers they are, and from whom they have both their Miſſion and their Meſſage, their Authority and their Abilities, for the Sacred Function; *Peter an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſons to whom the Epiſtle is directed, to the Strangers ſcattered abroad in *Pontus*, *Galatia*, &c. that is, to ſuch of the converted *Jews*, and proſelited *Gentiles*, as were diſperſed into ſeveral Countries, exiled and baniſhed from Houſe and Home, for the ſake of *Chriſt*, and his Holy Religion, which they made a faithful Profeſſion of. Learn thence, That a State of Exile and Baniſhment from outward Comforts and Priviledges has been, and may be, the Lot and Portion of a People that are exceeding Dear to Almighty God, *To the Strangers ſcattered throughout* Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Aſia, *and* Bithynia. *Obſerve* 3. How he comforts them in this their perſecuted Condition, by declaring to them the great Things which God had done for them in their *Election*, *Vocation*, and *Sanctification*; aſſuring them, that God had *choſen* them out of the World, according to his Foreknowledge and Unſearchable Counſel, and effectually called them to the Participation of his Grace, ſanctifying them by his Spirit, that they ſhould obey the Truth, and by Faith be ſprinkled with the Blood of *Chriſt*, and thereby be brought into a State of perfect Peace and Reconciliation with God. Learn hence, 1. That God has certainly choſen ſome to Eternal Salvation. 2. That ſuch as are choſen to Happineſs as the End, are alſo choſen to Holineſs as the Means. ***Elect through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience.*** Sanctification is the Fruit of our Election, and Obedience the End of our Sanctification. Learn 3. That Sanctification and Juſtification always accompany one another. Here is Sanctification and Sprinkling with the Blood of *Chriſt* joined together. Where *Note*, *Chriſt*, as Mediator, had Blood. His Blood was ſhed, his Blood that was ſhed muſt be ſprinkled, and by Faith applied; and we can never diſcern our Intereſt in the Blood of *Chriſt* till we are ſanctified by the Spirit of Chriſt, and our Hearts and Lives wrought unto Obedience. Juſtification and Sanctification, tho' diſtinct in their Nature, yet are inſeparable in their Subject. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Salutation here ſent to theſe diſperſed Saints, *Grace and Peace be multiplied.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Connexion, *Grace and Peace.* (2.) The Order, firſt Grace, and then Peace. (3.) The Option. *Be multiplied.* The Bleſſings prayed for are the choiceſt, the ſweeteſt, and the beſt, of Bleſſings. Grace and Peace, together with the Augmentation, and abundant Encreaſe of both, *Grace and Peace be multiplied.* Learn, That there is nothing that the Miniſters of Chriſt do more paſſionately deſire, and more earneſtly endeavour, than to ſee their People brought into, and preſerved in, a State of Favour and Peace with God, and enjoying a multiplied Encreaſe of all Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings from him.

3 Bleſſed *be* the God, and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, 4 To an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you.

Obſerve here, (1.) How our Apoſtle breaks forth into Gratulation and Thankfulneſs to God for thoſe ſpecial Bleſſings, which by his Miniſtry were conferred upon theſe Converted Chriſtians, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Bleſſing and Praiſe are due to God for the leaſt Mercies received from God, becauſe we are leſs than the leaſt, much more for Spiritual and Eternal Bleſſings, which are the greateſt Mercies that either God can give, or we receive. *Obſerve* (2.) The ſpecial Mercy which he thus ſolemnly Bleſſes, and gives Thanks to God for, namely, their Regeneration: For *Begetting them to a lively Hope by the Reſurrection of Chriſt, of an Inheritance Incorruptible*, &c. *according to his abundant Mercy.* Where *Note*, (1.) The Benefit declared, they were begotten again to an Hope of Salvation; by Means of Sin all Influences of Grace were ſuſpended, and all Hopes of Salvation were cut off. Chriſt's Interpoſure for us makes our Condition hopeful, and the fallen Angels hopeleſs. *Note* (2.) The Qualification of that Hope which Chriſtians are begotten to, it is a *lively Hope*, in Oppoſition to a dead Hope, and to a languid and languiſhing Hope; the Chriſtian's Hope is an effectual Hope, which proceeds from Faith, and promotes Holineſs. A *lively Hope*, is an Hope that makes us *lively*, joyful and comfortable, in our Lives; an Hope that puts Life into us. *Note* (3.) The Means whereby we are begotten to this Hope, and that is, *by the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead*; not by the bare *Act* of his Reſurrection, but by the *Vertue* and *Power* of it, we are raiſed to a Spiritual Life by it, and our Hopes of Eternal Life are thereby ſtrengthned and confirmed. The Juſtification of our Perſons, the Regeneration of our Natures, the Reſurrection of our Bodies, the Glorification of our Souls and Bodies, are ſingular Fruits and Benefits of Chriſt's Reſurrection. Well might the Apoſtle then ſay, that *we are begotten to a lively Hope by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead. Note* (4.) The moving and impulſive Cauſe from which Regeneration, and all other Spiritual Bleſſings, do proceed and flow; the Mercy and Goodneſs of God, *According to his abundant Mercy he has begotten us again.* In the Matters of Salvation nothing is owing to our Merit; for Demerit cannot merit, but all is due to Divine Goodneſs, and Undeſerved Mercy; this is the Fontal Cauſe of all our Favours. *Note* (5.) The Nature of that Happineſs which Believers are begotten to a lively Hope and Expectation of; it is here ſtiled *an Inheritance.* Heaven is an Inheritance, and as ſuch it is given to Children, to all God's Children, to none but his Children; 'tis an Inheritance dearly purchaſed, yet freely given; Chriſt is the Sole Purchaſer of it, no Joint-Purchaſers with him; the Saints are called Joint-Heirs with Chriſt, but never Joint-Purchaſers; yet remember, that tho' we cannot purchaſe this Inheritance in a Way of Merit, we may forfeit it by our Demerit, and provoke our Heavenly Father to diſinherit us. *Note* (6.) The Properties and Excellencies of this Inheritance which Believers are raiſed by Chriſt to the Expectations of; it is an Inheritance *Incorruptible*; an enduring Poſſeſſion; not ſubject to decay, having nothing in it that can corrupt it, or corrupt us in the Enjoyment of it. *Undefiled* Heaven is an Holy Habitation; the Holineſs of Heaven is the moſt conſiderable Part of its Happineſs. Sinners therefore that deſpiſe Holineſs, deſpiſe the richeſt Jewel in the Crown of Glory; *It fadeth not away*, it withereth not; Glory is a Flower which will eternally retain its Freſhneſs and Verdure. *Reſerved in the Heavens* for us. Heaven is the Country where the Saints Inheritance lyes. Here it is reſerved or laid up ſafe, by the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of God, by the Purchaſe, Poſſeſſion and Interceſſion, of Chriſt; and to be able to ſay [for us,] and be particularly aſſured of Heaven, is a ſpecial Comfort.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation, ready to be revealed in the laſt time.

Here our Apoſtle ſeems to pre-occupate and prevent an Objection. Some might ſay, Though the Saints Inheritance be ſafe in Heaven, yet are *they* in danger here on Earth; be it ſo, as if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Yet they are and ſhall be kept by God's Power, and their own Faith, to Eternal Salvation. *Note* here, (1.) *We are kept*; it implies we are in Danger, in great Danger, of miſſing Salvation, by reaſon of the Number, Power and Policy, of our Spiritual Enemies, Corruption and Sin within, the Devil and the World without; but we are kept as in a Garriſon; ſo the Word ſignifies. Saints are preſerved like Beſieged Cities; the General whom they fight under, and hold out for, preſerves them, by ſending in freſh Recruits, Supplies from the Holy Spirit, and by cutting off ſuch Succours as our Luſts and Spiritual Enemies would ſend forth againſt us, ſo that they ſtarve, and ſhall not vanquiſh us, but we *them. We are kept*; Eternal Thanks for ſuch a Keeper! *Note* (2.) What it is Believers are kept and preſerved to, namely, *Salvation*; he does not ſay they are or ſhall be kept from Trouble and Affliction; that their Fingers ſhall not ake in this World; he has made no ſuch Promiſe, and we muſt expect no ſuch Preſervation, but the contrary; in the World ye ſhall have Tribulation, ſays Chriſt, the Captain of our Salvation, *John* 16. But Safety and Reſt, Happineſs and Eaſe, ſhall be our Portion in the coming World. *Note* (3.) The Means by which they are thus kept unto Salvation. (1.) On God's Part, Almighty *Power*. If left one Moment to our ſelves we become a Prey to every Temptation. How did the Devil baffle and befool *Adam* in Innocency, when he had his Wits about him, by being left in the Hand of his own Counſels? Lord, in a worſe Hand thou canſt not leave us than our own. (2.) On our part we are kept through *Faith*. Our own Endeavour muſt accompany God's Power in order to our Preſervation. *We are kept by the Power of God through Faith*; by both jointly, by neither ſingly. God's Power will not keep us without our Care, neither can our Care ſecure us without the help of his Power. We and our Faith muſt be kept by the Power of God; what God does for us, he does by us; he requires the Uſe of our Faculties, and the Concurrence of our own Endeavours, in order to our Salvation. *Note* (4.) The Time when the Saints compleat Salvation ſhall be revealed to them, and they have the full and final Fruition of that; ---*Ready to be revealed in the laſt Time.* Mark, the Saints Salvation in Heaven, is a Myſtery, an hidden Myſtery, not yet revealed; revealed only to Saints on Earth by Faith, to Saints in Heaven by Sight; but the full Revelation is not to be expected and enjoyed by glorified Saints before the Day of Judgment, called here, *the laſt Time*, *ready to be revealed in the laſt Time.* Our Apoſtle told us, *v.* 4. it was reſerved in Heaven for us, kept ſafe for us, but kept cloſe to Heaven; it is an ineſtimable rich Treaſure; they that are Heirs of it on Earth, yea, they that are poſſeſs'd of it in Heaven, do not as yet fully underſtand and know the Tranſcendency of it, but it ſhall be revealed to them at the laſt Day.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations. 7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, tho' it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt:

Wherein ye greatly rejoice: That is, in the Belief and Expectation of which Glorious and Incorruptible Inheritance in Heaven, ye now joy and rejoice here on Earth; plainly intimating, that a Believer may be aſſured of his Title to the

Glorious Inheritance above, and both may and ought to rejoice in it abundantly below. *Obſerve* farther, by what Way and Method God brings his People to Heaven, it is by *Heavineſs*, by Afflictions, yea, by *manifold* Afflictions. As if he had ſaid, You that are the preſent Candidates of Heaven, the Heirs of Salvation, muſt not think your ſelves paſt the Rod and the Ferula; and that you are to expect nothing but Comfort, and to do nothing but Rejoice in the Hopes of your Salvation. But I tell you, you may have need of Heavineſs before you get to Heaven, and of manifold Temptations for the mortifying your Corruptions before you enter upon an Inheritance Incorruptible. *Obſerve* (3.) The Suppoſition made concerning the Neceſſity of a Believer's Afflictions, *If need be:* Intimating, (1.) That we ſhould never feel any Affliction from the Hand of God, never be in Heavineſs, if there were not need. And, (2.) That there is need that the Holieſt in this World ſhould ſometimes be made heavy, and that Heavineſs ſhould be upon them for a Seaſon. We ſhould always have Calms and Fair Weather, never any Storms or Tempeſts from God, did not our Needs call for it. As we need our daily Bread, ſo verily do we need a daily Rod; both the Rod of God's Mouth to admoniſh and reprove us, and the Rod of his Hand to chaſten and correct us, *Ye are in Heavineſs for a Seaſon, if need be, through manifold Temptations.* Hence learn, That the Trials and Afflictions which God exerciſes his Children with are many, yet they never feel them but when they need them, and then only for a Seaſon. As the Coldneſs of the Winter kills the Weeds in our Grounds, ſo the Cold Blaſts of Affliction (under the mortifying Influences of the Holy Spirit) kill our Corruptions in our Souls. Perpetual Shinings and Fair Seaſons are reſerved for Heaven; Cold Blaſts and Nipping Froſts are needful and uſeful here on Earth; *Ye are in Heavineſs for a Seaſon, if need be.* Learn farther, That as God doth not afflict us but when there is need, ſo he will not afflict us more than there is need. *Ye are in Heavineſs for a Seaſon*; we ſhall not be afflicted an Hour longer, nor ſhall our Croſs be a Drachm or a Grain heavier than God thinks needful. *Obſerve* (4.) The happy Effect and Fruit of the Saints manifold Temptations, they all work for their Advantage; they receive Good, and not Hurt, by them; no more Hurt than the Gold receives by the Fire; *That the Trial of your Faith*; that is, that your tried Faith being *more precious than Gold.* Faith is more precious than Gold, becauſe more pure, more durable, eſpecially when purified in the Furnace of Affliction. A good Man is no Loſer, but a great Gainer, by being tried. He who before had much Droſs in him, comes out of the Furnace as Gold, without loſing any Thing either of his Weight or Worth; nothing is conſumed but the Droſs and Rubbiſh of his Corruptions. Oh happy Conſumption! Grace is not only Grace ſtill, but more Gracious, yea, Glorious, after Trial. *That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth. Obſerve* laſtly, That Faith muſt be Tried on Earth before it be Crowned in Heaven; and after it is Tried, it ſhall certainly be Crowned, *and found unto Praiſe, Honour and Glory, at the Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* Learn hence, That the Trial of a Chriſtian's Faith, in their manifold Afflictions and Temptations now, will bring abundance of Honour and Glory to God in the Day of Chriſt; yea, not only to God, but to our ſelves. Our Light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment now, will work for us a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory then.

8 Whom having not ſeen, ye love: in whom, though now ye ſee *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory:

In theſe Words our Apoſtle commendeth the Faith and Love of theſe Jews to whom he wrote; that altho' they had never ſeen Chriſt in the Fleſh, as others did, yet they did truly love him, and their Faith cauſed them to triumph and rejoice in him. Learn hence, That it is the Property and Practice of a Believer to love an unſeen Saviour, and to rejoice in him, and in the Hopes of Eternal Life by him. *Inference.* If ſuch as never ſaw Chriſt, but with a believing Eye, do yet love him ſuperlatively, and rejoice in him unſpeakably, how will they love him, and rejoice in him, who ſhall ſee him with a glorified Eye, and behold him Face to Face!

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the ſalvation of *your* ſouls. 10 Of which ſalvation the prophets have inquired, and ſearched diligently, who propheſied of the grace *that ſhould come* unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the ſpirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignifie, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the goſpel unto you, with the holy ghoſt ſent down from heaven; which things the angels deſire to look into.

Obſerve here, (1.) The *End*, that is, the Reward of a Chriſtian's *Faith*, it is *the Salvation of his Soul*; of his Soul eminently, but not excluſively of Body and Soul both. The compleat Salvation of Soul and Body both, with Chriſt in Heaven, ſhall be the End and Reward of the Believer's Faith. *Obſerve* (2.) The diligent Search into, and Inquiry after, the Nature of this Salvation, which was made by the Prophets of the Old Teſtament; *Of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently:* That is, by Prayer, Meditation and Study, they ſearched after the farther and clearer Knowledge of this great Salvation, and the Kingdom of the Meſſias, when ſhould be the Time of his Sufferings and Humiliation, which were to precede his Glory and Exaltation. *Obſerve* (3.) The Succeſs of this their Inquiry and Search, they were anſwered by God, and received this Revelation from him, that they themſelves were not the Men that ſhould ſee the Meſſiah, and his ſpecial Kingdom; and that the Things which they propheſied of were not to be fulfilled in their own Times, but in After-times: And accordingly the Things foretold by the Prophets he aſſures them were clearly manifeſted to them by the Apoſtles, which were endowed with an extraordinary Meaſure of the Holy Spirit, ſent down upon them at the Day of *Pentecoſt*; *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us, they did miniſter the Things now reported to you. Obſerve* Laſtly, The Sublimity and Tranſcendent Excellency of thoſe Goſpel Myſteries which are now revealed; they are ſo Raviſhing and Tranſporting that the Holy Angels deſire to pry into them, *Which Things the Angels deſire to look into.* Learn thence, That the Glorious Myſtery of Man's Redemption and Salvation by the Incarnation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is an Object worthy of the Admiration and Contemplation of the Adoring Angels. They admire the Perſon of the Redeemer, they admire the Author and Contriver of the Work of Redemption, they admire the Subjects redeemed, they admire the Manner and Method of our Redemption, they admire the finally Glorious State which the Redeemed are brought into, and poſſeſſed of, and they pry into theſe Things, as the Cherubims look'd upon the Ark, with a curious and accurate Inſpection, with an earneſt and affectionate Inſpection; they holily admire the Wiſdom of this Glorious Contrivance, tho' even their raiſed and enlarged Capacities can never be able fully to comprehend it.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

Our Apoſtle having laid before them their high and glorious Priviledges in the foregoing Verſes, comes now to excite them to the Practice of ſeveral needful and important Duties in this and the following Verſes; the firſt of which is Vigilance and Watchfulneſs, Preparation and Readineſs of Mind; *Gird up the Loins of your Mind*; an Alluſion both to Runners and Waiters; to ſuch as run in a Race, and to ſuch as wait upon their Maſter; who both gird up their Cloaths (which in thoſe Eaſtern Countries they wore down to their Heels) that they might not hinder or trouble them, either in Running or Waiting. Next, to be Sober, and keep up their Hope ſteadfaſtly and perſeveringly to the End, for that Grace and Salvation, for that Perfection in Holineſs and Glory, which God will certainly give at the Glorious Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. Here *Note*, (1.) The Grace and Duty which they are exhorted to be found in the Exerciſe of, and that is *Hope*, to perſevere in Hope unto the End. This is a Divine Grace, and neceſſary Duty, whereby a Believer for Chriſt's Sake expects and waits for all the Great and Good Things which God has promiſed; but the Chriſtian at preſent not received. *Note* (2.) The Direction given, in order to the Exerciſe of this Grace and Duty of Hope, *Gird up the Loins of your Mind.* Habits of Grace are altogether unprofitable to us, without they be excited by us, and ſtirred up in us. When we pray, when we hear, we muſt gird up our Loins in praying and hearing, or in the Prophet's Phraſe, *Stir up your ſelves to take hold on God.* A Man upon his Sick Bed muſt gird up the Lions of his Mind to bear his Affliction, elſe he will never Profit by it, nor anſwer the End of God in it. No Grace can be exerciſed, no Duty can be perform'd, by a Soul ungirded, *Gird up the Loins of your Mind, that ye may hope,* &c.

14 As obedient children, not faſhioning your ſelves according to the former luſts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation; 16 Becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

The next Duty he exhorts them to is to anſwer the Engagements which their Adoption laid them under; they were now the Children of God, and as ſuch muſt, (1.) Be *obedient* to their Heavenly Father, walking in the Path of his Commandments, and no longer, according to the former Luſts which they were captivated by, and enſlaved unto, in the Time of their Ignorance, when they knew not God. And, (2.) They muſt *imitate* their Heavenly Father in the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs: *As he which hath called you is Holy, ſo be ye Holy.* *Obſerve* (1.) Chriſtians muſt make God the Pattern of their Holineſs, and be Holy as God is Holy, tho' not as Holy as God is; the Command obliges to a Conformity, not to an Equality; as God is really Holy, poſitively Holy, ſtrictly and exactly Holy, univerſally Holy, unchangeably Holy, ſo muſt we labour to be Holy both towards God and Man, which is to be *Holy in all manner of Converſation.* *Obſerve* (2.) Chriſtians are here requir'd not only to make God the Pattern of their Holineſs, but the Motive of their Holineſs, *Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* Seeing our God is an Holy God, therefore we that are his People muſt be Holy alſo. Our Apoſtle here repreſents the Holineſs of God both as a Rule and as a Motive of that Holineſs which ſhould be acted by us. And whereas the Apoſtle ſays, *It is written, Be ye Holy,* it plainly intimates, that God has in all former Ages obliged all Perſons who pretend any Relation to him as his Children to be Holy, as he is Holy; tho' not as to Equality, yet as to Imitation, tho' not in Meaſure and Degree, yet in Quality and Kind. God is the Original of all Holineſs, and the Firſt Man he created was after his own Likeneſs; and every one that is renewed is ſaid to be *created after God in Righteouſneſs, and True Holineſs.* What is Godlineſs but God-likeneſs? And what is Holineſs but the Conformity of our Natures to the Holy Nature of God, and the Conformity of our Lives to the Will of God?

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of Perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear:

If ye call on the Father; that is, if ye call God your Father, and call upon him, by worſhipping and owning of him; who without any Reſpect of Perſons, or any Regard had to Nations, Jew or Gentile, judgeth of every Man now, and will judge every Man according to his Works hereafter, ſee that you paſs the Time of your Pilgrimage and Sojourning in this World in Holy and Obedient Fear. *Learn* (1.) That ſuch as call God Father ought to walk in Obedience before him as his Sons, *If ye call on the Father.* *Learn* (2.) That he whom we call Father is and will be our Judge; not a Short-ſighted, but a Sharp-ſighted, Judge, impartial in Judgment, judging all Perſons according to their Works, and judging all Works as they really are, and not as they outwardly appear to be. *Learn* (3.) That Chriſtians here in this World are but Strangers, and their Life upon Earth a Pilgrimage, which they are daily paſſing. (4.) That the whole Time of a Chriſtian's Pilgrimage ought to be paſſed in an Holy, Cautelous, Reverential, and Obedient, Fear of God; *Paſs the Time of your Sojourning here in Fear.*

18 Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot: 20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you; 21 Who by him do believe in God that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

Still our Apoſtle is preſſing Chriſtians to the Love and Practice of Holineſs, and a Reverential Fear of God, by freſh Arguments and Motives, particularly from their *Redemption*, ſaying, that they could not but be ſenſible that they were *redeemed* with a very coſtly Price; not with Silver and Gold, which yet would ranſom Kings, but by the Precious Blood of Chriſt, whom the Paſchal Lamb typified, and who was from Eternity fore-ordain'd to the Office of a Mediator, though he was not manifeſted in the Fleſh till theſe laſt Days, for the Good and Benefit of thoſe who by him do believe in God that raiſed Chriſt from the Dead, and glorioſly exalted him at his Right Hand, upon which Account their Faith and Hope may ſafely and comfortably reſt in God. *Note* here, (1.) The Thraldom, Bondage and Slavery, of our Sinful State before we were redeemed. *Note* (2.) The Impotency and Inability of all Outward Things, be they never ſo Rich, Precious, and Coſtly, to redeem and ranſom an Enſlaved Sinner, *Ye were not redeemed with Corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold.* All the Gold and Silver in the World was no Ranſom for one Soul; nay, the Blood of all the Creatures in the World offer'd up in Sacrifice to the Juſtice of God could have been no Sufficient Compenſation. *Note* (3.) That the Redemption of every Soul coſt no leſs than the Precious Blood of the Son of God, that Spotleſs Lamb, who by the Sacrifice of his Death atoned Divine Diſpleaſure. *Note* (4.) That God the Father fore-ordained Jeſus Chriſt his Son to this Bleſſed Office of a Redeemer before the Foundation of the World, tho' he was not manifeſt in the Fleſh till theſe laſt Times. *Note* (5.) That by Chriſt, the Redeemer, we are taught to know God, and to believe in him, who raiſed Chriſt from the Dead. Here *Obſerve*, How the Socinians wreſt and miſapply this Text, where we are ſaid by Chriſt to believe in God. Thus they argue, He by whom we believe in God is not that God in whom we believe, becauſe the Means of Faith can never be the Object of Faith. But Chriſt is he (the Apoſtle ſays here) by whom we believe in God, therefore Chriſt is not God. *Anſwer*, Chriſt conſider'd in his Humane Nature in which he died, and was raiſed for us, is he by whom we believed in God; that is, own him to be able to raiſe us alſo from the Dead; but this hinders not his being God according to his Divine Nature, by which he did actually raiſe himſelf from the Dead, *Joh.* 10. 18.

22 Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; *ſee that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again; not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

The next Duty which our Apoſtle exhorts theſe Chriſtians to is the Duty of *Brotherly Love*, to a Gracious Propenſity of Heart which a Chriſtian bears for Chriſt's Sake to his Neighbour, whereby he wills, and to his Power procures, all Good for him; a Brotherly Affection, which every True Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow Members in Chriſt for Grace ſake. This Duty of Brotherly Love is often urged and enforced by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. St. *Peter* here tells them, that ſeeing by the Power of Chriſt's Spirit, and the Obedience of the Goſpel, they had purified themſelves in ſome Meaſure from Pride and Self-love, they ſhould now labour to grow in the Fervency and Sincerity of their Love one towards another. And the Argument he uſes to perſwade them to love one another is drawn from their Relation to each other; they are all Born again, and Born alike; not Brethren by Corruptible Generation only, but Begotten of Incorruptible Seed, the Word of God; therefore ſhould they live in Love together as Children of the ſame Father. *Note* here, The Commendation given to the Word of God, not to any Inward Word infuſed, but to the Outward Word preached, it is ſtiled ***Incorruptible Seed***; from whence it follows, that the Miniſtry of the Word, and the Ordinary Means of the New-birth, and the Inſtrumental Cauſe of of our Regeneration. *Being Born again, not of Corruptible Seed, but of Incorruptible, the Word of God.* *Note* farther, That ſuch as are Born of this Incorruptible Seed ought to bear an Incorruptible Love each to other, as an Evidence of their Incorruptible and Gracious Nature. *See that you love one another with a Pure Heart, fervently.*

24 For all fleſh *is* as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.

Our Apoſtle cloſes the Chapter by ſetting before them the Excellency of their Spiritual Regenerate State, compared with all other Excellencies and Endowments whatſoever. *All Fleſh*, that is, Fleſh with all its Glory, is a fading, dying, periſhing, Thing, it flags like the Graſs, and fades like the Flower. There are Three Excellencies in a Flower, Sweetneſs, which affects the Smell, Beauty, that affects the Eye, Softneſs and Smoothneſs, which affects the Touch; all theſe our Apoſtle paſſes over, and ſpeaks of the Flower, not as flouriſhing, but as withering, not as ſpringing up, but as falling away. *The Graſs withereth, the Flower falleth away.* *Learn* hence, That Man, when moſt flouriſhing, with all the Ornaments of Wit and Wealth, Beauty and Honour, is fading, and near to withering. Thus *David* deſcribes him, *Pſalm* 103. 15, 16. *As for Man, his Days are as Graſs, as the Flower of the Field, ſo he flouriſheth, the Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone.* Tho' the Flower be neither cut nor cropp'd, yet a Breath of Wind blaſts it, and blows away the Beauty of it. *All Fleſh is as Graſs, and all the Glory of Man as the Flower of Graſs.*

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.

That is, the Word of God, the Mind of *Chriſt*, contain'd in, and reveal'd by, the Goſpel, ſhall abide and laſt for ever, and never be abrogated. The Word of God is Everlaſting Truth. 'Tis ſo in its Nature, and alſo in its Effects, upon the Regenerate; it abideth for ever, and ſo doth their Eſtate, who are begotten again by it. The Word of God is the Incorruptible Seed, or Principle of Regeneration. 'Tis called the Word of Eternal Life, becauſe it brings thoſe that love and obey it to Eternal Life, *John* 6. 68. *Obſerve* laſtly, That the ſame Word of God is now preached unto us which was ſo highly commended by the Prophets, Apoſtles, and by *Chriſt* himſelf. *This is that Word*, the ſame Word, *which by the Goſpel is preached unto you.*

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Chapter made mention of their Regeneration, or New-birth, and taken notice of the Inſtrumental Cauſe of it, namely, the Word of God. *he comes in the Beginning of this Chapter to give ſeveral Directions for our profitable Hearing and Receiving of the ſame; which having compared to Milk, he ſhews how, and after what manner, it ſhould be* deſir'd, taſted, *and* digeſted, *by us,* that we may grow thereby. *And accordingly he thus beſpeaks us.*

1 WHerefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and all evil-ſpeakings,

Here we are firſt directed what to lay aſide in order to our Fruitful and Profitable Entertainment of the Word of God, namely, theſe Five Sins, *Malice*, *Guile*, *Hypocriſie*, *Envy*, and *Evil-ſpeaking*. Whence *Note* in general, That any Sin, much more if many Sins, be kept cloſe, and lye dormant within us, they will certainly hinder the Efficacy of the Word upon us. As the Foulneſs of the Stomach hinders the Natural Digeſtion, till it be purg'd out nothing can nouriſh within; in like manner our Apoſtle here adviſes to purge out theſe Peſtilent Luſts of Malice and Guile, of Hypocriſie and Envy, *&c.* before we hear the Word of God, as ever we expect to be nouriſhed with it, and grow thereby. As Sin hinders Good from coming to us, ſo it hinders the Word from working Good in us, particularly *Malice*, or Inveterate Anger, harbour'd in the Heart; *Guile*, or Deceit, in Words or Actions; *Hypocriſie*, or an Appearance of Friendſhip, when the Heart is otherwiſe affected; *Envy*, or grieving at another's Good; and *Evil-ſpeaking* of all Kinds, by Lying, by Slandering, by Backbiting, by Detracting. All which are contrary to the great Command of Love, and obſtructive of the Word of Truth, by which we are Born again. But it is obſervable, particularly concerning *Malice*, and *Guile*, and *Evil ſpeaking*, that our Apoſtle puts the Note of Univerſality to them, lay aſide *all* Malice, and *all* Guile, and *all* Evil-ſpeakings, importing, that though ſome other Sins will ſtick cloſe unto us, yet not a Jot of Malice or Guile ſhould be found in us, at leaſt prevailing in us, of any Kind, or in any Degree and Meaſure, for one Drop of this Deadly Poyſon may deſtroy us; therefore lay aſide *all Malice*, and *all* Guile, and *all* Evil-ſpeakings, *&c.*

2 As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

St. *Peter* having directed us in our Preparation before we come to hear the Word, and ſhewn the Neceſſity of laying aſide an Evil Frame of Spirit, he now directs us what we are to do when under the Word, namely, that there be found with us a Spiritual Appetite to it, and that we have the ſame Longing Deſires after it that the Child has after the Breaſt: *As New-born Babes deſire the Sincere Milk*, ſo deſire you the Incorrupted Word of God, that you may grow thereby. *Queſt.* How does the New-born Infant deſire its Natural Nouriſhment, its Mother's Milk? *Anſw.* Theſe Four Ways; *Firſt*, It covets it with vehement and impatient Deſire; nothing will ſo well ſatisfie and pleaſe it as the Breaſt; this will quiet it when nothing will. Thus the New-born Chriſtian hungers after the Word with a vehement Deſire; nothing will content and ſatisfie him, neither Gold nor Silver, in the abſence of the Word of God. *Secondly*, The New-born Infant deſires the Milk from a deep Senſe of its inward Wants; it is pinched with Hunger, and parched with Thirſt, and therefore cries for the Breaſt: So is the Chriſtian ſenſible of his Wants, of his Want of Knowledge, Want of Grace; 'tis little, ſays he, that I know of my ſelf, leſs of God, leaſt of *Jeſus Chriſt*: Oh, that by converſing with his Word I might know him more, and ſerve him better. *Thirdly*, The Infant deſires its Mother's Milk unmix'd, as Nature has prepared it, without any Artificial Sweetening of it. Some little regard the Wholeſomeneſs of the Food, but only admire the Dexterity of the Cook: They applaud the Parts of the Preacher when the Word flows from the Golden-mouth of a Celebrated Orator; but the New-born Chriſtian deſires the Sincere Milk of the Word, without any Compoſition of Error, and without any ſuch Mixture of Wit and Eloquence, as is inconſiſtent with the Gravity and Simplicity of the Word they hear. Plain Truths, without Art or Varniſh, may be convey'd with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience, than all the Charms of Humane Eloquence from the moſt Fluent and Popular Tongue; yet always remembring, that tho' the Miniſters of God muſt come in Plainneſs, yet not in Rudeneſs, of Speech. *Fourthly*, This Deſire of the Babe after the Sincere, Inmixt, and Uncompounded Milk is always accompanied with Endeavour; it hunts for the Breaſt, and is not ſatisfied that the Breaſt is in its Eye, but is impatient till it ſucks and draws, that Nouriſhment may be conveyed, and it grows thereby. Thus active and operative are the Deſires and Endeavours of a Sincere Chriſtian after the Word of God. That which was Seed to beget, they find Food to ſtrengthen; they can never be ſatisfied without it, they cannot be ſatisfied with a little of it.

3 If ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord *is* gracious.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle declares the Condition whereon our Profiting, Growing, and Thriving, by the Word doth depend, namely, upon our Taſting or Experiencing its Power, as it is the great Inſtrumental Cauſe both of our Spiritual Birth and Growth. This Taſte is a Spiritual Senſe of the Gladneſs, Power, and Efficacy, of the Word, in conveying the Grace of God unto our Souls; in a Taſte there is Sweetneſs and Refreſhment, but not Fulneſs and Satisfaction. *Learn* hence, 1. That God doth graciouſly ſweeten the Word to ſuch a Soul as doth deſire ſincerely to

taſte

to taſte the Sweetneſs of it. 2. That it is but a Taſte of the Sweetneſs of God, and his Word, which a Chriſtian partakes of in this Life; Satiety and Satisfaction is reſerved for another State.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, *and* precious, 5 Ye alſo as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt. 6 Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-ſtone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded.

Obſerve here, 1. The Denomination or Title given to *Chriſt*, he is ſtiled *a Living-ſtone*, and *the chief Corner-ſtone.* 1. *A Living-ſtone*; that is, a Lively-ſtone, no dead Foundation; and a Life-giving Stone, having not only Life in himſelf eſſentially, but communicatively, imparting Spiritual Life to the whole Building. *Chriſt* is not only an Head of Authority, but an Head of Vital Influence to all his Members; becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo. 2. He is ſtiled alſo *the chief Corner-ſtone*, both in regard of Suſtentation; the Corner-ſtone ſupports the whole Building; the Churches Grace, the Churches Peace, the Churches Conſolation, the Churches Salvation, are all upheld and maintained by him. And in regard of Union, the Corner-ſtone unites, ties and knits, the other Stones together that they ſhall not drop out of the Building. *Chriſt* alone unites the ſeveral Stones of the Spiritual Building to himſelf, and one to another. And this Corner-ſtone is of God's own immediate laying, *Behold, I lay in* Sion *a Corner-ſtone. Chriſt* was firſt manifeſted, and offered to the Church of the *Jews*, and then to the reſt of the World. *Obſerve* 2. The Titles given to Believers. 1. They of Lively-ſtones are Built a Spiritual Houſe. Believers are God's Temple, dedicated to, and ſet apart for, his ſpecial Service, and alſo enjoying his gracious and ſpecial Preſence. This is my Reſt for ever, ſays God, concerning the Believer's Heart: Here will I dwell, for I have a Delight therein. 2. They are an Holy Prieſthood to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable through *Chriſt*. Learn hence, That every Chriſtian in this Life is a Prieſt, and ought to offer up himſelf a Spiritual Sacrifice or Oblation unto God. In a Sacrifice there was a Separation of the Thing Sacrificed from common Uſe; the Beaſt was ſeparated from the reſt of the Flock, ſo muſt the Chriſtian be ſet apart from the reſt of the World. There was an Addiction, or Dedication, or Solemn Conſecration, of the Thing ſet apart to ſome Holy and Special Uſe and Purpoſe. Thus the Chriſtian that preſents himſelf a Living Sacrifice unto God, does not only ſeparate himſelf from Sin, the World, and the Fleſh, but does addict and devote himſelf to God, to ſerve and pleaſe him, to honour and glorifie him. *Obſerve* 3. The Application which Believers make to *Chriſt*, in order to their being his Spiritual Temple, and a Royal Prieſthood, *to whom, coming as unto a Living-ſtone*; the Particle denotes a continual Motion, by which the Soul gains Ground, and gets nearer and nearer to *Chriſt*; they are daily coming by Faith to him, and gradually advancing in their Knowledge of him, and Love unto him. *Obſerve* Laſtly, the Sweet Fruit and Bleſſed Effect of their Faith, *Whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not be confounded*; that is, not aſhamed, as a Perſon who is diſappointed of his Hopes and Expectations. He ſhall not be aſhamed of his Choice, he ſhall not be aſhamed of his Profeſſion; he ſhall never be aſhamed of the Cauſe and Intereſt of *Chriſt*, which he has eſpouſed, and at all Times appeared for; nor of the Work and Service of *Chriſt*, nor of the Time and Pains expended in that Work and Service; nor ſhall he ever be aſhamed hereafter, that he never was aſhamed here.

7 Unto you therefore which believe, *he is* precious:

To you belongs the Honour of being Built a Spiritual Houſe upon *Chriſt*, the chief Corner-ſtone, which renders him deſervedly precious to you, and of a very high Eſtimation with you; whatever mean, low and undervaluing, Thoughts the wicked World have of *Jeſus Chriſt*, yet he is highly eſteemed by, and deſervedly precious to, every believing Soul. He is precious in the ſeveral Relations he ſtands in to them; precious in regard of the great Things he has done for them; precious in the rich Supplies of Grace he beſtows upon them, and will be eternally precious to them, upon the Account of thoſe Glorious Manſions he has purchaſed and prepared for them.

7 ——But unto them which be diſobedient, the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner, 8 And a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient, whereunto alſo they were appointed.

Theſe Words diſcover the great Sin and Danger of thoſe who ſlight and neglect our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who ſtumble and take offence at him, either at the Meanneſs of his Perſon, or at the Ignominy of his Croſs, or at the Holineſs and Strictneſs of his Doctrine, or at the Freeneſs of his Grace; whatever the Occaſion of their Contempt may be, *Chriſt* will prove to them a burthenſome Stone, a Rock againſt which they will ſplit, to their utter Confuſion; they will in the Cloſe bring Ruin upon themſelves, as a Mad Man does that daſhes himſelf againſt a Stone. *Obſerve* next, How this Contempt of *Chriſt* has prevailed in the World ever ſince his firſt Coming into the World. How did the *Jewiſh* Rulers, called here the Builders, ſet him at Nought? *The Stone which the Builders diſallowed and ſtumbled at*: That is, the High Prieſts and Rulers, whoſe Office and Duty it was to Build up the Church, having Power in their Hand to do it, but inſtead of Building upon this Corner-ſtone, they ſtumbled, and took offence at him; and accordingly *Chriſt* is called *a Stone of Stumbling*, and *a Rock of Offence*, yet this does not imply that *Chriſt* was the Cauſe of their ſtumbling, but only the Occaſion of it. The *Object* at which they ſtumbled, without any Cauſe but their own Wickedneſs. For tho' it be ſaid in the next Words, that they were *appointed thereunto*, the Meaning is not, that God ordained them to Diſobedience, for then their Obedience had been impoſſible, and their Diſobedience had been no Sin, but God in his juſt Decree appointed that Deſtruction and Eternal Perdition ſhould be the Puniſhment of ſuch obſtinate and diſobedient Perſons. Learn hence, That Chriſtians have no Reaſon to be offended at the great Numbers of Unbelievers that are in the World, and at the Sight of *Chriſt's* being rejected by Multitudes in the World, it having been long ago foretold in Scripture, that thus it would be, and conſequently it ought to be no Occaſion of Offence that thus it is, *Matth.* 21. 42. *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the Stone which the Builders rejected is become the Head of the Corner?*

9 But ye *are* a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time paſt were not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle acquaints theſe believing *Jews*, who were Built upon Chriſt, the Foundation Stone, that the ſame Titles did now belong to them in a more excellent Manner as *Chriſtians*, which were formerly given to their Anceſtors of the *Jewiſh* Nation by God himſelf, *Deut.* 7. 6, 7. As the *Jews* of old were a choſen Generation, a Kingdom of Prieſts, an holy Nation, a peculiar People; that is, they were a People choſen by God before all other People whatſoever, to bear his Name, and to bear Witneſs to his Truth; they were a People in Covenant with him, and ſo inexpreſſibly Dear unto him, that he that hurted them toucheth the Apple of God's Eye; in like manner theſe *Jews*, and proſelited *Gentiles* of the Diſperſion, who were converted to Chriſtianity, have all the forecited Titles belonging to them. *A Choſen Generation*, by effectual Vocation ſeparated from the World to the Service of *Chriſt*, whoſe Name they bear. *A Royal Prieſthood*, that is, Kings and Prieſts; Kings to reign with him, and Prieſts to offer Spiritual Sacrifices to him. *An Holy Nation*; ſo all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity federally Holy, and for that Reaſon all the Chriſtian Churches call'd out of the World, and dedicated to the Service of *Chriſt*, are ſtiled Saints in all St. *Paul's* Epiſtles. *A Peculiar People*, in Covenant with God, purchaſed by the Blood of *Chriſt*. Next the Apoſtle declares the End of all theſe diſtinguiſhing Favours being granted to them, namely, *That they might ſhew forth the Vertues*; that is, publiſh and proclaim the Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs and Mercy, the Righteouſneſs and Truth, of God, who had called them out of the Darkneſs of Sin, Ignorance and Miſery, into the Marvellous Light of Knowledge, Faith, Holineſs and Comfort. *Laſtly*, To Inhance their Thankfulneſs for all theſe diſtinguiſhing Favours, he puts them in Mind of what they were before their Converſion to Chriſtianity; in Times paſt *they were not a People*, that is, not a People Beloved of God, and in Covenant with him, the Lord having given the Jews a Bill of Divorce, and ſaid to them, *Loammi*, ye are not my People, *Hoſ.* 1. 9. but now upon their believing in Chriſt they were reſtored to all their Church Priviledges by the ſpecial Mercy and Grace of God. Learn hence, That till Perſons ſubject themſelves to the Government of Chriſt, and become obedient to the Goſpel, they are in God's Account no People; to live without Chriſt in the World is a Life worſe than Death. Learn (2.) That when a People are brought near to God by Jeſus Chriſt, and partake of all the Rich and Invaluable Bleſſings and Priviledges of the Goſpel, they are exceedingly indebted for all to the Rich Mercy and Free Grace of God; *Which had not obtained Mercy, but now have obtained Mercy.*

11 Dearly beloved, I beſeech *you*, as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul;

Obſerve here, (1.) A Dehortation, abſtain from Fleſhly Luſts. *Queſt.* What is here meant by Luſts? *Anſ.* Luſt is either Habitual or Actual; Habitual or Original Luſt is the Corruption and Depravation of the Faculties of the Soul, an Averſion to every Thing that is Good, and a Proneneſs to all Evil; Actual Luſt is Original Sin put in Motion: By Fleſhly Luſts underſtand in particular thoſe Luſts which are Converſant about Senſual and Fleſhly Objects. *Queſt.* But what is it to abſtain from Fleſhly Luſts? *Anſ.* It implies a Total Forbearance of all wilful Sins; and at all Times there is great Difference between Temperance and Abſtinence; the Temperate Man eats little, the Abſtinent nothing at all; every one then that would be accounted a Chriſtian, is to Account it his great Duty and Intereſt to abſtain from all Fleſhly Luſts. *Obſerve* (2.) The Arguments which our Apoſtle here makes uſe of to perſwade Chriſtians to abſtain from Fleſhly Luſts; the firſt is implied or included in the Compellation, *Dearly Beloved*; not of the Apoſtle only or chiefly, but of God, Ἀγαπητοὶ; the ſame Word that Almighty God makes uſe of in expreſſing his Love to his Dear Son; as if he had ſaid, you that are ſo dearly Beloved of God, look you to it that you abſtain from what you know will be diſpleaſing to him. The Second Argument is drawn from their preſent State and Condition in the World, ye are *Strangers and Pilgrims* in the World, and therefore ſhould act as Strangers, who are not wont to be over-much affected with Objects that they ſee abroad in their Travels; no more ſhould you. The Third Argument is taken from the Peril and Danger of theſe Fleſhly Luſts to our precious Souls; *they War againſt the Soul*; that is, they War againſt the Purity of the Soul, they War againſt the Dignity of the Soul, againſt the Peace of the Soul, againſt the Liberty of the Soul; yea, againſt the very Life of the Soul.

12 Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles: that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil doers, they may by *your* good works which they ſhall behold, glorifie God in the day of viſitation.

From the Apoſtle's Dehortation in the former Verſe, he comes to an Exhortation in this, and the Duty exhorted to is ſtrict Godlineſs or Holineſs in all manner of Converſation; *Having your Converſation Honeſt*; 'tis not a ſingle Action, but our general Courſe and Converſation, that denotes us either Good or Bad: And the Word tranſlated *Honeſt* ſignifies Fair and Aimable, Beautiful and Adorning, the doing nothing that is unſeemly or a blemiſh either to our Perſon or Profeſſion: Chriſtians ſhould not only live free from Evil, but as much as may be from the very Suſpicion of Evil; it is added, *among the Gentiles*; that is, amongſt the Idolatrous Nations and People who had not received the Chriſtian Faith; great Care muſt be always taken by the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity that they do nothing which may encreaſe the Prejudices of the wicked World againſt Religion, and the Ways of Godlineſs, but remember that they are our watchful Obſervers, and bold Cenſurers, and accordingly endeavour that by a regular Piety, a ſtrict Sobriety, a diffuſive and extenſive Charity, we may render Religion venerable to the World, and ſtop the Mouth of Slander as much as in us lyes, by cutting off Occaſion from them that ſeek Occaſion. *Obſerve* farther, The Apoſtle exhorts them to have their Converſation *Honeſt* among the Gentiles; he doth not ſay Religious, though that be included, but outwardly Square, ſtrictly Juſt and Honeſt, this is that which the World judges us by; vain are all our Pretences to Piety if we fail in Honeſty; we muſt make Conſcience of the Duties of the Second Table, as an Argument of our Sincerity, and as an Ornament to our Profeſſion. *Obſerve next*, What was then, and is now, the Lot and Portion of good Men, namely, to be Evil-ſpoken of as Evil-Doers: *Whereas they ſpeak Evil of you, as Evil-doers*; Chriſt himſelf did not eſcape the Scourge of the Tongue; he was charged with Gluttony, Blaſphemy, Impoſture, with having a Devil, and with working Miracles by the Power of the Devil, and it is ſufficient for the Diſciple to be as his Maſter was; yet Mark, they ſpeak Evil of you, ſays the Apoſtle, *as* Evil-doers; to be an Evil-doer is miſerable, but not to be ſpoken of *as* an Evil-doer; *Nemo miſer ſenſu alieno*, no Man is Miſerable in another Man's evil Opinion of him; a bad Report, much leſs a bad Opinion, makes no Body a bad Man; if it be enough to Cenſure and Accuſe who can be Innocent? *Obſerve* again, The Apoſtle exhorts theſe believing Jews to a Conſpicuous Fruitfulneſs in good Works, *That they may by your good Works, which they ſhall behold*; implying, that Chriſtianity ſets Men to Work, (tho' we ſhall never be ſaved for our Works, yet without working we can never be ſaved,) and that Good Works may and ought to be ſo done that Men may *behold* them; tho' we muſt not do Good Works to be ſeen of Men, yet we ought to do Good Works that may be ſeen of Men, *Matth.* 5. 16. how elſe can Men be Patterns of Good Works, as they are required, *Tit.* 2. 7. if their Good Works be not conſpicuous, and expoſe to the World? *Obſerve* laſtly, The Bleſſed Fruit and Effect of Good Works, they cauſe ſuch as behold them to *Glorifie God in the Day of Viſitation.* This may be underſtood Two Ways, (1.) With reſpect to Believers, your Good Works will cauſe the wicked World to glorifie God in the Day of your Viſitation, that is, in the Day of your Perſecution and Affliction; though they Afflict and Perſecute you, yet they ſhall glorifie God when they behold your Faith, your Patience, your Conſtancy, in and under Sufferings in the Day of your Viſitation. (2.) With reſpect to the Wicked, and ſo the Day of Viſitation is the Day of their Converſion; and then the Exhortation is, to be ſo Conſpicuous in Good VVorks, that their Adverſaries may praiſe and glorifie God, when he ſhall viſit them with his Grace, and draw them by his Goſpel, to believe in his Son; the Day of Saving Converſion is a Day of Gracious Viſitation.

13 Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: Whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; 14 Or unto governours, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. 15 For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men:

Our Apoſtle having exhorted them in general to take Care that their Converſation be honeſt among the Gentiles, he now deſcends to particular Duties, which he adviſes them to be very Exemplary in the Performance of. And the firſt is, in their Subjection to Governours and Government; ſubmit your ſelves, ſays he, to every Civil Ruler, both Supream and Subordinate. Where *Obſerve*, (1.) How the Apoſtle calls Magiſtracy and Civil Government, though Originally of Divine Inſtitution, an Ordinance of Man: Firſt, As to the End of it, it being appointed and ordained for the Good and Benefit of Man. Secondly, In Reference to the Kind of it, every Nation having a Liberty to chuſe what Kind and Form of Government Humane Prudence ſhall direct them to, as moſt agreeable to, and commodious for, the People. *Obſerve* (2.) The Quality of that Obedience and Subjection which is to be given unto Magiſtrates, it muſt be *for the Lord's Sake*; that is, in Obedience to the

Command of God, and with an Eye at the Honour and Glory of God, Chriſtianity is no Enemy to the Civil Rights of Princes, it requires Subjection for Conſcience, *Prov.* 8. 15. By *me*, ſays God, *Kings Reign*; ſome read it, for me Kings Reign; both are true; Princes then hold not their Crowns, either from the Pope, or from the People, to be kick'd off by the one, or to be pluck'd off by the other, at their Pleaſure: *Submit your ſelves*, ſays our Apoſtle, *to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake. Obſerve* (3.) The Reaſons aſſigned why Magiſtrates ſhould be thus ſubjected and ſubmitted to, namely, (1.) Becauſe *they are ſent by God for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and the Praiſe of them that do Well*; the Magiſtrate's Office is to puniſh Evil-doers; the Fear of the Maigſtrate's Sword awes many Men more than the Fear of God's Hand; if ſome Men were not Gods among Men, many Men would be Devils among Men; there would be no living amongſt thoſe who Fear not the Inviſible God in Heaven, if there were not ſome viſible Gods on Earth to fear. (2.) Becauſe God will by this their Subjection given to Magiſtrates and Governours Silence, or as the Word ſignifies, put a Muzzle upon the Mouth of fooliſh and unreaſonable Men, who rage againſt his People as if they were Enemies to Order and Government: By this kind of Well-doing in particular, namely, by Subjection and Obedience to Rulers in the Lord, and for the Lord's Sake, we put to Silence the Fooliſhneſs of wicked Men.

16 As free, and not uſing *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God.

Here our Apoſtle anſwers an Objection which he foreſaw the Chriſtian Jews ready to make againſt this Duty of Subjection, namely, that they were a Free People as Jews, and ought to preſerve their Liberty, and own no Governours that were not of their own Nation; and as Chriſtians they look'd upon themſelves as Chriſt's Freemen, whereas Chriſtian Liberty exempts no Man from the Duty of Civil Subjection; the Liberty Chriſt has purchaſed for Believers is a Freedom from Sin and Satan, from ſinful Servitude; Chriſt makes all his Subjects Free, but it is with a Freedom from Spiritual Bondage, and not from Civil Subjection; conſequently to plead our Chriſtian Liberty in Bar to that Obedience which we owe our Superiors and Governors, either Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, is to uſe our Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs; and as a Covering for that Diſobedience which is hateful to God, and injurious to Mankind, as being deſtructive of Order and Government, which is the Beauty and the Bond of Humane Society.

17 Honour all men. — Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Here are Four very Important Duties recommended to us in this ſhort Verſe. (1.) To *Honour all Men*; no Man is to be deſpiſed by us, but every Man duly reſpected according to his Place and Station. There is a common Honour, and a Tribute of Civil Reſpect, payable to every Man, tho' ſome Men forfeit it by acting below Men; a vile Perſon is contemptible, though great; bare Greatneſs is no Guard againſt Contempt; but the Rags of a good Man cannot obſcure his Worth, nor hinder him from true Honour in the Hearts, and from the Tongues, of wiſe Men; Honour all Men, but eſpecially good Men. (2.) *Love the Brotherhood*; as there is a general Reſpect due to all Men, ſo there is a ſpecial Love due to the Brethren, to all the Saints, of what Nation and Country ſoever, of what Eſtate and Condition ſoever, High and Low, Rich and Poor, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever; therefore the Apoſtle calls upon us to Love the Brotherhood, the whole Fraternity and Society of Chriſtians, by what unhappy Names and Characters of Reproach ſoever diſtinguiſhed; there is no better Evidence of the Life of Grace in our ſelves, than the Love of Grace in another. (3.) *Fear God*; that is, living in a Religious Dread of his Name, as a Glorious God, and a Gracious Father; have a Reverential Awe and Fear of his Majeſty immoveably fix'd and implanted in your Souls, to the Production of which a double Apprehenſion is neceſſary, namely, the inconceivable Majeſty of God, and the miſerable Vileneſs of the Sinners. (4.) *Honour the King*; this Duty conſiſts in Reverencing their Perſons, in Obeying their lawful Commands, in a chearful Payment of their Dues, in Praying affectionately for them, and in Praiſing God for the Bleſſing of their Government. *Nero*, the worſt of Kings, and the Perſecutor of Chriſtians, was now in the Throne, yet the Command is expreſs to honour him: And if we conſider the Words in their Connexion and Conjunction one what another, Fear God, and Honour the King, we Learn, That Religion, and the Fear of God, do beſt qualifie Perſons to be good Subjects; this is the true and ſteady Principle of Loyalty, that Obedience to Governours that is laſting, is for Conſcience ſake to the Command of God; where there is no Fear of God in the Heart, there will be no Regard to the Command of God in the Life. Laſtly. Theſe Words may be conſidered as in their Conjunction, ſo in their Order in which they ſtand; firſt Fear God, and then Honour the King; *intimating*, that the Fear of God muſt be the Rule and Guide of our Subjection unto Governors; 'tis no Diſparagement to our Superiors to be under God, and ſo to be look'd upon by their Subjects; let ſuch as pretend to Fear God ſhew it by being Loyal Subjects, and let ſuch as would be thought moſt Loyal Subjects evidence it by their Awful and Religious Fear of God.

18 Servants *be* ſubject to *your* maſters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward. 19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God, endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and ſuffer *for it*, ye take it patiently; this *is* acceptable with God.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Order and Method of our Apoſtle in the Exhortations given to Chriſtians in this Epiſtle; he firſt excites them to the general Practice of their Duty, and *to be Holy in all manner of Converſation*, and next binds upon them the Performance of Relative and Particular Duties. In the foregoing Verſes he inſiſted upon the Duties of Subjects towards Magiſtrates and Governors, in this Verſe he propounds the Duty of Servants towards their Maſters. Thus let Chriſtian Servants be ſubject to their Maſters, whether Chriſtian or Heathen, giving due Reverence and Reſpect, not only to ſuch as are Kind and Gentle, but to ſuch as are Froward and Wrathful. Learn hence, That ſuch as are in the loweſt Condition, being Servants, yea, the meaneſt of Servants, may glorifie God in that Condition. Learn (2.) That Servants, to the end that they glorifie God in their ſervile Condition, muſt be ſubject to their Maſters with all Fear; yea, even to Wicked and Froward Maſters; becauſe the Ground of their Obedience is the Will and Command of God, which binds them to their Duty to their Maſter, tho' their Maſters fail and fall ſhort in their Duty to them. *Obſerve* (2.) The ſeveral Arguments made uſe of by St. *Peter* to enforce this Duty upon Servants. (1.) This is highly acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God, and will procure a gracious Reward. We ſhall certainly receive a Glorious Reward from God for what we ſuffer wrongfully and unjuſtly from Men. This is thank-worthy, and this is acceptable with God. (2.) From the Indecency of the contrary; becauſe it is no Vertue, but a juſt Puniſhment for Evil-doers, to ſuffer for their Evil Deeds; though to ſuffer patiently, when we ſuffer juſtly, is praiſe-worthy, yet not comparable with the Praiſe of ſuffering patiently, when we ſuffer unjuſtly. To do well, and then to ſuffer patiently, as for ill-doing, will meet with a Gracious, yea, with a Glorious Reward. *What Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults ye ſhall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

19 For even hereunto were ye called: becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us leaving us an example, that ye ſhall follow his Steps:

Obſerve here, Two farther Arguments to excite and move Chriſtians to Patience under unjuſt Sufferings. (1.) *Hereunto*, ſays the Apoſtle, *are ye called*; that is, by your Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; Religion obliges you to ſuffer, and to ſuffer with Patience; you muſt bear the Croſs before you wear the Crown; to this you are called, and with this you have been acquainted. (2.) You ſhould not think much to ſuffer Patiently, when you ſuffer Unjuſtly, becauſe Chriſt, your Captain and Guide, did ſo before you; he was the moſt Meek and Patient Endurer that ever was, of the Greateſt and moſt Wrongful Sufferings that ever were. *Note* here, That although the Example of our Saviour be here propounded to us with a ſpecial Regard to the particular

cular Virtue of Patience under unjuſt Sufferings, yet ought it to be extended to all Graces and Duties, and improved as a Pattern for the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs: *Leaving us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps*: The Practice and Example of the Holy Jeſus, in all the Ordinary Acts of his Obedience, ought to be propounded by all his Diſciples and Followers as the grand Pattern of our Imitation; it being a ſafe and unerring Example, an eaſie and familiar Example, a powerful and encouraging Example, and the moſt inſtructive and univerſal Example, that ever was given to the World, being a moſt abſolute and perfect Pattern of Holineſs.

22 Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but committed *himſelf* to him that judgeth righteouſly: 24 Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to ſin, ſhould live unto righteouſneſs: by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed.

Our Apoſtle proceeds to repreſent and recommend our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as a Mirror and perfect Pattern of Patience under the ſharpeſt Suffering; he acquaints us, (1.) With his pure and ſpotleſs Innocency, he did no Sin, therefore could not ſuffer for doing Evil; *No Guile was found in his Mouth*, neither in his Expreſſions, nor in his Actions; he never did Ill either in Word or Deed, but was a perfect Pattern of unblamable Holineſs: Next, our Apoſtle Recommends to us his invincible Patience under all his Sufferings, telling us, that although Chriſt was moſt ſhamefully *Reviled*, having the Dirt of a Thouſand Scandals, Slanders, Reproaches, and Blaſphemies, caſt upon him, yet *he reviled not again*, not giving them one Ill Word for all; and *when he ſuffered* all manner of Injuries and Indignities at once, being Buffeted, Spit upon, Crowned with Thorns, and Crucified, tho' he had Power ſufficient to look them into nothing, to frown them into Hell, yet *he threatned* them *not* with the leaſt Revenge, but prayed for his Murtherers, and committed his Cauſe to a Juſt and Righteous God; *He threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly*: Bleſſed Jeſus! Help us to imitate thy Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches, and never let us be found rendring to any Evil for Evil, or Railing for Reviling, but contrariwiſe Bleſſing for Curſing, Courteſies for Injuries, Affability for Affronts; let us at no Time be overcome of Evil, but labour at all Times to overcome Evil with Good. *Note* laſtly, How our Apoſtle takes notice that the Sufferings of Chriſt were not only Exemplary, but Satisfactory; he did not only ſuffer Patiently, but Meritoriouſly; *He his own ſelf bare our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree*. *Note* here, (1.) What was borne, *our Sin*, that is, the Guilt and Puniſhment of our Sin. (2.) Who bare it, Chriſt *his own ſelf*. This imports, (1.) The Singularity of his Sufferings, he had no Partner nor Sharer with him in what he bare, *he trod the Winepreſs alone*. (2.) The Sufficiency of his Sufferings, he *himſelf* bare our Sins; he who was God-Man, the Lamb of God, and as ſuch took away the Sin of the World. (3.) How he bare it, *in his own Body upon the Tree*; that is, in his Humane Nature upon the Croſs; Chriſt ſuffered in his Soul as well as in his Body, and both were ſatisfactory to Divine Juſtice, but his Bodily Sufferings are only mentioned, becauſe theſe were moſt viſible. (4.) The great Ends of his Sufferings, namely, Expiation of Sin, and Mortification of Sin; our Sins were expiated *on the Tree* by Chriſt's Suffering for us *in his own Body*; and by his Death he alſo purchaſed Virtue for mortifying Sin in us, and for quickning us unto Holineſs of Life, that as he died for Sin, we ſhould die unto Sin; and as he roſe again, and revived, never to die more, ſo ſhould we, being dead unto Sin, live no longer therein; *He himſelf bare our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, ſhould live unto Righteouſneſs, by whoſe Stripes*, that is, by whoſe Expiatory Sufferings, *we are* Healed; the Wounds made in our Souls by the Guilt and Power of Sin are Mercifully and Meritoriouſly Healed; the Guilt of Sin is pardoned, the Power of Sin ſubdued, and all the invaluable Fruits and Benefits of the Redeemer's Death obtained; Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

25 For ye were as ſheep going aſtray, but are now returned unto the ſhepherd and biſhop of your ſouls.

Obſerve here, (1.) The State and Condition in which both Jews and Gentiles were found before their Converſion to Chriſtianity, they were like Sheep going aſtray and loſt; wandring in the Ways of Sin and Unbelief, to their threatned Ruin and Deſtruction. *Obſerve* (2.) The tender Care of Chriſt, that great and good Shepherd, in bringing Home theſe loſt Sheep upon his Shoulders, (*Iſa.* 40. 11.) into his Fold, the Church; *Ye are now returned to the Shepherd*, to him that will feed you in green Paſtures, and preſerve you to his Heavenly Kingdom: The Shepherd gives Life to his Sheep, and alſo lays down his Life for his Sheep. *Obſerve* (3.) The Additional Title given to Chriſt, he is ſtiled *the Biſhop of our Souls*; he that with Tenderneſs, Care and Diligence, doth inſpect and viſit all his Charge; he is the Univerſal Biſhop, the Biſhop of Biſhops, who has the Charge of all the Flocks, and of the Shepherds too, and to whom all Biſhops and Shepherds muſt become accountable. God Almighty give them all ſuch Grace to be faithful, ſuch Wiſdom to be prudent, that Love to himſelf, that Zeal for Chriſt, that Tenderneſs for Souls, ſuch Meekneſs and Humility, ſuch Patience and Charity, ſuch Mortification and Self-denial, as becomes Perſons of their *Holy Character* and *Profeſſion*, always remembring that the Salvation of one Precious Soul for which the great Shepherd died is infinitely worth the moſt Indefatigable Labours of their whole Lives; that when the Chief Shepherd ſhall appear they may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

1 Likewiſe, ye wives, *be* in ſubjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives. 2 While they behold your chaſte converſation *coupled* with fear.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapter entred upon an Exhortation to the Practice of Relative Duties, particularly of Subjects towards their Rulers, and of Servants towards their Maſters, he continues here his Exhortation to Husbands and Wives in the former Part of this Chapter, beginning firſt with the Wives Duty, (as did St. *Paul* in all his Epiſtles,) becauſe their Duty of Subjection is the moſt hard and difficult Duty; *Likewiſe ye Wives be in Subjection to your own Husbands*. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Duty injoined, *Subjection*, that is, a loving and delightful Obedience to the Husband, owning of, and ſubmitting to, his Authority, in Compliance with the Command of God. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſons from whom, and to whom, this Subjection is due, from every *Wife* to her *own Husband*, Believer or Unbeliever, Chriſtian or Infidel; it is not lawful upon any Pretence whatever for the Wife to caſt off this Duty, which by the Law of her Creation, and the expreſs Command of God, is bound upon her. *Obſerve* (3.) One ſpecial Reaſon aſſigned why ſuch Wives as have unbelieving, wicked and unconverted, Husbands, ſhould take particular Care to expreſs that Fear and Reverence towards God, that Subjection and Obedience, that Chaſtity and Conjugal Affection towards their Husbands, which the Word of God calls for; namely, that ſuch Husbands as *Obey not the Word*, *may without the Word* (Preached) *be won* to the Faith, by obſerving the Efficacy and Power of the Word in the Converſation of the Wives. Learn hence, That the Wives Holy and Humble, Pious and Prudent, Meek and Patient, Chaſte and Unſuſpected, Converſation before God and the World, does recommend not only their Perſons to the Love and Eſteem of their Husbands, but alſo their Faith and Holy Religion, (which produces ſuch good Fruits,) to their Approbation and Choice; *If any obey not the Word, they may without the Word be won by the Converſation of the Wives*.

3 Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: 4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price.

Our Apoſtle's next Advice here given to Wives is concerning their Attire; this is laid down *firſt Negatively*, what it ſhould not be; not an Outward Adorning, attended with great Curioſity and Exactneſs in dreſſing the Body with Plaited Hair, Gold Chains, Gay and Gaudy Apparel, and ſuch like. Where *Note*, that Plaited Hair, Gold Chains, and Coſtly Attire, were then the Attire of Lewd Women; Whores only or chiefly were ſo deck'd and adorn'd, and therefore were abſolutely forbidden to the Chriſtian Women by our Apoſtle; but when ſuch Attire ceaſes to be a Mark of ſuch Diſtinction it may be worn by Chriſtian Women, provided it be done without Pride, and without too great Expence both of Time and Treaſure; always remembring that Gravity in Apparel, and wearing ſuch a Dreſs as is ſoon put on, is moſt honourable, and beſt becoming Chriſtian Women: I had rather (ſays one) go like the Wild *Indians* than have thoſe Thouſands of Hours to anſwer for which ſome have ſpent between the Glaſs and the Comb. *Obſerve* here, That this Text doth not abſolutely forbid the Wearing of Ornaments, or Coſtly Apparel, by ſuch Perſons whoſe Quality will anſwer it; but only forbids Pride and Vanity, Affectation and Oſtentation, in the Wearing of them; it is not only lawful to cover the Body, but to adorn the Body; *Abraham* had never ſent Ear-rings and Bracelets to *Rebeccah* had they been ſinful in their Uſe; to wear ſuch Things beyond our Purſe and Place, and to make our ſelves or others Poor by making our ſelves Fine, is very ſinful, but otherwiſe lawful. *Obſerve* next, Our Apoſtle's *Affirmative Precept* for the Woman's Adorning, with the Reaſons of it, *v.* 4. *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart*, &c. Where *Note*, (1.) What muſt be apparelled and adorn'd, *The Hidden Man of the Heart*; that is, the Soul, which wants both Covering and Adorning as well as the Body, Sin having made both Naked to their Shame. *Note* 2. With *what* the hidden Man of the Heart muſt be apparelled; not with Fine Cloaths, they will not cover a Naked Soul, but with the Sanctifying Graces of the Spirit of God; with Humility and Meekneſs, with Piety and Prudence, which Ornaments will never wax Old, nor grow out of Faſhion, as others do, and are alſo of Precious Eſteem with God himſelf; they *are in the Sight of God of great Price*; theſe Vertues are in themſelves, and render the Poſſeſſors of them, truly Valuable in the Sight and Eſteem of God. Upon the whole then it evidently appears that the Negation here is not abſolute, but comparative; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, God will have the hidden Man of your Heart adorn'd with Grace, and delights more to ſee that than your Bodies adorn'd with Precious Jewels and Coſtly Apparel: And accordingly, if Women affect Finery, and would appear Beautiful, let them chuſe the beſt Ornaments, thoſe of the Mind and Heart, which will attract the Eye of God towards them, rather than thoſe External Ones, which ſerve only to draw Man's Eye to an Admiration of them.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy
women alſo who truſted in God adorned themſelves,
being in ſubjection unto their own husbands; 6 Even
as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whoſe
daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not
afraid with any amazement.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Two Verſes enforces the Exhortation and Advice given to Women in the foregoing Verſes, namely, to attire themſelves with outward Modeſty, and inward Meekneſs, by a Twofold Argument. (1.) From the Example of Holy Women in general under the Old Teſtament, whoſe Praiſe is in the Scripture; not for the External Adorning of the Body, but for their Affiance and Truſt in God, and their Subjection paid to their own Husbands. Here *Note*, (1.) That Holineſs, or the Duties of the Firſt Table, are requir'd of Women, as well as of Men; and God accepts Holineſs in them as well as in Men, *The Holy Women. Note* (2.) That all Holy Women of Old did, and always ought to, make Conſcience of their Duty to their Husbands, particularly of Subjection, that ſo Good Example may be given by them, and taken from them, for others to do the like; the Vertue of Good Example is laſting; it may do good many Years after the Example is given; the Example of theſe Holy Women had a freſh Power to do Good many Thouſand Years after it was given, and will ſtill have to the World's End. (1.) Another Argument is taken from the Example of *Sarah*, who meekly obey'd *Abraham*, acknowledging him to be her Lord; the Daughters of whoſe Faith, and the Heirs of whoſe Bleſſing, ſuch Wives will appear and approve themſelves to be, who do as *Sarah* did, not ſuffering themſelves by any Fears or Terrors to be diverted from, nor by any Fits of Paſſion and Grief to be diſturbed in, the Performance of that Duty which God requires, and the Husband expects, *Even as* Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, *calling him Lord*. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That the Faithful Practice, and Conſciencious Diſcharge, of Domeſtick and Relative Duties, is much taken Notice of by God, and had in Remembrance with him; particularly the Wife's Duty faithfully diſcharged to the Froward Husband is, and ſhall be, had in Everlaſting Remembrance with God. *Obſerve* (2.) That the ſame Duty and Reverence, the ſame Subjection and Obedience, which *Sarah* gave to *Abraham*, is due and payable to every Husband, elſe the Apoſtle's Argument is of no Force. Some might ſay *Abraham* was a great Man. *Anſ.* True, but *Sarah* obeyed him as her Husband, as all Wives ought to do, becauſe the Command of God requires Honour and Reverence to be given to all Husbands as Husbands. *Obſerve* laſtly, With what great and wonderful Goodneſs and Clemency the Lord is pleas'd to overlook the Failings and Infirmities of his Upright Servants. We find in *Sarah*'s Story, *Gen.* 18. that ſhe ſpake very unhandſomely, and laugh'd indecently, when the Angel came and told her ſhe ſhould have a Son; but all that is paſſed by in Silence, and that one good Word ſhe gave her Husband, calling him *Lord*, is mention'd here by St. *Peter* to her Eternal Honour. The Lord has a Gracious Reſpect to a little Pure Gold, tho' mingled with much Droſs; and in a great Heap of Sin if he can eſpy he will accept of a little Spark of true Grace. O Lord! Thou wilt not bring our Infirmities and Slips to account againſt us, nor rigidly reckon with us for the ſame, if our Hearts be upright with thee: Make us then ſound in thy Statutes that we may not be aſhamed.

7 Likewiſe ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindred.

Next our Apoſtle proceeds to direct and exhort Husbands to the Practice of their Reſpective Duties; the General and Comprehenſive Duty of the Husband here mention'd is Cohabitation, under which all Matrimonial Duties are contain'd; *Dwell with your Wives according to Knowledge*; that is, as becomes Wiſe and Underſtanding Men, that well underſtand their Duty, and as the Rule of Chriſtianity directs, giving juſt Honour and due Reſpect unto them, and exerciſing great Tenderneſs towards them. Next *Obſerve* the Reaſons ſubjoin'd to enforce this Duty upon Husbands. (1.) Becauſe Wives are the Weaker Veſſels, ſubject to Infirmities, and more liable to Contempt, therefore their Husbands ſhould contribute their Wiſdom and Authority to ſupport their Honour, and preſerve them from being Deſpiſed either by Children or Servants. (2.) Becauſe Wives are not only Co-partners with their Husbands in their Temporal Good Things, but alſo Co-heirs of Saving Grace with them; *Heirs together of the Grace of Life.* (3.) Becauſe otherwiſe their Prayers one with, and one for, another, would be obſtructed and diſturb'd; *That your Prayers be not hindred. Note* here, That all Sinful Walking in general, but Diſcord and Diſcontent between Husband and Wife in particular, doth exceedingly hinder Prayer; it oft-times hinders from the very Act of Prayer, that the Duty is laid aſide; it flats and deads our Spirits, and ſtrengthens our Hearts in Prayer; and it hinders the Effect, Fruit, and Succeſs, of our Prayers; it makes Perſons in that Condition that they have no Heart to come before God, nor care they to lift up their Faces to him. From the whole *Learn*, That it ought to be the Mutual Care of Married Couples ſo to order all their Carriage towards each other that in their Houſes they hinder not any Holy Duties. To hinder the Practices of Religion is repugnant to the great Ends of this Relation; ſome hinder by their Wickedneſs, others by their Diſcontent and Frowardneſs; take we Care that neither the Husband's nor Wife's Heart be deaded, nor their Heat dampned, to Holy Duties, by either of their Sinful or Froward Behaviour; that Family will be little in Praying, that is much in Squabbling and Contending one with another.

8 Finally *be ye* all of one mind, having compaſſion
one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: 9 Not rendring evil for evil, or railing for rail-

ing; but contrariwiſe bleſſing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing. 10 For he that will love life, and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile. 11 Let him eſchew evil, and do good; let him ſeek peace, and enſue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord *is* againſt them that do evil. 13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

Our Apoſtle having finiſh'd his Exhortation to Relative Duties, namely, of Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, Magiſtrates and Subjects, he now enters upon another *Subject*, namely, that of *Sufferings*; ſhewing us a Prudential Way and Manner how to avoid *Sufferings*, that they may not come upon us, and next, how to avoid Impatiency under *Sufferings*, if it be the Will of God that they do come upon us. The former of theſe is ſpoken to in the Verſes now before us, in which he exhorts us to practice all thoſe Vertues which are apt to reconcile and gain the Affections of Men towards us; particularly he exhorts to Unity and Concord, *Be all of one Mind:* To ſympathize one with another in and under Sufferings, and to bear with one another's Infirmities, to be *courteous* towards all, ſweet and affable in our Demeanour, provided our Courteſie be neither a Snare to our ſelves, nor an Encouragement to others in their Sins, abſtaining from all Injury and Provocations, from all Revenge both in Act and in Deſire, not reviling them that rail at us, but giving good Words for bad ones, *for we are hereunto called, that we ſhould inherit a Bleſſing*; that is, *Chriſt* by his Goſpel hath called, and by his Example encouraged, us thus to do, that we may be bleſſed. Next *Obſerve*, That to encourage us to the Perpetual Practice of theſe Vertues, our Apoſtle aſſures us to, that hereby we ſhould moſt effectually conſult the Safety and Comfort of our Lives: *For he that loveth Life*; that is, Quietneſs and Peace, which is the Comfort of Life, the likelieſt Way to obtain it is to keep his *Tongue* from ſpeaking *Evil* of others, and his Lips from uttering Falſhood and Deceit; plainly intimating, that it is Mens Unbridled Tongues which bring moſt of their Troubles upon them. He adviſeth alſo to *eſchew Evil*, to avoid, and to abhor, every Thing that is vile and ſinful, and to *do Good*, that is, all the Good we can to all Men. *To ſeek Peace, and enſue it*; that is, to depart ſometimes from our own Right to obtain Peace, and to follow hard after it, though it flies before us. And farther, Our Apoſtle aſſures us that this Innocency of Converſation is not only the Way to gain the Friendſhip of Man, but to obtain the Favour of God, and to engage his Providence for our Protection, *For the Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry:* As if he had ſaid, the Eye of God's Special Care will be continually watching over you for good, to ſave you from Unreaſonable Men, and he will hear your Prayers in all your Diſtreſſes: And *the Face of the Lord*, his Angry Countenance, will be againſt them that wrong you, and do evil to you, to return it upon their own Heads. So that the Sum of all is, That an Innocent and Harmleſs, a Quiet, Peaceable and Obliging, Deportment doth naturally tend to preſerve us from Evil, and from Evil Men. For *who is he* that can be ſo unnatural and ungrateful as to *harm us if we be Followers of that which is Good?* That is, if we be civil and obliging to them they cannot find in their Hearts to be injurious and unkind to us. *Who is he that will harm you if ye be Followers of that which is Good?* Here *Note*, That the Apoſtle doth not abſolutely ſay none will harm us, but he ſpeaks of it as ſo very unreaſonable and improbable a Thing, that we may preſume it will not ordinarily and often happen; not but that Good Men are obnoxious to *Harm*; the moſt Unblemiſh'd and Shining Vertue will not at all Times, and in all Caſes, exempt from Injury, and Ill Treatment; but the *following* of that which is *Good* doth in its own Nature tend to ſecure us from the Malice and Miſchief of Men, and very frequently does it, and is the beſt and moſt effectual Means in order to it. He muſt love Miſchief for Miſchief's Sake that will be miſchievous to him who never offer'd him any Occaſion, or gave him any Provocation. Therefore let us never be weary of well-doing, ſeeing doing Good to Men is ordinarily a Security againſt Injuries from Men, by recommending us to the Favour and Protection of God, and to the Eſteem and Good-will of Mankind; none ſhall *Harm* them that do *Good*, for all *Harms* ſhall tend to their *Good*.

14 But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their Terror, neither be troubled;

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Tho' following that which is Good be, generally ſpeaking, a ſure and certain Way to keep you from Harm, yet ſhould it ſo happen, that notwithſtanding all your Piety and Prudence you ſhould ſuffer for Well-doing ye are happy, and not miſerable; therefore be not afraid of their Terrors and Threatnings, neither be ye troubled for what they can inflict upon you. *Note* thence, 1. That to ſuffer Affliction and Perſecution for Righteouſneſs Sake doth not hinder, but farther, our Happineſs. *If ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake happy are ye*, for ſo ſuffered your Saviour that went before you. *Note* 2. That when God calls us forth to ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake we muſt fortifie our ſelves againſt all Fear, no Terrors muſt trouble us, no apprehended Dangers or Difficulties muſt diſmay us; *Be not afraid of their Terrors, neither be troubled.*

15 But ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts:

This Phraſe in Scripture imports, 1. A firm Belief of God's Almighty Power, that he can protect from Sufferings, and a full Affiance in his Goodneſs and Providence, that he will do it if it be good for us. 2. It is from the Heart to own, and believe the Truth of all that God delivers in his Word by Way of Promiſe to his People, and by Way of Threatning to their Enemies, that his Eyes are over the Righteous, and his Face againſt them that do Evil. 3. To ſanctifie the Lord God in our Hearts, is always to maintain upon our Minds ſuch an Holy Fear and Awful Reverence of God as will effectually prevail upon us to dread more the Diſpleaſure of God than any Thing we can ſuffer at the Hand of Man. *Learn* hence, 1. That when Sufferings are approaching we ought to ſtrengthen our Hearts againſt all Fears of Suffering by putting our Truſt in God. 2. That by this Truſt and Confidence in God in a Suffering Hour we do eminently ſanctifie the Lord God in our Hearts, *Iſa.* 8. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your Fear, and your Dread.*

15 —— And *be* ready always to *give* an anſwer to every man that asketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſs and fear:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If you be Chriſtians indeed you are not without Hope, an Hope of Everlaſting Bliſs and Happineſs, which will infinitely recompence you hereafter for all the Hard Things which you ſuffer for the Sake of Chriſtianity here. And foraſmuch as this your Hope is not a vain and groundleſs Expectation, but a rational Hope, *Be always ready to render a Reaſon of that Hope that is in you with Meekneſs and Fear.* *Learn* hence, 1. That the Chriſtian's Hope it is a Rational Hope; he has a Reaſon to hope for what he hopes; his Hope is well-grounded upon the Promiſe of God, upon the Purchaſe of *Chriſt*, and upon the Operations of the Holy Spirit, quickning him by its Renovation, leading him by its Manuduction, acting him by its Influences, animating him in his Devotions by its Aſſiſtances, by being the Author of all that Grace that is in him, and of all that Good that is done by him. *Learn* 2. That it is a Chriſtian's Duty to be always ready to render a Reaſon of this his Hope when the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, and the Good of others, do require it. *Learn* 3. That this muſt not be done with Vanity and Oſtentation, but with Meekneſs and Fear. *Be always ready to render a Reaſon of the Hope that is in you with Meekneſs and Fear.*

16 Having a good conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt. 17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

Here our Apoſtle adds his Advice to Chriſtians, that they ſilence, and put to ſhame, their Adverſaries by their Works as well as by their Words, by their Holy Converſation, together with their Rational Diſputations; he bad them in the former Verſe be always ready to make a Profeſſion of their Faith, and *to render a Reaſon of their Hope*: Here he bids them confute Gainſayers by a good Converſation, and in order thereunto to keep continually an innocent Mind, and a clear Conſcience, pure from Guile, and clear from Guilt. *Having a good Conſcience, that ſuch as ſpeak Evil of you, as Evil-doers, may be aſhamed.* *Note* here, 1. That let the Servants of *Chriſt* be never ſo innocent in their Lives, and circumſpect in their Carriage, yet there are thoſe that will Cenſure them as bad Men, and ſlander them as Evil-doers. *Note* 2. That a good Conſcience, accompanied with a good Converſation, is the moſt effectual Means to ſtop the Mouth of Slander, and to put ſuch as accuſe us falſly to Shame. *Note* 3. That when Sufferings and Perſecutions do come, after all, the Conſideration that we ſuffer not for Evil, but for Well-doing, will be a ſufficient Support and Conſolation to us. *It is better*, if God will have us ſuffer, *that it be for Well-doing*; better for us, but worſe for our Perſecutors; for now the Body only ſuffers, while the Soul is free.

18 For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, (that he might bring us to God,) being put to death in the fleſh, but quickned by the ſpirit.

These Words are brought in as a ſtrong Argument why Chriſtians that ſuffer wrongfully ſhould bear it patiently. 'Twas our Saviour's own Caſe; he that had perfect Innocency, and unſpotted Righteouſneſs, ſuffer'd in the ſevereſt Manner for us that were Unrighteous, that he might reconcile us to God, being *put to Death in the Fleſh*, that is, in our Humane Nature, *but quickned by the Spirit*, or raiſed to Life again, by the Power of his Godhead. It doth therefore well become all his Followers chearfully to undergo all manner of Sufferings for him, which they meet with in their Duty to him. *Note* here, 1. *Chriſt* did not barely ſuffer for our Good, but he ſuffered in our ſtead. He is not only ſaid to ſuffer for us, but to ſuffer for our Sins, that is, the Puniſhment of our Sins; for no Man was ever ſaid to ſuffer for Sin that did not undergo and endure the Puniſhment of Sin. As the Sin-offering under the Law is called an Offering for Sin, becauſe it did expiate the Guilt of Sin, by dying in the Place and Stead of the Offender, in like manner, when the Death of *Chriſt* is called an Offering for Sin, what can it import but that he ſuffered to make Atonement for Sin in our Place and Stead? *The Juſt for the Unjuſt*: If theſe Words do not imply the Subſtitution of *Chriſt* as our Surety, and his Suffering the Puniſhment due to our Sins, what Words can expreſs it? *Note* 2. That the great End of *Chriſt*'s bitter Death, and bloody Sufferings, was to bring all thoſe for whom he died unto God. Now *Chriſt's* bringing us to God imports our Apoſtacy from him, our Inability to return to him: That Sin unſatisfied for, which was the great Bar to keep us from him, is mercifully removed by him, and that our chief Happineſs conſiſts in the Enjoyment of him.

18 ——Being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the ſpirit: 19 By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in priſon; 20 Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight ſouls were ſaved by water.

As if St. *Peter* had ſaid, Tho' *Chriſt* ſuffered for our Sins, and was put to Death in his Humane Nature or Fleſh, yet he was quickned and made alive by the Spirit; in which, or by which, Spirit he went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon, which in the Days of *Noah* were hardned in Sin and Diſobedience, whilſt the Long-ſuffering of God endured them, and waited for their Repentance, no leſs than an Hundred and Twenty Years; while the Ark was making and preparing, and *Noah* preaching to them, yet ſo impenitent were they to the very laſt that only Eight were ſaved in the Ark. *Note* here, 1. That the Old World before the Flood were in Priſon, whilſt here on Earth, being in Bondage and Captivity to Sin and Satan, held in the Chains of their Luſts, and in the Bonds of their Iniquity. Such as are in Bondage to Sin are Captives in Satan's Priſon. The Old World alſo was in Priſon, whilſt on Earth, as having received from God the Sentence of Deſtruction, and were reſerved as in Priſon againſt the Day of Slaughter, if they repented not within 120 Years. *Note* 2. That *Chriſt* by his Spirit did preach to the Old World in the Miniſtry of his Prophets, *Enoch* and *Noah*; and his Spirit did chide with them, and reprove them, in order to their bringing to Repentance. *Note* (3.) That thoſe refractory and hardned Sinners, for deſpiſing the Offers of Grace made to them, were for their Diſobedience clapt up into the Priſon of Hell, ſuffering the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. Such as were caſt into Priſon in *Noah's* Time, were all faſt in St. *Peter*'s Time; there is no picking the Locks of Hell Gates, no breaking through the Walls of the fiery *Tophet*; Hell has a Door to take in, but none to let out. *Note* (4.) That tho' *Chriſt* by his Spirit preached to the Spirits in Priſon, yet it was not when they were in Priſon, I mean in the Priſon of Hell, but here on Earth; there are no Sermons in Hell, no Conditions of Happineſs propoſed, no Tenders of Salvation propounded, there. *Chriſt* preached to theſe Priſoners to prevent their Impriſonment; *Chriſt* preached to theſe Men, who were now in Priſon, that they might not have been Impriſoned. *Note* Laſtly, That the obſtinate Infidelity, and ſottiſh Stupidity, of the Old World was amazing, that after 120 Years preaching no more than Eight Perſons ſhould be perſwaded into the Belief of the World's Deſtruction. From the beginning we find that the Prophets of God have had Cauſe to complain that few have believed their Report; do the Miniſters of God now groan to God that they run in vain, and labour in vain, and ſpend their Strength for nought? From the Beginning it has been ſo. Lord! If thou honoureſt any of us with better Succeſs, and giveſt us to ſee the Fruit of our Labours in the Lives of our People, help us to ſet the Crown of Praiſe on the Head of thine own Grace, and ſay, *Non nobis Domine, non nobis, &c.* Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory.

21 The like figure whereunto, *even* Baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

Obſerve here, 1. The Type and the Antitype, the Ark and Baptiſm; their Salvation from the Deluge by the Ark prefigureth our Salvation from God's Wrath by Baptiſm. As all that were without the Ark periſhed, and all within the Ark were ſaved, ſo all that are ingrafted into *Chriſt* by Faith, (whereof Baptiſm is a Seal) are ſaved, whilſt the Unbelieving and Unbaptized Part of the World periſh. Baptiſm is ſuch a Means of our Spiritual Salvation now, as the Ark was of *Noah's* and his Families Temporal Salvation then. *The like Figure whereunto Baptiſm now ſaveth us. Obſerve* 2. How our Apoſtle expreſſes himſelf, and plainly declares what he means by that Baptiſm which is ſaving, negatively, it is not the outward Ceremony of ſprinkling the Face, or waſhing the Body with Water, that is ſaving, or any ways pleaſing unto God, ſave only as it is an Act and Exerciſe of our Obedience to his Command and Will, but poſitively, it is the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, that is, the faithful Anſwer of a reſolved Soul in the Covenant of Baptiſm, who gives up himſelf to the Obedience of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and renounces the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. This covenanting is the Condition of Salvation, and Baptiſm but the Sign. Learn hence, That outward Baptiſm alone ſaves none, but the inward only; and the Sign and ſingular Effect of inward Baptiſm is the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God; yet muſt we not conclude with the *Anabaptiſts* from this Text, that Baptiſm can be of no ſaving Advantage to Infants becauſe they cannot at preſent make this Anſwer of a good Conſcience: For in the ſame manner ſpeaks St. *Paul* of Circumciſion, that the true Circumciſion before God is the inward Circumciſion of the Heart and Spirit, and not the outward Circumciſion of the Fleſh. But who dare argue from thence that the *Jewiſh* Infants, for want of the inward Circumciſion, muſt not be admitted to the outward? The Argument is the very ſame: Will you ſay that the Anſwer of a good Conſcience is abſolutely neceſſary, and expreſly required, that Baptiſm may be Beneficial; therefore they only are to be Baptized that can make this Anſwer? The ſame may we ſay, That the inward Circumciſion of the Heart was required as the only acceptable

Circumciſion in the Sight of God; therefore they only are to be Circumciſed who have this inward Circumciſion of the Heart. But as the one *was* the Will of God, ſo *is* the other true indeed. The *Jews* did not admit Proſelytes to Circumciſion *then*, no more will we admit Adult Perſons to Baptiſm *now* without the Anſwer of a good Conſcience, or a Solemn Stipulation to be the Lord's for ever, but they admitted Infants to Circumciſion without it. In like manner the Chriſtian Church now admits the Children of Chriſtian Parents to Baptiſm, without any ſuch Anſwer made by them, but for them only.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, and powers being made ſubject unto him.

Our Apoſtle having in the cloſe of the former Verſe ſpoken of the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby, he makes mention in this Verſe, 1. Of his going into Heaven, there to diſpatch all that remained to be done for the compleating the Salvation of his People. 2. He is there affirmed to be at God's Right Hand. The Right Hand is the Upper Hand, the Hand of Honour, and the Right Hand is the Hand of Power; accordingly *Chriſt*'s ſetting at God's Right Hand, as an Enthroned King, imports Sovereign Honour, and Supream Power; and that God has exalted his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* with great Triumph to his Kingdom in Heaven. 3. It is aſſerted, That Angels, Authorities, and Powers, are made ſubject to him, that is, our *Jeſus*, in whom we hope, believe and truſt, is advanced in Heaven, to a Preheminency above, and to a Superiority over, all Angels and Celeſtial Powers, waiting and expecting till all his Enemies on Earth become his Footſtool. For tho' his Victory is *yet* incompleat and inconſummate, and we ſee not all Things *yet* put under him, it may ſuffice at preſent that we ſee *Jeſus* Crowned with Glory and Honour, and that's enough to ſhew that the Power of his Enemies is broken; and that though they make ſome Oppoſition ſtill, yet is it to no Purpoſe at all. For refuſing to ſubmit to his Scepter, they will fall by the Rod of his Strength. Angels and Principalities in Heaven, and all Powers and Potentates upon Earth, being made ſubject unto him.

CHAP. IV.

The Argument which our Apoſtle purſues in this Chapter is the ſame which he had proſecuted in the former. The firſt Part of the Chapter is Exhortatory, urging all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity to the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs and Purity. The Second Part is Conſolatory, againſt Perſecutions and Sufferings for the Cauſe of Chriſt, *which were then inevitably coming upon them from the Enemies of Chriſtianity. The Exhortations unto, and the Arguments for, Holineſs are many, contained in the firſt Verſes of the Chapter, in which our Apoſtle thus beſpeaks them.*

1 FOraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind: for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh, hath ceaſed from ſin; 2 That he no longer ſhould live the reſt of *his* time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.

Theſe Words may be conſidered, 1. As an Inference drawn from what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing Chapter, namely, that *Chriſt Jeſus* ſuffered for our Sins, *the juſt for the unjuſt*, *v.* 18. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, foraſmuch as *Chriſt* has thus ſuffered for us, *Firſt*, as our Surety and Repreſentative, in a Way of Satisfaction; *Secondly*, As our Pattern and Example, in order to our Imitation; *let us arm our ſelves with the ſame Mind* and Reſolution, to be conformed to him in his Death, dying to Sin, as he died for Sin; for he that hath crucified the Fleſh, and mortified his corrupt Nature, in Imitation of *Chriſt*'s Suffering in our Fleſh and Nature, that Man hath ceaſed from Sin, that is, from living unto Sin, or ſerving Sin any longer, but ſpends the remainder of his Life wholly according to God's Will, not according to his own or others luſtful Deſires and Inclinations. 2. Theſe Words may be conſidered as an Argument to excite Chriſtians to eſchew Evil, and do Good, which he had preſs'd upon them in the former Chapter from the Example of *Chriſt*; and the Force of the Argument lyes thus: All Chriſtians ſhould be armed with the ſame Mind and Reſolution againſt Sin, and for Holineſs, that *Chriſt* was. But *Chriſt* having ſuffered in the Fleſh for Sin, and ceaſed from Sin, lived in the Spirit unto God: Therefore all Chriſtians ſhould wholly endeavour all they can to ceaſe from Sin, and live no more to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God.

3 For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries: 4 Wherein they think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of *you*. 5 Who ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Obſerve here, 1. That this Epiſtle was written, and directed not only to the Jewiſh Natives, but to the Gentile Proſelites and Converts; this is evident from the Apoſtle's putting them in mind that there was a Time, namely, before their Converſion, *when they wrought the Will of the Gentiles*. *Obſerve* 2. That Black and Diſmal Sins which the Gentiles were guilty of, and wallowed in, before their Converſion to Chriſtianity, namely, all manner of Senſuality, Uncleanneſs, Exceſs in Drinking, Revellings, Banquetings, and Idolatries, joined with the reſt of their Abominations. Lord! How endearing are our Obligations, *who were Sinners of the Gentiles*, for calling us out of this Darkneſs (worſe than *Egyptian*) into marvellous Light by the Goſpel. *Obſerve* 3. The Argument uſed to excite them to quit and abandon the forementioned Sins now in their converted State, which they had before indulged themſelves in the Practice of in their Heathen State. The Time paſt may ſuffice to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles; as if he had ſaid, ſurely you have had enough, enough of Sin, and too much in your Unregenerate State; your Luſts have taken up too much of your Lives, and had too much of your Love. Learn hence, That the true Penitent, and ſincere Convert, is one that has had enough of Sin, yea, more than enough; one Moment's Service of Sin is more Service than we owe it; we can never ſerve *Chriſt* too long, and our Luſts too ſhort, a Time. Learn 2. That this Conſideration, how long ſome of us ſerved Sin before Converſion, ſhould be a forcible Argument to excite and quicken us unto greater Meaſures and Degrees of Holineſs in our Regenerate and Converted State. *Obſerve* 4. What Uſage ſuch Chriſtians muſt expect from the Men of the World, who come out from among them, and refuſe to run any longer into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with them. 1. *They think it ſtrange*; they admire and wonder at them, as we do at Strangers that come out of another Country. And, 2. *They ſpeak Evil of them*, becauſe they will not be as bad and as mad as themſelves; *they think it ſtrange that you run not with them in the ſame Exceſs of Riot*, *ſpeaking Evil of you*. Learn hence, 1. That wicked Men are exceſſively Riotous, or, that there is an Exceſs of Riot and Sin which wicked Men upon all Occaſions run into. Learn 2. That ſuch Men wonder, and think it very ſtrange, that good Men are not as exceſſively Riotous as themſelves. 3. That becauſe they will not ſo run, therefore they ſpeak Evil of them. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Impartiality and Severity of that Account which the wicked Men of the World muſt render to God, the Univerſal Judge, for all their hard Speeches which they have uttered againſt the Righteous; *Who ſhall give Account to him who is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead*. *Note* here, 1. There muſt and ſhall be a Day of Account; there muſt be one, becauſe there never yet was one; there ſhall be one, becauſe God has made Man an accountable Creature; he can give, and therefore he ſhall give, an Account of his Actions; for he has a Principle of Reaſon to know what he does, and a Liberty of Choice to govern himſelf, and a Rule to direct him what to chuſe, and what to refuſe; and conſequently the Actions proceeding from him, muſt and ſhall be accounted for by him. *Note* 2. That this Account muſt be given to *Chriſt*, the Supream and Univerſal *Judge both of Quick and Dead*; partly, as a fitting Reward for his great Humiliation and Sufferings, and partly, that the World may ſee what great and excellent Perſon he was who came to viſit them in great Humility, and partly, to give Advantage to the future Judgment, in that God has appointed *a Man* for our Judge, who is Fleſh of our Fleſh, and Bone of our Bone; one that is ſenſible of the Follies, Temptations, and Infirmities, of Mankind, and pities them, and will make favourable Allowances for them; nay, one that is *God* as well as Man, from whom we may expect all the Goodneſs of a God, and all the Tender Compaſſion of a Man, in their utmoſt Perfection; ſo that no Man need fear ſuch a Judge who has not out-ſinned the Mercies of a God, and the Tender Compaſſions of a Man; for if either God or Man can help us we are ſafe in that Day when we ſhall give Account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.

6 For, for this cauſe was the Goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the ſpirit.

By the dead here ſome underſtand the Gentile World, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, to whom the Goſpel was preached when they were thus ſpiritually dead and buried in Senſuality, that they might *judge* and condemn, oppoſe and ſtrive againſt, mortifie and ſubdue, thoſe Senſual Deſires and Carnal Appetites which they indulged to, whilſt they lived as Natural Men, without the Knowledge of God's Will, and the Aſſiſtance of his Grace and Spirit: Others do underſtand the Words of ſuch as are naturally dead, that the Goſpel was preached to them who were long ſince dead, even our Forefathers that lived and died before *Chriſt*'s Coming, and that they had the Goſpel preached to them, (while they were alive,) that ſo they might mortifie all their Sinful Luſts and Corrupt Affections, and live New Lives, according to the Direction and Command of God in his Holy Word. *Learn* hence, That the Condition of Men now living, and of thoſe that lived heretofore in all Ages, is one and the ſame, having the ſame Goſpel for Subſtance preached to them, and accordingly the ſame Duties of Mortification and Holineſs required of them.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto prayer.

Theſe Words are brought by our Apoſtle as a freſh Argument to perſwade the Chriſtian Jews to the Practice of Sincere Holineſs. *The End of all Things*, that is, of the Jewiſh State and Polity, their City, their Temple and Worſhip *is, at hand*, the Fatal Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem is now very* near, therefore *be ye Sober* and Temperate in all Things; *watch* that the Day of Viſitation overtake you not unawares, and pray for the averting of God's Wrath, and that ye be not overwhelm'd in it. *Learn* hence, That Sobriety, Watchfulneſs and Prayer, are very Requiſite and Needful Qualifications to prepare and fit Perſons for every Coming and Appearance of *Chriſt* to Judgment, be it his Particular Coming to ſome, or his Univerſal Coming to all, at the End of the World.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among your ſelves: for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins.

The next Grace and Vertue exhorted to is that of Charity, or Mutual Love amongſt themſelves; and obſerve with what Special Care and Particular Regard it is recommended to us, *above all Things*; and note alſo the Intenſe Degree of it, it muſt not barely be Charity, but *Fervent Charity*; *above all Things have Fervent Charity among your ſelves*. *Learn*, That Chriſtians ought to take Care above all Things that their Love to one another be ſincere and fervent: But how may it be known to be ſuch? *Anſ.* If it be active and operative; if we love not in Word, or in Tongue, but in Deed, and in Truth; if it be not weakened by Time, if it be not hindred by Remoteneſs of Place, if it be a Sympathizing and Compaſſionate Love, a Forbearing and Forgiving Love, then have we *Fervent Charity among our ſelves*. *Obſerve* next, The Argument or Reaſon to enforce the Duty, *for Charity ſhall cover a Multitude of Sins*. This may be underſtood Two Ways, 1. With reſpect to our ſelves; Charity, or True Love, to our Brother, will cauſe us not ſtrictly to take notice of, but ſilently to overlook and paſs by, the Faults and Failings of others towards and againſt our ſelves. 2. 'Twill cover the Sins of others from the Eye of the World, and keep us from blazing abroad the Infirmities of others to their Prejudice and Diſgrace; 'tis both unwarrantable and unſafe to cover the Sins of others either by Flattery or Falſhood; but to cover a Sin by Charity, to conceal it from Publick Notice, is a great Piece of Chriſtian Duty; unleſs when the Concealing of it will do apparent Miſchief. Love looks upon great Wrongs as ſmall, and ſmall Wrongs as none at all; he muſt have no Friends that will have a Friend with no Faults. *Prov.* 10. 12. *Hatred ſtirreth up Strife, but Love covereth all Sins.*

9 Uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging.

As a Principal Act, an Eminent Exerciſe of Charity, the Apoſtle adviſes to *uſe Hoſpitality* to their Poor Brethren, *without grudging* or murmuring at the Charge: Hoſpitality is a Neceſſary, a Commendable, and a Commanded Duty; St. *Paul* requires, *Rom.* 12. 13. *That we be given to Hoſpitality.* *Obſerve* farther, The Apoſtle doth not barely ſay, *uſe Hoſpitality*, but uſe it *one to another*: 'Tis a Mutual Duty; whence it appears, that though Hoſpitality towards the Poor be a Commanded Duty, yet Hoſpitality among the Rich is no Sin, but a Duty likewiſe to give Reciprocal Entertainments; for though our Saviour ſays, *Luke* 14. 12. *When thou makeſt a Dinner or Supper call not thy Friends*, and Rich Neighbours, the Prohibition is not abſolute, he doth not forbid the inviting of the Rich, but chargeth us not to forget the Poor; we may treat both, if we have enough for both, but if not, what we have to ſpare muſt be for them that have nothing, not for them that have enough already, for we muſt prefer Works of Pious Charity before Acts of Civil Courteſie: *Uſe Hoſpitality one to another without grudging.*

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even ſo* miniſter the ſame one to another, as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God.

His next Exhortation is, that they endeavour rightly to employ, and wiſely to improve, their Spiritual Gifts, (as well as their Temporal, mention'd in the foregoing Verſe,) which they had received for the Good and Benefit of others in their Reſpective Places in the Church; looking upon themſelves not as Proprietors, but as Stewards, of the various Gifts beſtowed upon them by the free Favour of God, and of which they muſt give an Impartial Account. *Learn* hence, 1. That ſeveral Men have their ſeveral Gifts, as it pleaſeth the Gift-giving Spirit to give unto them, *As every Man has received the Gift*. *Learn* 2. That Gifts are given for the Benefit of others; we are to *miniſter one to another*, that is, to improve our Gifts to the Mutual Edification of each other. *Learn* 3. That ſuch as look upon themſelves as Stewards of the Manifold Gifts of God will wiſely improve them for his Glory, and the Good of others, the great Ends for which he has conferred them.

11 If any man ſpeak, *let him ſpeak* as the oracles of God; if any miniſter, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

If any Man ſpeaks; that is, 1. As a Publick Miniſter or Teacher, let him ſpeak as he is inſtructed from the Oracles of God. Or, 2. If he ſpeaks as a Private Chriſtian, let his Diſcourſe be Grave and Serious, for Mutual Edification, eſpecially when ye ſpeak of Divine Things: Speech is a Noble and Advantageous Benefit to Man, by which he excels the whole Creation; our Tongue is our Glory, the Inſtrument of our Creator's Praiſe; and there is no Subject ſo ſublime and honourable for the Tongue of Man to be employ'd about as the Word and Oracles of God; but then we muſt never mention them but with Reverence: Wo be to thoſe Men that bring forth Scripture in their Diſcourſe as the *Philiſtines* brought forth *Sampſon*, only to make them Sport, rendering it the Theme of their Giddy Mirth, and Prophane Drollery; but theſe Men e'er long will find Almighty God in Earneſt though they be in Jeſt: Such Men forget this Injunction of the Apoſtle's, *If any Man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God.*

12 If any man miniſter, ———

To ſupply the Neceſſities of others, either as a Deacon, whoſe Office it then was to take Care of the Poor, or as a Private Chriſtian, by Charitable Contribution, let him perform that Duty readily and chearfully, *according to the Ability God hath given him*. Where *Obſerve*, That he that with his Wealth miniſtreth to the Neceſſities of others, if he doth it not according to the Ability which God has given him, his Charity is no Acceptable Charity in God's Account; not acceptable to God, becauſe not proportionable to what he has receiv'd from God: The Reaſon of this Injunction is added in the next Words, --- *That God in all Things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt.* --- In whoſe Strength theſe Gifts are rightly employ'd, and by whoſe Merits and Interceſſion our Intention to glorifie God by them is accepted. --- *To whom*; that is, to which Jeſus, as to God bleſſed for evermore, be all Honour and Dominion everlaſtingly aſcribed. *Amen.*

12 Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happen'd unto you: 13 But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings, that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Metaphor which the Apoſtle uſes to ſet forth the Chriſtians Afflictions and Perſecutions by; he calls them *Fiery Trials*, Burnings, becauſe very Painful and Afflictive, very Grievous and Burthenſome, to Senſe; and alſo becauſe Men are tried by them as Metals are by Fire. *Obſerve* (2.) The Warning given by the Apoſtle to all Chriſtians, not to think ſtrange concerning theſe *Fiery Trials*; that is, not to look upon them as unuſual Things, but to expect them, and prepare for them; for unexpected Trials fall upon the Soul in their full Weight, and ſuddenly overthrow it: What we fear for that we prepare; but when Trials come, and we never looked nor prepared for them, they ſtrike us to the Heart, becauſe not armed to receive the Blow. *Obſerve* (3.) The Gracious End that God has in the Afflictions and Perſecutions which fall upon his People, *they are to try them*, not to conſume them; to try their Graces, and deſtroy their Corruptions; to give them Opportunity to make Proof of the Truth of their Faith, Sincerity and Conſtancy. *Obſerve* 4. The High Honour which God puts upon his Suffering Saints and Servants, they are ſaid to be *Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings*, becauſe they ſuffer for him, and he ſuffers with them, and in them; and alſo becauſe he ſuffered the ſame Things before them, and much worſe Things for them. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Duty which God expects and requires from them who ſuffer theſe Fiery Perſecutions for the Sake of his Son, and that is to *rejoice*, and be *exceeding glad*. From the whole, *Learn* (1.) That no Afflictions or Perſecutions ſhould ſeem new or ſtrange Things to Sincere Chriſtians. (2.) That the End and Uſe of all Afflictions is the Trial and Improvement of the Chriſtian's Graces. (3.) That Believers in ſuffering Afflictions and Perſecutions are Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings; he ſuffers in them, and they are made conformable to him by them. (4.) That it is the Will of God that ſuch as ſuffer for him ſhould not only be meek and patient, but be joyous and chearful. 5. That at the Great Day, when Chriſt's Glory ſhall be revealed, then eſpecially will the Suffering Saints *rejoice, and be glad with exceeding joy*; when they ſhall ſee their Dear Redeemer coming in the Clouds, with an Humane Body ſhining brighter than Ten Thouſand Suns; a Body which ſtill retains the Marks of his Sufferings, and the Tokens of his Love. O Joyful Day of Chriſt's Appearing, when this Royal Bridegroom ſhall take his Suffering Spouſe, the Church, by the Hand, and preſent her to his Father; own his in the Preſence of Men and Angels, beſtow a Kingdom upon them, that they may be with him where he is, eternally to behold his Glory; to feed upon an Happineſs as large as their Capacities, and as laſting as their Beings; ſuch Honour have all his Suffering Saints; and therefore ought greatly to *rejoice*, in as much as *they are made Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings, that when his Glory ſhall be revealed they may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.*

14 If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt, happy *are ye*; for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you: on their part he is evil-ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Another Argument is here offered by our Apoſtle for glorying in Sufferings and Reproaches for Chriſt, taken from the Happineſs of thoſe that are ſo reproached; *If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt, happy are ye. Note* here, That the Reproaches which the Saints ſuffer for the Sake of Chriſt are reckon'd Perſecutions, and yet at the ſame Time are eſteemed a Part as well as a Prognoſtick of their Happineſs; *Happy are ye if ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt. Obſerve* (2.) The Reaſon aſſigned why Chriſtians under Reproach for the Sake of Chriſt are to be eſteemed thus Happy, namely, becauſe the *Spirit and Glory of God reſteth upon them*; that is, the Glorious Spirit of God, which is both the Means and Evidence of your Happineſs, who is Glorious in himſelf, and alſo a Glory to you, upon whom he reſts, and in whom he dwells. Two Things are implied by the Spirit's *Reſting* upon a Reproached Chriſtian. (1.) *Complacency*; that he is well-pleaſed where he is; Men do not reſt where they do not like. (2.) *Permanency*; he abides where he reſts, and dwells there with Delight; ſome take the Expreſſion to be an Alluſion to *Noah*'s Dove, that hover'd about, but could nor reſt till returned to the Ark: Thus the Spirit of God, called here a *Spirit of Glory*, from his Effects and Fruits, namely, from his Chearing, Sealing and Reviving, Influences, which make Chriſtians glory in Tribulations, this *Spirit* flies from Place to Place, and from Perſon to Perſon, hither and thither, but reſts upon, and takes up his reſidence and abode with, ſuch Chriſtians as ſuffer for the Name of Chriſt; *If ye be reproached*, &c. happy are ye, *for the Spirit of Glory and of God reſteth upon you*: ---It follows, --- *On their Part he is evil-ſpoken of, but on your Part he is glorified*; that is, by their Reproaches caſt upon you they blaſpheme the Holy Spirit, as the Word ſignifies, but he is eminently glorified by your Patience and Conſtancy of Mind under all your Preſſures, which ſhews the Power of the Spirit reſting upon you, and mightily working in you. *Learn* hence, That in thoſe Reproaches which Good Men ſuffer for the Sake of Chriſt the Spirit of God in a Special Manner is blaſphemed on the one Side, and glorified on the other. O Sinner! Know that all the Reproaches thou caſts upon Religion, and Religious Perſons, as ſuch, reach the Holy Spirit that reſts upon them, and reſides in them, as his Temples: But Oh Chriſtian, remember thou that by thy Patience and Conſtancy under Sufferings thou glorifieſt the Holy Spirit eminently, abundantly ſhewing that by his Help Afflictions are not only tolerable, but joyous.

15 But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or as a buſie-body in other mens matters. 16 Yet if *any man ſuffer* as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf.

Obſerve here, (1.) What it is that the Apoſtle calls upon them to avoid and ſhun, it is Sin; not ſuffering Evil-doing in general, Murther and Theft in particular; Sins that were then very much practiced amongſt the Jews; *Let none of you ſuffer as a Murtherer, or as a Thief, or as an Evil-doer*; by ſuffering as Evil-doers we loſe the Comfort and Reward of all our Suffering. *Obſerve* (2.) What Sufferings he bids them not be aſhamed of, but glory in, namely, when they ſuffer as Chriſtians, and purely as ſuch. *Queſt.* But what is it to ſuffer as a Chriſtian? *Anſ.* (1.) When we ſuffer for a Good Cauſe. (2.) From a Chriſtian Principle. (3.) In a Chriſtian Manner, with Meekneſs, Patience, and Self-denial. *Queſt.* 2. What is it to glorifie God on the Behalf of our Sufferings? *Anſ.* Afflictions and Sufferings, conſidered barely in themſelves, are far from being glorious; but conſider them in their Cauſe, as Sufferings for Righteouſneſs Sake, and ſo they are glorious: And God honours us greatly when he calls us forth to ſuffer, and furniſhes us with Courage and Reſolution for Sufferings; and it is our Duty to give Glory to him who enables us thus to do; *If any Man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but glorifie God on thy behalf.*

17 For the time is *come* that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God: and if *it* firſt *begin* at us, what ſhall the end *be* of them that obey not the Goſpel of God?

Obſerve here, (1.) The Apoſtle does not ſay, if Judgment begin at the Temple of Idols, but *if it begin at the Houſe of God*, God will not ſpare his own Houſe, nor his own Houſhold; he will not ſpare his Children or Servants when they Sin; he is no Cokering Father to indulge his Children to their Ruin. Nay, *Obſerve* (2.) Judgment *firſt* begins at the Houſe of God; God will not bear ſo long with his own People ſinning as with Strangers; they ſhall be corrected *ſooner* and *ſorer* than others; the Lord will firſt puniſh them who have been forgetful of him, and trifled with him; who have been formal in their Profeſſion, and vain in their

Converſation. *Obſerve* (3.) That when we ſee with Sorrow God contending with his own People for their Sins, we may with Aſtoniſhment expect what will be the End of them that obey not the Goſpel when God brings ſuch Troubles upon his own Houſe. What Troubles may they expect from God who are but a Den of Thieves, and a Cage of unclean Birds? O what Appearances ſhall they have of God? And how ſhall they appear before God? *Obſerve* then, What little Cauſe Wicked Men have to rejoice at the Churches Sufferings, when it preſages a far more heavy Judgment coming upon themſelves; for *if Judgment begin at the Houſe of God, what ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Goſpel?*

18 And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?

As if he had ſaid, when the Day of Viſitation comes, which is verily at hand, and God ſhall begin to puniſh the Jews, his own People, called his Houſe in the foregoing Verſe, if then the Righteous amongſt them eſcape the common Calamity with great difficulty, and are ſcarcely preſerved, how ſhall the Ungodly and Sinners think to eſcape unpuniſhed in the Day of *Jeruſalem's* Calamity, that Day of Vengeance, when Chriſt ſhall come to plead with them? If then the Righteous be ſcarcely ſaved, that is, with great difficulty preſerved from that deſolating Calamity, that fiery Trial ſpoken of, *V.* 12. *Where ſhall the Ungodly and Sinner appear?* And how ſhall they hope to eſcape in Safety from that dreadful Judgment, now ready to come on the Jewiſh Nation? There have been thoſe that have made uſe of this Text to ſhew the difficulty of Eternal Salvation; and that the beſt and holieſt of Saints, even thoſe that are moſt Eminent in Grace, are very difficultly ſaved; which though a Truth in itſelf, yet is ſcarcely deducible from this Text, which certainly ſpeaks of Temporal Preſervation.

19 Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls to *him* in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Obſerve here, (1.) A cautionary Direction given, that in all our Sufferings we take care that we *ſuffer according to the Will of God*; that is, for what is according to God's Will, either to be believed or practiſed by us, for aſſerting and maintaining the Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine and Worſhip; and when our Patience under ſuch Sufferings is as extenſive and intenſive as God requires, when our Patience is as large and as laſting as our Troubles, then may we be ſaid to ſuffer according to the Will of God. *Obſerve* (2.) The ſpecial Priviledge allowed to ſuch Sufferers as ſuffer according to the Will of God, they may commit the keeping of their Souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Learn hence, (1.) That when Men ſuffer really and truly for well-doing, they may with Confidence, and great Aſſurance, commit their Lives, and all that is dear unto them, to the ſpecial Care of the Divine Providence; either God will keep us from, or ſupport us under, Trials when we thus commit our ſelves to him.

CHAP. V.

St. Peter *cloſes his Epiſtle with an Exhortation to the Spiritual Guides and Governours of the Church, to diſcharge their Duties faithfully, in feeding and ruling of the Flock of God committed to them; and this Exhortation is enforced with ſeveral weighty Arguments in the Four firſt Verſes of this Chapter.*

1 THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an elder, and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſons exhorted, *The Elders that are amongſt you*; the Guides and Governours of the Church; Elders by Age and Office, who were both to Rule well, and alſo to Labour in the Word and Doctrine; and for doing both faithfully were to be *accounted worthy of double Honour*. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon exhorting, *I exhort, who am alſo an Elder*. Mark, he ſays, not I, who am the Univerſal Head of the Church, Chriſt's Vicar upon Earth; but I, who am an Elder by Age, and by Apoſtleſhip, who have been long the Miniſter of the Circumciſion, I exhort, beſeech and entreat, you as my Brethren, Fellow-Labourers in our Lord's Vineyard. *Obſerve* (3.) The humble Teſtimony which St. *Peter* gives of himſelf; he doth not ſay, I command, who am the Chief of the Apoſtles, with whoſe Confeſſion of Faith Chriſt was ſo well pleaſed that he ſaid, *thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock will I build my Church*; but I exhort, *Who am a Witneſs of the Sufferings of Chriſt*; an Eye-witneſs of what our Dear Lord and Maſter ſuffered in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, both in his Life, and at his Death; and *alſo a Partaker of the Glory that ſhall be revealed*; I was alſo an Eye-witneſs of Chriſt's Glory in his Transfiguration here on Earth, and hope to be Partaker of that Glory which ſhall hereafter be revealed in Heaven. Learn hence, That ſuch Exhortations to Duty are likely to be moſt effectual and Succeſsful which are propounded in the humbleſt Manner. St. *Peter* was placed in an high Degree above theſe Elders, being an Apoſtle, a Chief Apoſtle, yet he gives himſelf no ſuch Title; but ſays, *the Elders I exhort, who am alſo an Elder*; not an Apoſtle, much leſs the Head and Chief of the Apoſtles.

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight *thereof*, not by conſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being enſamples to the flock.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Title given to the Church, it is the *Flock* of God; Denominations are given in Scripture to Perſons and Things proper to the State of Things and Perſons: Thus here the Church is called a Flock, and ſometimes a little Flock, in Oppoſition to the Herds, and huge Droves of the Men of the World; yet a Flock conſiſts not of a few abſolutely, but comparatively only; a Flock contains a Multitude. Again, as the Church is called a Flock for their Number, ſo for their Order; a Flock is under Inſpection and Government continually; Chriſt Jeſus is the great Overſeer of this Flock: And farther, it is a Flock in reſpect of the Unity and Love that is amongſt them; tho' the Church be ſcattered over the World, yet there is an Holy Combination and Sweet Communion of the Members amongſt themſelves. *Obſerve* (2.) The Duty exhorted to, and that is double, to feed the Flock, and to be an Example unto the Flock. (1.) *Feed the Flock, taking the Overſight of it*; feed it with wholeſome Doctrine, guide and govern it by ſtrict Diſcipline, overlooking it continually, and watch over it with unwearied Diligence; and that you may do ſo, be perpetually reſident, feed the Flock that is *among you*; how can the Flock be duly watch'd over when the Shepherd lives ſeveral Miles from the Fold, and is following his Pleaſure when he ſhould be feeding his Sheep? Feed the Flock *among you*. *Obſerve* (3.) The Manner directed to, how, and after which, the Shepherds ſhould feed and watch over their Flocks. (1.) *Not by Conſtraint, but Willingly*; that is, not as a Burthen, but a Pleaſure, with a free and ready Mind; what Men do out of Compulſion from baſe Fear, they do with no Satisfaction either to God or Man. (2.) *Not for filthy Lucre*; to feed the Flock purely for the ſake of the Fleece, and to take a Living only to get a Living, is an horrid Impiety; to be driven into the Miniſterial Office by Neceſſity is bad, but to be drawn by Covetouſneſs is much worſe. (3.) *Not as being Lords over God's Heritage.* Where *Note*, the Title given to the Church, they are God's Heritage, his People, not our own; his Lot and Portion; he having a ſpecial and peculiar Right unto them, and Propriety in them; therefore they are not to be *Lorded over*, not to be treated with Inſolence and Imperiouſneſs, ruling them by the Sword, and outward Force, which has made many Hypocrites, but not one Convert. *Laſtly*, He requires that they be Enſamples to the Flock; that is, in their daily Converſations; now how can they be Examples to them, if they live not amongſt them? They muſt be Examples of ſuch Meekneſs and Humility, of ſuch Patience and Charity, of ſuch Mortification and Self-denial, as becomes Perſons of their Holy Character and Profeſſion; and be Patterns of thoſe Virtues amongſt their People in Converſation which they recommend to them from the Pulpit. This Duty of Miniſterial Exemplarineſs in Converſation is bound upon us by innumerable Arguments taken from the Command of Chriſt, from the Glory of God, from the Preciouſneſs of the Soul, from the Dignity of our Office, from the Succeſs of our Miniſtry, which depends more upon our Practice than upon our Preaching; from our own Intereſt, with reſpect to our preſent Comfort, and future Happineſs; from the Influence it has upon our People, an encouraging and confirming Influence.

4 And when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, 'tis poſſible you may miſs of your Reward here from the Hands of Men, but when Chriſt, the Great and Good Shepherd, ſhall appear, when the Owner, Ruler, and Lover, of his Church ſhall come to Judgment, you ſhall have from him your full Reward, a never-fading, ever-flouriſhing, Crown of Glory, for faithfully Diſcharging your Duty to God and his People. Learn hence, 1. Thus Jeſus Chriſt, the chief Shepherd, will at length appear. 2. That when he doth appear he will call the under Shepherd to Account how they have diſcharged every Part of their Miniſterial Office, as well private Inſpection as publick Preaching. 3. That to all ſuch, and only ſuch, as have been faithful to the Intereſt of Chriſt and Souls, ſhall the Reward be aſſigned, even a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away; when the *chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a Crown of Glory*, &c.

5 Likewiſe ye younger, ſubmit your ſelves unto the elder: yea, all *of you* be ſubject one to another,——

Having laid down the Duties of Paſtors in the former Verſe, he points out the Duties of the People in this, whom he calls the *Younger*, either becauſe they were generally Younger in Years than their Spiritual Guides, or becauſe they ought to ſhew that Reverence and Obedience to them which is ſuitable in young Ones towards their Elders: Theſe Young Ones he exhorts to *ſubmit themſelves* to the Guidance of their Elders and Teachers; *Likewiſe ye Young Ones ſubmit your ſelves unto the Elder*; Instruction and Juriſdiction belonged to the Elders, Subjection and Obedience to the Younger. *Note* here, That the Duties of Paſtors and People are Mutual and Reciprocal; not that their Duties are alike, but becauſe there is alike Reaſon for the Performance of their reſpective Duties, alike Engagement and Obligation upon both; the Duty of the one is Subjection, of the other Miniſterial Direction. He adds, ---Yea, all of you be ſubject one to another, ---intimating thereby, that there is a Duty of Mutual Subjection which all Chriſtians owe to one another in Love; they ought to condeſcend to the meaneſt Offices one towards another; to bear with the Infirmities of each other.

5 ——And be cloathed with humility: for God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The Original Word rendred *Cloathed*, ſignifies firſt an upper Garment, a Frock or Cloak put over all the reſt of our Cloaths; and ſo imports that we ſhould be wrapt up all over with this Grace, that this ſhould be moſt viſible in our Converſations, Words and Actions, and conſpicuous beyond all other Vertues. *Secondly*, It ſignifies a Belt which girds about our Garments; and ſo imports, that we ſhould tie it faſt unto us, and have thoſe Conſiderations always fix'd upon our Spirits, which may keep us in an humble Frame of Soul. *Note* then, That Humility is a ſpecial Ornament, a beautiful Robe, to be put on daily, which commends us greatly both to God and Man. We are never to account our ſelves dreſs'd till we have this Livery of our humble Maſter, Chriſt Jeſus, put upon us. *Be cloathed with Humility*. *Obſerve* next, the Argument to enforce this Duty, *For God reſiſteth the Proud*, ſets himſelf as in Battel-array againſt them, but *giveth* freſh Supplies of *Grace* to the Humble; becauſe more Grace is promiſed to the Humble, and the Humble Soul is more fitted, prepared, and diſpoſed, to receive farther Meaſures of Grace from God. God ſets himſelf againſt Proud Men to bring them down, but the Humble he doth countenance and exalt.

6 Humble your ſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

By the *Hand* of God underſtand his Judgments, his Almighty Power, which it is our Duty to ſubmit unto, and to be humble under, in the Day of our Affliction; and this profound Submiſſion, and deep Humiliation, is the Way to Glory and Exaltation. He can exalt us, and will do it here, if it be good for us; but ſometimes God ſees Abaſement better for his People; better, becauſe ſafer, and accordingly they ſhall have it. Learn hence, That the Strength and Power of God ſhould oblige us very greatly to humble our ſelves before him, and ſubject our ſelves unto him, *Humble your ſelves under the mighty Hand of God*. *Secondly*, That God will exalt the Humble in due Time, either here or hereafter, either in Time or in Eternity, as it ſhall moſt and beſt conduce to his own Glory and their Good.

7 Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

Obſerve here, 1: The Nature of the Duty injoined, to caſt our Care upon God; 'tis not a providential and prudential Care, but an anxious and vexatious Care, that the Scripture forbids; and the Duty here required is this, that after we have uſed all prudent Care and Diligence in Subſerviency to the Providence of God, we ſhould not be over-ſolicitous about the Iſſue and Event of Things; which when we have done all we can will be out of our Power. 2. Caſting our Care upon God, implies that we ſhould refer the Iſſue and Event of Things to his wiſe Providence, which is continually watching over us, and knows how to diſpoſe of all Things for the beſt Advantage to us; entirely confiding in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that he will order all Things for the beſt, and in that Confidence reſting ſatiſfied with the Diſpoſals of his Providence, whatever they be. This is to caſt all our Care upon God. *Obſerve* 2. The Argument here made uſe of to perſwade us to this Duty, *God careth for us*. This implies alſo Two Things, 1. In general, that the Providence of God governs the World, and concerns itſelf in the Affairs of Men, and diſpoſeth of all Events that happen to us. 2. More particularly, that this Providence is more peculiarly concern'd for good Men; and that he takes a ſpecial Care of them, and of their Concerns; and the Care that God takes of them is a ſpecial Care, a tender Care, a promiſed and engaged Care, a Care myſteriouſly exerciſed; he then takes moſt Care of them when they think he takes leaſt, and the Men of the World think he takes none at all. Caſt we then all our Care upon him who careth for us; anxious Care is a painful Evil, an unprofitable Evil, a ſinful Evil.

8 Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe your Adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour. 9 Whom reſiſt ſteadfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.

Obſerve here, 1. A double Duty exhorted to, Sobriety and Vigilancy, *Be Sober, be Vigilant*, be Sober and Temperate in all Things; Sober in your Enjoyments, Sober in your Employments, Sober in your Recreations. Be neither drunk with Wine, nor with worldly Cares; the latter is the worſt of the Two. A Night's Sleep cures the former, but the Worldling is drunk all the Year long; never ſober Night nor Day. And to Sobriety we are exhorted to add Vigilancy; a watchful Care, and diligent Circumſpection, over all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, that we may not diſpleaſe God in any Thing. *Be Sober, be Vigilant. Obſerve* 2. The Reaſon or Motive to enforce the Duty, becauſe your Adverſary, the Devil, goeth about, *&c.* Where *Note*, how every Word contains a ſpecial Motive to Chriſtian Watchfulneſs. He is *your Adverſary*, who will do you all poſſible Miſchief. He is the *Devil*, an Accuſer, and one that ſeeks all Advantages againſt you. He is a cruel Adverſary, *a Lion*; yea, *a roaring Lion*, which adds Terrour to his Cruelty. He is a reſtleſs Adverſary, *He goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*; what Soul he may devour, for that's the Bit he gapes for. It grieves the Devils, thoſe Apoſtate Angels, to find the Souls of Men appointed to fill up thoſe vacant Places in Heaven which they turn'd themſelves out of. 'Tis a Delight to them to plunge Souls into the ſame Condemnation and Miſery with themſelves. *Obſerve* 3. The Duty of Reſiſtance urged upon us in order to our Preſervation, with the Weapon put into our Hand for that Purpoſe. *Whom reſiſt ſteadfaſt in the Faith*; that is, be ſteadfaſt in the Faith, that you may reſiſt him, and by the Help of your Faith you ſhall overcome him. Learn hence, 1. That the Devil is the reſiſtleſs Adverſary, an unwearied Enemy of Mankind. 2. That all the Pains which Satan takes is in order to the Deſtruction of Precious Souls. 3. That the Way to overcome him is by reſiſting of him, not by yielding to him; he is a cowardly Enemy, and a conquered Enemy; reſiſt him and he'll run. 4. That Faith is the

Weapon by which the Chriſtian is enabled to reſiſt the Tempter, and to repel the Force of his fiery Temptations.

9 Whom reſiſt ſteadfaſt in the faith, knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, reſiſt Satan's Temptations, occaſioned by your Sufferings, remembring that 'tis not your Caſe alone, but others alſo ſuffer with you, even all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus. Learn hence, That Chriſtians ſhould not deſire, and cannot reaſonably expect, a better Condition in the World, with reſpect to Freedom from Sufferings, than the reſt of their Brethren, who have all a Share of Affliction to ſuffer, and a Meaſure of Hardſhip to endure, as well as our ſelves. *The ſame Afflictions are accompliſhed in your Brethren that are in the World.*

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered awhile, make you perfect, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle *you.* 11. To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle concludes and cloſes his Epiſtle with an affectionate Prayer for theſe afflicted Chriſtians, and ſuffering Saints; beſeeching Almighty God, who is the Author of all Grace, and who hath called them by his Goſpel to the Participation of that Grace, which will entitle them to Eternal Glory, that after they have ſuffered awhile in the World, he would perfect the Work of Grace begun in them, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle, them in the Truth of the Goſpel; and to this infinitely Gracious God he deſires Glory and Dominion ſhould be for ever aſcribed. *Obſerve* here, 1. That God is the God of all Grace, Seed, Growth and Perfection, all from him; Reſtraining Grace, Renewing Grace, Sanctifying Grace, all from the Fountain of all Grace. *Obſerve* 2. That Serious Chriſtians are called by God to Eternal Glory and Happineſs; they are called to the Hope and Expectation of this Glory upon the Account of the Promiſe of it which God made to Chriſt, *Tit.* 1. 2. and they are brought into a State of Preparation for it. God has by his Word and Spirit wrought them for this ſame Thing. *Obſerve* 3. They are called to Eternal Glory through Chriſt Jeſus; he reveals it to them, he purchaſes it for them, he works that Faith and Repentance in them, which qualifies them for, and entitles them unto, this Heavenly Glory. *Obſerve* 4. That ſome Afflictions muſt be expected and endured by all Chriſtians, how dear to God ſoever they are or may be; was there any Patriarch, Prophet, Apoſtle, Primitive or Modern Chriſtian, that did not ſuffer awhile? Saints muſt ſuffer awhile from the Remains of Sin, from the Temptations of Satan, from the Enemies of Religion, from the Friends of Religion; yea, from God himſelf, their beſt Friend. *Obſerve* 5. That after ſerious Chriſtians have ſuffered awhile they ſhall enter into Glory; their Title is ſure by the Promiſe of God, by the Purchaſe of Chriſt, by the Inhabitation of the Spirit. *Obſerve* 6. That the perfecting, ſtabliſhing, ſtrengthning, of the Chriſtian in Grace and Comfort is from God; to whom all Glory and Dominion is and ought for ever to be aſcribed.

12 By Silvanus a faihtful brother unto you (as I ſuppoſe) I have written briefly, exborting and teſtifying, that this is the true Grace of God wherein ye ſtand.

Obſerve here, That our Apoſtle, to encourage theſe ſuffering Chriſtians to a reſolved Perſeverance in the Chriſtian Religion, aſſures them that it was undoubtedly from God, the unqueſtionable Truth of God; and therefore neither Seducers on the one Hand, nor Perſecutors on the other, ſhould be able to ſhake them, or cauſe them to fall from their own Steadfaſtneſs. A firm Belief of the Certainty and Excellency of Chriſtianity conduces much to the Eſtabliſhment of thoſe that have newly embraced it; if we be once aſſured that it is the true Grace of God wherein we ſtand, it will cauſe us to ſtand ſteadfaſt.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon elected together with *you*, ſaluteth you, and *ſo doth* Marcus my ſon. 14 Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

At the Foot of his Epiſtle he ſends them Salutations from the Chriſtians at *Babylon*, who were choſen out of the World, to partake in the Faith and Fellowſhip of the Goſpel. Some by *Babylon* figuratively underſtand *Rome*; but others underſtand it of *Babylon* in *Aſſyria*, where many Jews did tarry, and continue after the Expiration of the 70 Years Captivity; whom St. *Peter*, being a Miniſter of the Circumciſion, went to viſit, having probably planted a Church there. Whereſoever they were, God hath called them to the Knowledge of his Goſpel, and they ſend Salutations to all their Brethren and Fellow-Members in Chriſt, whereſoever diſperſed, or howſoever diſtreſſed. As alſo doth *Mark*, whom St. *Peter* calls his Son, becauſe inſtructed by him in the Goſpel, and begotten by him to Chriſtianity. *Laſtly*, He exhorts them to expreſs their fervent Affection to each other by a Kiſs of Charity, uſed in the Primitive Times as a Token of Love amongſt Chriſtians, but afterwards for juſt Reaſons laid aſide: And ſo wiſhing Peace, that is, all manner of Proſperity to all in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, to all profeſſing Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, he ſhuts up his Epiſtle.

THE
Second Epiſtle General
OF
St. PETER.

The Second Epiſtle of St. Peter *was written by him a little before his Death, he having received a Revelation (probably) of his Approaching Departure out of this Life; he writes this Second Letter to the* Jews *of the Diſperſion ſcatter'd through* Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, *and* Bythynia, *to warn them of the* Fiery Trial, *that Sharp and Bitter Perſecution which was coming upon them, and to fortifie them againſt that Apoſtacy from the Faith, that Falling from their own Steadfaſtneſs, that Departing from the Holy Commandment, which theſe Newly-converted* Jews *were very prone unto, he ſends therefore this Epiſtle to eſtabliſh and ſettle them, to ſtrengthen and confirm them; and this is the laſt Mention which we find in Scripture of this Great and Glorious Apoſtle.*

CHAP. I.

1 SImon Peter, a ſervant and an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt:

Obſerve here, 1. The Author and Penman of this Epiſtle deſcribed by his Name *Simon Peter*, the former given at his Circumciſion, the latter by *Chriſt*, upon the Occaſion of his Confeſſion, *Mat.* 16. 18. By his Condition, *a Servant*; by his Office, *an Apoſtle*; by the Author of his Office, *Jeſus Chriſt.* Here *Note*, That *Chriſt* only has an Authoritative Power to make Apoſtles, Miniſters, and Diſpenſers of his Word; a Derivative Power from *Chriſt* the Governors of the Church have; but ſuch as have not now their Call from *Chriſt* immediately, (which it is Preſumption to expect, and if any pretend to it let them ſhew it by their Miracles,) or mediately from the Officers of his Church, are Uſurpers of the Sacred Office, and they cannot pray in Faith themſelves for a Bleſſing upon what they do, nor can the People expect it. *Jer.* 23. 32. *I never ſent them*, (ſays God,) *therefore they ſhall not profit this People at all. Obſerve* 2. The Perſons deſcribed to whom this Epiſtle is directed, *To them that have obtained like Precious Faith with us.* To ſuch as had obtained *Faith, Precious Faith, like Precious Faith*, with the Apoſtle of *Chriſt*; *like* for its Nature and Quality, though not for its Meaſure and Degree, and alike *Precious* in regard of its Object, *Chriſt*; in regard of its Subject, *the Heart*; in regard of its Act, which is *Acceptance* and *Conſent* to the Terms of the Goſpel Covenant; in regard of its Effects and Precious Fruits, *Peace* with God, *Peace* with Conſcience, Victory over the World, and the like. We ſee then that the Faith of the Pooreſt Believer is as Precious as the Richeſt, and that the Weakeſt Believer has the ſame Precious Faith with the Strongeſt; and if it be alike precious, it ſhall be alike permanent and perſevering. *Obſerve* 3. The Meritorious Cauſe of this their Precious Faith, the Righteouſneſs of *Jeſus Chriſt: Through the Righteouſneſs of God*, even *our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* All Grace is derived to us through *Chriſt* for the Sake of his Righteouſneſs, Sufferings and Satisfaction; and as all Grace is derived from him, and for his Sake conferr'd, ſo all our Good, that little Service we do for God, is accepted through him, and owned for his Sake. And if ſo, then *Jeſus Chriſt* is really God; for the Righteouſneſs of a Creature cannot juſtifie me in the Sight of God; there is no appearing before God for any Creature in a Creature Righteouſneſs. And farther, if ſo, then it is not Faith that juſtifies and ſaves, but the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*, upon which Faith is grounded, Eph. 2. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved* effectually, *through Faith* inſtrumentally. The Brazen Serpent healed not the Eye that looked on it, yet without looking upon it no Help from it, no Healing by it.

2 Grace and Peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord.

The Perſon ſaluting, and the Parties ſaluted, were mention'd in the former Verſe, here we have the Salutation itſelf. 1. The Matter of it, *Grace and Peace.* Grace to free us from God's Wrath, and re-enſtate us in his Favour, Peace to quiet our own Conſciences, and reconcile us to our ſelves. *Obſerve* 2. The Meaſure of it, Grace and Peace *be multiplied*; they had both Grace and Peace already, yet the Apoſtle prays for the farther Encreaſe of them; there is no Compleat Perfection in Grace attainable in this Life. The beſt of Saints muſt be multiplying and encreaſing their Stores, for they are but imperfectly perfect when at the beſt. *Obſerve* 3. The Means for multiplying Grace and Peace, *through the Knowledge of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Learn*, That the Knowledge of God in, by, and thro' our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, is the Special Means of multiplying Grace and Peace in our Hearts; and indeed there is no Comfortable Knowledge of God but in and thro' *Chriſt.* John 17. 3. *This is Life Eternal*, &c. Out of *Chriſt* God is a Revenger, in *Chriſt* a Reconciled Father.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and vertue:

In theſe Words our Apoſtle ſhews what Reaſon they had to believe and hope that *Grace* and *Peace* ſhould be multiplied unto them, namely, becauſe Almighty God had already given them all Things which conduced to make them holy in this Life, and happy in the next, by the Knowledge of *Chriſt.* Others by Life and Godlineſs underſtand all Things conducing to the Preſervation of Natural Life, likewiſe of Grace here, and Glory hereafter; and whereas it is ſaid they were called to Glory and Vertue, by *Glory* underſtand the Honour of being Chriſtians, by *Vertue* the Good Life that becomes Chriſtians. To both theſe they were called with a Glorious Calling, as being attended with the Glorious Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt. If by Glory and Vertue be underſtood Grace here, and Glory hereafter, it ſhews our Priviledge that we have both at preſent in a Way of Inchoation, and ſhall e'er long enjoy both in a Way of Conſummation; and it points out alſo to us our Duty; we muſt have Vertue if we would have Glory; if we be not like *Chriſt*, we can never love him, nor may we ever expect to live with him.

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes; that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.

Whereby, or by whom, that is, through the Knowledge of Chriſt in the Goſpel, God has given to us all Things conducing to our preſent and future Happineſs, and amongſt the reſt the Precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, which ſo directly tend to make Men Partakers of the Divine Nature. *Note* here, That the Promiſes of the Goſpel are the Chriſtian's great and precious Treaſure; Greatneſs and Goodneſs are then moſt ſhining when they meet in the ſame Subject; but ſuch a Glorious Conjunction is rarely found, either in Perſons or Things; rarely are great Men good, or good Men great; Pebbles are great, but not precious, Pearls are precious, but not great. But the Promiſes are both, for Quantity exceeding great, for Quality exceeding precious, and that in reſpect of the Author of them, *God*, the Foundation of them, the *Blood of Chriſt*; the Manner of their Diſpenſation, they are freely *given*; the Means whereby they are apprehended and applied, *precious Faith*; and *exceeding precious* the Promiſes are in regard of the End of them, which is to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature; not of the Eſſence, but Qualities of the Divine Nature, which enables us in ſome Meaſure to reſemble God. As the Seal doth communicate in Signature, but not its Subſtance, ſo in the Work of Regeneration God doth not impart his Eſſence, but infuſe Holy Principles and Gracious Habits into the Soul, whereby the Chriſtian reſembles himſelf. Learn thence, That the great End and Effect of the Promiſes, and the proper Influence and Efficacy which they ought to have upon the Hearts and Lives of Men, is this, to make them Partakers of the Divine Nature, and to render them daily more like unto God. *Having eſcaped the Corruption that is in the World through Luſt.* Here *Note*, 1. That the World is full, very full, of Corruption, Sin and Temptation, by reaſon of the Luſt of Men: They rub their Leproſie upon each other, and by the Contagion of a bad Example infect and poyſon one another. *Note* 2. That by being made Partakers of the Divine Nature, through the Influence of the Promiſes, we eſcape the Pollutions of fleſhly Luſts, which the World is defiled with, and would defile us by.

5 And beſides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to vertue, knowledge; 6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; 7 And to godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs; and to brotherly-kindneſs, charity.

The Apoſtle ſpent the former part of the Chapter in comforting, this in exhorting; he told us before what God had done for us, he tells us now what we muſt do for our ſelves; it is not fit that Heaven ſhould take all the Pains, and we none; we muſt give Diligence, all Diligence. *Beſides this*, that is, beſides what God has given us, and done for us, let us take Care to be daily adding to our Stock and Store. Adding to our Faith, *Vertue*; that is, all good Works in general, without which Faith is dead or dying; and Fortitude, or Holy Courage, in doing your Duty in particular. To *Virtue*, *Knowledge*; that is, a more exact Knowledge of your Duty, and a farther Increaſe in it; for Knowledge is the Light, without which the Chriſtian cannot ſee to do his Work. And to Knowledge muſt be added *Temperance*, which ſubdues the Violence of our unruly Paſſions and Appetites, and does reduce thoſe rebellious Powers under the Government and Dominion of Reaſon and Religion. And to Temperance, *Patience* under all Wrongs and Sufferings whatſoever; an impatient Man under Affliction, is like a Bedlam in Chains, raving againſt God and Man. To Patience, *Godlineſs*; a Conſcientious Regard to all the Duties of the Firſt Table; let the Fear of God reſtrain you from Sin, the Love of God conſtrain you to Duty. And to Godlineſs, *Brotherly-kindneſs*, or a fervent Love to all Chriſtians, as being our Brethren and Fellow-Members in *Chriſt*, and this for Grace-ſake. And to Brotherly-kindneſs, *Charity*; that is, to all Mankind, as proceeding from the ſame Stock, having the ſame Nature, and ſubject to the ſame Neceſſities with our ſelves; let there be found with you a Deſire and Endeavour to do all the poſſible Good you can to every one. Learn, and *Obſerve* from the Whole, That there is a Concatenation both of Graces and Duties; they muſt not be ſeparated; they will not live ſingle; where there is one Grace in Sincerity, there is a conſtant Care to ſecure all the reſt; and where a Chriſtian, for Conſcience-ſake, performs one Duty, he will make Conſcience of all the reſt; the Duties of both Tables are religiouſly obſerved, both as an Argument of his Sincerity, and as an Ornament to his Holy Profeſſion.

8 For if theſe things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye ſhall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9 But he that lacketh theſe things, is blind, and cannot ſee far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins.

To encourage Chriſtians to grow and improve in the forementioned Virtues and Graces, our Apoſtle here lays before us, 1. The great Advantage of ſuch a Proficiency and Growth; *If theſe Things be in you, and abound*; that is, the forementioned Graces, they will both cauſe you, and evidence you, not to be barren and unfruitful in your Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and Faith in *Chriſt*; the Exerciſe of Divine Graces are the beſt Evidences of our being made Partakers of the Divine Nature. *Obſerve* 2. The miſerable Eſtate of thoſe whoſe Faith is not fruitful in good Works. *He that lacketh theſe Things*; that is, who doth not live in the Exerciſe of the forementioned Graces, he is ſpiritually blind, and really deſtitute of that Knowledge which he pretends to, blinded by his Paſſions, and Luſts, and ſenſual Affections, and ſees not the great End and Deſign of Chriſtianity; forgetting that in Baptiſm he ſolemnly vowed all this, and that he was Sacramentally waſhed from his old Sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure; for if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, See that in the diligent Exerciſe of the forenamed Graces, and in the daily Practice of the forementioned Duties, you make your Calling and Election, which are ſure in themſelves, ſure to you; for ſo doing you ſhall never fall or miſcarry Eternally. Here *Note*, That it is their own Calling and Election which Chriſtians are called upon to make ſure, not another's; we muſt leave their Caſe and State to God that ſearches the Heart; we cannot know the Hearts of others, it is well if we know our own; *make your Calling and Election ſure.* Learn 1. A Chriſtian may be aſſured of his own Salvation. 2. Aſſurance of Salvation requires all Diligence. 3. That Aſſurance of Salvation deſerves all Diligence. 4. That the Way to make our Election ſure, is firſt to make our Calling ſure.

11 For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

There are Four Sorts of Perſons ſpoken of in Scripture, 1. Some are ſaid to be far from the Kingdom of God, afar off from God, as Heathens and Infidels, who know not God. Others are ſaid not to be far from the Kingdom of God, *Mark* 12. 34. who yet will never come there. 3. Others are ſcarcely ſaved with great Difficulty, ſo as by Fire, with much Droſs of Error in Judgment, and Corruption in Life. 4. Others are ſaid to have an abundant Entrance adminiſtred to them into the Everlaſting Kingdom, and theſe are the fruitful Chriſtians, who are daily adding to their Graces, and going from Strength to Strength. Theſe ſhoot the Gulph of Death in the Holy Triumph of their Grace; they enter the Harbour of Heaven with a Plerophory, a full Sail, with a full Aſſurance of Faith and Hope. Thus will the fruitful Chriſtian both have a more comfortable Paſſage to, and alſo a more ample Reward in, Heaven.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of theſe things, tho' ye know them, and be eſtabliſh'd in the preſent truth. 13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to ſtir you up by putting *you* in remembrance: 14 Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off *this* my Tabernacle, even

as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me. 15 Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able, after my deceaſe, to have theſe things always in remembrance.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſons to whom the Apoſtle gave the foregoing Exhortation to Progreſſiveneſs and Proficiency in Holineſs, they were knowing Perſons, yea, eſtabliſh'd Perſons, they were both inform'd and confirm'd in the Truth: But were they knowing, yet they wanted farther Information; were they eſtabliſh'd, yet might they want farther Confirmation. It is a very Dangerous Notion that ſome have taken up, that a Chriſtian in this Life may live above Ordinances, and outgrow Counſels and Exhortations, as if he need not hear, or pray, or the like. St. *Peter* thought otherwiſe; theſe were Grown Chriſtians, to whom he writes, yet he tells them Three ſeveral Times together here in Four Verſes that he would not be negligent to put them in *Remembrance*, even of thoſe Things which they knew already. *Obſerve* 2. The Exemplary Diligence and Induſtry of the Apoſtle in his Miniſterial Work, together with his Conſtancy therein, *as long as I am in this Tabernacle*; that is, as long as I live in this World I will endeavour to keep the Heavenly Flame of Love and Zeal burning very lively upon the Altar of your Hearts. *Obſerve* 3. The Motive or Conſideration provoking him to this Diligence, and that is the Certainty of his Approaching Diſſolution, *I muſt ſhortly put off this Tabernacle, as my Lord hath ſhewed me.* Where *Note*, 1. He calls his Body a Tabernacle in regard of its Movableneſs and Frailty, and in Oppoſition to that Houſe made without Hands, eternal in the Heavens. *Note* 2. How familiarly our Apoſtle ſpeaks of Death, *I muſt put off this Tabernacle*; he makes no more of putting off his Body by Death than a Man does of putting off his Cloaths at Night. *Note* 3. The Neceſſity of putting off the Body, *I muſt*, I may, and *I muſt ſhortly*; intimating, that how ſtrong ſoever the Affections and Inclinations of Souls are to the Fleſhly Tabernacles they now live in, yet they muſt put them off, and that ſpeedily. *Note* 4. How the Conſideration of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of St. *Peter*'s Removal by Death did excite and provoke him to the utmoſt Induſtry and Diligence in his Miniſterial Work whilſt he liv'd; the Apprehenſions of Approaching Death muſt quicken to utmoſt Diligence. Laſtly, That Miniſters muſt never give over preſſing Known Truths as long as they live, that their People may have them in Remembrance after their Deceaſe; *I will endeavour that after my Deceaſe you may have theſe Things always in Remembrance.*

16 For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty. 17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed. 18 And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.

Our Apoſtle comes now to exhort them to Conſtancy in the Faith of the Goſpel, aſſuring them that himſelf and his Fellow Apoſtles had not followed artificially Deviſed Fables when they made known unto them the Coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh; and that he was truly, and in very deed, the Promiſed *Meſſias*; for that he himſelf, with *James* and *John*, were with *Chriſt* upon Mount *Tabor* as Eye-witneſſes of his Transfiguration, where and when he receiv'd in his Humane Nature a Communicated Splendor; and God the Father from Heaven, the Seat of the Magnificent Glory, pronounc'd him to be his Well-beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleaſed. *Learn* hence, That God the Father's Teſtimony from Heaven concerning his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* did effectually bring Honour and Glory unto *Chriſt*, and is a great Obligation upon us to Faith and Obedience to him; *He receiv'd from God the Father Honour and Glory*, atteſting him to be his Well-beloved Son *Learn Secondly*, That there was as much Aſſurance given of the Certainty of *Chriſt*'s being the Promiſed *Meſſias*, and of the Truth of the Evangelical Doctrine, as the World could reaſonably deſire; Men can humanely be certain of nothing more than what they perceive by their Senſes, which are the Proper Judges of all Senſible Objects; now no Satisfaction of this Kind was wanting to the World concerning our Bleſſed Saviour and his Miracles; the Apoſtles atteſting what they had heard, what they had ſeen with their Eyes, and their Hands had handled, of the Word of Life, 1 *John* 1. 1.

19 We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day-dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts:

Obſerve here, That the Scriptures, or Written Word of God, are a more ſure Word to us than any Voice from Heaven, or Revelation whatſoever; not that there was any Uncertainty in the Lord's Voice uttered from Heaven at *Chriſt*'s Transfiguration, but becauſe that Tranſient Voice was heard only by Three, and might be miſtaken or forgotten, whereas the Holy Scriptures are a Standing and Authentick Record, and a moſt Sure Ground for Faith to build upon; and accordingly our Apoſtle tells them they ſhould do well to attend unto the Written Word; that is, the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, as unto a Light that ſhined in that Dark Time, till by conſidering thoſe Ancient Prophecies, and comparing them with what *Chriſt* hath done and ſuffered, they might find the Day dawning upon them, and the Morning-ſtar, the Holy Spirit, ariſing in their Hearts, ſo enlightning and convincing them that no more Doubts or Scruples ſhould be left in them concerning this great Truth, atteſted by a Voice from Heaven, and confirmed by the Writings of the Prophets, namely, that *Jeſus* is the True and Promiſed *Meſſias*, and really the Son of God. *Learn* hence, That the Written Word of God is a ſurer Word, more to be depended and relied upon, than any Voice from Heaven, though atteſted by the greateſt and eminent Apoſtle, and conſequently to be more heeded, and moſt regarded, by us: Nay farther, the Sanctifying Operation of the Holy Spirit in and upon the Hearts and Lives of Sincere and Serious Chriſtians, is a more Certain and Indubitable Evidence of their Salvation than if an Angel ſhould come from Heaven on purpoſe to tell them that they ſhould certainly come thither; for the Teſtimony of an Angel at the higheſt is but the Teſtimony of a Creature, but the Teſtimony of the Sanctifying Spirit is the Teſtimony of God himſelf: It is therefore the *Sure Word* that we are to tend unto; and that Revelation of God's Will being final, is and ought to be attended to before any Pretended or Real Revelation whatſoever; *We have a more Sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed*, &c.

20 Knowing this firſt, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God ſpake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

Theſe Words are underſtood variouſly. 1. Some interpret them thus, That no Part of Holy Scripture was written by any Private Impulſe, Incitation, or Motion, by no Suggeſtion of Mens own Private Spirits, but they gave out to us what the Holy Ghoſt gave in to them: Nor did they prophecy according to the *Will of Man*; that is, when they would, or what they would, but they ſpake by the Inſtinct and Impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt. The Words ſhew what Authority the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures had to write what they did; and why we ſhould be ſo careful to take heed to what they wrote. *Learn* hence, That it is a very great Principle, yea, one of the Firſt Principles of our Faith, that the Scriptures are the very Word and Will of God, written not by any Private Spirit, but dictated by the Spirit of God, and conſequently are no Part of them of Humane Invention, but all of Divine Inſpiration, for which Reaſon great Reſpect is due to them, and *we ſhall do well to take heed to them.* 2. Others underſtand the Words thus, That no Prophecy of Scripture is to be expounded as ſpeaking only of thoſe Perſons whom the Speaker firſt intended and meant, according to the Speaker's proper Private Thought; for the Holy Men of God were moved by God's Spirit to ſpeak thoſe Words which ſignified more than they deſign'd, or always meant and underſtood themſelves; as for Inſtance, *David* often ſpeaks in the *Pſalms* Words true of himſelf and *Solomon*, but the Holy Ghoſt pointed at *Chriſt*, who was typified by thoſe Perſons; and whether *David* meant more than himſelf and *Solomon*, 'tis certain the Holy Ghoſt meant more; ſo if *Joſiah* be meant in *Iſa.* 53. as ſome would have it, it is evident that he was but typical, and that the Holy Ghoſt meant *Chriſt* and his Sufferings ultimately; ſo that it is plain that the Scripture Prophecy receives its full Senſe from the Spirit, and not from the Speaker, and muſt not be appropriated narrowly to thoſe Private Men, by whom, or of whom, they were proximately meant by the Speaker. 3. Others underſtand the Words after this Manner, namely, that no Private Perſon muſt take upon him the Interpretation of Holy Scriptures, but refer all to the Church: Hence *Eſtius* infers, that the Reformed and their Paſtors muſt not interpret the Scriptures, but the Catholick Church only. To which we reply, That as no Private Perſons, ſo likewiſe no Church, may preſume to interpret Scripture according to their own Mind, nor make their Private Senſe to be the Senſe of Scripture, but to ſeek Underſtanding from God, who ſhews the Meaning of the Word by the Word, (by comparing Scripture with Scripture,) and by his Spirit leads Good Men into the Knowledge and Underſtanding of it; *Knowing this, that no Prophecy of the Scripture is of any Private Interpretation; for the Prophecy came not in Old Time by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.*

CHAP. II.

Our Apoſtle in the latter End of the foregoing Chapter recommended the Holy Scriptures to us as our Guide and Rule, as our Card and Compaſs, by which we ſhould ſteer our Chriſtian Courſe: He tells us, that the Holy Prophets under the Old Teſtament were Men divinely inſpir'd, and what they wrote was by the Special Direction of the Holy Ghoſt: He comes now to declare and foretel in this Chapter the Coming in of Falſe Prophets and Teachers, that would pervert the Truth of Doctrine by bringing in Damnable Hereſies; *and he ſets forth their Manners; alſo they walk according to their* own Luſts. *Monſtrous Doctrines are uſually accompanied with Monſtrous Luſts, and Strong Deluſions with Vile Affections.*

1 BUT there were falſe prophets alſo among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Apoſtle foretels the Coming of Falſe Teachers into the Goſpel Church, as there had been Falſe Prophets in the Jewiſh Church; no Age of the Church ever was, or will be, free of them; but the Run of the laſt Times is moſt likely to have moſt of theſe Soure Dregs. *There ſhall be Falſe Teachers among you*; Falſe Teachers then may find a Scripture Prophecy for their being in the Church, but they will hardly find a Scripture Warrant for their being there. *Obſerve* 2. The Doctrines which they will teach, and they are *Damnable Hereſies.* Where *Note*, That Almighty God never intended a Certain Remedy againſt Hereſie any more than he did againſt Sin and Vice; 'tis certain that there is no Certain and Effectual Remedy againſt either of them: God does what he ſees beſt and fitteſt, not what we think to be ſo. *Note* alſo, that Infallibility itſelf is no Effectual Remedy againſt Hereſie; the Apoſtles were certainly Infallible, and yet they could neither prevent nor extinguiſh Hereſie, which never more abounded than in the Apoſtles Times; St. *Paul* ſays, *there muſt be Hereſies*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 19. St. *Peter* here ſays, that *there ſhall be Falſe Teachers:* Now if there muſt be Hereſies and Falſe Teachers, either the Church is not Infallible, or Infallibility is no Effectual Remedy againſt Hereſie. *Obſerve* 3. That *Chriſt* is here called the Lord that Bought theſe Men who brought Deſtruction upon themſelves, *denying the Lord that Bought them*; becauſe none ſhould periſh for want of a Sufficient Sacrifice for Sin, *Chriſt* by his Blood purchaſed for them Pardon and Life to be theirs upon Condition of Believing Acceptance. *Obſerve* laſtly, As the *Seeds-men, Falſe Teachers*, and the *Seed* they ſow, *Damnable Hereſies*, ſo the Crop they ſhall reap, and that is *ſwift Deſtruction*; as *Damnable Hereſies* are brought in privily, ſo the Blaſphemous Heretick, the Seducing Heretick, the Seditious Heretick, bring upon themſelves ſwift Deſtruction; ſometimes Temporal Deſtruction in this World, certainly Eternal, without Repentance, in the next.

2 And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil-ſpoken of.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Notwithſtanding Hereticks bring ſuch Fatal Deſtruction upon themſelves, yet many that profeſs Chriſtianity ſhall be ſeduced by them, and follow their Pernicious Ways, by reaſon of whom the Enemies of Religion will ſpeak Evil of it, and the Profeſſors of it. *Obſerve* here, 1. The Thriving and Growth of Hereſies, *many* ſhall follow their Pernicious *Ways:* Where *Note*, The Nature of Error, it is pernicious and deſtructive, and the Efficacy of Error, not a few, but *many*, are in danger of being perverted by it. *Obſerve* 2. The Sad Sequel or Fruit of this, *By reaſon of whom the Way of Truth ſhall be evil-ſpoken of.* Here *Note*, 1. The Title given to the Chriſtian Religion, it is the Way of Truth, ſo ſtiled from its Parentage and Original, the *God of Truth*, in regard of its Efficiency; it *works* Truth in the Inward Parts, and becauſe it brings thoſe that embrace and practice it to the Enjoyment of him who is the God of Truth. *Note* 2. The Courſe Uſage which Religion meets with from many in the World, it is blaſphemed, or evil-ſpoken of, by Perſons following Seducers, *By reaſon of whom the Way of Truth is evil-ſpoken of*; it is no New or Unuſual Thing for Religion, and the Sincere Profeſſors of it, to be traduced and ſlandered by Heretical Seducers and Falſe Teachers.

3 And through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandize of you: whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not.

Obſerve here, 1. What is the Root of all Hereſie? 'Tis *Covetuouſneſs*, which the Apoſtle calls the Root of all Evil; they are Covetous, Worldly-minded, Men generally who hope ſome Way or other to make an Advantage of their Opinions, who broach Errors and Falſe Doctrines. *Obſerve* 2. The Miſerable Condition of the Seduced, they are Sold by Hereticks like Beaſts; *They make Merchandize of you.* The Buſineſs of Hereticks is to ſell their own and others Souls, as *Judas* did *Chriſt*, for ſome Outward Benefit. *Obſerve* 3. The Arts which Hereticks and Seducers uſe to circumvent and deceive, and that is feigned Words artificially compoſed to ſeduce, drawing into Error with a Deceitful Eloquence. *Obſerve* 4. The Dreadful Puniſhment which attends their Sin, *Swift Deſtruction*; *their Damnation ſlumbereth not, their Judgment lingereth not. Learn*, That the Righteous Judgment of God brings Damnation upon the Wicked, and their Damnation will come ſwiftly, very ſwiftly, upon them.

4 For if God ſpared not the Angels that ſinned, but caſt *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment; 5 And ſpared not the old world, but ſaved Noah the eighth *perſon*, a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flooding upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into aſhes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted in the foregoing Verſe that the Judgment of the Wicked in general lingereth not, and that the Damnation of Seducers in particular ſlumbereth not, he comes here in theſe Verſes to make his Aſſertion good by a Threefold Inſtance, namely, *the Angels*, the *Old World*, and the *People* of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; from whence he would have them conclude that if God ſpared not theſe, he would not long ſpare Falſe Prophets and their Followers. *Obſerve* 1. The Example of God's Severity on the Fallen Angels, they ſinned, and kept not their Firſt State; they fell from that State of Holineſs in which they were Originally created, and their Puniſhment followed; they were caſt down to Hell, and delivered into Chains of Darkneſs, reſerved unto Judgment: But are they not judged and puniſhed already? Yes, no doubt; but the Full Wrath of God will not be pour'd out upon them till the Day of Judgment: If they are now as full of Sin as they can be, 'tis certain they are not ſo full of Miſery and Torment as they ſhall be. *Learn* hence, 1. That the Angels, tho' created in an Holy, yet not in an Immutable, State. 2. The Freedom of their own Wills was the Cauſe of their Sin, and their Sin the Cauſe of their Miſery. 3. That for Sin they were caſt down to Hell, where their Miſery is much, but they expect more. *Obſerve* 2. The Example of the Old World, upon whom ſinning God brought a Flood, drowning them all, except Eight Perſons. Where *Note*, That the greateſt Multitudes and Number of Sinners does not hinder God's Juſtice from executing Judgment upon them for their Sins; a whole World ſinning are as eaſily deſtroyed by God as a ſingle Sinner. *Obſerve* 3. He inſtances in the Wicked Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, who were conſumed by Fire from Heaven, and render'd by the Almighty a Dreadful Spectacle to all that ſhould live ungodly. Sin lays the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt Flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms; the ſtrongeſt Walls cannot keep Judgments out when Sin enters in. *Sodom*'s Plenty and Power could not ſecure her Inhabitants when Sin had once expos'd them to the Wrath of God. *Note* alſo the Intention, End and Deſign, of God puniſhing ſome Sinners, it is to make them Examples unto others.

7 And delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds.)

Obſerve here, 1. As bad as *Sodom* was it had a good Man in it; God leaves not himſelf without Witneſs. In the vileſt and worſt of Places God has ſome that profeſs his Name, and beareth witneſs to his Truth. *Obſerve* 2. The Character given of him, *Juſt Lot*; the Denomination was taken from the Habitual Frame of his Heart, and the General Tenour of his Life. *Obſerve* 3. How this Good Man laid to Heart the Wickedneſs of *Sodom*, he was grieved for their Wicked and Filthy Converſation before God more than for their Unkind and Cruel Behaviour towards him; the Spirit of a Child of God, it is a Sympathizing Spirit, it ſadly lays to Heart both the Sins and the Sufferings of others. *Obſerve* 4. The Care that God took for this Good Man's Preſervation, *he delivered Juſt* Lot; he deliver'd him both from the Company and Converſation of the Wicked, which was a continual Vexation to him; and alſo deliver'd him from the Judgments which were righteouſly brought upon the Wicked; *And delivered Juſt* Lot, *vexed with the Filthy Converſation of the Wicked.*

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed:

For the Particular Example of *Lot*, and his Gracious Preſervation in *Sodom*'s Deſtruction, the Apoſtle draws this General Concluſion, That Almighty God knows how to preſerve his own Faithful Servants from the Evil of Temptations and Trials which they here meet with in the World, and from the World; and can, and will, reſerve the Wicked to the Day of Judgment to be puniſhed. *Note* here, 1. That the Lord has a Perfect and Exact Knowledge both of the Righteous and the Wicked, and of their ſeveral Ways and Doings. 2. That God knoweth many Ways how to deliver the Righteous, but (conſidering the Tenour of his Revealed Will) he knoweth no Way how to deliver the Wicked, they having refuſed all Ways of his Appointment for their own Deliverance. 3. That although the Wicked ſometimes eſcaped Trouble, yet are they never deliver'd from it; all their Preſervations from Evil are but Reſervations for future and farther Evil; the Wicked are not ſo much preſerved from as reſerved unto future Wrath: Thus we ſee how Almighty God very well knows how to perform all thoſe Things which he has promiſed to the Godly, and threaten'd to the Wicked; *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly,* ——*but reſerveth the Wicked*, &c.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs, and deſpiſe government: Preſumptuous *are they*, ſelf-willed, they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Though God reſerves all Wicked Men to Puniſhment, yet eſpecially Hereticks and Seducers, who ſecond their Corrupt Doctrine with a Wicked Converſation, ſuch as *walk after the Fleſh, in the Luſts of Uncleanneſs*. Here *Note*, That Hereticks are frequently Unclean Perſons; Monſtrous Opinions, and Vile Affections, accompany one another; ſuch as oppoſe the Faith are Fleſh Defilers. *Note* farther, That Seducers are Oppoſers of Civil Government and Dominion, they *deſpiſe Government*, and *are not afraid to ſpeak Evil of Dignities*; ſome think the Dignities here intended were the Angels, others the Apoſtles, but moſt underſtand it of Civil Rulers; it is a very Heinous Sin in the Sight of God to deſpiſe Government, and oppoſe Rulers.

11 Whereas Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord.

That is, whereas the Bleſſed Angels, who have more Power than Men, when they plead againſt Devils themſelves, do it not by Railing Accuſation. *Note* here, That Angels are far ſuperior to Men in Dignity and Power. 2. That Purity of Affection does accompany Angelical Illumination; as the Angels are above us, ſo are they Patterns of Holineſs to us. 3. They are eminently ſo with reſpect to the Government of their Paſſions; when they contended with Devils themſelves, it is without Diſturbanee, without Railing Accuſations. It is our Duty to learn this *Angelical Leſſon* of forbearing Railing Accuſations, not to return Evil for Evil, but being defamed to entreat; we are to be as juſt to another's Reputation as our own; they that handled the Names of others rudely, muſt expect their own will be at one Time or other handled as roughly; nothing is more juſt with God than to ſuffer others to open their Mouths againſt thoſe who will open their own Mouths againſt others.

12 But theſe, as natural brute beaſts, made to be taken and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not, and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption;

Obſerve here what our Apoſtle compares theſe Heretical Seducers to, and ſets them forth by *Brute Beaſts*. 1. Becauſe their Minds run after Senſual Objects violently and impetuouſly, and they know no Meaſure in the uſing of them; like Swine they wallow over Head and Ears in the Mud of their Senſual Luſts. And, 2. They were alſo as ſecure as the Brute Beaſts, they mock at the Denunciation of God's Judgments, ſaying, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming?* Seducers are Perfect Senſualiſts; it is a Righteous Thing with God to leave them to be governed by Senſe who will not be guided by Grace: They would not be Saints, and at length they ceaſe to be Men, but, like Brutes, fall into the Ditch of Beaſtily Senſuality. Oh Chriſtian! Beg of God that thy Grace may be True and Supernatural; for if it be only in Appearance, and doth not ariſe to True Sanctity, it may ſoon degenerate and ſink down into Senſual Beaſtiality. In a Word, 3. They are to *periſh*, and to be deſtroyed *like Brute Beaſts*; all ſeek to deſtroy them for their Hurtfulneſs; but theſe Moral Beaſts deſtroy themſelves; Senſual Seducers *periſh in their own Corruptions*; in their Natural Corruptions, by their Luxury and Intemperance, bringing Diſeaſes and Death upon their Bodies, in their Civil Corruptions, overthrowing their Families by ſwallowing down their Eſtates; yea, they corrupt themſelves eternally, deſtroying Body and Soul by their Exceſs. Lord! How will the Fatted Glutton, without Repentance, fry in Hell! How diſmal a Recompence will a Sea of Brimſtone be for a River of Wine! They who are drowned in Profuſeneſs ſhall certainly be drowned in Perdition.

13 And ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, *as* they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time: ſpots *they are* and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, while they feaſt with you; 14 Having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin; beguiling unſtable ſouls: an heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices; curſed children:

Here we have many Sad and Dreadful Inſtances given of the Heights of Senſuality and Brutiſhneſs which theſe Seducers were arriv'd at, and had attain'd unto. Lord! How do Fleſhly Luſts and Senſual Affections obſcure the Light of Conſcience, and corrupt its Judgment? There is ſuch an Intimate Communion between the Soul and the Body that they interchangeably corrupt one another. To what a deſperate Degree of Hardneſs and Inſenſibility had the Flames of Luſt ſeared the Conſciences of theſe Men? They had loſt all their Ingenious Baſhfulneſs of Humane Nature, and pleaſed themſelves in their Licentious Principles and Practices,

ctices, not declining to do that at Noonday which Heathens would have bluſh'd to be found doing at Midnight. *Obſerve* particularly how Luxury and Uncleanneſs accompany each other; they took Pleaſure in *Rioting* and *Sporting* themſelves in their *Feaſts*, and their *Eyes* were full of *Adultery.* They feaſted and fed immeaſurably, impurely and luſtfully, making their Plenty Fodder and Fewel for their Luſts; for having Fed to the full, every one Neighed after his Neighbour's Wife, and putting out the Candles after Supper, they gave Way promiſcuouſly to the Ravings of unbridled Luſt, turning the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt into an Hog-ſty: But know, O unclean Sinner! That God will return Flames for Flames, and Revenge this Fire in thy Heart with the Fire of Hell. How nearly does it concern thee, who haſt burnt in thoſe impure Flames of Uncleanneſs, and kindled the Flames of God's Wrath, to labour to cool and quench them with the Blood of Chriſt, and the Tears of Repentance, which alone can allay the Heats of Sin in thee, and of Wrath in God. Let unclean Sinners improve Examples, leſt they be made Examples.

15 **Which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam, *the ſon* of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: The dumb aſs ſpeaking with man's voice, forbad the madneſs of the prophet.**

Our Apoſtle having charged theſe Men with inſatiable Luſt in the former Verſe, proceeds next to Tax them for Inſatiable Covetouſneſs in this Verſe, declaring that this Sin had diverted them from the right Way of Truth and Godlineſs, and cauſed them to imitate *Balaam* of Old, whoſe Love of Honour and Wealth blinded his Eyes, that the Aſs he rode upon could ſee beyond him, whoſe Mouth God miraculouſly open'd to rebuke the Madneſs of the Prophet. *Note* here, 1. How the Wicked in After-ages do in their Courſes and Practices imitate ſuch wicked Perſons as lived before them in former Ages; theſe Men follow the Way of *Balaam*, imitate his Covetouſneſs, and inſatiable Deſire of Wealth. *Note* 2. That as it is the Nature of all Sin to carry Men out of the Way, ſo Covetouſneſs in particular will carry a Man aſtray, and put him upon the Practice of any Wickedneſs; it neither fears nor forbears any ſinful Courſe to attain its End; they that will be Rich meet with many Enticements unto Sin, and they will not fear to embrace any Enticement. Nay, Verily, a Thirſt after Gain, will make a Man Thirſt after Blood to get Gain. Witneſs *Balaam* and *Judas*, who were both Covetous and Bloody. Covetouſneſs is oft-times the Cauſe of Uncleanneſs. How many for the ſake of Money have Violated their Matrimonial Faith, allured more with the Adulterer's Purſe than by his Perſon. Let no Perſon hope to eſcape any Sin that embraces this one Sin. *Note* 3. What a mighty Struggle there ſometimes is in a natural Man's Conſcience concerning Sin. The Light of *Balaam*'s Conſcience made him refuſe the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, and ſpeak Honourably; *If* Balack *would give me his Houſe full of Gold and Silver I cannot*, &c. but at the ſame time Luſt in his Heart led him forth ſtrongly to deſire it. *He loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*; loved it, yet durſt not touch it. *Note* 4. How extreamly, yea, brutiſhly Mad, ſuch Men are upon their Luſts, who will not be rebuked or ſtopped in their Progreſs of Impiety, without a Miracle. *Balaam*'s Running was ſo greedy, and his March ſo furious, that he had curſt the People, had not the Angel ſtopt him, and the Aſs ſpoken to him. Little Thanks to a reſolute Sinner that he does not ruſh on when the Arm of Omnipotency pulls him back. O! Let the Heart-changing Power of the Grace of God influence us to Good, as well as his Almighty Arm reſtrain us from Evil, or we are miſerable.

17 **Theſe are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempeſt, to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever.**

Still our Apoſtle proceeds in characterizing and deſcribing theſe Seducers, which were then amongſt them. He deſcribing them before by their Luxury and Licentiouſneſs, by their Incontinency and Uncleanneſs, by their Inſatiableneſs and Covetouſneſs, now he proceeds to diſcover their Vanity and Emptineſs; they pretended indeed to be deep Fountains of Saving Knowledge, but they were like Wells without Water, and to be Clouds, containing abundance of Rain for the watering of the Church, whereas they were like Clouds carried about with the Tempeſt of Pride and Ambition, from one vicious Doctrine and Practice to another, darkning the Church, for whom, by the juſt Judgment of God, is reſerved Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever. *Note* here, 1. The Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to be as Wells, for Depth of Knowledge, for Purity of Doctrine, for Reſidency and Fixedneſs of Abode; every one knows where the Town-Well ſtands; tho' Miniſters are Wells of Clay, yet ſhould they be always full of the Water of Life, and always at Hand for the People to have Recourſe unto. *Note* 2. The Miniſters of Chriſt muſt be full and watry Clouds, able and apt to Teach, able to open Scriptures, able to convince Gainſayers, continually dropping down the Heavenly Dew; but not as Clouds without Water, without the Water of true Knowledge, without the Water of Holineſs, Sanctity both of Heart and Life, nor without the Water of Conſolation and Refreſhment. The higheſt Commendation of a Miniſter is, Induſtry for, and Uſefulneſs to, the Souls of others; Clouds conſume themſelves by watering others. *Note* 3. That altho' Seducers are wont to make great Shews and Appearances of Worth in themſelves, yet it is a great and inexcuſable Sin to make Shew of that Goodneſs of which we are wholly void, and to which we are alſo oppoſite; to be *Wells without Water*, and *Clouds without Rain*; Big and Black, accompanied with Emptineſs and Drineſs. Appearing Goodneſs ſets Men at the fartheſt diſtance from Real Goodneſs; they that ſatisfie themſelves in Appearance, will never labour after Holineſs in Reality.

18 **For when they ſpeak great ſwelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them who live in error.**

The next Sin charged upon theſe Seducers is Pride and Oſtentation; they ſpeak big, great ſwelling Words of Vanity; with a lofty and affected Stile they propound their falſe Doctrines to amuſe the Simple. It is the uſual Practice of Seducers to ſpeak in an high-flown Strain of Words, that being not underſtood they may be the more admired. Next, they allure to their Party ſuch Novice-Chriſtians who had left the Heatheniſh Beſtiality, and made an outward Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. The Word rendred to *Allure*, is a Metaphor taken from Fiſhers or Fowlers, who produce the Bait or Shrap, but hide the Net or Snare. Seducers bait their Hook with ſuch Baits as are proper to the Fiſh they would catch, elſe they are no good Anglers. But *Obſerve* what the Bait is here before us, 'tis Liberty, 'tis Licentiouſneſs, they allure through the *Luſts of the Fleſh*; no Bait like this. Learn hence, That the true Reaſon why Seducers have ſo many Followers is this, becauſe their Doctrine is Libertiniſm, and moſt agreeable to the Carnal Luſts and Corrupt Affections of Men. This is the true Reaſon why Popery has had ſo many Proſelites; *They allure through the Luſts of the Fleſh.* Never was a Religion better calculated for gratifying Mens Beaſtly Luſts then Popery; it induges a Liberty to all abominable Luſt, and unchriſtian Practices, yet after all, will blanch over wilful Violations of God's Laws with the favourable Title of Venial Crimes. *Sit Anima mea cum Philoſophis:* Let my Soul at the great Day be rather found among the Sober Heathen Philoſophers, than among Senſual and Brutiſh Chriſtians.

19 **While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption: For of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage.**

Obſerve here, 1. How the old Pretence for the moſt unbounden Licentiouſneſs hath been *Liberty*, *They promiſe you Liberty*; a Liberty to do any thing without Fear: But this is not Liberty properly, but Licentiouſneſs, which in reality is the greateſt Slavery. Accordingly it follows, *They themſelves are the Servants of Corruption:* That is, ſuch as promiſe you a ſinful Liberty, are the greateſt Slaves to Sin and Corruption themſelves. All Sin is Servitude and Slavery; and when Sin and Sinners flatter Men with the great Opinion of Liberty, it makes then the moſt miſerable Vaſſals, and the worſt of Slaves; for ſo many Luſts, ſo many Lords, ſo many Vices, ſo many Tyrants, has a Sinner over him; *For of whom a Man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in*

Bondage. As when the Conqueror brings the vanquiſhed into Captivity, he makes them Slaves, and impoſes on them Vile and Servile Offices; in like manner thoſe Luſts, by which Sinners have been Conquered, and brought in Bondage, they muſt needs be Slaves unto. Is this Liberty to obey every Luſt as a petty Slave? Call you this Freedom when a Man cannot chuſe but Sin? If to ſin be the only Liberty, they have no Liberty in Heaven; no, this is the Service of Corruption; a Thraldom, not a Freedom; *For of whom a Man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in Bondage.*

20 For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again intangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning.

By eſcaping the Pollutions of the World, underſtand their renouncing of them in Baptiſm, their Converſion from Heatheniſm to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity by the knowledge of the Goſpel: Now if afterwards they return to it again, and are intangled in their Idolatry, and other groſs Sins, their latter end is worſe than their beginning; their Chriſtian Heatheniſm is worſe than their old Heatheniſm. Learn hence, That a Perſon may forſake many groſs and ſcandalous Sins, and have a viſible Change and Reformation wrought in his Life, but not being a thorough and prevailing Change, he is ſtill in an unſafe State; his latter End may be worſe than the beginning.

21 For it had better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The Sin and Miſery of theſe Men had been far leſs, if they had never known the Way of Righteouſneſs revealed by the Goſpel of Chriſt, than after they have known it, to forſake the Practice of Holineſs, which by their Baptiſmal Profeſſion they had obliged themſelves unto. Learn hence, That to ſin againſt Light and Knowledge, received in and by the Goſpel, is a very Heinous Aggravation of Sin. The Condition of Perſons ſimply ignorant is not ſo ſad by far as theirs, who have been enlightned, and yet afterwards have apoſtatized. A Relapſe is ever more dangerous than the firſt Sickneſs, more ſoon incurr'd, more hardly cured. Woe to thoſe that Relapſe from God to the World, from Truth to Error, from Grace to Vice; their latter end will be worſe than their beginning, if they recover not themſelves again by Repentance timely.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb; the dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.

Obſerve here the odious Character given of Apoſtates; the Apoſtle compares them to Dogs and Swine. Who tho' waſhed in the Water of Baptiſm externally, yet their Natures were never internally renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, as Chriſt's Sheep are. All the outward Reformation of Life which is found in unrenewed Perſons is but like the waſhing of a Swine, which you may make clean, but can never make cleanly; upon Occaſion it will again to the Mire; make the Swine a Sheep, change its Nature, and it will never delight in Filth more; but whilſt it retains its filthy Nature it will delight in Filthineſs. Dogs that have diſgorged their Stomachs are Dogs ſtill; and Swine waſhed are Swines ſtill. No wonder then if Temptation draw them to return to their Vomit and Mire again. O our God! As thou haſt outwardly waſh'd us in Baptiſm, do thou inwardly renew us, and throughly ſanctifie us by thy Holy Spirit; as we are the Workmanſhip of thine Hands, make us alſo the Sheep of thy Paſture; that our Love to Purity may daily more and more increaſe; that when Apoſtatizing Sinners return to their Vomit with the Dog, and to the Mire with the Swine, and ſo draw back unto Perdition, we may be of the Number of thoſe that perſevere to the Salvation of our Souls. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

Our Apoſtle having in the foregoing Chapter at large deſcribed the Seducers and Falſe Teachers which in all Ages trouble and perplex the Church; he comes in this Chapter to inform us, that thoſe Men would proceed to that Height of Impiety, as to ſcoff at the Principles of Religion, and to deride the Expectations of a future Judgment, which in the Cloſe of this Chapter he deſcribes; and exhorts Chriſtians to the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs, as the beſt Preparative for the Day of Judgment; adviſing that no Profit may tempt them, no Pleaſure entice them, no Power embolden them, no Privacy encourage them, to do that thing which they would not be found doing, if Judgment ſhould ſurprize them in the doing of it. Accordingly thus he writes.

1 THis ſecond Epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour:

Obſerve here, 1. The Deſign of both St. *Peter*'s Epiſtles was one and the ſame, even to put them in Remembrance of, and to call to their Minds what they had formerly heard and underſtood, but poſſibly not retained, nor duly conſidered. *This Second Epiſtle I write, in both which I ſtir up your Minds by way of Remembrance.* *Note*, The Office of Miniſters is to be Remembrancers, *The Lord's Remembrancers*, by putting him in mind of the Peoples Wants; their *Peoples Remembrancers*, by putting them frequently in mind of their Duty to God. There is then a conſtant Neceſſity of a conſcientious Miniſtry; none are weary of it but ſuch as love not to be remembred of their Duty by it. Nay farther, St. *Peter* tells them he would ſtir up their *pure Minds* by way of Remembrance; implying, That the Memories of the beſt Chriſtians ſtand in need of refreſhing, and the Affections of the Holieſt want a freſh exciting. The freeſt Chriſtian ſometimes want a Spur; we are ſlow to learn what we ſhould do, and more ſlow to do what we have learnt. Great then is the Sin of thoſe who contemn repeated Truths. Curſed is that Curioſity that deſpiſes a wholſome Truth becauſe it is common. If we have ſuch nice Stomachs that will not endure to eat Twice of the ſame Diſh, if wholeſome, it is juſt with God that Want ſhould overtake our Wantonneſs. *Obſerve* 2. What it is that he would have them remember and be mindful of, it is the Word of Prophecy in the Old Teſtament, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel in and under the New; *That ye be mindful of the Words ſpoken before by the Holy Prophets*, namely, *Enoch* and *Daniel*, who propheſied of the general Judgment at the laſt Day, and of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* then at Hand. *Obſerve* 3. How St. *Peter* here joins the Prophets and Apoſtles together, as concurring harmoniouſly in their Doctrine; what was foretold by the Prophets, was confirmed by the Apoſtles; hence they are ſaid to have but one Mouth, St. *Luke* 1. As he ſpake by the Mouth of all his Prophets, not by the Mouths; for though the Prophets and Apoſtles were many, yet had they all but one Mouth, ſpeaking all the ſame Things.

3. Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, 4 And ſaying, where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the Creation.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſons foretold, or what Sort of Men ſhould be found in theſe laſt Days; namely, *Scoffers*. Theſe are the Dregs of Mankind, found in the Dregs of Time; they ſcoff ſometimes at the Word of God, ſometimes at Religion, and the Ways of good Men; ſometimes at Sin, and the Follies of thoſe that are bad. The ſcoffing Spirit is a vile Spirit; 'tis better to be a Fool than a Flouter; better to have a dull Spirit than a deriding Spirit; to deride God and Religion is the Height of Impiety. Such as are in the Chair of the Scorner, are in the higheſt Form in the Devil's School. *Obſerve* 2. What it was that theſe Men ſcoffed at; namely, at the Prediction of our Saviour's coming to judge the World they ſay, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming:* Becauſe Chriſt did not come when ſome look'd for him, they concluded he would not come at all, but that all things ſhould go on in a conſtant Courſe, as they had done from the beginning of the Creation. *Obſerve*

3. The Character of the Perſons who are called Scoffers, they are ſaid to *walk after their own Luſts*; Men of ſenſual Spirits, and licencious Lives. No wonder that they who give themſelves up to all manner of Senſuality do deny a Judgment to come; for as it is expedient for them that there ſhall be none, ſo they endeavour to perſwade themſelves that there ſhall be none, and are glad to find Arguments to fortifie themſelves in that Perſwaſion. But ſurely God ſcorneth the Scorners; he will laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their Deſolation cometh. Lord! What a black and horrid Ingratitude is this, to ſcoff at the Author of our Beings, and the Patron of our Lives; to live in Defiance of him in whom we live? Is it not time for God to come and judge the World when Men begin to doubt whether ever he made it?

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water. 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed. 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

Theſe Scoffers had declared in the former Verſe that the World was the ſame it was from the beginning; that Nature always had, and therefore ever would keep its Courſe. But ſays the Apoſtle here, theſe Scoffers know better; if they be ignorant, they are willingly ignorant what a Change God made in the World ſince the firſt Creation of it, and that he can as eaſily deſtroy it as he did at firſt create it. To evidence this the Apoſtle ſhews how God by Water drowned the Old World, and therefore all things had not continued as they were from the beginning of the Creation; and that this preſent World ſhall, when God's Time is come, be ruined by Fire, as the Old World was by Water. The ſame Omnipotent Power of God which created the World upholds it, and preſerves it, and will at laſt deſtroy it; namely, at the final Judgment, when all wicked Perſons, eſpecially prophane Scoffers at, and Deriders of, Chriſt's Coming ſhall be condemned, and periſh. Hence Learn, That thoſe great and awful Works of God, the Creation, Preſervation, and final Deſtruction of the World, firſt, by Water, and next by Fire, none ought to be ignorant of, but all ought to meditate frequently upon, and be continually prepared for. *Note* 2. That the Day of Judgment will be a Day of Perdition to ungodly Men. They ſhall then be utterly and eternally deſtroyed; the Wicked are called in Scripture Sons of Perdition; they are ſo actively they make it their Work to deſtroy others, and they are ſo paſſively they ſhall be deſtroyed at that Day, when they and their Works ſhall be burnt up.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one Day *is* with the Lord as a thouſand Years, and a thouſand Years as one day. 9 The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, (as ſome Men count ſlackneſs.) but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.

Our Apoſtle here anſwers the Cavil and Objection of the forementioned Scoffers; namely, that if Chriſt intend to come to Judgment why does he ſo long defer his coming? To this our Apoſtle replies, 1. By aſſuring them that this Delay ought not to be judged according to our Senſe and Apprehenſion of Things; for God does not meaſure Time as we do, but a Thouſand Years, which ſeem ſo long to us, are but a Day, yea, but a Moment, to him, who is Eternal, and inhabiteth Eternity. To the Eternity of God no finite Duration bears any Proportion; to Eternity all Time is equally ſhort; God does not meaſure Time by our Pole, nor caſt up Years by our Arithmetick. 2. He aſſures them farther, that God's Delay of Judgment did not proceed from Slackneſs, but from Divine Patience and Goodneſs. He delays his coming on purpoſe to give Men Time to repent, and by Repentance to prevent their own Eternal Ruin. Learn hence, 1. That God's delay of Judgment is no Ground for Sinners to conclude that he will not come to Judgment; for our Saviour has nowhere fix'd and determined the Time of it. We can neither be ſure when our Lord will come, nor certain when he will not come. Learn 2. That the true Reaſon why God defers Judgment is to give Sinners Opportunity for Repentance; if this be not complied with he reſerves thoſe who are incorrigibly bad to a more remarkable Ruin, condemning them that will not be ſaved, but obſtinately deſtroy themſelves.

10 But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted that this Solemn Day of judging the Jews at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* firſt, and then of all Mankind, at the end of the World, will certainly come, he next ſhews the manner how; and that although this great Day of the Lord come ſlowly, yet it will come unexpectedly; like a Thief in the Night, ſurprizing the ſecure and unprepared Part of the World. The Thief cometh without Warning, and without Noiſe, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of Man be. *Rev.* 16. 15. *Behold I come as a Thief, bleſſed are they that watch. Obſerve* next, The Apoſtle declares what a great Change there will be when Chriſt comes to Judgment; namely, a total Diſſolution of the whole Frame of Nature, *The Heavens will paſs away with a great noiſe, the Elements melt, and the Earth be burnt up*; that is, ſay ſome, totally conſumed, and utterly aboliſhed; for when there is no more need of Sun and Stars, of Earth and Water, why ſhould they be any more; and when the Saints ſee God Face to Face, what need the Glaſs of the Creatures to behold the Face of God in? Others conceive that the Heavens and the Earth ſhall not be annihilated, but better'd and improv'd; their Subſtance continued, but their Qualities changed. That out of this Conflagration God will bring forth a new Edition of Heaven and Earth, and of what is contained in them, to be the everlaſting Monuments of his own Power and Goodneſs, and the delightful Object of his Saints Contemplation.

11 Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of Perſons ought ye to be in *all* holy converſation and godlineſs.

Theſe Words are St. *Peter*'s practical Improvement of the foregoing Doctrine concerning the certain, ſudden, and terrible Judgment of Chriſt to come. If the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth ſhall be ſo wonderfully changed, and a new World made, how Holy ſhould they be, and how great a Degree of Purity ſhould they labour to attain unto, who expect to live in this new World! Learn hence, That the firm Belief of Chriſt's coming to Judgment, and the Diſſolution of this ſinful World by Fire, ſhould convince all Chriſtians of the Neceſſity of, and engage them in their Purſuits and Endeavours after, a Life of Univerſal Holineſs, and that with the utmoſt Care, and poſſible Diligence, *Seeing all theſe Things,---what manner of Perſons ought ye to be?* ——— Heaven is an Holy Place, has Holy Company, Holy Employments, Holy Enjoyments; we muſt be qualified for it before we can be admitted into it, and begin that Life of Holineſs upon Earth which will never end in Heaven; without a preſent Meetneſs for Heaven we muſt never expect to be admitted into it, *Col.* 1. 12.

12 Looking for, and haſting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?

Having exhorted Perſons by Holineſs to prepare for Chriſt's coming to Judgment in the foregoing Verſe, he now directs them to expect and look for it, to deſire and long after it, *Looking for, and haſting to the coming of the Day of God*; that joyful Day of our perfect Deliverance and Salvation; when the Lower Heavens and Earth ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements melt with fervent heat. Learn hence, That there is, or ought to be, in all Believers a vehement Deſire after, and a fervent Longing for the Coming and Appearance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Oh Chriſtian! long intenſely for Chriſt's Company, for know aſſuredly he longs for thine.

13 Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs. 14 Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs:

Obſerve here, 1. What is the Subject Matter of the Chriſtian's Expectation; he looks for *new Heavens*, and a *new Earth*, in which *dwelleth Righteouſneſs*; that is, only Righteous Perſons, and perfectly Righteous Perſons, where Sin ſhall no more prevail. *Obſerve* 2. What is the Ground and Foundation of this Hope in the Chriſtian; it is the Promiſe of God; we according to his Promiſe look for *new Heavens*, and a *new Earth*. To hope for any thing that God has not promiſed is Preſumption. Hope is the Expectation of ſome future Good, which God has promiſed, and Faith believed. *Obſerve* 3. How Chriſtians ſhould qualifie and fit, make ready and prepare, themſelves for this joyful Hour, this deſirable Place and State. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and Blameleſs.* Give all Diligence, that ye may be found at that Day in a State of Peace and Reconciliation with God, by Juſtification, and without Spot, and Blameleſs; without any allowed Spot or Blame, by preſſing now after the higheſt Meaſures of Sanctification, that ſo an Entrance may both joyfully and abundantly be adminiſtred to you into that Kingdom wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs.

15 And account that the long-ſuffering of our Lord *is* ſalvation; even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, according to the Wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you; 16 As alſo in all *his* Epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things: in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as *they do* alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction.

In theſe Words St. *Peter* adviſes them to make an holy and wiſe Conſtruction of the Forbearance of God in his delaying to come to Judgment; not to think that God neglects them under Suffering, or is well pleaſed with the Perverſeneſs of the wicked World in Sinning, but his Patience and Long-ſuffering towards them is hereby diſplayed, in order to the bringing of them to Repentance, and by Repentance to Salvation. *Account that the Long-ſuffering of God*; that is, the Deſign of God in his Long-ſuffering, is the Sinner's *Salvation*. Here *Note*, That Patience and Long-ſuffering in God is an Ability or Power in him, not only to delay the Execution of his Wrath for a Time, by a Temporary Suſpenſion of it towards them that periſh, and ſhall feel it at laſt: But to delay the Execution of it towards others, in order to their Eternal Salvation, that they may never feel it. *Obſerve* next, how this Apoſtle, to add to the Strength and Authority of what he had ſpoken concerning the Certainty of Chriſt's Coming, aud their Duty to be in a ready Preparation for it, doth make mention of St. *Paul* as bearing Witneſs in ſeveral Places of his Epiſtles thereunto; *Even as our beloved Brother* Paul *hath written unto you in all his Epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe Things.* As the Prophets had all one Mouth, ſo had the Apoſtles alſo, ſpeaking all the ſame Thing. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The Teſtimony given by St. *Peter* to St. *Paul's* Epiſtles. He acknowledges, 1. That there were *ſome Things in them hard to be underſtood.* Mark, he doth not ſay many Things, much leſs that all Things in St. *Paul* were hard to be underſtood, but ſome Things only. How vainly then doth the Church of *Rome* produce this Text to prove the Obſcurity of the whole Scripture, whereas the great and neceſſary Things to our Salvation are ſo plainly reveal'd in Scripture, that even Babes in Chriſt do apprehend and underſtand them. And though there be Difficulties in other Points more remote from Salvation, yet they are ſo for our Exerciſe and Trial, to excite our moſt intenſe Study and Diligence. *Note* farther, Who the Perſons are to whom the Scriptures are hard to be underſtood, to the unlearned and unſtable, who wreſt and pervert them to their own Deſtruction. The Original Word rendred to *Wreſt* is a Metaphor taken from Tortures, who put a Man upon the Wrack; they torment him ſo long till they make him ſpeak what he never meant to ſpeak: So theſe wreſt a Senſe out of Scripture which the Holy Ghoſt never intended. *Scripturæ Obſcuritas non novæ Regulæ neceſſitatem, ſed Spiritus illuminantis & Miniſterii exponentis Neceſſitatem oſtendit.* Biſhop *Davenant.*

17. Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know *theſe things* before, beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. 18 But grow in grace and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with an Exhortation to watch againſt the Errors and falſe Doctrines of Seducers; leſt we being led away thereby, do fall from our own ſtedfaſtneſs in the Faith of the Goſpel, it ought to be our Care not only to be ſound in the Faith, but ſtedfaſt in the Faith; and that we may be ſo we are here directed, 1. To grow in Grace, in all Grace, in Faith, Hope and Love; for Grace eſtabliſhes the Heart; and accordingly Steadfaſtneſs, and encreaſe of Grace, are here joined together. 2. To grow in Knowledge; the Way to be kept Steadfaſt is to grow in Grace; and the beſt Way to grow in Grace, is to grow in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, to know him in his Perſon, in his Offices, in his undertaking, in his Doctrine, in his Example; ſuch a Knowledge as this is of Jeſus Chriſt is fundamental to all Graces; they all begin in Knowledge, and are encreaſed by Knowledge; grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt: Behold how theſe Two keep equal Pace in the Soul of a Chriſtian, namely, Grace and Knowledge; in what degree one encreaſes, the other encreaſes proportionably; to the Author and Finiſher of which Grace, to the Fountain and Foundation of which Knowledge, be aſcrib'd all Honour and Glory both now and evermore. *Amen.*

THE

THE
Firſt Epiſtle General
OF
St. JOHN.

As touching the Author and Penman of this Epiſtle, the Church of God has in all Ages concluded it to be St. John *the Apoſtle, the ſame Perſon that wrote the Goſpel, tho' we do not find his Name prefixt to either, which is look'd upon as an Evidence of his great Humility; he that was ſo high in* Chriſt'*s Favour as to be called,* The Diſciple whom *Jeſus* loved, *how little and low was he in his own Sight?*

The Time when he wrote this Epiſtle is concluded to have been a little before the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem, *becauſe he ſpeaks of the* laſt Hour now at Hand, *which is generally underſtood to be the laſt Times of the Jewiſh State; and becauſe of the many* Antichriſts, *and* Falſe Prophets, *which were then amongſt them, ſuch as* Chriſt *tell us,* Mat. 24. 24. *were to be the immediate Forerunners of that Deſtruction.*

The Occaſion of writing it ſeems to be Twofold, partly to Arm the Jewiſh Converts againſt thoſe looſe Doctrines, that Faith without Works, believing without doing Righteouſneſs, was ſufficient to Salvation: That Men might be Children of the Light, and yet walk in Darkneſs; the Favourites of God without Obedience to his Laws, or Love to his Children and Servants; and partly to fortifie them againſt the Impious Errors of the Gnoſticks, *who ſprang from* Simon Magus, *and pretended to extraordinary Meaſures of Knowledge, and Divine Illumination, from whence they had their Name; but notwithſtanding all theſe glittering Appearances, they allowed themſelves in all manner of Impious and Vicious Practices.*

Now that St. John *particularly aims at theſe Men, is evident from the frequent and plain Alluſions throughout this Epiſtle, to thoſe Names and Titles which this Sect aſſumed to themſelves; thus* Ch. ii. 4. He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him, *This Sect alſo pretended, that whatever they did they could not Sin; hence is that of the Apoſtle,* Ch. i. 18. If we ſay we have no ſin, the Truth is not in us; *in a word, theſe Men not only hold it lawful to renounce Chriſtianity, that they might avoid Perſecution, but alſo joined with the Heathen in perſecuting the Chriſtians, for which Reaſon the Apoſtle taxes them for* hatred *of their* Brethren, *and calls them* Murtherers; *therefore to ſhew the Inconſiſtency of theſe Principles and Practices with Chriſtianity, the Apoſtle writes this Excellent Epiſtle now before us; aſſerting, that nothing is more Eſſential to a true Chriſtian than the Love and Practice of Univerſal Holineſs; and let Men pretend to what Knowledge and Faith they pleaſe, Wickedneſs is a plain Mark and Character of the Children of the Devil; this is the general Scope and Deſign of St.* John'*s Epiſtle.*

CHAP. I.

1 THat which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life;

It is firſt obſervable, that whereas St. *John* began his Goſpel with a Deſcription of *Chriſt*'s Divinity, as *God*, he begins his Epiſtle with a Demonſtration of the Truth of his Humane Nature, as *Man*; for the certainty of which he appeals to the Judgment of Senſe, becauſe the Senſes, when rightly Circumſtantiated, are the proper Judges of all ſenſible Objects; accordingly St. *John* here to ſhew the certainty of *Chriſt*'s Incarnation and Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, brings in Three of the Five Senſes, to wit, *Hearing*, *Seeing*, *Feeling*, to bear Witneſs to it, the latter ſtill carrying a ſtronger Teſtimony than the former; to See is more than to Hear, to Feel is more than to See; *that which we have heard, which we have ſeen, which we have handled. Obſerve* farther, That to make the Teſtimony yet more ſtrong, St. *John* adds Two Words more by Way of Confirmation, 1. That *which we have looked upon*; now this is more than to ſee; to ſee may be but a tranſient, ſudden Act, but to *look upon* is a fix'd and deliberate Act, and uſually a pleaſing and delightful Act; we looked upon him as the rareſt Object, as the Deſire and the Delight of our Eyes. 2. It is added as the ſureſt Ground of certainty that their Hands had handled the Word of Life; as they daily converſ'd with *Chriſt*, ſo they handled and touched him, both before his Reſurrection and after it; ſo that from hence we may remark, That God has given us the higheſt and fulleſt Aſſurances that can be deſired of his Son's Manifeſtation in our Fleſh, and appearing in our Nature; he was heard and ſeen, look'd upon and handled by thoſe that converſ'd with him; which are evident Demonſtrations of the Truth of his Humane Nature aſſumed by him. *Obſerve* farther, That our Apoſtle takes notice of *Chriſt*'s Divine Nature, as well as aſſers the Reality of his Humane Nature: He ſtiles him *the Word*, the *Word of Life*, and the *Word* which was *from the beginning*. In the beginning, when all Things received their Being, then the *Word* was, and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all Eternity. Learn hence, That *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Eternal Word, not only antecedent to his Incarnation, but even before all Time, and the beginning of all Things, had an actual Being and Subſiſtence; Prov. 8. 23. *I was ſet up from Everlaſting, then was I by him as one brought up with him*; thus was this *Jeſus*, in whom we truſt, both God and Man, having Two diſtinct Natures in One Perſon.

2 (For the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen *it*, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us.)

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *Chriſt Jeſus*, that Eternal Life which was with the Father from Eternity, as being his Eternal Son, was in the Fulneſs of Time manifeſted in the Fleſh, and we his Apoſtles ſaw him in his aſſumed Humane Nature, and do now teſtifie, publiſh, and declare him unto you; he was pleaſed to ſubject himſelf to the notice of our Senſes; and what we have heard, ſeen and felt, and has been manifeſted unto us, that we do with all Integrity declare and manifeſt unto others. *Note* here, 1. The Title given to *Chriſt*, he is *Life*, *Eternal* Life; he is ſo in himſelf, and he is the Fountain of Life to us; we now live by him a Life of Juſtification; we derive from him a Life of Holineſs and Sanctification, and we hope to live with him a Life of Glorification. *Note* 2. This Eternal Life was from all Eternity with the Father, and diſtinct from him; he was with the Father, not as an Inſtrument, but as an Agent in making of the World, *Heb.* 1. 2, 3. And as his Father's Delight, *Prov.* 8. 31. *Note* 3. This Eternal Life which from the beginning was with the Father, in the Fulneſs of Time was manifeſted to the Sons of Men; manifeſted not as he was to the Prophets, by Faith, ſo they rejoiced to ſee him, *John* 8. nor in the ſimilitude and likeneſs of Fleſh, ſo he ſometimes manifeſted himſelf to the Patriarchs, *Gen.* 18. but manifeſted in the Fleſh to his Apoſtles, who eat and drank, diſcourſed and converſed with him. *Note* 4. That what the Apoſtles ſaw of *Chriſt* they made manifeſt to others; they had themſelves ſufficient Satisfaction of the Verity of *Chriſt*'s Humane Nature, and of the Certainty of his Doctrine, and therefore with mighty Aſſurance they declare it unto others, and the Reaſon of that Declaration follows in the next Verſe.

3 That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

As if he had ſaid, we declare unto you that of *Chriſt* which we our ſelves have ſeen and heard, and what we had by ſight and hearing you are to receive from our Teſtimony; and our Deſign and End herein is ſincerely this, that you may have Fellowſhip, and be of one Communion with us, and not with falſe Teachers, and by virtue of your Communion with us, may partake of the ſame Faith and Grace, and all Spiritual Benefits and Priviledges, which *Chriſt* has purchaſed for us; and you will have no Cauſe to repent of your coming into our Communion and Fellowſhip; for verily we, and all that have ſincerely embraced the Doctrine of the Goſpel with us, have Fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and with each other. Learn hence, That Believers have Communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and one with another. *Queſt.* What doth this Communion include? *Anſw.* 1. Real Union; Believers are united to God and *Chriſt*, Morally, Conjugally, Myſtically. 2. Reciprocal Community, a Community of Enjoyments; the Lord is theirs, and they are his; a Community of Affections; there is mutual Love, mutual Delight, mutual Deſires, and mutual Hatred; a Community of Intereſts, they have the ſame Deſigns and Ends, the ſame Enemies and Friends; a Community of Priviledges, the Lord viſits them, and they viſit him; the Lord walks with them, and they with him; the Lord obſerves them, and they obſerve him; they impart the Secrets of their Hearts to him, and he imparts the Secrets of his Word and of his Providence to them; Gen. 18. 17. *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the Thing that I do.* *Queſt.* 2. What are the Benefits and Advantages of this Communion? *Anſw.* It affords the higheſt Honour, the ſweeteſt Pleaſure, and the chiefeſt Happineſs; it is Heaven on this ſide Heaven; our Happineſs and theirs differ only in degree, not eſſentially, but gradually: Bleſſed Priviledge!

4 And theſe things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Obſerve here, The great End for which the Apoſtles penn'd and wrote the Doctrine of the Goſpel, namely, that their Joy may be full who do believe it, and obey it; the Joy which good Men experience in the Word of God, it is a ſolid Joy, a ſubſtantial Joy, a full Joy, a laſting Joy; worldly Joy is nauſeating, but not ſatisfying; glutting, but not filling; but that Joy which is found in the Holy Scriptures, in the Word and Promiſe of God, is better experienced than expreſs'd. Chriſtianity doth not extirpate our Joy, but regulate and refine it; it ſhews us the proper Object of our Joy, what to rejoice in, and the manner how, that we may not ſin rejoicing.

5 This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.

That is, This is the Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*'s Doctrine, and our Meſſage, to teach us to know what God is, namely, *Light*; that is, a Being of Infinite *Knowledge*, *Wiſdom*, and *Purity*; and that there *is no Darkneſs in him*; no Darkneſs of Error, no Darkneſs of Ignorance, no Darkneſs of Falſhood, Impurity and Sin, found with him, or can be pleaſing to him. *Note* here, 1. The Goſpel is a Meſſage, a ſpecial and gracious Meſſage, ſent by God to a loſt World; the Miniſters of the Goſpel are Meſſengers ſent of God to make known this Meſſage, and if ſo, then they muſt receive their Miſſion from God; then their Meſſage depends not upon their own, but God's Authority; then their own People are to receive it, not as the Meſſage and Word of Man, but as it is indeed the Word of God; *This is the Meſſage which we have heard, and declare unto you.* *Obſerve* 2. The Metaphor which St. *John* makes choice of to ſet forth the Nature of God by. He deſcribes him, 1. Affirmatively, God is Light, his Nature and Attributes are (tho' darkly and imperfectly) reſembled by it; the Light, as it was the firſt of all Creatures, ſhadows forth the Eternity of God's Being, who is the Firſt and the Laſt; Light, of all Bodies, is the moſt immaterial and uncompounded, denoting the Spirituality and Simplicity of God's Nature. Is the Light diffuſive, and cannot but impart itſelf for the Benefit of others? So is God communicative of his Goodneſs to all Perſons, ſhining upon the Juſt, and upon the Unjuſt; but according to the Apoſtle's Intendment here, Light is of a pure and undefiled Nature; it is a bright and ſpotleſs Splendor; though it ſhines upon a Dunghil, it contracts no Pollution; this repreſents the perfect Purity and unſpotted Holineſs of God. 2. Negatively, *in him is no Darkneſs at all*; that is, God is ſo Pure, that not the leaſt Impurity can cleave unto him; ſo Holy, that no Sin can be found in him, and conſequently, no Darkneſs of Sin or Impurity can proceed from him. Learn we then always to entertain high and holy Thoughts of God, and to conceive of him as a Being that hates Sin, and all the Works and Workers of Darkneſs, *Pſal.* 5. 4. *Thou art not a God that haſt pleaſure in Wickedneſs, neither ſhall Evil dwell with thee; Sinners ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight; thou hateſt all the Workers of Iniquity.*

6 If we ſav that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth. 7. But if we walk in the light, and he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, ———

Obſerve here, 1. What great Plainneſs of Speech St. *John* uſes with and towards ſuch Perſons as call themſelves Chriſtians, and pretend to Fellowſhip with God, but yet hold Communion with Sin, he ſays *they Lie.* Oh, how well does Fervour, Vehemency and Impartiality, become the Miniſters of *Chriſt* in reproving Sin! Health is found in thoſe ſmart Wounds which miniſterial Reproof makes. *Obſerve* 2. St. *John* ſpeaks in the firſt, not in the ſecond Perſon plural; *if we ſay*, not *if you*; if we Apoſtles and Miniſters, as well as if you Diſciples and Members of *Chriſt*, be guilty of this Hypocriſie, we Lie, and *do* not the Truth; he does not ſay, and *ſpeak* not the Truth, but *do* it not; there is a Twofold Lie, the Lie of the Lip, and the Lie of Life, and the latter is the louder of the Two; they Lie becauſe they *do* not the Truth; the Sum is, That a Profeſſion of Piety and Religion, accompanied with Sin, and unſuitable Walking, is odious Hypocriſie, abhorred by God and Man. *Obſerve* 3. The Practice of the ſincere and ſerious Chriſtian, he *walks in the Light*; that is, in the clear Knowledge of the Goſpel, and in the exemplary and exact Performance of his Duty; walking implies Motion, it is a voluntary Motion, a uniform and even Motion, a progreſſive Motion, a conſtant Motion; to talk of Religion is eaſie, but to walk wiſely before God and Man in the Practice of our whole Duty requires Diligence and Circumſpection. *Obſerve* 4. The Pattern after which the Chriſtian walks, and that is God; he walks in the Light, *as he is in the Light*; God is in the Light; that is, all his Actions are exactly Pure and Holy, and our walking muſt, for the Quality of it be Holy, though for Equality it cannot be as Holy as God is Holy. *Obſerve* 5. A double Priviledge ſecured to ſuch as walk in Communion with God; we have Fellowſhip one with another, Juſtification by *Chriſt*; the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt* cleanſeth from all Sin. *Note* 1. Such as walk in the Light have a certain Fellowſhip and Communion with God and *Chriſt*, and the Holy Spirit, and they with him; and likewiſe an intimate Fellowſhip and Communion one with another: Oh! How great is our Dignity? How gracious *Chriſt's* Dignation? How high are we exalted? How low is he abaſed? The Second Priviledge follows.

7 —— And the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.

Note here, 1. The Pollution and Uncleanneſs of Sin implied and ſuppoſed in the Word *Cleanſing*; Sin is the great Pollution and Defilement of the Soul, an univerſal Pollution, an abiding Pollution, a mortal Pollution, and yet an inſenſible Pollution. *Note* 2. The Remedy which the Wiſdom of God has provided againſt this Malady, the Soul's Pollution by Sin, and that is the Blood of his Son; this cleanſeth meritoriouſly, called therefore the Blood of God, as being the Blood of him that was truly and really God. *Note* 3. The Extent of the Efficacy and Virtue of this Blood. 1. In regard of the Univerſality of the Diſeaſe, it cleanſeth from all Sin. 2. In regard of the Permanency of the Remedy, which is expreſt in the preſent Tenſe, it *cleanſeth*; implying, that this Blood doth never loſe its Efficacy; it cleanſes ſtill no leſs than it did the firſt Moment it was ſhed; nay, it cleanſed virtually before it was ſhed; all the Patriarchs and Prophets were juſtified and ſaved by Faith in his Blood, who was the Lamb ſlain from the Beginning of the World, in the Decree and Purpoſe of God, Eternal Thanks to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of God, whoſe Blood cleanſeth from the Guilt and Filth of all Sin.

8 If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us.

If we ſay we Apoſtles, *we* cannot ſay we are free from Sin; much leſs can the proud *Gnoſticks* ſay ſo, who ſuppoſe and aſſert themſelves to be in a State of Perfection; and obſerve, he doth not ſay, if we ſay we *had* no Sin we deceive our ſelves; but that if now we ſay we *have* none; intimating, that Chriſtians, as well after, as before, Converſion continue ſinful Perſons, a perfect Freedom from all Sin being altogether unattainable in this Life, not only by ordinary Chriſtians, but by the moſt eminent Saints; the Church of *Rome* will have it that this is, *Magis humiliter, quam veraciter dictum*, rather ſpoken humbly than truly; but the Apoſtle doth not ſay Humility is not in us, but the Truth is not in us; he ſaith not, we extol our ſelves, and there is no Lowlineſs in us, but we deceive our ſelves, and there is no Truth in us; no Truth of Knowledge in our Underſtandings, no real Holineſs in our Hearts; who can ſay he has made his Heart clean? We can neither aſcribe what Purity we have to our ſelves, nor yet attribute Perfection to our Purity, and if ſo, how ſhould we long for the Day of Redemption, when no Sin ſhall affect us, no Sorrow afflict us, when we ſhall be cloathed with unſpotted Purity, perfect Felicity, and that to all Eternity?

9 If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.

Behold here, 1. A double Bleſſing promiſed and inſured, namely, Juſtification and Sanctification, Forgiveneſs of Sin, and Cleanſing from it, yea, from all Iniquity; when God pardons Sin, no Sin is left unpardoned; the Sea can as eaſily drown a Thouſand Men, as a ſingle Man; God's Act of pardoning Grace is free and full. *Obſerve* 2. The Certainty of the Mercy promiſed, God *is Faithful and Juſt to forgive*, not Merciful and Gracious, though ſo he is in himſelf, but Faithful with reſpect to his Promiſe to us, and Juſt with reſpect to the Satisfaction given by *Chriſt* for us. Almighty God in pardoning Sin performs an Act of ſtrict Juſtice with reſpect to *Chriſt*, as well as an Act of Grace and Mercy in regard of us; he is Faithful and Juſt, as well as Gracious and Merciful. *Obſerve* 3. The indiſpenſible Duty required on our Part, and that is Confeſſion of Sin, *if we confeſs*. Now Confeſſion of Sin is a penitent Sinner's voluntary accuſing himſelf to God, and condemning himſelf before God, with Hatred of, Shame and Sorrow for, and a full Reſolution againſt, his Sin, together with an earneſt Deſire of, and ſome good Hope in, Divine Mercy. *Obſerve* 4. What Relation Confeſſion ſtands in to Remiſſion; not as a meritorious Cauſe, Satisfaction, not Confeſſion, merits Pardon, but it is an excluſive Condition; there is no Remiſſion without Confeſſion. God will not pardon without it, and it is an incluſive Condition; God will, certainly will, forgive them that confeſs; there is not only a Poſſibility, or Probability, but an infallible Certainty of obtaining Remiſſion upon Confeſſion.

10 If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Note here, The Impiety and Blaſphemy of thoſe who affirm themſelves to be in a State of ſinleſs Perfection, they do not only lie themſelves, but interpretatively, and as much as in them is, they make God a Liar, by contradicting what he has aſſerted in his Word, that all are Sinners; ſo that upon the whole it appears, that to affirm we have no Sin, is the higheſt Pride, the greateſt Deceit, the loudeſt Lie, the prophaneſt Plaſphemy. It is to make the God of Truth a Liar, and to turn the Truth of God into a Lie, which evidences that his Word is not in us.

CHAP. II.

1 MY little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our ſins: and not for ours only, but alſo for *the ſins of* the whole World.

Obſerve here the Compellation: *Firſt*, *My little Children.* The Apoſtle calls the Chriſtians to whom he wrote *Children*, *little Children*, *his* little Children. He calls them *Children*, becauſe Converted to Chriſtianity; *little Children*, becauſe young and tender Chriſtians, of a low Stature in Religion, and far ſhort of manly Perfections; and his *little Children*, to denote that Spiritual Relation which was between him and them, and that endeared Affection which he bear towards them. St. *John*, by a loving Compellation, makes way for a faithful Admonition, which follows in the next Words; *Theſe things I write, that you ſin not.* This muſt be underſtood in a qualified Senſe thus: 1. *Sin not*, that is, as the Wicked Sin; take heed of ſcandalous Enormities, tho' you cannot ſhake off daily Infirmities. 2. *Sin not*, as in the ſame Kind that others Sin, ſo abſtain either in the ſame Manner that you your ſelves before ſinned; Sin not with that Fulneſs of Deliberation, with that Freedom of Conſent; Sin not with that Strength of Reſolution, with that Frequency of Action, which you ſinned before you were called to Chriſtianity. 3. *Sin not*, that is, as far as Humane Nature will admit abſtain from all Sin; let it be your Care, Prayer, Study, Endeavour, to keep your ſelves from every Evil Thing. Thus *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* were Blameleſs, *Luke* 1. 6. that is, they lived in no Sin known to the World, or known to themſelves; ſo it is ſaid of *Job*, Ch. 1. *laſt*, *he ſinned not*, that is, had no Sin prevailing in him, no Sin indulged by him. *Obſerve* 3. As the cautionary Direction, *Sin not*, ſo the comfortable Concluſion, *but if any Man Sin*, that is, thro' Infirmity and Weakneſs, through the Policy of the Tempter, or by the Surprize of a Temptation, *we have an Advocate*, a Mediator and an Interceſſor in Heaven, who is abſolutely Sinleſs, even *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* It is a Metaphor taken from Courts of Judicature, where is the Guilty Perſon, the Accuſer, the Judge, and the Advocate: Thus here Heaven is the Court, Man is the Guilty Perſon, *Satan* the Accuſer, God the Judge, Chriſt the Advocate: The proper Office of an Advocate is, not to deny the Fact, or diſown the Guilt, but to offer ſomething to the Judge whereby the Law may be ſatisfied, and upon which the Judge may, without any

Unrighteouſneſs, diſcharge the Accuſed. *Obſerve* 4. An Invaluable Priviledge here diſcovered, that *Chriſt* our Advocate became a Propitiation for us, and for the Race of Mankind, for all that lived before us, or ſhall live after us, for *Jews* and *Gentiles*; there is a virtual Sufficiency in the Death of *Chriſt* for all Perſons, and an actual Efficacy as to all Believers. Learn hence, That our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* ſuffering Death upon the Croſs for our Redemption, did by that One Oblation of himſelf, once offered, make a full, perfect and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satiſfaction, for the Sins of the whole World. The Original Word, *Propitiation*, ſignifies a propitiatory Covering, an Alluſion to the Mercy-Seat that covered the Ark, in which the Law was: In Alluſion to which *Chriſt* is here called our *Propitiatory Covering*, becauſe he hides our Sins, the Tranſgreſſions of the Law, from his Father's Sight.

3 And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Obſerve here, 1. That a Chriſtian may be aſſured of his Salvation; to know that we know, is to be aſſured that we know, not only to have the vital, but the fiducial Act of Faith. Some Chriſtians can ſay, We know that we know him. *Obſerve* 2. The Nature of true Chriſtian Knowledge diſcovered, it is an obediential Knowledge; 'tis not ſufficient to profeſs that we know *Chriſt*, except we yield ſincere Obedience to him; for this is a certain Mark and Proof that we know *Chriſt* effectually, if we love him, and keep his Commandments. The true Knowledge of God conſiſts in keeping of the Word of God, the whole Word of God, and becauſe it is his. *Obſerve* 3. That to ſay we know God, when we do not keep his Commandments, and to ſay we keep his Commandments when we do not know him, is a Lie. Sad will their Condition be who periſh for want of the Knowledge of God, but much ſadder theirs who periſh in the Neglect or Abuſe of that Knowledge. *Obſerve* 4. That a conſcentious Care, and conſtant Endeavour, to obſerve the Word, and keep the Law of God, is a certain Mark and Evidence that he that doth it has the Love of God perfected in him, and towards him. *Whoſoever keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.*

6. He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.

Obſerve here, 1. An high and honourable Priviledge ſuppoſed to be claimed, and that is Union with *Chriſt*, and abiding in him. *He that ſaith he abideth in him.* The abiding in *Chriſt* is a great Priviledge, and the True and Real Chriſtian doth Truly and Really abide in *Chriſt*. *Obſerve* 2. A great and important Duty belonging to all thoſe that do abide in *Chriſt*, and that is, to walk as *Chriſt* walked, to ſet his Example daily before them, and to be continually correcting and reforming of their Lives by that Glorious Pattern. Every Chriſtian is bound to an Imitation of *Chriſt*, under Penalty of forfeiting his Claim to *Chriſt*, for no Claim to *Chriſt* is or can be valid without a careful Imitation of him. The Temper of our Minds, and the Actions of our Lives, muſt be a lively Tranſcript of the Mind and Life of the Holy and Innocent *Jeſus*; we muſt be like him, or we can never love him, nor hope another Day to live with him.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you: becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth.

Our Apoſtle here exhorts Chriſtians to the great Duty of Brotherly Love, aſſuring them that it was no new Commandment which he enjoined them, but that which they were taught, not only in and by the Old Teſtament, but at the firſt Preaching of the Goſpel amongſt them; and in theſe Reſpects the Command of Love might be called *an old Commandment*, it being a Branch of the Law of Nature, and a known Precept of the Jewiſh Religion; altho' in other Reſpects it might be called *a new Commandment*, becauſe urged from a new Motive, and enforced by a new Example. Learn hence, 1. That the Doctrine of Chriſtian Love is a Divine Commandment. That which Chriſtians are not only allowed, but enjoin'd to practice; and it is called *the Commandment*, in the ſingular Number, to intimate that in this one Commandment all the reſt were contained, ſo that in keeping this we keep all. What are all the Commandments indeed but Love enlarged? And what is Love but the Commandment contracted? Learn 2. That the Commandment of Love is an old Commandment; it is as old as *Moſes*, yea, as old as *Adam*, being a part of the Law of Nature written in *Adam*'s Heart. The Evangelical Command of Love was from the beginning of the Law, and nothing new enjoined by *Chriſt* which was not before by *Moſes*. Learn 3. That yet this Command of Love may in ſome Reſpect be called *a new Commandment*, not ſubſtantially, but circumſtantially; not in the Eſſence of the Doctrine, but in the manner of the Diſcovery; not in reſpect of the Truth delivered, but in the Way of delivering. *New*, not in regard of Inſtitution, but Reſtitution, becauſe purged from the old corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*, who had limited this Duty of Love, and confined it to their own Countrymen, whereas *Chriſt* obliges his Diſciples to love all Mankind, even our very Enemies. In a Word, it may be called *a new Commandment*, becauſe it was never to wax old, but to be always freſh in the Memory and Practice of *Chriſt's* Diſciples to the end of the World. *Obſerve* next, The Arguments to enforce the Obſervation of this new Commandment. 1. In thoſe Words, *which thing is true in him, and in you*; that is, as there was in *Chriſt* a true and ſincere Love towards you, ſo look that there be a true and ſincere Love in you towards him, and one towards another. 2. *Becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth*; that is, the Darkneſs of Ignorance in general, and the Darkneſs of the Moſaick State in particular, is now paſt, and the true Light of the Goſpel now clearly ſhineth.

9 He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkneſs, and walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes.

Two Things are here to be conſidered, namely, the Grace and Duty propoſed and inforced, and the Sin or Vice ſpecified and oppoſed. *Obſerve* 1. The Grace propoſed, or the Duty recommended, namely, the Love of our Brother. *He that loveth his Brother, abideth in the Light, and there is no occaſion of ſtumbling in him.* Where *Note*, 1. The Nature of Brotherly Love, it is a Gracious Propenſity of Heart, which a Chriſtian bears for *Chriſt*'s ſake to his Neighbour, whereby he wills, and to his power procures all Good for him; or it is that Brotherly Affection which every true Chriſtian chiefly bears to all his Fellow-Members in *Chriſt* for Grace ſake. *Note* 2. The Benefits attending the Practice of this Grace and Duty. 1. His Condition is happy, *He abideth in the Light*; that is, he is in the State of Grace. Charity is an evident Demonſtration of Sanctity, and accordingly St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 5. reckoning up the Fruits of the Spirit, placeth Love in the Front of them. 2. His Converſation is Holy; *There is no occaſion of ſtumbling in him*; that is, he walketh inoffenſively in a State of Grace, and neither ſtumbleth himſelf, neither is there occaſion given by him that others ſhould ſtumble, or be drawn into any Sin. *Obſerve* 2. The Sin ſpecified, and the Vice oppoſed, namely, hating of our Brother. *He that hateth his Brother, is in Darkneſs, and walketh in Darkneſs.* Where *Note*, 1. It is not any hurting, but hating our Brother, that is forbidden; and that this Hatred is not only forbidden whilſt he is our Friend, but when he becomes our Enemy. To hate a Friend is inhumane, to hate an Enemy is unchriſtian. And farther, it muſt be noted, That whatever falls ſhort of the Duty of *Loving*, cometh within the Compaſs of *Hating* our Brother, for every departure from Love is a Degree of

Hatred. *Note* 2. The diſmal Character given of thoſe Perſons who hate their Brother, they are deſcribed by their wicked Diſpoſition; they are *in Darkneſs* by their vicious Converſation; they *walk in Darkneſs* by their miſerable Condition; they *know not whither they go, becauſe that Darkneſs has blinded their Eyes.* From the whole Learn, That we muſt love all, in the various Kinds and Manners, in the various Meaſures and Degrees, according to which God appeareth in them; that is, we muſt love all Men, as Men, above the Brutes; we muſt love all profeſſed Chriſtians above all other Men; and we muſt love real Chriſtians, eſpecially ſuch of them as are Eminent for Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Uſefulneſs, above all other Chriſtians. The Light of Knowledge, and the Heat of Love, muſt be inſeparable.

12 I write unto you, little children, becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name ſake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, becauſe ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Obſerve here, 1. The Care which God has taken, not only to have his Word preached, but written; *I write unto you.* Partly to ſupply his Miniſters Abſence, that their Writings might be inſtead of Vocal Inſtructions, partly to perpetuate Truth unto Poſterity, and to tranſmit Divine Revelations to future Ages. *Obſerve* 2. The Subject or Perſons to whom our Apoſtle writes to; *Fathers*, *Young Men*, and *Children.* Where in general the great Wiſdom of the Apoſtle is to be obſerved and taken notice of, that he contents not himſelf with generals, but directs his Diſcourſe particularly to Old and Young; plainly intimating, that none are too Young to receive Inſtruction, none are Old enough to reject it. And if St. *John* wrote to Perſons of all Ages and Conditions, then the Sacred Writings are to be read to, and read by, Perſons of every Age and Condition ſoever. And if the Scriptures be perverted by ſome, that is not a natural Effect, but only an accidental Conſequent of reading the Scriptures. Now as Evil muſt not be done that Good may come of it; ſo Good muſt not be left undone tho' Evil come of it. *Obſerve* 3. The Duty which all Sorts of Chriſtians are here exhorted and excited to, and that is *Love*; Love to God, accompanied with Obedience; and Love to all Chriſtians, in Obedience to the Command of God. It belongs to all Sorts of Chriſtians, Weak and Strong; to all Ages of Men, Young and Old, Children and Fathers, to expel the Poiſon of Anger and Hatred out of their Boſoms, and mutually to embrace one another. *Obſerve* 4. The Reaſons of our Apoſtle's writing to all Chriſtians in general, and to each Age in particular. *Note* 1. The Reaſon aſſigned for writing to Children, *ver.* 12. *Becauſe your Sins are forgiven you for his Name's ſake*; therefore you ought mutually to Forgive, and cordially to Love, one another. *Note* 2. The Reaſon aſſigned for writing to *Fathers*; *Becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning*, that is, Jeſus Chriſt, who, in reſpect of his Divine Nature, had a Subſtance from the Beginning; that is, from all Eternity: And if ſo, then our Bleſſed Saviour had a Being antecedent to his Conception; and before he was Born of the Virgin *Mary* he then began to be Man; but he did not then begin to be, for before *Abraham* was, he was; and he prays to his Father, *John* 17. 5. to glorifie him with the Glory which *he had* with him before the World was. Mark, it is not ſaid, with the Glory which thou *prepared'ſt* for me in thy Decree and Purpoſe before the World was, as the *Socinians* would have it, but the Glory which I *had* with thee. He that gave Being to all Things, muſt have a Being before all Things. *Note* 3. The Reaſons aſſigned for writing to Young Men, *becauſe ye are ſtrong, and have overcome the Wicked One, and the Word of God abideth in you.* Here we have obſervable, 1. The Enemy deſcribed, Satan, called the *Wicked One.* (Not that he was ſo by Creation, but by Apoſtacy and Defection.) Becauſe the firſt in Wickedneſs, becauſe moſt induſtriouſly Wicked, and becauſe moſt obſtinate and perſevering in Wickedneſs. 2. The Conqueſt ingeminated; *Ye have overcome the Wicked One.* Mark, he doth not ſay, you have made a League with him, but overcome him; there is no way to accommodate or compound Matters with Satan, no way to deal with him, but by Victory; we are ſaid to overcome him, becauſe we are ſure to overcome him; reſiſt him, and he will flee; and becauſe we have overcome him in God's Account; and becauſe we have begun to overcome him, yeild to him, and you will find him an imperious Tyrant, reſiſt him, and you will find him a timerous Coward. 3. The Combatants, *Young Men.* Youth is the warlike Age; Young Men are for Action, Old Men for Advice; Young ones ſhould begin this Spiritual War betimes, poſſibly they may never live to be Old; or if ſo, Victory will be the more difficult by how much the longer it is delayed; and God may deny thee that Grace which now thou denieſt thy ſelf. The Proverb ſays, *A Young Saint, but an Old Devil*; but it is very hard for a Young Devil to become an Old Saint; whereas a Young Chriſtian Soldier is moſt amiable in God's Eye, and moſt terrible in the Devil's. 4. The Aids, Helps and Aſſiſtants, by which this Victory is attained; *Ye are ſtrong*, that is, made Partakers of Divine Strength; ye have your Second in the Field, the Holy Spirit; you are ſtrong in the Lord. *And the Word of God abideth in you.* By the Strength of God, and the abiding of his Word and Grace in us, we overcome the Wicked One, and prevail againſt him. God's Word is the richeſt Treaſury to ſupply our Wants, and the ſtrongeſt Armory to oppoſe our Enemies. *I write unto you, Young Men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked One.*

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Apoſtle doth not, as he did before, direct his Advice to any one particular Sort or Rank of Chriſtians in ſpecial, but unto all in general; *Love not the World*, &c. *Obſerve* 2. That the Prohibition here is not abſolute, but comparatively only. It is not *Ordinata charitas*, but *Inordinata cupiditas*, that is here forbidden; we may look upon the World, and deſire it, delight in it, and in the Enjoyment of it, provided we do not chuſe it for our Portion, nor delight in it as our chief Good. *Obſerve* 3. St. *John* doth not ſay, *Leave* the World, but *Love* not the World; he doth not ſay, Uſe not the World, but Love it not; that is, ſeek not after the World inordinately, and delight not in it immoderately. Seek it we may, but not in an undue Manner; delight in it we may, not in an undue Meaſure. *Obſerve* 4. The Arguments which our Apoſtle makes uſe of to enforce his Dehortation. 1. The contrariety of the Love of the World to the Love of God; *If any Man Love the World*, (in an undue Manner and Meaſure,) *the Love of the Father is not in him:* That is, the Worldly Lover has no Intereſt in the Father's Love; the World's Darlings are none of God's Friends, and the World's Lover has no Love of the Father in him; there is no poſitive Love of God in him in whom there is a ſuperlative Love of the World. Lord, how deſperate and dangerous a Sin then is *worldly Love*, if the Love of the Father be not in him? The Hatred of the Father is towards him, *Jam.* 4. 4. *Know ye not that the Friendſhip of the World is Enmity with God?* A ſecond Argument to diſſwade from worldly Love is contained in the 16th Verſe; *For all that is in the World*; that is, all that is in Eſteem and Vogue with the Men of the World, is either *the Luſt of the Fleſh*; that is, all Senſual Delights and Enjoyments, which occaſion Intemperance, or *the Luſts of the Eye*; the Deſire of Gold, Silver, ſtately Houſes, rich Gardens, which tend to gratifie the Eye; and *the Pride of Life*, or the Deſires of Honours and Dignities, high Titles, and Places of Advancement, which tend to gratifie our Pride, all theſe are *not of the Father*; that is, they are not Deſires excited by him, nor are they pleaſing to him, but are the Deſires of the Men of the World, and proceed from that Corruption which is in them. The Third Argument is taken from the World itſelf, and its ſhort Continuance, in the 17th Verſe. *The World paſſeth away*; that is, all the Things of the World, which the Men of the World Doat upon, and are in Love with, are of a fading tranſitory Nature in themſelves, and they paſs away from their Poſſeſſors and Owners. *And the Luſts thereof*; that is, the Pleaſure which they had in gratifying their Luſts paſſeth away, but the Sting remaineth, and the Torment abideth. It is added, *But he that doth the Will of God abideth for ever.* Behold here the permament Felicity, not of the knowing, but obedient, Chriſtian. He abideth for ever, not in this, but in the other World, in a State of endleſs Happineſs. Although Eternity in its moſt comprehenſive Notion be peculiar to a Deity, and incommunicable to a Creature, yet it is that which God has made rational Creatures capable of, and as he abideth for ever, ſo will he grant to them that do his Will to abide with him for ever alſo. *The World paſſeth away, and the Luſts thereof: But he that doth the Will of God abideth for ever.*

18 Little children, it is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that antichriſt ſhall come, even now are there many antichriſts; whereby we know that it is the laſt time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us.

Our Apoſtle having warned them againſt the Danger of Covetouſneſs in the foregoing Verſes, he cautions them againſt the Danger of Deceit in theſe; he tells them that this is the laſt time of the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, and that the Deſtruction of their City, Temple, and Polity, was now at Hand; and as they had heard that Antichriſt ſhould come, accordingly now there were many Antichriſts come; that is, Oppoſers of Chriſt, and Deniers of him to be the Chriſt; and by the ſwarming of theſe Seducers and falſe Teachers now, according to our Saviour's Prediction, *Matth.* 24. they might well conclude it was the laſt time. *Obſerve* next, Theſe Antichriſts are deſcribed by the Communion which they once were of, to wit, the Chriſtian Communion, *They went out from us*, from us Apoſtles, and from us Chriſtians, being falſe Brethren, and unſound Chriſtians; for if they had been of us, as Members of the ſame Body, and had joined with us Apoſtles, in planting and propagating the ſame Chriſtian Faith, *They would no doubt have continued with us*, profeſſing the ſame Faith, and preaching the ſame Doctrine, which we do; but they left us, that it might be made manifeſt *that they were not all of us.* Here *Note*, That theſe Antichriſtian Impoſtors had been in the Boſom of the Church, and made a Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith; ſo did the falſe Apoſtles, the judaizing Teachers, mention'd *Acts* 15. So did *Simon Magus*, *Nicolas*, and *Cerinthus.* The Churches ſeeming Members prove her worſt Friends, the Foxes within do more Miſchief than the wild Boar without. *Queſt.* But is it not then lawful to depart from the Communion of a Church whereof we have been formerly Members? *Anſw.* Yes, if ſhe departs from herſelf; if ſhe degenerates and grows ſo corrupt a Body, and be ſo far infected, that we cannot communicate with her without Sin, which was the Caſe between us and the Church of *Rome*, her Doctrines were Erroneous, her Worſhip Idolatrous, we went out from them, becauſe they went out from the Ancient Apoſtolical Church. *Non fugimus, ſed fugamur.* Not we, but they, made the Separation, and conſequently the Schiſm lyes at their Door.

20 But ye have an unction from the holy One and ye know all things.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, although there are many Antichriſts and Seducers abroad in the World, yet the moſt Holy God hath anointed you with his Holy Spirit, which will preſerve you from pernicious Error, and lead you into all neceſſary Truth, if you obey and follow him. *Obſerve* here, 1. A Priviledge enjoined, *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One.* By which underſtand the Holy Spirit in its ſanctifying Gifts and Graces, which conſecrates Believers as Kings and Prieſts unto God. *Obſerve* 2. The Advantage of that Priviledge declared, *Ye know all things*; not Abſolutely, but with Reſtriction and Limitation. *All Things*; that is, all Divine Things, all Divine Things revealed, and all Things revealed that are neceſſary to Salvation. *All Things* needful to be known, and as far as needful for you to know. All Things relating to God, Chriſt, the Holy Spirit, our Selves, Sin, Satan, the Law, the Goſpel, Grace and Glory; ye know all theſe Things by virtue of your Unction.

21 I have not written unto you, becauſe ye know not the Truth: but becauſe ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt? He is antichriſt, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father alſo.*

Obſerve here, 1. The Character given of the Goſpel; it is *the Truth*, the Word of Truth, the Way of Truth, confirmed by real Miracles. It is Divine Truth, Univerſal Truth, Effectual Truth, and no Lie; for Almighty God would never have ſet the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Lie, and have confirmed it by Signs and Wonders, Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, had it been falſe. *Obſerve* 2. The Character given of the Hereticks in St. *John*'s Days, and in our Days alſo, they deny that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and therein deny the Father and the Son: *For whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father*; that is, he denieth the Father as well as the Son; for not having the Father, and denying the Father, is the ſame thing, *v.* 22. *He is Antichriſt that denieth the Father and the Son.* This is a Text in which every Socinian may ſee himſelf an Atheiſt; he that denies the Divinity of the Son, denies the Deity of the Father; for ſuch is the Nature of the Godhead, that one of theſe cannot be alone; the Father is not without the Son, nor can be; nor can the Son be without the Father; this Coherence is inſeparable and inviolable; therefores he that denies the Eternal Son, denies the Eternal Father; and if it be Atheiſm to deny the Divinity of the Father, it is no leſs to deny the Deity of the Son, for he that denieth the Son, denieth the Father alſo. There is ſuch a Connexion between theſe Two, the Father, and the Son, they being Coeſſential and Coeternal, that if you deny the Divinity of the one, you deny *that* of the other; therefore they are Atheiſts that deny the Divinity of Chriſt, as well as they that deny the Being of God; *For he that denieth the Son, denieth the Father alſo.*

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning, ſhall remain in you, ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

Theſe Words are an Exhortation to hold faſt, and not to forſake the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, which from the beginning they had received, and not to turn to Novelties. *Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning:* That is, from the firſt preaching of the Goſpel. *Note* here, What is Truth and true Doctrine, namely, that which was delivered from the beginning. Truth is Error's Elder, tho' Error is not much Truth's Younger. *Note* 2. By what Means they received the Evangelical Doctrine, namely, by *Hearing*; let that *which* you have *heard* abide in you. No Senſe more needful than that of hearing for the Benefit and Advantage of Man; both as he is by Nature a reaſonable Creature, by Converſe a ſociable Creature, and may be by Grace a new Creature: Faith cometh by hearing. *Note* 3. The Duty required with reference to what they had heard; *Let that which you have heard abide in you*; namely, by a careful Remembrance of it, and by reſolute Adherence to it. The Sum of this Exhortation is, that we retain and maintain the Ancient Catholick and Apoſtolick Faith; and verily when we conſider how Tenacious Hereticks are of their Novel Errors, it may bring a Bluſh into our Faces to conſider how ready we are to be withdrawn from Primitive Truths. *Obſerve* next the Motive with which our Apoſtle doth inforce and back his Exhortation. ---*If that which ye have heard remain in you, you ſhall continue in the Son, and in the Father*; that is, in the Love and Favour of the Son, and of the Father, and in Communion with both. *Qu.* But why is the Son put before the Father here? Partly to inſinuate that the Son is no leſs in Eſſence and Dignity than the Father, but equal in both. Accordingly the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the Apoſtolical Benediction, is mentioned before the Love of God the Father: And partly, becauſe no Man cometh to, nor continueth in, the Father, but by the Son; *He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* The Doctrine of the Goſpel comes from Chriſt; it leads to Chriſt, and by him unto the Father. See *John* 14. 23. *If a Man keep my Word, we will make our Abode with him.*

25 And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, *even* eternal life.

Obſerve here, 1. How gracious Almighty God is to enforce his Commands with Promiſes of Reward; he required of us Adherence to the Truth, and Perſeverance in it, in the former Verſe; here he promiſes Eternal Life by Way of Encouragement in this Verſe. *Obſerve* 2. The Benefit promiſed, *Life, Eternal Life*; the Greatneſs of this Life is immeaſurable, the Worth of this Life is ineſtimable, the Joys of this Life innumerable, the Duration of it is interminable. *Obſerve* 3. The Certainty of the Conveyance; this is the *Promiſe promiſed.* Mark, he doth not ſay purpoſed, but promiſed. A Purpoſe is a ſecret and hidden Intention of the Mind, but a Promiſe is a Revelation of that Intention; yea, it is more than a Declaration. A Promiſe makes ſure, as well as makes manifeſt; eſpecially God's Promiſe, which has his Oath for the Confirmation of it, *Heb.* 16. 17. *Obſerve* 4. The Peculiarity of the Perſons to whom the Promiſe is made, he hath promiſed *us*; not to us as Apoſtles only, but to us as Chriſtians; all that are Born of God are Begotten to a lively Hope of an Inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; again, he has promiſed *us*, not promiſed *all*, Eternal Life, but us, who are thus and thus qualified, who keep his Commandments, and walk as he walked. *Obſerve* 5. The Eminency of the Author by whom this Promiſe is made, in the Relative *he*; *This is the Promiſe which he hath promiſed us.* Here *Note*, That Eternal Life was promiſed by God to Good Men under the Old Teſtament; *Heb.* 11. 16. tells us, that the Old Teſtament Saints deſired a better Country, to wit, an Heavenly; now how could they have deſired it if they had not known it? And could they have known it if God had not revealed it? And Chriſt bad the *Jews* ſearch the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life; intimating, that in the Writings of *Moſes* Eternal Life was made known typically and darkly; not ſo clearly and fully as by the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. He that is Holy, and cannot Lie; Righteous, and cannot Deceive; Immutable, and cannot Repent.

26 Theſe things have I written unto you concerning them that ſeduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: And ye need not that any man teach you: but as the ſame anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie: and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.

Obſerve here the Pious Care which St. *John* expreſſes for their Preſervation from Hereticks and Seducers, *Theſe Things have I written to you concerning them that ſeduce you.* That is, to arm them againſt the Seducers then amongſt them; *intimating*, that Men are naturally prone to Error, yea, to Fundamental Errors. 2. That to be ſeduced by, and led into, ſuch Errors, is dangerous and deſtructive. 3. That it is the ſpecial Duty, and ought to be the ſingular Care, of the Miniſters of Chriſt to warn their People of, and arm them againſt, Errors and erroneous Perſons, againſt Seducers and Seduction; *Theſe Things I write concerning them that ſeduce you*; that is, thoſe who endeavour to ſeduce you. *Obſerve* next, the Encouragement which St. *John* gives them againſt theſe Seducers, and their Seduction, the Anointing which ye have received from Chriſt; that is, from the ſpecial Illumination of his Spirit, this *abideth* in you, *teacheth you all Things* neceſſary for you to know, ſo that you need not any Man to teach you; that is, any new Doctrine, any new Fundamental Principles of Faith. *Note* here, That Chriſtians ſavingly inlightned by the Spirit of God need no new Goſpel or Doctrine to be inſtructed in; but they need farther Teaching ſtill, in order to their better Improvement in what they know; vain therefore is the Quakers, and other Sectaries, Arguments drawn from hence, againſt all miniſterial Teaching; becauſe the Spirit teaches, Man muſt not teach; whereas the Spirit teaches mediately by Man, and not immediately by itſelf; when the Seducers can ſhew that they have ſuch an immediate and extraordinary *Afflatus* of the Holy Spirit, as was vouchſafed to the Primitive Chriſtians, then let them cry down the neceſſity of Miniſters Teaching, not before.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he ſhall appear, we may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.

Still our Apoſtle reinforces his foregoing Exhortation to abide fixedly in Chriſt; that is, in the Doctrine of Chriſt, in true Chriſtianity; *And now, little Children, abide in him*; and the Argument which he makes uſe of is very forcible and cogent, namely, *That when Chriſt ſhall appear, we may have Confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.* Here *Note*, 1. Something ſuppoſed, namely, the coming and appearance of Chriſt; he ſhall appear. 2. Something implied, namely, our appearance before Chriſt in the Day of his appearance. 3. Something expreſſed, namely, the confident appearing before Chriſt, of all thoſe who abide in him; *That we may have Confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.* Whence Learn, That the perſevering Chriſtian ſhall have Confidence before Chriſt at his coming; he ſhall lift up his Head without ſhame of Bluſhing, from the Teſtimony which Conſcience bears of his Sincerity, and from the Intereſt he has in the Judge; but on the other Hand, they that do not perſevere and abide in Chriſt ſhall be aſhamed before him at his coming; aſhamed of their groſs Hypocriſie, of their vile Unfaithfulneſs, of their manifeſt Folly.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteouſneſs, is born of him.

Our Apoſtle concludes the Chapter with an Exhortation to Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; aſſuring them, that if they be ſenſible, (as they muſt neceſſarily be,) that God is Righteous, eſſentially and infinitely Holy and Righteous, they may and ought to know alſo, that whoſoever is Born of him, and doth receive a new Nature from him, doth certainly endeavour to live unto him, and to walk before him as his Child in a Way of Obedience, and to expect Favour and Protection from him as from a Father. Learn hence, That all that ſincerely live a Righteous Life towards God and Man are certainly Born of God; and ſuch as are Born of God do certainly live that Righteous Life; then, and only then, may we know that we are indeed God's Children, when the Image of our Heavenly Father is inſtampt upon us, and the Diſpoſition of his Children wrought in us; when there is an happy Conformity in our Natures to the Holineſs of God's Nature, and in our Lives to the Righteouſneſs of his Law; when he beholds his own Face in the Glaſs of our Souls, and loves us for his own Image inſtampt and impreſt upon us.

CHAP. III.

1 BEhold, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God:——

Our Apoſtle begins this Chapter with Wonder and Admiration at the aſtoniſhing Goodneſs and Condeſcention of Almighty God towards Believers, in taking them into his Family, and adopting them into the Number of his Children; that Strangers and Enemies ſhould be dignified with the Honourable and Amiable Title of his Sons; 'tis the ſame Relation that Chriſt has, *I aſcend to my Father, and your Father*; there is indeed a Diverſity in the Foundation of it; Chriſt is a Son by Nature, we by Favour; he by Generation, we by Adoption: However, not only Crowns and Scepters are beneath this Dignity, but the Honour of our Innocent State was not equal with it; well might the Apoſtle then break out with an heavenly Aſtoniſhment, and ſay, *Behold! What manner of Love is this, that we ſhould be called*, accounted and acknowledged, for the Children of God. Here *Note*, 1. That it is the high and honourable Priviledge of all true Believers that they are now the Sons of God. They are ſo, 1. By Regeneration; they are made Partakers of the Divine Nature; not in the Eſſence of it, but in the Gracious Qualities of it, which enables them in ſome Meaſure to reſemble God their Father; they receive a Principle of Spiritual Life from God, which enables them to live unto God; and this Principle received in Regeneration, it is an inward Principle, an univerſal Principle, a

God-exalting Principle, and an Abiding Principle. 2. They are Children by Adoption alſo; Adoption is the Acceptance of a Stranger into the Relation and Priviledges of a Son; 'twas a rare Condeſcention in *Pharaoh*'s Daughter to reſcue *Moſes*, an innocent and forſaken Stranger, from periſhing by the Waters, and adopt him for her Son; but Oh, how much greater Kindneſs was it for Almighty God to ſave guilty and wretched Man from Eternal Flames, and to take a Rebel into his Family! This Priviledge of being the Sons of God by Regeneration and Adoption, it is a choice and precious Priviledge, an high and honourable Priviledge, a free and undeſerved Priviledge, a laſting and abiding Priviledge. *Obſerve* 2. As the Priviledge itſelf, ſo the fontal Cauſe of it, the Fountain from whence it doth proceed and flow, namely, from the gratuitous Love, and free Favour of God; what manner of Love has the Father beſtowed upon us? He cannot ſay what, nor how great, it was; he admires it, but cannot declare it; yet though Adoption was the Effect of God's free Love, it was the Fruit of Chriſt's rich Purchaſe; he of a Son became a Servant, that we of Slaves might become Sons. *Obſerve* 3. In the World; *Behold*, a Note of Attention and of Admiration both; God expects, the Goſpel requires, and the Priviledge of Adoption deſerves, that it be beheld with Love and Wonder, taken notice of with Joy and Thankfulneſs, and improved for growth in Grace, and Advancement in Holineſs; *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon you.*

1 —— Therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.

Note here, 1. That the Believer's Dignity, though real and great, is altogether unknown to the unbelieving World; they are ſo far from acknowledging them to be God's Children, that they Mock and Scoff, Jeer and Deride them for pretending ſo to be; and as they little Know them, ſo do they leſs Affect and Love them, but Hate and Perſecute them; *The World knoweth us not. Note* 2. The Reaſon aſſigned why the World knows not the Children of God, *Becauſe it knew not him*; God once made himſelf manifeſt to the World in and by his Son Chriſt, in whom dwelt the Fulneſs of the Godhead, came and dwelt among us, but the World knew him not, received him not; and if they ſaw no Beauty in him, who had Strength of Grace, and no Corruption in him, is it any wonder that they ſee no Excellency in them in whom is much weakneſs of Grace, and too great ſtrength of Corruption? Therefore the World knoweth us not, becauſe it knew not him.

2 Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, although the World knows us not, affect us not, eſteems us not, becauſe of the weakneſs of our Grace, and the ſtrength of our Corruptions, yet notwithſtanding both theſe we are now the Sons of God; this is the Happineſs of our preſent Condition, we are as Children in their Minority; we are not grown up for the Inheritance, but we are growing; we are not what we would be, we are not what we ſhould be, we are not what we ſhall be, but bleſſed be God we are what we are; now are we the Sons of God. *Obſerve* 2. As to the Honour and Dignity of the Chriſtians Priviledge in this Life aſſerted, *We are now the Sons of God*, ſo their Happineſs and Glory in the next Life deſcribed. 1. By Way of Negation, *It doth not yet appear what they ſhall be*; the Glory which God has prepared for all his adopted Children and People, it is an hidden Glory, a Glory that doth not yet appear; what the Saints ſhall be in their perfect State of Glory doth not yet appear to them in this their imperfect State of Grace. 2. By Way of poſitive Aſſeveration, *But we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Here *Note*, 1. The Certainty of Chriſt's Appearance declared, *He ſhall appear.* 2. A double Benefit which Believers may expect at his appearing. 1. *They ſhall be like him*, as well in Holineſs as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality; like him in a perfect Freedom from Sin, like him in the Ardour and intenſe Fervency of their Love; like him the Perfection of Grace, and the unſpotted Purity of his Holy Nature. 2. They ſhall ſee him, that is, his Glory, with a clear and immediate Sight, with a full and comprehenſive Sight, with an aſſimilating and transforming Sight, with an appropriating and poſſeſſive Sight, with a ſatisfying and everlaſting Sight.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.

Every one that has this Hope, that is, the Hope of ſeeing and injoying Chriſt in Glory, he now endeavours to purifie himſelf, according to the Pattern and Copy which Chriſt hath ſet before him, labouring to imitate it, though he cannot reach it. Here *Obſerve*, 1. The Character of a Chriſtian by his Hope, every Man that has this Hope in him. Learn, That a Chriſtian is a Perſon of high Hopes, and raiſed Expectations, as to future Bleſſedneſs; the Author of this Hope is God; the Object of this Hope is ſome future Good promiſed and expected; the Grounds of this Hope are the Promiſe and Oath of God, the Purchaſe and Undertaking of Chriſt, and the ſanctifying Work of the Spirit, in and upon his Soul. *Obſerve* 2. A Deſcription of this Hope by its inſeparable Effect, it *purifies* the Chriſtian; he that *has this Hope purifies himſelf*; where it is implied, 1. That Sin is a Pollution which we muſt be purified from. 2. That the Holieſt of Saints here on Earth are not perfectly purified from this Pollution, but are daily endeavouring to purifie themſelves more and more. *Obſerve* 3. The Pattern after which the ſincere Chriſtian doth conform in this Work of Purification, and that is Chriſt; he purifies himſelf, even as he is pure; intimating, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was a perfect Pattern of Purity; and that it is the Chriſtian's Duty to eye this Pattern, and endeavour to conform himſelf thereunto, by purifying himſelf, even as Chriſt is pure.

4 Whoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law: for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins; and in him is no ſin.

Whoſoever committeth Sin; that is, whoſoever lives in the allowed Commiſſion of it, lives in Rebellion againſt, and in a flat Oppoſition to, the Law of God, Sin being a Tranſgreſſion of God's Law; and ſuch a Perſon as thus commits Sin, not only violates the Law of God, but alſo fruſtrates the Death of Chriſt; for Chriſt, in whom there was no Sin, was manifeſt in the Fleſh to take away Sin, the guilt of it by his Blood, the Power of it by his Spirit, and conſequently we muſt purifie our ſelves from it if we hope to ſee him as he is. Learn hence, That nothing can be more unreaſonable and abſurd than to expect Salvation with God in Heaven by a ſinleſs Saviour, if we allow our ſelves in a Courſe of Sin; nothing being more contrary than this to the Deſign of Chriſt's Death, which was not only to deliver us from the Danger, but from the Dominion of our Sins; not only to expiate our Sins, but to make us ſinleſs like himſelf.

6 Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not; whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither know him.

That is, whoſoever lives in Sin, and goes on in a Courſe and Trade of ſinning, is the Servant and Slave of Sin; and although his Reaſon condemns it, his Conſcience boggles at it, and his Will ſomething averſe to it, yet if he yields his Members Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin, he is the Servant of Sin, and whatever his Pretence may be, he has no right Knowledge of Chriſt, nor any true Faith in him; for whoſoever abideth in him *thus* ſinneth not. Learn hence, That the ſincere Chriſtian, ſo far as he is in Chriſt, and by Faith united to him, and is taught and ruled by him, ſinneth not; that is, he makes it his conſtant Care and continual Endeavour to ſhun and avoid all Sin. 2. That ſuch Perſons as go on in a Courſe of Sin, let their Pretences to Chriſtianity be what they will, they never had any experimental *Knowledge* of Chriſt, no *Fellowſhip* or *Communion* with him, nor can ever hope to be Happy in the *Fruition* and *Enjoyment* of him: *Whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him, neither known him.*

7 Little children let no man deceive you: he that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous:

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, let no Man deceive you by making you believe that a right Faith may conſiſt with an unrighteous Life, for only *he that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous. Note* here, 1. That there is a Twofold doing Righteouſneſs. 1. In a Legal Senſe, which ſtands in an exact obeying and fulfilling the Law; and thus there is none Righteous, no, not One. 2. In an Evangelical Senſe, a walking uprightly, according to the Rule of the Goſpel, conſcienciouſly avoiding all known Sin, and performing every commanded Duty; it is not a ſingle Action, but a conſtant Courſe of holy Actions, that denominates a Perſon holy; a Righteous Man makes Righteouſneſs the Buſineſs of his Life; his daily Care is how to pleaſe God in all he does. *Note* 2. That it is the Duty of every Chriſtian that would not be deceived, as to his Spiritual State and Condition, to try himſelf by this Infallible Mark and Rule of Trial: *He that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous*; *he that doth not Righteouſneſs is not of God*. Chriſtian, enquire not ſo much what thy Affections are, what thy Deſires are, what thy Joys and Comforts are, as what thy Actions are; not what thy Peace is, but what thy Paths are; for God does not meaſure Mens Sincerity by the Tides of their Affections, but by the conſtant Bent of their Reſolutions, and the general Courſe and Tenour of their Converſations; *He that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous*, and only he.

8 He that committeth ſin is of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. ——

That is, ſo far as a Man ſinneth, ſo far he is of the Devil, and like unto him, in whom Sin is predominant; he having been an Old Sinner ſoon after the beginning of the Creation, and a Bold Tempter to Sin all his Days. Learn 1. That *Satan* has kept in a conſtant and continued Courſe of ſinning againſt God from the beginning of his Apoſtacy, and firſt Moment of his Revolt from God; *The Devil ſinneth from the beginning*. Learn 2. That ſuch as make Sin their Work, do make themſelves the Devil's Children; they are his Children by Imitation: St. *John* 8. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Works of your Father ye will do.*

8 —— For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.

As if he had ſaid, The Son of God came purpoſely into the World to deſtroy Sin, the Work of the Devil, in all that he will ſave. *Note* 1. The odious Character wherewith Sin is branded, it is *the Work of the Devil*; that Work which he is always doing himſelf, and which he is continually tempting and ſoliciting others to do, that they may be as miſerable as himſelf. *Note* 2. Our Saviour's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh aſſerted, the Son of God manifeſted, namely, to the World, and in the World; he appeared in our Nature, and was ſeen in our Fleſh; it was a real Exhibition, and not an imaginary Manifeſtation of him. *Note* 3. The Great End of this Gracious Manifeſtation of the Son of God in our Nature, it was *to deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, to looſe and diſſolve, ſo the Original; this ſuppoſes Mankind to have been in Bonds and Fetters; we were in Durance and Captivity, ſhut and lock'd up in the Priſon-Houſe; we were under the Dominion of Sin, and Power of *Satan*, but the Son of God came to reſcue us, to knock off our Fetters, and to ſet us at liberty: By *the Works of the Devil* underſtand all Sin in general. 2. Thoſe Sins in particular which have moſt of the Devil's Image upon them, and renders Perſons moſt like unto him, ſuch are Malice and Envy, rejoicing at the Calamities, and delighting in the Evils, that befal others, Rage and Paſſion, bitter Strife and Contention, Schiſm and Faction, Lying and Falſhood, Craft and Treachery; but eſpecially Pride and Haughtineſs, which was the Sin that turn'd *Satan* out of Heaven, and made him a Devil in Hell. 3. By *the Works of the Devil*, here are meant in particular Idolatry, and all Idolatrous Worſhip, even to the worſhipping of the Devil himſelf; this, and all other Kinds of Idolatry, had ſtrangely prevailed and overrun the World before the coming of *Chriſt*, who came on purpoſe to deliver Mankind from this Slavery, and to put down the Kingdom of *Satan*, and beat him out of thoſe ſtrong Holds which he thought had been impregnable, *The Son of God was manifeſt, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.*

9 Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.

Obſerve here, 1. The Character of a true Chriſtian, *he is Born of God*; he has, in the Work of Regeneration, paſt under a Bleſſed Change, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, renewing his Nature, and reforming his Life; yet this denotes not the ſingle tranſient Act of Regeneration, but rather a continued Courſe, and permanent State; one that is Born of God, is the ſame with him that leads a Pious and Godly Life, and continues ſo to do. *Obſerve* 2. What is here aſſerted concerning him that is Born of God, namely, that he *doth not commit Sin*, and that he *cannot Sin*. 1. He *doth not commit Sin*, he is no Evil-doer, no Worker of Iniquity, no habitual or cuſtomary Sinner; he goes not on in any Way or Courſe of Sin as the Wicked does, who makes a Trade of it; yea, he doth not tolerate or allow himſelf in any ſingle Act of Sin; not that he is abſolutely free from all Sin. 2. It is ſaid he *cannot Sin*; but how? And why? How can he not Sin? Has he not a natural Power to Sin? Has he not Corruptions within, and Temptations without, inclining and diſpoſing him to Sin, as well as other Men? And has he not Opportunity to Sin, the ſame Expectations of Advantages by Sin with other Men? Yes, no doubt; but he has not a Will bent for Sin, or a Heart and Mind ſet upon Sin, as the Wicked have; nay, he has an Heart and Will oppoſite to Sin, and ſet againſt all Sin. A Gracious Perſon then, though he has not a natural Impoſſibility, yet he has a moral Impoſſibility, to Sin; he that is Born of God hath a Power to do that Evil which he hath not a Will to do; he hath always a Natural Power, and ſometimes a Civil Power, as being in Authority; but his Blood and Pedigree is ſo high, being Born of God, that he diſdains to meddle with, or to trade in, ſo baſe a Thing as Sin is. *Note*, That a Child of God has a Bleſſed Impotency in the unregenerate Part, that he cannot ſin ſtrongly, though as yet he has not that Ability in the regenerate Part as not to Sin at all. *Obſerve* 3. The Reaſons aſſigned why a regenerate Perſon cannot Sin as the Wicked Sin, becauſe *his Seed remaineth in him, and becauſe he is Born of God*; that is, he has an inward Principle inclining and diſpoſing him to hate and oppoſe all Sin, to wit, *the ſanctifying Grace of God*; and he has that *mortifying Spirit* which cauſes him daily more and more to die unto Sin, and enables him to mortifie the Deeds of the Body. Learn hence, that although Sin remaineth in him that is Born of God, yet he that is Born of God doth not remain in Sin, either as to a ſinful State, or a ſinful Converſation, God's Word and Spirit, by which he was regenerate, ſtill remain in him; and ſo far as he is under the ruling Power and governing Influences of them, he cannot Sin, much leſs live in wilful Sin.

10 In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil: whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words gives us the diſtinguiſhing Character of a good and bad Man; thoſe who in their Diſpoſitions and Actions, in the Temper of their Minds, and in the Actions of their Lives, do imitate God, are his Children; and thoſe who addict themſelves to Sin and Impiety are of another Race and Deſcent, they are the Children of the Devil; they reſemble him, and belong unto him; by doing Righteouſneſs is meant the practice of univerſal Goodneſs, and a thorough Conformity to the Law of God, in oppoſition to Sin, which is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law. Learn hence, 1. That every Man may come to the certain Knowledge of his own Condition, whether he be a good or bad Man: *By this the Children of God are manifeſt*; that is, hereby good and bad Men are really diſtinguiſhed; the Scripture has laid down real Marks of difference between them. Learn 2. That the Love and Practice of Univerſal Righteouſneſs, and nothing ſhort of it, will denominate a Perſon a Child of God, and evidence to his own Conſcience that he is brought into a State of Grace and Favour with him: *In this the Children of God are manifeſt, whoſoever doth Righteouſneſs is of God.*

10 ——Neither he that loveth not his brother.

This diſcovers a farther Difference between the Children of God and the Children of *Satan*, namely, *Brotherly Love*; he doth not ſay, He that *hateth* his a Brother is a Child of the Devil, but *he that loveth not his Brother*; intimating, that not only Hatred and Malice againſt, but want of Brotherly Love towards each other, is a Mark and Sign not of a Child of God, but of the Devil: He that doth not unfeignedly love Men as Men, and all Chriſtians as Chriſtians, is no Child of God, nor Lover of God; for he that loveth not God's Image, loveth not God himſelf.

11 For this is the meſſage that he heard from the beginning, that we ſhould love one another. 12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother: and wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

Our Apoſtle comes now to enforce his Exhortation unto *Brotherly Love* by many weighty Arguments. 1. He aſſures them that this Precept concerning *Brotherly Love* was given them by *Chriſt*, and his Apoſtles, from the beginning of the preaching of the Goſpel; *This is the Meſſage ye heard of him from the beginning*. *Note* here, 1. That the Word of God is a Meſſage ſent from God unto us, a Meſſage for our Information and Inſtruction, a Meſſage for our Guide and Direction. 2. That the Duty of *Brotherly Love* is an *Ancient Meſſage* that God has ſent, and has continued to ſend us, *from the beginning*; God help us to learn this Leſſon ſo anciently taught us, and ſo long preſſed upon us by God himſelf; *This is the Meſſage which ye heard from the beginning*. A Second Argument to excite to *Brotherly Love* is drawn from the Evil of hating our Brother, which appears in the Perſon and Practice of *Cain*, whom our Apoſtle deſcribes, 1. By his Pedigree, *He was of that Wicked One*; that is, the Devil, of his diabolical Diſpoſition, of his envious and malicious Inclination, and as ſuch, was not ſo much *Adam*'s Son as the Devil's Son. 2. By his Practice, he ſlew his Brother; he firſt hated him, and then ſlew him. His Hatred was cauſleſs and unjuſt, implacable and deadly, and ended in his Brother's Death, and his own Deſtruction. 3. The Reaſon is aſſigned why he ſlew him, *Becauſe his own Works were Evil, and his Brother's Righteous*; not for any Harm he had done, or for any Evil he had deſerved, but becauſe *Cain* was bad himſelf, and his Works bad; to hate Godlineſs, and to perſecute the Godly, is the very Nature and Diſpoſition of a wicked Man. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Inference drawn by the Apoſtle from this Example of *Cain*'s hating his Holy and Innocent Brother: *Marvel not, my Brethren*, ſays he, *if the World hate you*; intimating, that the World always did, and ever will, hate God's Children; and that the Children of God are not to marvel or wonder at it, but to prepare for it; it is no new Thing, but what has been from the beginning; though *Cain* be dead, the Spirit of *Cain* is alive; the Perſecutor goes about with *Cain*'s Club in his Hand redded with Blood; *Marvel not then if the World hate you.*

14 We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren: he that loveth not *his* brother, abideth in death.

Obſerve here, 1. Our Apoſtle's Deſcription of a carnal, unregenerate State; it is a State of Spiritual *Death*. 2. Of a Chriſtian's renewed State by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, it is a State of Spiritual Life; *We are paſſed from Death to Life.* 3. Here is the Mark and Token by which this Tranſlation from Death to Life may be known, namely, by *Love*; for Love being the great Work of God's renewing Spirit on the Soul, it is by the Production of that we come to the Knowledge that we are changed from, the *Cainiſh* corrupt State of Death, into a State of Holy Life; whatever Grace Men pretend unto, if they want this Grace of *Love* they are yet Dead of Sin. *Obſerve* 4. The Characteriſtical Note of that Love which will be an indubitable Evidence of this our Tranſlation from Death to Life, it muſt be a Love of the *Brethren*; that is, of all Chriſtians as ſuch; particularly it muſt be an Extenſive and Univerſal Love, that reaches all the Children of God, all good Men, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever, otherwiſe 'tis the Love of a Party only, and a Love for Opinion ſake, not for Grace ſake. *Coloſ.* 1. 4. *We give Thanks ſince we heard of your Love to all Saints*; that is, to all of what Nation and Kingdom ſoever, of what Eſtate and Condition ſoever, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever, though differing from you in ſome leſſer Things. It muſt alſo be an *holy Love* that will evidence our Chriſtianity; though all Men muſt be loved as Men, yet the Brethren muſt be loved for the Likeneſs of God in them; we muſt love God's Holineſs in holy Perſons; 'tis one thing to love the Brethren, and another to love them as Brethren, and becauſe they are Brethren; a Gracious Perſon may be loved only for carnal Reſpects, and ſiniſter Ends; again, it muſt be *active* and *operative*, a *coſtly* and *expenſive*, Love; that cheap Love of ſome Men, which will wiſh a poor Chriſtian well, but will be at no Pains, no Coſt, or Expence, to help and ſuccour him, becauſe they love their Money better than they do their Brother, is the Hypocrite's Love, not the Saint's; ſee *James* 2. 15. *If a Brother or Siſter be Naked, and ye ſay unto him be Cloathed*, &c. this is a cold Sort of Love, which will profit neither our Brother, nor our ſelves. From the whole Learn, That the Love of Grace in another, is a good Evidence of the Life of Grace in our ſelves; unfeigned Love to the Children of God as ſuch, is an undoubted Evidence of our Regeneration and Adoption; *We know that we are paſſed from*, &c.

15 Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Nature of the Sin condemned, it is a ſecret Sin of the Heart, not an open Sin of the Life; he that *hateth his Brother*, that is, in his Heart, *is a Murtherer*, though he doth not ſmite him either with his Tongue, or with his Hand. Learn thence, That Sins of the Heart are damning, as well as Sins of the Life; a Man may be an Adulterer in the ſight of God, and yet never touch a Woman, *Mat.* 5. 28. an Idolater, and yet never bow his Knee to an Image, *Epheſ.* 6. 5. a Murtherer, and yet never hurt his Brother; if he hates him in his Heart it is recorded Murther in God's Account. What need have we to put up *David*'s Prayer, *Pſal.* 19. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Sins?* *Obſerve* 2. The ſad and deplorable Condition of ſuch as are guilty of this Sin, namely, of murthering their Brother by Hatred in their Hearts. *He that hateth his Brother, abideth in Death*, v. 14. *And hath not Eternal Life abiding in him*, v. 15. that is, he has no Spiritual Life, nothing of the Life of Grace abiding in him, which is the Seed and Principle, the Original and Beginning, of Eternal Life. *Note* thence, That the Life of Grace in the Heart of a Regenerate Perſon is the Beginning and Firſt Principle of a Life of Glory, whereof they cannot but be deſtitute who hate their Brother in their Hearts. So much Hatred in a Man, ſo much Death; and ſo much want of Love, ſo much want of Life.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe, he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Here our Apoſtle preſſes *Brotherly Love* from another Argument, namely, from the Example of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who being God as well as Man, laid down his Life, *as Man*, for us. Where *Note*, That the intimate Union betwixt the Divine and Humane Nature in *Chriſt*, gives ground for the calling *Chriſt*'s Life, *as Man*, the Life of God; as his Blood is ſaid, *Acts* 20. 28. to be God's own Blood. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God*, that is, of *Jeſus Chriſt* the Redeemer, *in that he laid down his Life for us*. Thence Learn, That the Death of *Chriſt* for us is a ſpecial Manifeſtation of his ſingular Love unto us. *Obſerve* farther, The Inference which our Apoſtle draws from *Chriſt*'s Love, in laying down his Life for us, namely, that we therefore ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren; that is, in a Time of Perſecution, when the Glory of God, the Edification of the Church, and the Eternal Salvation of our Brethren, do require it, and ſtand in need of it, we muſt never ſtick at laying down our Lives, when God calls us to it, as needful, for better Ends than our Lives. It is not needful that we live, but needful and neceſſary that we glorifie God, both in Life and Death.

17 But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of *compaſſion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Our Apoſtle here draws an Argument from the greater to the leſs after this manner. If, ſays he, we ought to be ready, in ſome Caſes, to part with our Lives for the Brethren, ſurely we much more ought to impart and communicate our worldly Goods to them in the Time of their Neceſſity; and he that refuſes ſo to do, can never think there is any thing of that Love in him which God requires of him towards his Children. Learn hence, That there certainly dwells no Love of God in that Man's Heart, who having this World's Goods, ſtretcheth not out his Hands to help the Neceſſities of his Brother. Here *Note* 1. The Fountain from which all Charitable Diſtributions are to proceed and flow, namely, from the *Compaſſion* of the Heart. 2. That the Compaſſion of the Heart muſt draw forth the Help of the *Hand*; he that is a Chriſtian indeed will open both Heart and Hand to the Diſtreſſed, and they ſhall partake of his *Purſe* as well as of his *Pity*. 3. It is not ſaid, He that has Abundance of this World's Goods, let him of his great Superfluity give; but he that *hath this World's Goods*; that is, in any meaſure, yea, though he has no more than he works for, yet is *he* required, *Eph.* 4. 28. that *worketh* with his Hands, to give to him that needeth. The World is greatly deceived who thinks Charity and Almſgiving a Duty that only concerns the Rich; indeed it concerns them eminently, but not excluſive. And Oh! The dreadful Account that ſome Rich Men have to give, who expend more upon a Luſt in one Day, than they give to the Poor in a whole Year. But yet after all, every One that has this World's Good, though he has but what he Labours and Sweats for, yet muſt he, in proportion to what he has give to him that needeth. *Note* 4. The Object of this our Compaſſion and Charity; a *Brother*, a Brother in *need*, and *every* Brother in need: Not only ſuch as are caſt down, but ſuch as are falling, are the proper Objects of our Pity and Help. *Note* 5. The Circumſtance of Time when we muſt give, namely, when we *ſee* our Brother in *need*. What a Vanity is it to leave our Alms till after our Death, to be beholding to the Juſtice of others for their Diſtribution! Let us ſee our Charity beſtowed with our own Eyes, and given out with our own Hands, when the Loins of the Poor will bleſs us; but their Prayers will do us no good when we are dead. *Whoſo ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* From the Whole Learn, That when we are in a Capacity, and enjoy an Opportunity of expreſſing our charitable Benevolence towards our poor and indigent Brethren, the Omiſſion of it is a certain Evidence that there is nothing of the Love of God reſiding in us.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.

Having laid down ſeveral Motives to *Brotherly Love* before by Way of Excitation, as an help to their *Affections*, he comes now to propound ſome Directions to them as an help to their Endeavours. And the Firſt is this, to take ſpecial Care that their Love be ſincere, and not hypocritical. *Let us not love in Word*; that is, in Word only, but *in Deed, and in Truth*. As if he had ſaid, Let our Deeds ſpeak the Truth of our Love; ſincere Love is fruitful; true Affection will put forth itſelf into Action; it doth not reſt at the Tongue's end, but will be ſeen at the Finger's end, rendring us laborious in Works and Offices of Friendſhip; as Faith, ſo Love without Works is dead; and as Faith is juſtified by Works, ſo is our Love alſo. *Obſerve* next, The Encouragement which our Apoſtle gives to the Exerciſe of this true Love, hereby *we ſhall know that we of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him*: That is, by ſuch Efficacy and real Fruits of our Love we ſhall know that we are true Chriſtians, who live by, and walk according to, the Rule of the Goſpel, which is emphatically ſtiled *the Truth*, and ſhall have the aſſured Teſtimony of our Conſciences, that we are ſincere in the ſight of God. Learn hence, 1. That the Love of Chriſtians one to another ought not to be Verbal, or in Word only, but in Deed, and in Truth. 2. That the Sincerity of our Love to our Brethren is the Security of our Conſciences and Eſtates before God. A Chriſtian may be aſſured of his good Eſtate, and may build his Aſſurance upon the Sincerity of his Love to God and Chriſtians.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater then our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence towards God.

By *Heart* here is undoubtedly meant *Conſcience*; and it is as much as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, If our Conſciences tell us that our Love is barren and fruitleſs, and ſo condemns us for Hypocriſie, God is greater than our Conſciences, both in Holineſs to condemn, and in Knowledge to perceive the Evil of them, for *he knoweth all things*; whereas if we have the Witneſs of our Conſciences touching the Sincerity of our Love by the Fruits of it; if after a moſt ſtrict Examination of our Conſciences, and an exact comparing of our Lives and Actions with the Law of God, we are not condemned of Inſincerity in our Obedience to God, and Love to our Neighbour, then have we an humble Confidence with God in all our Addreſſes to him. Learn hence, 1. That the Conſciences of Men have a Self-condemning and a Self-abſolving Power. 2. That the Conſciences of Men are much better known to God, than they either are or can be known unto themſelves. 3. That if our Hearts or Conſciences do condemn us, it is an Evidence of greater Condemnation from the Heart-ſearching God. 4. That if our Conſciences do abſolve us, it is an Argument of our Acceptance with God, and a Ground of Confidence in all our Addreſſes to him. 5. That according to the Verdict or Teſtimony of Mens Conſciences rightly informed, and truly teſtifying, God will either acquit or abſolve them at the great Day.

22 And whatſoever we ask, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight.

Obſerve here, 1. An extraordinary Favour and Priviledge inſured, *Whatſoever we ask we receive of him*; that is, whatſoever we ask according to his Will we are ſure to receive, either in Kind, or in Equivalency. It ſhall either be given in Mercy, or denied in Love; for verily God is as kind in denying ſome of our Requeſts, as in anſwering others; we often cry for that which it would be cruelty for God to give; we know not what is beſt to beg, but an Infinitely Wiſe God knoweth what is fitteſt to give. *Dat pro jucundis aptiſſima*. *Obſerve* 2. The Qualification of the Perſons to whom this Precious Priviledge does belong, *They keep God's Commandments*, and do the Things that pleaſe him. According to our hearing God's Commandments, ſo he hears and anſwers our Prayers; with what meaſure we meet to God, God will meaſure to us again. If God's Commands be trod under our Feet, no wonder that all our Prayers fall to the Ground. God hears not us, if we hear not him. *If we keep his Commandments whatever we ask we receive of him.*

23 And this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Obſerve here, 1. What is the Sum of the Chriſtian's Duty, *Faith* and *Love*, to believe on the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, to rely upon him as our Redeemer, our Teacher, our King, our Interceſſor, and to obey his great Command of loving one another with a pure Heart fervently. *Obſerve* 2. What a mighty Encouragement it is to Faith that believing on *Chriſt* is conſtituted a Duty by a plain Goſpel Precept. *This is his Commandment*, for this Command cuts off that vain Pretence and Plea of Preſumption. What! Such a vile Wretch as thou preſume to believe on *Chriſt*, ſays *Satan?* Yes, ſays the Chriſtian, here is a Command to me ſo to do, yea, a Command from the higheſt Sovereignty, the Contempt whereof I muſt anſwer at my utmoſt Peril. *Obſerve* 3. How the Command of Faith and the Command of Love are linkt and knit together, as if the Weight of our Salvation hung equally and alike upon both; as without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, ſo without Love is it impoſſible to pleaſe him alſo. Will no Duty profit without Faith? In like manner can we neither profit our ſelves nor others without Love: As whatever is not of Faith is Sin, ſo whatever Duty we perform towards our Brother, if we do it not out of Love, we miſs our Reward, 1 Cor. 13. *If I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Love, I am nothing.* Lord! Can we ever think this Command of Love ſmall and inconſiderable, when thou haſt joined the Love of thine Image with Faith in thy Dear Son? *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son, and love another.*

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Obſerve here, 1. The Benefit of Obedience to God's Commands. God dwelleth in us, and we in him. God's dwelling in us implies, 1. *Right and Propriety*; what a Man dwells in is his own 2. *Command* and *Authority*; the Maſter and Owner is the Commander and Diſpoſer of the Houſe. It alſo, 3. Implies Reſidence and Continuance, Settlement and Fixedneſs of Abode; there a Man dwells where he conſtantly reſides, and our dwelling in God imports, 1. Reconciliation with God. Can Two dwell together except they be agreed? 2. Affiance and Truſt in him. 3. An upholding conſtant Communion with him; it is one Thing to run to God for Refuge in a Storm, and another Thing to make him our Dwelling-place at all Times, and in all Conditions; he that keepeth God's Commandments thus dwelleth in God, and God in him; it follows, *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Learn hence, That the Spirit of God beſtowed upon us in his ſanctifying Gifts, and ſaving Graces, is an evident Sign of God's dwelling in us, and we in him.

CHAP. IV.

1 BEloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits, whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world.

Our Apoſtle having in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter mentioned the abiding of the Spirit of God in the Souls of Believers, leſt the Chriſtians to whom he wrote ſhould be deceived by ſuch as might pretend to be acted by the Spirit, when indeed they were not; he comes in this Chapter to Caution and Counſel all Chriſtians to take heed of being Seduced by ſuch as ſhould pretend to be Inſpired by the Holy Spirit of God, ſaying, *Believe not every Spirit*; that is, every Teacher, who pretends to be Inſpired, and every Doctrine that lays Claim to the Authority of Divine Revelation: *But try the Spirits*; that is, examine their Doctrines by the Rule of the Word of God, and try from whom they come, whether from the Spirit of God, or *Satan*; for *many falſe Prophets*, or Impoſtors, and Deceivers, are gone abroad into the World. Learn hence, 1. That Men from the beginning of Chriſtianity have, and ſtill do, falſly pretend to Divine Inſpiration. 2. That Chriſtians ought not to believe every one that thus pretends to be divinely Inſpired; for every one that has but enough of Confidence, and little enough of Conſcience, may pretend to come from God. Learn 3. That neither are we to reject all that pretend to come from God; for when the Apoſtle bids us not believe every Spirit, he ſuppoſes that we are to believe ſome; and when he bids us try the Spirits whether they be of God, he ſuppoſes ſome to be of God, and that ſuch as are ſo ought to be believed by us. Learn 4. That there is ſome Way to diſcern meer Pretenders to Inſpiration from thoſe who are Truly and Divinely Inſpired; it were in vain to make the Trial if there were no Ways to diſcern the Truth. Learn 5. That it is the Duty of all Chriſtians to examine the Doctrines propounded to them by the Word of God, they having a Judgment of Diſcretion, though not a Judgment of Deciſion; a Power to judge for themſelves, not to impoſe upon others; nor does this allowed Liberty of judging every one for himſelf take away the Neceſſity and Uſe of our Spiritual Guides and Teachers, or exempt us from a due Submiſſion and Obedience thereunto, but in Concurrence with them, *We are to try the Spirits whether they be of God.*

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God. 3. And every Spirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is not of God: and this is that *ſpirit* of antichriſt, whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it in the world.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle lays down a plain Mark and Rule of Trial, how they might know a Teacher that was Acted and Inſpired by the Spirit of God, from one that was not; ſuch a one as durſt truly and openly in the Face of Danger own and profeſs, teach and preach, *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Perſon, Nature and Offices, as the *Incarnate Word*, or Son of God, ſent from Heaven, aſcribing Virtue and Efficacy to the Sacrifice of his Death, and attributing to him alone the whole Glory of a perfect Saviour, this Doctrine is of the Spirit, and this Spirit is of God. But ſuch Teachers as will not hazard themſelves, but for fear of Sufferings and Perſecution will deny either the Godhead or Manhood of *Chriſt*, and diſown either his Incarnation, Death or Reſurrection, ſuch Teachers, and ſuch Doctrines, are not of God, but are the very Spirit of Antichriſt, which, ſays he, you have been foretold ſhould come, and is now already in the World. Learn hence, That ſuch a Teacher as diſowns either of the Natures of *Chriſt*, or denies any of the Offices of *Chriſt*, that either denies the Divinity of his Perſon, or the Meritoriouſneſs of his Satiſfaction, is not of God, he is Antichriſt, againſt *Chriſt*, and ſhall find *Chriſt* againſt him in the Day that he appears before him.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world.

Obſerve here, 1. A Character and Deſcription given of theſe Chriſtians to whom our Apoſtle writes. He tells them they were of a noble Deſcent, of a more excellent Pedigree, and higher Off-ſpring, than their falſe Teachers; *Ye are of God*, regenerated by the Spirit of God, quickned by his Renovation, led by his Manuduction, acted by his Influences, animated by his Aſſiſtances: *Little Children, ye are of God.* *Obſerve* 2. What is affirmed of theſe Chriſtians, *Ye have overcome them*; that is, you have reſiſted their Temptations, withſtood their Seductions, and all their Arts and Endeavours to miſlead you, when others have been perverted by them. Learn hence, That by Steadfaſtneſs in the Doctrine of *Chriſt* Chriſtians do overcome Impoſtors and Seducers, when unſtable Souls are overcome by them. *Obſerve* 3. The Reaſon aſſigned why, and the Means declar'd by which they overcome, namely, *becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World*; that is, *Chriſt*, who by his Spirit and Doctrine dwells in you, is greater, and more powerfully efficacious, than the Spirit of Error, which influences theſe vile Impoſtors and Seducers that are abroad in the World.

5 They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.

Here we have, 1. The Character given of theſe Seducers and falſe Teachers, *They are of the World*; that is, Men of Worldly Minds and Intereſts, *They ſpeak of the World*; that is, they preach a Doctrine ſuitable to the Luſts and Inclinations of Worldly Men, who greedily hear them, and eaſily believe them; ordinarily our Words are ſuch as we are; they who are of the World muſt needs ſpeak of the World, for they have nothing elſe to ſpeak of. The covetous Man ſpeaks covetouſly, and the proud Man proudly. *Obſerve* 2. The Character which the Apoſtle gives of himſelf and his Fellow Apoſtles, *We are of God*; that is, Taught and Inſtructed by God. We have our Miſſion and our Meſſage from God, and he has given us his Atteſtation, by opening the Ears and Hearts of thoſe that attend upon our Miniſtry, to receive and embrace our Doctrine; but ſuch as are not taught of God, reject both it and us. *Obſerve* 3. The Inference and Concluſion which our Apoſtle draws from hence, namely, that by the Doctrine and Writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts the Truth or Falſhood of Doctrines may and muſt be judged; for, ſays he, *Hereby we know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us.*

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

Our Apoſtle here reſumes his Exhortation to *Brotherly Love*, and urges and reinforces it with freſh Arguments. 1. He aſſures us that *Love is of God*; that is, the Fruit of his good Spirit in us; common Love is his common Gifts, and

Holy Love is his Special Grace: *Love is of God.* 2. 'Tis an Evidence that we have a Right Knowledge of God, both of his Nature and Will; and that we underſtand both what he is, and what he requires; he that has not the Grace of Love in his Heart, has not the Right Knowledge of God in his Head, whatever he may think of himſolf, or pretend to others. 3. The Apoſtle aſſures us, that Love is not only commanded, but exemplified, by God himſelf. *God is Love.* He had ſaid before, *Love is of God*, as a Quality; here he ſays, *God is Love*; not as a meer Quality, but his Eſſence. *God is Love*, 1. Eſſentially; Love in the Creature is an Accidental Quality, in God an Eſſential Property. 2. *God is Love* Cauſally, the Efficient Cauſe of whatever is loving or lovely in us; all our Love to him, and one another, is but a Reflection of his Love to us. 3. *God is Love* Objectively; he is, or ought, to be the Supream Object of our Love; and we muſt love him above all, or he accounts we love him not at all. 4. *God is Love* Declaratively; all his Works, as well as his Word, are a Declaration of his Love to us, and ought to engage us to Stedfaſtneſs in our Love to him. Let us therefore, ſays the Beloved Diſciple, *Love one another, for Love is of God, and God is Love.*

9 **In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.**

Obſerve 1. That God doth not only beſtow Love upon his People, but it is his Good Pleaſure to manifeſt that Love. *Queſ.* Wherein has God manifeſted his Love towards us? *Anſ.* 1. In our *Creation*, making us out of nothing in ſuch a Wonderful Manner; our Bodies curiouſly wrought as with a Needle, our Souls beautified with Underſtanding, Will and Judgment. 2. In our Apoſtacy and Degeneration, when no Eye pitied us, and when we had no Hearts to pity our ſelves, then were his Bowels of Love and Compaſſion yearning towards us; then he ſaid unto us, Live, when he might have ſaid, Die, and be Damn'd. 3. In our Redemption, Recovery, and Reſtitution, in ſending *his only Begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Obſerve* 2. A Threefold Evidence of God's Love to Mankind in the Work of Redemption, that Great and Glorious Work. 1. 'Twas a Wonderful Inſtance of the Love of God, that he ſhould be pleaſed to take our Caſe into Conſideration, and to concern himſelf for our Happineſs; as nothing is more obliging to Human Nature than Love, ſo no Love obliges more than that which is exerciſed with great Condeſcention after a Provocation; ſuch was God's Love to Offending Man. 2. That he ſhould deſign ſo great a Benefit to us, as is here expreſs'd, even Life, *That we might live through him.* 3. That God was pleas'd to uſe ſuch a Means for the obtaining and procuring of this Benefit for us. He ſent his own Son into the World, that we might live through him. Where *Note*, 1. The Perſon ſent, his own Son, and only Begotten Son. 2. The Perſons ſent to, the Men of the World, who were ſpiritually dead, and judiciouſly dead. 3. The Manner of his being ſent, Voluntarily and Free, not conſtrained by Neceſſity, not prevailed upon by Importunity, not oblig'd by Benefit or Kindneſs from us, but out of his meer Pity and Goodneſs towards us, he ſent him into a Wicked World, and into an Ungrateful World, that we might live through him. From the whole Learn, That God's beſtowing his Son upon a Loſt World, was a manifeſt Evidence of his great and wonderful Love unto them. *In this was manifeſt the Love of God towards us*, &c.

10 **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our ſins.**

Herein is *Love*; that is, the Cleareſt, the Fulleſt, the Higheſt Expreſſion of Free und Undeſerved Love that ever the World was acquainted with. *Obſerve*, That the Wiſdom and Power of God did not act to the utmoſt of their Efficacy in the Work of Creation; he could have fram'd a more Glorious World had it pleas'd him; but the Love of God in our Redemption by Chriſt could not be expreſs'd, or ſet forth, in an higher Degree: When Almighty God would give the moſt Excellent Teſtimony of his Favour to Mankind, he gave them his Eternal Son, the Son of his Love; and verily the giving of Heaven itſelf, with all its Joys and Glory, is not ſo full and perfect a Demonſtration of the Love of God, as the giving of his Son to die for us. *Herein is Love. Obſerve* next, the Priority of God's Love to Mankind; he loved us, not we him; he loved us antecedently to our loving him, and he loved us, that we might love him, when there was nothing in us either to deſerve, or to engage, his Love. *Obſerve* Laſtly, The great Intent, and gracious Deſign of God in ſending his Son; namely, *To be a Propitiation for our Sins*; that is, to die as a Sacrifice for our Sins, and thereby atone Divine Diſpleaſure. *Herein is Love*; that is, the Triumph, the Riches, and Glory, of Divine Love, that God gave Chriſt to die for us. But is there Love in nothing elſe but this? Yes, ſure, to have a Being among Rational Creatures, therein is Love; to have our Life carried ſo many Years in the Hand of Providence, like a Burning Taper, in the midſt of Winds and Storms, and not burnt out, this is Love. To have Food and Raiment convenient for us, Relations and Friends to comfort us, in all theſe is Love, great Love; but comparatively none at all to the Love expreſs'd in giving Chriſt to die for us. Herein was Love, the Flower of Love.

11 **Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another.** 12 **No man hath ſeen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.** 13 **Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.**

Obſerve 1. The Genuine Inference which our Apoſtle draws from the Doctrine laid down concerning the Greatneſs of God's Love to us; namely, that ſeeing God ſo loved us, we ſhould love one another, and be like him according to our Meaſure, and in our Degree. *Obſerve* next, the Apoſtle's Argument to provoke us hereunto; he tells us that God himſelf is to be loved by us for his Aſtoniſhing Love unto us: But as God is not to be ſeen in his Eſſence, but in Man his Image, ſo muſt we love God in Man, his Creature, made after his own Image and Likeneſs: And if we love the Holy Image of God in each other, it is an Evidence that God dwelleth in us, and we in him; namely, by the Inhabitation of his Holy Spirit, which being a Spirit of Love in us, draws forth our Love towards himſelf, and one towards another. And farther he aſſures us, that this will be a Sign, *That Love is perfect in us*; namely, that this Grace is, in its Vigour and Perfection in our Souls, ſincere and entire, having all its Eſſential Parts, tho' it be not abſolutely perfect in all Degrees. *Note*, That Perfection here is not oppoſed to Imperfection, but to Inſincerity. Our Love is then ſaid to be perfected when it is conſiderably heightned and improved. Bleſſed be God the Hour is coming when this, and all other Graces, ſhall be perfected, when this Spark of Love ſhall be blown up into a Seraphick Flame. *Obſerve* Laſtly, the Rule which our Apoſtle lays down, whereby we may know aſſuredly that God dwelleth in us, and we in him; namely, *If he has given us his Spirit*, which is a Spirit of Holy Love. Learn thence, that the Holy Spirit (not in its Extraordinary Gifts, which are long ſince ceaſed, but) in its Sanctifying Operations, and Gracious Fruits, (of which Sincere Love is the Firſt and Chief,) is an undoubted Evidence of God's dwelling in us, by a Special Inhabitation, and of our dwelling in him; that is, reſting in his Love and Favour, and under his Protection and Care. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*; namely, as a Spirit of Holy and Univerſal Love.

14 **And we have ſeen, and do teſtifie, that the Father ſent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the World.** 15 **Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.** *16* **And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.**

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Tho' no Man hath ſeen God at any time, yet we Apoſtles, who preach the Doctrine of Faith unto you, and preſs the Duty of Love upon you, have ſeen with our Bodily Eyes the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and do teſtifie, that God the Father glorified his Love by ſending his Son to be the Saviour of a Periſhing World; not of Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo. And we farther declare, That whoſoever believing this our Teſtimony, ſhall confeſs with his Mouth, and believe in his Heart, that this Jeſus whom we preach is the Son of God, and ſhall evidence the Truth of his Faith by the Sincerity of his Love, and other good Fruits, 'tis certain that God dwelleth in him by his Spirit, and he dwelleth in God by repeated Acts of Love: And finally, we Apoſtles well knowing and firmly believing the Love, the wonderful great Love, which God hath manifeſted towards us in and through his Son Jeſus Chriſt, we again affirm and conclude that *God is Love.* Love *Originally*, the Fountain from whence all Love flows. Love *Efficiently*, the Producing Cauſe of all Love in the Hearts of our People. Love *Subjectively*, a God full of Love and Mercy, of Goodneſs and Pity towards his Creatures. Love *Objectively*, he is deſervedly the Firſt and Chief Object of our Love, as he is the Firſt and Chief Good. Love *Declaratively*, both his Word and Works declare the Purpoſes of his Love unto us, and give Demonſtrations of Innumerable Inſtances of his Beneficence towards us. But eſpecially God is Love *Eſſentially.* Love in us is an Adventitious and Accidental Quality; in God it is an Eſſential Property, it is his very Eſſence and Nature, inſeparable from his Being; he can as ſoon ceaſe to *Be* as ceaſe to *Love.* And as *God is Love*, ſo we again affirm that he that *dwelleth* in *Love*; that is, he who has Love, as the Prevailing Habit in his *Heart*, and as the Governing Principle of his Life, he *dwelleth* by Communion *in God*, as rhe Eye dwells in the Light, and as one Friend by Love dwells in another, *and God* by his Spirit of Love *dwelleth in him.*

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment: becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love caſteth out fear: becauſe fear hath torment: he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.

Still our Apoſtle proceeds by Way of Argument to enforce upon us the Obligation of our Duty to love one another; he aſſures us here, that if our Love *be made perfect*; that is, heightned and improv'd by an Exact Correſponding with the Divine Pattern and Precept; if we love one another in Obedience to God's Command, and in Conformity to Chriſt's Example, it will give us Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment, and we may think and ſpeak of, we may expect and look for, the Approach of that Day without Fear and Conſternation of Mind; the Reaſon is added, becauſe *as Chriſt was, ſo are we in the World*; that is, as he was full of Holineſs and Purity, of Love and Charity, ſo have we endeavour'd to be in Imitation of his Example according to our Meaſure in ſome Proportion and Degree. Learn hence, 1. That ſuch as are ſincerely Gracious, and do excel in the Grace of Love, are in the World in ſome Sort as Chriſt was in the World; ſuch as walk in Love walk as Chriſt walked. Learn 2. That ſuch as are in the World, as Chriſt was in the World, they ſhall have Boldneſs when Chriſt comes to Judgment, and need not fear the Condemnation of that Dreadful Day; *Herein is our Love made perfect, that we may have Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment*; the Reaſon of this Freedom from the Fear of Wrath is added, *V.* 18. *There is no Fear in Love*; that is, no Slaviſh or Diſtruſtful Fear, whereby we queſtion the Favour of God, but only a Filial and Reverential Fear, whereby we ſtand in Awe of offending him as a Father: *But Perfect Love caſteth out Fear*; that is, either the Actings of our Perfect Love to God, or the Apprehenſions of God's Perfect Love towards us, do caſt out all that Fear which has Torment in it. Yet *Note*, That although Perfect Love caſts out Torment Fearing, it calls in Obeying Fear, *Eccl.* 12.10. Fearnig God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the Whole Duty of Man; an Aweful Fear of God is all Duty, and every Grace. *Note* alſo, The True Reaſon of our Diſquieting and Tormenting Fear is the Imperfection and Weakneſs of our Love; Fear may ſtand with Faith and Love, but not with Perfect Faith, nor Perfect Love: *He that feareth is not made Perfect in Love*, and becauſe he is not made perfect in Love, therefore he feareth; bleſſed be God as there will be no Torment, ſo no Fear, in Heaven; that is, no Tormenting Fear; yet there is a Fear of Reverence which will undoubtedly remain with Glorified Saints in Heaven; they ſhall have an Everlaſting Awe of the Majeſty and Holineſs of God eternally fix'd upon their Hearts and Spirits, even in the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven, as well as in the Kingdom of Grace here on Earth; the Saints *ſerve God acceptably with Reverence, and Godly Fear*; Lord, haſten the Perfecting of thy Grace in us, particularly the Perfection of our Love, that Perfect Love may caſt out Tormenting Fear, and cheriſh ſuch a Reverential Fear as will both prepare us for Heaven, and accompany us in Heaven, to all Eternity.

19 We love him; becauſe he firſt loved us.

There is a Double Reading of theſe Words according to the Original. 1. They may be read, let us love him, becauſe he firſt loved us, by way of Motive; *denoting* that Believers have great Reaſon to love God with their Choiceſt and Higheſt Affections, for as much as he has loved them, and firſt loved them. 2. They are here read by Way of Cauſality, we do love him becauſe he firſt loved us; *intimating*, that God's Love to us is the Root and Spring of our Love to him, and to one another; all our Love to Saints is the Effect of his Preventing Love to us, and but a Reflection of thoſe Beams of Love which God has firſt caſt upon us; if God's Love to us had been a meer Dependent Conſequent of our Love to him, how uncertain ſhould we be of its Continuance? But his Love to us was the Antecedent Cauſe of our Love to him; we therefore love him becauſe he firſt loved us.

20 If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words prevents an Objection. Some might be ready to ſay, who is it that doth not love God? Is there any that live who do not love him? The Apoſtle replies, that whoſoever ſays he loves God, and yet hateth his Brother, is plainly a Liar; for it is impoſſible truly to love God, and not to do what God Commands; and if we do not exerciſe Love to our Brethren whom we daily ſee, and converſe with, how can it be imagined that we love God whom we never ſaw? Learn hence, Firſt, that as God is infinitely above us, ſo he needeth not our Love, but it is wonderful Condeſcenſion in God to give us leave to love him, and to ſuffer himſelf to be embraced by thoſe Arms which have embraced Sin and Luſt before him. Learn 2. That though God needs not us, or our love, yet we need him, and ſtand in need of one another, and for that Reaſon muſt and ought to love each other. Learn 3. That if we love not God's Viſible Image, it is certain we never lov'd the Inviſible God; if when we have our Chriſtian Brethren in our daily View, and the Objects of our Senſes are their Miſeries and Wants, and yet we ſhut up our Bowels of Compaſſion from them, can we, or dare we, pretend at the ſame Time to love God whom we have not ſeen, and who is only preſent to our Minds by raiſed Expectations; as the Sight of our Brother is a ſtrong Inducement to love him, ſo the not loving him at Sight is a ſtrong Argument that we love not God himſelf: *For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?*

21 And this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loveth his Brother alſo.

This Commandment; this Great and Chief Commandment above the reſt, this Summary and Comprehenſive Commandment, including all the reſt, namely, to love God above all for his own Sake, and to love our Brother as our ſelves for God's Sake; this *Command* ſo full of Wiſdom, ſo agreeable to Right Reaſon, and ſo much our Duty and Intereſt to comply with, have we receiv'd from God; and it is moſt certain that we love him not, if we keep it not; *This Commandment have we from God, that he who loveth God, loves his Brother alſo.* Learn thence, 1. That the Great God, by his Gracious Command, requires that we love him, and place the Supremacy of our Love upon him. 2. That as God requires us to love him above our ſelves, ſo does he oblige us by Vertue of his Command to love our Brother as our ſelves; as ſincerely, though not ſo intenſely, as our ſelves. Learn 3. That the ſame Commandment that requires us to love God, requires Love to our Brethren alſo; God interprets the Neglect of our Duty to our Brother as a Neglect of our Obligation to himſelf.

CHAP. V.

Our Apoſtle in this Chapter proſecutes the Deſign of the whole Epiſtle, which is to excite and inflame in Chriſtians the Love of God, and their Brethren; Two Comprehenſive Duties, and our Principal Perfections in Heaven and Earth: Theſe he recommends by the moſt Affectionate and Obliging Perſwaſives, namely, the Superlative Love of God to us, and our Communion with the Saints both in Nature and Grace; and accordingly thus he writes.

1 WHoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God: And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him.

Obſerve here, 1. The Grand Propoſition laid down as the Object of our Faith, namely, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*; that is, that Jeſus of *Nazareth*, who was born with, and lived amongſt the *Jews*, was the Saviour of the World, the Perſon whom *Moſes* and the Prophets foretold to be the *Meſſiah*. *Obſerve* 2. The Duty requir'd of us, namely, to *believe* that Jeſus is the Chriſt; that is, not Hiſtorically only, to aſſent that Jeſus is the Predicted and Promiſed *Meſſiah*, but to expreſs the Truth of that Faith in a ſuitable Converſation. *Obſerve* 3. How evidentally ſuch a Faith is of our Regeneration: Whoſoever *thus* believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is Born of God; Faith in Chriſt Jeſus as the Great King, Prieſt and Prophet of his Church, accompanied with an Holy Life, is a Sure Mark and Undoubted Evidence of our New Birth: *Whoſoever believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is Born of God*. *Obſerve* 4. The Affection which every Perſon that is Born of God bears unto God, *He loveth him that Begat*; this is the Ingratiating and Indearing Quality; 'tis this that commends both our Perſons and Performances to God's Acceptation; the Service of Love is therefore moſt acceptable, becauſe moſt honourable to God, and moſt durable and laſting from us; the Obedience of Love will be laſting. *Obſerve* 5. What is the Genuine Effect and Natural Product of this Love to God, namely, a Sincere Affection to all the Children of God; *Whoſoever loveth him that Begat, loveth him alſo that is Begotten of him*; every Chriſtian that ſincerely loves God, certainly loves the Image of God in his Saints and Children; he that loves the Father for his own Sake, cannot but love the Child for the Father's Sake, if like him; and the more like him, the more he loves him; *He that loveth him that Begat, loveth him alſo that is Begotten of him.*

2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

Obſerve here, That the Sincerity of our Love to the Children of God is beſt diſcover'd by our Love to God, and Obedience to his Commands. *Queſt.* 1. What kind of Love is requir'd towards the Children of God? *Anſ.* A Love of Eſteem, a Love of Deſire, a Love of Delight, and a Love of Service and Beneficence. *Queſt.* 2. What kind of Obedience towards God is that which ſprings from Love? *Anſ.* It is *Uniform* and *Univerſal*; Love regardeth the whole Law in all its Injunctions and Prohibitions, and ſtudieth to pleaſe the Lawgiver: It is *Pleaſant* and *Delightful*; not a Melancholy Task, but a Pleaſing Exerciſe: It is *Accurate* and *Exact*; it produces a Severe Circumſpection over our Ways, that nothing be done or allowed by us that is diſpleaſing to the Divine Eye: And it is *Conſtant* and *Perſevering*; that Motion which is cauſed by outward Poizes will ceaſe when the Weights are down, but that which proceeds from an Inward Principle or Life is continual; and ſuch a Principle is the Love of God planted in the Chriſtian's Breaſt; *By this then may we know that we love the Children of God, if we love God, and keep his Commandments.*

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Our Apoſtle in theſe Words gives us a Threefold Deſcription of a Sincere Chriſtian. He deſcribes him, 1. By his Inward Affection to God and Chriſt, and that is *Love*; this is ſhed abroad in his Heart. 2. By the Action which flows from this Affection, namely, *Obedience* to God in *keeping his Commandments*. 3. By the Diſpoſition and Inclination from which that Obedience doth proceed and flow, namely, a Delight and Cheerfulneſs in the doing of our Duty: *His Commandments are not grievous*; that is, they have nothing in them heavy or burthenſome, but every Thing may render them at once both our Duty and Delight. Learn hence, 1. That Obedience is the moſt Natural and Neceſſary Product of Love; where Love is the Governing Principle, it rules all the Inclinations of the Heart, and Actions of the Life. Learn 2. That Love makes our Obedience to God cheerful and conſtant, delightful and laſting: Love is ſeated in the Will, and that Obedience which proceeds from it is out of Choice, and purely Voluntary: No Commandment is grievous that is perform'd from Love, and it makes Obedience alſo conſtant: That which is forc'd from Impreſſion of Fear is unſteadfaſt, but that which flows from Delight is laſting. Learn hence, that the Service of Chriſt is a very Gracious, a moſt Deſirable and Delightful Service; not to Sinners, whoſe Minds the God of this World has blinded, whoſe Conſciences are cauteriz'd, who have not only griev'd but quench'd the Holy Spirit of God. But, 1. It is not grievous in itſelf. 2. Nor is it grievous to a Regenerate Perſon; a Sound Eye never complains of Light, but a Sore Eye is uneaſie under it; the Commands of Chriſt cannot be grievous, becauſe they exact Things of us which are agreeable to our Reaſon, ſuitable to our Natures, conſonant to our Rational Deſires: We cannot give an Inſtance of any one of the Commands of Chriſt which is in itſelf grievous; that Command of his, to do to others as we would have others do by us, is a Dictate of Nature as well as the Law of Chriſt.

4 For whatſoever is born of God overcometh the World: and this is the Victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

Two Things are here obſervable, namely, a Propoſition, and the Explication of that Propoſition. *Obſerve* 1. The Propoſition, *Whatſoever is Born of God overcometh the World*; every Regenerate Chriſtian is a Victorious Chriſtian; he is a Conqueror, yea, the greateſt of Conquerors, he Conquers the whole World. *Obſerve* 2. The Expoſition of this Propoſition, *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*; it is a Spiritual Conqueſt, and ſpiritually obtain'd, even by Faith. *Note* here, 1. That the World is a Chriſtian's Grand Enemy; a Conqueſt ſuppoſes a Combat, and a Combat ſuppoſes an Enemy. 2. That every Regenerate Chriſtian is a Victorious Conqueror over this Enemy; the Chriſtian is a Soldier as ſoon as he is a Believer, and he is a Conqueror as ſoon as he is a Soldier: *This is the Victory*, he hath his Enemy under his Feet, even whilſt he is in the Fight. *Note* 3. That the Special Weapon by which the Chriſtian conquers the World, and his Spiritual Enemies, is his Faith: Many Warriors have done great Things in conquering Kingdoms, but this is a greater Conqueſt than all theirs; their Conqueſt was but poor and partial, only of ſome ſmall Parts of Earth, but the Chriſtian's Conqueſt is univerſal: Thoſe Conquerors whilſt they prevail'd Abroad were Slaves at Home; whilſt they were Lords of Nations they were Vaſſals to their own Luſts; but theſe Conquerors which the Text ſpeaks of, they begin their Victories at Home, and enlarge their Triumphs over all their Enemies Abroad: *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.*

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God? 6. This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.

Our Apoſtle having ſpoken of the Uſefulneſs of Faith in the former Verſe, *That it overcometh the World*; next diſcovers the Object of this Faith, which is this Propoſition, that *Jeſus is the Son of God: Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?* That Faith which overcomes the World is Faith in the Divinity and Sonſhip of Jeſus Chriſt; we overcome the World by believing in him that overcame it, even Jeſus Chriſt, who hath purchaſed, promiſed and prepar'd, a better World than what we do ſee, or can ſee, with our Bodily Eyes, and has made us Heirs of Eternal Glory. *Obſerve* next the Argument by which the Apoſtle proves that Jeſus is the Son of God, the True *Meſſias*, and Saviour of Mankind, namely, becauſe he *came by Water* and *Blood*; that is, ſay ſome, by the Teſtimony given him when he was in the Water at his Baptiſm, both by *John* the Baptiſt and the Voice from Heaven; he came by his Spirit, ſay others, *as by Water*, to ſanctifie thoſe that believe in him; and by his Blood, to make a full Atonement for them; an Admirable Symbol of both which was the flowing of Water and Blood both out of Chriſt's Side when he hung upon the Croſs: It is a Sweet Meditation that Chriſt comes by Water as well as Blood, by Way of Sanctification as well as by Way of Juſtification: His Death not only diſcharges from Guilt, but cleanſes alſo from Pollution and Filth: Bleſſed be God there is a Fountain open'd in the Side of our Saviour for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs, to waſh in, and to be purged from; Sanctification is as great, and in ſome Reſpects a greater, Priviledge than Juſtifications, for Juſtification frees us only from Miſery and Puniſhment, but Sanctification frees us from Sin, which is worſe than Puniſhment. Again, Real Perfections are above Relative Perfections; now Juſtification by Chriſt's Blood is only a Relative Perfection, it makes us ſtand in a New Relation to the Law, by which before we ſtood Guilty and Condemn'd; but Sanctification by the Spirit of Chriſt ſignified here, and ſet forth elſewhere frequently by Water, is a Real Moral Perfection; it changes the Heart and Nature, and makes us like unto God, yea, like unto him in his Higheſt Perfection, which is that of Holineſs. Come then, O Bleſſed Redeemer, by Water and Blood into our Souls with thy Renewing Grace, and Sanctifying Spirit, to purge our Conſciences from Dead Works, and to deliver us not only from the Danger, but from the Dominion of our Sins.

6 ——And it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe the Spirit is truth.

Some by the Spirit's bearing Witneſs underſtand the Teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gave to Chriſt here upon Earth, as touching the Truth of his Doctrine, the Reality of his Miracles, and the Certainty of his Miſſion; others underſtand by it the Spirit's Teſtimony in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Conſciences of Believers, that Jeſus Chriſt is a Divine Perſon, and came by Water and Blood, both to ſave us at once from the Wrath of God, and the Rage of our Luſts. Learn thence, that the Holy Spirit of God ſpeaking in the Scriptures, and breathing in the Conſciences of Believers, bears Witneſs to their Souls that Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave them by the Water of Sanctification, as well as with and by the Blood of Redemption; and that the Spirit thus witneſſing is a Spirit of Truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one.

That is, there are Three in Heaven which do bear Record to this Truth here upon Earth, namely, that Jeſus *is the Chriſt*; that is to ſay, the Three Perſons in the Holy Trinity, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*: The Father bear Witneſs both at Chriſt's Baptiſm and Transfiguration alſo, when with an Audible Voice he declar'd, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*; the Word bear Record of himſelf, affirming frequently, plainly and directly, that he was the Son of God, and making it manifeſt by his Doctrine and Miracles that he came from the Father; the Spirit bear Witneſs to this, partly by deſcending on Chriſt at his Baptiſm in the Shape of a Dove, and partly by deſcending on his Apoſtles at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* in the Figure of Fiery Tongues, *Act.* 2. Learn hence, 1. That it was no eaſie Matter to believe the Truth of our Saviour's Miſſion and Miracles, and that Jeſus Chriſt was the Eſſential and Natural Son of God: Though by the Mouth of Two or Three Witneſſes every Truth is eſtabliſh'd, yet in this and the next Verſe we have no leſs than Six Witneſſes produc'd to prove our Jeſus to be the Son of God; Three heavenly, and Three earthly Witneſſes, ---- it is added, *Theſe Three are One*; one in Teſtimony, ſay the Adverſaries of the Trinity, but not one in Eſſence; one in both ſay we, as one in Teſtimony, ſo one in Eſſence; but ſuppoſe we ſhould grant that the Oneneſs ſpoken of in the Text is to be expounded of Conſent in Teſtimony, Agreement, and Will, principally, yet will it prove the Godhead of Chriſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt; for in Free Agents, where there is the ſame Will, there is the ſame Nature; with Men it is the ſame Specifical Nature; but with God, becauſe there is but One only God, therefore it muſt be the ſame Numerical Nature. Learn 2. That there are Three Perſons, yet but One God, that do bear Witneſs to the Divinity of Chriſt, and of the Plenteous Redemption wrought by him.

8 And there are three that bear witneſs in earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood: and theſe three agree in one.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, As there are Three in Heaven who have given us their Teſtimony to the Divinity of Chriſt, and his Doctrine here on Earth, ſo there are Three Witneſſes here below teſtifying the ſame Thing, namely, *the Spirit* in the Preaching of the Goſpel, and in the Souls of Believers; *the Water*, or Sacrament of Baptiſm, wherein we are baptiz'd in the Name of the Son, as well as of the Father; *and the Blood*, that is, the Death of Chriſt, and the Sufferings of thoſe who have ſealed this Truth with their Blood; all theſe do give Teſtimony on Earth to Chriſt's Divinity from Heaven. *Note* here, that though much of theſe Two Verſes be left out in many Ancient Copies of the Bible, as the Learned Dr. *Hammond* takes Notice, yet in Copies more Ancient they are found; and we have more Reaſon to believe that the *Arians* left them out than that the Orthodox put them in, other Texts that aſſert the Truth being ſo abuſed: It has been the Common Courſe of Hereticks to diſown the Authority of ſuch Texts as do Gall and Pinch them. *Note* farther, that the Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity ſtands Built upon Holy Sctipture, as a Firm Baſis, and Impregnable Rock; and the Doctrine of the Anti-Trinitarians falls to the Ground like *Dagon* before the Ark. Lord, let our Underſtandings evermore ſtoop and yeild to this Divine Revelation, though it contain ſuch a Doctrine as doth exceed the Comprehenſion of Human Reaſon.

9 If we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater: for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in himſelf: he that believeth not God hath made him a Liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Our Apoſtle's Arguments in theſe Words is taken from the leſs to the greater thus; If, ſays he, for the Believing of any Thing be ordinarily thought ſufficient to have the Teſtimony of Two or Three Credible Men, then ſurely the Teſtimony of the Faithful and Infallible God given from Heaven is much more worthy of Belief; but the Teſtimony given concerning Chriſt, that he is verily the Son of God, is evidently the Teſtimony of the Faithful God that cannot Lie: Therefore he that, after all the Aſſurance which God has given of his Son's being a True and Real Saviour, ſhall yet reject and diſown him as ſuch, he does in effect accuſe God of Falſhood, and make him a Liar, becauſe he believes not the Record which God has given of his Son; whereas the Perſon that believes on Chriſt as the Son of God, and the True *Meſſiah*, is ſafe, having the Teſtimony of God the Father without him, and the Teſtimony of the Holy Spirit within him, as a Spirit of Holineſs, Wiſdom and Power: *He that believeth on the Son hath the Witneſs in himſelf, he that believeth not the Son has made God a Liar.* Learn hence, 1. That every Teſtimony which God gives us is infallibly True. 2. That the Teſtimony which God has given us concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt's being the True and Promis'd *Meſſiah*, has had its Confirmation abundantly above, and beyond other Teſtimonies. 3. Therefore ſuch as do not believe on our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as the Saviour of the World, they disbelieve the moſt Undoubted and Infallible Teſtimony of God, and in his Account make him a Liar. Lord, What a Bold, Preſumptuous, and Daring Sin is Unbelief? It gives God the Lie, and makes the God of Truth a Liar.

11 And this is the Record, that God hath given to us, eternal Life: and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son, hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, The Sum of God's Teſtimony recorded in the Goſpel is this, concerning his Son Jeſus

Chriſt, namely, that God for his Sake has made a Free Deed of Gift of Pardon and Salvation to the World, aſſuring them of Grace here, and Eternal Life hereafter, upon Condition of their believing Acceptance; that is, of Faith and Obedience; and accordingly he that thus has Chriſt, he that accepts the Merit of his Blood, and ſubmits to the Authority of his Law, *hath Eternal Life*; that is, he has an Undoubted Right unto it, an Aſſurance of it; yea, he has it already Initially, and in the Firſt-fruits; but he that either by Unbelief, or Diſobedience, refuſes Chriſt, *Shall not ſee Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* Learn hence, 1. That Eternal Life is the Gift of God. 2. That this Gift of Eternal Life is laid up for us in his Son. 3. That upon our having, or not having, Union with, and Intereſt in the Son, depends our having, or not having, Eternal Life: *He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son*, &c.

13 Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Our Apoſtle entring now upon the Concluſion of his Excellent Epiſtle, acquaints them with his Deſign and End in the Writing of it, namely, 1. That they might know they had Eternal Life; that is, both a Right and Title to Eternal Life, and might alſo attain to the Knowledge and Aſſurance of it. Learn thence, that Believers may in this Life (without the Help of Extraordinary Revelation) attain to a Knowledge, and Well-grounded Aſſurance of Life Eternal: *Theſe Things have I written unto you that believe, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life.* There is a Threefold Knowledge; *Notional*, which is barely the Work of the Underſtanding; *Experimental*, which is ſeated in the Heart, and viſible in the Life; *Fiducial*, when a Perſon is aſcertain'd and aſſur'd of what he knows; thus here *theſe Things I write*, that ye may know that ye know; that is, be aſſur'd that ye know; a Chriſtian may believe, and yet not be aſſur'd that he does not believe; many have a Vital Act, which have not a Fiducial Act of Faith; many have a Faith of Adherence that want a Faith of Evidence: Faith and Aſſurance in a Saint differ as much as Reaſon and Learning in a Man; every Man has Reaſon, but every Man that has Reaſon has not Learning, which is the Improvement of Reaſon: Thus every Good Man has Faith, but every one that has Faith has not Aſſurance, which is the Special Fruit of Faith. This therefore was the Firſt Deſign and End of St. *John*'s Writing, that they might know they did believe. The Second follows, that thoſe *that did believe might believe on the Name of the Son of God*; the Meaning is, that they might more firmly believe, be more rooted, grounded, ſettled, and confirm'd in the Faith, ſo as to remain unſhaken by all the Storms of Perſecution that might fall upon them; this ſeems to be the Senſe of the Apoſtle when he exhorts *Believers* to *believe: Theſe Things I write unto you that believe, that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.* The ſtrongeſt Believers may be exhorted to ſtrengthen their Faith, and to perſevere in the Faith, which they are ſtrengthen'd and eſtabliſh'd in.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. 15. And if we know that he hear us, whatſoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him.

To enforce the foregoing Exhortation to Believers, namely, to be confirm'd, and conſtant in the Faith, he ſhews them here what a Special Advantage Believers have above other Perſons, namely, Confidence in all their Approaches to God, and a full Aſſurance. 1. In general, that whatever they ask in Faith, according to his Will, they ſhall obtain. 2. In particular, that our ſeveral Petitions which we preſent unto God, ſhall, in his own Time, in his own Way, and after his own Manner, be granted by him, provided our Perſons and our Prayers be qualified according to the Goſpel for the receiving of his Promiſe. Hence Learn, that through our Intereſt in Chriſt, and for the Sake of his Meritorious Satisfaction, and prevailing Interceſſion, our Prayers are certainly heard by God, and we ſhall aſſuredly have what God has promis'd to give, and we are fit to receive: God indeed does not always, nay, not often, come with an Anſwer of Prayer at our Time, but he never ſtays a Moment beyond his own Time, Learn 2. That in all the Prayers we preſent and put up to God, a Special Eye and Regard muſt be had to the *Will* of God, if we expect to be heard and anſwer'd: *If we ask any Thing according to his Will he heareth us*; the Will of God is the Rule, not only of Things to be done by us, but alſo of thoſe Things which we crave of God to do for us; the *Will of God* under a Threefold Revelation is the Rule and Matter of Prayer. 1. The Will of God in his Commands; whatever God requir'd us to do, we may pray for Power that we may do. 2. The Will of God in his Promiſes; what God hath ſaid he will give, we may pray that we may receive. 3. The Will of God in Prophecies, what God hath foretold ſhall come to paſs, we may and ought to pray that it may come to paſs. The Prayer of Man gives Birth to the Prophecies of God, yea, and to the Promiſes of God too, *Ezek.* 36. 37. *I will be enquir'd of to do it for them.* Tho' God be a Sure Pay-maſter, yet he expects that we ſhould put his Bond in Suit before he pays. Learn 3. That a Prayer made according to God's Will ſhall certainly be granted according to our Will. *If we ask any Thing according to his Will he heareth us*; when we pray for any Thing in Obedience to God's Will, and with Submiſſion to his Will, *we know that we have the Petitions that we ask of him.*

16 If any man ſee his Brother ſin a ſin *which is* not unto death, he ſhall ask, and he ſhall give him life for them that ſin not unto death. There is a ſin unto death: I do not ſay that he ſhall pray for it. 17 All unrighteouſneſs is ſin: and there is a ſin not unto death.

Our Apoſtle informed us in the foregoing Verſe of the Comfort which Believers have in their Prayers for themſelves; all that is requeſted by them is granted by God. Now in the Verſe before us he relates the Benefit which others receive by their Prayers as well as themſelves, aſſuring them, that if any of them did pray for an offending Brother they ſhould be heard in what they deſired, unleſs the Perſon they pray'd for had ſinned the Unpardonable Sin, the *Sin unto Death*; by which we are to underſtand Apoſtacy from the Chriſtian Religion unto Idolatry, as appears from the following Words, *Keep your ſelves from Idols*; which Caution has no Manner of Dependance upon what went before, unleſs we underſtand the *Sin unto Death* in this Senſe, or if (with others) we call it *the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, it comes to the ſame; for what is that Sin but a Renouncing of Chriſtianity, Denying the Truth of the Chriſtian Faith, after Illumination and Conviction by the Holy Ghoſt, and maliciouſly Perſecuting the Sincere Profeſſors of it? Here *Note* 1. That a Believer is not to hide his Eyes from obſerving, but may and ought to take Notice of the Sins and Miſcarriages of his Brethren. *If a Man ſee his Brother ſin*, which he cannot do if he neglect to obſerve him. *Note* 2. That a Believer diſcerning and obſerving the Sin of his Brother, may and ought to pray for him. *Let him ask*; that is, importune God on his Behalf. *Note* 3. That a Believer's Prayers may prevail with God for us, when our own Prayers will not prevail for our ſelves. *Let him ask and he ſhall give him Life*; Temporal Life at leaſt, and upon his Repentance and Faith Eternal Life alſo. *Note* 4. That the State of ſome Wicked Men may be ſuch, that were it certainly known it might be a Chriſtian's Duty to ceaſe praying for them. *There is a Sin unto Death*; that is, which doth not only deſerve Death, as all Sin doth, and beſpeak a Perſon in a State of Death, but a Sin that argues a Perſon to be Twice dead, dead in reſpect of Unregeneracy, and dead in reſpect of Wilful and Sinful Apoſtacy. *I do not ſay that ye ſhall pray for it*; that is, for the Perſon guilty of it, ſeeing God never intends to forgive it. Lord! How deplorable is the Condition of thoſe whoſe Sins are paſt Prayers, who give over praying for themſelves, and others are ſtopp'd from praying for them? How ſad is it when the Lord ſhuts up the Hearts of any of his from praying for us? It ſhews the Sin of that Man *to be apprehended*, as being the Sin unto Death, when the Faithful ceaſe praying for him. Yet *Note* 5. The Apoſtle doth not here explicitely and ſimply forbid praying for ſuch wretched Perſons, but only ſays, *I do not ſay that ye ſhall pray for them*; that is, I cannot give you any Encouragement to pray for ſuch, nor dare I promiſe you any good Succeſs in praying for them who have ſinned unto Death. *I do not ſay*; that is, I give you no Warrant, I lay you under do Command, I can give you no Promiſe, that your Prayers for ſuch ſhall be heard and anſwer'd.

18 We know that whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

That is, we are well aſſured that Sincere Chriſtians, who are Begotten and Born of God, do not commit this Sin unto Death, namely, Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity to the Heathen Idolatry: *But he keepeth himſelf, and the Wicked One toucheth him not*; that is, he preſerveth himſelf from the Contagion of Idolatry, into which the Devil was ſo buſie to ſeduce a great Part of Mankind. It may be farther added, that *he that is Born of God*, ſo far as he is Partaker of the Divine Nature, *ſinneth not*; that is, ſuffers not any Sin to have Dominion over him, but takes Care to preſerve himſelf, through the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, from *Satan*'s Deadly Wound. *He toucheth him not*; that is, doth not touch him ſo as to leave an Impreſſion of his Deviliſh Spirit upon him. *Non tangit tactu qualitativo, vel tactu lethali & mortifero:* He ſhall not mortally touch them to make them ſin unto Death.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, ——

That is, do belong to the True God, and are Worſhippers of him; we are guided by his Spirit, we are obedient to his Laws, we pleaſe him on Earth, and do hope to enjoy him in Heaven.

19 —— And the whole world lyeth in wickedneſs.

That is, the far greater Part of the World are under the Dominion of that Wicked One, being ſunk into Idolatry, and become Worſhippers of the Devil, continuing in the midſt of their Impurity and Malignity, and wholly ſet upon Miſchief and Wickedneſs. See here the Darkneſs and Horror of an Unregenerate and Unconverted State; Perſons in it are under the Dominion of *Satan*, that Wicked One: But behold the Bleſſed Change that Chriſtianity makes; not in the Profeſſion, but in the Practice of it; it delivers from the Power of Darkneſs, and from the Power of *Satan*, the Prince of Darkneſs, and tranſlates us into the Kingdom of God's Dear Son.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep your ſelves from Idols. Amen.

As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, We Chriſtians are better taught by our Religion to acknowledge and worſhip the only true God by his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, our only Mediator, and therefore exhort you to keep from Idols; intimating hereby, that the Worſhipping of any other beſides this only True God, and by any other Mediator beſides *Jeſus Chriſt*, is Idolatry. Or the Words may be ſens'd thus; We are ſure that the Son of God is come; and that *Chriſt* is he, who by his Doctrine and Spirit hath enlighten'd us to know the True and Living God, whilſt the greateſt Part of the World worſhip Falſe Gods, yea, adore the Devil himſelf. And farther, *We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, we are by Faith implanted into *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the Author, Purchaſer, and Diſpoſer of Eternal Life, and therefore is True God. This Text, which proves undeniably the Divinity of *Chriſt*, the *Socinians* pervert by applying theſe Words, *This is the True God*; not to *Chriſt*, but to God the Father. But this makes the Apoſtle guilty of a Grand Tautology, by ſaying the True God is the True God. Beſides, it is here ſaid of the ſame Perſon that he is the True God, and Eternal Life. Now Eternal Life is Thrice in this very Chapter attributed to *Jeſus Chriſt* as the Author and Diſpencer of it, *v.* 11, 12, 13. If then *Chriſt* be meant by Eternal Life, he muſt be alſo meant by the True God, for they are ſpoken of together when the Apoſtle ſays, *This is the True God, and Eternal Life.* Laſtly, Our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with this Cautionary Direction, *Little Children, keep your ſelves from Idols*; as if he had ſaid, My Advice to you is as that of a Father to his own Children, having received by the Goſpel the Knowledge of the True God; keep your ſelves from Idols, or Falſe Gods of the Heathen, among whom ye live; abandon all Idolatry, Superſtition, ſacrificing to Idols, frequenting Idol-feaſts, and all Idolatrous Communion, theſe Things being inconſiſtent with the Worſhip of the True God, and Real Chriſtianity. *Little Children, keep your ſelves from Idols.* Amen.

THE

THE
Second Epiſtle General
OF
St. JOHN.

That St. John, *the Apoſtle and Diſciple of our Saviour, who wrote the Firſt, did alſo write the Second, Epiſtle, ſeems very evident from the Exact Agreement of ſeveral Paſſages in this with the former Epiſtle, even Word for Word; and accordingly it has been agreed that the ſame Perſon was the Author of both Epiſtles.*

But as touching the Perſons to whom it was wrote there have been different Opinions: Some think that it was a Church *whom he directs it to under the Title of the* Elect Lady; *and that ſome* Jewiſh *Church, and particularly the Church of* Jeruſalem, *the Mother of all, and from whence came forth the Word to all other Churches; the Reaſon upon which this Conjecture is grounded, is, becauſe the reſt of the Epiſtles, called* Catholick, *were written to the* Jews, *(excepting that to* Gaius,*) and therefore probably this was written to ſome* Jewiſh *Church; and becauſe all the* Jewiſh *Churches received their Spiritual Things from the Church of* Jeruſalem, *ſhe may therefore (ſay ſome) be fitly ſtiled the* Lady, *as ſhe was the* Mother *of all other Churches. Others conceive this Epiſtle to be wrote to a Particular Perſon, ſome Eminent and Religious Matron, great Eſtate, and a great Reliever and Supporter of the Members of the Church in her Days. Which Opinion of theſe Two has the greater Probability is a Matter of no great Importance: Let us rather attend the Subject Matter of this Divine Epiſtle, which ſpeaks thus.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth; 2 For the truths ſake which dwelleth in us, and ſhall be with us for ever: 3 Grace be with you, mercy *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon writing and directing this Epiſtle, St. *John*, ſtiling himſelf *The Elder*, partly with reſpect to his Age, he being, as it is thought, the only Perſon, at that Time living upon the Earth who bore the Name of an Apoſtle; and partly with reſpect to his Office in the Church, the Word *Elder* being a Name of Honour and Dignity; we find both St. *Peter* elſewhere, and St. *John* here, making uſe of it. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſon to whom the Epiſtle is directed, *The Elect Lady, and her Children*; either ſome Particular Church, with its Religious Members, according to ſome, or ſome Honourable Perſon of Eminent Piety and Uſefulneſs in the Church, according to others; *and to her Children*, who had been religiouſly Educated by her. *Obſerve* 3. The Solemn Profeſſion which he makes of the Sincerity of his Love to herſelf, and her Children, together with the Ground and Attractive Cauſe of that, his Cordial Affection to her and her's, *whom I love in the Truth, and for the Truth Sake*. Mark, St. *John* here loved the Lady for the Truth's Sake, but how many in our Days love the Truth for the Lady's Sake? I mean for Siniſter Ends, and By Reſpects. It is a Bleſſed Thing when Religion, and the Grace of God ſhining in the Lives of Chriſtians, is the Special Loadſtone of our Love and Affection towards them; *The Elder to the Elect Lady, whom I love in the Truth.* She had embraced the Truth of the Goſpel, and he was confidently perſwaded that ſhe would continue in the Profeſſion and Practice of it for ever. *Obſerve* 4. The Salutation ſent to her and her Children; namely, Encreaſe of Grace, and an Abundance of Mercy and Peace from God the Father, and *Chriſt* the Redeemer; earneſtly wiſhing that they may continue ſteadfaſt in the Profeſſion of the Truth, and in the Exerciſe of Love one to another, *Grace, Mercy and Peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in Truth and Love.*

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſon rejoicing, St. *John* the Apoſtle and Miniſter of *Chriſt Jeſus, I rejoice greatly.* 2. The Mercy rejoiced in, their *Walking in the Truth.* It was not their Speculative Knowledge of the Truth, and their taking upon them a bare Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, that he rejoiced in, but their *walking in the Truth*, and framing their Converſation according to the Commandment which they had receiv'd from the Father. Chriſtianity is not a Speculative Science, but a Practical Art of Holy Living; and the moſt Exalted Knowledge is inſufficient to Salvation without a Suitable and Correſpondent Practice; therefore ſays St. *John* here, *I rejoiced greatly* to find of thy Children, not barely *profeſſing of the Truth*, but *walking in the Truth.* *Obſerve* 3. The Perſons rejoiced for or in the Behalf of the Youth in that Church or Family, to which he now wrote, *I rejoice to find thy Children walking in the Truth*; the Hopes which the Holy Apoſtle had of a Succeſſion of Saints, and that the Children in his Time would walk in their Religious Parents Footſteps, was Matter of Singular Joy and Rejoicing to the Bleſſed Apoſtle. Yet *Obſerve* 4. With what Caution, Reſtriction, and Limitation, our Apoſtle ſpeaks, *I rejoiced greatly to find of thy Children*; that is, ſome of them, perhaps many of them, it is to be feared not *all* of them; to have ſeen all was no doubt the Apoſtle's Deſire, but to find any was queſtionleſs Matter of exceeding Joy, *I rejoiced greatly to find of thy Children walking in the Truth.* Learn hence, That there is no greater Joy to the Miniſters of *Chriſt* than to ſee the Youth, or Riſing Generation in their Day, walking in the Paths of Holineſs and Religion, and treading in their Religious Parents Footſteps.

5 And now, I beſeech thee, lady, not as tho' I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

Obſerve here the Duty required, together with the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, namely, to live in Unity and Peace, in Amity and Concord, one with another. This he calls a *Commandment*, in the Singular Number, to intimate, that in this One Commandment all the reſt are contain'd, and in keeping this we keep all: And he tells them it is no New Commandment, but an Old One, from the Beginning; it is Old as *Moſes*, yea, as Old as *Adam*, being a Part of the Law of Nature written in *Adam*'s Heart; yet in ſome Reſpects Love may be called a New Commandment, becauſe urged from New Motives, and enforced by a New Example; and becauſe it is never to wax Old, but to be always Freſh in the Memories, and Found in the Practice of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples to the End of the World: *I write no New Commandment, but what we had from the Beginning, that we love one another.*

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, By this we ſhall make it evidently appear that there is the True Love of God in us, if we endeavour to frame our Lives according to his Commandments; and this he aſſures them was the great Commandment, which they heard from the Beginning, when the Goſpel was firſt preached unto them, namely, that they ſhould believe in *Chriſt*, and love one another, and conſtantly perſevere in the Practice of theſe Duties. Learn hence, That as Obedience is the Natural Effect and Neceſſary Product of Love, ſo is it the beſt Evidence, the ſureſt Mark and Sign, of it, *This is the Love of God*; that is, the ſureſt Evidence that we love him, if we keep his Commandments. Learn 2. That it is not ſufficient that we profeſs Love to God and our Neighbour, but we muſt walk in Love, and be found in the Exerciſe, yea, in the perſevering Exerciſe, of that Grace and Duty. *This is the Commandment, that as ye heard from the Beginning ye ſhould walk in it.*

7 For many deceivers are entred into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chliſt is come in the fleſh. This is a deceiver, and an antichriſt.

Having exhorted them to Perſeverance in the Faith before, he ſubjoins a Reaſon for that Exhortation now, becauſe *many Deceivers are entred in the World*, &c. Many Impoſtors were gone forth abroad, who denied ſome the Divinity, others the Humanity, of *Chriſt*, and ſo razed the very Foundation of Chriſtianity, and thus diſcover'd themſelves to be Antichriſts, or Perſons that ſet themſelves to oppoſe *Jeſus Chriſt*. Learn hence, That even from the Beginning our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* has had thoſe who have diſowned his Natures, and denied his Offices, the Divinity of his Perſon, the Meritoriouſneſs of his Satisfaction, theſe are Antichriſt's, Perſons maliciouſly ſet againſt *Chriſt*; and they ſhall find him righteouſly ſet againſt them in the Day when they ſhall be ſummon'd by him ſolemnly to appear before him.

8 Look to your ſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Here our Apoſtle reſumes his Exhortation to them to Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel from this Argument, leſt they ſhould loſe the Fruit of their Faith profeſſed, the Profit of their Afflictions, which for the Sake of Chriſtianity they had ſuffer'd, and their Works of Piety and Charity which they have perform'd, but continuing faithful to the Death, might receive a full Reward, even a Crown of Life. Learn hence, That it is both lawful and needful, even for the beſt of Saints, in what they do in the Service of God, to have an Eye to the Promiſed Reward, by way of Encouragement to them in the Courſe of their Obedience. We may with *Moſes* have reſpect to the Recompence of Reward, but not only, or chiefly, yet as a Spur to provoke us to Duty. Perſeverance in Goodneſs has its Reward belonging to it; that Reward has a Fulneſs belonging to it; a Fulneſs of Compenſation, and a Fulneſs of Satisfaction, and that it is both lawful and laudable to have an Eye in our working to this full Recompence of Reward.

9 Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Obſerve here, 1. The Character given of the Goſpel, it is *the Doctrine of Chriſt*; that is, the Doctrine relating to *Chriſt*, and the Doctrine taught by *Chriſt*. *Obſerve* 2. What is affirm'd of thoſe that apoſtatize from, and abide not in, the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, *they have not God*; that is, ſay ſome, they have not God to be their Father, nor the Spirit to be their Guide and Sanctifier; they have, ſay others, no Knowledge of God, no Intereſt in God, no Influences of Grace and Holineſs derived from God. *Obſerve* 3. The Happy Condition of thoſe that abide in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, *they have both the Father and the Son*; he that has one, has both; and he that has not both, has neither; and this *having* may admit a Threefold Interpretation thus; he *has the Father and the Son* by Way of Abode and Inhabitation; he dwelleth in God, and God in him; they *have the Father and the Son* with them by Way of Society and Communion, *We will come unto them, and make our Abode with them.* Laſtly, They have the Father and the Son by the Way of Aſſiſtance and Approbation; they have God to aſſiſt them, to accept them, to reward them.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed. 11 For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle directs them how to carry themſelves towards thoſe Wicked Apoſtates, and Heretical Seducers, that deny the Goſpel, or any Eſſential Part of Chriſtianity, by no Means to give any Countenance or Encouragement to them, nor to hold any Familiarity or Communion with them, nor to Entertain them, nor ſo much as courteouſly to Salute them, but by ſhewing them Diſreſpect, manifeſt a Diſlike and Diſapproving of their Errors. This Form of Interdict, bid him not God Speed, ſeems to be an Imitation of the *Jewiſh* Practice towards Excommunicated Perſons, who were not only excluded from all Commerce, but alſo from all kind of Common Civilities, and Ordinary Salutation. Learn hence, That even Civil Courteſie, and Common Reſpect, is not, ought not, to be paid to thoſe that ſeduce others, or attempt to ſeduce us, from the Chriſtian Faith.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink; but I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face, that our joy may be full. 13 The children of thy elect Siſter greet thee. Amen.

Here our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with an Apology for the Brevity of it, declaring, that he hoped to come ſhortly to them, and ſee them. And tho' he had many Things to write, yet all Things were not fit to be written; but beſides, a Lively Voice affects more than a written Letter; and he hoped that they ſhould be filled with mutual Joy at the ſight of, and converſe with, each other. Preſence of Friends, and Familiar Converſe with each other, is preferrable to all writing to each other. By *the Children of the Elect Siſter*, ſome again underſtand the Members of another Church, who now ſent Salutations to them. The concluding Word, *Amen*, imports his Sincerity in what he had written to them, and his Hearty Wiſhes for the Happineſs and Welfare of them.

THE

THE
Third Epiſtle General
OF
S^{T}. JOHN.

CHAP. I.

1 THE elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Obſerve here, 1. The Penman and Writer of this Epiſtle, St. *John*, who wrote the Two former, as appears by the Agreement of them in Words and Phraſes which are peculiar to this Apoſtle; he ſtiles himſelf not an Apoſtle, (though he was ſo,) but an *Elder*; that Word being a Name of Honour and Dignity belonging to the Chief of their Tribes agrees very well with the Office of the Apoſtles, ſet over the Twelve Tribes to the Houſe of *Iſrael*. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſon to whom this Epiſtle is directed to, *Gaius*; we find Three Perſons of this Name in the New Teſtament, to wit, *Gaius* of *Macedonia*, Acts 19. *Gaius* of *Derbe*, Acts 20. and *Gaius* of *Corinth*, Rom. 16. whom St. *Paul* calls his Hoſt, and of the whole Church; who being Eminent for his Hoſpitality, eſpecially to the Miniſters who went out to Preach the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, taking nothing of them; this Man ſeems to be the Perſon who had the Honour of an Epiſtle ſent to him from the Pen of an Eminent Apoſtle: Such as do excel in their Kindneſs to the faithful Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, have oft-times in this Life ſome ſpecial Marks of Honour and Reſpects put upon them by God, as a Token of his Gracious Acceptance of them. *Obſerve* 3. The Intereſt which *Gaius* had in St. *John*'s Affections, he ſtilles him *the Well-beloved Gaius*, and ſhews alſo what was the Motive and Attractive of that his Love, namely, *the Truth*; that is, the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, called eminently *the Truth*; he loved *Gaius* in the Truth, that is, in great Sincerity, and for the Truth, for his ſincere profeſſing and practiſing the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *The Elder unto the Well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the Truth:* Such as love the Truth, are, and ought to be, the ſpecial Objects of our Love.

2 Beloved, I wiſh above all things that thou mayeſt proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.

Obſerve here, 1. This holy Man *Gaius*, who was ſo Hoſpitable an Hoſt to the Miniſters and Members of *Chriſt*, had but a weak and ſickly Body, he wanted Health; ſtrength of Grace, and dearneſs of Reſpect, even from God himſelf, cannot prevail againſt Diſeaſes; ſuch as are moſt holy, are ſometimes moſt weak and ſickly. *Obſerve* 2. That though *Gaius* had but a weak and conſumptive Body, yet had he a very thriving and vigorous Soul; it is a very common, yet a very ſad and true Obſervation, that Men of ſtrong, healthy and active Bodies, have weak, lame, ſickly and ſinful Souls. Ah wretched Sinner! When under Obligations to ſerve thy God beſt, thou forgetteſt him moſt, and proſtitutes thy Health to the Service of thy Luſts; how does the Health and Eaſe of One Day deſerve the Service and Thankfulneſs of thy whole Life? But alas! Inſtead of that thou makeſt him to ſerve with thy Sins, and layeſt the Firſt-fruits of thy Time and Strength upon the Devil's Altar. *Obſerve* 3. Our Apoſtle's Wiſh on the behalf of that *Gaius*, namely, that his Body were as Healthful as his Soul was Holy; that he had as much Health in the one, as he had Grace in the other: *I wiſh above all Things that thou mayeſt Proſper and be in Health, even as thy Soul proſpereth.* Behold here ſuch an improved and well-grown Chriſtian was this holy Man *Gaius*, that our Apoſtle makes the proſperous State of his Soul the Meaſure of all that Proſperity which the one could wiſh, or the other deſire; as thy Soul proſpereth, ſo may thy bodily Health, for the Service of God, and of thy Soul.

3. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Obſerve here, 1. The commendable Teſtimony which the Brethren that came from *Gaius* gave to St. *John* concerning his holy and unblamable Converſation, according to the Direction of the Goſpel; *The Brethren teſtified of thee, that thou walkeſt in the Truth*; good Reports of our Brethren, without detracting any thing from their Worth, is a manifeſt Duty. *Obſerve* 2. With what Joy and Rejoicing St. *John* received the Notices of *Gaius*'s Adherence to the Truth, and of his anſwerable Walking thereunto: *I rejoiced when the Brethren came and teſtified of thee*; he did not envy the Grace of God ſo largely conferred on *Gaius*, but rejoiced in it, and no doubt bleſt God exceedingly for it: Soul Mercies are the greateſt Mercies, and Matters of the greateſt Joy to gracious Souls. *Obſerve* 3. That additional Joy which St. *John* expreſſes, to hear that *his Children*, that is, thoſe Perſons whom he had converted to Chriſtianity, and begotten to *Chriſt* through the Goſpel, did *walk in the Truth*; that is, in the ſincere Practice, as well as in the outward Profeſſion of Religion; *I have no greater Joy than to hear that my Children walk in Truth*; the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* rejoice more in the Welfare of their Peoples Souls, than in all their worldly Wealth or Honour.

5 Beloved, thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers; 6 Which have born witneſs of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly ſort, thou ſhalt do well: 7 Becauſe that for his names ſake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive ſuch that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

Obſerve here how our Apoſtle at once commends the great Charity of *Gaius*, and at the ſame time excites him to the farther Practice of it. Where *Note*, 1. How Charity towards Chriſtians is here ſtiled Fidelity to *Chriſt*, becauſe ſhewn to them upon *Chriſt*'s Account, *Beloved, thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the Brethren*--- Acts of Charity are Acts of Righteouſneſs and Fidelity; he that is Uncharitable is Unjuſt. *Note* 2. The extenſive Nature of *Gaius*'s

Charity, it was to *Brethren*; yet not only to *Brethren*, but to *Strangers*; that is, not only to the Brethren of the Church with him, but to Strangers in their Travels to and fro, as they came near him; more particularly to ſuch faithful Miniſters as came out of Foreign Parts to preach the Goſpel, whom *Gaius* had Hoſpitably and Charitably entertained. *Note* 3. How he exhorts *Gaius* farther to furniſh and help theſe Miniſters in their Travels with all Things neceſſary for their Journey, becauſe, 1. They preached the Goſpel freely, taking nothing of the *Gentile* Chriſtians for their Pains. 2. Becauſe it was for *Chriſt*'s Name-ſake they went abroad to preach the Goſpel ſay ſome, to avoid Perſecution ſay others. 3. Becauſe to entertain ſuch is to farther as much as in us lyes the Propagation of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; ſuch as contribute towards the Maintenance and Support of the Miniſters of *Chriſt* for his Sake, ſhall have the preſent Comfort and future Reward, of co-operating and contributing their Parts towards the propagating and ſpreading of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

9 I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating againſt us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and caſteth *them* out of the church.

Obſerve here, 1. The Pious Care which St. *John* took for the Relief and Succour of ſuch faithful Chriſtians as now travell'd amongſt them, both to avoid Perſecution, and to preach the Goſpel; he wrote to the Church on their behalf, deſiring their Reception, and adviſing their Relief: *I wrote to the Church*; that is, I wrote for them, and ſent my Teſtimonial to the Church on their behalf; every One has a Pen to plead for himſelf; happy he that has both Tongue and Pen to intercede for others. *Obſerve* 2. The Oppoſition which St. *John* met with in ſo good a Work; *Diotrephes*, a proud Man, *regarded* not his Letters, *acknowledged* not his Authority, yea, *ſlighted* the Apoſtle, *prating* againſt him with *malicious* Words; the holieſt Men may meet with Oppoſition in the holieſt and beſt of Actions, wherein the Glory of God and the Publick Good are moſt concerned, *I wrote to the Church, but* Diotrephes *received us not*. *Obſerve* 3. The holy Apoſtle's Reſentment of this Indignity, and his wiſe Reſolution thereupon; *when I come I will remember his Deeds*; that is, I will ſharply rebuke him, and uſe that Severity towards him which his Crime deſerves, according to the Authority which God has given me. Learn hence, that though private Offences againſt *Chriſt*'s Miniſters muſt be forgiven and forgotten by them, yet when an Offence is prejudicial to the Church it muſt be oppoſed, and openly cenſured.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not ſeen God.

Here St. *John* adviſes his Beloved *Gaius*, and thoſe with him, not to imitate and follow this evil Example of *Diotrephes*, (who not only refuſed Charity towards the Chriſtian *Jews*, that wanted it himſelf, but would not permit the *Gentile* Chriſtians to receive them, or relieve them,) but to follow the Example of God, who is good to all; and accordingly he that is merciful is Born of God, but he that is malicious, hath no true Knowledge of God, but is a meer Stranger to him: Behold here the Eulogy and high Commendation which the Spirit of God gives to a Charitable and Good Man; *He that doth good is of God*; he is Ally'd to Heaven, Born of God, and his Off-ſpring; but the Uncharitable Evil Man is a Compoſition of Spite, Envy and Malice, Born from beneath, and the Devil's Off-ſpring.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf: yea, and we *alſo* bear record, and ye know that our record is true.

Having propounded the Example of God in the former Verſe, he propounds in this the Example of *Demetrius* as a Pattern to them for their Imitation in Works of Piety and Charity; not only common Report, and the Apoſtle's Teſtimony, but his own good Works, did juſtly recommend him as an extraordinary Pattern to their Imitation. *Note*, That the Commendations which our own good Works do give us before the World are more valuable than all the Praiſes and Applauſe which can be given us by Men, yea, by the Beſt of Men; *Demetrius has a good Report of all Men, yea, of the Truth itſelf*.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee, and we ſhall ſpeak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. Our friends ſalute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Thus our Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with an Apology for the Brevity of it, hoping in a ſhort Time to ſee him, and to ſpeak Face to Face unto him: He concludes with his Apoſtolical Valediction, *Peace be to thee*; unto which adding the Brethren's Salutations, it teaches us, that kind Remembrances and Greetings are ſuitable to Chriſtian Friendſhip; *Our Friends ſalute thee, greet the Friends by name.*

THE
General Epiſtle
OF
St. JUDE.

The Deſign and Scope of this Epiſtle appears to be much the ſame with that of the Second of St. Peter, *and was written probably about the ſame Time; the Intent of both is this, namely, to fortifie the Chriſtian Jews againſt the Error and Corruptions of thoſe Seducers, who by their wicked Lives, and worſe Doctrines, attempted to ſeduce Perſons from the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, and to bring upon them the ſame Condemnation and Judgment with themſelves.*

CHAP. I.

1 **JUde the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and brother of James, to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt,** ***and*** **called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.**

Here we have obſervable the Perſon ſaluting, the Perſons ſaluted, and the Salutation itſelf. *Obſerve* 1. The Perſon ſaluting deſcribed Three Ways. 1. By his Name *Jude*, called *Thaddeus* and *Lebbeus*, to diſtinguiſh him from *Judas Iſcariot*; behold an holy Apoſtle, and a perfidious Traitor, bearing the ſame Name, *Judas* an Apoſtle, and *Judas* an Apoſtate; 'tis not an holy Name, but an holy Nature, that commends us unto God. 2. By his Office, *a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*; he might have ſtiled himſelf a near Kinſman of Jeſus Chriſt, or a Brother of the Lord; but he mentions not his natural, but his ſpiritual, Relation to Chriſt; Alliance in Faith, or a ſpiritual Relation to Chriſt, is much dearer and nearer than Alliance in Fleſh; there is a peculiar Honour and Excellency in the Title of Chriſt's Servant above that of Chriſt's Kinſman. 3. By his Kindred and Alliance, *Brother of James*, this is added to diſtinguiſh him from *Judas Iſcariot*; it is the Duty of the Servants, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt, to prevent all ſcandalous Exceptions againſt their Perſons, and to be of untainted Reputations: Jude, *the Servant of Chriſt, and Brother of* James. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſons ſaluted, theſe alſo are Three Ways deſcribed. 1. They *are ſanctified by God the Father*; the Apoſtle judges of them by their Profeſſion, and by their Obligation; they had, by aſſuming the Chriſtian Name, obliged themſelves to be Saints, or holy Perſons, and by their Profeſſion did own and declare themſelves ſo to be; and no doubt many of them were inwardly Sanctified, as well as outwardly Holy. 2. *They are preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, in the Faith of Chriſt Jeſus, when many for fear of Perſecution have apoſtatized from it; he that will approve himſelf a true Chriſtian, muſt ſhew himſelf a ſteadfaſt Chriſtian; Inſtability is an Argument of Inſincerity; again, preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, preſerved in a State of Grace and Holineſs by Chriſt Jeſus, by the Merit of his Death and Paſſion, by the Prevalency of his Interceſſion, and by the Holy Spirit's Efficacy and Operation. 3. *They are called* all of them *externally* by the Miniſtry of the Word, *internally*, many of them, by the effectual Operation of the Spirit, renewing the Nature, and reforming the Life, theſe are the Perſons ſaluted, *Them that are ſanctified by God the Father, preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus, and called. Obſerve* 3. The Salutation itſelf, *Mercy*, *Peace*, and *Love*, be multiplied unto you; Mercy from God, the Father of Mercies; Peace from Jeſus Chriſt, who is our Peace; and Love from the Holy Ghoſt, by whom it is ſhed abroad in our Hearts; and his praying that theſe Graces may not barely be given and granted, but be multiplied and encreaſed, intimates to us our Duty, which is, not barely to ſeek Grace at the Hands of God, but the Multiplication and Augmentation of it; to labour after Grace in Growth, as well as Grace in Truth; *Mercy, Peace and Love, be multiplied*; thankful we may and ought to be for the leaſt Meaſures of Grace received, but not ſatisfied with the greateſt Meaſures, ſhort of our heavenly Perfection; he was never truly Good that does not deſire daily to grow better.

3 **Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common ſalvation: it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.**

Obſerve here, 1. A Courteous and Loving Compellation, *Beloved*; People ſhould ſtudy to render themſelves fit Objects of their Paſtor's Love. *Obſerve* 2. How his Love towards them put him upon writing to them with all Diligence; Love muſt be the Spring and Fountain of all our Miniſterial Performances; all Service without Love are as Sacrifices without Fire. Chriſt firſt inquired after *Peter*'s Love before he urged him to Labour; God will reward no Services to our People but what have been done in Love. *Obſerve* 3. The Excellency and Weightineſs of the Subject about which he was to write, it was concerning the *common Salvation* ſo called; not as if it were a Salvation common to all Perſons, good and bad; but becauſe common to all Believers who have a joint Title to it, and a common Intereſt in it; the Salvation which the Goſpel reveals it is a common Salvation; 'tis common in regard of the Purchaſer of it, *Chriſt* our common Saviour; in regard of the Price paid for it, the Precious *Blood* of Chriſt; in regard of the Way and Means by which it is obtained and ſecured, and that is *Faith*; and in regard of the Earneſt of it, and Longings after it, the Holy Spirit of God is common to all Believers, and gives them a Pledge and Earneſt of, and ſets them a Breathing after and Longing for this Salvation. *Obſerve* 4. The Exhortation itſelf, *Earneſtly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*; that is, for the ſincere Doctrine of the Goſpel delivered by Chriſt; *once delivered*; that is, once for all, ſo as never to be changed or altered more, no New Rule of Faith is evermore to be expected; and therefore the New Articles of Faith, added to the Apoſtles Creed by the Council of *Trent*, can be no Articles of Chriſtian Faith, becauſe never delivered by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, and never known to many Chriſtians long after their Deceaſe. Learn, That it is the Duty of Chriſtians at all Times, but eſpecially in Times of Error and Seduction, to contend earneſtly for that pure and uncorrupted Faith which is contained in the Goſpel.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Here we have a Reaſon of the foregoing Exhortation aſſigned, why we ſhould contend ſo earneſtly for the Chriſtian Faith once delivered by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, becauſe there were crept in by little and little ſuch Seducers into the Church as would endeavour to Adulterate and Corrupt it; *There are certain Men crept in unawares.* *Note* here, That Corrupters and Corruptions creep ſecretly and gradually into the Church; and Hereticks do not broach all their Errors and falſe Doctrines at once; vain then and frivolous is the Queſtion which the Church of *Rome* asks us, *when* did their Innovations and falſe Doctrines come firſt into the Church? They crept in, and that unawares; it is enough for us that we find them there though we aſſign not the time when, nor the manner how, they did come in. *Obſerve next*, The Character and Deſcription which our Apoſtle gives of theſe Seducers crept in amongſt them. (1.) He tells us they were Men fore-ordained to Condemnation, mark, not fore-ordained to Seduction to Sin, but to Condemnation for Sin; the Word rendred *fore-ordained* ſignifies before-written, or before-propheſied of, by *Enoch* and others, that they would by their great Sins and Impieties fall into that Condemnation which God hath ordained as a juſt Reward to their Tranſgreſſions; God never ordaineth or decreeth any Man's Sin, but he decreeth and foretelleth their Condemnation for Sin. (2.) He ſtiles them *Wicked, Ungodly, Men, turning the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs*; pointing at the *Nicolaitans*, *Gnoſticks*, and other Impure Hereticks, that ſprang from *Simon Magus*, who made the Doctrine of the Free Grace of God diſcovered in the Goſpel a Cloak for their Looſneſs and Laſciviouſneſs: Errors in Doctrine are uſually accompanied with Corruption in Manners, as being moſt ſuitable to Corrupt Man's Vile Nature; and will be ſure never to want Followers. (3.) He charges them with *denying* the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: That is, Jeſus Chriſt our only Maſter, God and Lord, called by St. *Peter*, *the Lord that bought them*; leſſening the Dignity of his Perſon, and invalidating what they could the Merit of his Death and Sufferings. *Learn* hence, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt, the Maſter of the World, and Lord of his Church, is truly God; he is called the Great God, and the Mighty God to ſhew that he is not a God inferior to, but equal with the Father, and that by Nature, not by Office. *Learn* (2.) That 'tis an horrid Impiety to deny our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; to deny him in either of his Natures, or in any of his Offices; to deny him either in Opinion, or in Practice, is a Sin that carries a Prodigious Appearance with it: *They denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the Land of Egypt, afterward deſtroyed them that believed not.

In this and the following Verſes, our Apoſtle, to deter them from following the pernicious Ways of theſe Seducers, ſets before them the ſeveral Examples of God's Judgments inflicted in former Times upon Perſons guilty of ſuch Crimes as theſe Seducers were ſtigmatiz'd for, and guilty of; he begins with the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, as they periſhed through Unbelief, after they were brought out of *Egypt*, ſo ſhall Revolters periſh, notwithſtanding their Baptiſm, and fair Beginnings. *Learn* hence, (1.) That God's Judgments inflicted on ſome are, and ought to be, Warnings unto all. (2.) That God's Ancient Judgments were ordained to be our Warnings and Examples; his Holineſs is the ſame as ever, his Juſtice the ſame, his Hatred of Sin the ſame, and his Power to Revenge it the ſame as ever; his Judgments now may be more Spiritual, but they are not leſs Terrible. *Learn* (3.) That unbelief will as certainly bring Deſtruction upon Chriſtians now, as it did upon the *Iſraelites* of Old; Did God deſtroy them that believed not his Power then? No leſs will he deſtroy them that believe not his Promiſe now.

6 And the Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day.

The next Example ſet before them is that of the Apoſtate Angels, who for their Rebellion againſt God were thrown down from Heaven, and are reſerved as ſo many Priſoners in Chains of Darkneſs to the Judgment of the great Day, when their Condition will be more miſerable than now it is. Now if God did not ſpare Apoſtatizing Angels, ſurely he will not ſpare Apoſtatizing Seducers. *Note* here, (1.) The Sin of the Angels; they left their Firſt State, namely, their State of Holineſs. (2.) Their Puniſhment; they left their own Habitation, they departed from that Place of Happineſs and Glory which before they enjoy'd; when they chang'd their Nature, they changed their Place; the Preſence of an Holy God is no Place for Unholy Perſons. *Note* (3.) That the Angels are kept in Chains, and thoſe Chains are everlaſting; the Chain of God's Eternal Decree holds them; the Chain of their own Guilt holds them; the Chain of utter Deſpair eternally holds them. *Note* (4.) That the Day of Judgment will be a great Day, and at that Day the Puniſhment of fallen Angels will be far greater than now it is: When Heaven's Joys are full, then Hell's Torments will be full, but not before.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner giving themſelves over to Fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Another Example of God's Severity againſt Sin and Sinners is *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, *Adma* and *Zeboin*, who giving themſelves up to the Luſts of Uncleanneſs, were in an Extraordinary Manner deſtroy'd by Fire from Heaven, which was a Forerunner of that Eternal Fire of Hell which they are to ſuffer to all Eternity, and ſo may and ought to be a Terrifying Example, and Timely Warning, to all Perſons that they fall not into the like Sins. *Learn*, That the Sin of Uncleanneſs doth exceedingly diſpleaſe and provoke God to puniſh above other Sins, becauſe it defiles both Soul and Body; it makes a Stye of a Temple; and becauſe it is a Sin uſually accompanied with Final Impenitency; none that go unto her return; that is, very few: Whoredom is a Deep Ditch, the Abhorr'd of God do fall into it. *Learn* (2.) That the Sin of Uncleanneſs is remarkably follow'd with Vengeance, even with Eternal Vengeance; God returns Flames for Flames, and revenges the Fire of Luſt with the Fire of Hell.

8 Likewiſe alſo theſe filthy dreamers defile the fleſh, deſpiſe dominion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities.

As if our Apoſtle had ſaid, Notwithſtanding theſe forementioned Examples of God's Vengeance upon the Unclean *Sodomites* and others, yet theſe Heretical Seducers, whom he calls Dreamers, becauſe they vented their own Dreams and Phantaſies inſtead of God's Truth, did defile themſelves with their Filthy Practices, teaching that by their Chriſtian Liberty they were freed from all Civil Subjection, ſpeaking Evil of thoſe that were ſet in Authority over them. Here *Obſerve*, (1.) That the Doctrines which Seducers bring are not the Truths of Chriſt, but their own Dreams. Dreams they are in Point of Opinion, and Dreams they will be found in Point of Expectation; they promiſe much, but perform nothing. (2.) That Dreams of Error, or Heretical Principles, do diſpoſe towards Filthy and Unclean Practices. *Filthy Dreamers defile Fleſh.* Avoid Error in Judgment if you would eſcape Filthineſs in Converſation. (3.) That Luſt loves not Reſtraint, Libertines deſpiſe Dominion, Senſuality makes Men unruly; ſuch are Sons of *Belial*, they caſt off the Yoke. (4.) That ſuch as deſpiſe Government, ſpeak evil of Governours, Dignities lye open to the Laſh of the Tongue; neither Power nor Innocency can protect from Calumny and Imputations, from Slander, and Falſe Accuſation. *Theſe Filthy Dreamers deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities.*

9 Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil, he diſputed about the Body of Moſes, durſt not bring againſt him a railing accuſation, but ſaid, The Lord rebuke thee.

Our Apoſtle in the preceding Verſe having charged Seducers with Contemptuous Speaking againſt Governours and Government, in this Verſe he aggravates the Impudence and Impiety of it, by the Carriage of *Michael* the Archangel towards the Devil. The Argument is taken from the greater to the leſs, and lyes thus: If *Michael*, an Archangel, ſo Excellent in Nature, ſo High in Office, contending with Satan, an Impure Spirit, yet uſed great Modeſty, without the leaſt Indecency of Expreſſion towards him, who and what are theſe that deſpiſe Dominions, and dare ſpeak evil of Dignities. Hence *Obſerve*, That it is our Duty to learn this Angelical Leſſon; namely, not to give railing or reviling Language to the worſt Adverſary in the beſt Cauſe, becauſe it proceeds from Pride or Paſſion, and becauſe ſo contrary to the Temper and Deſign of Chriſtianity; much more is it our Duty to watch againſt the Sins of the Tongue, with reſpect to our Governours and Superiours, remembring it is written, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the Rulers of thy People.*

10 But theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.

A double Crime is here charged upon theſe Seducers by our Apoſtle; namely, Pride, in ſpeaking evil of Things they know not; and Wickedneſs, in abuſing the Knowledge they had. (1.) Their Sin was great, in ſpeaking evil of what they did not know, (they reviled Dignities and Magiſtrates, the Uſefulneſs of whom they knew not,) and poſſibly condemned the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Faith, which they underſtood, notwithſtanding they called themſelves *Gnoſticks*, and pretended to higher Degrees and larger Meaſures of Knowledge than other Men. *Learn* hence, That Truth is uſually ſlandered by Ignorant and Conceited Men; becauſe Men do not underſtand the Things of God, therefore they do condemn them. (2.) Their Wickedneſs was great, in abuſing the Knowledge that they had, and in acting contrary to it. What they knew Naturally, or by the Light of Nature, to be ſinful, in thoſe Things, as Brute Beaſts, did they corrupt and defile themſelves. Here *Note*, (1.) That where Sin reigneth it turneth Man into a Brute Beaſt, *Pſal.* 49. 12. Hence they are compared to Dogs for Filthineſs, to Swine for Uncleanneſs, to Wolves for Cruelty; of the Two, it is worſe to be like a Beaſt, than to be a Beaſt; the Beaſt is what God has made it, but he that is like a Beaſt is what Sin and the Devil has made him. (2.) That 'tis a Sign of a Man turned Beaſt to follow the Luſts and Paſſions of corrupt Nature. *Like Brute Beaſts they corrupt themſelves.* 'Tis juſt with God to leave them to be led by Senſe, who will not be guided by Grace, and to ſuffer them to fall into the Ditch of Beaſtly Senſuality, who forget that they are Men.

11 Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and periſhed in the gainſaying of Core.

Our Apoſtle goes on in charging theſe Seducers with ſeveral Crimes; particularly with the Malice and Envy of *Cain*, with the ſordid Covetouſneſs of *Balaam*, with the Sedition and Gainſaying of *Core*; they hate their Brethren, and ſo are Murtherers like *Cain*; they have adulterated the Truth for baſe Gain, and ſo have followed the Example of *Balaam*, *who loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*. And as *Core*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, roſe up againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, ſo have they ſeditiouſly oppoſed both Magiſtracy and Miniſtry. *Learn* hence, (1.) That the Practice of wicked Men now, and from the beginning, is ſtill the ſame. (2.) That Satan entices his Slaves to divers Sins, to the Malice of *Cain*, to the Covetouſneſs of *Balaam*, to the Sedition of *Core*. (3.) That ſuch as Sin now may read their Deſtruction in the Deſtruction of thoſe that ſinned before them, *Wo unto them, they have gone in the Way of* Cain, *and periſhed*, &c.

12 Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear: Clouds *they are* without water, carried about of wind; trees whoſe fruits withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots: 13 Raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandring ſtars, to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

Our Apoſtle having ſet forth theſe Seducers in the foregoing Verſes by ſundry Examples, he now comes to ſet them forth by ſeveral Similitudes and Reſemblances. (1.) He calls them Spots in their Love-feaſts, (the Infamy of their Lives being a Blemiſh and Scandal to their Chriſtian Aſſemblies,) feeding without fear of offending either God or Man. (2.) He calls them Clouds without Water, promiſing Rain, but yielding none; making a ſhew of Knowledge, but indeed having none, and therefore are driven (as Clouds by the Wind) from one Vanity to another. (3.) Trees they are, but like them in *Autumn*, which have neither Leaves nor Fruit; nay, Trees twice dead in Sin before Converſion, and in reſpect of their Apoſtacy after their Converſion, and ſo ſhall be plucked up by the Roots. (4.) They are like raging Waves of the Sea, turbulent and tumultuous, foaming out at their Mouths the Filthineſs and Impurity that boiled in their Hearts. (5.) Wandring Stars, or Teachers unſtable, departing from the true Faith once delivered to them; but for theſe illuminated and knowing Teachers is *Reſerved the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever.*

14 And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his Saints. 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *ſpeeches*, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him.

The Apoſtle having deſcribed the Sin of theſe Seducers in the former Verſes, declares the Certainty of their Deſtruction in the Verſes now before us; aſſuring us, that *Enoch* of old, by a Spirit of Prophecy, did foretel the Sins of ſuch Perſons, and their Condemnation alſo at the General Judgment, when Chriſt ſhall come Glorioufly attended to execute Judgment upon the ungodly in general, and on ſuch as ſpeak contumeliouſly of him and his in particular. Here *Note*, (1.) That the Doctrine of the Day of Judgment is very ancient, foretold by the Prophets from the beginning. Man was made an accountable Creature, capable of rendring an Account of his Actions, and the Sentence of Death denounced in Paradice againſt him for his Sin did neceſſarily imply it; the drowning of the World, and burning of *Sodom*, were both Types and Forerunners of it: Though there are Atheiſts upon Earth that do not believe a future Judgment to come, there are none in Hell; Feeling and Experience muſt teach ſome Men that which the Spirit, Scripture, Reaſon and Conſcience, could never learn them. *Enoch propheſied, ſaying, Behold the Lord cometh.* *Note* (2.) How *Enoch* here prefixeth a Note of Incitement to his Prophecy, *Behold the Lord cometh to Judgment*; implying, that great is our natural Backwardneſs to believe and mind the coming of Chriſt to Judgment; and intimating, that we ſhould always realize the Day of the Lord to our ſelves, and repreſent it to our Thoughts, as certain, and near at hand. *Note* (3.) How Royally attended Chriſt will come to Judgment; *Behold he cometh with Ten Thouſand of his Saints.* Chriſt will be attended only with Holy Ones at the laſt Day; ſuch as meet him now in Purity, ſhall meet him then in Peace. How chearfully then may Saints think of the laſt Judgment, and obſerve the Number of his Attendants? Not a few Saints, but Ten Thouſand of them, *Revel.* 5. 11. They are called a Number which no Man can Number. This is a Comfort againſt the Paucity and ſmall Number of thoſe that are now upright with God; in Heaven we ſhall have Company enough; God's Family, when it comes together, will be very Numerous, or rather Innumerable. *Heb.* 12. 23. *Obſerve* (4.) The Work of Chriſt at the Day of Judgment; namely, to *convince and judge*. Conſcience ſhall then have an exact View of all that Sinners did and ſaid: Sin will find them out, and teſtifie againſt them at Chriſt's Tribunal, and when Conſcience has convinced, Chriſt will condemn, and whom he has condemned he will execute. *Obſerve* (5.) The Perſons whom Chriſt will convince and judge, *the Ungodly*. The Proceſs of the laſt Day lyes chiefly, though not only, againſt the Ungodly, theſe ſhall ſtand not in the Judgment, becauſe Ungodlineſs doth chiefly provoke; not but that Unrighteouſneſs will then be condemned alſo, *Rom.* 1. 18. And Sinners ſent to Hell for neglecting the Duties of the Second Table no leſs than the Firſt. *Obſerve* (6.) That not only the Deeds of Ungodly Men, but their Words, eſpecially their *hard Speeches* againſt God and his Children, ſhall be brought into Judgment. A wicked Tongue is a rugged Tongue; it ſpeaks Words ſharper than Swords; pray we for Wiſdom to make as good an uſe of the reproaching Tongue of an Enemy, as of the reproving Tongue of a Friend, that the Sword of the Tongue may let out the Corruption that is in our Hearts, and do us good againſt the Will, and contrary to the Intention, of our Enemy.

16 Theſe are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own luſts; and their mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling *words*, having mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage.

Our Apoſtle having aſſerted in the former Verſe that *Chriſt* will at the Great Day convince and judge all the ungodly, in this Verſe he declares that theſe Seducers were of the number of the ungodly, whom *Chriſt* will certainly judge, becauſe they were *Murmurers*, *Complainers*, diſcontented with, and always complaining of their Lot, and preſent Condition; becauſe they had not as much as they deſired they murmured againſt God, as if they had nothing; *walking after their own Luſts*, contrary to the Reſtraint of Nature, and the Laws of God; *their Mouth ſpeaking great ſwelling Words.* It has been the conſtant Courſe of Hereticks to ſpeak high, and talk big, like Mountebanks, hoping thereby to ſet off, and put off the better their counterfeited and falſe Wares; but he is no Wiſe Man whom great ſwelling Words will ſeduce from the Ways of Wiſdom. Not the Words of the Speaker, but the Weight of what is ſpoken, is to be minded; yet though they talk'd theſe ſwellings Words to their Inferiors, at the ſame time they could flatteringly admire the Perſons and Actions of others, from whom they expected any Benefit or Advantage; *Having Mens Perſons in Admiration, becauſe of Advantage.* Now from the whole of this large Character which St. *Jude* here gives of theſe heretical Seducers, and falſe Teachers, we Learn, That miſerable and moſt deplorable is the Condition of the miſled Followers of ſeducing Teachers; the Seducer follows his Luſts, and the Follower is led by the Seducer. Here the Blind lead the Blind, God pity them both. When Teachers offer themſelves to us we ſhould conſider who leads them, who are ſo officious to lead us, and follow them only as they follow *Chriſt*; no Wiſe Man will ſet his Watch by the Clock, but by the Sun.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 18 *How* that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts. 19 Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the Spirit.

Having largely deſcribed thoſe Seducers, our Apoſtle now comes to exhort thoſe to whom he wrote to *beware* of them, aſſuring them that the Apoſtles of *Chriſt*, St. *Paul*, and particularly St. *Peter*, had expreſly foretold of their wicked Scoffers which ſhould ariſe in the Church in the laſt Times; which Mockers and Scoffers he ſhews were ſuch as without any juſt Cauſe ſeparated themſelves from the Church's Communion, pretending greatly to Sanctity, but addicted to Senſuality, and deſtitute of the Holy Spirit. *Note* here, 1. That the Scripture ſpeaks much of the Sin and Sinners that ſhall be found in the latter Times; we ought not therefore to be troubled at what is foretold, nor be unarm'd when we are ſo often forewarn'd. It is a ſhame for them who have oft heard and known the Doctrines of the Apoſtle to be ſurprized by Seducers. St. *Jude* expects that theſe Chriſtians, who know what the Apoſtles had delivered, ſhould vigorouſly oppoſe all Seducers and Seduction. Learn 2. That a cauſleſs Separation from a Church, of which we are Members, is culpable and ſinful; a Separation from Corruptions, and a Separation from them that are corrupt, are Two diſtinct Things; the former is always a Duty, the latter not ſo. Learn 3. That thoſe that ſeparate from the Aſſemblies of the Faithful are uſually *Senſual, and have not the Spirit*; they have not the Spirit either to guide them, or to quicken them, or to comfort them. *Theſe are they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, having not the Spirit.*

20 But ye, beloved, building up your ſelves on your moſt holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt. 21 Keep your ſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

Our Apoſtle having in the former Part of the Chapter warned the Chriſtians of the Danger of Seducers, he cloſes his Epiſtle with Directions and Advice how they may be preſerved from Seduction, and what Means they ſhould uſe for their Perſeverance and Eſtabliſhment in the Doctrine of *Chriſt.* *Firſt*, He directs them to *build up themſelves in their moſt holy Faith*; that is, in the Doctrine of Faith contained in the Goſpel. Where *Note*, 1 That the Faith of Chriſtians is a moſt Holy Faith; Holy in its Principles, Holy in its Pattern, Holy in its Encouragements and Rewards. 2. That it is the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavours, of every Chriſtian to build up himſelf, and others alſo, in the Faith of the Goſpel; the beſt Way for Chriſtians not to be Loſers of what they have, is to be Labourers for what they want; Progreſs in Chriſtianity is the beſt Means to preſerve us from Apoſtacy. *Secondly*, He exhorts to Prayer, *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, with holy Reverence, with humble Confidence, with fervent Importunity, with thoſe Holy Affections and Deſires which the Spirit of God exciteth in you; the Concurrence of the Holy Spirit is neceſſary both to Aſſiſtance and Acceptance in Prayer; it enables us to pray in Faith and Love, with Sincerity and Importunity; without the Spirit there is no acceptable Praying, and without Prayer vain is the Pretence to the Spirit. Breathing is the firſt Evidence of Life. St. *Paul* was no ſooner converted but behold he prayed. *Thirdly*, He directs that they *keep themſelves in the Love of God*; no ſuch Way to keep our ſelves from Error, as to preſerve our ſelves in that Love which God bears to us, and in that Love we bear to him; take we Care that there be no Intermiſſion of the Acts of Love, and no Remiſſion of the Degrees of Love, but that we be rooted and grounded in Love, and then we are Proof againſt Seducers and falſe Teachers. *Fourthly*, He directs them to look up to Heaven, if they would be ſteady and ſteadfaſt in the Faith here on Earth. *Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto Eternal Life.* Here *Obſerve*, That Heaven, or Eternal Life, is the Mercy of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.* Mercy it is called, becauſe beſtowed on the Miſerable, that could never merit or deſerve it, and becauſe it is the Effect and Fruit of Free and Special Mercy, and becauſe beſtowed on the Veſſels of Mercy, and becauſe it is the Perfection and Conſummation of all Mercy; and it is the *Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe he purchaſed it, he prepared it, he exhibits and gives it. *Obſerve* farther, That Chriſtians are to *look for* Eternal Life as the Mercy of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, to believe it, to meditate upon it, to have ardent Deſires after it, and patiently to wait for it; *looking for that Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto Eternal life.*

22 And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference: 23 And others ſave with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh.

In theſe Words our Apoſtle directs them how to carry and behave themſelves towards thoſe that were ſeduced, in order to their Recovery, namely, after a different Manner. 1. He adviſes to Chriſtian Lenity and Gentleneſs, to Compaſſion and Tenderneſs towards ſome: *Of ſome have Compaſſion.* Learn thence, That tho' Reproofs are to be given to Backſliders, yet muſt they be given in Compaſſion, and with Holy Grief. Our Words muſt have Bowels in them, and proceed not from Paſſion, but from Pity. 2. For thoſe that are more entangled, corrupted, and hardned in their Errors, he adviſes that they endeavour to *ſave them with fear*; that is, terrifie them with the Fear of God's Judgments and Wrath, and by ſharp Admonitions recover them out of their Errors, as *Lot* was ſnatch'd out of the Fire of *Sodom.* There is a Time when Severity is not only uſeful, but abſolutely neceſſary, yet Neceſſity muſt be the Mother of Severity. Lenity muſt be firſt uſed, if that fails, Severity muſt ſucceed.

23 —— Hating even the Garment ſpotted by the fleſh.

By this the Apoſtle means every thing that doth defile, tho' in the leaſt degree; he forbids all Affinity or Nearneſs to the Errors and Vices of theſe Sinners; implying, That ſome Sinners are ſo filthy and unclean, that there is no keeping Company with them without Defilement; and intimating, That Chriſtians in their converſing with erroneous or vicious Perſons, whom they labour to recover, ſhould take great Care that they be not corrupted nor debauched by them, they being only to deal with them as Phyſicians, not as Companions: *Hating the Garment ſpotted with the Fleſh.*

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent *you* faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, 25 To the only wiſe God our Saviour, *be* glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Obſerve here, 1. How our Apoſtle ſhuts up his Exhortation with Prayer; having exhorted them to Duty, he commands them to the Divine Grace; *intimating*, That the Fruit of all muſt be expected from God, without whoſe Bleſſing all Exhortations and Endeavours will nothing avail. *Obſerve* 2. The Perſon who is the Object of Prayer and Praiſe, *Chriſt*, deſcribed by his Power. 1. *He is able to keep us from falling*; that is, from Apoſtacy; he ſpeaks not of his abſolute Power; ſo Chriſt is able to keep us from all Sin; but of ſuch a Power as is engaged by Promiſe and Office; all Believers are Chriſt's Charge, and he will preſerve them from final Deſtruction. 2. He is *able to preſent us faultleſs*; 'tis Chriſt's Office to preſerve his Church until he preſents it ſpotleſs to the Father, *before the Preſence of his Glory*; that is, at his Glorious Appearance, when he ſhall come to Judge the World *with exceeding Joy* on both Sides, no doubt, both on Chriſt's Part and ours. O Sweet Interview betwixt Chriſt and Believers! He will joy to ſee us, as well as we rejoice to ſee him. Learn, That Chriſt will one Day make a Solemn Preſentation of his People unto God. 2. That when he doth preſent them, he will preſent them faultleſs. 3. That the Day in which he does preſent them will be a very Glorious Day in itſelf, and a very Joyful Day to all his People; when the Impenitent World Howl, they ſhall Triumph.

25 To the only wiſe God our Saviour, *be* glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Our Apoſtle ſhuts up his Epiſtle (as is uſual) with a Doxology. Where *Obſerve*, 1. The Perſon to whom the Praiſe is given, to God, the Wiſe God, the only Wiſe God; ſo called, becauſe he is originally and independantly Wiſe, becauſe he is infinitely and tranſcendently Wiſe; all the Wiſdom of the wiſeſt of Men is nothing in Oppoſition to his Wiſdom, nor in Compariſon with it. *Obſerve* 2. That Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour is worthy to be accounted the only Wiſe God. As he is God he is called the Wiſdom of the Father; and in the Book of the *Proverbs* he is repreſented under that Title, and ſpoken of as a Perſon, *Ch.* 8. As he was Man all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge were found in him; he received the Habits of all Created Knowledge and Wiſdom, together with all other Graces, without Meaſure. *Obſerve* 3. As the Perſon deſcribed to whom the Praiſe is given, ſo the Deſcription of the Praiſe which is given to this Perſon, *Glory*, *Majeſty*, *Dominion* and *Power*. By which underſtand the Greatneſs and Eminent Excellency of the Divine Nature, which reſults from his Perfections, and whereby the Divine Nature is infinitely exalted above all other Beings. Learn hence, That we ought to have ſuch a Senſe of God's tranſcendent Excellencies and Perfections, as may oblige us to aſcribe all Things that are Honourable and Glorious to him, therefore are ſo many Words here uſed. *Obſerve* 4. The Duration, *Now and Ever*. Learn thence, That Believers have ſuch large and vaſt Deſires for the Exaltation of God's Glory, that they would have him Glorified everlaſtingly, and without ceaſing, not only in the Preſent, but to Eternal Ages. To him be Glory now and ever. *Amen.*

THE

THE
REVELATION
OF
St. JOHN, the Divine.

The Title of this Book is the Revelation; *ſo called, becauſe it contains in general a Diſcovery of ſuch Secrets as no Wiſdom of Man could have manifeſted or foreſeen, and in particular reveals ſuch Divine Things concerning the State of the Church, which before lay hid in the Purpoſe and Counſel of God. Concerning this Book,* Obſerve (1.) *The Penman that wrote it,* St. John, *the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, (as he is believed,) the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved; his Hand held the Pen, whilſt the Spirit of God Indited the Myſterious Matter of this Book.* Obſerve (2) *The Time when, and the Place where, he received the Commandment to write what he wrote; the Place was in the Iſle of* Patmos, *into which it is ſaid that* St. John *was Baniſhed by the Emperor* Domitian, *and there received and wrote this Revelation, after he had by a Miraculous Providence eſcaped Death at* Rome, *being there put into a Cauldron of Burning Oil: As to the Time when he had his Commandment to write, he tells us it was on the Lord's Day;* Ch. 1. v. 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard; ſaying, What thou ſeeſt write in a Book. *The more Conſciencious we are in obſerving our Lord's Day, and the more Zealous and Fervent in the Religious Duties of it, the more receptive we are of Divine Favours, and the better qualified for receiving Diſcoveries from God;* The Secret of the Lord is with them that Fear him; *that is, devoutly Worſhip, and perform their Duty to him.* Obſerve (3.) *The Perſons to whom this Epiſtle and Propheſie is written, namely, to all the Servants of God in general, and to the Seven Churches of* Aſia *in particular, to remain a Perfect Record for the Uſe of the Church to all ſucceeding Ages; the State of the Univerſal Church Militant being herein laid open.* Obſerve *laſtly, The Authority of what is here written, it is the Revelation of Chriſt Jeſus;* Ch. 22. I Jeſus have ſent my Angel to teſtifie theſe Things unto the Churches; *that is, for the Inſtruction and Conſolation of the Church in all Ages are theſe Things written;* v. 7. And bleſſed is he that keepeth the Words of the Propheſie of this Book; *from whence we may infallibly gather, that it is the Mind and Will of God that this Book ſhould be Read by the Church in all Ages, and by all her Members; for how can they keep the Words of this Propheſie except they Know them? How can they know them except they Read them, and Study them? Add to this, that beſides the Prophetical Part of this Book, there is ſuch a Spirit of Holineſs breathing through it, the main Articles of the Chriſtian Faith ſo clearly and plainly held forth in it, and many Religious and Moral Duties ſo ſtrictly injoined by it, that it is the unqueſtionable Duty of the Miniſters of God to ſtudy this Book with that Modeſty and Sobriety which becomes them as Enquirers; and likewiſe the Peoples Duty to give themſelves to the Reading of it with Fervent Prayer, and a Simplicity of Mind to be Guided and Directed by it as becomes Learners.*

CHAP. I.

1 THE Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he ſent and ſignified it by his Angel unto his ſervant John:
2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things that he ſaw.

That is, this Revelation God the Father gave to Chriſt, his Son, as Mediator, and therewith a Commiſſion to impart it to his Faithful Servants, eſpecially the Miniſters of his Church; and particularly to St. *John*, who bare Record in his Goſpel, and in his Epiſtles, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Eſſential and Eternal Word of God, and alſo bare Record of the *Teſtimony of Chriſt*; that is, of his Doctrine and Miracles, of his Death and Sufferings; declaring *all things that he ſaw*, namely, in his Viſions, and as they were repreſented to him. Here *Note* (1.) The Favour granted to St. *John*, he had a Viſion or Revelation of future Things; Revelations from God were ſometimes by Viſion, ſometimes by Voice, and ſometimes by Dreams; this Revelation which St. *John* had was of a mixt Nature, partly by Viſion, and partly by Voice. *Note* (2.) The Primary Author of this Revelation, God the Father, the Firſt Perſon in the Trinity, he revealeth it: *The Revelation which God gave.* *Note* (3.) The Order in which God gave forth this Revelation; firſt, it was given to Chriſt: *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt which God gave unto him*; next unto the Angels, then unto St. *John*, to reveal it to the Church; Chriſt as God knew all Things from Eternity, but as Man and Mediator he received this Relation from God the Father, and imparted it by the Angel to his Servant *John*; we ſee then that Chriſt in his State of Exaltation continues to execute his Prophetick Office, by revealing to his Servants the Mind and Will of God. *Note* (4.) The Subject Matter of the Revelation: *Things which ſhould ſhortly come* to paſs; mark, not Things which were already paſt, (then this Book had been an Hiſtory, and not a Propheſie,) but which ſhould certainly and ſuddenly come to paſs; that is, they ſhould ſhortly begin to be accompliſhed, and to take effect; not that they ſhould all be immediately performed, but in God's Time, in reſpect of whoſe Eternity a Thouſand Years are but as One Day. *Note* laſtly, The Fidelity and great Integrity of St. *John* in making known to others *all things that he ſaw*; that is, he had by his Writings told the Churches what Chriſt by his Angel told him, even all that he heard and ſaw in this Viſion; as St. *Paul did not ſhun* to declare the whole Counſel of God, *Acts* 20. (he doth not ſay he had declared the whole Counſel of God, for who but God himſelf could declare that?) So St. *John* here *bare record of the whole Word of God, and of the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all Things that he ſaw and heard.*

3 Bleſſed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Obſerve here the great Encouragement which the Spirit of God gives to all Chriſtians to Read and Regard, to Conſider and Meditate upon, the *Things* contained in this Divine Book; that is, the neceſſary Parts of Chriſtianity, which are here mixt with darker Paſſages, all muſt Read, Study, and Practice, theſe, that hope for Bleſſedneſs: *Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this Propheſie, and keep thoſe Things which are written therein.* Hence *Note*, That although the Book of the Revelation be in itſelf a very Abſtruſe and Myſterious Part of Holy Scripture, yet Chriſtians ought not to be debarr'd, much leſs to debar themſelves, from Reading of it, and Conſulting with it; Bleſſed *is he that readeth*, that is, Attentively, Underſtandingly, and Affectionately; *And bleſſed is he that keepeth the Things that are written*; that is, in his Mind and Memory, in his Affection and Practice, ſo as to adhere to the Truth whatever Trials and Temptations it may expoſe him to.

4 John to the ſeven Churches which are in Aſia: grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jeſus Chriſt, *who is* the faithful Witneſs, *and* the firſt begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth: —

Obſerve here, (1.) The Perſons to whom St. *John* writes, and the particular Churches which he does ſalute, namely, the Seven Churches of *Aſia*, which were then the moſt Famous and Flouriſhing Churches in the Chriſtian World, but now over-run with Barbariſm: Sin has laid the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt Flouriſhing Churches and Kingdoms. *Obſerve* (2.) The Apoſtolical Salutation given to theſe Churches; *Grace be to you, and Peace.* By Grace underſtand the free Favour, and rich Love of God, in pardoning, ſanctifying and ſaving, and by Peace the inward Senſe of that Love, and all outward Mercies and Temporal Bleſſings whatſoever. *Obſerve* (3.) The Perſons in whoſe Name, or from whom, this Salutation is ſent and given. (1.) From God the Father; who is deſcribed by his Eternity and Immutability: *Which is, which was*, and *which is to come.* (2.) *From the Seven Spirits which are before the Throne*; that is, from the Holy Ghoſt, who is thus deſcribed in regard of the Perfection and Variety of his gracious Operations; the Holy Spirit is called *Seven*, becauſe he is perfect in Working; and he is ſaid to be before the Throne, becauſe continually preſent with God, and ready to perform what is needful for the Church of God. (3.) From *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is deſcribed according to his Threefold Office of a *Prophet*, *Prieſt* and *King*; his being called *the faithful and true Witneſs*, points out his Prophetical Office, that he is the great Prophet of his Church, who reveals the Will of the Father fully and faithfully to the Sons of Men; his being ſtiled the Firſt Begotten of the Dead, points out his Prieſtly Office, and intimates that he Died, that he Roſe again from the Dead; and that he firſt Aroſe, or was the Firſt Begotten from the Dead; that is, the Firſt that Roſe from the Dead by his own Power to a State of Immortality, and never to die more; ſome indeed Roſe before him, but then they were Raiſed by him, he was the firſt that ever Raiſed himſelf; others were Raiſed from the Dead, as *Lazarus* before Chriſt, but they Died again, whereas Chriſt Roſe from the Dead never to Die more; he entred into a State of Immortality after his Reſurrection, and lives for ever to make Interceſſion for us. *Laſtly*, Chriſt is ſtiled *The Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, which Phraſe ſhews both his Influence upon them, (as giving Laws and Rules unto them,) and their Dependance upon him, who do receive their Power and Government, their Protection and Dominion, all from his Hands.

5 —— Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. 6 And hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

In the former Verſe our Saviour was conſidered in the Excellency of his Perſon, and with reſpect to what he is in himſelf; in this Verſe he is conſidered in the Execution of his Office; or with reſpect to what he is unto his Church. And here *Obſerve*, (1.) His Affection in general towards us: *He hath loved us.* Our Bleſſed Redeemer has given ample and full Demonſtration of his great and wonderful Love unto his Church and People; and none doth ſo properly and paſſionately Love the Church as Chriſt himſelf; Before Converſion he Loves his People with a Love of Commiſeration and Compaſſion, after Converſion he loves them with a Love of Complacency and Delight. *Obſerve* (2.) The Diſcovery and Manifeſtation which Chriſt has made of this his Love particularly towards us: *He hath waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood*; that is, he hath given himſelf a Sacrifice for our Sins, and by the Merit of his Blood freed us from the guilt of Sin in our Juſtification; and alſo by the Efficacy of that Blood cleanſed us from the filth of Sin in our Sanctification: The Blood of Chriſt has both a pacifying and a purifying Influence; it pacifies God's Wrath, and purges the Sinner's Conſcience: The Blood of Chriſt Merited the Spirit of God for our Sanctification; and ſo reconciled us to God, as well as obtained Pardon for us; in a Way of Meritorious Satisfaction, and ſo reconciled God to us. *He waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood.* Where *Note*, a great Emphaſis in the double Word of Propriety. (1.) *Our* Sins; that is, every one of our own Sins, without any Limitation or Exception whatſoever, as to the Number, or heinous Nature, of them: The Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is indeed excepted, but this proceeds from the Incapacity of the Sinner, not from the Inefficacy or Inſufficiency of Chriſt's Sacrifice for Sin. (2.) There is alſo an Emphaſis in the Word of Propriety, with reſpect to Chriſt, when it is called *his own* Blood: The Levitical Prieſts ſprinkled the People with Blood; but it was not their *own* Blood, but the Blood of Bulls and Goats: but Chriſt ſpared not his *own* Blood: and he did not barely ſprinkle us with it, but waſh'd us in it; it was not the Blood of his Finger, but the Blood of his Heart: His very Life went with it, *He waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood.* *Obſerve* (3.) The conſequent Effect and happy Reſult of all this Love of Chriſt towards us, and Undertaking for us, *He hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God.* (1.) *Kings*, not in a Temporal, but Spiritual Senſe; they Reign as Kings over their unruly Luſts and Corruptions, over Satan, over the World, over Death, the King of Terrors; they begin their Reign upon Earth, without which 'twere impoſſible to perfect and compleat it in Heaven. (2.) *Prieſts*, conſecrating themſelves a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God; and offering up, not expiatory, but gratulatory Sacrifices unto him, namely, Prayer and Praiſe, Supplication and Thankſgiving; 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Ye are an holy Prieſthood, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt.* *Obſerve* (4.) After this *Deſcription* of Chriſt follows an *Aſcription* of all that Glory and Honour, Dominion and Power, which is his Due, and our Duty to aſcribe unto him: *To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever*, Amen. Where *Note*, That the ſame Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, being here attributed and given to Chriſt, which Chriſt teaches us to aſcribe and render unto God; (*Mat.* 6.) it is a ſure Teſtimony that Chriſt is God, and as ſuch to be acknowledged and adored by us, *To him be Glory*, &c.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they *alſo* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him: even ſo, Amen.

Theſe Words are a Majeſtick Deſcription of our Saviour's coming to Judgment; they are uſhered in with a Note of Attention and Admiration; *Behold*, which denotes alſo the Truth and Certainty of his Appearance, and upbraids us likewiſe for our natural Backwardneſs to Believe, Mind and Meditate upon the coming of Chriſt; we are too much guided and governed by Senſe; what we ſee nothing of we believe little of; therefore St. *John* here begins with a Note of Incitement in the Word *Behold*; it follows, *he cometh with Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they which pierced him.* This was fulfilled, (1.) When Chriſt came by the *Roman* Armies to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, by taking Vengeance on his Murtherers, when his Crucifiers might diſcern that thoſe heavy and direful Judgments were inflicted on them for their crucifying Chriſt, and perſecuting Chriſtians. But, (2.) It will be more Eminently and Univerſally fulfilled at the General Day of Judgment, when Chriſt will come riding upon the Clouds, as in a Triumphant Chariot, and all Humane Eyes ſhall then ſee him, his Perſecutors and Deſpiſers particularly beholding him, but not all alike; ſuch as pierced him, but repented, whoſe Hearts were afterwards pierced for their piercing of him, theſe at that Day ſhall ſee Chriſt with aſtoniſhing Joy, tho' they put him to bitter Sorrow; the Death of Chriſt has procured Mercy for thoſe whoſe Cruelty did procure his Death; but as for ſuch as pierced him, but never repented, both ſuch as pierced him in his Perſon, or in his Members, they ſhall alſo ſee him to their Sorrow, and ſhall wail, or take on heavily, becauſe of him; that is, becauſe they muſt be judged by him. Lord! How will the Sight of a pierced Saviour then pierce their Souls with Sorrow, with Vexation of Heart, and Anguiſh of Spirit? To behold Chriſt with an Eye of Senſe *then*, will be very grievous to them that do not behold him with an Eye of Faith *now*; ſee him they ſhall, they muſt; but alas, they had rather be covered with Mountains and Hills fallen upon them than thus behold him! *Obſerve* farther, how St. *John* cloſes this Deſcription of Chriſt's ſecond coming with a Pathetick Option on his own and the Churches Behalf in the laſt Words of the Verſe---*even ſo, Amen*; *intimating*, that the Saints, or Church of God, do Expect and Believe that aſſuredly it will be ſo, and do alſo earneſtly Deſire and Pray that it may be ſo. *Learn* hence, That Chriſt will undoubtedly come to put an End to the Sufferings of his afflicted Church, and to puniſh his and their Perſecutors, with whoſe coming the Saints are well pleaſed, and do earneſtly deſire and long for it; behold he cometh----*even ſo, Amen.* Come Lord Jeſus.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, ſaith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Obſerve here, (1.) That what was applied to God the Father at the Fourth Verſe, namely, that he *was*, *is*, and *is to come*, is here by Chriſt applied to himſelf at the Eighth Verſe, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Beginning* and the *Ending*, *which is*, *which was*, and *is to come*; *Alpha* is the firſt, *Omega* the laſt, Letter of the *Greek* Alphabet, and as ſuch they encloſe all the reſt; Chriſt calling himſelf the firſt, and the laſt; that is, the firſt Cauſe, and the laſt End; (as nothing began before him, ſo nothing can outlaſt him;) he does hereby diſcover his Divinity to us, that he is Co-eſſential and Conſubſtantial with the Father, the ſame Attributes being given to both; underſtand we then that this Text plainly ſpeaks the Godhead of Chriſt againſt the *Socinians*, Chriſt calling himſelf *the firſt* and *the laſt*, takes to himſelf abſolute Perfection and Power, Sovereignty and Dignity, Eternity and Divinity; he is the firſt, becauſe he was before all beginning, and becauſe from him all Things had their beginning; he is alſo the laſt, becauſe he ſhall continue for ever without End, becauſe he is the End of all Things; and becauſe when we have attained him we are at the higheſt and laſt of our Attainments; we reſt, and have no more to ſeek when we have found Chriſt, for he brings us to the Father, in whom we have Eternal Reſt through himſelf, the Son; and the laſt Title Chriſt aſſumes to himſelf, namely, *the Almighty*, beſpeaks his Divinity; he is God Almighty, able to accompliſh all his Promiſes to his People, and to execute his Threatnings on his Enemies; and if the Adverſaries of our Saviour's Godhead in the Glaſs of this Text do not ſee his Divinity, it is not becauſe they cannot, but they will not, ſee, *I am*, ſays Chriſt, *Alpha and Omega*, *the Beginning and the Ending*, *which is*, *which was*, *and is to come*, *the Almighty*.

9 I John, who alſo am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt, was in the Iſle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.
10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt: And what thou ſeeſt write in a book, and ſend *it* unto the ſeven Churches which are in Aſia; unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The Preface being ended in the foregoing Verſes, here begins the Body or Viſionary Part of this Book; the firſt Viſion is here before us, concerning the Seven *Aſian* Churches. In which Viſion we have obſervable, (1.) The *Perſon* that received it, he is deſcribed by his Name *John*, I *John*; by his Spiritual Relation, I *John*, your *Brother*; by his *then* preſent Condition, your *Companion in Tribulation*; undergoing like Sufferings with you; your Companion *in the Kingdom of Chriſt*; that is, in expecting of, and hoping for, the ſame Kingdom of Heaven and Glory which ye expect; and I am alſo your *Companion in Patience*, called the *Patience of Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe in his Word he requires it, becauſe by his Spirit he produces it, becauſe in his own Example he gave us a Pattern of it; and perhaps Principally, becauſe the preſent State of the Kingdom of Chriſt in this World calls for it. *Obſerve* (2.) The *Place* where St. *John* received this Viſion, in the Iſle of *Patmos*, not far from the *Aſian* Churches, into which the Emperor *Domitian* baniſhed him, (having (as is ſaid) caſt him firſt into a Cauldron of burning Oyl, out of which he miraculouſly eſcaped.) Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory ſays St. *John* was very near an Hundred Years Old when he was by that Bloody Emperor baniſh'd into *Patmos* for preaching the Word of God, and for bearing Teſtimony to this Truth, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Saviour of the World. *Learn*, That the greateſt Honour which an Apoſtle, an aged Apoſtle, a beloved Apoſtle, can be admitted to the Participation of, is to ſuffer Baniſhment and Death for bearing a Faithful Teſtimony to Jeſus Chriſt. *Obſerve* (3.) The *Time* when St. *John* had this Glorious Viſion of Chriſt, Communion with him, and Communications from him, it was *upon the Lord's Day*; *I was in the Spirit*, that is, in Spiritual Meditation, in a Spiritual Extaſie, in a tranſporting Rapture by the Spirit, under his more immediate Illumination, and powerful Influences, *on the Lord's Day*, namely, the Firſt Day of the Week; ſo called, becauſe Chriſt at his Reſurrection took Poſſeſſion of it for his own, and becauſe the end of its Inſtitution was to Commemorate Chriſt's Reſurrection; and becauſe applied to his ſpecial Worſhip, and Service, and as ſuch, Religiouſly obſerved by the Apoſtles, *Acts* 20. 7. and by the Univerſal Church ever ſince the Apoſtle's Days, in that St. *John* in a Solitary Iſland kept the Chriſtian Sabbath; we *Learn*, that the Religious Obſervation of the Lord's Day is a Duty incumbent upon all Perſons, and in all Places. *Learn* (2.) How Chriſt owned his own Day, and encouraged St. *John* in his Religious and Strict Obſervation of it, by the Influences of his Holy Spirit upon him, and by communicating Extraordinary Revelations to him; *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great Voice.* *Obſerve* (4.) The *Viſion* and Revelation itſelf, which began with his hearing a loud Voice like a Trumpet; that is, the Voice of Chriſt, full of Majeſty and Power, ſpake unto him, ſaying, *What thou ſeeſt*; that is, what thou ſhalt ſee and hear *write in a Book*, and ſend it to the Seven Churches. Here *Note*, (1.) That the Book of the Revelation was written by Chriſt's own Direction, therefore warranted to be of Divine Authority. *Note* (2.) That what Chriſt commanded St. *John* carefully to write it becomes us heedfully to read; for tho' what St. *John* wrote and ſent concern'd the Seven *Aſian* Churches at that Time, and had a particular Reſpect to their preſent State, yet all Scripture is written for our Learning; and we are to beg Spiritual Wiſdom from God to make a right Uſe, and holy Improvement, of what is written.

12 And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks;
13 And in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks, *one* like unto the Son of Man, cloathed with a Garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden Girdle.
14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wooll as white as ſnow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;
15 And his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the ſound of many waters.
16 And he had in his right hand ſeven Stars: And out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword: and his countenance *was* as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength.

As if St. *John* had ſaid, I turned to ſee the Perſon whoſe Voice I heard ſpeaking with me, and I beheld Seven Golden Candleſticks, repreſenting the Seven *Aſian* Churches, and in the midſt of thoſe Candleſticks I ſaw one in the ſhape of a Man, which reminded me of Chriſt, the Son of Man, cloathed in Garments much like unto *Aaron's*, the High Prieſt, who was an Illuſtrious Type of Chriſt, our Great and Merciful High Prieſt, who made an Atonement for us on Earth, and maketh now Interceſſion for us in the higheſt Heavens. *Note* here, (1.) The Compariſon made between the Churches of Chriſt and the Golden Candleſticks; they are Candleſticks in regard of the Light which they hold forth; the Candleſtick doth not give Light of itſelf, but holds it forth to others: It is the Churches Duty to keep within herſelf the pure Word of God; and to keep herſelf pure from being beſmear'd with Errors in Doctrine, or Vice in Converſation; Churches, the holieſt and pureſt of Churches, are rather Candleſticks than Candles; Chriſt is the Light, the Word is the Lamp, the Church but the Inſtrument to convey the Light unto us. Again, the Churches are *Golden* Candleſticks; Gold is the moſt Precious of Metals, the Church is the moſt Excellent of all Societies; for it beautifies all Societies whatſoever, that they are Members of the Church of Chriſt. *Note* (2.) How Chriſt was ſeen by St. *John* walking in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks, preſent in and with his Churches; that is, St. *John* had in this Viſion a very lively Repreſentation of Chriſt in his Humane Nature; not that St. *John* now ſaw Chriſt in his Manhood really, for that was then in Heaven, but he had a Reſemblance of it in the Viſion. *Note* (3.) The Deſcription given of Chriſt as Walking in the midſt of his Goſpel Church; he is, (1.) Deſcribed by his Attire, habited like *Aaron*, the High Prieſt, with a Garment down to his Feet, and girt with a Golden Girdle, to ſignifie that as *Aaron* was of the Old, ſo Chriſt is the High Prieſt of the New Teſtament, preſenting continually to his Father the Memorials of his Death, the Merit of his Sacrifice, and making Interceſſion with the Father for our Gracious Acceptance with him. (2.) He is next deſcribed by the Parts and Members of the Body: His *Head and Hair as White as Snow and Wooll*, ſignifie his Eternity, and his Purity, that he is the Ancient of Days, even the Father of Eternity, and perfectly Innocent, Pure and Holy: *His Eyes like flaming Fire*, denoting his piercing Knowledge; that as Head of his Church he eſpies out all her Ways, Words and Thoughts: *His Feet like burning Braſs, and his Voice like many Waters*, which Expreſſions repreſent the Dread and Terror of Chriſt towards the Enemies of his Church; and that Vengeance he would execute upon his Murtherers in particular at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and upon all the Impenitent Rejecters of his Goſpel Grace at the General Judgment; then will they underſtand what they now will not believe, that it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God. (3.) He is next deſcribed by what he had in his Right Hand, namely, *Seven Stars*, repreſenting the Seven Angels, Biſhops and Miniſters, of the Seven Churches. Theſe are called Stars, their Office and Duty being to enlighten the Church, both by the Light of Life and Doctrine; and as Stars are ſeated above, ſo ſhould their Converſation be in Heaven, and their Affections not ſet upon the Things below. Stars give Direction, Light and Influence, to others; they were not made for themſelves. Miniſters muſt not chiefly ſeek their own, but others, Good. Stars are ſwift in their Motion, and their Motion is conſtantly in their own Orb and Sphere. Vain is the Pretence of, Care and Concern for, other Churches, whilſt we neglect our own. Finally, Miniſters are Stars as in reſpect of their Situation, and in reſpect of their conſtant and regular Motion; ſo in reſpect of their Continuance and Duration. Stars are fixt in Heaven, ſo are Miniſters in the Church. Chriſt holds them in his Hand, otherwiſe the World would ſoon have them under their Feet. (4.) He is deſcribed by a ſharp Two-edged Sword coming out of his Mouth, denoting the piercing Power of the Word of God to conquer Sin, convert Sinners, and to condemn and ſlay the Unconverted. *Laſtly*, it is added, That *his Countenance was as the Sun that ſhineth in his Strength*; that is, very glorious in itſelf, and very comforting and refreſhing to thoſe that are his Members, his ſincere Diſciples and Followers. This Part of the Deſcription of Chriſt ſweetly follows the former; when *his Feet were as burning Braſs*, to tread down and conſume his Enemies; *his Countenance was as the Sun*, to cheer and cheriſh, to comfort and refreſh, his Friends.

17 And when I ſaw him, I fell at his Feet as dead: And he laid his right hand upon me, ſaying unto me, fear not; I am the firſt and the laſt. 18 I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Effect which this Glorious Repreſentation of Chriſt in this Viſion had upon St. *John*; he was aſtoniſhed and amazed at it, and fell down at Chriſt's Feet as one almoſt dead. *Note* from hence, That the Holieſt Man on Earth is not able to bear the Preſence of Chriſt here, nor able to ſtand before his Gracious Manifeſtation of himſelf, when he comes to reveal himſelf in Mercy towards him. See *Hab.* 3. 15, 16. *Lord, how unable then will the Wicked be at the great Day to ſtand before the Manifeſtation of thy Fury!* If at this Viſionary Repreſentation of Chriſt St. *John* trembled, and fell at his Feet as dead, how unable will the Impenitent World be to look him in the Face at the great Day, when he ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, rendring Vengeance to them that know not God? *Obſerve* (2.) The ſeaſonable Care of Chriſt for St. *John*'s Relief in this great Exigency; *He laid his Right Hand upon me, ſaying, Fear not.* Hereby Chriſt diſcovered both his Readineſs to help, and his Ability to help; the Right Hand is the ſupporting Hand, the ſtrengthning Hand; Chriſt did not ſend an Angel to comfort St. *John*, but laid his own Hand upon him, to aſſure him both of Safety and Succour. *Obſerve* (3.) As what Chriſt did, ſo what he likewiſe ſaid, for St. *John*'s Comfort and Support under the Burthen of his Fears; *Fear not*, ſays Chriſt, for I am the *Firſt and the Laſt*; that is, I am an Eternal Being, without either Beginning or End. Again, I *am he that Liveth, and was Dead.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, Fear not Death, or Dying, for I have overcome Death by Dying, conquer'd the King of Terrors in his own Territories; but behold *I am now Alive for evermore*, for the Benefit of my Church, and to protect and defend my Faithful Servants. Nay farther, to ſhew that his Life was not a bare Subſiſtence, but cloathed with Power, Chriſt adds, *I have alſo the Keys of Hell, and of Death:* That is, a Sovereign Power over the whole Inviſible World, to let into Heaven, and to lock into Hell, as I pleaſe. The Keys are an Emblem of Authority and Power; the Steward, who has the Keys of the Houſe, commands the Houſe. There are Four Keys which Chriſt keeps in his own Hands; the Key of the Womb, the Key of the Clouds, the Key of the Earth, as of the Granary of Corn, and the Key of the Grave. When Chriſt ſays here, *I have the Keys of Hell and Death*, the meaning is, that he has a Sovereign Dominion over both Worlds; over this in which we live, and over that into which we die, whether the one or the other Part of it, Heaven and Hell both; for the Words muſt not be underſtood with a debaſing Limitation, only reſpecting Hell, as if Chriſt had only the Keys of the Bottomleſs Pit; but the Original Word *Hades* ſignifies the Invincible World, conſiſting of both Heaven and Hell; and he has a Power over both, and alſo over Death too, which is the common Paſſage unto both Places. *Learn* hence, (1.) If Chriſt has the Power of Death, and keeps the Keys of the Grave in his own Hand, that Men do no die at Random, by Accident and Chance, but by Determination and Judgment; Chriſt by an Authoritative Act turns they Key, and gives Man his Exit out of the World. *Learn* (2.) That Chriſt, who has the Key of Death, has alſo the Key of *Hades*, the Upper and the Lower *Hades*, Heaven and Hell; and ſuch as go out of the World, go not out of Being, but go into One of thoſe Two States and Places. *Learn* (3.) How Admirable, and yet how Amiable, Chriſt ſhould be in all our Eyes, who hath theſe Keys in his own Hand with ſuch merciful Intentions towards us; and how willingly ſhould we die when the Keys of Death are in ſo great, ſo kind, an Hand as his! O how unhappy is it when this Power of our great Redeemer over Death and the Grave, and a placid Reſignation to his Pleaſure, do concur and meet together, not from Stupidity, but Truſt, in him that keeps the Keys! Lord, when the Key is turning, and thou art letting in Souls into the Inviſible World, let thy Servant depart in Peace, and everlaſtingly ſee thy Salvation.

19 Write the things which thou haſt ſeen, and the things which are, and the things which ſhall be hereafter. 20 The Myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, and the ſeven golden candleſticks. The ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches: and the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt are the ſeven churches.

This Chapter concludes with a ſolemn Charge given by our Saviour to St. *John*, to write and record the Viſion of the Seven Stars, and Seven Golden Candleſticks, which he had newly ſeen; letting him into the Myſtery of both, by telling him that the Seven Stars *are* Seven Angels; that is, ſignifie Seven Angels; and the Seven Candleſticks *are*, that is, ſignifie Seven Churches, and repreſent them. In like manner when Chriſt ſays in the Sacrament, *this is my Body*, the meaning is, this Bread ſignifies and repreſents my Body. Here

Note, That the Biſhops and Governours, the Paſtors and Teachers, of the Church, are called ***Angels***, becauſe they are ſent by God on his Meſſage, becauſe they had their Commiſſion from him; and to ſignifie that unſpotted Purity which ſhould be found with them, both in Life and Doctrine; and they are repreſented by *Stars*, to denote their *Dignity* and *Duty*, their *Uſefulneſs* and *Beneficialneſs*, the *Swiftneſs* and *Conſtancy* of their Motion, but eſpecially in regard of their Nature. A Star is of the ſame Nature with the Heavens, Celeſtial; not Earthly, not Elementary Miniſters; but ſhould be Heavenly, Holy, Blameleſs, Inoffenſive; they ſhould teach by Tongue and Hand, and inſtruct by Lip and Life. God grant that in our Hearts we may experimentally find the Works of Holineſs, and in our Lives expreſs the Power of Holineſs. *Amen.*

CHAP. II.

This Book of the Revelations *being full of Prophetical Viſions*, St. John *in the former Chapter had a Viſion of our Bleſſed Saviour, as appearing in Prieſtly Garments*, Chap. 1. 13. Wearing a Garment down to his Feet, *in Alluſion to the Prieſtly Ephod, and the Curious Girdle under the Law. From whence we may comfortably collect, that Chriſt, now in Glory, remains ſtill his Churches Prieſt. And purſuant to that his Prieſtly Office, he diſcovered then in Heaven his great Care for his Churches Good here on Earth, by commanding* St. John *to write Epiſtles to the Seven* Aſian *Churches; commending, reproving, directing, warning, threatning, and comforting, them ſuitably to their reſpective Conditions, and as their preſent Caſe required.* Queſt. *But ſeeing there were ſo many Famous Churches then in the World, as* Rome, Corinth, Galatia, *and others, why muſt* St. John *paſs by them, and only write to thoſe of* Aſia? Anſw. *Poſſibly becauſe* Patmos, *where* St. John *was now in Baniſhment, was nearer to theſe Churches; and poſſibly becauſe theſe Churches were under his more immediate Care and Charge. For although the Apoſtolical Authority was Univerſal over all the Churches, yet the Apoſtles did every one by mutual Conſent aſſume ſuch a Part of the World as their more eſpecial Charge; and accordingly* Aſia *the Leſs, with her Churches, did fall under* St. John's *Care, who therefore at the Command of Chriſt writes, and ſends the following Epiſtles to them, contained in this and the next Chapter; in which he thus beſpeaks them.*

1 UNto the angel of the church of Epheſus, write, theſe things ſaith he, that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks:

Note here. (1.) That the Church of *Epheſus*, with the other Six Churches of *Aſia*, were at the time of St. *John*'s writing very flouriſhing Churches, favour'd as much with the ſpecial Preſence and Influence of Chriſt as ever any Churches were. *Note* (2.) That theſe Churches are written to as a ſort of Types of all the Gentile Churches unto the End of the World, and Patterns alſo which the Gentile Churches were to take warning by, Chriſt hereby declaring what all other Churches, offending and declining in the ſame Manner, might expect. *Note* (3.) That the firſt Church St. *John* is commanded to write unto is the Church of *Epheſus*, and what is written is directed to the *Angel*, the Biſhop, the Preſident, and chief Miniſter in that Church, to be communicated to all in the Church, both Miniſters and People, as that which nearly concern'd them all. *Note* (4.) That Chriſt in the beginning of every Epiſtle doth notifie himſelf by ſome one of thoſe Characters which he gave of himſelf in the former Chapter, either as *the Faithful and True Witneſs*, or *as the Firſt and the Laſt*, or *as having the Seven Stars in his Hand.* Thus here, *Theſe Things ſaith he that holdeth the Seven Stars in his Right Hand.* Mark, he holdeth the Stars in his *Hand*, to ſhew his Tenderneſs, in his *Right Hand*, to ſhew his Power, ſupporting and directing them for the Good of his People. It is added, that Chriſt *walks* in the *midſt of the Seven Golden Candleſticks*. Which Expreſſion denotes Chriſt's Gracious Preſence with them, his ſtrict Obſervation of them, his tender Care over them, his protecting and defending of them, in doing their Duty to him, his encouraging or reproving, his rewarding or puniſhing, as there ſhould be Cauſe. *Theſe Things ſaith he that holdeth the Seven Stars in his Right Hand, and walketh in the midſt of the Seven Golden Candleſticks. Learn* hence, (1.) That the Miniſters of Chriſt are Stars, yet but Stars; they ſhine but with a borrowed Light, with a Light derived from the Sun; they ſhine but for a time, the Day haſtens when theſe Stars ſhall diſappear for ever. *Learn* (2.) Theſe Stars are in the Right Hand of Chriſt, in his Power, and at his Diſpoſe; he appoints them their Orbs where they ſhall ſhine, and appoints them alſo their Time for ſhining. *Learn* (3.) That the Church is a Candleſtick a Golden Candleſtick. As a Candleſtick has no more Light than what is put into it, and muſt be continually maintained by a new ſupply of Oil, ſuch is the State of the Church; and as a Candleſtick is a moveable Thing, remove the Candleſtick and the Light is removed with it; ſo when God removes the Light of the Goſpel from a People he Unchurches them. *Farther*, the Church is called a Golden Candleſtick, becauſe as Gold is the pureſt of Metals, and excels all other Metals in Precioufneſs, ſo God expects his Church ſhould differ as much from the World as Gold doth from common Clay. *Learn* (4.) That there is a ſpecial Gracious Preſence of Chriſt with his Church in all her Adminiſtrations: *He walks in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks*: It denotes his Preſence, with them, and this Preſence of his is an Holy Preſence, and a Jealous Preſence.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil: and thou haſt tried them which ſay they are apoſtles, and are not; and haſt found them liars: 3 And haſt born, and haſt patience, and for my names ſake haſt laboured, and haſt not fainted. 4 Nevertheleſs I have *ſomewhat* againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.

Obſerve here, (1.) A general Declaration, which ſtands in the Front of the ſeveral Epiſtles, *I know thy Works*, both thy inward and outward Works, to obſerve and mark them, to puniſh or reward them, as the Caſe requires. This proves the Divinity of Chriſt, that he is truly and eſſentially God; he knows the Hearts of Men, which none but a God can know. V. 23. *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the Reins, and the Heart. Obſerve* (2.) The *Commendation* which is here given of this Church for her *Labour* in propagating the Goſpel, for her *Patience* in bearing Affliction and Perſecution for it, for the ſtrictneſs of her *Diſcipline*, that ſhe did not bear with, nor tolerate and endure, ſuch Perſons as were either erroneous in Judgment, or ſcandalous in Practice; for her Faithfulneſs in trying the Authority of thoſe who pretended to an immediate Call from God to be Apoſtles, but were found Liars, and Falſe Apoſtles; ſuch were thoſe Two ſeducing Hereticks, *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, and their Followers. Mark here, How our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth obſerve and approve, doth commend and praiſe, whatever is Good in his Church, and whatever is Commendable and Praiſe-worthy in the Members of it; yet at the ſame time when he commends them for what is Good, here proves them for what is Evil and Amiſs, and accordingly, *Obſerve* (3.) The *Reprehenſion* given, v. 4. *Nevertheleſs I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy Firſt Love.* As if Chriſt had ſaid, I obſerve amongſt you a great Abatement of your former Zeal and Fervour; you have not that hearty Love to me, and to one another, which you had at firſt, but verily you grow colder when you ſhould grow better. *Learn* hence, (1.) That where there is Truth of Grace, there may yet be a ſad Decay and Declining in Grace. (2.) That Chriſt takes notice of, and is diſpleaſed with, ſuch Decays and Declining in Grace, and ſeverely checks and reproves his People for them: *I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy Firſt Love.*

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.

We had Chriſt's Commendation and Reprehenſion of the Church of *Epheſus* before, we have his Admonition and Exhortation now. The Words before us are partly monitory, and partly minatory; monitory in the former Part of the Verſe, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent. Note* here, That Chriſt did not ſurprizingly come upon this Church at unawares; they were admoniſhed before chaſtiſed, warned before laid waſte. Chriſt doth premoniſh before he puniſhes. In the minatory Part we have a great Guilt and Sin ſuppoſed, a great Judgment for that Guilt denounced, the Unchurching of them that had committed it, and the Means preſcribed for the averting of that Judgment; to wit, Repentance. *Learn* hence, (1.) That a People profeſſing Religion and Godlineſs may fall. (2.) That fallen Profeſſors ſhould and ought to remember from whence they are fallen. (3.) The fallen Profeſſors ſhould be repenting Profeſſors, and do their Firſt Works. (4.) That without Repentance and Reformation God will certainly remove a People's Candleſtick, take away the Goſpel from them, as the ſevereſt Judgment which he can inflict upon them. *Remember, repent, and do thy Firſt Works, elſe I will remove thy Candleſtick out of its Place*; that is, ſuch a Tempeſt of Perſecution ſhall ariſe as will ſhake your tottering Candleſtick out of its Place. The Univerſal Church only has a Promiſe of Stability; any particular Church may be Unchurched finally.

6 But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, Tho' thou art not what thou ſhouldſt be, yet this thou haſt commendable in thee, that thou hateſt the Deeds of the Nicolaitans, who held Community of Wives, and eat Things offered to Idols, which impure Sect I alſo hate for their licentious Doctrine, and lewd Practices, which tend to the Ruin and Bane of Humane Societies. *Note* here, (1.) That it is not unlawful to call Hereticks by the Name of their Leaders; the Nicolaitans are here ſo called from one *Nicholas*, ſuppoſed to be the Deacon mentioned *Acts* 6. who having a Beautiful Wife, expoſed her as common, to avoid the Imputation of Jealouſie. *Note* (2.) That Chriſt hated all licentious Doctrines, and looſe Practices, and ſo ſhould we.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the ſpirit ſaith unto the churches,——

That is, let all that hear or read theſe Words unto the Churches which the Holy Spirit has uttered, conſider them, ſet their Hearts to regard them as Matters of great Importance, and which nearly concern them. *Obſerve*, that this Form of Speech, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear*, Chriſt often uſed at the end of his Parables, when he would ſtir up the People to more than ordinary Attention; and he uſes it here in this and the next Chapter, at the end of every one of theſe his Epiſtles to the ſeveral Churches.

7 ——To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, Let ſuch as fall away from their Holy Profeſſion for fear of Perſecution conſider what they loſe, even Eternal Life, which I will only give to ſuch as perſevere, for to him that overcometh Trials and Temptations will I give a Share in my Merits, and thereby a Title to Eternal Happineſs, ſignified by the Tree of Life in Paradice. *Note* here, (1.) It is not ſaid, to him that ſtriveth or reſiſteth will I give the Crown of Life, but to him that overcometh: Lazy Wiſhes are ſo far from ſaving Men, that Endeavours, yea, ſtriving againſt Temptation, without conquering and overcoming, will not ſave. 'Tis not enough that we reſiſt, but we muſt conquer; not ſufficient that we ſtrive, but we muſt overcome. *To him that overcometh*, &c. *Note* (2.) From the Promiſe that Chriſt makes of Eternal Life; *I will give* a clear Argument for Chriſt being God, eſſentially God: How is it elſe that he aſſumes to himſelf a Power of diſpoſing Eternal Life? *I will give to eat of the Tree of Life.*

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt, which was dead, and is alive: 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and *I know* the blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the ſynagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer: behold, the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be tried; and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches; He that overcometh ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death.

Here we have the Second Epiſtle which St. *John* wrote by the Command of Chriſt to the Church of *Smyrna*, a Famous City in one of the Provinces in *Aſia*, where *Polycarp* was Biſhop, and ſuffer'd Martyrdom. Now in this Epiſtle we have theſe Particulars conſiderable. (1.) The Deſcription which Chriſt is pleaſed here to give of himſelf, namely, *The Firſt and the Laſt, which was Dead, and is Alive*; and the Suitableneſs of this Deſcription, for the Conſolation of this Church, which was now under great Tribulation. It is as if Chriſt had ſaid, I am an Eternal Being, the Firſt Cauſe, and Laſt End; I was my ſelf put to Death, but I am Alive again; therefore fear neither Sufferings nor Death, for I will aſſiſt and ſtrengthen you, and if you loſe your Lives for my Sake I will raiſe your Bodies again to Everlaſting Life. *Obſerve* (2.) The Commendation given by Chriſt of this Church at *Smyrna*, it is large and full; nay, Chriſt blameth nothing in this Church; ſhe kept her Purity beſt, becauſe always in Affliction: Not but that there were Failings undoubtedly in this Church, but Almighty God mercifully overlook'd them. As in the Caſe of *Job*, no Mention is made of his Impatience, though he ſhewed much, but we are called upon to behold him as a Pattern of Patience. *Obſerve* next, the Particulars of this Churches Commendation, *I know*, ſays Chriſt; that is, I approve, commend and praiſe, *thy Works*, and *thy Tribulation*, and *Poverty*; that is, thy Labour, and Worldly Poverty, which thy Profeſſion of the Goſpel have brought upon thee: But tho' thou art outwardly Poor, yet art thou inwardly Rich; Rich in Grace, Rich in Faith and Patience, Rich in Meekneſs and Humility, Rich in Courage and Chriſtian Fortitude. And farther, I know alſo the *Blaſphemy of them that ſay they are Jews, and are not*; that is, I know the malicious Reproaches and evil Speeches of your Enemies caſt upon you; partly by Native Jews, who glory in Circumciſion and the Law; and partly by Falſe Chriſtians, profeſſing Faith in Chriſt, but not daring to own him for fear of Perſecution. Theſe belong to Satan's Synagogue, not to Chriſt's Church: None are ſo Bad as they who only profeſs and ſeem to be Good. *Obſerve* farther, the Encouragement which Chriſt gives this Church to perſevere in the Faith, though they ſhould ſuffer much ſharper Things than ever they yet ſuffered, Fear none of the Things you may be called forth to ſuffer: What though the Devil by his Inſtruments caſts ſome of you into Priſon, and you ſuffer for a ſhort Time, be Faithful to your Profeſſion until the Day of your Death, and I ſhall reward you with a Crown of Life. *Note* here, (1.) That Satan by his Inſtruments has been the Cauſe of all thoſe bitter and bloody Perſecutions which Chriſtianity in all Ages has undergone. *Note* (2.) That though Satan's Malice be infinite, yet his Power is limited and bounded; he cannot do all the Miſchief he would, and he ſhall not do all he can: Satan ſhall caſt you into Priſon, but not into Hell; and not all of you into Priſon neither, but ſome only. *Note* (3.) How mercifully Almighty God over-rules the Devil's Rage and Malice, making it ſubſervient to his own Glory, and his Churches Good, cauſing that which Satan intended for Deſtruction to ſerve only for Probation and Trial. The Devil's Deſign by all thoſe Floods of Wrath which he pours out againſt the Church is, that ſhe may be deſtroyed: But God's Intent is only that ſhe may be tried; even as the Wiſe Refiner when he caſts his Gold into the Furnace deſigns the purifying of the Metal, and only the conſuming of the Droſs. *Note* (4.) That the Sufferings of Good Men for the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, tho' they may be ſharp, yet ſhall they be but ſhort: *Ye ſhall have Tribulation Ten Days*; that is, for a ſhort ſpace of Time. *Note* (5.) That a perſevering Faithfulneſs in the Service of Chriſt in this Life is indiſpenſably neceſſary to our obtaining the Crown of Life and Immortality in the World to come: *Be thou faithful to the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* *Obſerve* laſtly, the Concluſion of this Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*. This is partly *Hortatory*; *He that hath Ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches.* The Warnings of the Holy Spirit to the Churches are recorded as of great Concernment for all to mind; and partly *Promiſſory, he that overcometh*, that is, conquereth the Love of this World, and the Love of Life, when God calls him forth to ſuffer, he *ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond Death*; that is, he ſhall eſcape Eternal Miſery, that Living Death, and that Dying Life, which will be the aſſured Lot and Portion of the Wicked and Ungodly World.

12 And, to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, theſe things ſaith he, which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges. 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, *even* where Satan's ſeat *is*: and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and

haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where ſatan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, to eat things ſacrificed unto Idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the ſpirit ſaith unto the churches, to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth *it*.

In theſe Verſes is contained the Third Epiſtle, which St. *John* by Direction had wrote and ſent to the Church at *Pergamus*, in which (as in the former) we have, (1.) A Deſcription of Chriſt, as having a Sharp Two-edged Sword in his Mouth; denoting the Word of God, and that Piercing Power which accompanies it to conquer the Luſts and Corruptions of Men. As alſo, (2.) A Commendation of what was Good and Excelling in that Church, *I know thy Works*; that is, with a Knowledge, and Intelligence, and Obſervation, as alſo with a Knowledge of Approbation and Acceptation. I know thee to be good in bad Places, and in the worſt of Times, tho' thou dwelleſt where Satan's Seat is; that is, where Satan bears Sway by Idolatry and Perſecution, yet doſt thou *hold faſt my Name*; that is, the Doctrine of the Goſpel preached in my Name, and by which I am made known to the World as a Man is by his Name; *and haſt not denied my Faith*, but openly profeſs'd it in a Time of Perſecution, even then when Blood and Slaughter attended the Profeſſors and Profeſſion of it, namely, when *Antipas* was ſlain, (who probably was a Biſhop, or ſome Miniſter in *Pergamos*, of Extraordinary Piety, for upon ſuch the Storm of Perſecution generally falls,) who died a Faithful Witneſs to the Truth of my Goſpel; even then and there, I ſay, hadſt thou the Courage to Profeſs my Name, and bear Witneſs to the Truth. Mark here, what an Honourable Mention Chriſt makes of the Services and Sufferings of his People; nothing we either do or ſuffer for Chriſt but it is recorded, and ſhall be remembred to our Commendation and Honour in this Life, and to our Conſolation and Happineſs in the next. Yet *Note farther*, The Holy Impartiality of our Bleſſed Lord; at the ſame Time when he commends this Church for what was commendable and praiſe-worthy, he reproves her for what was faulty and blame-worthy; *v.* 14. *But I have a few Things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt them that hold the Doctrine of* Balaam, *and the Nicolaitanes*; that is, the Doctrine of the impure *Gnoſticks*, who teach Men *now* to eat Things offered to Idols, and to commit Fornication, even as *Balaam of Old* directed *Balac*, to enſnare the *Iſraelites*, by committing Fornication with the *Moabitiſh* Woman, and to eat of what they ſacrificed unto Idols then. Here *Obſerve*, That it was not the Being of theſe Hereticks and Hereſies amongſt them that Chriſt blames them for, but the tolerating of theſe in their Communion, who made light both of Adultery and Idolatry. They ought to have executed Church Diſcipline upon them, and denounced the Church Cenſures againſt them, as had been done by the Church of *Epheſus* before them, that Chriſt might have ſaid of them as he did of thoſe, *v.* 6. *Thou hateſt the Deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I alſo hate. Obſerve* next, The Councel which Chriſt gives this Church, *Repent*; that is, be humbled for this thy Connivance at, and tolerating of this wicked Sect, and damnable Doctrine, and amend, or verily I will come quickly upon thee and them in a Way of Judgment, *and fight againſt them with my Two-edged Sword*; that is, with my Holy Word convince, wound, and condemn them, *&c.* The want of Zeal and Severity againſt Sin, and incorrigible Sinners, is very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and provokes him to Anger greatly. *Obſerve* laſtly, the Concluſion and Cloſe of this Epiſtolary Letter, which is partly Exhortatory, *He that hath Ears let him hear*, and with his Mind ponder and conſider what the Spirit ſaith, by Way of Counſel and Caution unto the Churches; and partly Conſolatory, *To him that overcometh will I give*, *&c.* Mark, he doth not ſay to every one that fighteth; no, nor to every one that conquereth in One, Two, or more particular Acts of Reſiſtance; but to him that perſeveringly conquers, and finally overcomes, both Tempter and Temptations, both Perſecutors and Perſecutions, both Falſe Teachers and Falſe Doctrines, to them will I give the *hidden Manna*, laid up not in the Earthly Tabernacle, but in the Heavenly Sanctuary: By which underſtand Chriſt himſelf, and the Joys and Conſolations of the Holy Spirit, which are hidden from the World, and the peculiar Portion of ſuch as ſincerely believe in him, and chearfully ſuffer for him. It is added, *I will give him a White Stone, and on the Stone a New Name*; that is, Abſolution and Pardon of Sin, together with the Priviledge of Adoption; it being a Cuſtom anciently to give a White Stone in Token of Abſolution, and a Black Stone as a Sign of Condemnation, on which Stones were written the Names of the Innocent and Guilty; accordingly this new Name ſignifies God's pardoned and adopted Ones; the Sweetneſs and Comfort of which Priviledge no Man knows but he that is poſſeſſed of it; the Happineſs of God's Sons both here and hereafter cannot be expreſt; only they that are ſo, know what it is to be ſo: And whereas Chriſt ſays, *I will give the* hidden Manna, *I will give* the White Stone, and the New Name, to them that overcome, ſurely it affords a good Argument to evince and prove his Divinity: Who but a God can pardon Sin, and ſanctifie, and ſave, Sinners?

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, theſe things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine braſs: 19 I know thy works, and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the laſt *to be* more than the firſt. 20 Notwithſtanding, I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezabel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs, to teach and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication, and ſhe repented not. 22 Behold, I will caſt her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

The next Epiſtle is directed by Chriſt, and written by St. *John* to the Church at *Thyatira*; in which Epiſtle *Obſerve*, (1.) The Name given to Chriſt, he is ſtiled the *Son* of God; that is, by Eternal Generation, being the only Begotten of the Father, as well as Begotten of the Father only; and Partaker of the Father's Eſſence, as well as of his Likeneſs; he is here called the Son of God, as being a diſtinct Perſon from the Father; yet is he the *Firſt* and the *Laſt*, which denotes his Eternity; and *who* is, and who *was*, and *is* to *come*, the Almighty, which are Eſſential Attributes of the Godhead. *Obſerve* (2.) The Deſcription here given of Chriſt, *His Eyes like flaming Fire, and his Feet like burning Braſs*; denoting thereby his piercing and diſcerning Sight to ſee and obſerve his Enemies, his fiery Indignation, and fierce Wrath, ready to take hold of them, and his irreſiſtible Power and Strength, to vanquiſh and tread them under his Feet. *Obſerve* (3.) The *great* and *ſpecial* Commendation which Chriſt gives to this Church; greatly ſhe is commended for her Charity to Chriſtians in Diſtreſs; for her *Service* in miniſtring to them, and in comforting of them; for her Faith and conſtant Adherence to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and for her Patience under Perſecutions for the Goſpel ſake; but her ſpecial and peculiar Commendation was this, that *her laſt Works were more than her firſt*; that is, her laſt Works were better, did exceed and excel the firſt: *Epheſus* was beſt at firſt, and worſt at laſt; but *Thyatira*'s laſt Works were beſt. It is a Bleſſed Thing when Chriſtians grow in Goodneſs, encreaſe in Faith and Holineſs, when their laſt Days are their beſt Days, their laſt Works, and their laſt Fruit, their beſt, their faireſt, Fruit. *Obſerve* (4.) The Reprehenſion follows the Commendation, as good as *Thyatira* was, ſhe needed to be better. She was remiſs and negligent in her Duty of reproving, cenſuring, excommunicating, vile Seducers, the Gnoſticks and Nicolaitanes, the Diſciples of *Simon Magus*, and his Lewd *Helena*, as ſome think compared to *Jezebel*, becauſe ſhe enticed *Ahab* to worſhip *Baal* as this Woman, (whoſoever ſhe was,) calling herſelf a Propheteſs, and teaching the lawfulneſs of Fornication, and eating Things offered to Idols. Some *Obſerve*, That there was ſcarce any Hereſie broached but it had ſome Woman or other for the Propagator and Promoter of it, who took upon them the Name of Propheteſſes; *Simon Magus* had his *Helena*, *Montanus* had his *Priſcilla* and *Maximilla*, *Carpocrates* his *Marcellina*; concerning this Perſon it is affirmed that *God gave her ſpace to Repent, but ſhe Repented not.* *Learn* thence, That great is the *Sin*, *Folly*, and *Danger*, of deferring and putting off the Duty of Repentance when God gives us Time and Space ſufficient to to perform it. (1.) Great is the Sin, becauſe it is a mocking of God's Patience, and undervaluing of his Service, a contempt of his Authority, a preſuming on his Goodneſs, a defiance of his Diſpleaſure. (2.) Great is the Folly as well as the Sin of it, becauſe we put it off to the moſt improper and unfitting Seaſon, and becauſe we hereby make the Work more hard and difficult, in what Seaſon ſoever we ſet about it; and the longer we delay our Repentance, the more Work ſhall we make for Repentance. (3.) As great is the Danger, as either the Sin or Folly, becauſe it puts a Perſon upon a mighty Hazard, he runs a deſperate Venture, not knowing whether he ſhall live an Hour longer; and becauſe we forfeit by our Delays that ſpecial Grace, without the Aſſiſtance whereof we can never Repent. *Obſerve* (5.) How ſeverely God threatens *Jezebel* here, and in her all Sinners to whom he gives Space for Repentance, but it is not improved for that End; I will caſt her into a Bed of Tribulation and Torment, inſtead of her Bed of Luſt and Uncleanneſs, unleſs ſhe Repent. Behold here how great and immeaſurable the Patience of God is towards the greateſt, the vileſt, and the worſt, of Sinners; they have Space for Repentance, they have Invitations to Repent, they have Judgments threatned to prevent their final Impenitence, but if they prove Incorrigible and Unreclaimable, nothing is to be expected but approaching Ruin; *I will kill her Children with Death*; that is, ſuch as are ſeduced by her ſhall ſuffer with her, if Judgments threatned be not by Repentance prevented. *Obſerve* laſtly, The End and Deſign of Chriſt in bringing upon vile Sinners theſe exemplary Puniſhments, namely, to declare his Omniſciency, Power and Juſtice: *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts*; that is, all the Churches in and about *Thyatira*, ſays Chriſt, ſhall know that I not only obſerve outward Acts, but take notice of the ſecret Counſels, Motions, and Deſigns, of Mens Hearts, and will judge every Man according to his Works; a full and clear Text to prove the Divinity of Chriſt; he that ſearcheth Mens Hearts, and renders to all Men according to their Works, is God; but Chriſt doth both, therefore he is eſſentially and truly God.

24 But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they ſpeak, I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have *already*, hold faſt till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give Power over the nations: (And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers,) even as I received of my Father. 27 And I will give him the morning ſtar. 28 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Here Chriſt returns in his Counſel and Charge given to the Church at *Thyatira*, *unto you I ſay*; that is, to you the Angel, the Governours and Paſtors, and to all the Members of the Church; I ſay unto you all, who have not owned nor entetained theſe Doctrines of the *Gnoſticks*, who proudly call their filthy Opinions profound Myſteries, and Depths of Knowledge, though they are indeed the Depths of Satan, his Policies and Devices; as if Chriſt had ſaid, theſe vile Seducers call their Opinions Depths, and ſo they are, but Depths of Satan; that is, ſuch Depths as Satan has brought out of Hell; they are the Whiſperings and Hiſſings of the Old Serpent, not the Inſpirations of the Holy God: To you I ſay that I will not impoſe or put upon you any New Doctrine, but charge you to hold faſt the Old, that Apoſtolick Doctrine which you have received, perſevere therein till I come to relieve you, and to releaſe you, from your Perſecutions, which will ſoon be at an end: *Hold faſt till I come.* *Obſerve* farther, How our Saviour concludes this Epiſtle to the Church of *Thyatira*, as he did the former, with a Conſolatory Promiſe to ſuch as overcome Temptations, Perſecutions, all, and all manner of Oppoſition in their Chriſtian Converſation, and faithfully perſevere in Well-doing to the End; *to him*, ſays Chriſt, *will I give Power over the Nations*; that is, Power with me, and in Subordination to me, to judge the World, wicked Angels, and wicked Men, at the Great Day; then ſhall you rule them *with a Rod of Iron, and daſh them to ſhivers like a Potter's Veſſel, even as I have received of my Father*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, I have received Power as Mediator from my Father effectually to ſubdue and conquer all mine and your Enemies, and I will make you Partakers of it in ſome Meaſure; you ſhall exerciſe an irreſiſtible Power over them by conſenting to, by approving and applauding of that Righteous Judgment which I ſhall denounce againſt them, and execute, and inflict upon them. *Learn*, that Believers ſhall ſit as Aſſeſſors with Chriſt in Judgment, and approve the Equity of his Proceedings againſt the finally Impenitent then, though never ſo near and dear unto them now. *Obſerve* laſtly, The full and final Reward which Chriſt Promiſes to him that finally perſevereth, and manfully overcometh, I will *give him the Morning Star*; that is, my Self and Spirit to comfort him, and the Light of Glory to ſhine upon him, to all Eternity. *Note*, Chriſt is called a Star, becauſe he enlightens all with the Light of Natural Knowledge, and his Church with Divine Illumination; and the *Morning Star*, peradventure with Reſpect to his Incarnation, becauſe as that riſes not at the beginning of the Night, or at the middle of it, but towards Morning; ſo Chriſt came not in the beginning or middle of the dark Time unto the Law, but in the laſt Age of the World, in which he has ſhined forth to the Joy and Comfort of all Nations.

CHAP III.

1 AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars; I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou haſt received, and heard, and hold faſt, and repent. If therefore ſhall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

This Chapter begins with the Fifth Epiſtle which Chriſt wrote and directed to the Church of *Sardis*. In which *Obſerve* (1.) The Glorious Deſcription given of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, namely, that he *has the Seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars*; that is, according to ſome, he hath the Holy Spirit of God proceeding from him, as from the Father; and becauſe he had Power to ſend the Holy Ghoſt together with the Father, he is therefore ſaid to have the Seven Spirits of God; ſo the Holy Ghoſt is called, becauſe of the Perfection and Variety of his Gifts and Graces, Influences and Operations; others by the Seven Spirits underſtand created Angels; and the Seven Spirits being joined with Seven Stars, intimates according to theſe that Chriſt is the Lord of Angels and Miniſters; he upholds his Miniſters, and has Angels always at hand to defend his Members. *Obſerve* (2.) This Churches partial Opinion of herſelf, in her own and others Eſteem ſhe was alive; thou haſt a Repute for an Excellent Church, thy Profeſſion cauſes many to think and ſpeak well of thee: *Thou haſt a Name that thou liveſt.* *Obſerve* (3.) Chriſt's Impartial Judgment concerning her, as one that knew her better than either others did, or herſelf could know her; thou ſayeſt thou art thus and thus, Alive and Lively; but alas! Thou art better than Dead, thou art Dead or Dying, thy ſelf and others are deceived concerning thee. *Learn* hence, (1.) That it is poſſible for a profeſſing People to be Alive in their own and others Eſteem, and yet to be Dead or Dying in God's Account; at the ſame Time that they make a ſplendid and Glorious Profeſſion of Religion, they may be under the Reign and Power of Hypocriſie. *Learn* hence, (2.) That no Religious Pretences, no Fair Shews, can poſſibly hide a Perſons or a Peoples Hypocriſie from God's Eye; thou ſayeſt thou art thus, but I know thee better than others do, or thou canſt know thy ſelf; thou haſt a Name to Live, but thou art Dead. *Obſerve* (4.) The Counſel given by Chriſt to this languid and languiſhing Church. (1.) *To be watchful*, to ſhake off her Drowſineſs and Formality; no Reformation can be expected, if due Conſideration, Watchfulneſs and Care, be not exerciſed. (2.) *To ſtrengthen the Things which are ready to die*; that is, blow up every Spark of Grace which lodges under the Aſhes of much Corruption, and keep it from going quite out; Spirituals are to be ſuccoured and ſtrengthned if once they grow languiſhing and dying, leſt they grow quite dead. (3.) *To remember what they had received and heard* from Chriſt's Apoſtles and Miniſters, *to hold faſt the* Truths received, and to *repent* of what is evil, and to reform what has been done amiſs; *intimating*, that it is the Duty of Chriſtians to remember thoſe Truths which they have heard and received, and alſo to hold faſt what they have heard and received; and that renewed Repentance is the Duty of Chriſtians, as well as initial Repentance. *Obſerve* (5.) The Complaint which Chriſt brings in againſt this Church of Sardis, *I have not found thy Works perfect before God*: Not full ſays the Original; that is, not filled up with that Sincerity and Zeal which God requires; a Man may be full of good Works, and yet his Works not be full; a Man may be full of Prayer, pray much, pray often, and yet his Prayer not full, but vain and empty: Sincerity is the fulneſs or filling up of all Duties; it is not common Frailty, but the want of Sincerity and Soundneſs, Zeal and Serioùſneſs, which Chriſt complains of. *Obſerve* (6.) The Danger threatned to Security and Slothfulneſs: *If thou ſhalt not watch I will come upon thee as a Thief*; that is, I will ſurprize thee with my Judgments in the midſt of thy Security, as a Thief does Perſons when they are aſleep, and leaſt expect him; the Expreſſion plainly intimates both the ſuddenneſs of the Judgment, and the ſeverity of the Judgment threatned.

4 Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

Note here, That though the greater Part in *Sardis* were dead, or dying, that is, declining and decaying; yet there were ſome that kept their Innocency, and preſerved themſelves from Error and falſe Worſhip, from Erroneous Principles and Debauched Practices. *Note* farther, That theſe few which kept themſelves pure above the reſt are not commanded to ſeparate from the reſt: Doctrines crying up Purity to the Prejudice of Unity reject; for the Goſpel calls for Unity as well as for Purity. *Note* alſo, The Reward promiſed to ſuch as kept themſelves in *Sardis* pure both from Error and Vice, *They ſhall walk* with Chriſt in White, like Perſons of Dignity and Honour, like Kings and Conquerors, who of Old wore White Garments; they ſhall have the Reward of their Innocency and Uprightneſs; for they are worthy of it, according to the Law of Grace which promiſeth it to them; they have walked worthily; with a worthineſs of Meekneſs, not with a worthineſs of Merit; they are therefore meet Receivers, tho' not meritorious Purchaſers, of this Reward.

5 He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be cloathed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Obſerve, Chriſt doth not ſay, he that conflicteth, but he that vanquiſheth; not he that conquereth once or twice in the Spiritual Combate, but he that overcomes at laſt the Temptations and Perſecutions from without, the Luſts and Corruptions from within, he ſhall be cloathed with White Raiment; that is, with Robes of Glory, as the Reward of his Innocency and Virtue, and as a Mark of Dignity and Honour; and farther, *I will not blot his Name out of the Book of Life*; that is, they ſhall be enrolled in it, and certainly ſaved, and I will preſent them to my Father, yea, I will publickly own them, and confeſs them before God, and Angels, and Men; Lord! What an Honour is this to know thy People by Name, and to call them by Name before thy Throne, and there publickly to acknowledge them, and proclaim the Good done by them? Oh let it be our Care to get firſt the White Garment of Grace on Earth, and then we ſhall not miſs of the White Robes of Glory in Heaven.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Theſe Words are the ſame Exhortatory Concluſion which we find added by Chriſt to all the foregoing Epiſtles, and plainly ſignifie thus much, that all Perſons ſhould look upon themſelves as concerned in theſe ſeveral Meſſages which the Spirit of Chriſt ſends unto the Churches: Hence it is ſo oft repeated both in the former Chapter, and in this Chapter, becauſe it is of ſuch univerſal uſe, and ſo nearly concerns us all.

7 And to the Angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, Theſe things ſaith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and ſhutteth, and no man openeth: 8 I know thy works: behold, I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it: for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, (which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold, I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Here we have the Sixth Epiſtle indited by Chriſt, written and ſent by St. *John* to the Church of *Philadelphia*, which *Name* ſignifies Brotherly Love; and we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that Grace of Love, Unity and Concord, was eminently found with and amongſt the Members of this Church, and had a mighty Influence upon them in the Practice of univerſal Godlineſs, inaſmuch as we find not this Church blamed by Chriſt for any thing; not that ſhe was wholly faultleſs, and altogether unblamable; but being free from thoſe groſs Miſcarriages which were in other Chriſtians, and abounding with Love to Chriſt, and one towards another, Chriſt graciouſly paſſes by and overlooks her Failings and Infirmities, and only proclaims her Virtues, and good Works, *Sincerity* and *Love*; though they do not blind Chriſt's Eye that he cannot ſee Sin in his People, yet it cauſes him to look upon their Failings with a Pitiful and Compaſſionate Eye: This *Philadelphia* is ſaid to be a mean City, not far from *Sardis*, yet here Chriſt had a very Eminent Church not faulted for any thing; it is not the Grandeur, but Graciouſneſs of a People, that renders a Place renowned: In this Epiſtle to the *Philadelphians* we have theſe Particulars obſervable, (1.) A lofty Deſcription of Chriſt, by whoſe Authority it was written, he is *Holy and True*; *Holy* in himſelf eſſentially, Holy with reſpect to us communicatively, the Author, Approver, and Diſpenſer, of all Holineſs; and *True*, that is, a Lover and Approver of Truth. This Title aſſures the Church of the Truth of all his Predictions, Promiſes and Threatnings: Theſe Two Titles, Holy and True, are generally aſcribed to God in the Old Teſtament; theſe Chriſt in the New Teſtament often attributes to himſelf, which he had never done had he not been truly and really God; the other part of the Deſcription of Chriſt follows, *Who hath the Key of David*; that is, of the Church of which *David* was a Type by the Key Power is denoted; Chriſt as Mediator has an abſolute Power over the Church, being Lord and Head of it; and has committed a Miniſterial Power of the Keys to the Governours and Paſtors of it; and having this Key of the Church in his own Hand, by virtue of it he *opens, and none can ſhut, and ſhutteth, and none can open*: That is, he can open when he will the Door of Succeſs to his faithful Miniſters, by opening the Hearts of his People through the Power of converting Grace; and no Man can ſhut that Door whom Chriſt will thus open; and again, when ſhe ſhuts out the finally Impenitent out of the Church, and out of Heaven, no Man can open, and bring them in againſt his Will; *He openeth, and can ſhut, he ſhutteth, and none can open.* *Obſerve* (2.) The ſpecial Favour which Chriſt indulged to this Church, namely, the Favour of Succeſs in her Goſpel-Adminiſtration: *Behold, I have ſet before thee an open Door*: Under the Metaphor of an open Door the Succeſs and Progreſs of the Goſpel in the Preaching and Diſpenſation of it is ſhadoweth forth; it is a ſpecial Favour from God when he opens a Door of Advantage to us, to do good, the leaſt good, either by convincing and converting Sinners, or by edifying, ſtrengthening and comforting Saints, and when God is pleaſed to open ſuch a Door, none ſhall ſhut it. *Obſerve* (3.) The Commendation given by Chriſt of this Church; *Thou haſt a little ſtrength*, a little ſpiritual and inward Strength, and but few external and outward Helps and Advantages, yet *haſt thou kept my word*, my Doctrine of Faith, and my Precepts for holy Walking, theſe haſt thou kept pure, *and haſt not denied my name*, but adhered conſtantly to the Profeſſion of me and my Goſpel, notwithſtanding all the Temptations thou haſt met with by Sufferings and Reproaches. *Note* here, How Chriſt took notice of that little meaſure of Strength which this Church had and accepted it; weak Grace, if ſincere, ſhall always find acceptance with Chriſt; *Thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word. Obſerve* (4.) The gracious Promiſe made by Chriſt unto this Church, that her Enemies ſhould ſubmit themſelves unto her, and worſhip before her Feet; behold, ſays Chriſt, *I will make them of the ſynagogues of ſatan*, which falſly call themſelves *Jews*; I will make them, namely, by the Power of my Grace, to come and *worſhip* before thy Feet; they ſhall reverence thee, and pay a civil reſpect to thee, and ſhall know that I have loved thee. Learn hence, That the Submiſſion which the Enemies of the Church ſhall be forced to make unto her, by the Power of Chriſt, is great and wonderful.

10 Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Still our Bleſſed Saviour proceeds with Promiſes and Encouragements to this Church, *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience.* Here *Note*, That the Doctrine of the Goſpel is called the Word of Chriſt's Patience, partly, becauſe it teaches Patience in perſecuting Times, and partly, becauſe it is a Doctrine which cannot firmly be adhered to without Patience, *Thou haſt kept the word of my patience.* To keep this Word of Chriſt's Patience, implies not only the keeping his Doctrine pure and uncorrupted from Error, but alſo the obſerving and practiſing all the Duties of a good Life. And *Note*, The Reward promiſed to this Church for the performing of this Duty, *Becauſe thou haſt kept ---- I will keep thee*; Chriſt will not be behindhand in rewarding our Obedience, no, not in this Life, *I will* (here) *keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world.* Here *Note*, (1.) That a Time of Affliction, much more of Perſecution, is a Time of Temptation; becauſe an afflicted and perſecuted State hath many Circumſtances attending it, by which all are tried, and ſome enſnared. *Note* (2.) That a time of Trial and Temptation will come, moſt certainly come, ſooner or later upon all Perſons that dwell upon the Earth, upon Sinners as well as Saints, upon Hypocrites as well as ſincere Chriſtians, which Trials will infallibly diſcover the Faith and Conſtancy of the one, the Corruption and Apoſtacy of the other, *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will alſo keep thee from the hour of temptation.*

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.

Obſerve here, notwithſtanding this Church's Conſtancy, yet Chriſt exhorts her to Stedfaſtneſs, *Hold faſt:* the ſteadieſt and moſt ſtedfaſt Chriſtians have need to be often cautioned and counſel'd againſt Backſliding. *Obſerve* alſo, the Encouragements which Chriſt gives his Church to hold faſt her Innocency, Fidelity and Patience; the firſt is drawn from the ſhortneſs of her Sufferings, by reaſon of Chriſt's ſudden coming, *Behold I come quickly*, that is, to deliver my faithful People, and to deſtroy their Enemies; the ſecond is drawn from the hazard which they run of loſing the Crown for want of an unfainting Perſeverance, *Hold faſt, that no man take thy crown.* Where *Note*, That only the perſevering Chriſtian ſhall be crown'd, and that each perſevering Chriſtian ſhall have his *own* Crown. There are *probably* differences of Reward in Heaven, as well as degrees of Miſery in Hell; for quality the Glory will be the ſame, they ſhall ſhine as the Sun; for degree it will *likely* be differing, as much as one Star differs from another in Glory, let *no man take thy crown.*

12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, *&c.*

In this Verſe Chriſt promiſes a threefold Reward to them that finally overcome all the Temptations and Trials of this Life. (1.) They ſhall be *Pillars* in God's Temple, that is, honourable and glorious Members of the triumphant glorifi'd Church, and ſhall have a fix'd Happineſs therein; poſſibly the Holy Ghoſt here alludes to the Pillars in *Solomon*'s Temple, which were very beautiful. (2.) *They ſhall go no more out*, the Pillars in *Solomon*'s Porch were remov'd and carri'd away by the *Caldeans*, but theſe Pillars ſhall be perpetual, their glorious State ſhall be a fix'd unchangable State; when all the Pillars of the Earth ſhall tremble, theſe Pillars in the Temple of Heaven ſhall remain Immovable to eternal Ages. (3.) As in Pillars erected by Men, their Names were written and engrav'd, in like manner does Chriſt here promiſe the Inſcription of a threefold Name upon theſe Pillars, the Name of *God*, the Name of the *City of God*, and his *new* Name; *the Name of God* ſignifies the Perſon to be an adopted Child of God; *the Name of the City of God* declares ſuch a Perſon to be a Citizen of the *New Jeruſalem*, which is ſaid to *come down out of heaven*, that is, the Knowledge of it comes down to us from God, otherwiſe we had never known it, nor could ever have conceiv'd of it: And Chriſt's *new Name* is that of the *Glorious Redeemer*, and ſignifies him that overcometh ſhall be honour'd as one of Chriſt's Redeem'd ones; the whole Name put together, to wit, the Name of God, the Name of the City of God, and the new Name, ſignifies an adopted Son of God, an Heir of the *New Jeruſalem*, and a living Member of Chriſt the Glorified Redeemer: Thus ſhall it be done to them whom Chriſt delighteth to Honour in the *New Jeruſalem*; above ſhall they ſpend an Eternity in the Rapturous and Raviſhing Admiration of that Love which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit beſtow'd upon them, in making them firſt the adopted, and now the glorified Sons of God.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

This is again the Cloſe and Concluſion of this, as it was before of all the Epiſtles, in which Chriſt calls upon all Perſons to hear and conſider what he ſaith by his Spirit to this Church, and to lay it deeply to Heart for their Inſtruction and Admonition. The Counſel which is given by Chriſt to one particular Church he requires and expects ſhould be applied to all, and improved by all.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, Theſe things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then, becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.

This Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans* is the ſeventh and laſt Epiſtle which Chriſt commanded St. *John* at this time to write; moſt of the Churches were found faulty before, but none like this here; Formality and Hypocriſy, Coldneſs and Indifferency in Religion had ſo far prevail'd in this Church, that we find nothing commended in them, nothing of Good ſpoken of them, and none of them exempted from the general Charge brought in againſt them for that Lukewarmneſs and Hypocriſy. In this Epiſtle now before us, *Obſerve* (1.) A Deſcription of Chriſt in his deſervedly glorious Titles. Thus ſaith the *Amen, the faithful and true witneſs*, that is, he that is Verity and Truth itſelf, both in his Promiſes and his Threatnings, who is Holy, and cannot Lie; Righteous, and cannot Deceive; Wiſe, and can never be Deceiv'd. Therefore Chriſt takes upon him this Name here of the *faithful and true witneſs*, to awaken theſe drowſy Hypocrites, to ſee and conſider that he knows their State and Condition, and will teſtify and witneſs againſt them. There is no ſuch effectual remedy againſt Hypocriſy, Lukewarmneſs and Indifferency in the Matters of Religion, as a firm Belief of Chriſt's Omniſciency and Veracity. The other Title given to Chriſt is, *The beginning of the creatien of God*, that is, the Beginner of the Creation of God; the original and firſt Cauſe by which all the Creatures of God had their Beginning. Chriſt is not only *Principium Principatum*, but *Principium Principians*, not the Paſſive Beginning, or he that firſt created, but the Active Beginning, or he by whom the Creation was begun, both the old and new Creation. Now Chriſt takes upon him this Title to encourage the *Laodiceans* to come unto him (according to the Invitation given, *v.* 18.) to recover them from their Formality, ſeeing he is Omnipotent, and can give a Being and Beginning to Grace in the new Creation, as he did to Nature in the old and firſt Creation. *Obſerve* (2.) The Reproof here given to this Church of *Laodicea*, *I know thou art neither hot nor cold*; thou art not for open Hereſie, or Infidelity, but likeſt well a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. You receive the Goſpel, and ſo are not quite cold; but you want Zeal to ſuffer any thing for it, and ſo are not at all hot. I ſee nothing in thee but a lukewarm Indifferency, for which I diſown thee, nay, diſdain thee. Learn hence, (1.) That Chriſt loaths lukewarm Perſons, who profeſs Chriſtianity with Reſerves for worldly Safety. Theſe *Laodiceans* were neither Enemies to Chriſt, nor true Friends, but ſerved God and Gain, Chriſt and the World, by turns, as Occaſion ſerv'd. Learn (2.) That tho' God abominates Lukewarmneſs and want of Zeal, yet he will not diſown thoſe who have any Spark of true Zeal, tho' defective, and culpably remiſs, he will not quench ſmoaking Flax, but blow it up into an Holy Flame: But all that have not ſo much Zeal as to prefer Chriſt before the World, ſhall be accounted his Enemies, and diſowned by him.

17 Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 18 I councel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayeſt be cloathed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee.

Obſerve here (1.) This Church's partial Opinion of herſelf; her Vanity and Vainglorious Oſtentation, accompanied with Self-eſteem, *She ſaid ſhe had need of nothing.* *Obſerve* (2.) That this Boaſting and Vainglorious Oſtentation did very probably ſpring from, and was occaſion'd by this Church's worldly Proſperity, *Thou ſayeſt I am rich and encreaſed in goods.* We are apt to miſtake the warm Sun for God's Bleſſing, and to apprehend when we are Great, that we are Gracious; and becauſe rich in Goods conclude ourſelves rich in Grace. But alas, God lifts up the Light of his common Providence upon Thouſands whom he does not lift up the Light of his reconciled Countenance upon. *Obſerve* (3.) Chriſt's impartial Judgment concerning this Church of *Laodicea*. Thou ſayſt thou art *rich*, and needeſt *nothing*; but I ſay, thou are *wretched* and *miſerable*, *poor*, *blind*, *and naked.* Behold here how ſome have little or no Grace, who yet conceit they have much Grace; as ſome reckon their Temporal, ſo there are others that value their Spiritual Eſtate at many thouſands beyond what it really is, and when upon a juſt Ballance of Account they are worth nothing. Ah miſerable Souls! Empty and Guilty, Poor and Penileſs in Spirituals, wanting every thing, but eſpecially a ſight and ſenſe of their Poverty and Wants. *Obſerve* (4.) The Counſel given by Chriſt to this Church, very ſuitable to her Condition; what pinches more than *Poverty*? Here is *Gold* to *enrich* us. What ſhames us more than *Nakedneſs*? Here is a Promiſe of *Raiment* to cloath and cover us. What afflicts and grieves us more than Blindneſs? Here is *eye-ſalve* to anoint us. But obſerve the Order of the Words, (1.) Chriſt ſays not I *command* thee, but I *counſel thee.* O infinite Condeſcenſion! the Lord Jeſus does not always Command like a King, but ſometimes Counſels like a Friend; he Counſels us by his Spirit; he Counſels us by his Miniſters; he Counſels us by our own Conſciences. (2.) Chriſt's Counſel is to *buy*, that is, earneſtly to deſire, and ſincerely to endeavour the procuring ſuch Spiritual Bleſſings as we want; we buy with our Prayers, our Tears, our Endeavours. (3.) The Bleſſings offer'd, *tried gold*, that will bear the Touchſtone; that Faith and Holineſs which will give thee boldneſs in Judgment. *White raiment*, or the Merits of the Mediator, which covers our Shame and Nakedneſs out of the ſight of God. And *eye-ſalve*, or the Grace of ſpiritual Illumination, whereby we ſee the want and worth of theſe ſpiritual Bleſſings.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten: Be zealous therefore and repent.

Here Chriſt lets the *Laodiceans* underſtand, that altho' he had been ſharp with them, in reproving them for their Formality and Lukewarmneſs, yet it was upon a merciful Deſign towards them, it proceeded from a Principle of Love in him; for *as many as I love*, ſays Chriſt, *I rebuke and chaſten.* Chriſt does not therefore love his Children becauſe he corrects them, but he therefore corrects them becauſe he loves them. None the Favourite whom God lov'd too well to ſtrike; nay, commonly there goes the ſevereſt Exerciſes where there has been the greateſt love. Let not then God's Chaſtnings of us abate our Love to him; for neceſſity compels God to correct, nothing is done by Rods, but what could not be effected without them. *Be zealous therefore and repent*; as if Chriſt had ſaid, *O Laodicea!* lay aſide thy lukewarm Indifferency, and be fervent in my Service, repent and amend your Ways, if you would eſcape your Chaſtnings and Rebukes, for I had much rather give you the Kiſſes of my Lips than the Blows of my Hand. If then you love not Correction, prevent it by Zeal and Reformation.

20 Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.

Theſe Words are very expreſſive of the tender Love, and gracious Condeſcenſion of Chriſt towards poor Sinners; full of heavenly Rhetorick, to win and gain their Hearts unto himſelf. Here *Obſerve*, That Man's Heart is Chriſt's Door, that this Door of the Heart is naturally ſhut, yea, lock'd and barr'd againſt Chriſt by Ignorance and Infidelity. That notwithſtanding this, Chriſt knocks graciouſly at the Door of Mens Hearts, by his Word, by his Rod, by his Spirit. Knocking is a vehement Motion, a reiterated Motion, we knock again and again; a gradual Motion, firſt more gently, then loudly; and it is a finite Motion, Men will not always continue knocking; but if no Anſwer they turn their Backs and go their Way; all the Knocks of Chriſt will ceaſe and end, his Spirit will not always ſtrive. Farther *Obſerve*, Chriſt doth not always knock, but ſtands knocking; it denotes the Aſſiduity of Chriſt in waiting upon Sinners, and his Patience in knocking. Standing is a waiting poſture, it denotes an earneſt Deſire, and patient Expectation. Again *Obſerve*, tho' Chriſt knocks at the Door of Man's Heart, he doth not break it open, he doth not offer Violence to Mens Wills, and ſave them againſt their Wills; but the Holy Spirit enclines them to hear Chriſt's Voice, and enables them to open the Door to him, cauſing them to approve of, and conſent unto, the Offer and Call of Chriſt; yet again *Obſerve*, That the Door is no ſooner open but Chriſt comes in, and Sups with the Sinner. His *coming in* denotes our Union to him; his *Supping* our Communion with him, imperfect on Earth, compleat in Heaven. There is a mutual, ſweet, and intimate Communion between Chriſt and Believers here on Earth; there will be a perfect, compleat, and uninterupted Communion with him in Heaven, when they ſhall ever be with the Lord.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.

Here our Saviour concludes this Epiſtle as he did the former, with a Promiſe to the perſevering Chriſtian, *To him that overcometh*, namely, all the Trials and Temptations of this Life, and keeps his Faith, Love and Obedience entire to the end, *I will grant*, not in a way of Merit, but of Free Gift and Grace, *to ſit down with me in my throne*, namely, to partake of the ſame Power and Glory, and Kingdom, that I, as Mediator, do now partake of. Where *Obſerve*, Chriſt here diſtinguiſhes between his own Throne and his Father's; the former ſeems to be his Mediatorial, the latter his Eſſential Throne. And he plainly tells us, that as he obtained his Glory by overcoming Satan and the World, ſo muſt we, *To him that overcometh will I grant-- even as I alſo overcame.* The way to Heaven for Chriſt and all his Members is the ſame; as he conquer'd and finally overcame on Earth, before he was crown'd in Heaven, ſo muſt they.

22 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

Thus Chriſt ſhuts up this, as he did all the preceding Epiſtles before, with a repeated Exhortation to all Chriſtians to the end of the World, to hear, read, attend unto, and obſerve all the Cautions and Warnings, all the Reproofs and Counſels, all the Promiſes and Threatnings contain'd in this and the other Epiſtles, as Matters that do greatly concern all Chriſtians to underſtand and know, *Let him that hath an ear hear.*

CHAP. IV.

In the foregoing Chapters we had St. John's *firſt Viſion from Chriſt, relating to the State and Condition of the Seven Churches of* Aſia, *in this he has a farther Viſion of the Glorious and Incomprehenſible Majeſty of God in Heaven, wherein were repreſented to his Intellectual Eye and Sight God's Celeſtial Throne, his ſitting upon his Throne, his Heavenly Attendance, his Awful Preſence, his Diſplayed Glory, and Unſpeakable Praiſes, as in the ſequel of this Chapter is declar'd.*

AFter this I looked, and behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the firſt voice which I heard, *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which ſaid, Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee things which muſt be hereafter.

As if St. *John* had ſaid, After my firſt Viſion was over, being deſirous farther to underſtand and know the Mind of God, I looked upwards to Heaven, from whence Divine Revelations come, and it was repreſented to me as if a Door were opened into the third Heavens; and I apprehended that I heard that former Voice which ſpake to me in the firſt Chapter, now ſpeaking to me again; namely, the Voice of Chriſt, ſounding like a Trumpet in my Ear, and ſaying, *Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee*, or give thee a clear Repreſentation *of things* that *ſhall be hereafter*. Where *Note*, (1.) That ſuch a Soul as has taſted the Sweetneſs of Communion with Chriſt, does long for the farther and fuller Enjoyment of him; *After this I looked.* It was a Gracious Viſion he had of Chriſt in the firſt Chapter, but it did only whet his Deſires after more Communion with him, and clearer Manifeſtations from him. *Note* (2.) That the Knowledge which advances and improves a Man's Underſtanding on Earth, comes all from Heaven; thither we muſt look up, and from thence ſeek, if we will know the Things of God; *I looked, and behold a Door was opened in Heaven.*

2 And immediately I was in the ſpirit: and behold, a throne was ſet in heaven, and *one* ſat on the throne. 3 And he that ſat, was to look upon like a jaſper, and a ſardine ſtone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald.

I was in the Spirit; that is, in an Extaſie, in a Trance, in a Rapture of Delight and Joy, raviſhed in Spirit. This Viſion was repreſented to his Mind more lively than any Corporeal Objects could be to his outward Senſes, which were now all bound up. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Viſion itſelf, a *Throne ſet in Heaven*; St. *John*'s Mind was not taken up with Earthly Matters: Worldly Crowns and Scepters were now poor Things in his Eſteem, and will be ſo in the Eſtimation of all others, who have a Proſpect of a Throne in Heaven, as our Apoſtle had. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon whom he ſaw ſitting upon his Throne, God the Father in Royal Majeſty, whoſe Power and Glory was repreſented by the Similitude of precious Stones, particularly by the Jaſper and Sardine Stone; which Stones (ſay ſome) being of a red and fiery Colour, repreſented how terrible God is in Judgment, cloathed with Omnipotent Power, and inflexible Juſtice; but to allay the Terror of this Viſion, St. *John* ſaw a *Rainbow round about the Throne, in ſight like unto an Emerald*; this was very comforting, for the Rainbow was of old a Token of God's Covenant, *Gen.* 9. that he would never more drown the World by Water; here it denotes the Covenant of Grace, whereby the Church is ſecured from the deluge of God's Wrath by the Blood of a Mediator; and mark, this Rainbow was *round about* the Throne; let God look which Way he will, here is that which reminds him of his Covenant and Promiſe, and the colour of this Rainbow was *like an Emerald*; that is, of a moſt pleaſant and delightful Greenneſs, ſignifying, that Almighty God in mindfulneſs of his Covenant takes unſpeakable delight and pleaſure in the Exerciſe of Mercy towards his Children, even then when he appears cloathed with Terror, to judge and ſentence an Impenitent World; bleſſed be God, that he that ſetteth upon the Throne of Judgment has a Rainbow about him, giving full Aſſurance that for his Covenant ſake, the floods of his Wrath ſhall not overwhelm his Children, when his Enemies are ſwept away with the Deluge of Deſtruction.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty ſeats: and upon the ſeats I ſaw four and twenty elders ſitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

St. *John* having deſcribed Almighty God as ſitting upon his Throne in the former Verſe, here he declares whom he ſaw about the Throne as Aſſeſſors with him, namely, *Four and Twenty Elders*, by which ſome underſtand the Patriarchs and Apoſtles, as Repreſentatives of the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Church; others underſtand hereby the whole Body of private Chriſtians, a certain number being put for an uncertain, who are repreſented, (1.) as *round about the Throne*, to denote their nearneſs unto God, and their Communion with him. (2.) As *ſetting*, to ſignifie their State of Reſt and Eaſe, and to denote their ſetled and ſecure Condition of Happineſs which they now Enjoy. (3.) *As cloathed in white Raiment*, to repreſent their Prieſtly Dignity, that they were all Prieſts unto God: as alſo their celeſtial Purity and Glory. (4.) As having on *their Heads Crowns of Gold*; this Knightly Dignity, that as Kings they do, and ſhall Reign with Chriſt for ever and ever, who having *loved them*, and *waſhed them from their Sins in his own Blood, has made them Kings and Prieſts unto God.* (5.) They are called Elders, to ſignifie their great Wiſdom and Experience: ſuch as with Patriarchs and Apoſtles have done the greateſt Services for God on Earth, ſhall ſhare with him in the higheſt Dignity and Honour in Heaven, ſitting nearer the Throne than others: St. *John* ſaw the Elders not only near the Throne, but ſitting round about it.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thundrings, and voices: And *there was* ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the ſeven Spirits of God.

By the *Throne*, God is repreſented as a Judge; by the *Thunderings* and *Lightnings*, and *Voices*, is repreſented the Terribleneſs of God in judging Sinners. As the Law was delivered upon Mount *Sinai* in Lightning and Thunder, ſo will there be the ſame; nay, far greater Dread and Terror, when God comes to judge and plead with Sinners for their wilful and repeated Tranſgreſſions of that Law. By the *Seven Lamps of Fire burning before the Throne*, ſome underſtand the Holy Spirit of God in its manifold Gifts and Graces; enlightning quickning, warming, comforting, the Church of God; others underſtand the Holy Angels, who are continually waiting upon this Judge, and attending of this Judicature, who are as his Eyes and Feet; that is, his ready Inſtruments to execute his Pleaſure. God in the Judgment of the Great Day will be attended by his Saints as Aſſeſſors, by his Angels as Aſſiſtants.

6 And before the throne *there was* a ſea of glaſs, like unto cryſtal:——

By this *Sea of Glaſs* there ſeems to be an Alluſion to that large Veſſel of Water in the Temple, called the Brazen Sea, in which *Aaron* and his Sons did waſh themſelves before they adminiſtred in Holy Things; *ſignifying*, that Purity which is required in all the Worſhippers, but eſpecially in all the Miniſters of God, and becauſe the Uſe of this Sea in the Temple is made good in Chriſt, the Laver of his Blood might be ſignified by this *Sea of Glaſs* here repreſented, which is compared to Cryſtal; denoting the ſpotleſs Innocency of his Perſon and Sufferings, and the Purity and Cleanneſs of his juſtified Members. Others by this *Sea of Glaſs* will have the *World* repreſented to St. *John*'s Viſionary View. The World (ſay they) is compared to *a Sea*, for its Inſtability, Tempeſtuouſneſs, and uncertain Motion, to *a Sea of Glaſs* for its Slipperineſs, and for its Brittleneſs; Glaſs yields no good footing to any that ſtand upon it, nor does the World to any that ſtay themſelves upon it; and to a *Sea of Glaſs like Cryſtal*, becauſe of the Clearneſs and Tranſparency of it to God; he ſees quite through it, all the Counſels and Actions of Men, being naked and open before God and the Throne. It follows:

6 —— And in the midſt of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beaſts full of eyes, before and behind. 7 And the firſt beaſt *was* like a lion, and the ſecond beaſt like a calf, and the third beaſt had a face as a man, and the fourth beaſt *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about him, and *they were* full of eyes within; and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

By the Four Beaſts here, underſtand the Four Evangeliſts in ſpecial, and all Goſpel Miniſters in general, who went forth to preach the Word in all the Quarters of the World: And here we have a moſt ſtately Emblem of true Goſpel-Miniſters, they have the Courage of the Lion, the Strength of the Ox, the Loftineſs of the Eagle, the Face, that is, the Prudence and Diſcretion of a Man. Farther, they are deſcribed *as full of Eyes*; they have Eyes looking *before* them to God for Direction looking *behind* them to the Flocks they lead, and *within* them to their own Hearts. They have alſo Six Wings, with Two they cover their Faces, manifeſting their deep Reverence of God, with Two they cover their Feet, manifeſting the humble Senſe of their Infirmities, and with Two they fly with chearful Expedition to the Service of God. *Obſerve* next what was repreſented to St. *John*, as the perpetual Employment and Work of Heaven; namely, inceſſantly to admire, love and praiſe the Holineſs of God, which is the Excellency of all his other Excellencies. *They reſt not Day and Night, ſaying, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.* Learn hence, That the celebrating of the Praiſes of the moſt High and Holy God is the inceſſant Works of Glorified Saints and Angels in Heaven, and a very great part of the Work and Duty of the faithful Miniſters of God here on Earth. Again, Learn (2.) from this Example, how much it is the Duty of the Miniſters of Chriſt to ſtudy and endeavour to make God known in all his Glorious Attributes, particularly in his Holineſs and his Power, as alſo in his Eternity and Simplicity, as he is the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever, without variation and ſhadow of changing.

9 And when thoſe beaſts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that ſat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.

Obſerve here, (1.) How St. *John* ſaw both Beaſts and Elders (repreſenting Miniſters and People) unitedly joining together, and with one Conſent, to ſound forth the high Praiſes of their God; *intimating* how the whole Body of ſincere Chriſtians ought heartily to join with their faithful Miniſters in that Bleſſed Work of Praiſing and Worſhipping the Eternal God. *Obſerve* (2.) That as a farther Act of Homage and Adoration, the Four and twenty Elders caſt *their Crowns down to the ground*; not in a Way of Contempt and Diſdain, as if they ſlighted the Glory conferr'd upon them by God, but in a Way of humble Gratitude; attributing their Victory and Reward to God, and not to themſelves, and acknowledging that whatever Honour they have, they have it from God's Hand, and are willing, very willing and ready to lay it down at God's Feet, and to diveſt themſelves of it, that they may put Honour upon God; profeſſing hereby that all the Goodneſs wrought in them, or done by them, does proceed from God's free Grace and Mercy, and that the Glory of it is intirely due to him. *Obſerve* (3.) The Hymn of Thankſgiving itſelf, which was jointly ſung amongſt them, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive, glory, and honour, and power.* As if they had ſaid, That God thou art, unto whom all the Homage and Adoration of thy Creatures are juſtly and peculiarly due; for thou haſt created all things by thy Omnipotent Power, and for thy Pleaſure, and the Manifeſtation of thy Glory they are ſtill preſerved as they were at firſt created. Where remark, That every Moment's Preſervation is virtually a new Creation, and that the ſame Omnipotent Power is neceſſary every Moment to preſerve us, which was at firſt requiſite to create us. Therefore worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour, and Everlaſting Praiſes, as thou art he who giveſt Being to all Creatures, and therefore giveſt it them, that they might Love and Laud, Magnifie and Bleſs, Glorifie and Serve, Honour and Obey thee, their Great Creator and Gracious Preſerver. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

AND I ſaw in the right hand of him that ſat on the throne, a book written within and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals.

In this Chapter we have a Continuation of the Viſion recorded in the former Chapter. *There* St. *John* ſaw a Throne ſet in Heaven, and a Perſon ſitting upon that Throne in Majeſty and great Glory, repreſenting to him God the Father. *Here* he beholds the ſame Glorious Perſon ſitting upon the Throne, with a Book in his Right-Hand, *written within, and on the backſide, ſealed with ſeven ſeals. Obſerve* here (1.) What St. *John* ſaw, namely, *a Book*, by which Mr. *Meed* and others underſtand a Roll, containing God's Decrees and Counſels, his Purpoſes and Reſolutions, concerning the future State of the Church, as they were to be fulfilled according to Prophecy, and brought to paſs in ſeveral Ages, as the Providence of God ſhould order and ſee fit. *Obſerve* (2.) The Perſon in whoſe Hand this Book of the ſecret Counſels of God was; namely, in *God*'s own Hand, and in his *Right-Hand*, thereby denoting his Authority to impart and communicate the Knowledge of this ſealed Book to whom he pleaſed, and alſo his Power to execute his Purpoſes and Counſels when he pleaſed, and as he pleaſed. And none but God himſelf can declare who God is, ſo none but God himſelf can declare what God does, and what in After-Ages he will do. *Obſerve* (3.) The copious Fulneſs of this Book, it was written *within*, and *on the backſide*, inſide and outſide fill'd up, ſo that there was no room left either for *Addition* or *Alteration*. *Obſerve* (4.) It was a ſealed Book, yea, ſealed with Seven Seals, denoting the Matters that are therein contain'd to be moſt *Divine* and *Excellent*, *Secret* and *Myſterious*, *Certain* and *Unalterable*, and the Knowledge of them impoſſible, without the Help and Favour of ſpecial Revelation.

2 And I ſaw a ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much becauſe no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders ſaith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to looſe the ſeven ſeals thereof.

Obſerve (1.) Here is a Proclamation made by an extraordinary Angel, like an Herald or Officer, inquiring who was *worthy*, either in regard of *Authority*, or in reſpect of *Ability*, to *open* this *Book*, and *unlooſe* the *Seals*; that is, to diſcloſe the ſecret Counſels of God, and to make them known unto the Sons of Men; *implying*, that every Angel in Heaven is not worthy or meet to be the Expoſitor of God's Mind and Myſteries unto Man. *Obſerve* (2.) The great Silence which there was in Heaven upon this Proclamation, amounting to an abſolute and peremptory Denial, that not any one, either in Heaven, or Earth, or under the Earth; not any Angel in Heaven, nor any Saint living upon Earth, nor any dead Saint under the Earth, nor any Devil or Infernal Spirit, was either worthy to open the Book, or able to foreſee or foretel the leaſt Event concerning the Church farther than revealed to them. Learn hence, That neither Angels nor Devils do underſtand the myſterious Counſels of God, or can reveal future Things to Man, any farther than as God is pleaſed to reveal the ſame unto them. *Obſerve* (3.) St. *John*'s great and bitter Lamentation, becauſe no Perſon was found worthy to open the Book, and reveal unto the Church the ſecret Counſels of God concerning her. *I wept* much, fearing, no doubt, leſt the Church of God ſhould be depriv'd of the Benefit and Comfort of this Revelation. Such as are the true Members of the Church are greatly affected with all the Providential Diſpenſations of God which do befal her; but nothing goes ſo near them as to have the Mind and Will of God hidden and conceal'd from her. *Obſerve* (4.) A ſeaſonable Conſolation given to St. *John*; one of the Elders that were about the Throne ſaid to him, Weep not, for care is taken for the opening and revealing of the Book. Chriſt, who is called the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, the Son of *David*, as Man; and the Root of *David*, as God, is found worthy, in regard of the Dignity of his Perſon, and the Prevalency of his Merits, to open unto the Church all the Myſteries of God which are meet and convenient for her to underſtand and know. *Qu.* Why is Chriſt called the Lion of the Trrbe of *Judah*? *Anſ.* In Alluſion to *Jacob*'s Bleſſing, *Gen.* 48. where *Judah* is called a Lion's Whelp, denoting the Dignity and Superiority of that Tribe above the reſt. Now Chriſt deſcended of this Tribe, and is called a Lion in regard of his Kingly Power and Strength, in regard of his Stoutneſs and Courage, in regard of his Mildneſs and Clemency, and true Nobleneſs of Spirit to them that ſubmit and yield unto him, and in reſpect of his Vigilancy and Watchfulneſs over his Church; all which are the known Properties of the Lion; and as that Creature is the King of Beaſts, ſo is Chriſt King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the only Potentate; Dominion and Fear are with him. *Qu.* But how could Chriſt be called *David's* Root, when we know that *David* did not ſpring from him, but he from *David*, according to the Fleſh? *Anſ.* In a natural Senſe *David* was the Root of Chriſt, but in a ſpiritual Senſe Chriſt was the Root of *David*. *David*, as Man, was the Root of Chriſt; Chriſt, as Mediator and God-Man, was the Root of *David*. Thus he was both *David's* Lord, and *David's* Son. *Pſal.* 110. 1.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt of the throne, and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders ſtood a Lamb, as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns, and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God ſent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beaſts, and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of ſaints. 9 And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the earth.

Obſerve here, (1.) that St. *John* had a Viſion of Chriſt in the former Verſe under the Repreſentation of a Lion: here he is repreſented under the Form and Figure of a Lamb, as wounded, bloody, ſacrificed and ſlain; as bearing upon him the Signs and Scars, the Marks and Tokens of his By-paſt Death; his appearing as a Lamb ſlain denoted his Death, his ſtanding denoted his Reſurrection. *There ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain*; it is added ——*having Seven Horns*, the Strength of a Beaſt lying in its Horns; this expreſſion of *Seven Horns* denotes that Omnipotent Power which Chriſt has in himſelf, and that Fulneſs of Power which he does exert, and put forth upon all Occaſions in defence of his Church It follows,—*And Seven Eyes, which are the Seven Spirits of God*; theſe repreſent the Holy Spirit of God in its manifold Graces given by Chriſt unto the Church, as his Agent, and Advocate upon Earth; ſo that here in the Text and Context are all the Three Perſons in the Holy Trinity, whoſe Divinity we believe, and in whom we Truſt; God the Father upon the Throne, with a Book in his Hand; Chriſt the Lamb in the midſt of the Throne, opening the Book; and the Seven Spirits or Holy Ghoſt diſtinct from the Two former. *Obſerve* (2.) The Office which Chriſt, as Mediator of God-Man, performs; he goes to the Throne, and takes the Book out of the Father's Hand; that is, he receiv'd Power from God to open the Book of Myſteries, and to execute them: Chriſt ſat upon the Throne as God, but went to the Throne for the Book, as God-Man; this Power was due unto him as the reward of his Sufferings. *Obſerve* (3.) The joyful Acclamations, accompanied with the profoundeſt Adorations, which were deſervedly given by the holy Inhabitants of Heaven to Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Perſon worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals; *They fell down before the Lamb, ſaying, thou art worthy, for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us.* *Note* here, Divine Worſhip given to Chriſt, the Lamb, which proves his Deity; they Sing an Hymn of Divine Praiſe to the Bleſſed Redeemer; with Harps, and Golden Vials in their Hands, *a new Song*: That is a moſt excellent Song, ſetting forth the Benefits, and extolling the Praiſes, of the Lord the Redeemer. *Obſerve* (4.) The Churches Celebration of thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings which by the Death of Chriſt ſhe had received, namely, (1.) They were redeemed unto God out of every Kindred and Tongue, People and Nation, which ſhews the univerſal Extent of the Goſpel Church ſcattered over the Face of the whole Earth, in and among all the Nations of the World. (2.) They were by him made Kings and Prieſts unto God, to Reign on Earth; that is, Spiritual Kings and Prieſts unto God, to Reign over Sin, Satan, and the World, trampling their Spiritual Enemies under their Feet not expecting an earthly Dominion.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beaſts, and the elders: And the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beaſts ſaid, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Office of the Holy Angels in Heaven declared, they ſtand *round about the throne of God* continually, as Nobles, and chief Miniſters of State attend upon a Prince, awaiting his Pleaſure, and expecting his Commands. *Obſerve* (2.) The numberleſs number of them, *Thouſands of Thouſands, and Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand*; and as Almighty God is attended by an innumerable Company of Angels in Heaven, ſo do the Holy Angels ſtand ready to Accompany and Protect his People here on Earth, *Pſal.* 34. 7. *They encamp round about them.* *Obſerve* (3.) How readily and chearfully the Holy Angels joined with the Elders in Bleſſing and Praiſing Chriſt for the invaluable Fruits and Benefits of Man's Redemption; thoſe Beneficent Spirits rejoice in our Happineſs; they Joy at the Converſion of a Sinner, and Triumph at the Glorification of a Saint? Here they are ſaid to Sing with *a loud Voice*, to ſhew their Affection and Zeal in the Work of Bleſſing and Praiſing God for Jeſus Chriſt, who is an Head of Confirmation to them, as he was an Head of Redemption unto us. *Obſerve* (4.) How the Angels give the ſame Worſhip, pay the ſame Homage, aſcribe the ſame Honour to Chriſt which they do to God the Father, this had never been given, had he not been eſſentially God: The Angels pronounce and proclaim Jeſus Chriſt worthy of Omnipotent Power; and that Honour, Glory, and Bleſſing, do appertain to him for evermore. *Obſerve* laſtly, That not only all the Angels, but all the Creatures in *Heaven*, in *Earth*, *under the Earth*, and in *the Sea*, all and every of them, do Worſhip Chriſt with Religious Worſhip, and pay him Divine Honour; adore him that ſits on the *Throne*, and the *Lamb*, for ever and ever; that is, the rational Part of the World, to wit, Angels and Men, Actively; the ſenſitive Part of the World, Objectively; the diabolical Part, Paſſively: Chriſt extorts that Glory from them by their Torments, which they refuſe to give unto him by Confeſſions and Voluntary Acknowledgments; what greater Argument than this can we deſire for our Satiſfaction that Chriſt is Truly and Eſſentially God? He thinks it no Robbery to be equal with God, to ſhare with him in all that Honour and Homage, in all that Adoration and Religious Worſhip, which the whole Creation do pay to Almighty God; for thus do the Angels and Elders above, and the whole Church Militant here below, chaunt forth the Praiſes of the *Creator* and Redeemer, ſaying,

Bleſſing, and Glory, and Renown,
We now give all together,
To him that on the Throne ſets down,
And to the Lamb for ever.

Amen, Hallelujah.

CHAP. VI.

AND I ſaw when the Lamb opened one of the ſeals, and I heard, as it were the noiſe of thunder, one of the four beaſts, ſaying, Come, and ſee. 2 And I ſaw, and behold, a white horſe; and he that ſat, on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

The former Chapter acquainted us with Chriſt's *receiving* of the ſealed Book; this with the opening of it Seal by Seal. Chriſt reveals unto St. *John* the deep Counſels of God which were hidden and ſecret; the only begotten Son that lay in the Boſom of the Father he hath revealed them, he only received Authority, and he only was indued with Ability to reveal them. *Note* (1.) The Preparation made for St. *John's* Viſion of the Seals, he ſtanding as far off with profound Reverence, heard a Voice like Thunder proceeding out of the

Mouth of One of the Four Beaſts, who performed the Office of a publick Cryer, ſaying *Come and ſee.* It is dangerous ſearching into God's Secrets, and prying into his hidden Counſels, till we have a Call and Commiſſion, a Command and Invitation, from God himſelf ſo to do; thus had St. *John* here; one ſaid unto him, *come near, and ſee.* *Note* (2.) the Viſion itſelf; *I beheld a white Horſe, and he that ſat on him had a Bow and a Crown, &c.* By the white Horſe is generally underſtood the *Goſpel*, ſo called in regard of the Divinity and ſpotleſs Purity of its Doctrine; the *Rider* upon this Horſe is Chriſt, who rode ſwiftly in the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles, and other faithful Teachers in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; and he rode with a *Bow* in his *Hand*, and a Crown on his *Head*: With a *Bow*; that is, with Threatnings and Terrors denounced againſt his Enemies before they were inflicted upon them, as the Bow is firſt held in his Hand, then the Arrow prepared upon the String, and at laſt ſhot forth; and with a Crown, denoting that Royal State of Kingly Dignity and Honour, to which Chriſt the Lamb that was ſlain was now exalted: and thus he rode on *Conquering*, and to *Conquer*, till he had conſummated his Victories in a glorious Triumph over his Enemies, namely, in the Converſion of ſome, and Deſtruction of others; thus the opening of the firſt Seal gave the Church a very encouraging and comfortable Proſpect of the Victories, Succeſſes and Triumphs of Chriſt, notwithſtanding the Rage, Subtilty and Power, of all his Enemies: Chriſt rode on with his Bow in his Hand, and with a Crown on his Head, Conquering, and to Conquer, till his Arrows were ſharp in the Hearts of his Crucifiers, and will thus ride on till the People fall under him, and all his Enemies become his Footſtool.

3 And when he had opened the ſecond ſeal, I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 4 And there went out another horſe *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that ſat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was given unto him a great ſword.

The ſecond Seal opened did repreſent to St. *John's* Viſionary view, *a red Horſe*, of a bloody Colour, denoting firſt the dreadful Executions of God's Wrath upon the *Jews*, embroiling the Land with Wars, Diviſions, Bloodſhed, unpeaceable Tumults, killing and ruining one another, to which purpoſe he apprehended that he ſaw a Sword in *his* Hand that rode upon this Horſe, ſignifying the great Slaughters which would be committed by the *Jews* upon one another; others, ſecondly, by this *red Horſe*, underſtand the Bloody *Roman* Emperors, *Nero*, *Trajan*, *&c.* and the Perſecution which the Primitive Church underwent in their Days; *Euſebius* relates, that ſo fierce was their Rage againſt the poor Chriſtians, that a Man might ſee Cities lye full of dead Bodies, Old and Young Men and Women, caſt out naked, without any reverence of Perſons, or regard to Sex. From hence we may *Learn*, what little reaſon the Chriſtian Church has *to think ſtrange of the fiery Trial, as if ſome ſtrange thing hapned to them*, when as we ſee all the Rage and Cruelty, all the Blood and Violence, which the Chriſtian Church has fallen under in the ſeveral Ages of it, have been from the beginning revealed, and Prophetically foretold.

5 And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay, a meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

The third Seal opened, ſets forth the great Calamity which ſhould befall the Church by Famine, which ſome underſtand Literally, others Figuratively and Myſtically. (1.) A Literal Famine in *Judea* ſeems here to be prefigured by a Perſon riding on a Black Horſe, with a balance to weigh Food in his Hand; Famine diſcolours the Face of Men, and makes them look black, ſad and diſmal; accordingly it is repreſented by a Black Horſe, and the Rider having a Pair of Scales in his Hand, to weigh Corn by the Pound, and not to meaſure it by the Buſhel, imports the great Scarcity that there ſhould be of Bread; and St. *John* heard a Voice, ſaying, a Meaſure *of Wheat for a Penny, and Three Meaſures of Barley for a Penny.* The *Roman* Penny was the ordinary Wages for a Day's Work to a Labourer, ſo that the Quantity of Bread was but ſufficient to keep Perſons alive for one day; Famine is a very ſore and terrible Judgment, it conſumes a People by piecemeal; other Judgments cut off ſuddenly, but this is a lingring, and a languiſhing Death: Lord! Help us in the midſt of our fulneſs, when we eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet, to remember how righteouſly thou mayeſt cut us ſhort of our abuſed Mercies, how is it that we have not long ago ſinned away our Plenty, who have ſo often ſinned with our Plenty? (2.) Others underſtand the Famine here repreſented by the Black Horſe, to be meant of a Spiritual Famine, a ſcarcity of the Word of God, which fell out in the time of the Ten Perſecutions, when the Storm fell upon the Biſhops, and moſt uſeful Miniſters in the Church, when many bright and burning Lamps were extinguiſhed; others hid under a Buſhel, a diſmal gloomy Day, when the Church of God did eat her Spiritual Bread by weight, when all the Spiritual Food Men could get to keep their Souls alive from Day to Day could be but ſufficient for that end.

7 And when he had opened the fourth ſeal, I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horſe; and his name that ſat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth.

The fourth Seal opened repreſents a pale Horſe, (*Peſtilence*) with *Death* riding upon it; and *Hell*; that is, the Grave following it, denoting, ſay ſome, all the Calamities of Sword, Peſtilence and Famine, which Chriſt, St. *Mar.* 24. foretold ſhould come upon the *Jews*, and cauſe a Univerſal Devaſtation of their City and Nation, and as univerſal a Deſtruction of their Perſons. *Note* here, (1.) How Death is repreſented as ſitting upon a pale Horſe: by a Horſe for his Strength, there is no reſiſting of him; for his ſwiftneſs 'tis always poſting towards us; for its office and uſe, which is to cut off, and carry away; and by a pale Horſe, for its gaſtlineſs. Death has a grim and gaſtly Countenance, that ſtrikes Terror into all Hearts, and Paleneſs into all Faces. *Note* (2.) As terrible as Death was, it muſt, and did receive Power before it could deſtroy and kill; *I beheld a pale Horſe, and he that ſat on him was Death, and Hell followed him, and Power was given to them.* Learn thence, That all the Executioners of God's Wrath and Vengeance, Sword, Peſtilence, and Famine, Death of all kinds, do act by Commiſſion; yea, they all come forth with a limited Commiſſion, Power was given to them; others conceive that by this pale Horſe the Perſecution of the Primitive Church was repreſented under the Pagan Emperors, who made her Face look pale like Death by the loſs of a vaſt quantity of Blood and Spirits, when the Church was mowed down like a Meadow, and ſprang as faſt.

9 And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren that ſhould be killed as they *were*, ſhould be fulfilled.

Here we have the fifth Seal open'd; under which Chriſt repreſents to St. *John* the Condition of thoſe precious Souls of the holy Martyrs, who died for the Teſtimony of Chriſt, by the bloody Hands of Tyrants; the deſign whereof is, to ſupport and encourage all that were to come after in the ſame bloody Path. *Obſerve* here, (1.) The Viſion where St. *John* ſaw, namely, the Souls of the Martyrs; but how could they be ſeen? *Anſw.* Not by the external Senſes, being immaterial Subſtances, but *in Spirit* they were ſeen by him; he had a Spiritual Repreſentation of them made to his Mind. *Obſerve* (2.) The Place where he ſaw them *under the Altar*; that is, lying at the Foot of the Altar, as Sacrifices ſlain and preſented unto God. Where *Note*, that howſoever Men look upon the Death of the Martyrs, yet in God's Account they die as Sacrifices;

and their Blood is no other than a Drink-offering poured out to God, which he highly prizeth, and graciouſly accepteth. *Obſerve* (3.) The Cauſe of their Sufferings and Death deſcribed, it was for *the Word of God, and for the Teſtimony which they held*; as one of the Martyrs in the *Marian* Days held up his Bible at the Stake, ſaying, *This is that* hath brought me hither; they die not as Malefactors, but as Martyrs, giving a threefold Teſtimony to the Truth, a Lip-teſtimony, a Life-teſtimony, and a Death or Bloody-teſtimony; they held the Profeſſion of their Faith faſter than they held their own Lives. *Obſerve* (4.) What St. *John* heard, *a loud Cry*, ſaying, *How long*? Not, (1.) That Souls can ſpeak Audibly to the Ears of Men. Not, (2.) That they have any ſenſe of Sufferings when they are in Glory; it doth not imply that Souls there are in a reſtleſs State, or that they want true Satisfaction and Repoſe when they are out of the Body. Much leſs, (3.) Doth this Cry ſuppoſe that they carried with them to Heaven any angry Reſentments, or revengeful Diſpoſitions, towards their Murtherers; but this Cry ſuppoſes in them a vehement Zeal for the Glory of God, a flagrant Deſire that God would clear their Innocency, and make known his Juſtice among Men; that he would aboliſh the Kingdom of Satan, and conſummate the Kingdom of Chriſt; making all his Enemies to become his Footſtool; ſo that they pray for what Chriſt waits in Glory, *Heb.* 10. 13. All the revenge here deſired was only a Vindication of God's Holineſs and Truth, which he himſelf had promiſed. *Obſerve* (5.) The gracious Anſwer which God gave to the Cry of theſe gracious Souls in which he ſpeaks Satisfaction to them theſe Two Ways. (1.) By ſomewhat given them for the preſent. (2.) By ſomewhat promiſed them hereafter; firſt White Robes were given at preſent to every one of them; that is, large Meaſures of Heavenly Glory, as the reward of their Sufferings and Services, beyond other Saints; as if God had ſaid, though the time be not yet come to ſatisfie your Deſires in the final Ruin of Satan's Kingdom, yet it ſhall be well with you in the mean time; you ſhall walk with me in white, and enjoy my Glory in Heaven. Secondly, That is not all, but the very Things they cry for ſhall be given them after a little Seaſon; for God had more to call unto Sufferings beſides them; and they having conquered, ſhall be Crowned together; as if God ſaid, you my faithful Witneſſes wait a little while till your Brethren be got through the Red Sea of ſuffering as well as you, and then you ſhall ſee the Feet of Chriſt upon the Necks of all his Enemies; and Juſtice ſhall fully avenge the Precious Innocent Blood of all the Saints, which in all Ages has been ſhed for the Teſtimony of the Goſpel, from *Abel* the Martyr, to the laſt Sufferer, *Reſt for a little Seaſon until your Fellow-ſervants alſo, and their Brethren, ſhall be kill'd as you were.* Now from the whole learn theſe Leſſons of Inſtruction. Learn (1.) That the Souls of Men periſh not with their Bodies, but do certainly outlive them, and ſubſiſt in a State of Separation from them: The Bodies of theſe Martyrs were deſtroyed by divers Sorts of Torments, but their Souls were out of the reach of Danger: they were in ſafety under the Altar, and in Glory, cloathed with their white Robes, when their Bodies were either turned to Aſhes, or torn in Pieces by wild Beaſts; we ſhall not ceaſe to be, when we ceaſe to breathe; our Souls do not vaniſh with our Breath. Learn, (2.) That as the Soul is alive in a State of Separation from the Body, ſo is it awake alſo, and doth not ſleep with the Body. Mark, theſe Souls *cried* with a *loud Voice*; then they were not Aſleep, though their Bodies were Aſleep in the Duſt; the Opinion of the Soul's ſleeping with the Body till the Reſurrection is a wicked Dream; 'tis granted that the Organical Acts of the Soul, that is, ſuch Acts as do depend upon the Members of the Body, theſe muſt ceaſe, when the Body ceaſes; but we find when we are Aſleep, that the Soul can Act of itſelf without the Aſſiſtance of the Body; the Soul Grieves and Rejoices, Hopes and Fears, Chuſes and Refuſes; therefore the Soul is not only alive, but awake alſo in its State of Separation from the Body. Learn (3.) That there are not only Praiſes, but Prayers, in Heaven, and that for Juſtice to be inflicted upon Perſecutors here on Earth. O the miſerable Condition of Bloody Perſecutors! When Heaven and Earth both pray againſt them. Learn (4.) That there is no Sin committed upon Earth which doth more loudly call for Vengeance from God in Heaven, and which he will more certainly and ſeverely Puniſh, than Perſecuting and Wronging of his Saints and Servants. *Learn* (5.) That one Reaſon why the ſuffering Servants of God are not preſently delivered from their Perſecutions is this, becauſe more of their Brethren muſt ſuffer beſides them before their Perſecutions are ripe and ready for ſignal Vengeance. Learn laſtly, That the Souls of God's Martyrs ſhall be under the Altar in Heaven, cloathed in white, enjoying Divine Glory, before the fatal Day of final Vengeance come upon the perſecuting World; for though the patience of God ſuffers long, yet the Holineſs of God cannot permit that Innocency ſhould always ſuffer, and Violence with Perſecution go unpuniſhed, but in the mean Time they ſhall put on their Crown, and their Robes.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the ſixth ſeal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the ſtars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree caſteth her untimely figs when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty wind: 14 And the heaven departed as a ſcroul when it is rolled together; and every mountain and iſland were moved out of their places:

A threefold Interpretation is given relating to this ſixth Seal, and the opening of it. (1.) Some apply it altogether to the *Jews*; and that their Deſtruction in *Judea*, and at *Jeruſalem*, was ſo diſmal, that it was repreſented to St. *John* as the darkning of the Sun, and the Moon looking like Blood, and the Stars falling, ſuch Calamities impending as if Heaven and Earth were diſſolving, doubtleſs at and before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* there was a Confluence of ſuch Calamities, ſo Diſmal, and ſo Dreadful, as can very Difficultly be repreſented, or deſcribed. (2.) Others apply it to the Overthrow of Paganiſm, and the Deſtruction of the Heathen Emperors; the fall of Paganiſm, by means of *Conſtantine*'s Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, was the moſt terrible Judgment that ever fell upon the Devil's Kingdom; and accordingly by the Earth's quaking, the Sun's becoming Black, the Moon's becoming Blood, and the Stars falling from Heaven to Earth, is to be underſtood the great Changes that were made in the *Roman* Empire, by overturning the whole Pagan State, and making Chriſtianity the Religion of the greateſt Part of the World; ſo that the ſenſe of the foregoing Expreſſions is Metaphorical, and ſignifies a great and general Alteration of the Face of Affairs, as if the World was to be another thing. But, (3.) There are that Interpret all this of the great and horrible Confuſion of the Chriſtian World under Antichriſt, when Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs began to be obſcured; that is, his Doctrine concerning his Offices and Benefits darkned, the Moon or Church turned into Blood, the Stars or Paſtors fallen from Heavenly Offices, the Scriptures (like the Heavens rolled up) forbidden to be read, the Mountains. Kings and Princes, in Jeopardy, and the Iſlands brought under Antichriſt's Yoak and Tyranny. Laſtly, Some apply all this to the laſt Diſſolution of the World, and the final Judgment at the great Day, according to what follows in the Three next Verſes.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free-man hid themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?

Obſerve here, That if this was meant of the ruin of the *Jews* at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, it was exceeding Dreadful, and beſpake all ſorts of Men, from the higheſt to the loweſt, to be under a moſt dreadful Conſternation, when they ſaw an inevitable Vengeance coming upon them for crucifying Chriſt, and perſecuting his Members, which made them run into Rocks, and call upon Mountains to hide them: If it be applied to the Judgment of the great Day, it ſhews the Juſtice of Chriſt in forcing thoſe to call upon the Mountains to hide them, who by Perſecution had driven his Members to hide in Mountains, Dens, and Caves of the Earth: any ſort of hope of Deliverance would be then welcome, but alas! all help will fail, and all hope will be then in vain; neither Greatneſs, nor Numbers, will ſave any from Miſery and Terror, when that Day of Vengeance is come. Learn hence, That wicked Men, how Numerous, how Powerful and Strong, ſoever, ſhall fall before the Wrath and Indignation of Chriſt; if when Chriſt appears like an angry Lamb, the greateſt in the World fall before him, what will they then do when Chriſt ſhall put on the fierceneſs and ſeverity of a Roaring Lion? *Mœſtiſſima ſententia quæ a mitiſſime judice Denunciatur.* If the Wrath of the Lamb cannot be born; if the unbelieving Kings and Potentates of the Earth ſhall be caſt down at the Sight of Chriſt, where ſhall the Wicked, and the Sinner appear? If the Wrath of a King be as the Roaring of a Lion, what will the Wrath of God, of an Angry God be? Let us now be caſt down at the Sight of Sin, and we ſhall not be caſt down hereafter at the Sight of God; but when others at his Appearance cry to the Rocks to cover them, and to the Mountains to fall upon them, ſuch as have ſeen Sin to their Abaſement and Humiliation, ſhall ſee a Saviour to their joyful Satisfaction, and ſpend an Eternity in the rapturous Contemplation and raviſhing Fruition of him. *Amen.*

CHAP. VII.

The former Chapter gave us a general View and Deſcription of God's terrible Vengeance on his Churches Enemies; that is, upon the obſtinate Jews *in* Judea, *the Crucifiers of the Son of God,* ſay ſome; *upon the Pagan World, or Heathen Emperors,* ſay others; *under whom the Chriſtian Church ſuffer'd a bitter and bloody Perſecution for the firſt Three Hundred Years; namely, till the time of* Conſtantine *the Great.*

Now the following Chapters give us an Account of the Execution of thoſe Denounced Temporal Judgments upon the Jews, according to ſome; *or* according to others, *They repreſent the dark Kingdom of Antichriſt, wherein a great Storm of Hereſie did ariſe, and a Flood of Errors and falſe Doctrines did flow down, to the corrupting ſuch vaſt Numbers, that the* whole World is ſaid to wander after the Beaſt. *Leſt then the faithful ſhould faint, as if the Apoſtacy would be Univerſal, and the Chriſtian Church totally fail, Almighty God declares to St.* John *His Pleaſure in this Chapter, to ſeal an Hundred Forty four Thouſand; that is, to preſerve a very, very, great Number from the Stroke of this Judgment, be it Temporal or Spiritual; if Temporal, he would mark them, as he did the* Iſraelites *in* Egypt, *that the Deſtroyer may paſs over them; if Spiritual, he would preſerve a Number in His Church, which ſhould not Apoſtatize; ſo that the Church ſhould not fail, a Number of Sealed ones having the Promiſe of Preſervation from God.*

AND after theſe things, I ſaw four angels ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind ſhould not blow on the earth, nor on the ſea, nor on any tree.

Obſerve here, (1.) That if a Temporal Judgment on the *Jews* be here intended, then this Viſion repreſented to St. *John* God's Decree and Purpoſe for ſuſpending the dreadfal Execution of the threatned and intended Vengeance upon *Judea* for a time; namely, till God had *ſealed* his Number, that is, marked them for Preſervation, according to *Ezek.* 9. 4. *Set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men, &c.* that is, preſerve the penitent Believers from the common Deſtruction, as the *Iſraelites* were preſerved in *Egypt* from the Deſtroying Angel. *I beheld Four Angels* that had Power to inflict Judgments. Famine, Sword and Peſtilence, foretold *Ch.* 6. upon *Judea*, I beheld theſe Angels making a Stay and Stop before they would ſuffer thoſe Miſchiefs to break forth upon the Earth. Where *Note*, That the Office of the Holy Angels in Heaven is at God's Command, and by God's Direction, to execute Vengeance, and to inflict all Temporal Judgments upon obſtinate Sinners here on Earth; yet glad they are when it pleaſes God to ſtay and ſtop them from a ſpeedy Execution of his Wrath and Vengeance; for as Judgment is God's ſtrange Work, in which he does not delight; ſo neither is it pleaſing to the Angels, as an Act of Puniſhment, but only in Obedience to the Command of God, and with an Eye and Reſpect to the Glory of God. *Obſerve* (2.) That if a Spiritual Judgment be here intended, as others apprehend, namely, the Calamities befalling the Church, by reaſon of an Apoſtacy under Antichriſt: then by the *Winds* they underſtand Hereſies and falſe Doctrines of all ſorts, which have an impetuous Force and Violence, like Winds, to drive unſtable Souls from their Stedfaſtneſs in the Truths of God, into damnable Errors. Now God takes ſpecial Care that theſe Winds ſhould not blow, theſe Antichriſtian Errors and falſe Doctrines ſhould not overflow the Earth, until he had *ſealed* his People; that is, ſecured them from that Danger, preſerving them from Spiritual Defilement, as the undoubted Fruit of their *Sealing. Where we ſee,* that in all times of publick Calamity, be it Temporal or Spiritual, God has a ſpecial Care of his own, and bears a ſpecial regard unto his own. Here he commands the Angels to hold the Winds from ſmiting the Earth till the Number of his *Sealed* Ones was compleated.

2 And I ſaw another angel aſcending from the eaſt, having the ſeal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the ſea. 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed the ſervants of our God in their foreheads.

Obſerve here, (1.) The ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing Care which God took of his Church and faithful People before he ſuffered the approaching Storm to come upon the World. He did by another Angel cry to the Four Angels that were ready as God's Executioners to hurt the Earth, that they ſhould hurt nothing till the Servants of God were ſealed in their Foreheads, and his crying with a loud Voice intimates his great Care to preſerve his faithful ones. *Queſt.* What was this ſealing? *Anſ.* Some underſtand it of an external, viſible ſealing, by ſetting a Mark upon their Foreheads for Preſervation, according to *Ezek.* 9. 4. the Letter *Tau*; doubtleſs there was ſome Notification made by Almighty God to the deſtroying Angels of every one whom he would have preſerved. Others do underſtand this Seal to be internal, by Sanctification; and from thence we may gather, that Inward Holineſs is the beſt Guard againſt Temporal or Spiritual Judgments. But take ſealing in either Senſe, either for an outward or inward ſealing, the Notion doth imply, (1.) That the Perſons ſealed are of precious and excellent Eſteem with God. (2.) It imports Preſervation and Security from Danger; God ſealeth his People, that the Deſtruction coming upon others may eſcape them. Thus here, God's Servants were ſealed, that they might be preſerved. That they are kept either from Sin and Error, or from Judgments and Danger, is not from themſelves, but from God's Care and Love towards them in the ſealing of them. The Angel ſaid, *Hurt not the Earth,* &c. *till we have ſealed the Servants of God,* &c.

4 And I heard the number of them which were ſealed: *and there were* ſealed, an hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael. 5 Of the tribe of Juda *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 6 Of the tribe of Aſer *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Manaſſes *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Iſachar *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Joſeph *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

Note here, (1.) That the true Church is repreſented in this Book by the Name of the *Jews*, and the falſe Church by the Gentiles; ſo that by the Tribes of the Children of *Iſrael* is to be underſtood the whole Univerſal Church of ſincere and ſerious Chriſtians; all that profeſs and practice the Faith of *Abraham*, and ſo are his Spiritual Seed. *Note* (2.) That theſe Hundred Forty four thouſand are particularly mentioned, *Ch.* 14 *v.* 1. as the pure Virgin Church diſtinguiſhed from the Adulterous. This Number then comprehends all ſuch as during Antichriſt's Tyranny ſhould be kept from his Deluſions, of whatſoever Nation they be; all that adhere to Chriſt againſt Antichriſt are ſealed, to preſerve them from that Defection wherein others would be involved. *Note* (3.) The great Care which Almighty God takes in a time of general Apoſtacy, to preſerve a Number in all his Churches from that fatal Miſchief, that the Catholick Church may not fail; God has a Number ſealed, and ſuch as are ſealed ſhall be preſerved. *Note* (4.) That tho' the Number of God's ſealed ones be great in itſelf 144000, yet how ſmall is it in Compariſon of the not ſealed? *Note* (5.) That as God had a Number out of all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, ſo doth he gather to himſelf a People out of all Nations, Ranks and Conditions of men, in and throughout the whole World. *Note* (6.) That the Tribe of *Dan* is here left out; the Reaſons aſſigned for it are various, becauſe ſay ſome, Antichriſt was to come of that Tribe; but it doth not any where appear that ever Almighty God puniſhed a People before they committed a Sin: others with more Reaſon conceive it was the great Idolatry which this Tribe fell into, and continued in, till the Captivity; ſee *Judg.* 18. 30. and *Amos* 8. 14. yet muſt we not ſuppoſe that none of this Tribe were ſaved, becauſe here not mentioned; for we find *Sampſon* of this Tribe, and reckoned among thoſe Worthies, whoſe Names are recorded, *Heb.* 11. *By Faith* Sampſon. *Note* (7.) That *Levi*, or the Levites, who had no Inheritance in the Earthly *Canaan*, but were diſperſed and ſcattered throughout all the Tribes, that they might teach the People the Law of the Lord, and ſo could not be numbred *there*; yet, ſays the Learned and Pious Dr. *Hammond*, in Chriſt their Portion was as good as the reſt, and therefore were not omitted *here*. Behold here a Conſideration which adminiſters much Comfort to us, the Miniſters of the Goſpel; though many of us have no Earthly Poſſeſſions, and ſome cut ſhort of outward Comforts, yet our Title to the Heavenly Inheritance is good, and we ſhall not miſs of it as the Reward of our Faithfulneſs. *Note* Laſtly, That although *Levi* had the Charge of all the Tribes, and had the peculiar Favour above all the reſt to ſtand before God, and adminiſter to him in Holy Things, yet no more are ſealed of this than of the other Tribes, all were Teachers, but all were not ſealed; all are not ſaved that are of the Holy Calling, and who may be Inſtrumental to ſave others. It was a ſolemn Speech of an ancient Father, *Non Temere dico, ſed ut affectus ſum, ac ut animo ſentio: Revera puto ſacerdotes non multos eſſe qui ſalvi fient, ut plures eſſe qui pereunt.* With whom agrees St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. Fearing, *leſt having preached to others he himſelf ſhould become a Caſtaway.*

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God, which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and *about* the elders, and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

St. *John* having had in the former Verſes a Viſionary View of the Church Militant, under the Denomination of *ſealed* ones; In theſe Verſes a Proſpect is given him of the Church-Triumphant in Heaven: a moſt magnificent Deſcription of which we have here before us. Where *Note* (1.) The Triumphant Church above is deſcribed by its Multitude: *A numberleſs Number, which no Man can number*; according to the Promiſe made to Chriſt, of *bringing many Sons unto Glory.* (2.) They are deſcribed by their Variety; ſome out of every Nation, Tribe, People and Language, according to that of our Saviour, *Mat.* 8. 11. *They ſhall come from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt*, and from the North, and from the South, *and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.* (3.) They are deſcribed by their Poſture, they *ſtand* before the throne, and before the Lamb, as Servants attending upon their Lord, a moſt happy Station, as ſuch accounted by them; not that they ſtand perpetually gazing upon God, and doing nothing elſe, but they expreſs their Love unto him, by attending upon him, to execute his Command. (4.) They are deſcribed by their *Habit*, they are *cloathed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands*; white Garments import their Dignity, their Purity, their Joy. The Saints Dignity in Heaven is great, they are Kings and Prieſts unto God; their Purity great, being purified as he is pure, their Joy great, being entred into the Joy of their Lord, this Joy being too great to enter into them. *Note* farther how theſe glorified Saints do aſcribe all their Glory, Happineſs, and Salvation to Chriſt, and nothing to themſelves. *Salvation to our God, who ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb. Sancti quaſi ſanguine Tincti*, ſay ſome. Many of theſe Saints were Martyrs, that ſhed their Blood for Chriſt: But mark, their Garments were made white, not in their own Blood, but in the Blood of the Lamb. Again, they are deſcribed, *With Palms in their Hands*, as well as cloathed in white. Now this denotes their Victory, and the Reward of their Victory. Palms were amongſt the *Romans* Enſigns of Victory; all the Saints enter Heaven with Palms in Hand, having conquered Sin, Satan, and the World, and the whole Hoſt of Spiritual Enemies. *Obſerve* next, how the Holy Angels in Heaven do join with theſe Saints and Martyrs, in worſhipping God, and adoring the Lamb, *v.* 11. *And all the Angels ſtood round about the Throne, and fell on their Faces, and worſhipped God*, concurring with the Church in their Congratulations, adding their *Amen* to what the Palm-bearers had ſaid, and much more of their own, aſcribing *Bleſſing, and Glory, and Wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and Honour, Power, and Might, unto him for ever and ever.* Where *Note*, How the Triumphant Church is made up of an innumerable Company of Angels, as well as Saints, *Heb.* 12. beſides the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, makes mention of an innumerable Company of Angels, as part of the Church of the Firſt-born. (*Angeli* ϛῶσιν *Sancti* 'Αναϛάσιν *debent Chriſto Mediatori*, ſays one.) And St. *Paul*, *Epheſ.* 1. 10. ſays, *That in the Diſpenſation of the Fulneſs of Time he might gather together in one, all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him.* Whence it appears, that though Angels ſinned not, yet Chriſt gathered them and us into one Society, and is an Head both to them and us.

13 And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I ſaid unto him, ſir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid to me, theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them.

As if St. *John* had ſaid, One of the Elders; not out of Ignorance as to himſelf, but out of Deſire to inform me, asked me, Whether I knew what theſe were that ſtood arrayed in white? And I told him, I did not know, but deſired him to inform me. He replied, They were ſuch as had ſuffered great Tribulation for Chriſt, and were now accepted of him, and dignified by him; not for their own worthineſs, but for the ſake of his Sufferings. *Note* here, (1.) The preſent State and Condition of the Church of God, and Members of Chriſt, in this World, they are *in Tribulation*, yea, in great Tribulation here, as long as there is a Devil in Hell, and wicked Men upon Earth; all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer Tribulation. *Note* (2.) The future State which they ſhall be advanced to, they ſhall *come out of great Tribulation*, the Saints ſharp Sufferings and Perſecutions ſhall have a joyful Iſſue and Glorious End. Yet *Note*, (3.) That though the Croſs was the Way to the Crown, yet the Croſs did not merit the Crown; their Sufferings would not, could not bring them to Heaven, without having their *Souls waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb*, much leſs could their Sufferings merit and purchaſe Heaven, but it pleaſed God of his free Grace thus to reward their Sufferings. They were *waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb*, whoſe Blood paid the Price of their Salvation. *Note* (4.) The Deſcription which is here given of Heaven; it is called a Temple, in Alluſion to the *Jewiſh* Temple, in which God dwelt of old, as God by his Gracious Preſence dwelt in his Temple on Earth, ſo by his Glorious Preſence he dwells amongſt his Glorified Saints in his Temple in Heaven; and accordingly the Glorified Saints in Heaven do Temple-Service, they *worſhip* God continually, and ſerve him Day and Night. In Alluſion this is probably ſpoken, the Prieſts ſtanding in the material Temple, and ſerving in their Courſes Night and Day. *Pſal.* 134. 1. Heaven is a Place of Employment and Service, as well as of Pleaſure and Joy, and the greateſt Joy reſults from the greateſt Service.

16 They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the lamb which is in the midſt of the

throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Here St. *John* proceeds in giving a farther Deſcription of the Place and State of the Bleſſed; he acquaints us both with the privative Evils they ſhall everlaſtingly be delivered from, as alſo with the poſitive Good they ſhall eternally reſt in. As to the former, he aſſures us that Glorified Souls ſhall be acquainted with no Wants, and expoſed to no afflictive Providences. *They ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt*; that is, they ſhall be in a Condition free from all, and all manner of Wants whatſoever. *Neither ſhall the Sun, nor the Heat, light upon them*; that is, the ſcorching Heat of Perſecution, to which they were expoſed here, ſhall never more affect or afflict them there. And *God will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes*; that is, all Cauſe of Sorrow and Mourning ſhall everlaſtingly ceaſe. Farther, he acquaints us with the poſitive Good which Glorified Saints do eternally reſt in, the Lamb in the midſt of the Throne *ſhall feed them*; that is, Chriſt ſhall ſatisfie them with a Satiety of Joy, and Fulneſs of Pleaſure. And *lead them to the Living Fountains of Water*, that is, to the never-failing Comforts of God's Preſence. Oh happy Place and State! which will at once cauſe the Saints to forget all former Sorrows for time paſt, and happily prevent any farther Cauſe of Affliction and Sorrow for time to come; where no Sin ſhall afflict them, no Sorrow affect them, no Danger affright them, where all Tears ſhall be wiped from their Eyes, all Sorrows baniſhed from their Hearts, and everlaſting Joys ſhall poſſeſs their Souls; where they ſhall obey their God with Vigour, praiſe him with Chearfulneſs, love him above Meaſure, fear him without Torment, truſt him without Diſpondency, ſerve him without Laſſitude and Wearineſs, without Interruption or Diſtraction, being perfectly like unto God as well in Holineſs as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality. Lord, ſtrengthen our Faith in the Belief of this deſirable Happineſs, and ſet out Souls a longing for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of it.

CHAP. VIII.

AND when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour.

When *He* had opened, that is, when the Lamb, who opened the Six foregoing Seals, did open the Seventh, there was *Silence in Heaven* about half an Hour, by way of Alluſion to what was done in the Temple at the time of offering Incenſe. The end of which Silence was to give St. *John* an Opportunity to contemplate thoſe high Myſteries which he had revealed to him, and to prepare him for new Viſions, as Silence is cried before the Proclamation of great and weighty Matters. When great things are to be uttered, great Attention is expected, and great Silence prepares for great Attention.

2 And I ſaw the ſeven angels which ſtood before God; and to them were given ſeven trumpets.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Readineſs of the Holy Angels to execute the Will of God at all Times; *They ſtand before God*, namely, to miniſter at his Pleaſure, and to execute Judgments at his Command: whether theſe were good Angels or bad it is not material to diſpute, ſeeing God makes both the Executioners of his Judgments when he pleaſes. *Obſerve* (2.) The *Number* of theſe Angels, they were *Seven*, and no more, becauſe it pleaſed not God to pour down his whole Wrath at once upon the rebellious World, but at divers times, and gradually. *Obſerve* (3.) That to theſe *Seven Angels* were given *Seven Trumpets*, to publiſh God's Judgments to the World. Theſe Trumpets ſignify'd that God would proceed againſt the World in fearful Hoſtility, and appear againſt it as an Enemy to Battel, proclaiming, as it were, open War with ſound of Trumpet, and Beat of Drum, and hanging out a Flag of Defiance againſt it. The Patience of God, though laſting, yet will not be everlaſting. Theſe Angels ſounding the Alarm of Judgments before they did inflict theſe following dreadful Judgments upon the World, ſhews that God warns before he ſtrikes; he doth uſually preadmoniſh before he puniſheth. Judgment is his ſtrange work, he delights not in it: But when Sin calls upon him to ariſe out of his Place, to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity, he doth it with unſpeakable Reluctancy and Regret, like a tender-hearted Father, with a Rod in his Hand, and Tears in his Eyes.

3 And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden cenſer; and there was given unto him much incenſe, that he ſhould offer *it* with the Prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. 4 And the ſmoke of the incenſe *which came* with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God, out of the angels hand. 5 And the angel took the cenſer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and caſt it into the earth: and there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Obſerve here, That all along in the Viſion, which St. *John* had, a Repreſentation was made to his Mind of things pertaining to the *Jewiſh* Worſhip; his Viſionary *Temple*, the *Altar*, the *Incenſe*, the *Fire*; the *Cenſer* which he ſaw were in Alluſion to the material Temple, and to the Worſhip and Service performed there at *Jeruſalem*; and accordingly this other Angel here mentioned repreſented the High Prieſt, (who was an Illuſtrious Type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt) whoſe Office it was to offer Incenſe at the Altar, and therewith to offer up Prayers for the People. *Obſerve* farther, That Chriſt is here repreſented, as having a Golden Cenſer, whereas the High Prieſt's was only of Braſs, to denote that he was a more excellent High Prieſt; and *the much Incenſe given to him* repreſents his abundant Merits, whereby he renders the Prayers of all his Saints acceptable to his Father. *Learn* hence, That as Chriſt was the only Mediator of Redemption, ſo is he alſo the only Mediator of Interceſſion; his Mediation is founded upon his Satisfaction? None had to do with the Cenſer to offer Incenſe but he that had to do with the Altar to offer Sacrifice; who durſt offer to intercede with an offended God on the Behalf of Sinners, but he that has firſt ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin. Now to ſatisfie an offended God is Chriſt's Peculiar, therefore to intercede with God *Authoritatively* on the Behalf of Offenders is Chriſt's ſole Prerogative. Again, Chriſt's Interceſſion gives Vertue and Effect to our Supplication. This Truth was ſignified, *v.* 4. where it is affirmed, *That the Smoke of the incenſe which came with the Prayers of the Saints aſcended up before God out of the Angels Hand*; that is, the Vertue and Efficacy of the Mediator's Merits, which came up with the Prayers of the Saints, and perfumed them, did both plead for, and procure Acceptance with God. Behold here the true Reaſon why our poor and broken Supplications do find Acceptance with God; namely, becauſe perfumed with the Odours of Chriſt's Merits, and preſented to the Father by his own Mediation and Interceſſion. The Father heareth him always, and ſo he doth all them whoſe Prayers are offered by him. *Obſerve* laſtly the Succeſs and Efficacy of the Saints Prayers thus perfumed and repreſented unto God, there followed *Voices, and Thunder, and Lightnings*, ſignifying the wonderful Effects of Prayer, or the terrible Things that would follow after their Prayers, even dreadful Judgments upon the Earth; that is, upon the Land of *Judea*, ſay ſome, upon the *Roman* Empire, ſay others. However it was, we may gather thus much from it, That in Times of National Provocation the fervent Prayers of God's faithful Servants have a mighty Prevalency with God for ſtaving off for a Time National Ruin and Deſtruction.

6 And the ſeven angels which had the ſeven trumpets, prepared themſelves to ſound. 7 The firſt angel ſounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were caſt upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green graſs was burnt up.

Note here, (1.) The Readineſs of the Holy Angels in Heaven to execute the Will and Pleaſure of God here on Earth; they knew that the Execution of God's Judgments was to be performed by them, and accordingly they prepare themſelves for it. *Note* (2.) The Judgments denounnced by the firſt Angel, *Fire and Hail mingled with Blood*. A ſtrange Storm, alluding probably to one of the Plagues of *Egypt*, mentioned, *Exod.* 9.

denoting, ſay ſome, the direful Temporal Judgments which God would bring upon *Judea* in general, and *Galilee* in particular, by Bloodſhed and Inſurrections. The Trees, ſays Dr. *More*, ſignifie the great Men, and the Graſs the common People; others by this Storm of Hail and Blood underſtand a Spiritual Judgment, namely, an Inundation of Hereſie upon the Chriſtian Church, which is of a fiery and bloody Nature; where-ever it prevails, it is a dreadful Plague, and a conſuming Storm; juſtly inflicted by God upon a People for their Contempt of the Goſpel, and not receiving the Truth in the Love of it, that they might be ſaved.

8 And the ſecond angel ſounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was caſt into the ſea; and the third part of the ſea, became blood: 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Univerſality of the Judgment inflicted; the former Judgment was upon the Earth, this upon the Sea, that no place might eſcape; a Storm of Hail and Blood falls upon the former, a Mountain of burning Fire is caſt into the latter; both ſignifying increaſed Wars and Bloodſhed by Sea and Land, according to ſome; the mighty Prevalency of Error and Hereſie, ſay others, and particularly of the *Arian* Hereſie, which puffs up, and ſwells with pride, and is the Harbinger and Forerunner of Ruin and Deſtruction; as only by Pride cometh Contention, ſo after Pride, or along with Pride, cometh Deſtruction.

10 And the third angel ſounded, and there fell a great ſtar from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: 11 And the name of the ſtar is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, becauſe they were made bitter.

The next Judgment inflicted, or rather the farther Progreſs of the former Judgment, was the infecting of the Waters and Rivers with a mortal bitterneſs, by a bitter Star falling from Heaven into them, denoting, ſay ſome, the fall of a great Captain among the *Jews* in *Judea*; others underſtand it of Hereſie in general; of the *Arian* Hereſie in particular; and ſome apply it to the fall of *Rome*, the Seat of the Weſtern Empire; ſo Mr. *Mede*. If it be underſtood of Hereſie, it ſhews us what a poyſonous, bitter and deadly Nature Error and Hereſie is of. Error is as damnable as Vice; the one is an open Road, the other a By-path to Hell and Deſtruction; and accordingly that Perſon, and that People, which have a due Care of their Soul's Salvation, will be as much afraid of Erroneous Principles as they are of debauched Practices.

12 And the fourth angel ſounded, and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars, ſo as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to ſound.

Obſerve here, (1.) That by Sun, Moon and Stars, in Scripture Propheſies, the Potentates and Powers of a State are underſtood; accordingly the darkning of the Sun, Moon and Stars, ſignifies generally the fall of ſome great Powers either Eccleſiaſtical or Civil; others who Interpret theſe Judgments ſpiritually, by the darkening of the Sun, Moon and Stars, do underſtand the prevalency of Ignorance and Error in the Church, occaſioning a fearful Eclipſe of that ſaving and comfortable Light which ſhould Illuminate our Eyes, and direct our Steps in the Way that leads to eternal Happineſs. *Obſerve* (2.) That in this, and all the former Judgments, the third Part only is mentioned as ſmitten, which ſhews that the Lord corrects in Meaſure, and delights more in Mercy than in Juſtice, and deſires rather the Converſion than Confuſion of Sinners, by making the Puniſhments of ſome, inſtructive Warnings unto others. *Obſerve* (3.) God's Way of dealing with his People in giving Warning of future and ſevere Judgments before they came, *I heard an Angel flying through the midſt of Heaven, ſaying, Wo, wo, wo, to the Inhabiters of the Earth*; thus God warneth of approaching Judgments before they come, that Sinners may Repent, and his own People being forewarned, may be forearm'd, e're the Judgment comes upon them; *præmoniti, præmuniti, præviſa jaculaminus feriunt*, Darts foreſeen are dintleſs.

CHAP. IX.

AND the fifth angel ſounded, and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit. 2 And he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air were darkned, by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads.

Obſerve here, (1.) That thoſe who underſtand this *Wo* denounced by the fifth Angel to denote a temporal Judgment, apply it to the *Jewiſh* Seducer, who headed the turbulent Zealots; he was a Ringleader of moſt Helliſh Villanies, and the Zealots under him did all the miſchief imaginable, marching up to *Jeruſalem*, Plundering the City, ſeizing the Temple, and killing the High Prieſt, with the reſt of the Prieſts; but by God's Providence it ſo hapned, that this Judgment of the Zealots fell not upon the Chriſtians, ſignified by the Trees, and Green Things, but upon the *Jews* themſelves only, becauſe they were not of the Faction of Zealots. *Obſerve* (2.) That thoſe who underſtand this *Wo* to intimate a ſpiritual Judgment, apply it ſome to the firſt Riſing of the *Turks* and *Mahometans*; others to the Papacy and Papal Clergy: Mr. *Mede* applies it to the former, King *James* to the latter, by Locuſts and Graſhoppers, (ſays he) underſtand Monks and Friars, who ſeem to fly a little from the Earth, but indeed are gorbellied Devourers; in Locuſts you ſee little, but a Mouth, and a Belly; in Monks you ſee a Mouth to mumble over Maſſes, and a Belly to conſume; they ſeized (when time was) upon the Meadows, the fat and pleaſant Parts of the Land, and like Graſhoppers conſumed every green, that is, every good thing. Yet *Obſerve*, (3.) The Commiſſion and Command given to them not to hurt the *Trees*; ſuch as are Fruit-bearing, and Fruitful bearing Chriſtians, are preſerved, and the Storm falls upon droſſy Hypocrites: Whence we may remark, that in Times of Error and Seduction, as well as in Times of Judgment and Calamity, God takes a ſpecial Care of his faithful Ones for their Preſervation; and has a ſpecial Regard to the Fruit of the Trees of Righteouſneſs; *It was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt any Tree.*

5 And to them (*which had not the Seal of God in their Foreheads*) it was given that they ſhould not kill them, but that they ſhould be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a ſcorpion, when he ſtriketh a man. 6 And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it; and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them.

That is, God would bring ſuch dreadful Judgments and Calamities upon the wicked World, that Men ſhould prefer Death before Life; and it ſhould be an Affliction beyond all other Afflictions, that they could not die: to flee death is a great Miſery, but to have Death flee from us, or flee before us, and not able to find it, is a far greater Miſery; God can ſo imbitter Life by Afflictions and Sufferings, that thoſe who dread Death may yet deſire to die; not for any good that they ſee in Death, but only to get rid of the Troubles of Life; *In thoſe Days Men ſhall ſeek Death, and ſhall not find it.*

7 And the ſhapes of the locuſts *were* like unto horſes prepared unto battel; and on their heads

were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. 9 And they had breaſt-plates, as it were breaſt-plates of iron; and the ſound of their wings *was* as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battel. 10 And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, *which* is the angel of the bottomleſs pit, whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

That this is a Metaphorical Deſcription of a terrible Army of cruel Men ſeems very plain; ſome underſtand it of the *Jewiſh* Zealots, who appeared as Warriors, and were devouring Waſters; they look'd like Men, kind and friendly, and pretending to be Redeemers of the People, Saviours of, and Benefactors to their Country; but at the ſame time Plundering and carrying away the Spoils of their Brethren, without any Tenderneſs or Compaſſion. Others apply all this to the Papal Clergy, *numerous*, like Locuſts; *well fed*, like Horſes for Battel; *mighty*, for Earthly Poſſeſſions; *crowned*, like petty Princes; alluring like Women with their Hair, and other Ornaments, *&c.* Others again make the Application to belong to the *Turks* and *Saracens*, who are repreſented as having many Crowns on their Heads, and as mov'd with Wings in regard of the many and vaſt Conqueſts, ſays Mr. *Mede*, which they made in a ſhort Time, even *Paleſtina*, *Syria*, *Armenia*, *Aſia the leſs*, and many others; as to the King named here *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, ſome underſtood it to be the Devil, others *Mahomet*, others the Pope; to whom, to every of whom, the Name of a Deſtroyer too fitly belongs, as ſeeking and endeavouring to deſtroy Mens Souls, and by Blood and Perſecution to deſtroy and lay waſte the Church of Chriſt.

12 One wo is paſt, *and* behold, there cometh two woes more. 13 And the ſixth angel ſounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet, Looſe the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were looſed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horſemen *were* two hundred thouſand thouſand: and I heard the number of them.

Note here (1.) From thoſe Words, *One wo is paſt, and two more are to come*, that God has a Storehouſe of Judgments, as well as a Treaſury of Mercy, and when One Judgment will not do, he has more to inflict. *Note* (2.) The Golden Altar which is here ſaid to be before God, ſignifies our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his Purity and Excellency, and his appearing continually in the Preſence of his Father for us, as our Interceſſor and Mediator. *Note* (3.) That this vaſt Army of Horſemen, conſiſting of Two hundred thouſand thouſand, is expounded generally of *Turks* and *Arabians*, who have vaſt Armies beyond all Nations, whom God makes the Executioners of his Vengeance at his Pleaſure. *Note* (4.) Whereas it is ſaid, that the four Angels were bound in the great River *Euphrates*, and till looſed by God's Command, could never hurt nor ſtir, it teaches us, that the Lord has Satan, and all his Inſtruments, in his own Power to looſe them for our Sins, and to bind them again upon our Repentance; tho' their Malice be infinite, yet their Power is bounded; they cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. *Note* (5.) That when theſe deſtroying Angels were looſed, their time of hurting was limited *to a Year, a Month, and a Day*; ſhewing that the ſet and determinate Time of the Wickeds Inſolency is appointed by God, to be either ſhorter or longer as he thinks fit; yea, they execute nothing but with a Divine Permiſſion; nay, nothing without a ſpecial Warrant and Commiſſion from God, *I heard a voice, ſaying, looſe the four angels which are bound in the river Euphrates; and they were looſed for an hour*, &c. This is Matter of ſingular Conſolation to us, that evil Angels and wicked Men are limited Powers; they cannot move, much leſs hurt, till God looſe them; *A voice ſaid looſe the four angels.*

17 And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them, having breaſt-plates of fire, and of jacinct, and brimſtone: and the heads of the horſes *were* as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths iſſued fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone. 18 By theſe three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the ſmoke, and by the brimſtone, which iſſued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto ſerpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the reſt of the men which were not killed by theſe plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they ſhould not worſhip devils, and idols of gold, and ſilver, and braſs, and ſtone, and of wood, which neither can ſee, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their ſorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

St. *John* proceeds here in deſcribing this vaſt Army of *Turks* and *Arabians*, that with incredible Swiftneſs did over-run and ruin the Eaſtern Churches; all theſe Expreſſions of *Fire*, and *Brimſtone*, and *Smoke*, denote that cruel Devaſtation and Deſtruction which was occaſion'd by the *Turks* and *Mahometans*; behold herein the Inſtruments of Satan, how his own cruel and deſtructive Nature is diſcovered, how exceedingly he is delighted in the Perdition of Mankind, having been a Murderer from the beginning. In the two laſt Verſes St. *John* declares, (1.) What were the Sins which procured ſo great a Plague, namely, Idolatry, and Worſhipping the Works of their own Hands; a Sin very odious to God, and for which God ſuffer'd the *Turks* to be ſo ſevere a Scourge to Chriſtendom; what little Reaſon had the Chriſtians then to call their Wars againſt the *Turks* the *Holy War*, when Idolatry, the Cauſe of it, was not repented of? What Succeſs could they expect, as long as the Idolatry of Chriſtians, and their other provoking Sins were ſo many? *Obſerve* farther, what was the End God aimed at by ſuch ſtrong Phyſick, by ſuch terrible Judgments as he then brought upon the World? It was to bring them to Repentance; but ſo mad was the Antichriſtian World upon their Idols, that they would not be reformed by the Judgments they ſaw upon their Brethren. Hence Learn, That when God once begins to enter into Judgment with a ſinful People, he will follow them with a Variety and Succeſſion of Plagues and Judgments one upon another, till he has either brought them to himſelf, or brought them to nothing.

CHAP. X.

AND I ſaw another mighty angel come down from heaven, cloathed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire. 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth.

This *Angel* is concluded to repreſent our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Angel of the Covenant; he is called a *mighty* Angel in oppoſition to the *mighty* Enemies of his Church, mention'd in the foregoing Chapter; he is ſaid *to come down from* Heaven, to intimate his Signal and Seaſonable Appearing for the Relief of his Church, *cloathed with a cloud*, repreſenting the manner of his coming in the Clouds at the final Judgment; *with a rainbow on his head*, ſignifying that *Covenant* of Peace which he has made with his Church, and his continual Mindfulneſs of that Covenant; *His face was as the ſun*, to denote that Light of Comfort and Deliverance which he would bring to his Church in his own Time: *His feet as pillars*, to ſignify the ſteadineſs and ſtability of his Purpoſes and Actions, that where he ſets his Feet none can remove him; and as *Pillars of fire*, denoting his Ability to tread down his Enemies under him, and alſo to conſume them, this is according to the Deſcription of his Perſon given, *Ch.* 1. 15, 16. The Emblems and Figures by which he is repreſented here, are the ſame by which he was deſcribed there, conſequently he is the ſame Perſon. *Obſerve* next, the account of what he did, *He had a little book in his hand open*, to diſtinguiſh it from the former Book ſealed; a Book in which the Purpoſe and Decree of God was made known concerning what ſhould happen to the Church; a Book ſealed and ſhut to us. but obvious and open to Chriſt; Chriſt that lay in the Boſom of the Father, reveals his Father's Secrets to us ſo far as it is needful and neceſſary for us to know them; *And he ſet his right foot on the ſea, and his left foot on the earth*, to let us know his Sovereignty and Dominion over the whole World; as well over the turbulent and unquiet, as over the quiet and more peaceable Part of it; and alſo to ſignify his Ability to tread down his Enemies where-ever they are; a Conſideration that adminiſters much Comfort and Conſolation to his Church; his Dominion is over the Earth and the Sea, none can diſpoſſeſs him of his Power, and none can eſcape his Preſence.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion
roareth: and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the ſeven thunders
had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and
I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Seal
up thoſe things which the ſeven thunders uttered,
and write them not.

This Angel who repreſented Chriſt, the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, is ſaid to cry like a roaring Lion, whoſe Voice is both loud and terrible; this, ſome conceive, ſhadowed forth efficacious and ſucceſsful preaching of the Goſpel, and that the Seven Thunders ſignified the ſame; but others apprehend hereby the thundring Judgments of God which were ſhortly to be inflicted on the wicked World, and particularly on *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*, ſay ſome; upon Antichriſt and his Adherents, ſay others; the Judgments of God are fitly ſet forth by *Thunder*, becauſe they do not ſiy at random, but by Divine Direction; the Loudneſs, the Swiftneſs, the Forceableneſs of Thunder is known, and the Terribleneſs of God in his Doings towards the Children of Men, has been ſufficiently underſtood. *Obſerve* next, St. *John*'s Intention to write what theſe Thunders utter'd for the Benefit of the Church, as conceiving them to be of great Concernment to her; but he receives a Command from Chriſt to the contrary not to do it at preſent; God foreſeeing that the Oppoſers would not hear, but deſpiſe, therefore theſe Judgments ſhall be known by Experience, and not by Words. Others ſay, this Inhibition was only Temporary, and not Perpetual; write them not, that is, conceal them for the preſent, till thou haſt thoſe Things repreſented to thee in other Types, and till they are nearer their Accompliſhments; hereafter he might write them, for what God reveal'd to *John* was to be ſhewed to his Servants, *Chap.* 1. *v.* 1.

5 And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea,
and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,
6 And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever,
who created heaven and the things that therein are,
and the earth and the things that therein are, and
the ſea and the things which are therein, that there
ſhould be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the
voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to
ſound, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, as he
hath declared to his ſervants the prophets.

The Angel that repreſented Chriſt, is here repreſented to St. *John* as *Swearing*. Where *Obſerve*, (1.) The Ceremony uſed in Swearing, *Lifting up of the hand to heaven*, appealing thereby to God as a Witneſs, and a Judge. (2.) The Perſon ſworn by God deſcribed, (1.) By his Eternity, *He lives for ever*, before and after all time. (2.) By his Omnipotency, and Almighty Power in the Work of Creation, making Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein; an Oath is proper to God, and as we are to ſwear by God, ſo God only is to be ſworn by. *Obſerve* (3.) The thing ſworn, namely, *That time ſhall be no more*; that is, that there ſhould be no farther delay of Time; for the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the obdurate *Jews*, ſay ſome; for the Ruin of the *Roman* Empire; for the Deſtruction of Antichriſt, ſay others; the Performance of God's Word, both in his Promiſes of Deliverance to his Church, and in the Execution of Judgments on her Enemies, is now at hand. *Obſerve* (4.) The Promiſe made, and the Aſſurance here given, namely, *That the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed*, that is, the Deliverance of the Church ſhall be compleated, and the final Confuſion of her Enemies ſhall be accompliſh'd, which is call'd, *a Myſtery*, becauſe the World underſtands it not, nor will they believe the ſame; as Myſteries have their own Time to be made manifeſt in, ſo to the Comfort of the Faithful, and Terror of the Wicked, a Day was then approaching in which the happy Condition of the Afflicted ſhould appear, and the Calamitous State of the ungodly be diſcover'd.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven ſpake
unto me again, and ſaid, Go, *and* take the little book
which is open, in the hand of the angel, which
ſtandeth upon the ſea, and upon the earth. 9 And
I went unto the angel, and ſaid unto him, Give me
the little book. And he ſaid unto me, Take *it*, and
eat it up; and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it
ſhall be in thy mouth ſweet as honey. 10 And I
took the little book out of the angels hand, and eat
it up; and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey:
and as ſoon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.
11 And he ſaid unto me, Thou muſt propheſie again
before many people, and nations, and tongues, and
kings.

Expoſitors generally make this *little Book* the Emblem of the Holy Scriptures, and the Command given by the Angel to St. *John* to *eat* this Book, imports the great Duty of *ſtudying* diligently the Holy Scriptures, inwardly *digeſting* them, and making them our own by particular Application; what we eat is turned into Nouriſhment, and becomes one Subſtance with ourſelves; thus the Myſteries of the Goſpel muſt be eaten by the Interpreters of Goſpel Myſteries; it is not enough that we know Divine Things, but we muſt know them Divinely, we muſt have a ſavoury Knowledge of them, and an Experimental Acquaintance with them. *Obſerve* (2.) The Effect which eating of this Book had upon St. *John*, it was in his Mouth *ſweet as Honey*, in his Belly very *bitter*; that is, the Knowledge he had of Divine Myſteries was in itſelf very pleaſant, but the Knowledge of the Perſecutions and Cruelties which the Chriſtians were to ſuffer and undergo was very bitter to his *Soul*. Learn hence, That tho' Communication of Light from God, and the Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, be in itſelf very delightful to his Miniſters, yet in reſpect of the ſad Meſſage contain'd in his Word it is very burthenſome and bitter to them; however, it being the Burthen of the Lord, they muſt bear it, they muſt carry it; every good Man, much more every gracious Miniſter, has a very high Eſtimation of the Word of God, he eſteems it as Food, he eſteems it neceſſary Food, he eſteems it more than his neceſſary Food; but when God ſends us to denounce Judgments upon Sinners, our *Belly trembles*, our Lips quiver, Anguiſh takes hold upon us, we deſire not the woful Day, Lord, thou knoweſt. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Aſſurance God gives St. *John* of farther Revelations of his Mind unto him, *As thou haſt propheſied, ſo ſhalt thou propheſie again before many people, and nations, tongues and kings*; ſee here in St. *John*'s Perſon the true End and Reaſon why God calls his Miniſters, and fits them with Gifts, and why they furniſh themſelves with acquir'd Abilities, it is to render themſelves the more ſerviceable in his Work, that they may ſpeak of his Word before Kings, and not be aſhamed.

CHAP. XI.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel ſtood, ſaying, Riſe, and meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein.

Obſerve here, (1.) The Command given by God to St. *John* to take a Survey of his Church, his Spiritual *Temple*, conſiſting of living Stones, and built upon the chief Corner Stone, Jeſus Chriſt; God's Faithful and True Worſhippers are only thoſe whom God will have to be *meaſured*, and take notice of, as being his Part and Portion, his Tabernacle in which he will dwell, and bleſſed be God in the worſt of Times, they are *Meaſurable*, even in Times of Epidemical Degeneracy, and univerſal Apoſtacy, God has a number to ſtand up for his Name, and to bear Witneſs to his Truth. *Obſerve* (2.) That the *Temple*, the *Altar*, and the *Worſhippers* therein, are here all join'd together, and the Command given is to *Meaſure* them together, *Ariſe and meaſure the temple, the altar, and them that worſhip therein*; intimating, that the true Church, and the true Worſhippers are ever found together; and by the true Worſhip, and true Worſhippers, is the true Church ever known; ſo that if the Queſtion be ask'd, *Where is the true Church*? The Anſwer is, Where the true Altar is, and where the true Worſhip is, there the true Church is, that Worſhip which will bear God's *Meaſuring Reed*, the Scrutiny of the Scriptures, and the Examination of his Holy Word; where that Worſhip is found, there the Church of God is found.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and meaſure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

Obſerve here what St. *John* is forbidden to *Meaſure*, and commanded to leave out, as no part of the true Church, namely, *The Court which is without the temple*; that is, that Part of the viſible Church which is over-run with Idolatry, and Antichriſtian Worſhip as bad as Gentiliſm, and accordingly ſhall be treated as Gentiles, and trodden down under Foot, as droſſy Hypocrites; *Meaſure the temple*, ſays God, but not *the outward Court*; the Temple had but few Worſhippers (the Prieſt only) in compariſon of the outward Court, where the Body of the People was; *whence* we ſee that the true Church is but *ſmall, very ſmall*, in compariſon of the Falſe and Antichriſtian Church, and conſequently *Multitude* can be no right Note of the true Church. *Obſerve* farther, That whereas theſe Gentiles are ſaid to tread under Foot the Holy City Forty two Months, thereby is ſignified that they ſhould kill and perſecute the true Spouſe and Church of Chriſt (call'd the Holy City in Alluſion to the Earthly *Jeruſalem*) during the Time of Antichriſt's prevalency; yet here we have the Church's Ground of Comfort and Support, that her Preſſures, and Antichriſt's Prevalency, ſhall be but for a limited time, a ſhort time, *the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty two months.*

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall propheſie a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth.

Obſerve here, (1.) That the Church of God, during Antichriſt's prevalency ſhall not want Witneſſes, or faithful Teachers, tho' remov'd by Perſecution into Corners. *Obſerve* (2.) By mentioning *Two* only, we may gather the paucity of faithful Teachers during the Time of Antichriſt's prevalency: *Two* are a Number, but the leaſt of Numbers; we muſt not have our Eye upon the Multitude, or conclude that is not Truth which is not embrac'd and practis'd by the moſt; the Train of Chriſt is not large, nor are his Ways throng'd as they ought, few comparatively there be that walk in them: As they whom he calls forth to be eminently his Witneſſes are not many, therefore called *Two*; ſo they that receiv'd their Witneſs are but few, for *the World wanders after the Beaſt*. *Queſt.* But who and what are theſe Witneſſes? *Anſw.* The whole Succeſſion of faithful Miniſters, Martyrs, and Confeſſors, which Almighty God from Time to Time has raiſed up in his Church to be the Aſſertors and Maintainers of Divine Truth, and to bear their Teſtimony for Chriſt againſt all Hereſies, Blaſphemies, Idolatries, and Uſurpations, in the Time of Antichriſt's Reign. *Obſerve* (3.) The proper Work of theſe Witneſſes declar'd, it is *to Propheſie*; that is, to inſtruct the People how to Worſhip God according to his Word and Will, the manner of their Prophecying is ſaid to be *in Sackcloth*; that is, in much Affliction, and with great Lamentation, bewailing the Pollutions of the Church, by the overſpreadings of Idolatry; and the time of their Prophecying is ſaid to be *a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days*; that is, during the Time of Antichriſt's Reign, ſo long the Witneſſes ſhall have a mournful Time of it; during the whole Reign of Antichriſt God will have a true Church, and a true Miniſtry, and faithful Witneſſes, whom tho' Antichriſt will fight with, yet he ſhall never prevail againſt. *Obſerve* (4.) How God is pleaſed to own and bear witneſs to theſe his Witneſſes. (1.) He calls them *his, my two witneſſes.* (2.) He gives them *Power to Propheſie*; that is, they have their Commiſſion and Authority from him, and they are enabled, aſſiſted, and ſucceeded by him in the Diſcharge of their Teſtimony; their Reſolution and Courage is from God, who calls them forth to bear their Teſtimony for him. Learn hence, That when God calls any of his to a Martyr's Fire, he does endue them with a Martyr's Faith; he furniſhes his Miniſters and faithful Servants with Noble Endowments, anſwerable to their Great Imployments; God evermore gives much Grace where he tries Grace much; as the Command of God makes every Duty neceſſary, ſo the Aſſiſtance of God makes every Duty eaſie, and the Reward of God makes every Duty and Service gainful and advantageous.

4 Theſe are the two olive-trees, and the two candleſticks ſtanding before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed. 6 Theſe have power to ſhut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their propheſie: and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Obſerve here, (1.) A double Title given by God unto the Two Witneſſes, ſpoken of in the former Verſe, they are ſtiled *Olive-Trees and Candleſticks.* As the Olive-Tree is always green, ſo the Miniſtry of theſe Witneſſes is lively and efficacious; as the Olive is a Sign of Peace, and the Oil that drops from the Olive an Emblem of Grace, ſo the Miniſtry of theſe Witneſſes was a Miniſtry both of Grace and Peace. Again, They are called Olive-Trees, becauſe they are to miniſter Oil to the Candleſticks, which are to hold out Light unto others. Here *Note*, That the Title of *Candleſticks* given to the Churches, *Ch.* 1. is here given to the Miniſters of the Church; partly to ſhew the near Relation that is between them, and partly to point out the Duty that is mutually incumbent upon them; namely, to hold forth the Light of Truth unto others. And farther, theſe *Candleſticks* are ſaid *to ſtand before the God of the earth*; ſignifying their Fidelity in the Diſcharge of their Duty, as in the Preſence of God before whom they ſtand. *Obſerve* (2.) The Efficacy and Power of theſe *Witneſſes* Miniſtry in the certain Effects of it. What was ſaid of *Elijah* and *Eliſha* Literally, is applied unto them Spiritually. (1.) As *Elijah* brought Fire down from Heaven, which devour'd the Enemy; ſo Fire proceeds out of theſe Witneſſes Mouth, not by way of Imprecation, but by way of Denunciation, pronouncing the Threatnings and Judgments of God againſt them, continuing in their Impenitency. (2.) As *Elijah* had Power to ſhut Heaven, ſo have theſe Witneſſes Power to do the like during the time of their Propheſie, that is, God is provoked for the World's ill Treatment of his faithful Witneſſes, to withhold the Spiritual Reign of the Word, and the refreſhing Doctrine of the Goſpel from them. Again, When it is ſaid that theſe Witneſſes have Power to *turn the waters into blood*, and to *ſmite* the Earth with all *Plagues*; there is a manifeſt Alluſion to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who exerciſed ſuch a Power, *Exod.* 7. Accordingly God being provok'd by the Indignities offer'd to his faithful Witneſſes, permits the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel to be corrupted, and avenges their Cauſe, by bringing Judgments on the World (as *Moſes* did upon *Egypt*) according to the Threatnings denounced by them. Whence we may Learn, What great Credit and Eſteem the faithful Witneſſes and Miniſters of Chriſt are in with God; what Power and Prerogative is given to them, far ſurpaſſing the Power of any mortal Prince, even a Power to open and ſhut Heaven, to turn Waters into Blood, and to ſmite the Earth, that is, God doth all theſe Things upon a juſt Occaſion in Vindication of them, and in Revenge for the Injuries done unto them.

7 And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit, ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies *ſhall lie* in the ſtreet of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where alſo our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and an half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they

that dwell upon the earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Theſe Verſes ſet before us the barbarous Uſage which the Two Witneſſes ſhould meet with from the Antichriſtian World, for the faithful Diſcharge of their Duty, *They ſhall be ſlain*, *Politically* and *Civilly* ſay ſome, depoſed, ſilenced, impriſon'd, and laid aſide as uſeleſs and dead. *Literally*, ſay others, they ſhall be put to Death for the Teſtimony of Jeſus, by Bloodſhed, Fire and Faggot. *They ſhall overcome them*, that is, in their Perſons, but not in their Cauſe. See here the Chriſtian Church founded in Blood, (that of Chriſt, its Head) watered with Blood, (that of his Miniſters and Members;) God ſuffers his, ſometimes to be actually ſlain, for his own Glory, their Honour, and the Church's Good; but mark the Time ſpecified when the Witneſſes were ſlain; it was *when they had finiſhed their teſtimony*, and not before then, but not till then. So long as God has ſpecial Work and Service for his Witneſſes to do in the World, their mighty and cruel Enemies cannot touch an Hair of their Heads, much leſs can they take away their Lives, *till they have finiſhed their Teſtimony. Obſerve* (2.) Beſides the Antichriſtian Cruelty in killing theſe Witneſſes, their barbarous Inhumanity in denying them Burial, not ſuffering ſome to be buried at all, and digging up the Bones of others that have been long buried. The Place where this is done is called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, and the *Great City*, where our *Lord* was *Crucified*; which, if literally underſtood, ſignifies *Jeruſalem*, compar'd to *Sodom* for the abominable Sins of the *Gnoſticks* committed in her; and to *Egypt*, for Oppreſſion; but, if *Myſtically* underſtood, *Rome*, or the *Roman* Empire, is conceiv'd by moſt Proteſtants to be here intended by *Egypt* and *Sodom*, like *Egypt* for Idolatry, Tyranny, Spiritual Darkneſs, Obſtinacy and Obduracy; like *Sodom* for Uncleanneſs, yea, worſe than *Sodom*, Uncleanneſs being not only practiſed, but tolerated, yea, allow'd publickly, Licenſes being there given to ſuch publick Houſes, and Books written in defence of Sodomy; at *Rome*, where Chriſt may be ſaid to be crucified in his Members as long as this Apoſtate Power holds up. *Obſerve* (3.) The great Joy and Exaltation which is here diſcover'd at the Slaughter of theſe Witneſſes, the Antichriſtian Rabble triumph, and make merry, rejoice, and *ſend Gifts* to one another. Lord! how madly do the Wicked rejoice at the Death of thoſe Men that uſed their utmoſt Endeavours to have ſaved them? *They that dwell on the earth ſhall rejoice and make merry. Obſerve* (4.) The ſpecial Reaſon aſſign'd why the Members of Antichriſt's Kingdom did thus triumph at the Death of the Witneſſes, and their ſuppoſed utter Extinction; namely, becauſe the two Witneſſes *tormented them that dwell on the earth*; that is, by their publick Preaching, by their private Reproving, by their denouncing of God's Judgments againſt them, for not ſuffering them to go on quietly and undiſturbedly in the ways of Sin, they grew very uneaſie with them, and rejoic'd when they thought the World fully rid of them. Lord! how does the Preaching of thy Word, which comforts and ſupports thy Children, which is ſweeter to them than the Honey, and more eſteem'd by them than their neceſſary Food, how does the ſame Word preach'd torment notorious Sinners? And inſtead of receiving the Meſſage, they rage at the Meſſenger, and triumph and dance with *Herod*, to ſee the Head cut off whoſe Tongue was ſo bold to tell them of their Faults; *They rejoiced, becauſe theſe two Prophets that tormented them* were ſlain.

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entred into them: and they ſtood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

The *Death* of the *Witneſſes* was deſcrib'd in the foregoing Verſes, their *Reſurrection* is declar'd in theſe. This is underſtood *politically* by ſome, that they who were civilly dead, that is, laid aſide as uſeleſs, were now politically alive; that is, reſtor'd to their publick Work and Employment in the Church again, God cauſing Princes and Magiſtrates to own and favour them, and accordingly by their aſcending up into Heaven, they underſtand their re-entring into the Church, their re-enjoying their publick Liberties and Goſpel-Privileges, which in compariſon of the Low and Sackcloth Condition they were in before, was like Heaven on Earth unto them. And they *aſcended in a cloud*, that is, gloriouſly, and their Enemi- beheld them with an envious Eye, becauſe of the Work in their Hands, which it was not in their Power to hinder. Others underſtand this Reſurrection (in the manner foremention'd) to be meant not of the ſame Men, but of Men of the ſame Spirit and Office, reſtor'd to the ſame Work, to the Admiration of the Good, and Conſternation of the Bad; and that the Voice of Chriſt ſpake to the ſlain Witneſſes, ſaying, Come up hither, that is, into *Heaven*, to receive the Reward of your Sufferings and Services, and others that ſucceed you in Office ſhall partake of your Spirit, and perfect that Work which you began and carried on. Where *Note*, That oft-times God's faithful Witneſſes, namely, ſuch Magiſtrates and Miniſters as have done great things for the Church of God, are taken up to Heaven before they behold the deſir'd Iſſue which is left to their Succeſſors to ſee compleated.

13 And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake was ſlain of men ſeven thouſand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Theſe words are conceiv'd by Interpreters to ſet forth the great Succeſs of the Witneſſes Miniſtry after their Reſurrection; it was accompani'd with a mighty *Earthquake*, or a great ſhaking of the Kingdom of Antichriſt, inſomuch, that a *Tenth part of the city fell*; that is, many Nations and Kingdoms under Antichriſt's Tyranny and Dominion ſhook off the Yoke, and diſown'd his Juriſdiction, and fell off from him. *Obſerve* farther, what this Earthquake and Fall produc'd, namely, a Twofold Effect. (1.) *Seven thouſand were ſlain.* (2.) Others were affrighted, turned from their Sins, and gave Glory to God. Behold here the great Power of the Word of God, and the happy Succeſs thereof, to the ſhaking of Antichriſt's Kingdom, which falls not at once, but by degrees, as it roſe. The Man of Sin is to be conſum'd with the Breath of Chriſt's Mouth, at firſt, which is a gradual Death, till at laſt he be quite aboliſh'd by the brightneſs of his Coming. Upon the whole then we may confortably conclude, that whatever Ground Antichriſt on the one Hand may ſeem to have gain'd of late in any Place, that yet he is certainly in a deep Conſumption; nay, far gone in it, and will languiſh more and more until he draws his laſt Breath: And, on the other hand, whatever Clouds may overſpread the Church of Chriſt in any Place, it will not be long e're they will vaniſh, and that Affairs are moving towards the Church's higheſt outward Proſperity, and moſt flouriſhing Condition that ſhe ſhall ever arrive at on this ſide Heaven, which is to be under the bleſſed *Millenium*, or Thouſand Years, which began probably with the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes at the beginning of the Proteſtant Reformation, by the Preaching of *Luther*. Thus ſpeaks our Learned Dr. *More*, *Myſt. Iniq. P.*477. " I doubt not (*ſays he*) but this
" Viſion of the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes was a Prediction
" of our Proteſtant Reformation, begun at *Spires* in *Germany*,
" *Anno* 1529, when ſeveral *German* Princes and Imperial Ci-
" ties made a ſolemn Proteſtation againſt the Innovations and
" Uſurpations of the Church of *Rome*; from whence came
" the Name of Proteſtants, which continues to this Day. This
" therefore (*ſays he*) (*mark his Inference*) ſhould make our
" Reformation the more Sacred, and keep all Perſons that wiſh
" well to our Holy Religion from caſting any Dirt upon our
" firſt Reformers, whoſe Names ought to be had in Honour,
" and will be ſo in the Church of God throughout all Genera-
tions.

14 The ſecond wo is paſt, *and* behold, the third wo cometh quickly. 15 And the ſeventh angel ſounded, and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.

An Account is here given of the Angel's ſounding the ſeventh Trumpet, at the beginning of Antichriſt's Ruin and Downfal. St. *John* heard great Acclamations and Shootings in Heaven for the Victory which Chriſt by his *Witneſſes* had gotten over him, ſaying, the *Kingdoms of this world*, that is, ſeveral Kingdoms, or main Bodies of Kingdoms and Nations are now brought in to acknowledge *Chriſt* for their Sovereign and Lawgiver, who did not ſo before; but whereas formerly they owned another Maſter, namely Antichriſt, now they do eſpecially own and acknowledge Chriſt, by profeſſing to believe in him, and becoming a pure Church to him, *And he ſhall reign for ever and ever*; even under Antichriſt's Reign and Tyranny. Chriſt had a Kingdom, but he will have a more viſible Kingdom in the World, and which ſhall continue without any Eclipſe by Antichriſt, or any other, as it ſuffer'd before.

16 And the four and twenty elders which ſat before God on their ſeats, fell upon their faces and worſhipped God, 17 Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldeſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great, and ſhouldeſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

This Chapter concludes with a Doxology and Solemn Thankſgiving in Heaven for the Victory which Chriſt obtain'd over Antichriſt here on Earth; that is, for the begun Victory over him. Here *Obſerve* (1.) The Perſons rendring Praiſes, the *Four and twenty elders*; all the Miniſters of the Church, ſay ſome; the whole Church, ſay others, who are ſaid to ſit before God, denoting, (1.) that they reſt from their Labours; they *walked* as Pilgrims before, they *ſit* now. Would we with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, *ſit* down in the Kingdom of God in Heaven? We muſt with *Abraham* walk before God in Uprightneſs here on Earth, *Gen.* 17. 5. (2.) It denotes their Honour and Dignity unto which they were now advanc'd. As Servants they *ſtood* before, as Friends they *ſit* now; but upon this great Occaſion mark their humble Geſture, their Proſtrations and Adorations before God, *They fell upon their faces and worſhipped.* *Obſerve* (2.) The Ground and Occaſion of it; what it is which they thus ſolemnly bleſs God for; namely, for Chriſt's Victory over his Enemies, for aſſuming to himſelf his great Power, and univerſal Dominion; and becauſe the *Kingdoms of the world were now become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt.* For if there be Joy in Heaven at the Converſion of one Sinner unto Chriſt, what is there, ſuppoſe we, at the Converſion of Nations and Kingdoms unto Chriſt? Behold here the whole Hoſt of Heaven, the Church triumphant in the *New Jeruſalem*, breaking forth into the higheſt Praiſes for eſtabliſhing the publick Exerciſe of Religion in its Purity, never more to be driven into Corners, as it was twice before; firſt by Pagans, next by Pagan Chriſtians. *Obſerve* (3.) The Doxology or Thankſgiving itſelf, *Lord God Almighty we give thee thanks*, for this begun Overthrow of Antichriſt, which by the Almighty Power thou wilt certainly carry on, being always the ſame, and as able to help thy Church as ever; *Becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned.* As if they had ſaid, In the time of Antichriſt's full Power, when thy Church was under a bitter and bloody Perſecution, thy Power ſeem'd to be laid aſide, and thou ſeemed'ſt not to reign, having thy Power obſcur'd by his Tyranny; but now thou ſhewed'ſt thy ſelf to be Ruler over all the World, both King of Saints, and King of Nations. *Obſerve* (4.) The Indignation and Wrath which the Friends of Antichriſt expreſs upon this Occaſion, *ver.* 19. *The nations were angry*; that is, the Idolatrous Nations; they who formerly perſecuted, do now fret becauſe they are overcome; they gnaſh their Teeth at the ſucceſsful Progreſs of the Goſpel; and becauſe *thy Wrath*, that is, the time to execute thy Wrath *is come* upon all Idolaters and falſe Worſhippers. And *the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged and rewarded*; that is, the time is now come when thoſe Witneſſes, which were civilly dead, and accounted as dead by the World, ſhall revive again; or, *the time of the dead*, that is, of thoſe that have been ſlain by Antichriſt; the time is come that their Blood ſhall be avenged, and all thy faithful Servants and Sufferers recompenced and rewarded. Particularly *thy Prophets*, whoſe Work being greater, ſuch ſhall their Reward be alſo. *And all that fear thy Name, both ſmall and great*; that is, all true Believers of a more private Capacity, who have cleaved unto Chriſt's pure and undefiled Religion; how obſcure ſoever they have been in the World, none of theſe ſhall miſs of a Recompence, when God's Time of rewarding is come; and then *he will deſtroy them which deſtroy the Earth*, that is, thoſe Bloody Perſecutors, who deſtroy the Inhabitants of the Earth by Perſecutions, or falſe Doctrines. *Obſerve* (5.) The great Bleſſing which follows upon the downfalling of Antichriſt, *v.* 19. *The temple of God was opened*, alluding to the frequent ſhutting up of the Temple at *Jeruſalem* by Idolatrous Princes, *Ahaz* and others, when the *Ark*, in which the Law of God lay, was not ſeen; but *Hezekiah* and *Joſiah*, thoſe Two Reforming Princes, opened the Temple and reſtor'd the true Worſhip of Almighty God. In like manner, during Antichriſt's Reign, the Temple of God was ſhut up, his true Worſhip ſuppreſs'd; but now, ſince Antichriſt's falling, the *Temple* is open'd, the *Ark* ſeen, the pure Word of God expounded, and a more than ordinary Preſence of God, (of which the Ark was a Symbol) found in in his Church. Well might the Church then, upon this happy Occaſion, triumphingly ſay, *We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned.*

CHAP. XII.

In this Chapter St. John *has, in a Viſion, a very clear Repreſentation given him of the State and Condition of the true Church; as alſo of Satan, Her grand Adverſary and Aſſailant, together with the Battel between them; the Church's Victory over him; and the Triumph of the Faithful for that Victory.*

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman cloathed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars:

Obſerve here, (1.) That by the Woman we are to underſtand the Chriſtian Church in her militant State, call'd a Woman, in regard of her Weakneſs and Dependency; as alſo in regard of her Fruitfulneſs, ſhe bringing forth many Children unto God, which are born upon her Knees. *Obſerve* (2.) This Woman, the Church, is ſaid to appear in *Heaven*, having her Original from Heaven, her Converſation in Heaven, her Tendency towards Heaven, and her Dependency upon Heaven. *Obſerve* (3.) The Woman deſcribed by her rare Perfections, which are Three, (1.) *Cloathed with the Sun*, that is, adorned with thoſe Graces which Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs has put upon her, and environ'd with the pure Light of the Goſpel ſhining about her. (2.) Having the *Moon under her feet*, that is, the Legal Worſhip, according to ſome; the Chriſtian Church outſhining now the Jewiſh State of Imperfection, caſting off, and trampling under the Yoke of the Moſaick Diſpenſation. Others by the *Moon* underſtand the *World*, which is like the Moon, full of Spots, defiling and polluting, full of Changes and Alterations, *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. It is never long in one Garb, and her having the Moon *under her feet*, implies the Church's being enabled by Chriſt to overcome and trample upon all the Enjoyments and Satisfactions of the World, and to deſpiſe all the Affronts and Inſults of the World. (3.) *Upon her head a crown of twelve Stars*, that is, holding faſt the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel firſt preached by the Twelve Apoſtles, and after them by ſucceeding Miniſters, which is as a Crown on the Church's Head. Where *Note*, That the Apoſtles, and all faithful Miniſters with them, are ſtiled *Stars*. As *Stars* they ſhine before Men, by the Light of Life and Doctrine. As *Stars* they ſhine with a borrowed Light, derived from the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Again, as *Stars* are in continual Motion for the Good of the Univerſe, ſo are the Miniſters of the Goſpel for the Good of the Church; as *Stars* they ſhine in their own Orb, attending the proper Duty of their Place and Station; and as *Stars* ſhine brighteſt in the cold Winter Nights, ſo do they in Times of Affliction and Perſecution.

2 And ſhe being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The *Church*, typified by a *Woman* was deſcrib'd in the former Verſe by her rare Perfections, in this Verſe by her weak and perilous Condition, ſhe cries like a Woman in Travail for Delivery to God in her Prayers, to Men in her Apologies.

The plain Senſe is this, That the Chriſtian Church was poſſeſt with an earneſt Deſire to propagate the Chriſtian Religion throughout the World, and ſhe earneſtly cried to God to aſſiſt her therein, and ſtrove with utmoſt Endeavours to accompliſh this her Deſign; and was truly ſollicitous to ſee the Succeſs of her Labours in the Lives of her Members. Many and ſore have been the ſick and breeding Fits which the Church has conflicted with by means of Hereticks and Perſecutors, which ſometimes gave occaſion to fear that ſhe would certainly miſcarry; but at laſt God ſent her Eaſe from Heaven by the Birth of a Child, which cauſed the Woman to forget all her Sorrows; and the Prayer of Faith was then in the greateſt Activity, when the Woman was found to be in greateſt Extremity.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having ſeven heads, and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven, and did caſt them to the earth: ——

The Church was deſcrib'd before; her Arch Enemy, the Devil, is deſcrib'd now; he is call'd a *Dragon* for his Subtilty, a *Great* Dragon for his Power, a *Red* Dragon for his fiery Cruelty. His *Seven Heads* denote his manifold Subtilties, and miſchievous Contrivances, his Devices and wicked Imaginations againſt the Church; his *Ten Horns* denote his vaſt Power and great Strength, both in himſelf and in his Members; alſo the Number and Power of his Agents, who ſerve as *Horns* to puſh and hurt the Church. His *Seven Crowns* upon his Head denote his Regal Power which he holds by Uſurpation; and his many Victories and Conqueſts which he obtains in the World, yet over none but thoſe who are willingly overcome by him. The whole of the Deſcription repreſents Satan as a powerful, ſubtil, cruel, victorious Adverſary. All which Properties he diſcovers in the Aſſault he makes upon the Miniſters of the Church, call'd the *Stars* of Heaven, which he endeavours to caſt down to the Earth; that is, to hinder their ſhining in the Firmament of the Church. Hence Learn (1.) What a mighty Enemy the Church has, fierce and fiery, red and bloody, full of Craft and Cruelty, of Power and Policy; and how deplorable her Condition would be, if the Lord himſelf were not on her ſide. *Learn* (2.) Who is the prime Author of all that Cruelty and Bloodſhed againſt the Church of God, even the *Red Dragon* with his Heads and Horns, his Miniſters and Agents; the greateſt Monarchs upon Earth, if they gore and hurt the Church, they are the baſe Heads and Horns of this monſtrous Dragon.

4 —— And the dragon ſtood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as ſoon as it was born. 5 And ſhe brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days.

That is, As *Herod* watched to deſtroy Chriſt as ſoon as he was born, *Mat.* 2. ſo while the Church was endeavouring to propagate Chriſtianity, and make Converts to Chriſt, the Dragon watched, intending to devour them; the Devil's great Deſign is to cruſh every good thing in the beginning, to nip Grace in the Bud, to kill the Infant Church in the Cradle; he is therefore ſaid to *ſtand before the Woman*, to prevent all poſſibility of her Child's Eſcape. Behold his bloody Cruelty! But tho' he ſtood before her, he had no Power to hurt or touch either *Mother* or *Child:* Behold his powerful Reſtraint! *Obſerve* farther, the Child's Birth, Preſervation and Preferment. (1.) Its *Birth*, ſhe brought forth a *Child*, not *Children*, to ſhew the *Paucity* of the Church's Members; and alſo their *Unity*, they are all but one *Man-child*, make up all but one Body, and the Dragon's Purpoſe was to devour all in one, and all at once. (2.) Its *Preſervation*, the Child is *caught up to God, and to his Throne*; that is, Heaven took it immediately into its Care and Protection, out of the Dragon's Reach, to his ſhameful Diſappointment. (3.) Its *Preferment*, it was to *rule all Nations with a Rod of Iron*; that is, with ſuch Severity, mixt with Lenity, as was needful; the Church ſhall prevail againſt all Oppoſers. *Obſerve* laſtly, After the Woman's Delivery, her Flight into the Wilderneſs is ſet down and her Continuance there for a Time, together with God's Protection over her, and Proviſion for her; a plain Alluſion to *Elijah's* flying into the Wilderneſs from the Rage of Idolatrous and bloody *Jezebel*, and God's feeding him extraordinary at the Brook *Cherith*. From the Woman's, that is, the Churches flying into the Wilderneſs for a while, we Learn, That the Viſibility of the Church is not always conſpicuous, to her Enemies eſpecially. (2.) That it is ſometimes lawful to fly in time of hot and bitter Perſecution; *the Woman fled into the Wilderneſs.* (3.) In that the Woman had a Place, and Food prepared for her, we Learn, God's provident Care for his Church in the Day and Hour of her greateſt Extremities; when ſhe lurks and hides herſelf in obſcurity, during the time of Antichriſt's Reign, God will take Care that ſome ſhall feed her with wholeſome Food, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, that ſincere Milk of the Word, to the Intent that ſhe may grow thereby.

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels: 8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was caſt out, that old ſerpent, called the devil and ſatan, which deceiveth the whole world: He was caſt out into the earth, and his angels were caſt out with him.

By *Michael* and *his* Angels underſtand *Chriſt* whoſe the Angels are, and ſo much the Name imports. *Michael*, that is, who like God; Chriſt is the likeneſs of his Father, his Eſſential likeneſs. St. *John* in a Viſion beholds *Michael* and his Angels combating with the Dragon and his Angels; yea, vanquiſhing and overcoming them. This may comfort the Church under all her Conflicts, that at length her *Michael* will finally prevail, and ſhe in him. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by the powerful Preaching of the Goſpel has weakened the Kingdom of Sin, Satan and Antichriſt. His *Angels* are his Miniſters, Martyrs and Confeſſors; thoſe particularly of the firſt Ages, who by their Cries to God, and Apologies to their Rulers, by their Holy Lives, and Patient Deaths, did overcome their Enemies. And thus *Michael* and his Angels, Chriſt and his Miniſters, fought againſt the Dragon and his Angels, againſt Satan and his cruel Inſtruments, who were ſo far from prevailing, that they loſt Ground continually; the Chriſtians overcame them by their Faith and Patience. And the *great Dragon was caſt down*; he was by the Preaching of the Goſpel depoſed from being worſhipped as a God, and his Power was taken away. From the whole *Note* (1.) That though *Michael, Chriſt alone*, be able to overcome the *Dragon*, and all his Angelick Powers, yet for his own greater Honour, and their greater Confuſion, he overcomes him and them by his Miniſters and faithful Servants. *Note* (2.) If *Michael* our Prince be with us, Chriſt Jeſus, the Captain of our Salvation, our Leader, then though the Combate may be ſharp, yet the Victory is ſure; for if he be for us, who can (ſucceſsfully) be againſt us? *Note* (3.) That Satan and his Angels were caſt out together; for of the Devil and his Inſtruments the Lot ſhall be alike, they ſin together, and they ſhall ſuffer together, and ſhall never be parted. Lord! How dreadful will an Impriſonment with Devils and damned Spirits be to eternal Ages? To lye for ever with Satan in that Myſterious Fire of Hell, whoſe ſtrange Poperty it is always to torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume. The Dragon was not only caſt out of Heaven with his Angels, but both were caſt down into Hell, even into that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone.

10 And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven, Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt: for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the ſea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time.

After *Michael* and his Angels, Chriſt and his Followers, Victory over the Dragon and his Angels, over Satan, and his Inſtruments, here follows a ſolemn Thankſgiving for the Devil's downfal; the Saints in Heaven join with Believers on Earth in this Song of Confidence and Triumph; when they ſpeak of God, they ſay *our* God; and when they ſpeak of the Church below, they ſay *our* Brethren; behold a ſweet Communion between the Church Militant, and the Church Triumphant; indeed they conſtitute and make up but One Church, One Family, One Houſhold; the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is but One. *Obſerve* farther, Another Name here given to Satan, *The Accuſer of the Brethren*; he accuſes them continually before God, and by his Inſtruments before Men; the Primitive Chriſtians were accuſed by their Enemies to the Magiſtrates as guilty of the moſt Villainous Practices in their Religious Aſſemblies; and behold the Aſſiduity of Satan in accuſing the Saints *Day* and *Night*; but bleſſed be God, as Satan is a continual Accuſer, Chriſt is a continual Mediator. *Obſerve* again, How the Saints overcome Satan. (1.) By the *Blood* of the *Lamb*; that is, by Faith in his Blood. (2.) By the *Word* of their *Teſtimony*; that is, by their Preaching, Profeſſing, and Practiſing, the Word of God. (3.) By their Sufferings and Martyrdom, *They loved not their Lives unto Death*; that is, they loved not their Lives ſo well but that they were willing to expoſe them to *Death*, rather than renounce the Cauſe of Chriſt, and deſert their Holy Profeſſion. *Obſerve* laſtly, After this great Exultation and Joy in Heaven for the Devil's downfal, here is a Denunciation of Wo to the Inhabitants of the Earth, and of the Sea upon that Account; that is, to all Earthly, Senſual Men, whether they Inhabit the Continent, or any Iſland in the Sea; becauſe the Devil is come down full of Rage, knowing that his Time is ſhort to execute his Malice in. *Learn* hence, (1.) Who is the Author of Wrath and Malice, and Revenge: And whoſe Children they are that partake of that Spirit, and Temper. The *Devil* has *great Wrath*; that is his Character, and the very Soul and Spirit of the Apoſtate Nature. *Learn* (2.) That ſomething *good* may be learned from the *evil* One; Satan is very Buſie, doubly Diligent, becauſe his Time is ſhort; ſo ſhould we be; our Grave and Coffin are at Hand, our Glaſs has but a little Sand: ſince but a few Leaves are remaining in the Book of our Lives unfilled up, it concerns us to write the cloſer, and the faſter too; as Satan's Time for Miſchief is ſhort, ſo is our Time for doing good.

13 And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto the earth, he perſecuted the woman which brought forth the man-*child*. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs, into her place; where ſhe is nouriſhed for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the ſerpent.

Obſerve here, The inceſſant and reſtleſs Malice of Satan and his Inſtruments againſt the Church; neither his forementioned Diſappointment, his preſent Foil and Downfal, nor his Fear of future Deſtruction, could move him to deſiſt; but having attempted to deſtroy the Church with the Fire of Perſecution before, he endeavours to drown it with a Flood of Errors now; *Diabolus mutat Conſilium, non deponit Malitiam*; the Devil ſometimes changes his Methods in doing Miſchief, but never lays down his Malice; he Perſecutes the Woman, the Church of Chriſt, after another manner, namely, by a Flood of Errors and Hereſies. *Obſerve* (2.) The Care that God took for his Churches Preſervation from this fatal Miſchief alſo; to the Women *were given Wings of a great Eagle for flight into the Wilderneſs*; that is, all Means and Ways of Evaſion which God out of his Care for his Church provides for her Safety and Protection in the time of Trouble; the Churches flight in Times of Perſecution is by no means to be cenſured or condemned, eſpecially when God by his Providence provides her *Wings*, that is, gives her opportunity ſo to do. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Place ſhe flies into for Safety, namely, into the *Wilderneſs*, called *her Place*, becauſe prepared by God for her Safety: *here ſhe is nouriſhed*; that is, hath Spiritual Food provided for her by God, and a Number of faithful Miniſters are qualified for the Feeding of her; *for a Time, and Times, and half a Time*; that is, for a certain Time determined by God, but altogether unknown to us; Thus when the Church meets with new Diſtreſſes, God provides for her new Deliverances.

15 And the ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cauſe her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

Two Things are here obſervable; a new Danger, *ver.* 15. and a renewed Succour, *v.* 16. *Obſerve* (1.) A new Danger; this is ſet forth, (1.) By the Author of it, the *Serpent*, the former attempt againſt the Church was managed by the wrathful Dragon, *this* is contrived by the ſubtil Serpent; open Cruelty is more dreadful, but ſubtil Policy is more dangerous; the cunning Devil is a more miſchievous Enemy to the Church of Chriſt, than the raging Devil; ſubtil *Julian* did the Church more miſchief than bloody *Nero* or *Diocleſian*. Learn hence, That what miſchief Satan cannot effect by open Cruelty, he will attempt againſt the Church by ſubtil Policy; when he fails as a Dragon, he will try what he can do as a Serpent. (2.) Obſerve the Matter as well as the Author of this Danger, *The Serpent caſt out of his mouth water as a Flood*; that is, a Flood of Errors, Hereſies, falſe Doctrines, and corrupt Opinions, caſt out of the Mouth of the Corrupting Seducers, endangering the very Eſſence and Being of the Church of Chriſt, particularly the *Arian* Hereſie, which prodigiouſly overſpread the World in its Time. Hereſie may fitly be compared to a Flood; it is a corrupting and defiling Flood, it is a ſwelling and increaſing Flood, it is a drowning and overwhelming Flood. Learn hence, That the Serpent's Flood of Errors, and falſe Doctrines, is the worſt and chiefeſt of the Churches Dangers, *The Serpent caſt out a Flood to carry away the Woman.* *Obſerve* (3.) The Churches ſeaſonable Relief and Succour; *The Earth help'd the Woman by opening her Mouth, and ſwallowing up the Flood which the Dragon caſt out of his Mouth*; by the Earth ſome underſtand earthly Ones, wicked Men, who are ſaid to help the Woman, not intentionally, but eventually, by their greedy ſwallowing down thoſe Errors which come out of the Dragon's Mouth, hearkning to his Lies, and believing his Errors for Truths; others by the Earth underſtand the Kings and Rulers of the Earth, helping the Woman, by calling Synods and Councils to ſtem the Tide, to damm this Flood, and to condemn theſe Errors and Hereſies, which by their overflowing endanger'd the Churches Ruin; the Devil raiſed Four Abominable Errors preſently after the Church had obtained Peace, and there was a great Concurrence of Magiſtrates and Miniſters in Confuting, Cenſuring and Condemning the ſame in and by their Councils and Synods. (1.) The Hereſie of *Arius*, who denied the Divinity of Chriſt, this was condemn'd by the Council of *Nice*, called by *Conſtantine*. (2.) The Hereſie of *Macedonius*, who denied the Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt; condemned by a Council at *Conſtantinople*, called by *Theodoſius* the Firſt. (3.) The Hereſie of *Neſtorius*, who aſſerted that Chriſt had Two Perſons, as well as Two Natures, condemned by a Council at *Epheſus*, called by *Theodoſius* the Second. (4.) The Hereſie of *Eutychus*, who confounded Chriſt's Natures, making him to have but One Nature, as well as to be but One Perſon: this was condemned by the Council of *Calcedon*: Thus the Earth help'd the Woman; theſe Four Councils tended very much to the maintaining the Truth, and preſerving the Church from that Flood of Error and Hereſie which the Dragon caſt out of his Mouth. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Dragon's Rage, v. 17. *He was wrath with the woman, and made war with the Remnant of her Seed*, that is, he was greatly inraged becauſe the Woman was extraordinarily Helpt, and his Deſigns wonderfully diſappointed, and when he ſaw he could not Ruin the whole Church, he reſolves to Attack ſome particular Members of it, even ſuch *as kept the Commandment of God, and had the Teſtimony of Chriſt*: that is, thoſe who kept cloſe to the Scriptures, which contain the Doctrine of Faith, and teſtifie that Chriſt is the only Saviour of the World. Now from the Dragon's making War with the Remnant of the Woman's Seed, we Learn, How inſatiable the Blood-thirſtineſs of Satan, and his Inſtruments is, who when they had killed the Witneſſes before, and many others, yet can they not reſt till they have killed this *little Remnant*, and made themſelves Drunk with the Blood of the

Saints, and never let Proteſtants expect any other, or any better Uſage at the Hands of *Romaniſts*, with whom this is a certain Principle, That Hereticks in a Nation are to be extirpated Root and Branch, where it may *ſafely* be done; that is, when they are not too numerous, and the loſs of one of our Lives may not coſt two of their own; if any ſay that Papiſts are now become better natur'd, by being under the reſtraint of our Laws, I wiſh them that they may never be tempted out of their Humanity by Advantages of Power; and as Almighty God has once more deliver'd the Neck of this Nation from the pinchings of the Antichriſtian Yoak, may our Sins never provoke him more to deliver us into the Hands of thoſe Men whoſe tender Mercies are cruel. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII.

In the Viſions of this and the following Chapter is repreſented to St. John, *the great Streights which ſuch Chriſtians as were the ſincere Worſhippers of the true God ſhould be reduced to: On the one hand they are threatned with Damnation if they do worſhip the Beaſt,* Ch. 14. 9, 10. *On the other hand, they are threatned with Death if they do not worſhip it,* Ch. 13. 15. *So that whenever this ſhould happen, it would be a time of great trial to faithful Chriſtians, and therefore it is added,* v. 12. Here is the patience of the Saints: *This is repreſented in St.* John's *Viſion, as the laſt and extreameſt Perſecution of the true Worſhippers of God, and which ſhould precede the final downfal of* Babylon. *And when this ſhould happen, then he tells us, that the* patience of the Saints *would be tried to purpoſe, and it would then be ſeen who are faithful to God, and conſtant to his Truth: The Particulars hereof follow.*

AND I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy.

Obſerve here, (1.) The place where St. *John* had the Viſion related in this Chapter, he apprehended himſelf to ſtand upon the *Sea-ſhore*, a place fit for the ſight he was to ſee, namely, *a Beaſt riſing out of the ſea.* Where *Note*, That it is uſual in the Prophets (*Daniel* eſpecially) to ſet out Temporal Monarchies, oppreſſing the Church, by great Beaſts. Whence we learn, What a Baſe and Vile, what a Low and Mean Eſteem God has of the mightieſt Enemies of his Church and People; let the World admire them as Gods, if they abuſe their Power God calls them Beaſts; and as ſuch, in his own time, they *ſhall be deſtroyed: I ſaw a Beaſt riſe up out of the ſea. Obſerve* (2.) The monſtrous Deſcription of that Beaſt which St. *John* ſaw, it had *ſeven Heads*, denoting, ſay ſome, the ſeven Hills upon which *Rome* ſtands; or the ſeven ſorts of Government ſucceſſively in the *Roman* State, ſay others; *and ten Horns*, that is, Ten Kings under *Rome*, and Confederate with her. Where *Note*, That all ſuch Kings, be they never ſo many or mighty, which perſecute ſincere Chriſtianity, they are vile in the eſteem of God, accounted no better than the Horns of a bloody Beaſt, which Almighty God in the end, will either blunt or break. *And upon the horns ten crowns*, which Crowns they hold of God, who is King of Kings. Sovereignty is from Heaven, however Men come by it; or however they abuſe it; which ſhews the horrid Ingratitude of thoſe Princes, who having receiv'd their Power from God, do improve it againſt him, and turn it upon him by whom they Reign. *And upon his heads the name of blaſphemy:* Thoſe that apply this Deſcription of the Beaſt to *Rome-Pagan*, underſtand hereby their Paganiſh Idol-worſhip in general; and their deifying of the *Roman* Emperors in particular. Others (as moſt Proteſtants) who apply it to *Rome-Papal*, by this Name of *Blaſphemy*, underſtand thoſe Blaſphemous Titles which are given to the Pope, as *Lord God*; *The Univerſal Head, The Huſband of the Church, The Light which came into the World*, &c. which are the incommunicable Attributes of Chriſt; and by Flatterers and Admirers frequently given to the Papal Antichriſt, *Upon whoſe Head is the name of Blaſphemy.*

2 And the beaſt which I ſaw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his ſeat, and great authority.

St. *John* here proceeds in giving a farther Deſcription o this *Monſtrous Beaſt*; it was in appearance like a *Leopard*, ſpotted with divers kinds of Idolatry, with variety of Idol-gods; with *Feet* like a *Bear*, denoting its Strength and Fierceneſs; its *Mouth* like a *Lion*, that is, Cruel and Ravenous. Next, an account is given from whom this Beaſt receives its Power and Authority; The *Dragon*, that is, the Devil, by God's Permiſſion, gave unto this Beaſt Power, and great Authority, to deceive by ſtrong Deluſions and hurt the Soul, as alſo to kill and deſtroy the Body. *Note* here, That when the Dragon is ſaid to give the Beaſt his Throne and Power, his Seat and great Authority, we muſt not underſtand it as by *Right*, (for all Power is from God) but as by *Uſurpation*, belonging to him. That Authority which is claim'd to depoſe Kings, to diſpoſe of Kingdoms, to diſpenſe with the Laws of God, all this is from the Dragon, and in no wiſe from God, *The Dragon gave the Beaſt his power, his ſeat, and great authority.*

3 And I ſaw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondred after the beaſt.

Here St. *John* farther declares what he ſaw concerning theſe Beaſts; namely, (1.) That *one of its heads was wounded*, by which Head many underſtand, the fall of the Ancient Imperial Power, the decay of its wonted Glory, and that ample Juriſdiction which *Rome* heretofore had under the Pagan Emperors: And by the wounding of this Head, they underſtand the aboliſhing of Paganiſm and Idolatry, and putting a ſtop to Perſecution by the Chriſtian Emperors. (2.) It is aſſerted, That *this deadly wound was healed*; namely, when Idolatry, the ſame for ſubſtance with the Pagan and Old Heatheniſh Idolatry, but in a new Dreſs, was gradually reſtor'd by the Papal Power. (3.) Here is the Effect of this healing, *all the earth wondered after the beaſt*, that is, follow'd him in blind Devotion. Where (1.) *Obſerve*, Who the Admirers of the Beaſt are, the *Earth*, the Men of the World; no wonder to ſee them Seduced! (2.) This Admiration is general, the *whole Earth* wonder after the Beaſt; how falſe is it then, that *Multitude* is a Note of the true Church. Behold the ſeveral Inſtances of the World's wondering after the Beaſt at *Rome*, they receive their Doctrine and Worſhip from him, they make all their Appeals to him, all Church-Officers receive their Ordination from him, and are Inſtalled by him.

4 And they worſhipped the dragon which gave power nnto the beaſt: and they worſhipped the beaſt, ſaying, Who *is* like unto the beaſt? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

From Admiration in the former Verſe, they proceed to Adoration in this, they worſhip both the Dragon and the Beaſt, that is, they did worſhip Idols, which are often in Scripture called Devils, like the *Gentiles* of Old, who are ſaid by St. *Paul* to Sacrifice to Devils, and not unto God, 1 *Cor.* 10. 20. Behold here a vaſt difference between God's Judgment and the Opinion of the ſeduced World. They think the Worſhip they give to a Creature is given to God; but God accounts it as given to the Devil, who is the Author of all Idolatry. *Note* next, That as the ſeduced World worſhipped the Beaſt, ſo do they extol his earthly Grandure and ſurpaſſing Power, ſaying *Who is like unto the Beaſt? who is able to make war with him?* Who can reſiſt his Power and Greatneſs? The greateſt Princes are not able to withſtand him. See how Pomp and worldly Grandure dazles the Eyes of its Admirers. *Note* farther, That a *mouth* was given to this *Beaſt* to ſpeak, that is, a power by the Devil's Inſtigation and God's Permiſſion, to utter Blaſphemies againſt the moſt High. (1.) The Blaſphemous Mouth of the *Beaſt* is open'd againſt the *name* of God, that is, againſt the Word of God, by which God makes himſelf known, as a Man is known by his Name. Now the Word of God is Blaſphemed by the *Beaſt* and his Worſhippers, when it is charged with Obſcurity, with Imperfection, called a dead Letter, and a Noſe of Wax, *&c.* The Spirit of God is then Blaſphemed when his Divinely Inſpir'd Writings are thus vilified and undervalued. (2.) This Blaſphemous Mouth is open'd not only againſt God's *Name*, but againſt his *Tabernacle*, the place of his inſtituted Worſhip, meaning by his *Tabernacle*, the true Church, wherein God is worſhipped according to his Word: God accounts himſelf Blaſphemed when his true Worſhippers are called *Hereticks*, *Schiſmaticks*, and, in a way of Scorn, *Hugonots*, and the *Synagogue of Satan*. (3.) They Blaſpheme them that *dwell in Heaven*, by which ſome underſtand the *Holy Martyrs* now in Heaven, whom they frequently call *damn'd Hereticks*, blacking their Names, and blaſting their Reputations; others underſtand it of ſome Saints in Heaven, whom they pretend to Honour, as the Virgin *Mary*, *&c.* They *Blaſpheme* them, namely, by ſpeaking of them, and praying to them *Blaſphemouſly*, as when they bid the Holy Virgin, *In the Right of a Mother, command her Son.* Hence *Obſerve*, That when we give that Honour and Worſhip to Saints and Angels which is only due to God, it is an Idolatrous and Impious *Blaſpheming* of them that dwell in Heaven; were the Virgin *Mary* ſenſible in Heaven of that Idolatrous Adoration which is given her here on Earth, with what Indignation and Diſdain would ſhe look down upon this Sacrilegious Violence offered to her Holy Son, in robbing him of that Divine Honour which is peculiarly due to his Divine Nature, for Religious Adoration is peculiar to a Deity.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the
ſaints, and to overcome them: and power was given
him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.
8 And all that dwell upon the earth ſhall worſhip him,
whoſe names are not written in the book of life of
the lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

Obſerve here, (1.) A War proclaimed; the *Beaſt* makes War upon the Saints, by Bloodſhed and Perſecution, and by the force of thoſe Weapons overcomes them; that is, to outward Appearance, and in the opinion of the World, they ſeem to be totally overcome, becauſe *viſibly* Slain; but *really* do the Saints overcome him, by their Patience and Conſtancy under Sufferings; and by rejecting his curſed Idolatry, and adhering to the Truth. *Obſerve*, (2.) The large Extent of the *Beaſts* Power that was given him, namely, *over all Kindreds, Tongues and Nations.* This muſt not be underſtood of Individual Perſons, nor univerſally of all Nations, but of the Nations belonging to the *Roman* Empire: Whole Nations were carried away with his Idolatry, though not all of every Nation, Chriſt's Flock is a little Flock, compared with *Antichriſt*'s Herd: How wrong a Note then is *multitude* of the right Church. *Obſerve* (3.) That as the power of the *Beaſt* is Univerſal, ſo is the Worſhip alſo; *All that dwell on the Earth ſhall worſhip him.* That is, the Generality of the *Roman* Empire ſhall Obey and Honour him, and comply with him in his Idolatry; few comparatively refuſing it. *Yet*, (4.) We have a number excepted, *whoſe names are written in the book of Life*, Bleſſed be God for this comfortable Reſtriction: All are not worſhippers of the *Beaſt*. Chriſt has his number of faithful ones, who are not defiled by *Antichriſt*'s Pollutions; a number, whoſe Converſations are in Heaven, and whoſe Names are written there, *in the book of Life*, called the Book of the Lamb; becauſe it is by him, and by the Merit of his Blood, that we obtain Eternal Life. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Title here given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is ſtiled *the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, and that in ſeveral Reſpects. (1.) In the purpoſe and decree of God. (2.) In the Promiſe of God made from the beginning, *Gen.* 3. 15. (3.) In reſpect of the Types, Shadows and Sacrifices whereby his Death was Prefigured and Repreſented, Chriſt was ſlain typically in thoſe Sacrifices which *Adam* and *Abel* offered up unto God daily. (4.) In reſpect of the Vertue and Efficacy of his Death, which was effectual to all that truly believe in him, from the firſt Promiſe made of him: The Merits of Chriſt's Death have ſaved all that have been ſaved from the Foundation of the World. *Behold here*, The tender care of God in providing for our Salvation before we were, yea, before the World was; and obſerve alſo, that the Saints of God in all Ages have been ſaved the ſame way, and by the ſame means, namely; by Faith in the Death of Chriſt, which has extended itſelf to all true Believers from the beginning of the world; and the efficacy of it will reach to all ſuch, even to the end of the world: The vertue of the Sacrifice is as freſh as the firſt moment it was ſlain, the Death of Chriſt is of Eternal Efficacy.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He
that leadeth into captivity, ſhall go into captivity: He
that killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the
ſword. Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints.

Obſerve here, (1.) That this Acclamation, *If any Man have an ear let him hear*, is added in Scripture when ſomething went before which required a very diligent Attention and cloſe Application of Mind: *If any Man have an ear*, that is, a Spiritual Underſtanding to diſcern the meaning of what has been foretold, let him ponder and conſider what is here revealed concerning this *Beaſt*, and take heed that ye be not found amongſt the number of the Worſhippers of it. *Obſerve*, (2.) The conſolation here given to the Saints, from the conſideration of God's juſt Retribution to his and their Enemies: *He that leadeth into Captivity, ſhall go into Captivity*, that is, The *Beaſt* who has brought many of the Saints into Captivity, ſhall himſelf at length be taken Captive and thrown into that Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, ſpoken of, *Chap.* 19. 20. With what meaſure *Antichriſt* meets to others, it ſhall be meaſured to him again: God has as many ways to hurt his Churches Enemies, as they have to hurt his People; if they lead into Captivity, ſo can he; if they kill with the Sword, ſo will he. *Obſerve* (3.) The end and deſign of God in ſuffering *Antichriſt*'s Rage to break forth againſt the Church: It is for the trial of his Churches Faith and Patience, *Here is the Patience and Faith of the Saints.* Where *Note*, (1.) That none can ſtand under, or bear up under Sufferings like Saints. (2.) That under great Sufferings Saints themſelves will have great occaſion for the exerciſe of Faith and Patience. (3.) That the Faith and Patience of the Saints, will be made very conſpicuous by great and ſharp Sufferings. (4.) That Faith and Patience muſt accompany each other in ſuffering times: Patience is the Souls Shoulder, to bear what is Afflictive at preſent: Faith is the Chriſtians Eye to diſcover a Glorious deliverance to come; where no Patience is, 'tis a token of no Faith; and where no Faith is, there will appear great impatience: Behold, then the Faith and Patience of the Saints.

11 And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of
the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he
ſpake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciſeth all the power
of the firſt beaſt before him, and cauſeth the earth,
and them which dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt
beaſt, whoſe deadly wound was healed. 13 And he
doth great wonders, ſo that he maketh fire come
down from heaven on the earth, in the ſight of men.
14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by
the means of thoſe miracles, which he had power to do
in the ſight of the beaſt, ſaying to them that dwell
on the earth, that they ſhould make an image to the
beaſt which had the wound by a ſword, and did live.

Here St. *John* enters upon the Deſcription of a ſecond Beaſt very different from the former, yet not ſucceeding the former, but appearing during his Continuance; and this Beaſt (whoever he is) we find ſundry Ways here deſcribed, namely, (1.) By his Original, he *aſcended out of the Earth*, v. 11. which denotes his Riſe from a ſmall beginning to a mighty height. as thoſe Things which from ſmall Seeds grow out of the Earth to be tall Trees. Thus has one ariſen from being *Epiſcopus Urbis*, to be *Epiſcopus Orbis*. (2.) He is ſaid to have *Two Horns*, whereas the former Beaſt had *Ten*, v. 1. which ſignified the Ten Kingdoms, into which the *Roman* Empire, after its Diſſolution ſhould be divided. Accordingly by the Two Horns here, in all reaſon, may be underſtood two of thoſe Kingdoms of which this Beaſt (whoever he be) ſhall be poſſeſt. (3.) He is ſaid to look like a *Lamb*, but to ſpeak like a *Dragon*; that is, to pretend to great Meekneſs, and make a ſhew of much Lenity and Mildneſs in his Proceedings, but ſhould really be very Cruel, pretending to do all without Violence, but doing indeed all by Force, aſſiſted by his armed Dragoons, and Booted Apoſtles with Javelins in their Hands. (4.) It is affirmed, *v.* 12. that he ſhall ariſe during the Continuance of the firſt Beaſt, and engage in his Cauſe, aſſuming to himſelf as great, or a greater Power than any Emperours did before him, cauſing the *Earth*, that is, all Earthly-minded Men who are ſubject to him, to worſhip the firſt Beaſt; that is, to yield as great Reverence and Obedience to his Decrees for eſtabliſhing Idolatry, as ever the People did under the *Pagan* Emperours. (5.) He is remarkable for working Wonders, and particularly for cauſing Fire to come from Heaven in the ſight of Men; that is, he ſeemeth to the deluded Multitude to do as great Miracles, as *Elias* did who brought down Fire from Heaven to confirm the Religion he profeſt. In like manner, the Beaſt here works Wonders ſeemingly great, lying Wonders, falſe Miracles, ſuch as falſe Prophets may work, and have wrought for confirming their falſe Doctrines. Accordingly we find this *Beaſt* here, called the *falſe Prophet* elſewhere, *Chap.* 16. 8, 9. (6.) He requires the Inhabitants of the Earth to make an Image to the Beaſt; that is, he perſwades them, now profeſſing Chriſtianity, to introduce and bring in ſuch a kind of Idolatry, that the Old *Heatheniſh* Idolatry may ſeem to revive again. Here *Note*, That the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*, is a living Image of the Old *Heatheniſh* Idolatry. This is but the Image of that, that was performed to *Heathen* Deities, this to departed Saints. *Popery*, ſays the Learned Dr. *More*, is ſuch a Chriſtianity, as in all Points anſwers the Model of the Old execrable *Heatheniſm* with which the *Gentiles* were inamoured *then*, as are the *Papiſts now*. Thus the wounded and dead Image of *Pagan* Idolatry revived, and Lives again in *Papal* Idolatry. Good God! That any Perſons profeſſing to know and worſhip the Bleſſed Jeſus, ſhould thus diſhonour him by intermixing the Old *Heatheniſh* Superſtitions, or ſomething worſe with his Holy Inſtitutions.

15 And he had power to give life unto the Image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt ſhould both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt, ſhould be killed. 16 And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. 17 And that no man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wiſdom, Let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt: For it is the number of a man; and his number is ſix hundred threeſcore *and* ſix.

St. *John* proceeds here to give a farther Character and Deſcription of the Beaſt, which he had begun to deſcribe *v.* 11. And, (1.) His bloody Cruelty is ſet forth, *ver.* 15. *He cauſeth them to be killed, that would not worſhip the Image of the Beaſt.* Where Mark, it is not ſaid, that he killed them himſelf, not challenging directly the Power of Life and Death to himſelf, but he cauſed them to be killed; namely, by the Secular Powers, by Kings and Princes, who are the Horns of the Beaſt, and who give their Power and Strength to the Beaſt, and war againſt the Lamb. Again, (2.) After his Cruelty, follows his Compulſion; he cauſes all ſorts of Men high and low, bond and free, to receive a Mark in their Right Hand, and in their Forehead; in Alluſion to an ancient Cuſtom, which was to Mark Servants and Soldiers on the Arm, by which it was known what Maſter or Captain they belonged to; in like manner, the Beaſt here is ſaid to have a Mark for thoſe that are his, which Mark ſeems probably to have been an open owning of him, an active Engagement for him, a profeſſed Subjection to him. (3.) The Beaſt is here ſaid to interdict and forbid all Trade and Commerce with thoſe that had not his Mark, *ver.* 17. *He cauſeth that no Man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the Mark of the Beaſt.* Several Bulls and Decrees have been ſent forth from *Rome*, commanding that no Traffick or Commerce be had with any *Heretick* in Buying or Selling; but only with thoſe that profeſs themſelves Members of the *Roman* Church. (4.) It is added, that the number of the Beaſt is Six Hundred Sixty Six; that is, that the Numeral Letters of a certain Word or Name, being computed ſhould amount to that Number. I ſhall cloſe this Chapter with the Words of a great Man, Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* on *Rev.* 14. 13. *pag.* 329. “Unto whom all the forementioned Characters of the Beaſt do agree, and eſpecially the Number of his Name, I ſhall not preſume to Conjecture, much leſs poſitively to determine, becauſe it is ſaid to require a particular Wiſdom and Underſtanding to find it out. *Here is Wiſdom, let him that hath Underſtanding count the number of the Beaſt.* However the Event will diſcover it.’ *And again*, on St. *Luk.* 9. 55. He thus ſpeaks, “It is believed by many, and not without cauſe, that the Pope and his Faction are the Antichriſtian Beaſt, I will ſay no more than I know in this Matter; I am not certain that it is he, that is particularly deſigned in Scripture by that Name; but however that be, I challenge Antichriſt himſelf, whoever he is, and whenever he comes to do worſe and wickeder Things than he has done; verily it almoſt looks uncharitably, barely to relate what theſe Men have not bluſht to Act.’

CHAP. XIV.

The Deſign and Scope of this Chapter is Threefold, Firſt, *to ſhew, that during the Reign of the Beaſt, mentioned in the foregoing Chapter, Chriſt had a Church, a number of Virgins, of pure and unpolluted Souls, who did zealouſly and ſincerely Worſhip him.* Secondly, *That the Light of the Goſpel which had been ſo long ſuppreſſed, ſhould at length break forth glorioſly in the faithful Preaching of it, to the downfall of* Babylon, *and the Comfort of* Sion *the Church of God.* Thirdly, *The Chapter acquaints us with the happy Condition of ſuch as Die in the Lord, and particularly of the Martyrs which Die for the Lord; and concludes with an Account of the dreadful Puniſhments which God would inflict upon their Perſecutors.*

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb ſtood on the mount Sion, and with him and hundred forty *and* four thouſand, having his Fathers name written in their foreheads.

This Verſe repreſents to us a freſh Viſion which St. *John* had, in which ſeveral Things are very obſervable; as, (1.) What and whom St. *John* ſaw, *a Lamb*, by whom Chriſt is to be underſtood. (2.) The Poſture which this Lamb was found in, *he ſtood*, ſhewing thereby his readineſs to deliver his Church, and to do every thing that is needful for Her. (3.) The Place where he ſtood on, *Mount Sion*; that is, in the midſt of the Church. Chriſt ever has been, is, and will be preſent with his Church even to the end, although his Preſence with her is not always ſenſibly perceived; his Care is myſteriouſly Exerciſed, he is then taking moſt care of her when he ſeems to take leaſt; nay, when the Men of the World think he takes none at all. *Obſerve*, (4.) His Company and Attendants, and they are deſcribed two ways. (1.) By their Number, to wit, an Hundred Forty and Four Thouſand; whereby the Collective Body of the Whole Church is to be underſtood, and intimates to us, That in the worſt of times, even then when Apoſtacy and Perſecution do moſt univerſally prevail, Chriſt never wants a Church, and is not without a number of true Worſhippers. (2.) They are deſcribed by their Badge or Mark, having the *Fathers Name written in their Foreheads*; in Oppoſition to the Mark of the Beaſt mentioned in the foregoing Chapter: And in Alluſion to a Cuſtom amongſt Men, who put their Mark or Name upon their Goods, eſpecially upon ſuch as are very precious, as Silver or Gold Veſſels, and the like. So that the Mark of the Fathers Name upon the Forehead, denotes both the precious Eſteem which God has of his People, and alſo intimates, their open Profeſſion and owning of him for their Lord and Maſter, and their faithful Adherence to his Worſhip. *Learn* hence, That the ſincere Worſhip of God, with the open and avowed Profeſſion of his Holy and Undefiled Religion, accompanied with a ſuitable Converſation, is a better Mark and Note of the true Church, than Multitudes and Numbers, which are a Note of the Antichriſtian Synagogue; the World wanders after the Beaſt, when *Mount Sion* here, affords only an Hundred Forty Four Thouſand, which had the Fathers Name written on their Foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and the voice of a great thunder: And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. 3 And they ſung as it were a new ſong before the throne, and before the four beaſts, and the elders: And no man could learn that ſong, but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, which were redeemed from the earth.

St. *John* here deſcribes the true Worſhippers of Chriſt in the midſt of Antichriſtian Idolatry; where we have, (1.) The acceptable Worſhip they perform; Prayer and Praiſe, an *Heavenly* Exerciſe; which like *Thunder*, and the *Voice of many Waters*, ſounds loud in the Ears of God, and is certainly heard by him, and is melodious like the *Harp*, and therefore as acceptable to him, as the ſweeteſt Muſick is to us. (2.) The Perſons deſcribed, who perform this acceptable Worſhip, ſuch as were *redeemed from the earth:* Where the *Earth* is put for Earthly-minded Men, the falſe Church; the meaning is, that God has fetcht this ſmall Number of true Worſhippers, the Hundred forty four thouſand, from amongſt the falſe Worſhippers, and impure ones; he hath reſcued them from the World of Idolaters, and from the Superſtitious Multitude. (3.) The Perſons deſcrib'd before whom this Worſhip is perform'd, before the Throne, and before the Four Beaſts and Elders: *Before the Throne*, to ſhew the Reverence and Sincerity wherewith they perform'd the ſame, as in the ſight of the great and glorious God, and *before the beaſts and elders*, that is, the whole Congregation of the Saints; according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 89. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſemblies of his ſaints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.*

4 Theſe are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins; theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth: theſe were redeemed from among men, *being* the firſt-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

St. *John* proceeds here in deſcribing the true Worſhippers of God, which would not comply with Antichriſtian Idolatry. (1.) He ſtiles them *Virgins*, thereby intimating, that they are the chaſte Spouſe of Chriſt and the true Church, who Worſhip God alone with Religious Worſhip. *And they have not defiled themſelves with women*; that is, ſpiritually committed Whoredom; they have not been inveigled with the *Whore* to commit ſpiritual Fornication. Where *Note*, That Idolatry is a filthy Sin, it is as odious to God as Whoredom and Uncleanneſs; and an Idolatrous Church is a filthy Whore, unworthy to claim the Title of a Mother, unleſs it be the Mother of Fornications. (2.) They are ſaid to *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes.* This is ſpoken in Oppoſition to thoſe who *followed the Beaſt*, and denotes their Imitation of Chriſt's Example, and their firm Adherence to the Purity of his Doctrine and Worſhip, although it expoſe them to Hazard and Danger. (3.) They are call'd the *Firſt-fruits unto God and the Lamb.* Which denotes their *Paucity*; like a few Sheaves in compariſon of the whole Harveſt. Their *Sanctity*, the Firſt-Fruits were Holy to the Lord, and were his peculiar Portion; alſo their *Safety* and *Security*, as the Firſt-Fruits were God's Portion, ſo it was both Sacrilegious and unſafe to rob God of his Portion. By calling them the Firſt-Fruits which were Holy to the Lord, we ſee the ſpecial Intereſt and Propriety that God has in his faithful Servants and true Worſhippers beyond all others; they are his peculiar Portion, his Inheritance, his Treaſure, which he will ever take care of, and be concerned for.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Here St. *John* cloſes the Deſcription of the forementioned Followers of the Lamb, (1.) With the Character of their Integrity; like the Lamb, no Guile is found in their Mouth, as there was none in his, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. They were free from that Hypocriſy which was found amongſt Antichriſt's Followers, who profeſs to worſhip God, but adore their Idols. Sincerity and Uprightneſs of Heart towards God and Man was found with them. (2.) They are ſaid to be without Fault before God, which may be underſtood Comparatively. They have no ſuch Faults as Antichriſt's Followers are guilty of, they Worſhip God aright; and are approv'd by him: Or if abſolutely, we muſt underſtand it of their Glorification in Heaven, where all the Saints are without Spot, and blameleſs before the Throne of God, perfectly like unto God and the Lamb, as well in Purity as in Immortality.

6 And I ſaw another angel flie in the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters.

Here St. *John* has another Viſion of an Angel, flying in the midſt of Heaven with great ſwiftneſs, which Interpreters apprehend to ſignifie the Faithful Miniſters Zeal and Diligence in Preaching the glad Tidings of the Goſpel to a loſt World. Where *Note*, (1.) The Title given to the Goſpel of Chriſt, it is called the *Everlaſting Goſpel.* So it is partly in regard of its Author, the Everlaſting God; partly becauſe it promiſes and offers Everlaſting Life; but chiefly becauſe it was preached from the beginning of the World, and ſhall continue to the end of the World, and never be abrogated, as the Legal Adminiſtration was. *Note* (2.) The univerſality of that Grace and Salvation which in and by the Goſpel is held forth and tendered even unto all *Nations, Tongues, Kindreds and People.* So that none are debarred but thoſe who by Impenitency and Unbelief do wilfully and finally debar themſelves. *Note* (3.) That God's ſending the Everlaſting Goſpel to be Preached, is here called *the hour of his Judgment.* The Preaching of the Goſpel is the hour of Mercy to ſome, but of Wrath and Judgment unto others, even to all Refuſers and Contemners: And accordingly all are warned to fear God, and give Glory unto him; and inſtead of worſhipping Idols and Images, to Worſhip the true God according to his Will reveal'd in his Word.

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters, 8 And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Here we have the ſecond Angel's Proclamation, denouncing the Fall of *Babylon*, whoſe Fall is in the Prophecy threatned, and in the threatning ingeminated, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, to ſhew the certainty of her Downfal; and it is obſervable how this comes in immediately after the reſtoring of the Goſpel mention'd in the foregoing Verſes. *I ſaw an angel fly, having the everlaſting goſpel to preach*, v. 6. *And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen*, v. 8. Whence learn, That it is the Zealous and Faithful Preaching of the Goſpel, which is the Ruin of *Antichriſt*, and the means of his Downfal and Deſtruction: This is the Breath of the Lord's Mouth, by which he is conſumed, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* Queſt. *What is here meant by Babylon?* *Anſ.* All agree that Literal *Babylon* is not here meant, which was the chief City of *Caldea*, but ſpoken figuratively; and it is as generally agreed, that by *Babylon* is *Rome* here intended; ſome will have it *Rome Pagan*, under the Heathen Emperors, others *Rome Papal* under the Antichriſtian Tyranny, and that ſhe is parallel'd with *Babylon* for her Idolatry and Cruelty; yea, far exceeding her in both: *For in her is found the blood of the prophets, of the ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth*, Rev. 18. 24. *Obſerve* next, Her Ruin declar'd in the preſent Tenſe, *is fallen*, as if already accompliſh'd; and ingeminated, *is fallen, is fallen*, which Repetition denotes both the certainty of her Fall, and the Joy which the Church ſhould expreſs upon that occaſion: Though *Babylon* be never ſo great, yet ſhe ſhall fall, ſhe ſhall aſſuredly fall. And it is the Church's Duty to pray, that as it is in the Prophecy, ſo it may be in the Hiſtory, that *Babylon is fallen*; and to expreſs the higheſt Joy upon that great Occaſion. *Obſerve* laſtly, The Cauſe of *Babylon*'s Ruin is here aſſigned: *She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornications.* Where (1.) *Note*, That by *Fornications*, her Errors, Idolatries, and falſe Worſhip, are underſtood. *Note* (2.) That theſe are compar'd to Wine upon ſeveral Accounts. Is Wine pleaſant to the Pallate? ſo is Idolatry to corrupt Nature, which is hugely pleaſed with a pompous Worſhip, and a ſenſual Religion. Is Wine inflaming? ſo is Idolatry inflaming themſelves with Idols, *Iſa.* 57. 5. Does the Wine deceive, and inſenſibly ſteal upon the Drinker, and Intoxicate him e're he is aware of it? So doth Error and Idolatry grow upon Perſons by inſenſible Degrees, and accordingly, *Chap.* 13, 14. the Beaſt is ſaid to *deceive* them that dwell on the Earth. In a word, As Perſons drunk with Wine are altogether uncapable of Counſel and Advice from their beſt Friends, in like manner, ſuch as are Drunk with Error and Idolatry, with the Wine of the Whores Fornication are beſotted, benumm'd, will not acknowledge their Error, nor receive Inſtruction. *Note* (3.) That this Wine, as ſweet as it is, is called *the Wine of Wrath*; partly, becauſe it inflames them that are Drunk therewith with Rage and cruel Fury againſt Sincere Worſhippers, and partly becauſe it brings the Wrath of God upon them that drink it. Little do Idolaters think of this, becauſe it is a Worſhip of their own Invention; it pleaſes them, becauſe it Feaſts their outward Senſes, it is as grateful as Wine unto them; but they forget that this *Wine* is mixt with Wrath, even with the Wrath of God, the Dregs of which ſhall be wrung out, and all Idolaters ſhall drink them up.

9 And the third angel followed them, ſaying, with a loud voice, If any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand. 10 The ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb: 11 And the ſmoak of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no reſt day nor night, who worſhip the beaſt and his image, and whoſoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Obſerve here, (1.) The great and ſpecial care which Almighty God takes to warn Men and Women of thoſe dreadful Plagues which ſhould moſt certainly come upon the Heads of Idolaters: *A third Angel followed, crying with a loud voice:* O how Good is God in that he doth always premoniſh before he Puniſhes! warns before he ſtrikes; and adviſes all not to partake with others in their Sins, leſt they be partakers of their Plagues. *Obſerve*, (2.) A moſt dreadful Denunciation of the wrath of God againſt all thoſe who ſhall *worſhip the Beaſt and his Image*, that is, ſubmit to the enjoyn'd Idolatry, and *receive his mark in their foreheads or hands:* that is, yield Obedience to the *Beaſt* as a Servant, and openly own Subjection to him as his Slaves. Lord! what a dreadful guiltineſs is it to follow *Antichriſt*, and to continue obſtinate in Idolatry, after God has ſent one Angel after another, Miniſter after Miniſter, to acquaint them both with Sin and Danger. *Obſerve*, (3.) The Denunciation itſelf in the ſeveral parts of it. (1.) They *ſhall drink of the Wine of the wrath of God:* that is, For their Sin ſhall partake of ſevere Judgments, the effects of God's *Wrath*. *Mark*, Here is *Wine* for *Wine*, for the *Wine of Babylons Fornication*; here is the *Wine* of the *Wrath* of God; the former *Wine* was not ſo Sweet, but the latter ſhall be as Sharp. (2.) Here is the quality of this *Wrath*, *it is poured out without mixture*: its being poured out ſhews the abundance of it, and without mixture, ſhews that it is without the leaſt drop of Mercy to allay the extremity of their Torment. (3.) It is called a Cup of Indignation, thereby intimating, that it is not a Correction of a Father which is accompanied with Lenity and Love, but the Vengeance of a Judge that deſigns utter Deſtruction. (4.) Here is the Effect of their drinking of this Cup of the Lord's Indignation, their being tormented with Fire and Brimſtone; which Expreſſion denotes theſe Sinners Torments to be moſt exquiſite, both intollerable and interminable, and their Puniſhment both eaſeleſs and endleſs. (5.) It is here ſaid, that this their Torment, ſhall be in the preſence of the Holy Angels and of the Lamb; in the ſight of the Lamb, againſt whom, and in the ſight of the Angels before whom, they had ſinned in worſhipping the Beaſt; they ſhall ſee them, but none ſhall help them. (6.) The eternity as well as the extremity of their Torments is here ſet forth, *Their Smoak aſcends for ever and ever:* The Torments of Hell are here ſet forth as moſt acute and exquiſite, and as endleſs and eaſeleſs; they have no reſt Day nor Night, not a Moments eaſe. It is well *obſerved* by Mr. *Mede*, that there is not a more terrible Deſcription of Puniſhment in the whole Book of God, than is here denounced againſt thoſe Idolaters which adhere to the *Beaſt: The Smoak of their torment* that is, the Fire and Smoak wherewith they are tormented, aſcendeth up for *ever and ever*; And they have no reſt Day nor Night. And if the Church of *Rome*, or *Papal Babylon* be here intended, and not *Pagan*; as moſt Proteſtants believe and affirm; then this ſhews, that thoſe of her Communion, living and dying in a firm adherence to the chief Doctrines of Popery, and framing their Lives by them, after they have had, or might have had, ſufficient means to convince them of their Error and Idolatry, do expoſe their Salvation to extrem hazard and danger. Bleſſed be God for our *happy Reformation*, from the Idolatry and Superſtition, from the Tyranny and Oppreſſion, and the intolerable Yoak of the Church of *Rome*. God grant we may be reformed in our Lives as well as in our Religion; otherwiſe our Damnation is as ſure, as theirs is great, for the holieſt Doctrine, and pureſt Worſhip will be of no avail to impure Worſhippers and unholy Livers; it matters not what Church or what Communion a bad Man is of, for it is certain, he cannot be ſaved by any.

12 Here is the patience of the ſaints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus.

That is, here at this time will be exerciſed all the Faith and Patience of Chriſt's faithful Servants; and this their exerciſe of theſe Graces will make it appear that they were true and not counterfeit Chriſtians; It follows, *here are they which keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jeſus.* That is, who diſcover themſelves Sincere in their Profeſſion, by obeying the Commands of God, and rightly believing in our Jeſus Chriſt. Where *Note*, What is the characteriſtical mark of a ſincere Chriſtian; namely, Faith and Obedience united together; Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and Obedience to the Will of God in all things are never ſeperated where they are Sincere.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying, unto me write, Bleſſed *are* the dead which die in the Lord: from henceforth: yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Theſe words, in their original and primary Intention, were delivered by the Spirit, and commanded to be written by St. *John*, for the ſupport and comfort of the Church, under that ſevere Perſecution which ſhould befall it; and do declare the happy condition of Martyrs, particularly, and ſuch as die for the Lord; but they may be conſidered in a greater Latitude, and be of general uſe to the Church of God in all Ages, and under all Circumſtances, and Adminiſter Comfort to all Believers who die in the Lord: that is, in the Faith of the Lord, in the Fear of the Lord, and in the Favour of the Lord, to all that die ſincere Chriſtians both in Faith and Practice. Here *Note*, (1.) A Solemn declaration of the Bleſſed State of Good Men after this Life; their Death is Bleſſed, and a Bleſſing to them. *Note* (2) The time from whence their bleſſedneſs Commences; *from henceforth*; that is, from the time of their Death, then doth their Bleſſedneſs begin. *Thence Learn*, That all good Chriſtians immediately upon their diſſolution and departure out of this Life are in a bleſſed and happy Condition. Note, (3.) Wherein the Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous after their departure doth conſiſt: (1.) In reſting from their Labours, that is, from all the Troubles, Sorrows and Sufferings, from all the Calamities, Infirmities and Miſeries of this frail mortal State: No Sin ſhall affect them, no Sorrow afflict them, no danger affright them. (2.) In reaping the comfort of all the good *Works* they have done in the World, *Their works follow them*; that is, (1.) A delightful remembrance of their good Works is found with them, which if it refreſhes their Souls with tranſporting Pleaſure, *now*, How will it ſwallow them up with the higheſt tranſports of Complacency and Delight *then*? (2.) The bleſſed Fruits and happy Effects of their good Works, and the ſpecial Reward belonging to them ſhall accompany good Men into another World, which will render them compleatly Bleſſed, by procuring for them through the Merits of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, an admiſſion into Heaven, where they ſhall drink of thoſe Pleaſures which are at God's right Hand for evermore. *Note* Laſtly, How this truth concerning the future Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous, deſerves our moſt ſerious and attentive Regard, and Meditation, becauſe, delivered by an audible Voice from Heaven, expreſly commanded to be written, and confirmed by the ſolemn Aſſeveration of the Spirit; *I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying to me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.*

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* ſat, like unto the ſon of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a ſharp ſickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud, Thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe. 16 And *he* that ſat on the cloud, thruſt in his ſickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

In theſe Verſes a Deſcription is given of Chriſt, as coming to Judgment, to inflict Puniſhment upon his ſtubborn Enemies: And here we have the Judge deſcribed. (1.) By his Form or Shape, He was one like the Son of Man. (2.) By his place and poſture of Judgment, ſitting on a white Cloud, the *Cloud* denoting the Sovereignty of the Judge, and *whiteneſs* prefiguring the uprightneſs of his Proceedings; and both ſignifying his Speed and Swiftneſs in coming to execute Judgment. On this white *Cloud* did he ſit, denoting thereby both his Compoſedneſs and freedom from all Paſſion and Perturbation, as *a Judge*: And alſo his Majeſty and Authority, ſitting *as a King* upon his Throne, as well as like *a Judge*, upon his Tribunal. (3.) He is deſcribed by his Royal Ornament, *Having on his Head a Golden Crown*. Behold here, the different Eſtate of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *above*, from what it was here *below*. Here Crowned with Throns, there Crowned with Gold, the Reward of his Sufferings. Bleſſed be God, that as it was with the Head, ſo ſhall it be with all the Members, (4.) By the Inſtrument which he had in his Hand fit for the work which he had in Hand: Namely, a ſharp *Sickle* for the reaping of the Earth; A *Sickle* is a Circular Inſtrument, and compaſſeth the Corn round about which it is to cut down; the Judgment of Chriſt upon the wicked will encloſe them all, not a Soul of them ſhall be able to eſcape it. And a ſharp *Sickle* ſignifies the quality of his Judgment, that it will be ſevere. Behold here the unavoidable Deſtruction of the wicked; and how impoſſible it is for them to eſcape the Judgment of Chriſt, all the wicked together are no more in the hand of Chriſt than as an handful of Graſs or ripe Corn to a ſharp *Sickle* in a ſtrong hand.

In the fifteenth Verſe we have a manifeſtation of the Church's fervent Deſire that Chriſt would make ſpeed and haſten his work and come quickly to Judgment, both for the Conſummation of their Glory, and for the deſtruction of his own and their Enemies: *Thruſt in thy Sickle and Reap for the Harveſt is ripe*; that is, it is full time to execute thy Judgments on the Wicked, for their Sins (which call for theſe Judgments) are now come to the heighth. Behold here, Chriſt's day of Judgment is like a day of Harveſt; when the Corn is ripe the Sickle is got ready; when the Sickle is got ready, it is ſet to work; when it is ſet to work it cuts all down, *Wheat* and *Tares*, *Corn* and *Graſs*, without Diſcrimination; but the Lord of the Harveſt ſoon commands a ſeparation to be made of the Good Grain from the Tares, of the Righteous from the Wicked, laying up the former in the Granary of Heaven, binding up the latter for the Fire of Hell.

In the ſixteenth Verſe we have Obſervable, (1.) Chriſt's ready anſwering of, and complying with the deſires of his People, to thruſt in the Sickle of his Judgments, and reap the Earth, *he that ſat on the Cloud* did *Thruſt in* his Sickle: How ready is Chriſt to fulfil the deſires of them that fear him, to hear their cry and help them, in his own time, in the beſt and fitteſt ſeaſon! *Obſerve*, (2.) The great infinite Power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that upon the thruſting in of his Sickle, the whole Earth was preſently Reaped. Behold the ability of Chriſt for Judgment, as well as his Impartiality in judging: Such a Judge is he as the Power of the mightieſt cannot daunt: Such a Judge is he as the Riches of the Wealthieſt cannot Bribe: Such a Judge as the Subtilty of the Wiſeſt cannot deceive. In a word, ſuch a Judge as there is no appealing from, no repealing of his Sentence. O Great Day! when the ſtiffeſt Knee ſhall bow at the Tribunal of Chriſt, and the ſtrongeſt Back ſhall bend under the inſupportable burthen of the wrath of the Lamb; when the *Alexanders* and *Cæſars* which once ſhook the Earth and cauſed the World to tremble, ſhall revere and lie proſtrate at the Foot of Chriſt. Behold then, and Admire the wonderful power and dexterity of Chriſt in judging; that upon the *thruſting in of his Sickle, the whole Earth was preſently reaped.*

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he alſo having a ſharp ſickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle, ſaying, Thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and caſt *it* into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine-preſs was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-preſs, even unto the horſe-bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand *and* ſix hundred furlongs.

In the former Verſes we meet with the metaphor of an Harveſt, in theſe we meet with that of a Vintage; there the wicked were compared to ripe Corn fit for the Harveſt, here to ripe Grapes fit for the *Wine-preſs*, ſignifying by both, that the Wicked by filling up the meaſure of their Sins, do make themſelves Ripe and ready for Judgment. *Note* here, (1.) That as the true Church is called a Vine, ſo is the wicked Antichriſtian Church here called, but with this Addition, *a Vine of the Earth*, cleaving to, and only ſavouring of the Earth: A good name will ſignifie little in Judgment, to be called Chriſtians, Virgins, *&c.* what will it Profit, without burning and ſhining Lamps: *Note*, (2.) Whereas the Grapes of this Vine are ſaid to be, not only Ripe, but *full* Ripe, how great is the forbearance and long Suffering of God towards the Wicked; *Maximum miraculum eſt Dei longanimitas*; The Patience of God towards Sinners is the greateſt Miracle in the World, but tho' laſting, it will not be everlaſting, when long abuſed, it turns at laſt into Fury, ripens in Sin, is a ſure Prognoſtication of Judgment at hand. *Note* (3.) The Vine with all its Cluſters are gathered, ſmall and great, one and another, all ſhall appear before the Bar of Chriſt, *Chap.* 20. 12. *I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before God, and the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of thoſe books.* *Note*, (4.) Whither this degenerate Vine with all its Cluſters was caſt, namely, into the *Wine-preſs* of God's Wrath, which is called *a great Wine-preſs*; becauſe it can contain all the Wicked, it will hold them all, be they never ſo many; and is ſaid to be *trodden*, that is, by Chriſt; denoting the ſeverity of that Vengeance which will be inflicted upon Sinners. The Grapes which have hung a long time ripening in the Sun, are ſeverely Preſt at laſt. *Note*, (5.) That the Blood which came out of the *Wine-preſs*, (the Blood of the Grape) was ſo much in quantity that it came up to the *Horſes Bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred Furlongs.* All Metaphorical Expreſſions, ſignifying, that the *Wine* is the wrath of God, and the Cup of his Indignation, and the Hyperbolical Expreſſion of its heighth reaching as high *as the Horſes Bridles*, and of its length reaching more than a Thouſand Furlongs, ſhews, that mighty deluge and inundation of God's Wrath, which the wicked in general, and all Antichriſts followers in particular, ſhall not only drink of, but ſwim in; and as they ſhed the Blood of the Saints abundantly, in like manner God will give them Blood to drink in great abundance. *Note laſtly*, That altho' theſe two Metaphors of the Harveſt and the Vintage ſignifie one thing, only the Viſion is doubled, like *Pharaohs*'s Dream, to ſhew the certainty thereof. Yet we may conceive that the ſimilitude of a Vintage here, holds forth greater Judgments than the Harveſt. Almighty God in his Providential Diſpenſation towards the wicked proceeds gradually; as they proceed from one degree of wickedneſs, ſo does he from one degree of Wrath and Vengeance to another. The Vintage follows the Harveſt, the ſharp Sickle follows the Sickle, the Harveſt is ſaid to be Ripe, the Vintage to be *full* Ripe; if the flood of God's Anger in this Life will not waſh Sinners clean, the deluge of his Wrath in the next will waſh them quite away: *Blood came out of the Wine-preſs, even to the Horſes Bridles by the ſpace of a thouſand and ſix hundred Furlongs.* Eternal Thanks to Chriſt, the Lamb who has delivered *his* from this dreadful wrath to come.

CHAP. XV.

AND I ſaw another ſign in heaven, great and marvellous, ſeven angels having the ſeven laſt plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

This and the following Chapter acquaints us with a freſh Viſion which S. *John* had of the *pouring forth of the Vials*, or the inflicting of the ſeven laſt Plagues and Judgments upon the World; upon the Heathen World, ſay ſome; upon the Antichriſtian World, ſay moſt. *I ſaw ſeven Angels having the ſeven laſt Plagues, in them is filled up the wrath of God*: Where by ſeven Angels, underſtand the Miniſters and Executioners of the Wrath of God; by the ſeven Plagues, underſtand the laſt dreadful Judgments that ſhould be inflicted, which would make a final end of him, (whoever he be) that they ſhould be poured forth upon one after another. *Where note*, (1.) How the Patience, Forbearance, and long-Suffering goodneſs of God, is wonderfully ſeen in his carriage towards Sinners, tho' he puniſhes the wicked ſometimes, to let them ſee that his Juſtice is not aſleep, yet he doth not ſtir up all his Wrath, nor poureth it out all at once upon them; but gradually deſirous of, and waiting for their Repentance, even when he has begun in Juſtice to puniſh them. *Note* 2. Whereas it is ſaid, *in them* (that is, in the preſent Seven Plagues) *is filled up the Wrath of God. We learn*, What final Impenitency, and Incorrigibleneſs under former Judgments, will produce at laſt; namely, Judgment to the uttermoſt; ripeneſs in Sin will at laſt make Men ripe for Ruin: And when they have filled up the Meaſure of their Sins, God will fill up the Meaſure of his *Wrath*; *in them is filled up the Wrath of God.*

2 And I ſaw as it were a ſea of glaſs, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, ſtand on the ſea of glaſs, having the harps of God. 3 And they ſing the ſong of Moſes the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty, juſt and true *are* thy ways, thou king of ſaints. 4 Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord! and glorifie thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: For all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

There ſeems *here* to be an Alluſion to the *Iſraelites* Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and to the Song of *Moſes* upon that Occaſion, recorded *Exodus* the 15th. As they were delivered out of Literal *Egypt*, ſo theſe from Myſtical *Egypt*, both Neſts of Idolatry and falſe Worſhip; a Deliverance from both which deſervedly call'd for a Song of Thankſgiving. *I ſaw a Sea of Glaſs mingled with Fire*; that is, a great Number of Pure, Zealous, Chriſtians; their Multitude being repreſented by the *Sea*, their Purity by *Glaſs*, and their Zeal by *Fire*, *who had gotten Victory over the Beaſt, and over his Image*; that is, who overcame all Temptations to Idolatry, both from the *Pagan* and *Antichriſtian* Emperors, called the Beaſt and his Image. *Having the Harps of God in their Hand*, in Alluſion to the Muſical Inſtruments uſed in the Temple-Service, and denoting Hearts fitted for, and tuned by, the Spirit of God; to Praiſe him with chearfulneſs for preſerving them from being overcome by Temptations to Idolatry. *Learn hence*, That ſuch as are ſincerely Gracious are truly thankful to God for all his Benefits and Bleſſings, but eſpecially for their Preſervation from Sin, and their getting Victory over Temptations. *Obſerve next*, The Work of ſolemn Praiſe and Thankſgiving which theſe purified and preſerved Souls were engaged in, and imployed about. *They Sung the Song of* Moſes *and the Lamb*, *ſaying, great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord. Where Note*, 1. The Title of the Song, namely, *The Song of* Moſes, *and the Lamb*. The Song of *Moſes*, that is, a Song much like unto that of *Moſes* and the *Iſraelites* after they had paſſed ſafely through the *Red Sea*, Exod. 15. And *the Song of the Lamb*; ſo called becauſe it was a Song indited by the Spirit of the Lamb, and tending to advance the Glory of the Lamb. *Note* 2. The Matter of the Song, which is divided into Two Parts, 1. The Churches Confeſſion and Declaration of thoſe Works which Chriſt doth. *Great and marvellous are thy Works, juſt and true are thy Ways*; that is, they are *great and wonderful* Works, fit only to be done by him who is the Lord God Almighty: *Juſt and true*, well becoming him who is King of Saints. 2. The Uſe which the Church makes of theſe Works, and that is, 1. To record, celebrate and publiſh, them. 2. To oblige and bind themſelves faſter and cloſer to him in his Worſhip and Service. *Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord! And glorifie thy Name? For thou only art Holy. Obſerve farther*, The Titles which are here by the Church given unto God. 1. *The Lord God Almighty.* A Title full of Comfort to the Saints in their greateſt Streights, and full of Terror to their Enemies in the midſt of their Abundance. 2. He is ſtiled *King of Saints*, they receiving ſpecial Protection from him, and he exerciſing a particular Care over them. 3. He *only is ſaid to be Holy*; that is, Eſſentially and Cauſally: Eſſentially in himſelf, and Cauſally with reſpect to us, all Holineſs is originally in him, all Holineſs is derivatively from him, therefore ſhould the Praiſe thereof be given to him. *Obſerve laſtly*, The Duty inferr'd from all thoſe Glorious Titles which are here given to God, and for all the great and marvellous Works done by him. *Who would not fear thee, O Lord! And glorifie thy Name?* As if he had ſaid, all ought to do ſo, and there is great Reaſon for ſo doing. As God is to be feared becauſe he is full of Power and Juſtice, ſo then eſpecially ſhould his People fear him when he is taking Vengeance on his Enemies, his own and his Churches Adverſaries, *Who ſhall not fear thee, for thy Judgments are made manifeſt?*

5 And after that, I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the ſeven angels came out of the temple, having the ſeven plagues, cloathed in pure and white linen, and having their breaſts girded with golden girdles.

Obſerve here, 1. The Viſion which St. *John* had, he thought he ſaw the Holy of Holies open to him, and Seven Angels coming forth with Seven Plagues, as the Executioners of God's Judgments upon Idolatrous Perſons. *Where Note*, 1. The Inſtruments imployed by God for executing his Wrath upon Sinners, *Angels*, *Seven Angels*; not that he needs them, but he is pleaſed to make uſe of them; and they are but Inſtruments in his Hand, his Bow and his Battle-Ax, meer dead Tools, who receive all their Efficacy from the Hand that uſes them: Their Preſence adds no Strength to him, their Abſence makes the Work no more difficult before him. *Note* 2. From whence theſe Seven Angels came, namely, *out of the Temple*, out of the Oracle, more immediately from the Preſence of God; implying, that they came forth to execute Vengeance by God's ſpecial Direction, and not barely by his Permiſſion; and conſequently that the Work was very acceptable and well-pleaſing unto God which they went about. *Note* 3. How they are furniſhed, *having Seven Plagues*; namely, to inflict upon the Idolatrous Enemies of the Church. *Note* 4. In and after what Manner theſe Angels were Apparelled and Appeared. 1. They were cloathed *in pure White Linen*, to denote the Holineſs of their Perſons, as alſo the Holineſs of that Work which they had then in Hand. 2. This Cloathing of theirs was girded to them, expreſſing thereby their great Readineſs for, and their great Alacrity and Chearfulneſs in, their Work. 3. The Girdle wherewith they were girded was a Golden Girdle, exactly anſwering the Habit of the High Prieſt when he entred into the Holy of Holies to Enquire of God, or came out with an Anſwer from God. *From the whole Learn*, That when the Lord comes to pull down *Babylon*, as well as to build up *Sion*, he will appear in his Glory; the Angels here God's ſpecial Miniſters; when they go forth to pour out the Vials of his Wrath upon *Babylon* they appear glorioſly Apparelled, glittering like the High Prieſt, and *girded with Golden Girdles*.

7 And one of the four beaſts gave unto the ſeven angels, ſeven golden vails full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with ſmoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. That what was called Seven Plagues in the foregoing Verſe, is here called *Seven Golden Vials full of the Wrath of God:* In this Verſe Vials are full Cups. Vials of Wrath are prepared when the Meaſures of a Peoples Sins are filled up; full Cups of Sin are followed with full Vials of God's Wrath. *Next*, Theſe Vials are ſaid to be *of Gold*, ſignifying, that theſe Judgments proceed from a juſt God, with whom there is no Corruption, nor Iniquity in Judgments, he being Holy in all his Ways, and Righteous in all his Works. Theſe Vials are alſo ſaid to be *full of the Wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever*, as an Aggravation of the ſame, it not being like the Wrath of a Mortal Man, of ſhort Continuance, but of endleſs Duration; it is the Wrath of him that ever lives to maintain his Wrath, and to uphold and ſuſtain the Sinner under the Execution and Infliction of this Wrath, that the Sinner cannot run from it. Oh what a fearful Thing is it to fall into the Hands of the Living God, whoſe Wrath is both intolerable and interminable, the Sinner can neither ſtand under it, nor flee from it. *Obſerve* 2. The Executioners of this Wrath are ſaid to be *Seven Angels*. The Angels, which are merciful Attendants upon the Godly, are alſo at God's Command the Executioners of his Wrath upon the Wicked. Theſe Angels are here ſaid to be *Seven*, to ſignifie that God's Judgments upon his Churches Adverſaries ſhall be heavy and great; One Angel plagu'd all *Egypt*, and deſtroyed *Sennacherib*'s mighty Hoſt, but here went out Seven Angels to deſtroy Antichriſt. *Obſerve* 3. The tremendous dreadfulneſs of this Wrath, intimated by filling *the Temple with Smoke*; thereby ſignifying, that the Wrath of God kindled againſt his Enemies ſhall be unto them like a devouring and conſuming

Fire, before the Flames of which burſt forth, a Cloud of Smoke appears. *And the Temple was filled with Smoke from the Glory of God, and from his Power. Learn thence*, That Almighty God is glorified in the Deſtruction, as well as in the Salvation, of Sinners, his Glory is as well ſeen in his Smoking Wrath againſt the Wicked, as in his Saving Mercy towards the Godly. *The Temple was filled with Smoke from the Glory of God, and from his Power*; it follows,--- *No Man was able to enter into the Temple*; that is, to deprecate God's Anger, and ſupplicate his Mercy, or to avert the Plagues threatned, and now juſt ready to be inflicted; when Mercy has been long offered and deſpiſed, the Lord at laſt becomes inexorable, and will ſuffer none to intercede or plead with him; *Jer.* 15. Though *Moſes* and *Samuel* ſtood before me, yet my Mind cannot be towards this People; caſt them out of my Sight, *&c.* The Sins of a People may ſometimes grow to ſuch an height that Almighty God will no longer be intreated; and when we know it is our Duty to ceaſe praying for them. Wo, wo, wo, be unto ſuch a People.

CHAP. XVI.

In the former Chapter Preparation was made, and a general Commiſſion given, for inflicting the Seven Plagues, and pouring forth the Seven Vials, upon the Antichriſtian State. In this Chapter we read an Account at large of the Infliction of thoſe Plagues, and the Effuſion of thoſe Vials accordingly; and foraſmuch as Rome *is often in this* Prophecy *compared to* Egypt, Sodom, *and* Babylon, *for their Idolatry, Cruelty, and other Sins, Almighty God is here pleaſed to Parallel her Plagues with theirs; and it is obſervable, that many of the Plagues mentioned in this Chapter do very nearly reſemble the Plagues of* Egypt *Recorded in the Book of* Exodus, *as will appear by conſulting the Chapter itſelf, which ſpeaks thus.*

1 AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, ſaying to the ſeven angels, go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Obſerve here, 1. The Command given to the Seven Angels, the Executioners of God's Juſtice, to do their Office; namely, in pouring out the Vials of his Wrath upon the Earth: The Command is here ſaid to be given by a *Voice*, by a *great Voice*; becauſe it was the Command of a great God, and about a great Work; and it is ſaid to *come out of the Temple*, in Alluſion to the Holy of Holies, the Place of God's exhibiting himſelf, and from whence he gave forth Oracles of Old. *Obſerve* 2. How the Seven Angels (the Inſtruments of God in executing his Judgments) receive their Commiſſion from God, and pour not out One Vial upon the Earth till they are required ſo to do; and being called *Vials of the Wrath of God*, it gives us this *Intimation*, that what is done againſt Antichriſt is not the Effect of Man's Revenge, but the Fruit of God's Wrath; and whereas Vials are Veſſels of large Extent, but of narrow Mouths, which pour out ſlowly, but diſtil effectually, and drench deeply, it imports, that the Wrath of God is, though ſlow, yet ſure: It comes upon Sinners gradually; but if upon its approach they repent not, it will at laſt, like a mighty Torrent, waſh them away from off the Earth.

2 And the firſt went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt, and *upon* them which worſhipped his image.

Obſerve here, 1. What an Alluſion this Plague inflicted upon *Babylon* has to that Plague which God of Old inflicted upon *Egypt*, Exod. *9. 9. Egypt* had her Boyl, breaking forth with Blains upon Man, and upon Beaſt; in like manner the Worſhippers of the Beaſt have noiſome and grievous Sores upon them; that is, great Trouble and Uneaſineſs of Mind upon the firſt proſpect of the ſhaking of their Kingdom, by diſcovering the Vanity, Blaſphemy, Hypocriſie and Tyranny, of their deviſed Religion; even as Sores and Blains do vex and torture thoſe that are troubled with them. *Learn hence*, That it is no ſmall Vexation and Trouble to the Wicked when they have their Sins detected and diſcovered, it is as great a Torture to their Minds as an Ulcer or Boyl is to their Bodies.

3 And the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living ſoul died in the ſea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Obſerve here, That this Second and Third Plague poured out upon the Sea, and the Rivers of Waters, whereby they became Blood, have a manifeſt Alluſion to that Plague of *Egypt*, whereby all the Waters were turned into Blood, Exod. 7. 19. *Obſerve farther*, That by the Sea and the Rivers full of Blood the Bloody Perſecutors in the Antichriſtian Church are ſuppoſed to be meant, who by Slaughter and Bloodſhed ſeek to plant and propagate a Bloody Religion throughout the Earth. *Obſerve laſtly*, That the pouring out of theſe Vials gradually and ſucceſſively upon Idolaters and Perſecutors, and not all together, and all at once, but one after another, teaches us how abounding the Patience, Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering Goodneſs, of God is even towards the worſt of Sinners; not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters ſay, thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus: 6 For they have ſhed the blood of ſaints and prophets, and thou haſt given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the Altar ſay, even ſo, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

Theſe Verſes ſeem to be a Key to let us into the right Underſtanding of the Verſes immediately foregoing; and clearly ſhew, that as the Idolatrous Enemies of the Church did ſhed the Blood of Saints and Martyrs, ſo ſhould theirs be ſhed, which is called their *having Blood to drink. Here Note*, 1. The Approbation which the Angel gives of the Equity and Righteouſneſs of God's Judgments upon theſe Bloody Perſecutors. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, for thou haſt given them Blood to drink.* Where the Retribution which God makes of Blood for Blood ſhews the Righteouſneſs of God in his Judgments inflicted; and alſo declares that Almighty God doth ſometimes ſo ſuit his Judgments to the Sin committed, that Perſons may read their Sin in their Puniſhment. As theſe Perſecutors thirſted after Blood, ſo here they get Blood to drink. *Note* 2. How the Angel in the Fifth Verſe, and the other in the Seventh Verſe, do both rejoice in the Execution of God's Judgments, and in the Terrible Revenge of the Blood of Saints. For thus they ſing, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and Juſt are thy Judgments.*

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the ſun; and power was given unto him to ſcorch men with fire. 9 And men were ſcorched with great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God, which hath power over theſe plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Fourth Vial is ſaid to be poured forth upon the Sun, which Metaphorically taken in Scripture uſually ſignifies ſome great Prince or Potentate: Here the Head of the Antichriſtian Party is ſuppoſed to be *the Sun*, upon which the Wrath of this Vial falls. *Obſerve* 2. The Effect which followed hereupon, *Power was given him to ſcorch Men with Fire*; and the Event which inſued was double, Men *blaſphemed the Name of God, and repented not, to give him glory. Learn hence*, 1. That altho' God ſends his Judgments to call the Wicked to Repentance, yet they will not repent of Sin, even when they lye under the wrathful Hand of God; but will rather break forth to farther Wickedneſs, even to blaſpheme the Holy Name of God. *Learn* 2. That what the Damned do in Hell, where the Wrath of God is poured out upon Men to the uttermoſt, that do incorrigible and unreclaimable Sinners upon Earth; they are ſcorched with great Heat, the Vengeance of God cometh upon them, they are mad, and inraged, and blaſpheme the Holy and Juſt God, who bringeth ſuch Plagues upon them; but they have no Senſe of their Sins, no Thoughts of turning unto God, or of giving Glory to him: Theſe Men here blaſphemed, but repented not.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt; and his kingdom was full of darkneſs, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blaſphemed the God of heaven, becauſe of their pains and their ſores, and repented not of their deeds.

Obſerve here, 1. The gradual Approaches which Almighty God makes by his Plagues and Judgments towards the Antichriſtian Beaſt, he began farther off at firſt, and then came nearer and nearer to him; the Firſt Vial was poured out upon the Earth, the Second upon the Sea, the Third upon the Rivers, the Fourth upon the Sun, now the Fifth upon the Seat of the Beaſt; that is, *probably*, the Seat of his Empire, the chief Place where he appeareth in the higheſt Majeſty and Glory. This ſhould teach us all at the firſt Alarm of Judgments to draw near to God by a true and timely Repentance, before he comes nearer to us by a Succeſſion of Plagues and Puniſhments. *Obſerve* 2. The Effect and Conſequent which did enſue and follow upon the pouring out of this Vial upon the Throne or Seat of the Beaſt. 1. His Kingdom *was full of Darkneſs*; this Vial did not deſtroy, but diſtreſs, him, it filled his Kingdom with the Darkneſs of Miſery and Trouble, of Calamity and Confuſion; not but that the Kingdom of the Beaſt was a Kingdom of Darkneſs before, but that Darkneſs was a Darkneſs of Ignorance and Error: This is a Darkneſs of Calamity and Horror, by the loſs of that Luſtre, Reſpect and Reverence, which the Throne of the Beaſt had before, but was wanting now. 2. As an Evidence of this Diſtreſs it is here ſaid that *they gnawed their Tongues for Pain*; that is, they were almoſt diſtracted at the declining of their Grandeur. Where *Note*, 1. From the *gnawing of their Tongues*, which was an Indication of the Horror of their Conſciences. That as Almighty God makes the guilty Conſciences of the Wicked to be their own Accuſers, ſo he can make them, whenever he pleaſe, to be their own Tormentors. *Note* 2. How Almighty God ſo ſuits his Judgments ſometimes to a Peoples Sin, as that if they do not wink hard, or wilfully ſhut their Eyes, they may and muſt ſee and read their Sin in their Puniſhment. Theſe Worſhippers of the Beaſt ſeduced others by their falſe Doctrine, and ſinned with their Tongues, and now God makes their Tongues like ſo many Scorpions Tails, the Inſtruments of their Torment; *They gnawed their Tongues for Pain*, it is added, *That they blaſphemed the God of Heaven, and repented not of their Deeds*. Where *Note*, That as the Plagues he inflicted reſembled the Plagues of *Egypt*, ſo the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, whom they were inflicted upon, reſemble *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, who hardned his Heart yet more and more againſt the Lord, and repented not.

12 And the ſixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared.

Obſerve here, 1. In the drying up of the River *Euphrates* a manifeſt Alluſion to the manner of Old *Babylon*'s Deſtruction. The River *Euphrates* ran through Old *Babylon*, and was a greater Defence to it than its Celebrated *Walls*, which for thickneſs and height were the Wonder of the World; *Cyrus*, when he took *Babylon*, cut many Ditches, and let the River *Euphrates* run out, and ſo he and his Soldiers entred the City, (then fordable,) and took it. Now as the drying up of *Euphrates* then was an immediate Forerunner of the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, in like manner the drying up of *Euphrates* (ſignifying it what it will) ſhall be the immediate Forerunner of the Deſtruction of Antichriſtian *Babylon*, whenever it ſhall be. The *Romiſh Euphrates* being dried up, the *Romiſh Babylon* will haſten amain towards its final Ruin. Queſt. *But what is meant by* Euphrates *here? Anſ.* Probably the *Turkiſh* Empire, according to Mr. *Mead* and Dr. *More*, the *Turks* firſt taking up their Habitation about this great River: So that *Euphrates* may be underſtood the People Inhabiting about *Euphrates*; and by drying up its Waters, the diminiſhing and leſſening of their Empire. By the Kings of the *Eaſt* the *Jews* are ſaid to be underſtood, who inhabit the *Eaſtern* Countries, to whom God made a Promiſe, *Exod.* 19.6. that they ſhould be a Kingdom of Prieſts: So that here ſeems to be a Prophecy of the *Jews* Converſion to the *Chriſtian Religion*, which Two Things do chiefly hinder, namely, The Idolatry of *Rome*, and the Power of *Conſtantinople*, the Image-worſhip of the *Papiſts*, and the Puiſſance of the *Turks*; but both theſe being taken away by the Fall of *Babylon*, and the Ruin of the *Turks*, the Way then will ſeem prepared for the *Jews* receiving of the Chriſtian Faith. Taking the Words in this Senſe *the Notes are theſe*, 1. That the Days will come wherein Chriſtian Princes and States ſhall pour out the Wrath of God upon *Popiſh* Idolatry, and *Turkiſh* Tyranny. 2. That the pouring out of the Wrath of God upon both theſe Grand Enemies of God will prepare and make ready the Way for the *Jews* Converſion to him.

13 And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet.
14 For they are the ſpirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

In the foregoing Verſes an Account was given of the Subject upon which the Sixth Vial was poured out, namely, upon the River *Euphrates*. Here we have an Effect that followed hereupon, namely, a Warlike Expedition, or gathering to Battle. *Where Note*, 1. The principal Commanders in this Battle, namely, the *Dragon*, the *Beaſt*, and the falſe *Prophet*. 2. The Inſtruments imployed and made uſe of by them, who are here ſaid to be for their Nature *Spirits*, for their Quality *Unclean*, for their Number *Three*, for their Similitude and Reſemblance *like Frogs*, namely, with reſpect to their Original, they breed of Corruption, and in great Numbers, ſwarm and croak in all Places, and live both in the Water and upon the Earth; by *all which* many Interpreters underſtand Emiſſaries, Miſſionaries, Negotiators, Solicitors and Legates, ſent forth and imployed by Antichriſt for the Support and Strengthning both of him and his Kingdom, by ſoliciting the Kings of the Earth to join together in a Battle againſt the Church. Behold here how the *Dragon*, the *Beaſt*, and the *falſe Prophet*, do ſend forth all their Emiſſaries, and imploy all their Inſtruments, to ſtir up Princes, and engage them in Battle, to withſtand the Reformation of Chriſtians, and the Converſion of the *Jews*: *I ſaw unclean Spirits like Frogs come out of the Mouth of the Dragon, and go forth to the Kings of the Earth, to gather them to Battle. Obſerve farther*, The Actions here ſaid to be performed by them, namely, their *working Miracles by the Power of the Devils*: That is, ſuch wonderful Things as *Satan* can ſometimes produce, or at leaſt delude Peoples Sences, and make them believe that they are produced and effected by him. *Where Note*, That the Advantage which the falſe Church makes of a pretended Power with her to work Miracles, the Spirit of God, both here and elſewhere, (2 *Theſſ.* 2.9.) makes to be a Badge of Antichriſt and his Followers: *They are the Spirits of Devils, working Miracles*.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments; leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.

Theſe Conſolatory Words of Chriſt ſeem to be inſerted here for the Support of the faithful Servants of God againſt thoſe great Preparations of the Enemy in the Day of Battle. *Behold*, ſays Chriſt, I then *come as a Thief*, ſecretly, ſuddenly, and unexpectedly, to deſtroy theſe Enemies when they leſt expect me; and then am I at Hand to take Vengeance on them, and to deliver my Church, when they leaſt think of me; *Bleſſed is he that watcheth*, namely, againſt thoſe Temptations which he will be then expoſed to; and keepeth his Garments, that is, his Profeſſion unſpotted from Sin, and the Defilements of Antichriſt; *leſt he walk naked*, that is, appear as a Man deſtitute of Uprightneſs and Sincerity; *and they ſee his ſhame*, which ever follows upon a ſinful Courſe. *Note here*, 1. That when Chriſt comes he comes ſuddenly, even as a Thief cometh. 2. That although Chriſt comes ſuddenly, and as a Thief, yet he is pleaſed to give us warning of his coming, *Behold I come*. 3. That when Chriſt's coming is near at hand there is Danger that many for want of watchfulneſs will loſe their Garments. 4. That is, to ſuch as through Negligence ſhall loſe their Garments this Miſery will befal them, they ſhall walk naked, and Men ſhall ſee their ſhame. 5. That thoſe few who watch and keep their Garments are certainly in an happy and bleſſed Condition, *Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments*.

16 And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew Tongue, Armageddon.

He, that is, *Almighty God*, by his permiſſive Providence ſuffered the Kings of the Earth to hearken to Antichriſt's Miſſionaries, who, like Frogs, hop abroad even into Kings Palaces, and perſwade them to aſſemble and gather together, as *Jabin* and *Siſera* gathered together againſt *Iſrael*, to their own Deſtruction: And whereas the Place of their gathering together is called *Armageddon*, this is ſo named from the Event of the Battle; ſignifying ſuch a Place where the Enemies of the

Church ſhall be deſtroyed. *Learn hence*, That the Event and Succeſs of that Battle which the Adherents of Antichriſt ſhall fight for him, will be deſperate Deſtruction to themſelves, joyful Victories and Triumphs to the Churches of Chriſt.

17 And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, ſaying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake *and* ſo great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath. 20 And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every ſtone* about the weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God, becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Theſe Words deſcribe and declare unto us the pouring out of the Seventh Vial by the Seventh Angel; in which we have Obſervable, 1. The Subject upon which it fell, namely, the *Air*; not that the Elements of Air, Earth, or Water, are to be underſtood in this Chapter literally, for the Vials poured forth are Vials of Wrath, and conſequently are poured forth upon the proper Subjects of God's Diſpleaſure, which the Elements are not; but it is the Earthly Antichriſtian Church which is thought to be here intended, ſo called in Oppoſition to the Heavenly and Pure Church. So that by the *Air* here Mr. *Mead* underſtands all the Subjects of *Satan*'s Kingdom, who is called the Prince of the Air; and the pouring out of this Vial upon the Air denotes the full and final Deſtruction of Satan's Power. *Obſerve* 2. The Adjunct accompanying the pouring out of this Vial, namely, a Voice out of Heaven, ſaying, *it is done:* That is, theſe laſt Plagues are now finiſht, the Work of God is done; and what in his Counſels he deſigned for the Deſtruction of his Enemies, and for the Deliverance of his People, this is ſaid to be *done*, becauſe it was now *doing*, and accompliſhed, becauſe it was now accompliſhing. God's threatnings of Judgment (except Men repent) are as ſure when denounced as if they were already executed. *Obſerve* 3. The direful Effects and dreadful Conſequences of this laſt Vial's pouring forth; namely, 1. *Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquake*; all implying thus much, that the Storm of God's Wrath now coming upon the Kingdoms of Sin, Satan and Antichriſt, would be very terrible and amazing. 2. *The great City was divided into Three Parts*, into Three Factions ſay ſome; and that Antichriſt's Kingdom was now falling by being divided within itſelf: *And the Cities of the Nations fell*; namely, *Heathen* Nations, and Places which withſtood Chriſt and his Goſpel. For all Chriſt's Enemies are now to be diſpoſed from Publick Authority: *And great* Babylon *came up in remembrance before God.* Not that God was ever unmindful of her, either of her Impiety towards himſelf, or of her Cruelty towards his People; but as good Works are ſaid to be remembred when they are rewarded, ſo Wickedneſs is then remembred when it is puniſhed; *God remembred Babylon*, when for the full Cup of her Sins he put into her Hand a full Cup of the Wine of the fierceneſs of his Wrath. God is never forgetful either of his Churches Sufferings, or his Enemies Sins, but will puniſh the one, and redreſs the other, in his own appointed Time. 3. As another Effect of the pouring forth of this Vial, it is added, *Every Iſland fled away, and the Mountains were not found. Signifying*, ſay ſome, That the remoteſt and ſtrongeſt Places which owned and maintained *Babylon* ſhall either be Converted or Confounded. *Intimating*, ſay others, That there ſhall be no Place in that Day of God's Wrath to flee unto for Safety; neither Iſland in the Sea, nor Mountain on dry Land. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The ſuperadded Judgment of unuſual Hail which God poured forth upon *Babylon*, as before upon *Egypt*, Exod. 9. *There fell great Hail out of Heaven, every Stone about the weight of a Talent.* An Hyperbolical Expreſſion, ſetting forth the Deſign and Purpoſe of God to purſue *Babylon* and the Worſhippers of the *Beaſt* until they be utterly deſtroyed: A Talent, ſay ſome, was an Hundred Pound weight, if ſo, theſe Hail-ſtones were ſufficient not only to kill Men, but to daſh them all in pieces. This heavy Hail ſhews that weighty Sins procure heavy Judgments: Yet mark what a bad uſe theſe obdurate Sinners made of all theſe tremendous Judgments, *They blaſphemed God.* They were ſo Obſtinate in their Idolatry that they ſtood it out againſt all God's Judgments. And when they ſhould have humbled themſelves under his mighty Hand they open their Mouths in Blaſphemies againſt Him. *Here Note*, That in the Book of *Exodus* we do not read that the Old *Egyptians* blaſphemed God when the Plague of Hail was inflicted upon them, nor when they lay under any of the Ten Plagues: But theſe Idolaters, inſtead of giving glory to God, they blaſpheme him, becauſe of the greatneſs of their Plagues. This *Perhaps* is an Emblem of what the Damned will do at the Day of Judgment, tho' their Conſciences be convinced of the Righteouſneſs of their Sentence, yet will they not ceaſe to pour out Blaſphemies againſt God upon the Account of the Severity and Eternity of their Torments. But verily then will all the Divine Attributes be conſpicuouſly glorified, his wonderful Clemency ſweetly diſplayed, his exact Juſtice terribly demonſtrated, his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded, all the knotty Intrigues of Providence wiſely reſolved, and the injured Honour and Glory of Almighty God viſibly cleared and repaired, to the joyful Satisfaction of all good Men, and to the dreadful Conſternation and Confuſion of all impenitent Sinners, who with theſe Worſhippers of the Beaſt will gnaw their Tongues for Anguiſh, and blaſpheme the Holy and Juſt God moſt unjuſtly, for bringing upon them that Deſtruction which they had deſerved, yea, that Damnation which they had choſen.

CHAP XVII.

1 AND there came one of the ſeven angels which had the ſeven vials, and talked with me, ſaying unto me, Come hither, I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that ſitteth upon many waters:

Obſerve here, (1.) The Angel's Invitation to the ſubſequent Viſion, *One of the Angels talked with me, ſaying, Come hither, I will ſhew thee*, &c. Where we ſee the Readineſs of thoſe miniſtring Spirits, the Holy Angels, to do any good Office for the Saints, and with what Chearfulneſs they are employ'd about Things for our Conſolation, and the ſweet Familiarity that is between them and the Saints evidenced by that Expreſſion, *He talked with me, ſaying, Come hither. Obſerve* 2. The Promiſe which the Angel makes to St. *John*, namely, to *Shew him the Judgment of that great Whore.* By the *Whore* all underſtand the City of *Rome*; only ſome will have it *Rome* Pagan, others *Rome* Papal, or the great Idolatrous City and Church of *Rome:* Idolatry is often, in Scripture Stile, called Whoredom; and Idolaters are ſaid to go a Whoring from God. A Whore is a Perſon married to an Huſband, who afterwards proves falſe to his Bed. The Papal preſent Church of *Rome* deſerves this Name, having been guilty of the greateſt Defection and Apoſtacy from the true Evangelical Doctrine and Worſhip that ever was in the World; and ſhe is deſervedly alſo called the *Great Whore*, becauſe of her Whoredoms committed with ſo many under her Power and Juriſdiction, having many People ſubject to her, and for that Reaſon is here ſaid *to ſet upon many Waters.* The true Church is Chriſt's Bride and Spouſe, ſhe is betrothed unto him in *Righteouſneſs*, in *Loving-kindneſs*, and in *Tender Mercy*, and at any Time by Idolatry to Apoſtatize from him is Spiritual Whoredom, which ſhall not paſs without deſerved Puniſhment. *Learn hence*, How hateful Idolatry is to God, and how highly it provokes God's Wrath, even as the Whoredom of a Woman, who plays the common Harlot, provokes the Jealouſie of her Husband. Verily never was Husband more jealous of the Chaſtity of his ſuſpected Wife than God is jealous in Point of Worſhip.

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Babylon was charged with committing Whoredom in the former Verſe, in this the Perſons are declared *Whom* ſhe committed Whoredom with, *viz.* with *Kings*, and the *Inhabitants* of the Earth; that is, with all Sorts of Perſons, Small and Great, Rich and Poor. *Where Note*, That ſhe is, 1. A Catholick Whore, common and ſhameleſs, ſhe refuſes none that will be lewd with her. 2. A Politick Whore; ſhe firſt draws Kings and Princes to commit Fornication with her, and then other Inhabitants; well knowing how faſt the Example of Superiors are commonly followed by Inferiors; and whereas ſhe is ſaid to *make them drunk with the Wine of her Fornication*, the Spirit of God ſeems to intimate that Idolatry is like unto Wine; a ſenſual Sort of Worſhip, and therefore *alluring*; making Perſons drunk, therefore *intoxicating*. Wine is ſweet, but proves deceitful; Idolatry is pleaſing to Man's corrupt Nature, but brings Wrath and Judgment upon the Sinner.

3 So he carried me away in the ſpirit into the wilderneſs: and I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, full of names of blaſphemy, having ſeven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and ſcarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious ſtone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthineſs of her fornication 5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written. MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Obſerve here, 1. That St. *John* was not in one continued Extaſie, but at ſeveral times, *in the Spirit*; that is, in an Extaſie or Rapture of Mind, wherein his outward Senſes being bound up, his Underſtanding was fixed and raiſed up to the Contemplation of Divine Objects repreſented to him in the Viſion. A Spiritual Frame of Mind is requiſite for diſcerning the Viſions of God, *He carried me away in the Spirit*. *Obſerve* 2. The Place whither St. *John* was carried, and where he ſaw the following Viſion, namely, in the *Wilderneſs*; *He carried me away into the Wilderneſs*, a Place of Privacy, ſay ſome, where he might diſcern Things undiſturbedly and undiſtractedly. Solitude is fitteſt for Contemplation. A Wilderneſs, ſay others, was the fitteſt Place to ſee *that Church* in a Viſion, which was itſelf a *Wilderneſs*: The Apoſtolical Church before was driven into the Wilderneſs, here the Apoſtolical Church follows her, as an Harlot ſucceeding to a Faithful City. *Obſerve* 3. The Viſion itſelf, *I ſaw a Woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-colour'd Beaſt*, &c. The Woman here is the ſame with her that was called Whore, *v.* 1. namely, Idolatrous *Rome*; ſhe is repreſented as a Woman Richly and Splendidly arrayed, with her Wealth and Riches, with her Pomp and Power, enticing the World to her Idolatry, called ſo often Whoredom and Spiritual Fornication, and the *Golden Cup* in her Hand is an Alluſion to Harlots, who with their Philters, or Inchanted Cups, do allure and provoke Men to ſenſual Satiſfactions; in like manner doth *Rome* by her outward Splendor allure, and by other ſpecious Pretences and Means draw Perſons to her Idolatries and Superſtitions. *Note Laſtly*, The Name written on her Forehead, to wit, *Myſtery*, *Babylon the Great*; that is, not Literal, but Myſtical, *Babylon*, the great City of *Rome*, the Mother of Idolatry, the Pattern of Cruelty, the Patroneſs of all Impiety; and propagating all theſe by her Power and Policies, who calls herſelf *the Mother Church*, but it is indeed *the Mother of Harlots*, and of all manner of *Abominations*; that is, of abominable Doctrines and Practices.

6 And I ſaw the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus: and when I ſaw her, I wondred with great admiration. 7 And the angel ſaid unto me, wherefore didſt thou marvel? I will tell thee the myſtery of the woman, and of the beaſt that carrieth her, which hath the ſeven heads and ten horns. 8 The beaſt that thou ſaweſt was, and is not: and ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth ſhall wonder (whoſe names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the beaſt that was, and is not, and yet is.

St. *John* proceeds in the Deſcription of this Woman; he declared her to be a filthy and common Whore in the foregoing Verſe, in this he repreſents her as a cruel and bloody Whore; ſhe is ſaid to be *Drunk*, Drunk *with Blood*, Drunk with Holy Blood, Drunk with the Blood of *Saints and Martyrs*, Behold the Blood-thirſtineſs of the *Roman* Church, and her inſatiableneſs therein, even unto Drunkenneſs. *Obſerve* 2. With what Wonder and Admiration St. *John* was filled when he ſaw this Woman drunk with Blood *I wondred with great Admiration*; *intimating*, that ſo aſtoniſhing is the Cruelty of that Church that it juſtly cauſes Wonder and Admiration to all that are not of her Cruel and Bloody Diſpoſition. I wondred that God ſhould ſuffer ſo much of his Dear Servants Blood to be ſhed by her, and at her inſatiable Cruelty in the ſhedding of it. *Obſerve* 3. How the Spirit of God is pleaſed to open this Myſtery, which indeed is the only Viſion of this Nature expounded throughout the whole Book. He begins firſt with a Deſcription of the *Beaſt*, affirming that *he was*, and *is not*, and *yet is*; as if he had ſaid the *Roman* Empire was once Pagan: Now is not Pagan, but Chriſtian, and yet is as Idolatrous now as it was of old; the ſame it was, only in another Form. *Rome* Papal is certainly as Idolatrous, as Cruel and Bloody, as ever *Rome* Pagan was of old; yea, perhaps much more ſo, beyond compare. *Obſerve* next, The *Riſe and Original* is declared from whence this Idolatrous Church ſhould ſpring, namely, *out of the Bottomleſs Pit*; becauſe her working is after the working of Satan, with all Deceivableneſs, with Signs and Lying Wonders. And as its *Riſe* is declared, ſo is its *Ruin* foretold, it *ſhall go into Perdition*; that is, ſhall be finally deſtroyed, never to revive again: But before his Deſtruction the World ſhall be under ſuch an Infatuation, that the generality of the Inhabitants of the Earth, ſome few excepted, *ſhall wander after the Beaſt*, that is, be wonderfully taken with him, and ſhall follow him with an implicite Faith, paying Homage and Subjection to him. But theſe Admirers and Adorers of the Beaſt are only ſuch whoſe *Names were not Written in the Book of Life*; intimating to us, that in Times of greateſt Apoſtacy, and moſt univerſal Defection, from the Truth, the Lord wants not his own true Church; he ever had, and has, yea, ever will, have a number to ſtand up for his Name, and bear witneſs to his Truth.

9 And here is the mind which hath wiſdom. The ſeven heads are ſeven mountains, on which the woman ſitteth. 10 And there are ſeven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he muſt continue a ſhort ſpace. 11 And the beaſt that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the ſeven, and goeth into perdition.

Here the Angel cometh directly to declare and unfold the Myſtery of the Beaſt, premiſing firſt, that it requires Heavenly Wiſdom in a Perſon to underſtand it, and apply the Marks accordingly. *Here is the Mind that hath Wiſdom*, that is, the Mind that hath Wiſdom may here exerciſe itſelf. *The Seven Heads*, ſaith the Angel *are Seven Mountains*, that is, ſignifie Seven Mountains; a clear Deſcription of *Rome*, as to its Local Situation, being Built upon Seven Hills. *And there are Seven Kings*, that is, Seven Forms of Government by, and according to, which *Rome* was governed, namely, by *Kings*, *Conſuls*, *Tribunes*, *Decemviri*, *Dictators and Emperors*, that were Pagans. Five of theſe were fallen in St. *John*'s Time, that is, utterly extinct, namely, the Government by *Kings*, *Conſuls*, *Tribunes*, *Decemviri*, and *Dictators*. *And one is*, to wit, the Government by Pagan Emperors, which was in St. *John*'s time in being. *And the other is not yet come*, that is, the Government by Chriſtian Emperors was not yet in being, and when it did come it held but a little while before the Biſhops of *Rome* wreſted the Government out of their Hands, and took it into their own: Behold here the great Mutability of all Earthly Things; Governments have their Periods, Kingdoms come to an end; happy they who ſerving God acceptably, with Reverence and Godly Fear, have ſecured to themſelves a Kingdom that cannot be moved, *Heb.* 12. 28.

12 And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beaſt. 13 Theſe have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt. 14 Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and they that are with him *are* called, and choſen, and faithful.

Obſerve here, The Angel farther explains to St. *John* this great Myſtery of the Beaſt; declaring that the *Ten Horns* of the Beaſt do ſignifie Ten Kings, which ſhould employ their

Power with the Beaſt, and in Conjunction with his eſtabliſht Idolatry, and to uphold his bloody Religion: Next, their wicked Unity is declared in giving their Power and Strength to the Beaſt; *They have one Mind*, v. 13. that is, they unanimouſly concur in Aiding, Strengthning, and Aſſiſting, the Beaſt; in uſing their Power, and imploying their Authority, to maintain him in his Idolatrous and Pagan-like Superſtitions. Laſtly, it is declared for what End they thus concur together in giving their Power and Strength to the Beaſt; namely, *To make War with the Lamb*, that is, to take part with Antichriſt, and oppoſe Chriſt in his Truth and Goſpel, in his Miniſters and Members, in his Children and Servants. --*But the Lamb ſhall overcome them.* Some ſhall be converted by the Power of the Goſpel, others ſhall be confounded, one way or other brought into ſubjection; for *He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*; that is, cloathed with Divine Power: Chriſt, though a meek Lamb, yet is a mighty Lord. The Titles here given him ſhew his Godhead and Omnipotency, and having ſuch a Power he knows how to fit Inſtruments for his Purpoſe, and thoſe whom he will make uſe of in this Work ſhall be choſen Perſons, and faithful in the Diſcharge of the Truſt committed to them. All that are faithful to Chriſt ſhall ſhare with him in his Victory.

15 And he ſaith unto me, the waters which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt, theſe ſhall hate the whore, and ſhall make her deſolate, and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire.

Here the Angel proceeds, and goes on farther in the Explication of the Viſion. By the *Waters* whereon the Whore ſat he declares are to be underſtood many and divers Nations belonging to the *Roman* Empire. Behold then of what Church Multitude is a Note! Not of the Church of Chriſt, his Flock is a little Flock, but of the Antichriſtian Synagogue, which vaunts that Multitudes are on her ſide. *The Waters whereon the Whore ſat are Multitudes, Peoples, Nations and Tongues.* Alas, the Multitude, or generality of Perſons, are prone to oppoſe that which is good, and thoſe that do good. Next, it is declared what Inſtruments God will make uſe of as the Executioners of his Vengeance upon this great *Whore*, *The Ten Horns*, that is, the Ten Kings which did before Idolize her, and commit Idolatry and Spiritual Whoredom with her, ſhall at length Revolt from her, Hate her, make her Deſolate and Naked, ſhall Eat her Fleſh, and Burn her with Fire. Lord! What a ſtrange, ſudden, and mighty, Change doth the Power of converting Grace make? Behold theſe Ten Kings, who ſometimes doated upon the painted Beauty of this great Whore, when once their Eyes ſhall be opened their Hearts will ſoon be alienated. *Babylon*'s Courts ſhall be crouded with Suitors no longer; they ſhall make her *Deſolate*, by deſerting her Communion; make her *Naked*, by withdrawing their former Supplies afforded to her; they ſhall eat her *Fleſh*, feed themſelves with Spoils, and take her Revenues to themſelves, and Burn her with *Fire*; that is, ſhall utterly Ruin and Deſtroy her. The Deſtruction of Antichriſt once begun ſhall hold on conſtantly by degrees till his final Deſtruction.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beaſt, until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled.

Obſerve here, 1. How the Infinitely Wiſe and Perfectly Holy God can and does ſo order Things, that all his Judgments ſhall be executed by Sinners, without his being the Cauſe of any one of their Sins; though by the permiſſive Will of God theſe Kings gave their Power for a Time to the Beaſt, yet they never had his Approbation for ſo doing. God ſo over-rules the Actions of wicked Men, that when they are doing their Will, contrary to their own Intentions, in and by them the Lord is likewiſe doing his Will. God ſometimes does his Will by thoſe who reſolve they will not do his Will. *Obſerve* 2. The Time when Almighty God, who permitted them to ſubmit to the Whore, will put it into their Hearts to hate Her, and help to Deſtroy her. namely, *when his Word is fulfilled.* God's Word ſhall be fulfilled in Spite of Satan and all his Inſtruments; yea, the Wicked are then fulfilling God's Word and Will, that is, his permiſſive Will; when they are going on in their Wickedneſs God hath put it in their Hearts to fulfil his Will.

18 And the woman which thou ſaweſt, is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

This is ſo clear a Deſcription of *Rome*, that the Church of *Rome* herſelf acknowledges it: For if *that* be the City Built upon Seven Hills, the City that allures the Inhabitants of the Earth to Idolatry; if her Idolatries be a lively Image of the Old Pagan Idolatries; if to her many Kings have given their Power and Strength; and if ſhe reigneth over the Kings of the Earth; there remains no doubt but that this great City is *Rome*; that *Rome* is Myſtical *Babylon*, which has ſhed the Blood of Saints and Martyrs without Number, and muſt be deſtroyed for ſo doing; no Pomp nor Grandeur can exempt or ſhall ſave her from the revenging Hand of God, and his juſt Indignation.

Lord! Haſten that deſireable Time.

CHAP. XVIII.

This Chapter contains a large and particular Deſcription of the Certainty of Babylon*'s Ruin; whoſe Deſtruction is ſet out in Expreſſions borrowed from the Old Prophets,* Jeremiah *and* Ezekiel, *who propheſied of the Certainty, Terribleneſs and Irrecoverableneſs, of Old* Babylon*'s Ruin and Deſtruction, unto which the Holy Ghoſt ſeemeth to allude throughout the whole Chapter.*

1 AND after theſe things, I ſaw another Angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightned with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice, ſaying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

The Deſtruction of Spiritual *Babylon* hath in this *Prophecy* been ſeveral Times *predicted*, and already *foretold*; now here an Angel from Heaven is employed to declare it ſhall certainly be performed. This Angel is variouſly here deſcribed, 1. By the *Place* from whence he came, namely, from *Heaven*; ſignifying that the Deſtruction of *Babylon* was *there* ſurely decreed, and ſhould moſt certainly be accompliſhed. 2. By the *Authority* and *Power* with which he came in the Name of, and by Commiſſion from, the Great God, and *having great Power*. A Mighty Angel is imployed in this Great and Mighty Work, to deſtroy *Babylon*, the Mighty Throne of Antichriſt. 3. By the *Effect* of his Appearance, *The Earth was lightned with his Glory*; *denoting*, that *Babylon*'s Deſtruction ſhould be open and manifeſt, and Matter of Joy and Glorious Rejoicing both to Heaven and Earth. *Learn hence*, That as the Deſtruction of *Babylon* is the Work and Office of an Angel, (under God,) ſo is it unto the Angels Matter of Joy and Triumph; eſpecially to ſuch of them as are employed as Officers therein. *I ſaw an Angel come down from Heaven, having great Power, and the Earth was lightned with his Glory. Obſerve* 2. The *Place* againſt which this Mighty Angel doth denounce the Vengeance of God, and that with an Ingemination or Repetition of the Threatning, *Babylon the Great in fallen, is fallen*; where by *Babylon* all, both Papiſts and *Proteſtants*, do underſtand the City of *Rome*, tho' in different reſpects. This is called Myſtical *Babylon*, in an Alluſion to Ancient *Babylon*, becauſe of their Reſemblance. 1. In *Sin:* Namely, in Pride and Self-Exaltation, in Cruelty and Oppreſſion, in Sorcery and Witchcraft. See *Jer*. 51. 7. 2. In *Puniſhment:* The Deſtruction of Old *Babylon* was a ſudden Deſtruction, *Iſa*. 47. 9. and a perpetual Deſtruction. See *Iſa*. 13. 20. compared with *Rev*. 11. 10. and *Rev*. 18. 8. It is alſo called *Babylon the Great*. 1. Becauſe of the greatneſs of its Strength and Glory: It was the ſtrongeſt and moſt fortified Place in the World. *Cyrus* beſieged it Thirteen Years before he took it; and then by cutting Channels and drawing dry the River *Euphrates*. 2. In regard of her great Power and Dominion Literal *Babylon* ſaid, *Are not my Princes altogether Kings?* And Myſtical *Babylon ruleth over all the Kings of the Earth*. Farther, it is here ſaid, that *Babylon the Great is fallen*; nay, it is ingeminated and repeated, *is fallen, is fallen*; implying, 1. The *Certainty* of her Ruin; it is a Speech of Faith, ſpeaking of Things to come as already paſt; God's Puniſhments when *threatned* are as certain as if already *inflicted*. 2. It denotes the *Suddenneſs* of her Deſtruction, *She is fallen*, that is, *ſubito ruitura*, ſhe ſhall ſoon fall; as when

Chriſt ſaid of his Suffering Work, *It is finiſhed*; he meant, that it was very near finiſhing. 3. It denotes her *utter Ruin* and *Deſtruction*, *is fallen*, *is fallen*, never to riſe more; the Church ſhall never more be tormented by her, or troubled with her. 4. It denotes the *Joy* and *Rejoicing* which will be found in *Sion* at *Babylon*'s Downfal and Deſtruction. *She is fallen*, *ſhe is fallen*; it is not only a Speech of Faith and Truſt, but of Joy and Triumph. *Learn hence*, 1. That *Rome*, or Myſtery *Babylon*, ſhall certainly fall, ſhall utterly fall, ſhall irrecoverably fall. 2. That the Downfal of *Babylon* will be Matter of great Joy and Triumph to the Inhabitants of *Sion*, becauſe ſhe has been to the Church of Chriſt an old and inveterate Enemy, a cruel and bloody Enemy, and ſhall be the laſt Enemy. When *Babylon* is fallen then ſhall all Perſecutions ceaſe; Satan ſhall be bound, and the Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt. Let all that have an Intereſt in God then be inſtant in Prayer with him to haſten its Time, that it may be in the Hiſtory as it is here in the Prophecy, that *Babylon* is fallen. *Obſerve laſtly*, What an heap of multiplied Expreſſions the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed here to make uſe of to ſet forth the utter Ruin and final Deſolation of *Babylon*, *She is become the Habitation of Devils*, *the Hold of every foul Spirit*, *a Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird*; that is, as Devils, and Evil Spirits, are ſuppoſed to haunt Deſolate Places; and Birds, which make hideous and diſmal Noiſes do dwell in ruinous and ruined Places, in like manner theſe Expreſſions denote how intirely and abſolutely God will bring about the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, inſomuch that the Place which hath known her ſhall know her no more, and her Habitation ſhall be an Eternal Deſolation, ſo that none that paſs by ſhall ſay, *This is* Babylon.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

The Spirit of God is pleaſed here to aſſign the Reaſon and Cauſe of *Babylon*'s fatal Ruin and final Deſolation; namely, 1. Becauſe *all Nations have drunk of the Wine of the Wrath of her Fornication.* *All Nations*, that is, very many, the generality of the *Roman* Empire, have been aſſured to, and intoxicated by, her Idolatries, which have brought all this Wrath upon her and them. *Where Note*, How Idolatry is compared to Wine, becauſe very pleaſing to corrupt Nature, and alſo very enticing and enſnaring, overtaking (like Wine) a Perſon unawares; and it is called Wine of Wrath, becauſe it exciteth and provoketh God's Wrath againſt a Perſon or a People guilty of it. 2. Becauſe *the Kings of the Earth have committed Fornication with her*; that is, joined with her in her Idolatrous Worſhip. *Where Note*, The Policy of *Babylon* in drawing Kings and Princes to the Bed of her Fornications, well knowing how faſt their Example would be followed by Inferiors. The Example of Superiors in doing Evil is ſtrangely powerful; *Jeroboam* made *Iſrael* to Sin, not by commanding them to worſhip the Golden Calves, but by commending that Idolatrous Worſhip to them in his own Perſon. 3 Becauſe *the Merchants of the Earth were waxed Rich* through the *Abundance of her Delicacies*. By the Merchants underſtand all ſuch as Trade in *Babylon*'s Wares, her pleaſing and coſtly Wares of Pardons, as Maſſes and Indulgencies, by which ſo many were inriched. All Things are vendible at *Rome*, any Sin to be forgiven for Silver, and a Licenſe for any Thing that is unlawful for Money. Theſe are the Reaſons here aſſigned for *Babylon*'s Ruin. *The Nations were made drunk by her*, *Kings committed Fornication with her*, *and the Merchants inrich'd through the Abundance of her Delicacies*.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, ſaying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Obſerve here, An Admonition given, and a double Reaſon aſſigned, for that Admonition. 1. The Admonition itſelf, *Come out of her my People*; that is, come out of Myſtical *Babylon*, have no Communion with that Idolatrous Church, abſtain from all communicating with her in her Sins, as even you would approve your ſelves to be my faithful People. *Here Note*, It is not ſo much a Local Departure, as a Moral Separation, that is here intended; not ſo much from *Babylon*'s Local Bounds, as from her Abominable Errors, Superſtitions and Idolatries. *Learn hence*, 1. That God has, and ever had, a People even in *Babylon*. *Learn hence*, 2. That it is a ſpecial Duty which God requires of his People to depart from Myſtical *Babylon*, eſpecially when her Downfal is approaching. 3. That ſuch a Departure from *Babylon* is no Schiſmatical Separation; 'tis not a Departure from the True Church, but the Churches Separation from an Idolatrous Communion; and that by the expreſs and poſitive Command of God himſelf, *Come out of her my People*. An Alluſion to the Charge given with Reſpect to *Babylon* of Old, *Jer.* 51. 6, 9. *We would have healed* Babylon, *but ſhe would not be healed*, *forſake her*. *Obſerve* 2. A double Reaſon aſſigned for this Admonition. 1. Becauſe we are in Danger of being Partakers of her Sins; namely, by incurring the Guilt of her Sins, and by contracting the Spot and Filth of her Sins. 2. There is Danger alſo of being made Partakers of her Plagues; there is no Safety in being near thoſe who are under the Curſe of God; Participation in Sin will certainly cauſe a Participation in Judgment. How dreadful is this Text to ſuch as continue in, or apoſtatize unto, *Babylon*'s Idolatry and Communion?

5 For her ſins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembred her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as ſhe rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double. 7 How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her: For ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a queen, and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow. 8 Therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire: for ſtrong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

Obſerve here, 1. The Reaſon aſſigned why Almighty God inflicted ſuch ſevere Puniſhments upon *Babylon*, becauſe *her Sins*, that is, the Cry and Clamour of her Sins, *had reached up to Heaven*; the Meaſure of her Sins was filled up, and God had *remembred* her *Iniquities*, that is, manifeſted his Remembrance of them, by inflicting on her ſo great, ſo juſt, a Puniſhment for them, *viz.* for her Idolatry and Perſecution. *Learn hence*, That altho' Sins be tranſient Actions, yet they have a permanent Pleading before the Lord's Tribunal, to bring down Judgments upon incorrigible Sinners. And, 2. That altho' the Juſtice of God may be thought to be aſleep, and he may ſeem to be forgetful of Sin and Sinners, yet he will take his own Time to manifeſt that he remembers them, by inflicting the heavieſt of his Judgments upon obdurate Sinners. *Her Sins reached unto Heaven*, *and God hath remembred her Iniquities*. *Obſerve* 2. The Injunction and Command given by God unto his People, to every one of them in their *Place* and *Station*, to contribute *Regularly* all they can towards *Babylon*'s Downfal and Deſtruction, *reward her as ſhe rewarded you*; *yea*, *double*. This is required, not from a private Spirit of Revenge, which Chriſtianity expreſly forbids, but as a publick Work in an Authoritative Way and Manner, out of an ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, and from a juſt Indignation againſt her Tyranny and Idolatry; and the Command to *double unto her double*, implies, that a double Puniſhment is due unto her, yea, a juſt one, according to her Works. Behold here what Bloody Perſecutors may at length expect, namely, to receive at the Lord's Hands double for all their Sins. *Babylon*'s Puniſhment ſhall be double, reſpecting what ſhe has acted, but not double in reſpect of what ſhe has deſerved. If poſſible let her have as much Blood again to drink as ever ſhe ſpilt; for one Drop of the Blood of *Sion* is more worth than an Ocean of the Blood of *Babylon*. Give her therefore double; for tho' it be more in Quantity, it is nothing ſo much in Value. *Obſerve* 3. How ſuitable and anſwerable *Babylon*'s Puniſhment inflicted will be to her Sin committed, her Sins were Pride and Inſolence, Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs. *Note* (1.) Her Pride, *She ſaid in her Heart*, *I ſit as Queen*; *Mark*, ſhe did not barely ſay, I *am* a Queen, but *I ſit as a Queen*; as if ſhe had ſaid, I am not only in a *high* Place, but in a *ſure* Place; I have a warm and a firm Seat, I am well ſettled, I have a great Command, yea, an uncontroulable Command; *I am no Widow*, no deſolate Widow, no diſconſolate Widow, for I have many Children to comfort me, many Sons and Daughters to ſupport me; *I ſhall ſee no Sorrow*, I neither feel nor fear any. Behold how Worldly Men fancy to themſelves an everlaſtingneſs in Worldly Things, they fancy themſelves ſitting as upon *Down-Pillows* for Eaſe and Softneſs, and as upon Rocks of Adamant for Sureneſs and Unmovableneſs. *I ſit as a Queen*, *and ſhall ſee no Sorrow*.

Note 2. Her Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs, *She lived delicioſly*, in pompous Palaces, pleaſantly ſituated, plentifully furniſhed; and her Judgment bears a ſtrict Proportion to her Sin, *How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived delicioſly, ſo much Torment and Sorrow give her*. The Juſtice of God will exact all the Arrears of abuſed Mercy. Sinners that now fare deliciouſly every Day, ſhall paſs from *their good Things* here, to the Flames which live by the Breath of God's revenging Wrath. Ah! Doleful Exchange! One Hour's feeling of that Fire will be more tormenting than an Age's Enjoyment of this World's Delights can be pleaſing. *Obſerve* 4. The *Equity*, the Celerity and Multiplicity, of *Babylon*'s Puniſhments. Their *Equity* is intimated in the illative Particle, *Therefore*, that is, becauſe of her former Sins her Plagues ſhall come. The *Celerity* and *Swiftneſs* of her Puniſhment is intimated, *They ſhall come upon her in one Day*, as did *Sodom*'s Plagues, ſuddenly and unexpectedly; and the *Multiplicity* and *Variety* of her Plagues is particularly here expreſt. *Death*, for putting the Saints to Death; *Mourning*, for her former Rejoicing; *Famine*, for famiſhing God's People; and *Burning*, for having Burnt ſo many of the Bodies of the Holy Martyrs to a Coal: Righteous art thou, O Lord, and Juſt are thy Judgments. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Reaſon here aſſigned for the Unavoidableneſs of all theſe Plagues coming upon *Babylon*, *For ſtrong is the Lord who judgeth her*. True! *Babylon* has all Natural Power, and all Civil Strength, on her ſide; but the ſtrong God is againſt her. It is his Controverſie with her, and he is able to effect what he pleaſeth, how incredible ſoever the Thing may ſeem to us. Sooner may the Ark and *Dagon* be reconciled, and ceaſe to be adverſe, than God can be at peace with *Babylon: Strong is the Lord who judgeth her*.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciouſly with her, ſhall bewail her, and lament for her, when they ſhall ſee the ſmoke of her burning. 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city: for in one hour is thy judgment come.

The Spirit of God having in the former Part of the Chapter ſet forth the Certainry and Severity of thoſe Judgments which ſhould come upon Myſtical *Babylon*, he next declares what Wailings and bitter Lamentations her Downfal would occaſion to her Votaries and Admirers, to her Friends and Followers; more particularly he acquaints us with Three Sorts of Perſons that ſhall bewail *Babylon*'s Deſtruction, *Kings*, *Merchants*, and *Seamen*; the former we have here before us in theſe Two Verſes: *The Kings of the Earth*, who have adhered to the Whore, committed Spiritual Fornication with her, and delighted themſelves in her Carnal and Pompous Idol-worſhip, when they ſee the Smoke of her Burning, and underſtand the Certainty of her Deſtruction, they *ſhall ſtand afar off*, like Perſons aſtoniſhed, and like Perſons afraid. Amazed at the dreadfulneſs of the Judgment, and afraid to come near leſt they be involved in it; and the Words of their Lamentation are ſet down, *Alas, alas, that great City* Babylon! *In one Hour is her Judgment come*; as if they had ſaid, notwithſtanding all *Babylon*'s Grandeur, which we ſo admired and magnified, and which *She* herſelf put ſo much Truſt and Confidence in, to our Aſtoniſhment we behold in one Hour her Judgment come upon her. A great and mighty City deſtroyed, a gay and ſplendid Church politickly founded, powerfully ſtrengthned, on a ſudden broken in pieces, and brought to Deſolation: *Alas, alas, that great City* Babylon! *Learn hence*. That when God begins to enter into Judgment with his Churches Enemies the ſtrongeſt Arm of Fleſh cannot avail, but Kings with their Armies will flee, and be diſcomfited; the ſtouteſt Hearts will be afraid and terrified, not daring to approach the Preſence of an Angry God. *The Kings of the Earth ſhall ſtand afar off for fear of her Torment*.

11 And the merchants of the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth her merchandize any more: 12 The merchandize of gold, and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and ſilk, and ſcarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner veſſels of ivory, and all manner veſſels of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble. 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe, and wine, and oyl, and fine flour, and wheat, and beaſts, and ſheep, and horſes, and chariots, and ſlaves, and ſouls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy ſoul luſted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou ſhalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of theſe things which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing. 16 And ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was cloathed in fine linen, and purple, and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls: 17 For in one hour ſo great riches is come to nought.——

The Second Sort of Perſons who paſſionately lament and bitterly bewail *Babylon*'s Downfal and Deſtruction are the *Merchants*, who Traded in and with *Babylon*. Here we have an Alluſion to the Merchants and Merchandize of *Tyre* ſpoken of *Ezek*. 27. As *Tyre* was the Mart of the Earth for Temporal Things, ſo was *Babylon* for Spiritual Things; making Merchandize even *of the Souls of Men*, perſwading the People that they could purchaſe the Redemption of Souls out of Purgatory by Maſſes. *Here Note*, That *Pagan Rome*, though ſhe did Traffick for Slaves, yet not for Souls; but *Papal Rome* deals for both. She ſells alſo the Souls of Men by ſelling her Eccleſiaſtical Benefices, and Cure of Souls. And I would to God that this Piece of Spiritual Merchandize were only found amongſt them, and not heard of elſewhere. *Obſerve next*, The Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed to enumerate at large ſeveral Sorts of Wares, and the Kinds of Merchandize, which *Babylon* Dealt and Traffick'd in, namely, *Gold*, *Silver*, *Precious Stones*, *Fine Linen*, *Purple*, *Silk*, and *Scarlet*; all Things for Ornament, Neceſſity and Delight; the Pride and Senſuality of *Rome* prompted her to Buy up all Sorts of Commodities; and took off all that the Countries round about could bring in; partly to gratifie her Pride, and partly to ſerve her Idolatry. *Obſerve farther*, What a bitter Lamentation is here taken up; but for what? Not for their Sins, their Pride, their Luxury, or Idolatry, but for the loſs of their Market and Merchandize only. Behold in theſe *Babylonians* the Spirit and Temper of all Natural Men, they weep not for Sin, but for Sufferings; for any Temporal Croſs they have Tears enough, they refuſe to be comforted; but for their Sins, which are not their *Croſs*, but their *Curſe*, their *Plague*, yea, the greateſt of all Plagues, becauſe Spiritual, theſe they can ſpeak of with dry Eyes, and unaffected Hearts. *Obſerve laſtly*, How theſe Merchants here, as the Kings before, *ſtand afar off for fear of her Torment*, *Weeping and Wailing*, Pitying and Condoling, one another, greatly Affected and ſorely Afflicted to ſee the Ruin of that Polity that ſuſtained them, but not able to help one another. Behold how Fruitleſs and Helpleſs the Wicked's Friendſhip is one to another in the Day of Viſitation; they ſtand afar off for fear of Torments, but can afford no Succour to each other: They durſt not come near to help *Babylon* or them.

17—— And every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips and ſailors, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtood afar off. 18 And cried when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning, ſaying, What *city is* like unto this great city? 19 And they caſt duſt on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ſhips in the ſea, by reaſon of her coſtlineſs: for in one hour is ſhe made deſolate.

The *laſt* Sort of Mourners for *Babylon*'s Ruin are *Sailors* and *Seamen*: All Spiritual Seamen that have an Oar in St. *Peter*'s Boat ſhall lament greatly, whoſe Life and Livelihood did depend upon the Merchant-Trade of that great City: Theſe, tho' they ſtuck Cloſe to her, and Trafficked with her in the Day of her Proſperity, yet now with the reſt they ſtand afar off from her, lamenting her Ruin, and their own Loſs, in the Day when her Deſolation cometh. And, as an Evidence of the greatneſs of their Sorrow and Mourning, they are here ſaid to *caſt Duſt on their Heads*; which amongſt the Ancients was uſed as a ſpecial Token of extraordinary Grief and Sorrow, *Job* 2. 13. In a time of deep Affliction we may expreſs our inward Sorrows by our outward Geſtures: Theſe Mourners for *Babylon* expreſs their Sorrow for her and themſelves by caſting Duſt upon their Heads.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.

Note here, 1. That as *Babylon*'s Ruin was Matter of great Grief and Sorrow to the forementiond Mourners, who Merchandized and Traded with her, ſo is it Matter of great Joy and Rejoicing to all Spiritual and Heavenly-minded Perſons, which are the True Church. who are commanded to rejoice at it. *Rejoice over her, O Heaven*; that is, ye Angels in Heaven, or ye Saints, or that are of an Heavenly Diſpoſition. And all *ye Holy Apoſtles and Prophets*; that is, all Faithful Miniſters who ſucceed them, who are indewed with the ſame Spirit, and teach the ſame Pure and Holy Doctrine with them. *Note* 2. The Cauſe of this Rejoicing declared; *For God hath avenged them upon her.* The Church does not, the Saints of God dare not, rejoice at *Babylon*'s Calamity to as ſuch, but as an Act of Divine Vengeance. God will be avenged on *Babylon* for the Doctrine of the Goſpel corrupted by her, and for the Rules of Worſhip violated by her, and for all the Barbarities and Indignities which his Church and People have ſuffered from her: God will revenge the Wrongs of his People, when through want of Power they cannot, and through his Prohibition they may not avenge themſelves.

21 And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like a great
milſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with
violence ſhall that great city Babylon be throwndown,
and ſhall be found no more at all .22 And the voice of
harpers, and muſicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters,
ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftſman,
of whatſoever craft *he be*, ſhall be found any more in
thee; and the ſound of a milſtone ſhall be heard no
more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle ſhall
ſhine no mote at all in thee; and the voice of the
bridegroom and of the bride ſhall be heard no more at
all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of
the earth; for by thy ſorceries were all nations deceived:
24 And in her was found the blood of prophets,
and of ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon
the earth.

Obſerve here, 1. *Babylon*'s utter Deſolation repreſented by the Type and Sign of a Milſtone caſt into the Sea; like a Milſtone ſhe had ground and oppreſt the Church of God, and now like a Milſtone thrown into the Sea ſhe ſinks into the Pit of Deſtruction. Almighty God, by this Sign or Symbol, ſignified to St. *John* that *Babylon*'s Ruin ſhould be violent, irrecoverable and irreparable; ſhe falls never to riſe more. The caſting of a Stone into the Sea was anciently the Emblem of Everlaſting Forgetfulneſs. *Obſerve* 2. The Amplification of *Babylon*'s Ruin particularized in ſeveral Inſtances. 1. That nothing ſhould ever more be found in her that belonged to *Pleaſure* or *Delight*; *No Voice of Harpers, Muſicians*, or *Trumpeters.* 2. Nothing which belonged to *Profit* or *Trading*, no Artificers or *Craftſmen.* 3. Nothing belonging to *Food*, no Noiſe of a *Milſtone* for grinding Corn, and making Proviſion for Bread. 4. Nothing to relieve againſt the *Darkneſs* and *Terror* of the Night; *as the Light of a Candle.* 5. No Means for the Propagation of Mankind by Marriage; *The Voice of the Bride and the Bridegroom ſhall be heard no more.* All which Expreſſions do imply extream Deſtruction and utter Deſolation; intimating, that *Babylon* ſhall be a Place utterly abandon'd and forſaken. *Obſerve* 3. A Threefold Cauſe aſſigned for all this, to wit, 1. Damnable Covetouſneſs; *Her Merchants were the great Ones of the Earth.* Her Sinful Way of Merchandizing by dealing in Spiritual Commodities, peculiar to *Rome*, ſeems to be here pointed at; her making Merchandize of the Souls of Men, as we have it, *Ver.* 13. 2. Her bewitching Idolatry, called here *Sorceries*, whereby ſhe enticed People to join with her in her Superſtitious Worſhip. 3. Her Cruelty and Bloodſhed: *In her was found the Blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were ſlain upon the Earth.* *Q.* But how can the Blood ſhed by others be laid to her Charge? *Anſ.* 1. Becauſe the Doctrines which cauſed their Blood to be ſhed were from her. 2. Becauſe her Judiſdiction gave Commiſſion to ſlay the Saints which were ſlain in other Kingdoms. 3. Becauſe by the Influence of her Example at Home much Blood had been ſhed Abroad. God will charge upon others as he did upon *Babylon*, not only the Sin which they have acted, but all the Sins which they have been acceſſary unto.

CHAP. XIX.

The foregoing Chapter reported to us the Final Downfal and Deſtruction of Babylon, *never to riſe more; together with the Bitter Lamentation of her Friends and Votaries upon that Mournful Occaſion.*

This Chapter before us repreſents th great Joy and Rejoicing which was found both in Heaven and Earth, when it pleaſed the Holy and Juſt God to pour forth the Vials of his Wrath and Vengeance upon that Inveterate and Bloody Enemy of his Church and People. A Choire of Singers is here found praiſing God, as Ver. 1. *informs us.*

1 AND after theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven; ſaying, Alleluja; ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

Note here, That the Firſt which ſing this Song of Thankſgiving for *Babylon*'s Deſtruction are Glorified Saints, called here *much People in Heaven*; and they are ſaid *to ſing with a great Voice*, expreſſing thereby their United Zeal and Fervent Affection in this Duty of Thankſgiving. And they begin their Song with an *Hebrew* Word, *Hallelujah*, which is a Word of *Excitation*, and ſignifies *Laud ye the Lord.* Some think that hereby the Chriſtian Churches do invite the *Jews* or *Hebrews* to join with them in praiſing God; and that after *Babylon*'s Overthrow Chriſt ſhall be ſolemnly praiſed, as by the *Gentile*, ſo by the *Jewiſh*, Church. The Tenor of their Song is much the ſame with that which we had before, *Chap.* 7. 10. to wit, *Salvation*, (or Deliverance from all Evils, Spiritual and Temporal, particularly from thoſe which the Church ſuffered under *Babylon*'s Tyranny,) *and Glory, and Honour, and Power, be aſcribed unto the Lord our God*, and to him alone, who is the Author of all Good, and hath manifeſted his great Power in deſtroying our Enemies. *Learn hence*, 1, That the Churches Salvation is entirely from God, and the Special Effect of his Divine Power. 2. That to him, upon that Account, all poſſible Honour and Glory is due, as having ſhewn himſelf his Peoples God: *Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power, be unto the Lord our God.*

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments; for he
hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the
earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood
of his ſervants at her hand. 3 And again they ſaid, Alleluiah.
And her ſmoke roſe up for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, 1. The Cauſe aſſigned and ſet down of this their Doxology and Solemn Thankſgivings, namely, the Truth and Faithfulneſs, as alſo the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, of God in the Execution of his Judgments upon *Babylon:* His Truth appeared in performing the Threatning which *Babylon* deſpiſed; and his Righteouſneſs is ſuiting his Judgment inflicted upon her, to the Sins of Idolatry and Bloodſhed committed by her. *Obſerve* 2. The Title here given to *Babylon*, ſhe is called the *Whore*, becauſe of her Idolatry, which is often in Scripture ſtiled Spiritual Whoredom; and *the great Whore* becauſe of her Univerſal Corrupting the whole Earth: She made others to ſin, and cruelly murdered thoſe who would not ſin. *Hence learn*, That Idolatry and Perſecution conſtantly go together; *Babylon*'s Idolatrous Practices were accompanied with Bloody Cruelties. *Obſerve* 3. An Intimation given of the Irreparable Ruin and Irrecoverable Deſtruction of *Babylon: Her Smoke roſe up for ever and ever*; that is, God followed her with a Succeſſion of Plagues and Judgments until ſhe was ruin'd paſt Recovery. *Obſerve* 4. That the Word *Allelujah*, as it begins the Song, ſo does it alſo cloſe the ſame, to ſhew thereby the Raiſedneſs of the Churches Affections, and their Unweariedneſs in praiſing God for this Deliverance by *Babylon*'s Deſtruction.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four
beaſts fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the
Throne, ſaying, Amen, Alleluia. 5 And a voice came
out of the throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God, all ye his
ſervants, and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great.

Note here, 1. How the whole Heavenly Choire praiſe God on the forementioned Account, acknowledging the Juſtice of his Proceedings againſt *Babylon*. And, 2. An Invitation is here given to all the Saints upon Earth, both ſmall and great, to fear and praiſe him. *Whence Note*, How the Church Triumphant and Militant, the Saints in Heaven, and Chriſtians on Earth, jointly give Praiſe to God, and glorifie him for this great Work, adoring his Divine Juſtice in deſtroying *Babylon*, the Mother of Idolatry, the Neſt of Luxury, the Seat of Oppreſſion and Cruelty: It is a Duty well becoming the Saints, *both ſmall and great*, to Celebrate the Praiſes of God for the Equity of his Judgments upon his Churches Incorrigible and Unreclaimable Enemies. And here God himſelf, and his Miniſters, call upon the whole Church to join in this Solemn Work of Praiſe and Thankſgiving. *A Voice came out of the Throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God, and the Four and Twenty Elders, and the Four Beaſts, fell down and worſhipped.*

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great mul-
titude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the
voice of mighty thundrings, ſaying, Alleluja: for the
Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and
rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of
the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf
ready. 8 And to her was granted, that ſhe ſhould be
arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen
is the righteouſneſs of ſaints.

In the former Verſes an Exhortation was given to all the Saints to abound in the Duty of Thankſgiving; here we find them unanimouſly addreſſing themſelves to the Practice and Performance of that Duty; and accordingly they are called here a *great Multitude*; *their Voice like many Waters* for Unity, and *like Mighty Thunderings*, denoting that Zeal and Fervour which is in their Thankſgivings. *Where Note*, How exceedingly the Church doth rejoice and triumph, not ſo much in *Babylon*'s Ruin, as in the Glory of God advanc'd, and as his own Kingdom is promoted by it. *Obſerve* 2. A Superadded Ground and Reaſon for this Extraordinary Joy and Rejoicing; *for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and the Wife hath made herſelf ready.* By the Marriage *of the Lamb* Mr. *Mede* and Dr. *Moor* do underſtand the Converſion of the *Jews*; by the *Lamb's Wife* the Nation of the *Jews*, ſo called in regard of that Relation which they ſtand in to God by Vertue of the Covenant; and ſhe is ſaid to have *made herſelf ready*, namely, by the Wedding-garment of Faith to accept of her formerly Deſpiſed Bridegroom. *Note*, That it is probably conjectured by ſome that the Converſion of the *Jews* ſhall ſoon follow the Deſtruction of Antichriſt, for his Idolatry and Perſecution are great Scandals to the *Jews*, and mighty Stumbling-blocks in the Way of their Converſion. And whereas it is added, *That it was granted to her to be arrayed in Fine Linen*, the Words do ſeem to import that the *Jews* ſhall in due Time be brought in to Chriſt, to ſubmit to his Righteouſneſs, and be cloathed with it; and that an Holy Emulation ſhall be found between the *Gentiles* and them, which ſhall moſt and beſt adorn the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. *From the Whole Note*, How the Church is called Chriſt's Wife; Chriſt and ſhe are here Betrothed each to other: But at the Great Day the Marriage will be conſummated. *Note farther*, The Churches Spiritual Nakedneſs in herſelf conſider'd: *It was granted to her to be arrayed in Fine Linen*; ſhe had it not of herſelf, but it was put on by Chriſt; he decks and dreſſes his own Bride with the Ornaments of Grace here, and Glory hereafter; that he may *preſent it to himſelf a Glorious Church, without Spot or Wrinkle, Holy, and without Blemiſh.*

9 And he ſaith unto me, Write, bleſſed *are* they
which are called unto the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb.
And he ſaith unto me, Theſe are the true ſayings of
God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worſhip him: And
he ſaid unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-
ſervant, and of thy brethren that have the teſtimony
of Jeſus: worſhip God: for the teſtimony of Jeſus is
the ſpirit of prophecy.

Bleſſed are they which are called to the Marriage-ſupper of the Lamb; that is, (ſay they, who underſtand by the Marriage of the Lamb the Converſion of the *Jews*,) who ſhall live in that Happy Time, when the *Jews* being converted, ſhall with the *Gentiles* make up One Glorious Goſpel Church. But the Marriage is one Thing, and the Marriage-Supper another; the Marriage-Supper follows the Marriage; ſo that the Kingdom of Glory rather ſeems here intended: Bleſſed are they which are called to it, being made meet and prepared for it, by Grace here for Glory hereafter: We muſt be made meet for Heaven before we can be admitted into Heaven: *Bleſſed are they which are called to the Marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. Obſerve next*, That St. *John* being overjoy'd at the Good News of his Countrymens, the *Jews*, Converſion, fell down at the Angel's Feet to worſhip him, as *Cornelius* did at St. *Peter*'s, when he heard of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; Acts 10. 25. *And I fell at his Feet to worſhip him.* The Holieſt and Beſt of Saints are not wholly free from Paſſionate Infirmities: He would now have worſhipp'd this Angel, yet we read not of any Attempt made to worſhip any of the former Angels which convers'd with him. This makes it probable that he apprehended it to be an Uncreated Angel, even the Son of God, which now talked with him. *Obſerve next*, With what Indignation this Holy Angel rejected the Offer of Religious Adoration, and how peremptorily he forbids it; Ὅρα μὴ, by no Means, upon no Terms, do it, *See thou doſt it not*. The Church of *Rome* asks us why we reprove them for worſhipping the Angels when St. *John* himſelf did it? Our Anſwer is ready, that St. *John* himſelf was reprov'd for it; the Angel rejected it as none of his Due. O the Preſumption of thoſe Men who dare do that which the Angel expreſly forbids to be done! Yet after all *Bellarmine* ſays that St. *John* did well to worſhip the Angel: Then ſay we the Angel did ill to reprove St. *John*; but whether we ſhall believe a Cardinal of *Rome*, or an Angel of God, judge ye. *Obſerve Laſtly*, the Reaſons aſſign'd why the Angel forbad it. 1. Becauſe God, and God alone, is the Sole and Proper Object of Religious Worſhip: *Worſhip thou God*. 2. Becauſe the Angel was St. *John*'s Equal in Office, though not in Nature, *I am thy Fellow Servant*: As if he had ſaid, thoſe who ſerve and worſhip God together with you, muſt not be worſhipped by you; thoſe who are Fellow-ſervants to one Maſter ſhould not give to one another that Worſhip which is only due to their Lord and Maſter. *But we are Fellow Servants*: How doth that appear? Thus: You have the *Teſtimony of Jeſus*, and I have *the Spirit of Prophecy*. Now the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Work of the Miniſtry in teſtifying of Jeſus, being of the ſame Nature and Kind of Service, therefore from thoſe that are employ'd in one of them Religious Worſhip is not due to the other. 'Tis Chriſt that employs us both, and therefore he alone is to be worſhipped, and neither I nor thou: *Worſhip God*, to whom Religious Worſhip is juſtly and peculiarly due.

11 And I ſaw heaven opened, and behold a white
horſe, and he that ſat upon him *was* called faithful
and true, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make
war. 12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his
head were many crowns: and he had a name written
that no man knew but he himſelf; 13 And he *was*
cloathed with a veſture dipt in blood: and his name is
called, the Word of God. 14 And the Armies which
were in heaven followed him upon white Horſes,
clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of
his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhall
ſmite the nations: and he ſhall rule them with a rod of
iron: and he treadeth the wine-preſs of the fierceneſs
and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on
his veſture, and on his thigh a name written, KING OF
KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Here we have a new and freſh Viſion, in which St. *John* ſaw Heaven opened, and Chriſt repreſented as a Great and Victorious General, marching forth with a Glorious Army for his Churches Enemies Full and Final Deſtruction. This Great General is firſt deſcribed from the Place whence he comes, namely, from Heaven; he is no Earthly Prince or Potentate, but an Heavenly Monarch. Next he is ſaid to ſit *on a White Horſe*, denoting Victory, Proſperity, and Succeſs: He is called *Faithful, and True, and Righteous*, becauſe Faithful in his Promiſes, True in his Threatnings, Righteous in all his Diſpenſations towards his Enemies; he will do them no Wrong. Next, *his Eyes* are ſaid to be as a Flame of Fire, denoting his clear and piercing Knowledge, and alſo his Terror as a Judge, his Eyes being in Wrath as a Flame of Fire, ready to conſume his Enemies. And *farther*, to ſhew his Royal Dignity, it's added, *on his Head were many Crowns*, which alſo denoted his many Victories over his many and mighty Enemies. And by the *Name* which *no Man knew* but himſelf, ſome underſtand his Nature and Eſſence, which is ſo incomprehenſible and unſearchable as that none but he who is True God is able to comprehend it fully, nor reveal it perfectly. Others by his Name underſtand his Judgments and Ways, by which he is known as a Man by his Name. *Obſerve next*, This Great and Mighty General is deſcribed from his *Veſture dipp'd in Blood*, which denotes the Mighty Overthrow of his Enemies: The Crueleſt and Proudeſt of them can expect nothing in the End from him, but extremity of Wrath and deſerved Deſtruction, for they muſt all become his Footſtool. And his Name being called *The Word of God*, ſpeaks Dread and Terror to Antichriſt, who ſlanders, oppoſes, corrupts, and ſuppreſſes, and offers all Manner of Indignities to the Word of God; and exerciſes utmoſt Cruelties againſt the Preachers and Profeſſors of it. *Obſerve farther*, That after the Deſcription of this Great and Might General, follows next the Deſcription of his *Armies*, his Attendauts and Followers, namely, the Holy *Angels* and Glorified Saints, *Verſe* 14. theſe alſo ride upon *White Horſes* as their General did before them, and are cloathed in *Fine Linen, White and Clean*. Behold the Comely Conformity in Purity and Holineſs between the General and his Soldiers, between Chriſt and his Followers, they both appear on White Horſes, ſuitable to one another. Chriſt will admit none to be his Followers that are not like him. Next we have the *Weapon* deſcribed, *Verſ*. 15. which Chriſt makes uſe of for the Deſtruction of Antichriſt, and all his Churches Enemies; and that is *a Sword*, *a Sharp Sword*, the *Holy Scriptures*, particularly the Threatnings of the Word, with which he will ſmite all the Wicked Nations that ſide with Antichriſt againſt him and his Kingdom: Dealing with his Enemies as Men do with Grapes gather'd into a Winepreſs, which they can eaſily cruſh. *Laſtly*, He is deſcribed by a New Name of Royal Dignity and Supream Power, being called *King of King, and Lord of Lords*. And this Name is ſaid to be written on his *Veſture*, and on his *Thigh*, partly for Perſpicuity, that all might take Notice of it; and partly for Permanency, to ſhew that as long as himſelf laſts, which is for ever, ſo long ſhall his Kingdom and Dominion over all endure.

17 And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun, and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather your ſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh of captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all men, both free and bond, both ſmall and great.

After the Deſcription of the General and his Army follows next the Event and Succeſs of the Battel, which is a Prodigious Slaughter of the Churches Enemies: And as Eagles and Vultures, and other Birds of Prey, do attend an Army, and flock where the Slain lye, in like manner Almighty God here invites the Fowls of the Air to ſup upon the Carcaſſes of his Slain Enemies. Antichriſt would not ſuffer the Dead Bodies of the Witneſſes to be buried, but to be caſt out, and lye in the Streets; and here God metes to him the ſame Meaſure; their Carcaſſes alſo ſhall be a Supper for the Birds and Fowls of the Air. *Come to the Supper of the Great God*, to the Slaughter of Antichriſt and his Adherents. *Where Note*, That by calling it a Supper Two Things may be probably intended. 1. The Facility and Eaſineſs of the Victory; that Chriſt's and his Churches Enemies will not put him hard to it to overcome them, as we proverbially ſay; they will be but a Supper to him, or a Breakfaſt for him. 2. The Word *Supper* ſeems to import, that this ſhall be the laſt Effort, the laſt great Oppoſition, that Antichriſt and the Churches Enemies ſhall ever make Chriſt againſt to the End of the World, as the Supper is the laſt Meal of the Day.

19 And I ſaw the beaſt, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his Army. 20 And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhiped his image. Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone. 21 And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which *ſword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh.

Obſerve here, 1. The Final Iſſue of this great Battle, namely, the Total Ruin of all the Enemies of the Church; the Beaſt and Falſe Prophet were taken, *and caſt alive into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimſtone*. Behold the Puniſhment of Idolaters and Idolatry, the Falſe Prophet had cheated Credulous Princes and Peoples with his Pretended Miracles into Idolatry. He had caſt others into a Bed of Fornication, and God caſts him into a Bed of Flames. *Laſtly*, It is added concerning the *Remnant*, that they were ſlain *with the Sword of his Mouth*; that is, by Chriſt's Judicial Sentence they were righteouſly adjudg'd to be ſlain, and when they were ſo all the Fowls were filled with their Fleſh. *Where Note*, That theſe Perſons were not excuſed becauſe they follow'd their Leaders, and did what they bad them. Chriſt commands for all that that they alſo ſhould be ſlain. Lord! How vain will the Plea of many Sinners be at the great Day; we followed our Guides, we did as we ſaw others do before us? *Remember we* that God has given us a Rule to walk by, the Infallible and Inflexible Rule of his Word; and neither the Example of the moſt, nor of the beſt, muſt influence us to act contrary thereunto; for if we will do as the moſt do, we muſt be contented to go where the moſt go, even *into the Lake of Fire burning with Brimſtone*.

CHAP. XX.

1 AND I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years, 3 And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled: and after that he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon.

This Chapter begins with a Freſh and Glorious Viſion which St. *John* had of an Angel's deſcending from Heaven to bind Satan for a Thouſand Years: *And herein we have obſervable*, 1 The Perſon binding, *the Angel* of the Covenant, Chriſt Jeſus, (for he only has the Keys of the Bottomleſs Pit, of Hell, and of Death, *Rev.* 1. 18.) This Angel is here ſaid to come down from Heaven, and with a great Chain in his Hand; denoting his Omnipotent Power and Soveraignty over Satan, and his Ability to reſtrain him. *Obſ.* 2. The Perſon bound, *Satan*; where *mark* that he is ſet forth here by Five Names, he is called the *Dragon*, the *Serpent*, the *Old Serpent*, the *Devil* and *Satan*. *And Note*, That Chriſt's Power is ſet forth in as many Terms as the Devil has Titles; he is ſaid to lay *hold* on him, to *bind* him, to *caſt* him into the Bottomleſs Pit, to *ſhut* him in, or ſeal him up for a Thouſand Years; that is, to reſtrain him, and render him uncapable of doing ſuch Miſchief to the World as he had done before. *Obſerve* 3. What we are to underſtand by Chriſt's binding Satan, Some thereby do underſtand Chriſt's Overthrowing the Power of the Devil in the *Heathen* World; his Caſting down thoſe Strong Holds of Satan, to wit, Ignorance, Superſtition, Idolatry, and Lying Oracles, by the Light and Power of the Goſpel preach'd among the *Gentiles*, his curbing of Satan that he ſhould no more couſin the World with *Heatheniſh* Deluſions as he had done. Others underſtand this Binding of Satan to be after the Deſtruction of Antichriſt; when the *Jews* ſhall be converted, and there ſhall follow a Quiet and Peaceable State of the Church for a long Time, ſtiled here a Thouſand Years; during which Time Satan ſhall be bound, and there ſhall be no Moleſtation from him. *From the whole Learn*, That be the Devil never ſo deviliſh Chriſt has Power to overpower him; Chriſt has a great Chain in his Hand to bind Satan. *Intimating*, That how mighty and malicious ſoever Satan is Chriſt has him as a Dog in a Chain. *But obſerve a little*, How Chriſt's Power meets with and maſters Satan's Power; the Devil carries Power in his *Name*, he is called a *Dragon*, in his *Nature*, as being an *Angel*, in his *Numbers*, which are numberleſs; but Chriſt over-powereth him, ſo that he cannot do his own Will without him; he bounds him in the Execution of his Malice, tho' his Malice be boundleſs. Satan is bound in a double Chain, in a Chain of Juſtice, and in a Chain of Providence; he cannot move a Foot either to tempt or to trouble us without a Permiſſion from Chriſt.

4 And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I *ſaw* the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand Years.

Theſe Words are conceived to ſet forth the Glorious and Happy Condition of the Church of Chriſt here on Earth during the Time of Satan's reſtraint; and the Term of a *Thouſands Years* ſhews that it will be the longeſt Happy Condition that ever the Militant Church enjoy'd, for Purity of Ordinances, for Encreaſe of Light and Knowledge, for the Power of Godlineſs, for the Abundance of Profeſſors, for the more Open and Publick Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, for Outward Freedom and Peace, and all this for a long Continuance of Time; which Happy State and Condition is here ſet forth by *Thrones*, ſhewing the Saints Dignity and Dominion over their Enemies. And whereas St. *John* ſays he ſaw the Souls of Martyrs who had ſhed their Blood for Chriſt, the Meaning, ſay ſome, is, *He ſaw them* in their Succeſſors of the ſame Faith, thoſe Pious Chriſtians which ſhould at that Time live, and in their Principles and Practices are like the Holy Martyrs; theſe ſhall then enjoy a more Quiet, Happy, and Comfortable, State during this Time than the Servants of God enjoyed at any time before. *Yet obſerve farther*, That this Glorious Condition of the Church is not abſolutely, but comparative only, both in reſpect of Purity, and in reſpect of Peace; for whilſt the Church is on this ſide Heaven there will be both Corruptions without, and Temptation without, Croſſes; Hypocrites will be, and Offences will come, though Freedom from all theſe will at that Time be more than uſual; yet taking up the Croſs, and being conformed to Chriſt in his Sufferings, will be Duties belonging to Saints whilſt the World endures. *Obſerve Laſtly*, That yet there is no Ground from hence to expect Chriſt's Perſonal Reign upon Earth, or his Corporal Preſence with his Church here; for it is not ſaid that he reigned *with them*, but that they reigned *with him*; denoting that this Kingdom is Spiritual, conſiſting in Purity and Peace, in Righteouſneſs, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. As to a Perſonal Reign of Chriſt then with his People here on Earth it ſeems not probable, becauſe the Scripture is ſilent of it, and joins Chriſt's Perſonal Coming and the Day of Judgment together; beſides, were Chriſt perſonally upon Earth, how ſhould we enjoy him, and converſe with him? 'Tis impoſſible we ſhould enjoy a glorified Chriſt till our Bodies be ſpiritualized, which they will never be till they get to Heaven. Once more; what will become of the Saints during theſe Thouſand Years of Chriſt's ſuppoſed Preſence with them? Either they will live all that Thouſand Years, (which is not rational to ſuppoſe,) or they will die in that Time: If they die, and go to Heaven, they will go *from* Chriſt, and not *to* him, and muſt for a Time be abſent from him, inſtead of being for ever with him; and doubtleſs Heaven will be a Melancholy Place if Chriſt be out of it. The Sum then is this, that the Saints living and reigning with Chriſt holds forth the Flouriſhing Condition of the Church Militant: The Expreſſion of Sitting upon Thrones ſpeaks an Honourable Condition that the Church will be certainly in after the Downfal of Antichriſt; and the Term of a Thouſand Years, ſhews it will be the longeſt Happy Condition that ever the Church enjoy'd. God Almighty haſten that deſirable Time.

5 But the reſt of the dead lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed. This *is* the firſt reſurrection. 6 Bleſſed and holy *is* he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, but they ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

By the reſt of the Dead underſtand the Subdued Enemies of the Church in their Succeſſors, who are ſaid to be dead *politically*, in reſpect of their Outward Condition, which will now be very low; *they lived not again* a Political Life. Life; that is, they did not regain or recover that Power to perſecute the Church which once they had, but are now diveſted of in great Meaſure, namely, till the Thouſand Years are finiſhed; then they ſhall have Liberty again to vent their Enmity againſt the Church, joining with *Gog* and *Magog*, as their Predeceſſors, the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, did combine together before them. *This is the Firſt Reſurrection*; that is, the living again of the Saints in that Glorious Manner before deſcribed, in Holy Societies, with greater Degrees of Purity and Peace. *Learn*, That the Reformation of the Church after the Ruin of its Pagan and Papal Enemies is as a Splendid and Glorious Reſurrection to her: And accordingly ſuch as are ſharers in this Political Reſurrection are pronounced Bleſſed, *Bleſſed and Holy is he that hath Part in the Firſt Reſurrection*; that is, bleſſed are they that ſhall have their Lot to live in this Happy Time, when the Means of Holineſs will more abound, and the Meaſures of Holineſs be more extenſive and univerſal. *The Second Death* ſhall never affect them, Everlaſting Miſery ſhall be eſcaped by them; *and they ſhall be Prieſts unto God*, to offer up, not *expiatory*, but *gratulatory*, Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe unto him; and as the Prieſthood is Spiritual, ſo is the Kingdom alſo. *They ſhall reign*, ſpiritually over their Luſts and Corruptions, and have greater Power to overcome Temptations, and this for a Thouſand Years; that is, during the Time of their Living here, in that Part of the Happy Millenium in which they ſhall live, they ſhall in that Time enjoy a more Holy, Happy, Peaceful and Flouriſhing, Condition than the Church of God did ever ſo long enjoy in former Times. --- Some will have all this to be underſtood concerning a Spiritual Reſurrection from the Grave of Sin to a Life of Holineſs and Grace; over ſuch indeed the Second Death or Everlaſting Miſery ſhall have no Power; but tho' this may be alluded to, yet a Political, not a Spiritual, Reſurrection ſeems here to be principally intended.

7 And when the thouſand years are expired, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his Priſon, 8 And ſhall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the ſand of the ſea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt and the falſe prophet *are*, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Obſerve here, 1. A Prophetical Prediction, that when the long Time of the Churches Liberty and Peace ſhall be expired, (which is here expreſs'd and ſet forth under the Notion of a Thouſand Years,) God will then take off his Reſtraint from the Devil, and he ſhall influence the Wicked World once more to make Oppoſition againſt his Church; *When the Thouſand Years are expired Satan ſhall be looſed out of his Priſon. Behold here*, Satan's Reſtleſs Malice againſt Mankind, and particularly againſt the Church of Chriſt. *Obſerve next*, That Satan is firſt ſaid to deceive the Nations, and then to gather them together to Battel againſt the Saints; the ſame Saints, either in their Perſons, or in their Succeſſors, who did formerly reign will now ſuffer; but by whom? By *Gog and Magog*; where is probably an Alluſion to thoſe Two Names mention'd often in the *Old Teſtament*, who were the laſt Enemies of the *Jewiſh Church* before Chriſt's firſt Coming. In like manner the laſt Enemies of the Chriſtian Church are here ſet forth by that Name, who ſhall be utterly deſtroyed a little before Chriſt's Second Coming to Judgment. Satan, with all his united Power, and combined Force, will attempt the whole Body of the Chriſtian Church before his Laſt and Fatal Overthrow. *Obſerve Laſtly*, That after the Deſtruction of theſe Agents and Inſtruments of Satan's Fury his own Full and Final Deſtruction is declared; which may be called his Second Impriſonment in that Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, which is both eaſleſs and endleſs, there to keep company with the Beaſt and Falſe Prophet to all Eternity. *Behold here* the Deceiver and the Deceived plagued together, the Devil that deceiv'd, and the Beaſt and falſe Prophet that were deceived by him, and were his Inſtruments to deceive others, are caſt together into the Lake of Fire, to be Tormented for ever. Satan was indeed condemned to this before, and reſerved thereunto, but the actual and final Execution thereof is ſuſpended till the End come.

11 And I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. 12 And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: And the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books according to their works. 13 And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire: this is the ſecond death. 15 And whoſoever was not found written in the book of life, was caſt into the lake of fire.

Here is another Viſion which St. *John* ſaw, namely, a lively Repreſentation of the Great Day of Judgment, when all, both good and bad, that ever lived, ſhall be raiſed and ſentenced according to their Works; the State of the Wicked is ſet forth in this Chapter, and the happy Condition of the Righteous in Heaven gloriouſly deſcribed in the Two next Chapters. *Obſerve* here, 1. The Judge deſcribed, as ſitting upon a Throne, or Seat of Judgment; a *Throne*, to denote that this Judge is a King; and a *White* Throne, to denote the Purity and Righteouſneſs of this Judge; and *a great* White Throne, becauſe erected for a great Judge, and for a great Service, namely, the judging of the whole World. *Obſerve* 2. The Dreadful Majeſty and Glorious Power of this Judge declared, that neither Heaven nor Earth are able to abide his Preſence, but are ſaid *to flee away, and that there was no Place found for them. Obſerve* 3. The Perſons judged are here deſcribed, and that, 1. By their Condition and Qualification, all the Dead, both ſmall and great; all that ever lived, and all that ſhall then be found alive. 2. By their Poſture, they ſtand before the Judge whilſt he ſits to ſhew his Authority. 3. By the Manner of Proceeding, which is repreſented as being after the Form of well-ordered Judicatories here on Earth; wherein the Books are produced, namely, the Book of God's Omniſcience, and the Book of Conſcience, the Book of the Law, and the Book of the Goſpel. They that had not the written Law ſhall be judged by the Law of Nature: They that had the written Law are to be judged by that, and they that have had the Goſpel to be judged by that, and every one according to their Works. *Obſerve* 4. The Execution of the Sentence of this great Judge upon the wicked and impenitent World; they are caſt into the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death. *From the whole Learn*, 1. That it is certain that there ſhall, and neceſſarily that there ſhould, be a Day of Judgment. 2. That in that Day there will be no Exemption of any Perſons from the Examination of the Judge. *I ſaw all the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God.* 3. That Jeſus Chriſt, called here *God*, (which clearly proves his Deity,) ſhall come in the Clouds to judge the World; and will be then found ſuch a Judge as the Riches of the Wealthieſt cannot Bribe; ſuch a Judge as the Power of the Mightieſt cannot Daunt; ſuch a Judge as the Subtilty of the Wiſeſt cannot Delude; ſuch a Judge as there is no appealing from, no repealing of, his Sentence. *Learn* 4. That as the ſame Perſons ſhall be judged, who formerly lived ſo, in the ſame Bodies that died, and were either buried in the Earth, or conſumed in the Sea. *The Sea gave up her Dead*; by which underſtand all Places, tho' attended with never ſo many improbable Circumſtances of a Reſurrection, ſhall yet give up the Dead. *Death and Hell*; that is, Death and the Grave *gave up the Dead which were in them*; that is, by the Power of God were made to reſtore them. *Learn* 5. That the Sentence denounced will be according to every Man's Works at the great Day, according to the Nature and Quality of the wicked Man's Works, ſhall his Judgment and Puniſhments be: According to the Sincerity, not according to the Imperfection of the Righteous Man's Works, ſhall his Reward be. God grant that the Conſideration of this may ſo far influence us, that no Profit may tempt us, no Pleaſure entice us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to do that Thing of which we cannot give a good Account in the Day of Judgment.

CHAP. XXI.

In the Concluſion of the foregoing Chapter St. John *had a Viſion of the Day of Judgment, and the Execution of the Sentence on the Wicked was briefly declared and ſet down; in this Chapter he has a Viſion of the New* Jeruſalem, *the Holy City, out of which all the Wicked are excluded, and the Excellencies thereof are more largely inſiſted upon for the Conſolation of the Righteous; concerning which he thus ſpeaks.*

1 AND I ſaw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the firſt heaven, and the firſt earth were paſſed away, and there was no more ſea. 2. And I John ſaw the holy city, new Jeruſalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her huſband.

By the New Heavens and the New Earth here all underſtand a new State and Face of the Church; but ſome apply it to the State of the Church Militant here upon Earth, and others to the State of the Church Triumphant in Heaven. Accordingly they take the New Heavens and the New Earth to be the Effect of that great Change which ſhall be made by Fire at the Univerſal Conflagration; and they are called *New*, not ſo much in regard of *Subſtance*, as in reſpect of *Qualities*, being now for Nature more Stable, and for Beauty more Glorious. Queſt. *But what Uſe ſhall there be of this New Heaven and New Earth? And who ſhall dwell therein? Anſ.* We cannot tell, but muſt reſt ſatisfied with what God has told us, that therein *ſhall dwell Righteouſneſs*; and it will be a ſtanding Monument of God's Power and Greatneſs: It is added, that *the Firſt Heaven and the Firſt Earth were paſſed away*; not by an Annihilation, but by a Qualitative Mutation. *And no more Sea*; that is, ſay ſome, as it was before, Turbulent, Changeable, ſubject to Corruption and Vanity: Say others, no more troubleſome State of Things, which is oft-times ſignified by the Sea. A New and Glorious State of Things was undoubtedly here deſigned relating to the Church. *Obſerve next*, The Character St. *John* gives of the Glorious State of the Church Triumphant, *v.* 2. He compares her, 1. To a Beautiful *City*, for Amplitude and Largeneſs, for Compact, Structure, and for Commodious Habitation; ſhe is called *Holy*, becauſe no unclean Thing can enter into her, and becauſe that Holineſs ſhall there be perfected which was here begun. 2. To an adorned *Bride*; no Spouſe on her Marriage-day ſo adorned as ſhe was. The Church in Heaven is ſo called to denote her Dignity, and the Love which Chriſt bears to her, and the Delight which he takes in her, which is ſo continual, as if it were always a Wedding-day, and ſhe is adorned for him, and adorned by him, with Spiritual Beauty, and Glory, and Perfection of Grace.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, ſaying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away.

Obſervable is that Variety of Expreſſions which the Holy Ghoſt here makes uſe of to ſet forth the Excellency of the Church Triumphant by. 1. She is bleſt with God's immediate Preſence and Abode, of which the *Tabernacle* was a Sign: The Lord manifeſting himſelf in Heaven unto his Saints in a more immediate Way than ever he did unto them here on Earth. *The Tabernacle of God is with Man*; and to ſhew the permanency of this Priviledge, it is added, *He ſhall dwell with them*; after an Inhabitation here by Grace, ſhall follow a Cohabitation hereafter in Glory. Next it is ſaid, *They ſhall be his People, and he will be their God*; which muſt not be ſo underſtood as if that Relation did now begin between them, but the Comfort of that Relation is now perfectly underſtood, and they reap the compleat Advantage of that Covenant-promiſe, whoſe Sweetneſs they did only taſte before. 2. Having deſcribed the poſitive Good which the Triumphant Church ſhall Eternally reſt in, St. *John* nexts ſets forth the Privative

Evils, which they ſhall Everlaſtingly be freed from. All Sorrow, and all the Cauſes of Sorrow, ſhall be removed; they ſhall have no outward Occaſion nor inward Diſpoſition to weep; there ſhall be no more Death, but Immortality and Eternal Life, nor any more Pain or Sickneſs, but Pleaſure for evermore. Lord! What a Sovereign Cordial is this againſt all our preſent Sorrows and Sufferings; to conſider the Time is at Hand when all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, all Sorrows, and the Cauſes of Sorrow, baniſh from our Hearts, and Everlaſting Joys ſhall poſſeſs our Souls, and we ſhall be with our Lord for ever, to obey him with Vigour, to praiſe him with Chearfulneſs, to love him above Meaſure, to fear him without Torment, to ſerve him without Interruption or Diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him as well in Holineſs as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality.

5 And he that ſat upon the throne, ſaid, Behold, I
make all things new. And he ſaid unto me, Write:
For theſe words are true and faithful. 6 And he ſaid
unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Note here, 1. How theſe New Heavens and a New Earth come to be effected and made, namely, by the Omnipotent Power of Chriſt. *Behold I make all Things new*, a good Argument to encourage us to go unto Chriſt by Prayer for renewing Grace. Surely he that makes New Heavens can make New Hearts, he that renews an Old World can renew us in the Spirit of our Minds, and make Old Things paſs away, and cauſe all Things to become New. Next he commands St. *John* to write that theſe Words ſet down here and throughout this Prophecy are *true and faithful.* We ſee then that the Holy Scriptures were written at the Lord's Command, and therefore from him they do derive their Authority. *Obſerve* 2. The Word of Aſſurance here uttered by Chriſt for the Confirmation of what he had before declared and promiſed, *He ſaid unto me it is done*; ſignifying thereby, that it is as certain as if it were already done; namely, whatever he had promiſed relating to his Church's Happineſs, and all that he had threatned relating to her Enemies Deſtruction. Let not the Church then at any Time ſtagger in her Faith. *Obſerve* 3. The Title which Chriſt is pleaſed here to reſume, which before was given by himſelf, *Chap.* 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.* To ſhew, that as he firſt made the World, ſo he was now about to put a Period to it, and would give to every thirſty or believing Soul an Everlaſting Life in the New *Jeruſalem*, which ſhall no more decay than Water, which is in an ever-ſpringing Fountain, can be dried up.

7 He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I
will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son.

Obſerve here, 1. That our Deſires of Happineſs muſt be accompanied with Endeavours after it, or they will be ineffectual; to thirſting in the former Verſe, he joins overcoming in this Verſe: We muſt not barely Wiſh, but Work; not only Talk, but Fight; and not only Fight, but overcome our Spiritual Enemies in fighting, or we are miſerable; how ſtrong ſoever our Deſires after Happineſs may be ſuppoſed to be, without proportionable Endeavours we can have no good Ground of Hope. *Obſerve* 2. *He that overcometh*, that is, he that is overcoming, he that daily maintains the Combate, tho' he has not yet obtained a perfect Conqueſt over his Spiritual Enemies, yet he keeps the Field with Sword in Hand, reſolving never to throw down his Weapon, but to die a Conqueror, rather than be taken Priſoner. *Obſerve* 3. The encouraging Promiſe given to the Conqueror, *He ſhall inherit all Things. Where Note*, The Extent and Latitude of the Promiſe, the enjoying *all Things*, that is, all Bleſſings and Benefits, all Joys and Comforts, that are requiſite to make him perfectly and perpetually Happy. *Note alſo*, God's Way and Manner of diſpenſing the Mercy promiſed, and that is by Free-gift. *He ſhall inherit all Things*, not merit any Thing; an Inheritance is *Gratuitum Paterni Amoris Pignus*, an Eſtate freely given by the Father to his Children. *Obſerve* 4. A ſuperadded Promiſe, *I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son*; that is, I will give him the Manifeſtation of his Adoption before Angels and Men; I am now his God, and he is now my Son, but the World knoweth it not; they brand my People for a Generation of Hypocrites, and ſometimes they call in Queſtion their own Sincerity, and their Title to the Priviledge of Adoption, but at the great Day I will publickly own them before Angels and Men, and make it appear that I love them as a Father, and they ſhall live with me as Sons, for ever and ever: *He that overcometh*, &c.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.

After a Deſcription given of the Celeſtial Happineſs of the Righteous at the Day of Judgment, here follows the eternally miſerable Condition of the Wicked, and Eight ſeveral ſorts of Sinners are here ſumm'd up, who ſhall be excluded out of Heaven, and caſt into Hell; namely, *the fearful*; ſuch as dare not own Chriſt, or for fear of Suffering have diſown'd him, apoſtatiz'd and revolted from him. *Unbelievers*, ſuch eſpecially as have ſat under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, but have rejected our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and refuſed to come unto him that they might have Life. *The Abominable*, ſuch as live in the Practice of Sins againſt Nature, Sodomy, and ſuch Uncleanneſs as renders them abominable in the ſight of God and Man, *Rom.* 1. 26. *Murderers*, ſuch as deſtroy either the Soul, Body, or good Name, of their *Neighbours*, eſpecially Perſecutors; the Whore and her Followers, who are drunk with the Blood of the Saints. *Whoremongers* of all Sorts, both Spiritual and Corporal, particularly ſuch as are guilty of Uncleanneſs in a Conjugal State. *Sorcerers*, ſuch as exerciſe Witchcraft, conſult with the Devil, and trade with Familiar Spirits. *Idolaters* of all ſorts and kinds, ſuch as worſhip falſe Gods, or the true God after a falſe Manner. *Covetous* Perſons, who make the World their God; and *Senſual* Perſons, who make their Belly their God. *Laſtly*, All *Liars*, thoſe which lie with the Lip, and talk falſely; thoſe which lie in their Lives, as all Hypocrites do; whoſe Practice gives their Profeſſion the lie. Thoſe who are the Inventers of the Doctrine of Lies, which is no better than the Doctrine of Devils. Theſe, all theſe, ſhall have their Part in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimſtone; that is, in exquiſite Torments, and Everlaſting. *From the whole Note*, Firſt, How the timerous and fearful ſtand in the Front of all thoſe vile Sinners, whoſe Ways lead down to the Chambers of Death and Hell. Behold here God's martial Law executed upon Cowards and Renegadoes, whoſe Fear makes them revolt from Chriſt in time of Danger. Think of this all you timerous and faint-hearted Profeſſors, who cannot bear the thought of lying in a naſty Dungeon for owning Chriſt, how will you endure to lye in a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone for diſowning of him? Is not the little Finger of an angry God heavier than the Loins of all the Tyrants and Perſecutors in the World? *Note* 2. That although Eight Sort of Sinners only are here reckoned up, yet all others who live and die impenitently in any known Sin, beſides theſe, of what kind ſoever, are certainly included, and their Damnation implied alſo, as well as theſe. For whoever lives in the habitual Practice of any known Sin, without converting from it unto God, is certainly in a State of Damnation. *Note Laſtly*, That the Sins here mentioned muſt not be underſtood copulatively, but disjunctively; we muſt not ſuppoſe that ſuch as are guilty of all the forementioned Sins are the Perſons threatned with Hell-fire, but ſuch as are with allowance guilty of any one of theſe, or of any other beſides theſe, and continuing impenitently in them.

9 And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels,
which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues,
and talked with me, ſaying, Come hither, I will ſhew
thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried
me away in the ſpirit, to a great and high mountain,
and ſhewed me that great city, the holy Jeruſalem, deſcending out of heaven from God. 11 Having the
glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a ſtone moſt precious, even like a jaſper ſtone, clear as cryſtal;
12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve
gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes
of the children of Iſrael. 13 On the eaſt, three gates;
on the north, three gates; on the ſouth, three gates;
and on the weſt, three gates. 14 And the wall of the
city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb.

St. *John* having delivered before a general Account of the Saints Happineſs in Heaven, deſcends here to a more particular Deſcription of it. Heaven, called the New *Jeruſalem*, is repreſented by a City, with Magnificent Gates and Walls; and the Church, the collective Body of Glorified Saints, is here called the Lamb's Wife, eſpouſed before, but the Marriage ſolemnized now. *Note here*, That as the Earthly *Jeruſalem* was a Type of the Church Militant, ſo the Church Triumphant is called the New *Jeruſalem*; and compared to a *Great* City for the multitude of its Members; and ſtiled Holy, becauſe Sanctity is the ſpecial Qualification of thoſe who are the Inhabitants of it. *Note* 2. The Light which is found in this City; it is not compared to the Light of the Sun, for that is attended with ſcorching Heat, nor to the Light of the Moon, which is variable and uncertain; but to the Light of *Precious Stones*, which is clear and pure, and has nothing annoying in it. *Note* 3. The great Safety and Security of this City, and of all the Citizens inhabiting therein: Here is *a Wall Great and High*. Walls are for Defence, (called *mœnia, a muniendo*,) and the higher the Wall the greater the Defence: God's Omnipotency is as a Wall and will be an inviſible Bulwark about his Saints in Heaven; nothing ſhall endanger them, nothing ſhall offend them. *Note* 4. Here are Twelve Gates for Conveniency of Entrance into this City on all ſides, and to give free and eaſie Acceſs from all Parts, Eaſt, Weſt, North and South; to ſignifie, that the Church in Heaven will be made up of Perſons coming from all Parts, as Chriſt foretold, *Mat.* 8. 11. *Luk.* 13. 29. They ſhall come from the Eaſt, *&c.* and ſhall ſit down with *Abraham*. The Triumphant Church is a collective Body of Believers of all Nations, Kindreds and People, Tongues and Languages. *Note Laſtly*, That as the Names of Workmen are ſometimes ſet upon Foundation Stones, by which it is well known in After-ages who were the Builders, in like manner it is here intimated, that as the Ancient *Jewiſh* Church was founded in Twelve Patriarchs, ſo the latter Chriſtian Church in and by Twelve Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone, or the Foundation of both; he being *fundamentum fundans*, they *fundamenta fundata*; *Teaching us* that our Faith muſt be Built upon the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and upon no other Doctrine whatſoever, tho it has a pretended Stamp of *Infallibility* upon it.

15 And he that talked with we had a golden reed to meaſure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lyeth fourſquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he meaſured the city with the reed, twelve thouſand furlongs: the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. 17 And he meaſured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the meaſure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Still St. *John* proceeds in the Deſcription of the Heavenly State, and the Church Triumphant in it: This is called *a City* in reſpect of its magnificent Building, comely Order, and invincible Strength. *A great City* in regard of its largeneſs and capaciouſneſs, being full of glorified Saints and Angels; and *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of that Everlaſting Peace which is there enjoyed, as the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies. And here an Account is given of the meaſuring of this great City: We read of its meaſuring before, *Chap.* 11. but differently from its meaſuring now; then it was meaſured by a *Man*, now by an *Angel*; then by an *Ordinary Reed*, now by a *Golden Reed*. Intimating the Tranſcendency of the State of the Church now to what it was before; and repreſenting the Firmneſs, Perfection, and Greatneſs of the New *Jeruſalem*. Here *Note*, An obſervable difference in the meaſuring of the Church Militant, and of the Church Triumphant. The *Church Militant*, upon a juſt Meaſure by the Reed of the Word, is found unequal in its Parts; ſome Parts of it are purer and better than others; but in the New *Jeruſalem* all Parts are equal in Perfection and Purity: The length is as large as the breadth, and the height equal to either. The Church of Chriſt in Heaven ſhall be exceeding large and great, perfect and compleat; nothing ſhall be found irregular in it; all Things can there endure the meaſuring Reed, and abide the exacteſt Trial.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jaſper; and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glaſs. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones. The firſt foundation *was* jaſper; the ſecond, ſapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, ſardonyx; the ſixth, ſardius; the ſeventh, chryſolite; the eight, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryſopraſus; the eleventh, a jacinct; the twelfth, an amethyſt. 21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every ſeveral gate was of one pearl: and the ſtreet of the city *was* pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs.

Some will have all this to ſignifie and repreſent the pureſt State of the Church here upon Earth; but if there ſhall be any State on this ſide Eternity which anſwereth this Glorious Repreſentation, how much more will the perfect Glorious Church in Heaven fully anſwer it? What was ſaid of *Jeruſalem* of Old, may be truly ſpoken of the New *Jeruſalem* above, *Pſal.* 87. 3. *Very excellent Things are ſpoken of thee thou City of God.* Her Pavement of Gold, her Gates of Pearl, her Walls of Precious Stone; denoting the Durableneſs and Permanency of the Saints Happineſs, the Delight and Satisfaction that accompanies it, and the reſplendent Glory of it. As Gold excels all Metals, and is not ſubject to Corruption; as Precious Stones are full of Splendor and Glory, in like manner will the Manſions of Heaven be moſt Glorious, the Converſation there Pure and Incorrupt; affording Saints ſuch an intire Satisfaction as infinitely exceeds all that the moſt Rich and Glorious Things of this World can afford for the Gratification of the outward Senſes.

22 And I ſaw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to ſhine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are ſaved, ſhall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day: for there ſhall be no night there. 26 And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatſoever* worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Obſerve here, 1. St. *John* declares that the New *Jeruſalem* ſhall not want either thoſe Spiritual Supplies or Natural Advantages which *Jeruſalem* below ſtood in need of: No need of any *Temple* there for external Worſhip and Ordinances, which it is our Duty to wait upon God in here; what need an Houſe of Prayer for them that want nothing to Pray for? What need of Miniſters and Ordinances to teach them whoſe Knowledge is perfected? What need of Sacraments to remember Chriſt in and by when they ſhall always ſee Chriſt Face to Face? Again, what need of the natural Light of the *Sun* or *Moon* where the Sun of Righteouſneſs for ever ſhineth, and where God is all in all? Happy they that enjoy him, for they enjoy all Good in him, and by him, he being the Fountain of all Goodneſs. *Obſerve* 2. Having thus deſcribed the City, St, *John* next declares who ſhall be Citizens, namely, the Nations that are ſaved; all believing *Jews* and converted *Gentiles*, called elſewhere the *general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born*, which are a great *Multitude*, theſe ſhall be admitted into it, and partake of the Glory and Happineſs of it; and whereas it is added, that *Kings do bring their Glory and Honour into it*, this is not to be ſo underſtood as if there would be a Diſtinction in Heaven between Kings and Subjects; no, all the Saints there are Kings and Prieſts unto God; neither is it meant that Kings ſhall carry their Earthly Glory and Honour with them into Heaven; but that Kings who ſhall be ſo happy as to come thither, ſhall ſee all their Honour and Glory ſwallowed up in the Glory and Happineſs of that Place and State; and ſhall confeſs that all their Crowns are infinitely ſhort of the Crown of Glory; and that their Thrones are Dunghils compared with the Dignity of this Throne. *Obſerve* 3. It is declared what perfect Security and Peace the Saints enjoy in the New *Jeruſalem*, together with their Glory, Riches and Happineſs: This is ſignified, *ver.* 25. *The Gates ſhall not be ſhut at all by Day*, and there is no Night to ſhut them in. The

Gates ſhall be open to ſhew their peaceable State, and ſecure Tranquility, without fear of any hoſtile Invaſion or Entry of Enemies, either by Force or Fraud: It is added, *there ſhall be no Night there*, either in a literal or metaphorical Senſe: No Darkneſs. no interruption of Happineſs, nor fear of Danger; nothing that can either diſturb or diſquiet. *Obſerve* 4. Who the Perſons are that ſhall be everlaſtingly debarr'd the Enjoyment of all this Happineſs; all that have defiled themſelves by Luſt and Uncleanneſs, every Perſon that hath not by Holineſs of Heart and Life ſeparated himſelf from Sin and Wickedneſs, and dedicated himſelf to God and his Service; *nothing that defileth*, nothing that *worketh Abomination*. No open ſcandalous Sinner, or he that maketh a Lie, ſhall be admitted; to tell a Lie is bad, but to make a Lie is much worſe. This is the Devil's Sin in a ſpecial Manner; 'tis his by Temptation, 'tis his by Approbation, 'tis his by Practice; he is a Liar, and the Father of Lies and Liars; it were well if our cuſtomary Liars would conſider it. The Sum of all is, that without Grace and Holineſs here there can be no Expectation of Glory and Happineſs hereafter: This fits at once for the Imployment of Heaven, and the Enjoyments of Heaven: It makes meet for the Inheritance in Light; and if we have not our preſent Fruit unto Holineſs, our End can never be everlaſting Light.

CHAP. XXII.

1 AND he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

St. *John* in this and the Four following Verſes goes on with the Deſcription of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, which he had begun in the former Chapter. *And here we have Obſervable*, 1. The City deſcribed, as having *a clear River* running through it, and this *of the Water of Life*; an Alluſion doubtleſs to the Earthly Paradiſe, *Gen.* 2. which was well watered, without which Accommodation no Place can be Happy. The Heavenly Paradiſe here, or the New *Jeruſalem*, is ſaid to have a pure River of Water in it, denoting the pure and unmixt Joys of Heaven; and thoſe *Rivers of Pleaſure which are at God's Right Hand for evermore*. Here is not a Well of Water, but a River; not of muddy or feculent Water, but *clear as Cryſtal*; not corruptible or dead, but living Water, *Water of Life*. *Obſerve* 2. The Head or Spring of this River declared, from whence it doth ariſe; not from the Hills which may be cut off, diverted, or dried up; but it *proceeds out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb*, and therefore can no more fail than God and Chriſt can fail: No River can fail, unleſs the Springs that feed it fail. The Saints in Heaven ſhall be refreſhed with ſuch Conſolations as flow from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and their Comforts cannot fail till they fail; *He ſhewed me a pure River of Water*, &c. *proceeding out of the Throne of God*.

2 In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and of either ſide of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

Note here, 1. That as there was a River, and a Tree of Life, in the Terreſtial Paradiſe, ſo in alluſion thereunto both are ſaid to be in the Heavenly Paradiſe. Behold here a Tree of ſuch vaſt Proportion and Extent, that its Branches extend to both ſides, that all may receive Benefit by it. Who can this agree with but Jeſus Chriſt, who is called *a Tree of Life*, becauſe from him we have our Natural, our Spiritual, and our Eternal, Life? From this Tree do Bud forth all the Fruits of Grace and Comfort, and that for all Seaſons and Conditions. In Chriſt, 1. Our Souls have all Neceſſaries for Food and Phyſick; *its Leaves are for healing, as well as its Fruits for Food*. 2. All variety of Fruits, called here *Twelve Manner of Fruits:* That is, Variety of Graces, and Comforts, of all Sorts. 3. In him are theſe Fruits at all Times; this Tree bears Fruit every Month; Winter Fruits as well as Summer Fruits, even in the Black Months of Sickneſs and Death. Chriſt is continually diſtributing of his Divine Fulneſs to the Satisfaction of his People; he is all in all in the Enjoyment of Mercy; he is all in all in the Want of Mercy; he is all in order to his Peoples Salvation, and he is all in their Glorification. *Queſt.* But will there be any need either of Food or Phyſick in Heaven? If not, what need of the Fruits of this Tree for Food, or of its Leaves for Healing? *Anſw.* We cannot ſuppoſe that in the Heavenly State there will be any want either of Meat or Medicines, any Hunger that ſhall require Food, or any Sickneſs to ſtand in need of Phyſick: But as Food and Phyſick are the inſtrumental Means of the Preſervation of Natural Life, without which it will certainly and ſuddenly decay, in like Manner our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth not only give Spiritual Life unto his People, but he is the Conſerving Cauſe of it; he doth maintain, and will preſerve, it without the leaſt decay to all Eternity; *thus are the Leaves of this Tree for the healing of the Nations*.

3 And there ſhall be no more curſe: but the throne of God, and of the Lamb ſhall be in it; and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him. 4 And they ſhall ſee his face; and his name *ſhall be* in their foreheads. 5 And there ſhall be no night there, they need no candle, neither light of the ſun, for the Lord God giveth them light: and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.

St. *John* has not yet done with this copious Deſcription of the *New Jeruſalem*; but here he cloſes it by doing theſe Two Things: 1. He ſhews what ſhall not be found there. *There ſhall be no Curſe*, no accurſed Perſon, or accurſed Thing; no Sin, nor any Thing ſinful, that deſerves the Curſe. *And there ſhall be no Night there*, no Darkneſs of Ignorance or Error, no Darkneſs of Affliction, Temptation or Deſertion. No Night of Natural Darkneſs, no Night of Spiritual Darkneſs, much leſs of Eternal Darkneſs, which is the Portion of the Wicked. *Farther*, There ſhall be no need of Natural Light, the Light of the Sun; no need of Artificial Light, the Light of a Candle; no need of the Spiritual Light of the Word and Ordinances: All which ſhall then and there ceaſe. 2. He ſhews what there ſhall be there. *Namely* 1. The Throne of God and the Lamb, that is, the Glorious and Everlaſting Preſence of God and Chriſt, as on a Throne of Royal Majeſty; inſomuch that the Name of the City may be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. 2. It is added, that *his Servants ſhall ſerve him*; that is, the Glorious Angels, and Glorified Saints, ſhall continually ſtand before him, and adminiſter unto him; not ſpend their Eternity in a perpetual gazing upon God, but executing his Commands, obeying him with Vigour, praiſing him with Chearfulneſs, loving him above Meaſure, fearing him without Torment, truſting him without Deſpondency, ſerving him without Laſſitude and Wearineſs, without Interruption or Diſtraction. Praiſing God, and ſinging Eternal Hallelujahs to the Lamb, for ever and ever. 3. It is declared, *That they ſhall ſee God's Face*, which imports Fruition as well as Viſion of him; together with a Sweet and Satisfactory Delectation in him, St. *Mat*. 5. 8. *Heb*. 12. 14. *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, and Holy Life, for they ſhall ſee God*; that is, have a clear and apprehenſive, tho' not a full and comprehenſive, Knowledge of him. 4. *His Name ſhall be in their Foreheads*; his Name, that is, his Holy Nature, his Image and Likeneſs, by which they ſhall be known, as a Man is by his Name. An Alluſion probably to the High Prieſt, who had Holineſs to the Lord written on his Frontlet: Or a Reflection upon the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, who have his Name on their Foreheads; in like Manner the Name of God ſhall be on his Servants Foreheads; they are thankful for imperfect Lineaments here, but ſhall be ſatisfied with his Likeneſs then, and there. *Laſtly*, It is cloſed with this, *they ſhall Reign for ever and ever*; not for a Thouſand Years, as the Militant Church is ſaid to Reign on Earth after Antichriſt's Deſtruction, but for Eternal Ages, and this not partially, but fully and compleatly, when all their Spiritual Enemies, Sin, Satan, and the World, yea, Death itſelf, ſhall be put under their Feet, and that for ever. *From the whole learn*, That when we are at any Time dejected upon the Account of our dark and imperfect Knowledge, or afflicted upon the Occaſion of many wearisome Nights and Days, of Sin and Sorrow, of Trouble and Temptation, of Miſery and Deſertion, which we have here on Earth, let this Meditation Comfort us, that the happy Day is coming when there ſhall be no Night, but an Eternal Sabbath of Reſt, Light and Life; with Plenty of all good Things, even Fulneſs of Joy, and Rivers of Pleaſure, for evermore.

O Lord, the Well of Life ſo pure
Doth ever flow from thee,
And in thy Light thy Saints are ſure
Eternal Light to ſee.

——*The Lord giveth them Light, and they ſhall Reign for ever and ever.*

6 And he ſaid unto me, Theſe ſayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: bleſſed *is* he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John ſaw theſe things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and ſeen, I fell down to worſhip before the feet of the angel, which ſhewed me theſe things. 9 Then ſaith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the ſayings of this book, worſhip God.

The Prophetical Part of this Book being now ended, here follows the Concluſion, which is managed in a Way of Dialogue between Chriſt, the Angel, and the Apoſtle. *Note here,* 1. How the Divine Authority of this Book is ſtrongly aſſerted, and its Excellency commended, *Theſe Sayings are Faithful and True*; that is, all Things contained in this Book of Prophecies are certain and infallibly true. The Holy Spirit of God foreſaw that this Book would be more queſtioned than other Books of Holy Scripture, therefore he confirms the Divine Authority of it by an Holy Angel, and the Truth of all Things in it; and eſpecially that which relates to the Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven, the Inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem*, with a frequent Aſſertion, *viz. Theſe Sayings are faithful and true*; it is added, *They ſhall ſhortly be done*. This is ſpoken of the beginning of their Accompliſhment, they ſhall begin to be Fulfilled, and to take Effect, and ſhall receive their full and final Accompliſhment in due Time. Behold here in Chriſt's Omniſciency an evident Proof of his Divinity, he knows all Things to come, as well as all Things paſt; and whereas Chriſt ſays, theſe Things *ſhall ſhortly be done*, *we Learn*, That the Time of the Churches Suffering is a limited Time; it is a ſhort Time, after which ſhall follow an Eternal Deliverance, and a Great Reward. *Obſerve farther*, That Chriſt ſubjoins a Promiſe and Aſſurance of the certainty and ſuddenneſs of his coming to Judgment, for the Support of his Church during the ſhort Time of her Sufferings and Services, *Behold I come quickly. Next*, he pronounces them Bleſſed who keep the Words of *this Book*, not only in Memory and Profeſſion, but in Practice and Performance. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Sincerity of St. *John*, the Penman of this Book; he leaves here upon Record his Relapſe into that Error into which he had fallen before, *Chap.* 19. 10. The good Man relates his own Sin, yea, records his Relapſe into the ſame Sin, once and again, which as it diſcovers that he preferr'd the Glory of God before his own Reputation, *ſo it evidently declares*, That a Holy Man may poſſibly relapſe into the ſame Sin, through Inadvertency the Power of a Temptation; and how much it is the Duty of every one that thinketh he ſtandeth to take heed leſt he fall. Of St. *John*'s Weakneſs in Worſhipping the Angel. *See the Notes* on *Chap.* 19. 10. as alſo the Angel's Anſwer, *Worſhip God*, as much as had he ſaid, Thou miſtakeſt the Object of thine Adoration, I am a Created Being, and can accept of ſo much Homage as this, which is peculiarly due to the Great Creator.

10 And he ſaith unto me, Seal not the ſayings of the propheſie of this book: for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjuſt let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he which is filthy let him be filthy ſtill: and he that is righteous let him be righteous ſtill: and he that is holy let him be holy ſtill.

Obſerve here, 1. A ſtrict Charge given to St. *John* not to ſeal or cloſe up the Words of this Prophecy, but to publiſh and make it known for the Uſe and Benefit of the Church, for which Reaſon this Book is called a Revelation, *Seal not the Sayings of the Prophecy of this Book. Where Mark*, That although this Book be the obſcureſt Part of the Scripture, yet it is Chriſt's Command that it ſhould not be conceal'd from the Knowledge of the People. How Sacrilegious then is the Practice of the Church of *Rome* in robbing the Common People of all the Scriptures, locking them up in an unknown Tongue, and forbidding the People to read the ſame? *Obſerve* 2. How the Holy Ghoſt here preoccupates an Objection, which St. *John* might be ready to make, If I Seal not up, but make known this Prophecy, the Wicked Men of the World, Perſecutors eſpecially, will be made worſe by it; they will be unjuſt ſtill, and filthy ſtill, and more ſo, than ever. Be it ſo, ſays he, yet the Righteous will be more confirmed in their Courſe of Obedience: And ſuch as are Holy, will be Holy ſtill, and ſuch as are Righteous, will be Righteous ſtill; there is we ſee a dangerous Perſeverance in Sin, as well as a deſirable Perſeverance in Grace and Holineſs. Let him that is unclean be unclean ſtill: *Where Mark*, This is no Permiſſion, much leſs a Perſwaſion, to Sin, but a dreadful Threatning or Commination, that ſuch as give up themſelves to ſinning ſhall be judicially given up by God to Sin, and Puniſhment; ſuch a Liberty as this to Sin, is the worſt of Bondage. *Again*, he that is Holy let him be Holy ſtill; the Words carry with them not only the Force of a Command, and the Direction of a Rule, but the Sweetneſs of a Promiſe, and a Gracious Priviledge that they ſhall perſevere in Holineſs unto the end.

12 And behold I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every Man according as his works ſhall be.

The former Verſes contained a Dialogue, or Interlocutory Diſcourſe, between the Angel and St. *John*. Here Chriſt begins to ſpeak, and continues his Speech to the middle of the Twentieth Verſe; wherein he declares, That it will not be long before he comes to judge the World; to give unto thoſe that are Good Everlaſting Happineſs, and to them that are Evil Everlaſting Puniſhment. *Here obſerve*, 1. An Excitation, *Behold*. 2. The Cœleſtial Object, Chriſt Jeſus, *I come quickly*. And, 3. The End of his Coming, *My Reward is with me, to render to every one according to his Works. Learn hence*, 1. That the Notices of our Lord's coming to Judgment are uſually in Scripture uſher'd in with great Solemnity, with a Mark of Attention and Obſervation. This Word *Behold* is generally prefixt and ſet before: Thus *Jude* 7. *Behold, the Lord cometh with Ten Thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all.* So the Apoſtle *James* gives an awful Admonition, *Behold! The Judge ſtandeth before the Door*, ready to paſs a final Sentence. And St. *John* in this Book of the *Revelation* ſeldom ſpeaks of Chriſt's coming but he breaks forth into an Extaſie of Admiration, *Behold! He cometh with many Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him; and they which pierced him. Learn* 2. That the ſpecial Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments is reſerved till the Second Coming and Appearance of Jeſus Chriſt, *My Reward is with me to give to every Man according to his Works. Learn* 3. That it is our Wiſdom and Duty to repreſent by actual and ſolemn Thoughts the certain and ſpeedy coming of Chriſt to the Righteous Judgment of the World. *I come, behold I come; behold I come quickly, to render unto every Man according to his Work.*

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt. 14 Bleſſed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

As if Chriſt had ſaid, I am the Eternal God, the firſt Cauſe, and the laſt End of all Things; I firſt made the World, and I will at laſt put a Period to it. And when Time ſhall be no more, they ſhall for ever be happy in the Enjoyment of me, who have here Obeyed me, and lived in Conformity to my Doctrine and Example; they ſhall through Holineſs enter the Gates of the *New Jeruſalem*, that Glorious City, having the Tree of Life in it. Preſent Bleſſedneſs, as well as future Happineſs, belongs to thoſe that obey God's Will, and keep his Commandments. *Bleſſed are they*; and Bleſſed for ever ſhall they be.

15 For without *are* dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Without, that is, without the Gates of the City of the *New Jeruſalem*, are all filthy and unclean Sinners, all cruel and bloody Perſecutors, all raging and furious Enemies to me and my People, all Idolaters, and all Liars; theſe ſhall be ſhut out of Heaven, as Dogs are ſhut out of the Houſe; and ſhut into Hell, to be impriſon'd with Devils and Damned Spirits; and that everlaſtingly to lye for ever in that myſterious Fire, whoſe ſtrange Property it is always to Torture, but never to Kill, or always to Kill, but never to Conſume: They would Die, but they cannot Die; they ſeek for Death, but cannot find it; they deſire it, but it flies from them.

16 I Jeſus have ſent mine angel to teſtifie unto you the things in the Churches. I am the root, and the offſpring of David, *and* the bright and morning ſtar.

Obſerve here, 1. That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Author of this Revelation, and owneth it to be his; the Angel did but declare it, St. *John* did but write it, Chriſt himſelf was the Inditer of it: They were not the Inventions of St. *John*, nor the Sayings of the Angel, but the Revelation was Chriſt's, which leaves all Men inexcuſable who believe not the ſame, but queſtion the Divine Authority thereof. *Obſerve* 2. The Titles by here Chriſt given of himſelf. 1. The *Root* of *David*; that is, as God, from whom by Creation *David* and all Mankind had their Being, and did Spring. 2. The Off-ſpring of *David* according to his Humanity: Chriſt as God was the Root of *David*; but conſidered as Man *David* was the Root of Chriſt. *Iſa.* 11. 1. *There ſhall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of* Jeſſe, *and a Branch ſhall grow out of his Roots.* 3. Chriſt ſtiles himſelf the Bright Morning Star, that is, the Light of the World, inlightning and enlivening the New Creation: The Fountain of all Knowledge, Grace and Comfort, on Earth, and of all Glory and Happineſs in Heaven. As the Morning Star firſt brings Light to the World, ſo Chriſt firſt publiſhed the Light of the Goſpel, and now by this *Revelation* gives a ſuperadded Light to his People, informing them what ſhall befal his Church until his *Second Coming to Judgment.*

17 And the ſpirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth, ſay, Come. And let him that is a thirſt, come: and whoſoever will, let him take the Water of life freely.

Obſerve here, 1. The Perſons mentioned, *the Spirit and the Bride:* By the Spirit underſtand the Holy Ghoſt, and by the Bride the whole *Catholick Church* in general, both in Heaven and Earth, and every true Believer in particular. Behold how the Spirit ſpeaks in the *Bride*, and how the *Bride* ſpeaks from and by the Spirit. Chriſt by his Spirit is preſent with her by his Influence, he is Aſſiſtant to her. *Obſerve* 2. The Title here given to the Church, ſhe is called *Chriſt's Bride*, and he *elſewhere* called her Bridegroom: Now this Title of a *Bride* given to her is, 1. A Title of Eminency and Excellency, and ſtands in oppoſition to Adultery; ſhe is a *Bride*, not a *Whore:* The falſe Church is not a *Bride*, but the *Whore*, and ſo often called: She deſires not Chriſt's coming, no more than an Adultereſs deſires the return of her Husband; but the *Bride* being a chaſte Virgin longs for it. 2. As the Word *Bride* is a Word of Excellency as it ſtands in oppoſition to Adultery, ſo it is a Word of Extenuation and Diminution as it ſtands in a diſtinction from Matrimony and compleat Marriage; it is the *Bride*, not a married Wife. The Saints are contracted to Chriſt in this World, the Marriage is near, and ſhall be conſummated in the next. A *Bride* is a Spouſe in the Confines of Marriage, near the Approaches of Conjugal Solemnity: Bleſſed be God it will not be long before Chriſt and his Church, Chriſt and every Believer, who are now betrothed and eſpouſed, ſhall be fully and compleatly Married, and in the perfect Enjoyment of each other. *Obſerve* 3. The Affection which this *Bride* expreſſes towards her Bridegroom; ſhe ſays, *Come*; ſhe paſſionately and impatiently deſires, and vehemently longs, for his coming: *Come*, is a Word of Invitation; I pray come, it is my earneſt Suit and Requeſt that thou wouldſt come. *Learn hence*, That the Glorious Coming and Appearance of Jeſus Chriſt to Judgment is vehemently deſired and earneſtly longed for by all Believers. The Spirit in the *Bride*, and the *Bride* by the Spirit, ſay come. *Obſerve* 4. The Invitation of Acceſs returned by Chriſt, the *Bribe*, ſays come; ſays Chriſt, let him that is athirſt come: We muſt firſt come to Chriſt by Faith and Repentance, before we can ever deſire Chriſt's coming to us by Death and Judgment. *Obſerve Laſtly*, The Intimation given by Chriſt of a gracious Acceptance, and a grateful Entertainment: *Whoſoever will, let him take of the Waters of Life freely. Here Note*, 1. The Benefit mentioned, or the Mercy offered, *Water of Life*, all Grace here, and Glory hereafter: Grace as it leads to Glory, and Glory as it follows upon Grace; Grace carries Life in the Boſom of it, even Eternal Life. *Note* 2. The Perſon to whom this Benefit is offered and tendred, and that is to whoſoever will; to ſhew that Salvation is not forced upon us againſt our Wills, but beſtowed upon us in the uſe of our Faculties, and in the exerciſe of our own Endeavours: We are the Subjects of this willingneſs, but God is the Author of it, *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Certum eſt nos velle, cum volumus, ſed Deus facit ut velimus præbendo vires efficaciſſimas voluntati*, ſays St. *Auſtin. Note* 3. The offer itſelf, let him take it freely; Grace is the Free Gift of God as well as Eternal Life: Such is God's Munificence and Royalty that he will not ſell his good Things; if he did, ſuch is our Indigence and Poverty that we could never buy them; therefore ſays God take freely: Yet we muſt underſtand it only of a Freedom from Merit, not of a Freedom from Endeavour; God's Offers in the Goſpel are Conditional, he proffers his Son, and all Good with him, but upon Condition of our Acceptance on his own Terms. Let none then ſtraighten the Grace of God where he has enlarged it. If a Man has a Mind to keep his Sins he ſhall have no Mercy, be they never ſo ſmall; but if he be willing to leave his Sins, and to accept an offered Saviour, (as offered,) he ſhall not be excluded from Mercy, be they never ſo great: For ſays Chriſt, *Whoſoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.*

18 For I teſtifie unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Here we have a dreadful Commination and ſevere Threatning denounced by Chriſt againſt all ſuch as ſhall add any Thing to the Scriptures in general, and to this Prophecy in particular; not by way of true Interpretation, but either *formally*, by enjoining any Thing to be received as Scripture which God never revealed to be ſuch, or *vertually*, by putting ſuch a Senſe and Meaning upon Scripture as God never intended, and the Words cannot rationally bear. Almighty God here declares, that he will add to ſuch his Plagues, and ſhut them out of the Holy City, the *New Jeruſalem*, the Kingdom of Heaven: And if ſo, Learn we what great Guilt the *Church* of *Rome* contracts, and what a dreadful Curſe ſhe lyes under, by making Oral Tradition of equal Authority with the Scriptures, and by adding New Articles of Faith, New Points of Doctrine, which is in effect to accuſe God of Ignorance or Inadvertency. True, the Doctrine of Chriſtianity is a Tradition; it was delivered by Chriſt to the Apoſtles, and by the Apoſtles to their Succeſſors; but now they being long ſince dead, we cannot receive from them the Doctrine of Life by Word of Mouth, but muſt ſtick to the Scriptures, or written Word, for theſe Things were written for our Sake. But if any Man ſhall add unto theſe Things, God ſhall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book. We reject not all Traditions, becauſe Scripture itſelf is a Tradition; but we blame the *Church* of *Rome*, and deſervedly ſure, for making her private unwritten Traditions of equal Authority with the Scriptures, and for urging that they ought to be received *pari pietatis affectu*, with the ſame Pious Affection with which we received the Holy Scriptures. And thus they ſet their Poſt by God's Poſt, and equal their Traditions with the Doctrines of Faith; their Opinion is bad, but their Practice is worſe; for they value their own Traditions above the Scriptures, and prefer them before the Scriptures; they never called their own Traditions a Noſe of Wax, a dead Letter, a dumb Rule, an obſcure Doctrine; but in this manner have they ſtigmatized the Holy Scriptures, and how they will eſcape Chriſt's ſevere Commination here before us, for adding to and taking from the Word of God, concerns them to look to it, for they muſt certainly anſwer for it at the Bar of God.

20 He which teſtifieth theſe things, ſaith, Surely I come quickly.

That is, Jeſus Chriſt, the faithful and true Witneſs, from whom St. *John* received this Revelation, as he formerly had done the Holy Goſpel, he ſaith, *ſurely I come quickly. Where Note*, 1. That this Prophecy or Promiſe of Chriſt's Second coming to judge the World it is here left as Chriſt's laſt Word upon Record; it is almoſt the laſt Word in the Bible; doubtleſs that it might be ſeriouſly minded and frequently remembred by us. Chriſt had in this Chapter Twice before, namely, ly, at *ver.* 7, and 12. teſtified, that he came quickly; y repeats it here again, to excite us to prepare for it, and t continually in the expectation of it. *Note* 2. That as has Three ſeveral Times in this Chapter given us the Aſſu of the Certainty of his Coming, ſo he prefixes an B behold before it, *Behold I come quickly*, and here he pr the Word *ſurely* before it, *ſurely I come quickly*; to ken the Security, and leave the Incredulity of Sinners out Excuſe, who live as if they did not believe an Day would come.

20——— Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.

To the forementioned Aſſurance of the Certainty ur Saviour's Coming, St *John* in the Name of the whole ch ſubjoins a hearty *Amen*; an earneſt Wiſh, a paſſion de-ſire and Longing for our Lord's Coming, ſaying, *eve me Lord Jeſus*, as thou haſt promiſed, and thy People expected. *Learn hence*, 1. That the Coming of *Chriſt* dgment is a Truth firmly believed, and earneſtly de by all good Chriſtians. St. *John* here, in the Name the *Church*, takes as it were the Word out of *Chriſt*'s ath, like a quick Eccho, and preſently improves the niſe into Prayer; *Chriſt*'s Farewel-word to his *Church come quickly*, the *Churches* Farewel-ſuit to *Chriſt* is, *Lord Jeſus, come quickly*. Queſt. *But why is Chriſt Seco ming ſo exceedingly deſired by his Church and Childre* *Anſw.* For finiſhing the Days of Sinning, and deſt g the Works of Satan, for accompliſhing the Num of his own Elect, and for haſtning his Kingdom for ng the Creature from Subjection to Vanity, for ma ing the Glory of his Juſtice and Mercy, and for pu ing Saints into the full and final Poſſeſſion of their rod Inheritance. *Learn* 2. That it is the unfeigned e f God's Faithful Servants to have the full Fruition of Chriſt. This is the Habitual Deſire of their Hea : Chriſt would come and receive them to himſelf, tho' at the ſame time they may tremble at ſome Circumſtances of his Coming. There is a degree of ſinful Bondage which hinders much our Spiritual Confidence and Boldneſs; but the more Holy we are, the more Emboldned we ſhall be againſt the Day of Judgment.

21 The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all, Amen.

This is an Epiſtolary Concluſion, uſed almoſt in all the Epiſtles of the New Teſtament; and ſo here, becauſe this Prophecy was in the manner of an Epiſtle directed to the *Churches*. St. *John* began this Epiſtle with this Salutation, *Chap.* 1. 4. and ſo it ends with it here. He knew there would be a long Tract of Time intervening between the giving of the Promiſe and the fulfilling of it; between the *Bride's* making herſelf ready and the Day wherein the Marriage was to be ſolemnized. He well knew that before the Conſummation of all Things there were many ſad Diſpenſations that the *Churches* would certainly meet with; many falſe Doctrines would be ſpread, many Duties to be performed, many Afflictions to be endured, all which would require an extraordinary Aſſiſtance and Special Grace; therefore he prays that the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be with them all. *Teaching* us inceſſantly to deſire for our ſelves, and to crave for others, the Auxiliary Aids of Divine Grace, to enable to the acceptable performance of every Duty, and to the patient enduring of every Trial. The greateſt Mercy that can be wiſhed to any, or that any can wiſh unto themſelves, is the Grace of God to excite and quicken us to our Duty, and to aſſiſt and help us in the performance of it; and accordingly St. *John* ſhuts up this Book, and therewith the Canon of the whole Scripture, in theſe Words, *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all, Amen.*

Tati Gloria Sempiterna.

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